# Personal Development

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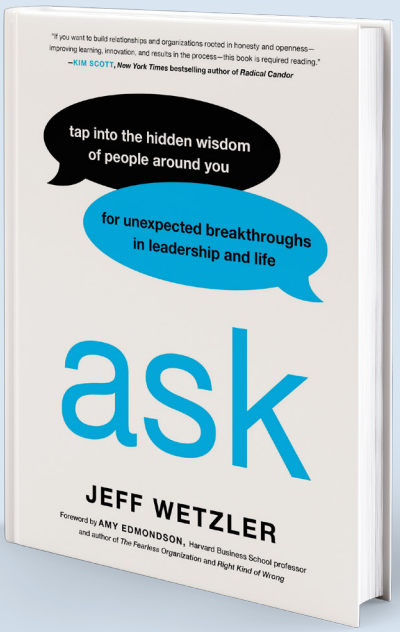
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## Ask

### Tap Into the Hidden Wisdom of People All Around You for Unexpected Breakthroughs in Leadership and Life

*By Jeff Wetzler*

**Jeff Wetzler** has been on a quarter-century quest to transform learning opportunities and unlock human potential. Blending a unique set of leadership experiences in the fields of business and education, he's pursued this quest as an international management consultant to executives in Fortune 500 corporations, as Chief Learning Officer at Teach For America, and currently, as co-CEO of Transcend, a nationally recognized education innovation organization. Jeff earned a Doctorate in Adult Learning and Leadership from Columbia University and a Bachelor's in Psychology from Brown University. He is an Aspen Global Leadership Fellow and an Edmund Hillary Fellow.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Find Out What Others Really Think, Know, and Feel

In his book, ***Ask: Tap Into the Hidden Wisdom of People All Around You for Unexpected Breakthroughs in Leadership and Life***, author Jeff Wetzler wants to open up, for his readers, the world that becomes available once you start asking questions. He is convinced that in the mere asking of the right questions of the right people, you can open up vast swaths of information that otherwise would be invisible to you. While he addresses his book primarily to people working in business, he maintains that the importance of questions is not just relegated to the world of work. The principles he lays out can be generalized to any area of life where a person wants to recognize pitfalls and weaknesses and unlock strengths and new opportunities. He breaks his book up into three parts. The first section deals with problems people face in relationships, particularly when it comes to the asking of questions. The second part covers what he calls, "The *Ask* Approach," and his final section teaches his reader how to build this approach into both their leadership roles and their personal lives.

After discussing how many people wish they could read the minds around them, Wetzler states that "people overestimate their ability to make accurate inferences about what others around them are really feeling or thinking at a given moment." Unfortunately, most of our inferences, he maintains, are incorrect. This is in part because both body language and a person's empathy can fail to provide adequate information into the thoughts and feelings of others. Wetzler maintains that the only accurate way to determine what another person is thinking is through asking them directly. This is not always easy. Wetzler believes difficulties arise because people have not been properly taught how to ask people the questions they need answers to. "Couple this dearth of knowledge," he writes, "with social norms that emphasize self-reliance, competition, and conflict avoidance, and you begin to understand why so many of us avoid asking." There is hope, however, as Wetzler believes that we will all be better off once people learn to ask quality questions, and this skill is, indeed, learnable.

## The Invisible Problem

Wetzler opens each of his chapters with an essential question the chapter attempts to answer. In Chapter 1, he asks, "What do you most need to know that people are least likely to tell you?" He tells the story of when he worked for Teach For America when their Northwest Summer Institute suddenly faced major challenges. This was a drastic situation because this training is what would prepare large numbers of teachers to face students come fall. Despite the fact that problems had been arising for quite awhile, nobody told Wetzler of the problems for months. While the problems with the Summer Institute were able to be overcome, Wetzler was left realizing that even though he had asked many questions, whatever he had done did not create an environment that was conducive to his colleagues telling him the truth. Instead, they attempted to solve problems on their own without his help. He knew something needed to change.

Wetzler then goes on to write about a tactic he learned called "the two-column case." When people use this technique, they create two columns on a sheet of paper. In the right column, they write down what was actually said during a conversation. In the left column, they then "write the unspoken thoughts and feelings they experienced throughout the interaction." This exercise helps people realize how much they are holding back from saying, and when extrapolated to the other person, can help a listener realize how much a speaker may be withholding in a conversation. These thoughts and feelings are important. Wetzler explains how it is our problem when others hold back from sharing because our decision-making and relationships suffer because of the omissions. Wetzler shares four categories of information that people generally withhold:

1. "Their struggles and frustrations…and what help they need
2. What they really believe or feel about an issue…and where their views come from
3. Their honest feedback for you…and suggestions for how you can improve
4. Their most audacious ideas and dreams…which they fear might sound crazy."

## Barriers to Sharing

Wetzler's second chapter attempts to answer the question, "why don't most people tell you what's most important for you to find out?" Wetzler believes there are four primary reasons why people withhold information: they're worried about the impact their words could have on themselves or others, they do not have the energy to deal with the answer, they do not believe their opinions or feelings will be valued, and they do not have the words required to properly share their feelings.

Wetzler believes that the number one reason people hold back sharing is because "they are worried about the impact of sharing." These impacts can be different in various contexts. For example, in some cultures, people are quite concerned with saving face, and as such, they may be concerned with embarrassing you with their insights. While trust can help overcome some of this reluctance, sometimes a closer relationship can actually make disclosure more difficult because the stakes are higher for the person trying to share. Another problem is one of estimation. People often believe they will cause more harm than they actually will with a disclosure while simultaneously underestimating the benefits they stand to reap.

While people fail to disclose information because they worry about the effects on the other person, some people fail to disclose information because they fear they will reap negative repercussions themselves. These possible repercussions include possible fears of both judgment and rejection, and people are susceptible to these fears in all areas of their lives. A fear of rejection also does not need to stem from personal rejection. If a person sees a colleague or friend get rejected for sharing an opinion, they likely will not feel comfortable sharing their own ideas, particularly if they are not high in the organizational hierarchy.

The next barrier Wetzler discusses is people who have difficulty putting their thoughts into words. This can happen because people think more quickly than they can speak, they do not have the necessary communication skills, and they worry the words they can find are not appropriate. The latter problem frequently has to do with emotional speech that people may have been conditioned to keep inside.

Wetzler's fourth barrier is a "lack of time or energy." This occurs when people know that providing insight into a situation will inevitably draw them more deeply into the problem than they have the energy to deal with. Wetzler notices this tendency in himself at times, and when he does, he tells those around him that he really is interested in what they have to say and that they have full permission to stop him from what he is doing. He tells his people that he will provide them with all of the attention he can give them.

A final barrier to communication occurs when people feel their opinions are not valued. This does not have to be an accurate assessment in order for it to be a powerfully prohibiting one. People can determine that you do not want to listen based upon prior experiences with you or even with experiences with people in a similar role to you. When people try to share and nothing changes, it can lead to people losing hope. Despite the seriousness of the barriers presented, Wetzler maintains, "Many of the barriers described in this chapter can be immediately overcome simply by asking."

## Choosing Curiosity

There are five key pillars to Wetzler's Ask Approach. These include choosing curiosity, making it safe, posing quality questions, learning to listen, and reflecting. When it comes to choosing curiosity, Wetzler asks, "How can you awaken your curiosity to make new discoveries and unexpected connections?" Unfortunately in conversation, people frequently already believe they know what the other person will say, and this stops conversation before it can even start. Curiosity, described as a drive state, can help

> *There are three types of questions that Wetzler suggests his reader avoid: 'clumsy questions, sneaky questions, and attack questions."*

overcome this. There are multiple different types of curiosity, and Wetzler is concerned with connective curiosity which "is a desire to understand more about the thoughts, experiences, and feelings of other people." This type of curiosity helps both the speaker and the listener because when the listener feels that what they say is taken seriously, they actually experience an increase in a desire to divulge information. For Wetzler, curiosity is a choice rather than an inherent trait, and it is a choice anyone can choose.

One problem people frequently face is they choose one aspect of a person's statement to focus on and then they draw conclusions and tell stories based upon that piece of information. All of this, of course, is subject to confirmation bias or the tendency people have to focus on information that confirms what they already believe while ignoring other information that could point them in other directions. In order to overcome this tendency to move quickly from a situation to a story, it is important to insert curiosity at different steps in the listening process. This can happen when a person asks questions of themselves at each step of the process, leaving themselves open to see how their conclusions or story may not be accurate. It is also important to keep in mind that there is a lot of information that we cannot access without honest answers to questions, and this includes "others' true intentions and motivations."

## Cultivating Safety

Next Wetzler turns his attention to figuring out how to make other people feel more safe in sharing. This is frequently an issue when there are differentials in power that can arise from age, sex position, race, or any other number of factors. Wetzler states, "sometimes being asked to share, particularly in a professional context, feels less like an invitation and more like a social threat." In these situations, it is important to consider the questions asked and the ways they are asked. People must feel psychologically safe in order to share, and studies have shown that businesses and organizations can sink or soar based upon how free people at different levels feel in expressing what it is they have to say.

Despite the importance of psychological safety, Wetzler affirms that this is not absolutely achievable in a work environment where there is always some level of risk in speaking out. To make speaking out safer for people, Wetzler proposes the safety cycle. The first step of this cycle involves creating connections. This can be done through sharing important stories as well as through being vulnerable oneself. Further, it is important to find both an appropriate time and place to have a meaningful discussion. This should be a time and a place conducive to the person you are asking questions of. Next, opening up yourself is important. This happens when the person looking for information acknowledges that there are insights that the other person has that they, themselves, are not privy to. Sometimes question askers are reluctant to share too much themselves because their words and opinions could bias the other person, and it takes more time. Still, this is an important step in building psychological safety. Finally, the third step in the safety cycle is radiating resilience. This becomes possible when topics are made discussable because the conversational participants acknowledge that there are things they may have to say that others do not want to hear. In addition, it is important for the listener to try to react calmly and appropriately when people share information they do not want to hear.

## Asking and Listening

Not all questions are equally helpful, and Wetzler's Chapter 6 helps his reader tap into the most important questions to ask. Wetzler acknowledges the truth that many people have been made to feel ashamed for questions they have asked, and this can make them more reluctant to ask questions in the future. There are three types of questions that Wetzler suggests his reader avoid: "clumsy questions, sneaky questions, and attack questions." The first set can be awkwardly worded questions that simply do not get the needed information because they fail to clearly ask for it. Sneaky questions, on the other hand, do not try to elicit information but instead are "designed to influence, convince, or maneuver the other person." Attack questions go further and attempt to actually hurt the other person. Clearly none of these questions will elicit the answers desired. Helpful questions, Wetzler states, contain the following criteria: "They signal true curiosity…They are clear and direct…They invite honesty…They tap into the other person's full story… [and] They create mutual benefit." Good questions help a listener understand more clearly all aspects of what it is the other party thinks and feels in relation to the issue at hand.

Wetzler moves on to ask "How can you hear what someone is really trying to tell you?" Here, Wetzler wants his reader to listen to all that the other person has to say, and this involves listening to their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Many people confuse the concept of listening with hearing. True listening is a far more active pursuit than merely just hearing what the other person has to say. When people listen in order to learn, they pay attention to all it is the other person is saying. A big part of this is getting rid of distractions, both internal and external. In addition, it requires a listener to be quiet so the other person has ample opportunity to speak. One effective technique Wetzler shares is sometimes referred to as the looping technique. With this technique, a listener paraphrases back what it is they heard the speaker say and then ask whether their interpretation was

accurate. This helps a listener know that what he or she has said is valued, and it also ensures that the listener really understood what it was that was being said.

## Responding and Reconnecting

In his final section on the *Ask* Approach, Wetzler turns to action as he states that "The hardest part of learning from others isn't asking the questions, or even listening to the answers. It's deciding what to do with what we hear." He believes that when given the gift of thoughtful answers, it is a questioner's responsibility to both reflect on what was said and to go back and reconnect with the giver of the answers. These steps are important for making sure that we understand what is most important and also in ensuring that communication is enhanced in the future rather than shut down. All of this does not mean that a person has to act on every bit of information they are given or accept as truth that which they know to be false. Rather, the listener needs to "separate the wheat from the chaff" and then respond in a way which makes the other party feel respected and appreciated.

Wetzler recommends that the first step in the sifting process is to record what was said. This "provides clarity and prevents you from second-guessing or immediately interpreting what you heard." It is after this first step is done that a person can then mine what they have heard for nuggets of value. Wetzler recommends a three turn approach. In the first turn, a listener is tasked with reflecting upon their own story about the situation at hand. On the second turn, they are tasked with reflecting on next steps, and on the third turn, they should focus on their own "stuff" to determine if there are deeper factors at play. Wetzler offers numerous tools to aid in reflection including journaling, conversation, coaching, and therapy, all of which can help a person delve deeper when performing these three turns.

Once the reflection is complete, it is time to turn to reconnecting in a way that helps to enable future sharing. Wetzler recommends starting this process with honest gratitude for what has been shared. Then, it is important to share the impact that the other party's words and insights had on the issue at hand. This includes sharing what you heard from the speaker so they know that their words and insights were taken seriously. Finally, it is helpful to let the other party know what actions are being considered because of the insights they shared. Because you may not choose to take all of the advice or act on all of the insights provided, it becomes important to explain the decision-making process to the other party as a form of reconnection after this process.

## Broader Context

Throughout his book, Wetzler walks his reader through different steps to take in order to become better question askers. He includes explorations of numerous real world situations in which the asking of questions benefited either himself or other people, demonstrating real world applications for his principles. While much of the book focuses on individuals, his advice and principles are not just relegated to individual leaders. These tactics are meant to be used throughout all levels of organizations, and to emphasize this, one of his later chapters focuses specifically on how to "unlock the collective genius of your team." In addition, he includes a chapter on harnessing these techniques in education. After all, children are natural question askers until this tendency is conditioned out of them by forces wanting to tell children what to think rather than opening up their own potential for discovery on their own and through others. Because of this, he provides guidelines for working with children that help to enhance this question-asking capability in them while it is still present.

Wetzler believes in the power of people to learn from other people. This power is most hindered by the reluctance people have to ask good questions. This, in turn, leads others to shut down, and knowledge and insights become siloed. Asking good questions is a skill, and it is this skill that Wetzler helps his reader develop in his book.

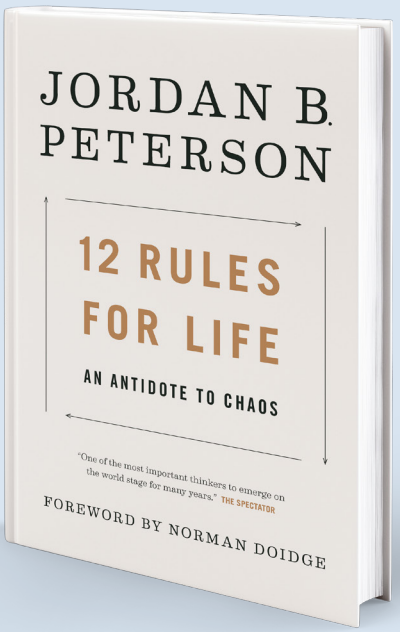
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# 12 Rules for Life

Jordan Peterson

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## 12 Rules for Life

**An Antidote to Chaos**

*By Jordan Peterson*

Jordan Peterson has taught mythology to lawyers, doctors and business people, consulted for the UN Secretary General, helped his clinical clients manage depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, and schizophrenia, served as an adviser to senior partners of major Canadian law firms, and lectured extensively in North America and Europe. With his students and colleagues at Harvard and the University of Toronto, Dr. Peterson has published over a hundred scientific papers, transforming the modern understanding of personality, while his book Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief revolutionized the psychology of religion.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Not Your Ordinary Self-Help Book

Jordan Peterson's book, ***12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*** is listed as a self-help book, but it goes beyond the ordinary prescriptions and how-to's of the traditional self-help book. Peterson provides his readers with rules that he believes will help them successfully live at the point where chaos and order are in proper proportion to each other, and he explains and defends his rules by employing deep dives into psychology, philosophy, and theology. He explores some of the great thinkers of all time in his chapters that mainly read as stand alone essays into his philosophy of life.

## Chaos and Order

In his first rule, "Stand Up Straight with Your Shoulders Back," Peterson discusses evolution and to explain how those characteristics that are deemed ideal are perpetuated. Evolution does not move towards a fixed point, however, because as society changes, so does the list of traits that are deemed desirable. Peterson believes that hierarchies have been around for half a billion years. When people experience defeat in this hierarchy, they have lower levels of serotonin which leads to more illness and less confidence among other things. When they experience success, their serotonin goes up as does their health and resiliency. Those on the low end of the hierarchy, he says, need to be constantly vigilant, and often they have to use the energy that ideally would be spent preparing for the future in dealing with current crises.

Peterson says that our habits can mess up our systems. This happens frequently through irregular sleep patterns and poor nutrition. Through situations like these, the individual becomes engaged in a negative feedback loop. Peterson says that when a person slumps, other people assign them less value in the social hierarchy. The individual's brain will pick up on that and will then produce less serotonin to reflect this lower status in society.

In his second rule. Peterson discusses chaos and order. Later in the book, he will expand upon this further and explain that order is predictability and chaos is what we do not know. Without chaos, growth cannot occur, but without order, people are not able to function properly within their lives. Because of this, the thriving

of human beings relies upon a balance of both order and chaos. Peterson starts this chapter by discussing how people are frequently adamant about making sure their pets receive medications they need, but people frequently do not take the medicine they need themselves. He mentions extreme cases where people need anti-rejection medications after life saving transplants but fail to take these medications. Peterson says that both the extreme cases as well as the more pedestrian ones occur because people see the evil within themselves, within all humanity, and deem themselves undeserving. People, he says, depend upon each other. As such, they have a responsibility to take care of themselves. As such, this second rule is that people should treat themselves like they treat people they are tasked with helping.

## Oneself and Others

In rule three, Peterson considers the people we spend time with. He explains that when a low achiever joins a group, the group does not raise up the low achiever. Rather, the whole group lowers itself. Because of this, it is important for people to decide who to spend time with. It is hard to spend time with high achieving respectable people because they expect something from those around them. Peterson says, "It's a good thing, not a selfish thing, to choose people who are good for you."

In rule four, Peterson relays the commonly shared advice to "Compare yourself to who you were yesterday, not to who someone else is today." Peterson shares how it is part of the act of maturing for a person to compare oneself to the dictates of parents and to those around them, but part of maturing into adulthood is learning to judge for oneself based upon one's own criterion. People are harsh critics, however. Peterson advises his reader to broaden the perspective of what it is they want. Instead of looking towards one, possibly unachievable, goal that will make everything better, he encourages his reader to instead look for what will make life better.

When a person broadens their perspective, they also broaden the possibilities they see. He advises his reader to look around and decide what one thing they could do that would make life better. If the person is not willing to do such a thing, then he recommends continuing to set the bar lower until the individual finds something that they are, indeed, willing to do in order to improve their life. He then advises his reader to reward themselves. By continuously doing this, a person can dramatically improve their life over time.

In rule five, Peterson encourages parents not to let their children do anything that makes the parent dislike them. This is not shared from the perspective of the selfish parent who wishes to have children always be pleasing and easy. Rather, it requires parents to actively discipline and mold their children's behavior into that which is acceptable by others. This, Peterson believes, should be a crucial aim for parents because children who have not been properly socialized will get rejected by society. Children will reap the consequences of their negative behavior out in the world, and poor and annoying behavior, he says, is better dealt with by parents who love their children rather than by the world which does not. Peterson believes that being a parent is not the same as being a friend because the parenting relationship is a greater relationship. Parents, he says, need to stop being afraid of being rejected by their children and instead do what is best for them by providing proper guidance and discipline when appropriate.

## Focusing Within

Chapter six begins with a discussion of the Columbine killers and their belief that the human race ought to be wiped out. Peterson uses this duo to advance his next rule that people ought to focus on their own lives before they criticize the world at large. He discusses the four approaches Tolstoy mentioned to deal with a bleak world of suffering. These include remaining ignorant of the problem, overindulging in pleasure, continuing to live a meaningless existence, or destroying life. While Peterson believes people can be motivated to such extremes as mass murder through their confrontation with evil and suffering, they can also choose to make good out of it. An example of the possibility of this is that some abused children grow up to be abusers, but most rise above abuse and stop the cycle. Peterson says, "That's a testament to the genuine dominance of good over evil in the human heart." Peterson urges his reader, in the face of personal and societal suffering, to look within and clean up their own life. He says to "Stop doing what you know to be wrong." This determination to clean up one's own life can help a person start to see the possibility for good in the world.

Rule seven is entitled, "Pursue What is Meaningful (Now What is Expedient.)" In this chapter, Peterson discusses the benefits of postponing gratification for the greater good. Small sacrifices can lead to small gains, but Peterson encourages looking for the greatest sacrifice that can cause the greatest gain. People's sacrifices need to be accepted and seen. "Satan," Peterson says, "embodies the refusal of sacrifice." Jesus, Peterson then points out, refused to sacrifice truth despite the repeated temptation by Satan in the desert. Jesus, instead, chose the greater good. Jesus "refuses to dispense with His responsibility for the events of His own life." Peterson believes it is important to prize what one can achieve in the future through sacrifice over the sacrifices that need to be made in order to get there.

## Searching for Truth and Understanding

In rule eight, Peterson urges truth over lies. He discusses a time when he had a landlord who was an alcoholic. The landlord would arrive at Peterson's home in the middle of the night trying to sell Peterson items like toasters in order to get money to purchase more alcohol. Peterson and his wife realized they could not keep enabling the man, and when the man asked Peterson why he would not purchase his items, Peterson told him the truth. The man respected Peterson for telling the truth, and no serious altercation occurred. Peterson believes that the human mind has an immense capacity for self-deception, and people must be ruthless in their attempts to pursue what is actually true. He believes that if people become attentive to their words and actions, they will ultimately start to feel a disparity

> Listening is not the same thing as giving advice."

when the two do not match, and this can be used to help a person actually discover what the truth really is. "If your life is not what it could be, try telling the truth."

In rule nine, Peterson encourages readers to truly listen to others and to believe that others have something to teach. Listening, he says, is not the same thing as giving advice. Peterson writes about how people think through their words, and this process is important in helping people to understand the world. When counseling clients, Peterson, unlike Freudians, looks at his clients because he believes it is important for them to see his physical reactions even when he does not say anything. This is one way that a listener can give an honest opinion, and people need the opinions of other people at times.

One specific way that Peterson recommends people listen to each other is to summarize what the person has said after they speak before proceeding to share one's own ideas. Then if the summary is inaccurate or deficient, the original speaker and the listener can work together until understanding occurs. This helps people truly listen. Sometimes it can take awhile to understand what a person is really saying because they are working it out themselves as they speak. True listening can lead to transformation.

In rule ten, Peterson tells his readers to be precise in their speech. This is because precision is necessary for growth. When people see objects, they see their usefulness. For example, when a person sees a car, they do not see all the different parts that make it run. Instead they see it as an object to get them from one place to another. This changes, however, when the car breaks down. Then this lack of understanding of the car leads one to feel the chaos of life. This is similar to how the victim of infidelity in a relationship feels. Once confronted with the truth, everything feels chaotic because the previously ordered world, including their own self, gets called into question. Peterson says that "Everything clarified and articulated becomes visible." To see a problem clearly is to admit that it exists. Peterson says, "If you shirk the responsibility of confronting the unexpected even when it appears in manageable doses, reality itself will become unsustainably disorganized and chaotic." Confronting problems with clear language can help people move forward.

## Power and Vulnerability

Peterson believes that children need to be able to do dangerous things, and he writes about this in rule eleven, and he writes about what he sees are the problems with a society that denigrates masculinity. He discusses the negative effects on young men when they are told that they are causing harm because they are the "beneficiaries of the patriarchy," and he mentions how his son told him that everyone knows girls do better in school. He explains how boys are falling behind and are making up less and less of a percentage of students in many higher education disciplines. This is not good for men, but it is also not good for women. Most women, he says, prefer to marry a man who is at least their equal in terms of education and success. When the percentage of men attaining those levels of success declines, successful women have fewer partners to choose from.

Peterson admits that any hierarchy is necessarily oppressive, but he does not believe that the patriarchal hierarchy was created solely by men to enhance the prospects of other men because women participated in such a system through the raising of boys who then participate in the system. Some men did and do use patriarchal systems in unjust attempts to gain and maintain power, but most men try to protect their wives and their children rather than overpower them. He believes that males toughen themselves and each other up, and that women want men who are strong.

Peterson's twelfth and final rule is to "Pet a Cat When You Encounter One on the Street." In this chapter, he discusses a life-altering, lifelong illness his daughter has and how he, as a parent, wished he could shield his children from vulnerability. People, he says, must learn to see what is beautiful despite the suffering that is around them. "They must see the good in Being." As such, he encourages people to pet cats when they see them and watch little girls twirling as ballerinas in play. Such are the small joys in life.

While Peterson's main points can be distilled into twelve rules, each of his chapters goes far beyond just the rules he advocates. Because he goes far beyond merely prescribing the course of actions he advises, he enables his readers to integrate these ideas and theories into life. They are a list of one man's ideas, developed from the wisdom of the greats, and some views are more liberal and conservative than others. In the end, however, his advice goes beyond those distinctions as he is able to provide truly valuable guidance for how to work through life in a world of suffering and vulnerability.

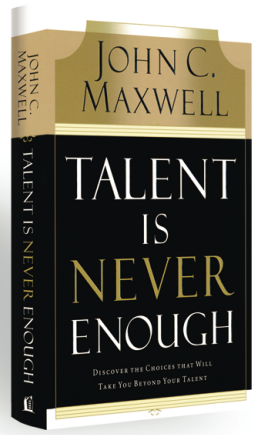
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By John C. Maxwell

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### Discover the Choices That Will Take You Beyond Your Talent

# TALENT IS NEVER ENOUGH

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Talent is often overrated and frequently misunderstood. When people achieve great things, others often explain their accomplishments by simply attributing everything to talent. But that is a false and misleading way of looking at success. If talent alone is enough, then why do you know of highly talented people who are not highly successful?*

*Leadership expert Dr. John C. Maxwell knows that people are never successful by talent alone, and he outlines 13 crucial things you can do to maximize your natural talents and become a "talent-plus" person. He is weighing in on the subject of talent — and, as always, his opinion and his insights might surprise you.*

*A long-time admirer of great talents in sports, business, leadership and philanthropy, Maxwell says that what separates the talented from the truly successful is making the right choices. In* Talent Is Never Enough, *Maxwell lays out a road map for anyone interested in making the most of their natural abilities.*

*"People who neglect to make the right choices to release and maximize their talent continually underperform," writes Maxwell. "Their talent gives them an opportunity, but their wrong choices can shut the door." Talent, he contends, is a given, but success must be earned.*

*In this summary, you will learn:*

- ✓ ***How passion can empower you to outperform people with more talent than you.***
- ✓ ***The power of practice and how it can enable personal development, lead to discovery and demand discipline.***
- ✓ ***How teachability can expand your talent.***
- ✓ ***That anyone can make choices that will add value to talent and become a talent-plus person.***

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# TALENT IS NEVER ENOUGH

**By John C. Maxwell**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## Belief Lifts Your Talent

The first and greatest obstacle to success for most people is their belief in themselves. Once people figure out where their sweet spot is (the area where they are most gifted), what often hinders them isn't lack of talent. It's lack of trust in themselves, a self-imposed limitation. Lack of belief can act as a ceiling on talent. However, when people believe in themselves, they unleash power and resources around them that almost immediately take them to a higher level. Your potential is a picture of what you can become. Belief helps you see the picture and reach for it.

### *Three Beliefs Worth Buying Into*

**1. Believe in your potential.** Too often we see what is, not what could be. Too many people fall short of their real potential. John Powell, author of *The Secret of Staying in Love*, estimates that the average person reaches only 10 percent of his or her potential. Your potential is really up to you.

**2. Believe in yourself.** People who believe in themselves get better jobs and perform better in them than those who don't. Only with belief in yourself will you be able to reach your potential.

**3. Believe in your mission.** What else is necessary to lift a person's talent? Believing in what you are doing. Belief in your mission will empower you. Belief in your mission will encourage you. Belief in your mission will enlarge you.

### *Belief Determines Expectations*

If you want your talent to be lifted to its highest level, then you don't begin by focusing on your talent. You begin by harnessing the power of your mind. Your beliefs control everything you do. Accomplishment is more than a matter of working harder or smarter. It's also a matter of believing positively. Someone called it the "sure enough" syndrome. If you expect to fail, sure enough, you will. If you expect to succeed, sure enough, you will.

### *Expectations Determine Actions*

In 20 of the world's most primitive languages, the word for *belief* is the same as the word for *do*. It is only as people become more "sophisticated" that they begin to separate the meaning of one word from the other. Most people separate belief from action. So how can we bring these two things back together? Through our expectations.

There are two kinds of people in this world: those who want to get things done and those who don't want to make mistakes. If you're the first type, then you already expect to believe in yourself and take risks. But what if you're the second type? There's good news: You can grow.

### *Actions Determine Results*

Results come from actions. That may seem obvious in the physical realm. However, in the human realm, many people don't make the connection. They simply hope for good results. Hope is not a strategy. If you want good results, you need to perform good actions. If you want to perform good actions, you must have positive expectations. To have positive expectations, you have to first believe. ■

## Passion Energizes Your Talent

Talent doesn't carry people to the top — it's passion. Passion is more important than a plan. Passion creates fire; it provides fuel. As long as the passion is there, it doesn't matter if individuals fail or how many times

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**The author:** Dr. John C. Maxwell is an internationally recognized leadership expert, speaker and author who has sold more than 12 million books. His organizations have trained more than 1 million leaders worldwide. Based in Atlanta, Ga., Dr. Maxwell is the founder of Injoy Stewardship Services and EQUIP. A *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *BusinessWeek* best-selling author, Maxwell is one of 25 authors named to Amazon.com's 10th Anniversary Hall of Fame.

*Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell.
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## Passion Energizes Your Talent

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they fall down. It doesn't matter if other people are against them or if people say they cannot succeed. They keep going and make the most of whatever talent they possess. They are talent-plus people and do not stop until they succeed.

### *Your Passion Can Empower You*

A passionate person with limited talent will outperform a passive person who possesses greater talent. Why? Because passionate people act with boundless enthusiasm, and they just keep on going.

**1. Passion is the first step to achievement.** Loving what you do is the key that opens the door to achievement. When you don't like what you're doing, it really shows — no matter how hard you try to pretend it doesn't.

**2. Passion increases willpower.** What do you sing about? What do you cry about? What do you dream about? The answers to these questions can often help people discover their true passion. While everybody can possess passion, not everyone takes the time to discover it.

**3. Passion produces energy.** Without passion, achievement becomes a long and difficult road. The secret of passion: *I am gifted at what I do. What I do makes a difference. When I do what I was made to do, I feel most alive.*

**4. Passion is the foundation for excellence.** Passion can transform someone from average to excellent. When you find purpose, you find passion. And when you find passion, it energizes your talent so that you can achieve excellence.

**5. Passion is the key to success.** Whenever anything fires people's souls, impossibilities vanish. Philosopher-poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is due to the triumph of enthusiasm."

**6. Passion makes a person contagious.** Even a brief review of effective leaders and businesspeople throughout history would illustrate that their passion "caught on" with others.

### *Putting the Talent-Plus Formula Into Action*

If you don't possess the energy that you desire, then you need to fire up your passion. First, prioritize your life according to your passion. People who have passion but lack priorities are like individuals who find themselves in a lonely log cabin deep in the woods on a cold, snowy night and then light a bunch of small candles and place them all around the room. They don't create enough light to help them see, nor do they produce enough heat to keep them warm.

On the other hand, people who possess priorities but no passion are like those who stack wood in the fireplace of that same cold cabin but never light the fire. But people who have passion with priorities are like those who stack the wood, light the fire and enjoy the light and heat that it produces. If your priorities are not aligned with your passion, then begin thinking about making changes in your life. Will change be risky? Probably. But which would you rather live with? The pain of risk or the pain of regret?

Second, you need to protect your passion. If you want to keep a fire hot, you need to feed it and you need to protect it. Not everyone in your life will help you do that when it comes to your passion. In truth, there are two kinds of people: "firelighters," who will go out of their way to help you keep your fire hot, and "firefighters," who will throw cold water on your passion.

Finally, pursue your passion with everything you've got. What do you want to accomplish in your lifetime? How do you want to focus your energy: on survival, success or significance? Your passion has the potential to provide you energy far beyond the limitations of your talent. In the end, you will be remembered for your passion. ■

# Initiative Activates Your Talent

Talent-plus people don't wait for everything to be perfect to move forward. They don't wait for all the problems or obstacles to disappear. They take initiative.

### *Insights on Initiative*

If you want to reach your potential, you have to show initiative. Here's why:

**1. Initiative is the first step to anywhere you want to go.** Where you finish in life isn't determined so much by *where* you start as by *whether* you start. If you're willing to get started and keep initiating, there's no telling how far you might go.

**2. Initiative closes the door to fear.** Author Katherine Paterson said, "To fear is one thing. To let fear grab you by the tail and swing you around is another." We all have fears. The question is whether we are going to control them or allow them to control us.

**3. Initiative opens the door to opportunity.** No one can wait until everything is perfect to act and expect to be successful. It's better to be 80 percent sure and make things happen than it is to wait until you are 100 percent sure, because the opportunity will have already passed you.

**4. Initiative eases life's difficulties.** Psychiatrist M. Scott Peck stated, "Life is difficult." That's not most people's problem — their response to life's difficulties is. Too many people wait around for their ship to come in. When they take that approach to life, they often find it to be hardship. The things that simply come to us are

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## Initiative Activates Your Talent

*(continued from page 3)*

rarely the things we want. To have a chance at getting what we desire, we need to work for it.

**5. Initiative is often the difference between success and failure.** Too many people are waiting for someone else to tell them what to do next. Nearly all people have good thoughts, ideas and intentions, but many of them never translate these into action. Doing so requires initiative. ■

# Focus Directs Your Talent

Focus does not come naturally to us, yet it is essential for anyone who wants to make the most of talent. Having talent without focus is like being an octopus on roller skates. You can be sure that there will be plenty of movement, but you won't know in what direction it will be.

### *The Power of Focus*

Focus can bring tremendous power. Without it, you will often feel drained and unable to accomplish much. With it, you will find that your talents and abilities gain direction and intentionality, and those qualities pay off by producing results.

Focus increases your energy. If you desire to achieve something, you first need to know what your target is. Attempting everything, like attempting nothing, will suck the life out of you. Focus also lifts you and expands your life. However, people do not naturally remain focused — it must be intentionally sustained. Hall of Fame baseball player Hank Aaron said, "I think what separates a superstar from the average ballplayer is that he concentrates just a little bit longer." Aaron demonstrated that he was able to sustain his concentration — he holds the Major League Baseball record for the most home runs hit in a career.

If you desire to become a talent-plus person, you need to make focus your friend. Here's how:

- **Be intentional — make every action count.** People who are undecided about what they want to do or where they want to go cannot tap into their strength of will — or their talent. As a result, they will merely drift along.
- **Challenge your excuses.** We all have reasons for not doing what we ought to do. Should we let these things get us off track? No!
- **Don't let yesterday hijack your attention.** Too many people yearn for the past and get stuck in it. Instead, they should *learn* from the past and let go of it.
- **Focus on the present.** Just as you should keep your focus off yesterday, you shouldn't have it on tomorrow. If you're always thinking about tomorrow, you'll never get anything done today. Do certain things every day, like reading, listening to others, thinking and sharing those lessons with others.
- **Stay focused on results.** Anytime you concentrate on the difficulty of the work at hand instead of its results or rewards, you're likely to become discouraged. By focusing on results, you will find it easier to stay positive and encouraged. ■

# Preparation Positions Your Talent

Being unprepared puts you out of position. Ask negotiators what happens at the bargaining table when they are out of position. Ask athletes what happens when they are out of position. They lose. Preparation positions people correctly, and it is often the separation between winning and losing. Talent-plus people who prepare well live by this motto: "All's well that begins well."

### *Why People Fail to Prepare*

Talent-plus-preparation often leads to success, whereas talent-minus-preparation often leads to disaster. In hindsight, it's easy to recognize the value of preparation. So why do so many people fail to prepare? There are two main reasons:

**They fail to see the value of preparation before action.** Authors Don Beveridge Jr. and Jeffrey P. Davidson believe that lack of preparation is the primary reason for business failure today. "Poorly educated, poorly prepared and poorly trained people fail because they do not have the skills or the expertise to perform," the authors say.

**They fail to appreciate the value of discipline.** A frustrating thing about preparation is that it usually takes much more time than the actual event one prepares for. Musicians may practice many hours preparing to perform a three-minute piece. ■

**For information about preparation principles, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Practice Sharpens Your Talent

It's a fact: You play at the level at which you practice. Consistently good practice leads to consistently good play. It sharpens your talent.

### *The Power of Practice*

There's a myth about highly talented people — it's that they are simply born that way. But the truth is people do not reach their potential unless they are willing to practice.

First, practice enables development. People refine old skills and acquire new ones through practice. That is where the tension between where we are and where we

*(continued on page 5)*

## Practice Sharpens Your Talent

*(continued from page 4)*

ought to be propels us forward.

Second, practice leads to discovery. Practice both shows and builds commitment. Your performance can always be improved. Finally, practice demands discipline. There is no easy way to become a disciplined person. Once the choice is made, there is a separation between the person who practices and the one who doesn't.

There is one more secret to successful practice that will help you sharpen your talent — it's summed up in the phrase "a little extra." Here's what it takes for someone to become a talent-plus person in the area of practice:

- **A little extra effort.** Art Williams, the founder of Primerica Financial Services, once stated, "You beat 50 percent of the people in America by working hard; you beat 40 percent by being a person of honesty and integrity and standing for something; and the last 10 percent is a dogfight of the free enterprise system." If you want to win that dogfight, then do a little extra.
- **A little extra time.** Successful people practice harder and practice longer than unsuccessful people do. Giving a little extra time requires more than just perseverance. It requires patience.
- **A little extra help.** Anybody who succeeds at anything does so with the help of others.
- **A little extra change.** Let's face it. Most people are resistant to change. Focus your energy to get the kinds of changes that will change you for the better. ■

# Perseverance Sustains Your Talent

Perseverance is not an issue of time or talent. Perseverance is about finishing. Talent provides hope for accomplishment, but perseverance guarantees it. No matter how talented people are, there is no success without perseverance. If you desire to become a talent-plus person, you need to understand some things about perseverance.

**1. Perseverance means succeeding because you are determined to, not destined to.** You can see this determination in successful people in every walk of life and at every age.

**2. Perseverance recognizes life is not a long race, but many short ones in succession.** Each task has its own challenges; each day is its own event.

**3. Perseverance is needed to release most of life's rewards.** How many highly successful people do you know who gave up? It's said that Walt Disney's request for a loan was rejected by 301 banks before he finally got approval.

**4. Perseverance draws sweetness out of adversity.** The trials and pressures of life — and how we face them — often define us. Confronted by adversity, many people give up, while others rise up.

**5. Perseverance has a compounding effect on life.** Every day that you do the right things, you invest in yourself. To do these things every day takes relentless perseverance, but if you do them, your success compounds over time.

**6. Perseverance means stopping not because you're tired but because the task is done.** To successful people, fatigue and discouragement are signals to draw on their reserves, rely on their character and keep going.

**7. Perseverance doesn't demand more than we have, but all that we have.** Perseverance means more than trying — it is an investment and a willingness to bind oneself emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually to an idea or task until it has been completed.

### *The Five Enemies of Perseverance*

Perseverance begins with the right attitude — tenacity. But the desire to persevere alone isn't enough by itself to keep most people going when they are tired or discouraged. Perseverance is a trait that can be cultivated, and the initial step to developing it is to eliminate its five greatest enemies:

**1. A lifestyle of giving up.** If you desire to be successful you need to be consistent and persistent.

**2. A wrong belief that life should be easy.** Having the right expectations going into anything is half the battle.

**3. A wrong belief that success is a destination.** As soon as you think you no longer need to work to make progress, you'll begin to lose ground.

**4. A lack of resiliency.** If we desire to persevere, we must not become dry, brittle and inflexible.

**5. A lack of vision.** People who display perseverance keep a larger vision in mind as they toil away at their crafts or professions. ■

# Courage Tests Your Talent

People think of courage as a quality required only in times of extreme danger or stress, such as during war or disaster. But it is much larger than that — and more ordinary than we think. Courage is an everyday virtue. The person who exhibits courage is able to live without regrets.

Why does talent need courage? The stakes were high for Winston Churchill as he carried out his duties as England's prime minister. He was doing more than just defending London and the empire during World War II, although those responsibilities were monumental. Freedom and democracy were hanging in the balance.

But his first tests didn't come when the stakes were high.

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### Courage Tests Your Talent

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They came early. If he hadn't possessed the courage to step up when he was young and untested, he never would have discovered the depth of his talent, nor would he have been ready when he had to perform on the world stage.

Most of us will never be asked to face flying bullets in a physical battle. Often our tests are much more private and involve an internal battle, and many people find that painful. In order to grow, we need to face truths about ourselves, and that is often a difficult process. ■

For additional information about how courage is tested, go to: http://my.summary.com

## How to Overcome a Pride Problem

Pride is a huge barrier to success and the development of talent. If pride is an obstacle to your growth, then you need to take some deliberate and strategic steps to overcome it:

**1. Recognize and admit your pride.** To defeat pride, we need to embrace humility.

**2. Express gratitude often.** Oprah Winfrey says, "Keep a grateful journal. Every night, list five things that happened this day that you are grateful for. If you can learn to focus on what you have, you will always see that the universe is abundant, and you will have more."

**3. Laugh at yourself.** People who have the problem of pride rarely laugh at themselves. But engaging in humor at your own expense shows that pride isn't a problem.

# Teachability Expands Your Talent

If you are a highly talented person, you may have a tough time with teachability. Why? Because talented people often think they know it all. And that makes it difficult to expand their talent. Teachability is not so much about competence and mental capacity as it is about attitude. It is the desire to listen, learn and apply.

Who is the most talented person who ever lived? Leonardo da Vinci would certainly be a strong candidate. Da Vinci has been called *Homo Universalis*, a "universal man," for his incredible ability to master diverse disciplines. What set him apart? Da Vinci's talent was extraordinary — but so was his teachability. His notebooks are a physical record of a mind that never stopped discovering and never ceased learning.

### *Teachability Truths*

The good news is that we don't have to have da Vinci's talent to be teachable; we just need to have the right attitude about learning. To do that, consider the following truths about teaching:

- **Nothing is interesting if you are not interested.** It's a shame when people allow themselves to get into a rut and never climb out. They often miss the best life has to offer. In contrast, teachable people are fully engaged in life.
- **Successful people view learning differently from those who are unsuccessful.** Teachable people are always open to new ideas and are willing to learn from anyone who has something to offer. American journalist Sydney J. Harris wrote, "A winner knows how much he still has to learn, even when he is considered an expert by others. A loser wants to be considered an expert by others before he has learned enough to know how little he knows."
- **Learning is meant to be a lifelong pursuit.** It's said that the Roman scholar Cato started to study Greek when he was more than 80 years old. When asked why he was tackling such a difficult task at his age, he replied, "It is the earliest age I have left." Every stage of life presents lessons to be learned.
- **Talented people can be the toughest to teach.** One of the paradoxes of life is that the things that initially make you successful are rarely the things that keep you successful. You have to remain open to new ideas and be willing to learn new skills.
- **Pride is the No. 1 hindrance to teachability.** While envy is the deadly sin that comes from feelings of *inferiority*, the deadly sin of pride comes from feelings of *superiority*. ■

# Character Protects Your Talent

Many people with talent make it into the limelight, but the ones who have neglected to develop strong character rarely stay there long. Why? Because people cannot climb beyond the limitations of their character. Talented people are sometimes tempted to take shortcuts, but character prevents that.

### *The Components of Character*

People are like icebergs. There's much more to them than meets the eye. When you look at an iceberg, only about 15 percent is visible — that's talent. The rest — people's character — is below the surface, hidden.

Tim Elmore, founder and president of Growing Leaders, tells some little-known details of the infamous sinking of the Titanic: "The huge and unsinkable ship received five iceberg warnings that fateful night of April 14, 1912, just before it went down. When the sixth message came in during the wee hours of the next morning, 'Look out for ice-

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## Character Protects Your Talent

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bergs,' the operator wired back, 'Shut up! I'm busy.' Those were his last words over the wire. They underestimated the power of the iceberg and overestimated their own strength. What an accurate description of so many people today."

So what exactly composes character? There are four elements: self-discipline, core values, a sense of identity and integrity.

### *Character Communicates*

Character creates a foundation upon which the structure of your talent and life can build. If there are cracks in the foundation, you cannot build much. That's why first you must develop within before you can achieve much without.

But once you build strong character, it does more than provide a platform for your personal success and the maximization of your talent; it also impacts others and allows you to build with them. Character does that through what it communicates to people:

**Character communicates consistency.** People who live without character communicate confusion to others. They can say anything they like, but their actions determine the messages we receive.

**Character communicates choices.** It's an interesting paradox. Our character creates our choices, yet our choices create our character. Once you get a handle on the character of a person, you can understand his or her choices and predict what they will be.

**Character communicates influence.** Today many people try to demand respect. They believe that influence should be granted to them simply because they have position, wealth or recognition. However, respect and influence must be earned over time, and they are built and sustained by character.

**Character communicates longevity.** If you want to know how long it will take to get to the top, consult a calendar. If you want to know how long it can take to fall to the bottom, try a stopwatch. Character determines which will happen. Character provides the opportunity for longevity in any career, relationship or goal.

### *Talent-Plus Character*

Here's how to become a talent-plus person in the area of character:

**1. Don't give up or give in to adversity.** It takes character to weather life's storms. At the same time, adversity develops character. Author and activist Helen Keller, who could not see or hear, remarked, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved."

**2. Do the right thing.** It's not easy to do the right thing when the wrong thing is expedient.

**3. Take control of your life.** Your character is always your choice. ■

# Relationships Influence Your Talent

In his book *My Personal Best*, John Wooden writes, "There is a choice you have to make in everything you do, so keep in mind that in the end, the choice you make makes you." Nothing will influence your talent as much as the important relationships in your life.

### *The Impact of Relationships*

Many people mistakenly minimize the impact that other people can have on their lives. Almost all our sorrows can be traced to relationships with the wrong people and our joys to relationships with the right people. The relationships in our lives really do make or break us.

### *The Directions Relationships Take Us*

Note whether a person makes you feel better or worse about yourself. How much energy does the relationship require? Les Parrott identifies a few of the types of people who are likely to hurt us and take energy from us:

- *Critics* complain or give unwanted advice.
- *Wet blankets* are pessimistic and habitually negative.
- *Gossips* spread rumor and leak secrets.
- *Control freaks* are unable to let go and let things be.
- *Backstabbers* are irrepressibly two-faced.

Relationships commonly go through four stages: surface relationships, structured relationships, secure relationships and solid relationships. As the level of relationship increases, so does the influence people have on one another. Every now and then a relationship goes beyond solid to become significant, a relationship that is pivotal to your life. The signs of a solid relationship are mutual enjoyment, respect, shared experiences, trust and reciprocity. ■

# Responsibility Strengthens Your Talent

Nothing adds "muscle" to talent like responsibility. It lifts talent to a new level and increases its stamina. But of the 13 choices that help to create a talent-plus person, responsibility is often the last choice people desire to make.

### *The Strength of Responsibility*

We live in a culture that overvalues talent and undervalues responsibility. If you doubt that, then examine

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### Responsibility Strengthens Your Talent

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## Talent-Plus Responsibility

The following steps will help you become a talent-plus person when it comes to responsibility:

**1. Start wherever you are.** If being responsible has not been one of your strengths, then start small.

**2. Choose your friends wisely.** If you have started your journey on the road to responsibility, make sure you have the right traveling companions.

**3. Stop blaming others.** If you want to be successful and maximize your talent as a talent-plus person, take responsibility for your own life.

**4. Learn responsibility's major lessons.** There are four core lessons: Recognize that gaining success means practicing self-discipline; finish what you start; know when others are depending on you; and don't expect others to step in for you.

**5. Make tough decisions and stand by them.** When he was mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani kept a sign on his desk that stated, "I'm responsible." In his book *Leadership*, Giuliani wrote, "Nothing builds confidence in a leader more than the willingness to take responsibility for what happens during his watch."

**6. Live beyond yourself.** This is the idea of taking responsibility beyond yourself by serving others. Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, spent the years after his time in Nazi concentration camps giving back to others.

the way we treat our athletes. When athletes are in high school and college, their reckless or irresponsible acts are often overlooked in proportion to the talent they display on the court or playing field. What a disservice to them. Responsibility actually strengthens talent and increases the opportunity for long-term success.

Specifically, responsibility helps strengthen talents through:

- Providing the foundation for success
- Leading to more responsibility, when handled correctly
- Maximizing ability and opportunity
- Building a solid reputation over time. ■

# Teamwork Multiplies Your Talent

In the Academy Award-winning movie *Rocky*, boxer Rocky Balboa describes his relationship with his girlfriend Adrian: "She's got gaps. I got gaps — together we fill the gaps." What a wonderful description of teamwork! Partner with others who have strength in those areas.

### *Teamwork Truths*

It's easy to see that teamwork is essential for tasks; however, a task doesn't have to be complex to need teamwork. Teamwork not only allows people to do what they couldn't otherwise do, it also has a compounding effect on all they possesses — including talent.

**1. Teamwork divides the effort and multiplies the effect.** Teams involve more people, thus affording more resources, ideas and energy than an individual possesses. Teams also maximize a leader's potential and minimize weaknesses.

**2. Talent wins games, but teamwork wins championships.** Teams that repeatedly win championships are models of teamwork. It's easy to see the fruits of teamwork in sports, but it is just as important in business. Harold S. Geneen, who was director, president and CEO of ITT for 20 years, observed, "The essence of leadership is the ability to inspire others to work together as a team — to stretch for a common objective."

**3. Teamwork is not about you.** The true measure of team leadership is not getting people to work. The true measure of a leader is getting people to work hard together.

**4. Great teams create community.** All effective teams create an environment where relationships grow and teammates become connected to one another. That environment is based on trust. Little can be accomplished without it.

**5. Adding value to others adds value to you.** Too often people join a team for personal benefit. They want a supporting cast so that they can be stars. People who take advantage of others inevitably fail in business and relationships.

The reality is that there never has been nor will there ever be a talent shortage. Choose to become a talent-plus person. If you do, you will add value to yourself, add value to others and accomplish more than you dreamed was possible. ■

### SOUNDVIEW *Recommended Reading List*

**If you liked *Talent Is Never Enough*, you'll also like:**

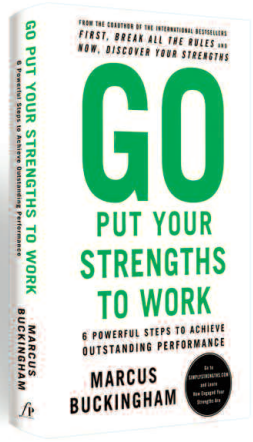
1. ***The Power of You!*** **by Scott Martineau.** Martineau shows that fulfillment doesn't come from success at work or happiness at home; it comes from both.
2. ***Success Built to Last*** **by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson.** Through interviews with 300 successful individuals, the authors uncover the secrets of their accomplishments.
3. ***The Carrot Principle*** **by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton.** The authors team up to show readers how the best managers are able to use recognition to engage employees, boost performance and retain talent.
4. ***The Difference Maker*** **by John C. Maxwell.** The author argues that while attitude is important, it cannot change anyone into something they're not.
5. ***Go Put Your Strengths to Work*** **by Marcus Buckingham.** Research shows that most people do not make full use of their strengths on the job — only 17 percent of individuals believe they use all of their strengths at work.

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SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®






by Marcus Buckingham

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### 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance

# GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The strengths movement is everywhere: the corporate world, the worlds of public service, of economies, of education, of faith, of charity — it has affected them all. It has its detractors, but an appeal as universal as this begs the question, "Why?" Why do so many people from so many different worlds see such power in the strengths-based perspective?

Now that the strengths movement is in full swing, this summary answers that question and the ultimate question: How can you actually apply your strengths for maximum success at work?

Research shows that most people do not come close to making full use of their assets at work — in fact, only 17 percent of the workforce believe they use all of their strengths on the job. This summary aims to change that through a six-step experience that will reveal the hidden dimensions of your strengths. It shows you how to seize control of your assets and rewrite your job description under the nose of your boss.

With proven tactics from people who have successfully applied its lessons, this summary arms you with a radically different approach to your work life. It also opens up an exciting uncharted territory for you and your organization.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why your strengths aren't "what you are good at" and your weaknesses aren't "what you are bad at."
- How you can take the simple steps each week to push your time at work toward those activities that strengthen you and away from those that don't.
- How to talk to your boss and your colleagues about your strengths without sounding like you're bragging, and how to talk about your weaknesses without sounding like you're whining.
- How a 15-minute weekly ritual will keep you on your strengths path for your entire career.

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# Lead This Movement

Conventional wisdom tells us that we learn from our mistakes. However, the strengths movement says that all we learn from mistakes are the characteristics of mistakes. If we want to learn about our successes, we must study success.

Fueled by this idea, the first stage of the strengths movement — the stage we are in right now — has been dominated by efforts to label what is right with things. Thus, whereas the World Bank used to rank countries according to their negative qualities, such as poverty, violence and vulnerability, today it has developed a list of positive labels that capture a country's overall level of well-being, labels such as social capability, economic self-determination and sustainability of local customs.

## *High-Performance Teams*

Ask a nationally representative sample of the work force how often they feel an emotional high at work — a sure sign that they're playing to a strength — and 51 percent say "about once a week."

Our challenge now is to dramatically increase how often we play to our strengths. On high-performance teams, people say they call upon their strengths more than 75 percent of the time. For us to reach this level, we don't need to cast aside our current work and strike out for the perfect dream job.

Instead, we simply need to learn how to take our existing job, and each week, reshape it around our strengths — even in the face of interference from the world around us. To do this, we need to master a new discipline, one that brings order and focus to a series of incremental moves. If we put this discipline into practice each week, we will gradually, degree by degree, tilt the playing field so that the best of our job becomes *most* of our job.

## *'The Push Discipline'*

Simply put, we need to ditch the typical "pull" approach to work and replace it with the "push" discipline.

"Pull" looks like this: Somebody else tells you what is expected of you; your goals are set. Your best hope for achievement and reward, you tell yourself, is to try to focus your time so that you spend most of it on those few activities that will really drive your goals. As such, your goals pull you toward certain activities and away from others.

The "push" discipline looks very different. It begins with you taking responsibility for identifying your own strengths and weaknesses. Then, having identified them, you take a stand for them. In practical terms, this means that you push the people at work, along with their many expectations, toward your strengths and away from your weaknesses. These people — your colleagues, your customers, your manager — are good people, with good and appropriate expectations of you, but they don't know your strengths.

## *The Best of You*

You do know your strengths. It's your responsibility to know how to push each week for more opportunities to play to your strengths. This doesn't mean you should swagger into work each day and demand that you be asked to do only strength-based activities. No one would want to work with you if you did this. But what you can do each week is start this new discipline — discipline that begins with the simple question, "How will I ensure that I put my strengths into play just a little more this week than I did last week?" and ends with you building your job around the best of you.

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**The author:** Marcus Buckingham spent 17 years at the Gallup Organization, where he conducted research into the world's best leaders, managers and workplaces. The Gallup research later became the basis for the best-selling books *First, Break All the Rules* and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, both coauthored by Buckingham. He now has his own company, providing strengths-based consulting, training and e-learning.

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## Lead This Movement

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Here are the six steps that make up this discipline:

1. **Bust the Myths.** Capitalizing on your strengths is the best way to compete.
2. **Get Clear.** Identify your own strengths and weaknesses.
3. **Free Your Strengths.** Learn how to volunteer your strengths to the team.
4. **Stop Your Weaknesses.** Learn the best strategies for lessening the impact of your weaknesses on the team.
5. **Speak Up.** Master the art of talking about your strengths without bragging and your weaknesses without whining.
6. **Build Strong Habits.** Build the right habits, so that week in, week out, and year upon year, you stay in control, always pushing toward activities that strengthen you, ever watchful for those that drag you down.

### *Two Places for Conversations About Contribution*

At work, the two most common situations in which you should have a "my strengths and weaknesses" conversation are the "how are we going to divide up the work" conversation with your teammates, and the one-on-one with your manager. You want them to know how to set you up so that you can make your greatest possible contribution. ■

# Step 1: Bust the Myths

A majority of us have come to believe in certain myths — three, to be precise — that our parents told us were true, that our teachers reinforced, and that today we hear in one form or another from our managers. These myths have become so ingrained in our lives that we no longer see them. They are core assumptions that even now we are passing on to our children, our students and our employees, and we are pleased with ourselves for doing so.

To help you bust each myth and figure out the best way to get a friend or colleague to bust it too, here are three questions that should prove revealing. Write down your answers after reading each myth. Later, when you're trying to persuade others, use these questions as a way to begin your discussion:

**1. How does the myth serve you?** Only by understanding how the myth helps people get through their day can you start to see how they can be disentangled from it.

**2. What would it cost you to stop believing in this myth?** Before we can think about what we will gain by changing our beliefs, we first have to fess up to what we will lose.

**3. How would it benefit you to believe the truth?** If we can capture in detail what we will gain by carving a life around our strengths, we'll keep fighting for it for the rest of our lives.

### *The Three Myths*

Consider these myths:

**Myth:** ***As you grow, your personality changes.*** Sixty-six percent of us believe this to be true. The truth is that as you grow, you don't change into someone else. You don't change your personality.

**Truth:** ***As you grow, you become more of who you already are.*** Getting a little better at something than you were before doesn't necessarily mean that you've changed the distinctive peaks and valleys of your personality.

**Myth:** ***You will grow the most in your areas of greatest weakness.*** Sixty-one percent of people believe this to be true. Instead, the truth is that you will learn and grow the *least* in your areas of weakness, and what learning and growth you do achieve will be hard-won.

**Truth:** ***You will grow the most in your areas of greatest strength.*** You may not be creative in all aspects of your life, but whatever your general level of creativity may be, you will be at the peak of your creative powers in your areas of strength. You will learn the most, grow the most and develop the most in your areas of greatest strength. Your strengths magnify you.

**Myth:** ***A good team member does whatever it takes to help the team.*** Ninety-one percent of people believe this to be true. The truth is that while you will certainly accomplish more if you collaborate with your teammates — there's no question that teams are more effective than groups of disconnected individuals — when you look closely at the most effective teams, you discover that the players on these teams are not chipping in and doing whatever the team requires of them.

**Truth:** ***A good team member deliberately volunteers his or her strengths to the team most of the time.*** Team members have realized that the right, most responsible thing to do is to identify where their strengths lie and then figure out how to arrange their time and their role so that they play to these strengths most of the time. ■

# Step 2: Get Clear

Your strengths are defined by your actual activities. They are things you do, and, more specifically, things you do consistently and near perfectly. Thus, if you are

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## Step 2: Get Clear

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a nurse, one of your strengths might be giving injections that seem almost painless to the patient. If you are in sales, you might have a strength in closing deals when competing head to head.

Strengths such as these are made up of three separate ingredients:

1. **Talents**, such as empathy, assertiveness or competitiveness.
2. **Skills**, such as knowing the steps involved in giving injections.
3. **Knowledge**, such as of which dosage is correct for a particular patient or who is your most dangerous competitor in the marketplace.

To capture the *specific activities* that constitute your strengths, you are going to have to go beyond generic talent labels and pinpoint how your actual activities in a regular week make you feel. Pay close attention to your feelings before, during and after your weekly activities. Only then will you get clear on exactly what your true strengths are.

### *The Four Signs of a Strength*

To help you, there are the four telltale signs of a strength. The acronym SIGN is a good way to organize and remember them:

• ***S* is for Success.** For an activity to be labeled a strength, you must obviously have some ability in it, and your success, measured or otherwise, is the best indicator of ability. How effective you feel in any activity — your *self-efficacy* — is a solid first indicator of a strength. But your strengths are more than merely what you're good at.

• ***I* is for Instinct.** You can't quite articulate why, but you find yourself drawn to certain activities repeatedly. You may feel a twinge of fear, but, unprompted, you put yourself in situations where you have to perform them.

• ***G* is for Growth.** Research by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of the seminal book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, has shown that happiness and concentration are very closely linked. The results from a study of more than 10,000 people, gathered over the last 25 years, show that, although our absolute level of happiness won't vary much, each of us is at our personal peak of happiness when we are deeply immersed in a specific activity.

• ***N* is for Needs.** Some activities just seem to fill an innate need of yours. When you are done with them, you feel fulfilled, powerful, restored — the exact opposite of drained.

The simplest and most useful definition of a strength is this: Your strengths are those activities that make you feel strong. The flip side is also true: "An activity that makes you feel weak" is the best definition of a weakness.

### *The Best Judge of Your Strengths*

No one can tell you which activities make you feel strong and which ones make you feel weak. Here, your perspective is, and will always be, sure and true. So trust it. Pay close attention to your appetites. Capture them, clarify and confirm them, and outstanding performance will follow.

Learning how to capture, clarify and confirm your strengths is your goal for this step. Examine the actual activities that fill up your week, look for the telltale signs that point to your strengths, and identify them. By the end of this step, you'll be able to write three statements that describe your strengths vividly. These three Strength Statements will stem from you pulling apart the jumble of activities filling your week, sorting out the strong from the weak, and then distilling the strong down to the most tangible level possible. These three activities will be you at your most productive, innovative, resilient and focused. They will be you at your best.

The most effective way to identify your strengths is through a simple three-phase process. This process will ask you to pay attention to your work more closely than ever before and to sort out exactly how the things you do make you feel.

### *Capture*

This process begins with the challenge of *capturing* which specific activities over the course of a week played to your strengths and which ones played to your weaknesses.

For one week, on a small memo pad, keep track of the times when you find yourself doing something that makes you feel powerful, confident, natural, authentic, etc. Likewise, if during the course of the week you find yourself feeling drained, frustrated, forced, irritated, bored, etc., write down exactly what you are doing. (You'll deal with your weaknesses in step 4.)

At the end of the week, sort the pages of activities that make you feel strong by spreading them out over a flat surface with the most positive pages on top, all the way down to the least positive pages on the bottom. Then "deal" off the top of your deck your top three pages and lay them out in front of you. These specific activities provide the raw material for your three Strength Statements.

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## Step 2: Get Clear

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### *Clarify*

Next you need to *clarify* the specific activities you've captured and arrive at statements that are both precise enough to preserve the original emotional punch and general enough for you to apply each week.

First, clarify the essence of each of your positive statements while not entirely losing their specificity. Second, identify exactly which aspects of the activity are critical and must be preserved if the activity is to generate in you the same positive emotions in future weeks as it obviously did this week. Ask the following four questions:

1. **Does it matter *why* I do this activity?**
2. **Does it matter *who* I do this activity with/to/for?**
3. **Does it matter *when* I am doing this activity?**
4. **Does it matter *what* this activity is about?**

You should now have three statements, derived from a regular week at work, that vividly capture activities that make you feel strong. Take a long look at them. Simply put, your goal for this coming year will be to figure out how to exploit each of these a little more efficiently week after week after week.

### *Confirm*

Finally, you'll want to *confirm* that these three are indeed your most dominant strengths.

You should go through the capture-clarify-confirm process twice a year. Pick a week and capture your emotional reactions to the activities of your week, then clarify and confirm what you captured. To seize control of your time at work, you have to know what your targets are, what you want to push your time toward. This twice-a-year process will set your targets.

Fill out cards with your top three Strength Statements. Keep them front and center on your desk, on your wall or in your top drawer. Whatever you choose to do with these statements, take them seriously. Elevate them. Spotlight them. Keep them directly in your line of sight. ■

# Step 3: Free Your Strengths

There are powerful forces pulling your week away from your strengths: the needs of your customers, the demands of your colleagues, the expectations of your boss, your own career aspirations. It will take a rare concentration of the mind to push back these forces, channel them, and thereby restore them to their proper place and influence in your time at work.

These forces won't ever disappear completely, nor should they. The key question for you is, "How can I use my strengths precisely to fulfill my customers' needs, to listen to the demands of my colleagues, to meet or renegotiate the expectations of my boss and to honor my career aspirations?"

Your answers to this question will certainly not sap your energy, but neither will they be smooth sailing. The world out there is, at best, indifferent to you and your strengths.

The most extreme answer is that the only way for you to free your strengths is to leave your current role or get out from under your misguided boss. In some circumstances, that is the right strategy. But it is the *fifth* possible course of action. There are four distinct strategies you must consider first:

1. **Identify exactly how and where each strength helps you in your current role.**
2. **Find the missed opportunities to leverage each strength in your current role.**
3. **Learn new skills and techniques to sharpen each strength.**
4. **Build your job toward each strength.**

### *Your Strong Week Plan*

We need to find those activities at work that play to our strengths and then fill most of our time with them. We need to turn the *best* of our job into *most* of our job.

To make this happen, you will need to establish in your life a specific routine or regimen that is straightforward enough for you to do regularly, but meaty enough to keep your time at work centered on and moving continuously toward your strengths.

The most effective routine is a Strong Week Plan. The seven-day week is one of the best weapons you have in your battle to build your entire life around your strengths.

At the end of each week, or over the weekend, or very early on a Monday, take 15 minutes to complete a Strong Week Plan. The plan challenges you to identify two specific actions that you will take each week to free your strengths (and two actions to stop your weaknesses). Devise a plan each week to push *toward* two specific activities and away from two others. Do this each week, every week, year upon year, and the changes you want to make in your life will both work and last.

### *Four Strategies to Put Your Strengths to Work*

After closely studying people who have managed to stay on their strengths path, and those who have man-

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### Step 3: Free Your Strengths

*(continued from page 5)*

aged to find their way back after taking a wrong turn, researchers discovered a clear sequence to putting strengths to work.

The word *FREE* captures this sequence well, with each letter referring to a distinct strategy for putting your strengths to work. Whenever you find yourself struggling to identify what you can do this week to capitalize on your strengths, pick one particular strength and then try one of these four strategies.

• ***F* is for Focus.** Identify how this strength helps you in your current job. If you want to have a strong week this week, begin by taking stock of how you currently use this strength to succeed.

• ***R* is for Release.** Find the missed opportunities in your current role. What new situations can you put yourself in to use this strength more? Can you change your work schedule to put yourself in these situations? What new systems or techniques can you try that will accelerate this strength? How can you measure how much you use this strength? Are you struggling with any of your current job responsibilities? How can you use this strength to help you overcome this?

• ***E* is for Educate.** Learn new skills and techniques to build this strength. What new skills can you learn to leverage this strength? What actions can you take to learn these skills? Who can you job shadow at work? Who can you talk to about how to use this strength more effectively? (e.g., a friend, teacher, manager or mentor.)

• ***E* is for Expand.** Build your job around this strength. How can you share your best practices using this strength with others? How can you expand your role to make better use of this strength? ■

## Step 4: Stop Your Weaknesses

By becoming intimate with the activities that weaken you and labeling them for what they are, you can take steps to stop their rotten work.

Activities that weaken you are like dirty little bombs, waiting to spread their cloud into your strength time — time you could be spending on the activities that make you feel strong. By identifying these toxic activities and naming them, you'll be able to recognize them the moment they appear and either navigate around them or suffer through them for only a finite amount of time. In effect, you can shut them up in a lead box and neutralize them.

Second, you'll be able to see them in their proper perspective. While it may feel like your entire job is contaminated, that's probably not true. In reality, just a few activities are ruining your days, corrupting everything else in your job. By identifying, naming and tagging them, you restore them to their actual size.

### *Capture, Clarify and Confirm*

Flip through your pages of negative activities and consider what you wrote. Try to zero in on those three activities that generated strongly negative emotions and are regular parts of each week. Look for the clearest signs of a weakness, which are the inverse of the strength signs. These signs will prove useful not only in pinpointing your three most dominant weaknesses but also in spotting future potential weaknesses before they spread and contaminate your entire work:

• ***S* is for lack of Success.** The most useful definition of a weakness is an activity that makes you feel weak. You are the true expert on what weakens you.

• ***I* is for lack of Instinct.** Avoidance, searching for someone else to do it and having to brace yourself are all good clues that you lack the instinct for it.

• ***G* is for lack of Growth.** When you are doing it, all you can think about is when you can stop. You aren't inquisitive about it.

• ***N* is for lack of Needs.** The only thing that makes you happy thinking about this activity is contemplating a world where you would never have to do it again.

### *Four Strategies to Stop Your Weaknesses*

There are four strategies to help you figure out how to minimize the amount of time your weaknesses take or the amount of distress they cause. As you did with your strengths, first select from your top three weaknesses the one that is currently proving most damaging to you. Then consider each of these four strategies:

• ***S* is for Stop.** Stop doing the activity and see if anyone notices or cares.

• ***T* is for Team.** Team up with someone who is strengthened by the very activity that weakens you.

• ***O* is for Offer Up.** Offer up one of your strengths, and gradually steer your job toward this strength and away from the weakness.

• ***P* is for Perspective.** Perceive your weakness from a different perspective.

When you find yourself struggling to identify what you can do to stop one of your weaknesses, turn to these four strategies and take action. You will always have more room to maneuver than you think. ■

## Step 5: Speak Up

Until now you've been working on your strengths and weaknesses largely on your own.

Now, in step five, you're going to speak up and get help. Specifically, you're going to go up to your manager and have a strong conversation with him. You're going to describe to this person what strengthens you and what weakens you, and you're going to have to do it in such a way that he winds up thinking not that you're trying to make life easy for yourself but, rather, that you are a responsible colleague looking for ways to contribute more — and at the same time make *his* life a little easier. By the time you're done, he must not only understand you better, he must actively want to help you maximize your strengths.

To reach outstanding levels of performance, you must stop tiptoeing. You must learn how to express — using unambiguous words and examples — what strengthens you and what weakens you.

Before you charge off to confront your manager, you should face up to your own fears. Not that they will ever go away completely, but by identifying what they are, you reduce the likelihood that they will trip you up at the critical moment.

### *Four Conversations*

To help you through your fears, follow this sequence of conversations. Of course, you'll want to vary the exact content of each one according to your unique situation, but if you ignore the sequence, or skip parts of it, your chances of getting other people to want to help you will fall sharply.

**Conversation 1: The Strengths Chat.** Start by having a chat with someone you're close to about what you've discovered about your strengths over the last five weeks. You are simply asking that she listen to you, that she be your audience as you try to find the best way to describe your strengths.

**Conversation 2: "How I Can Help You?"** Now you're ready to talk with your manager about what you would actually like to do differently, given what you've discovered lately about your strengths and weaknesses. Set up a "How I can help you" meeting. The point of this meeting is for you to describe to your boss just one of your strengths and exactly how you can exploit this strength to advance a specific project or improve a certain performance outcome.

**Conversation 3: The Weakness Chat.** Let a couple of weeks go by. Then call a close friend who cares about you. Tell her you want to chat about some of the things that weaken you. First, you must become good at claiming a weakness as a weakness, rather than pawning it off as something else. Try not to give your weaknesses a positive spin. You also need to learn the art of the comeback. You don't need this weakness so that you can fully appreciate your strengths. You just want to figure out how to navigate around it so that it doesn't drag you down as much as it does now. Call another friend and do it again.

**Conversation 4: "How Can You Help Me?"** Now you're ready for the next meeting with your manager. The point of the meeting should be to ask your manager to help you figure out how to be more productive. Before the meeting, pick the weakness that distracts you the most from playing to your strengths and develop three or four ideas for how to minimize it. ■

### Tips for Strengths-Based Managers

The role of all good managers is to do everything to turn each employee's unique combination of strengths and weaknesses into real-world performance. Here are a few tips that will help you play this role as effectively as possible:

- Your chief role is to listen to what your employee is saying, affirm what you hear her say, and offer ideas for actions that can be taken.
- If you really can't approve an employee's request because you absolutely need her to do that activity, keep in mind that if the activity is something that weakens her, it is not and never will be productive to ask her to do it repeatedly.
- If an employee wants to do more of an activity that you know he's really bad at, make sure you've accurately assessed the situation. Be completely sure of your assessment before shutting someone down.
- If the job has certain responsibilities that just aren't going to change, ask, "Does she have to spend a *majority* of her time on these activities to deliver outstanding performance?" If so, it might be time to suggest an alternative role. If not, what can she do differently to make the activities less draining, boring or frustrating?

## Step 6: Build Strong Habits

Faced with a world that doesn't really care about your strengths, your challenge now is to continue to accelerate your progress by building strong habits. To help you,

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### Step 6: Build Strong Habits

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there are five things you absolutely must do to fight for this strong life of yours. It is, after all, your career, your professional life, your success and satisfaction that are at stake.

**1. Every day look over your three Strength Statements and your three Weakness Statements.** It's up to you to fix them so clearly in your mind that you can recite them word for word from memory.

**2. Every week complete a Strong Week Plan.** Start each week with a plan for making the week as close to an ideal week as possible.

**3. Every quarter close the books on your strengths.** Put it on your calendar, once a quarter, to seek out your manager and have a 30-minute conversation about your strong quarter. Look back over your Strong Week Plans and identify three tangible achievements in which you contributed more to the team, based on either exploiting your strengths or minimizing your weaknesses.

**4. Every six months pick a week to capture, clarify and confirm your strengths.** Your underlying personality will not change much, but your strengths will. Capture these changes twice a year.

**5. Every year take the SET survey.** The Strengths Engagement Track, or SET, can be found at the Web site www.SimplyStrengths.com. Take the survey annually. You'll see movement, and this movement will serve as a leading indicator of your performance and contribution. Pay attention to it. It will show you your future. ■

## 'And What Happens If …'

You will inevitably face a few situations that will slow or even halt your progress. To prepare you to survive them with your strengths focus intact, here are the four most common:

**1. "What happens if I don't know if I should take this job?"** When considering a new role, the three questions most people ask themselves are: (1) What is the fundamental purpose of the role, and do I have an appetite for this purpose? (2) What are the kinds of people I'll be working with? and (3) What are the specific activities that will fill my week?

The most important question is the last one. It is the activities themselves that will determine your success.

**2. "What happens if I don't think I should have taken this job?"** Face up to it fast and take action to get yourself out of it. Occasionally this will mean packing up and leaving the role, but more often than not you'll be able to track your way back onto your strengths path without resorting to something quite as drastic. Identify a specific strength, take a stand for this strength, and volunteer it to your team.

**3. "What happens if I'm new to the job?"** Pick one of your strengths and lead with it. When all else is uncertain, this strength of yours will not only showcase you in the most self-assured and confident light possible, it will also provide a core of certainty from which you can start reaching out and filling in the gaps of your knowledge.

**4. "What happens if I'm constantly overworked?"** It took you a while to become overworked, so it will take you a while to get out from under it. Concentrate on your three strongest strengths and push everything else aside. See what happens after a month. You may find that an awful lot of stuff falls by the wayside.

### Soundview Recommended Reading List

**If you liked *Go Put Your Strengths to Work*, you'll also like:**

1. ***Talent Is Never Enough*** **by John C. Maxwell.** Maxwell, a leadership expert, asserts that talent is often misunderstood and overrated. To combat this, he suggests that people build their strengths and become a "talent-plus people."
2. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There*** **by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The corporate world is full of intelligent and skilled executives, but few will ever reach the top and, according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.
3. ***How*** **by Dov Seidman.** According to Seidman, in this ever-increasingly competitive world, it's not what you do, but how you do it that sets you apart from the pack.

## Take Your Stand

You have distinct strengths. No one has quite the same configuration of strengths as you.

You will be at your most productive, creative, focused, generous and resilient when you figure out how to play to your strengths most of the time. When you do, your customers, your colleagues, your company and you will win. Everyone will win.

But it doesn't matter what other people believe. It only matters what you believe.

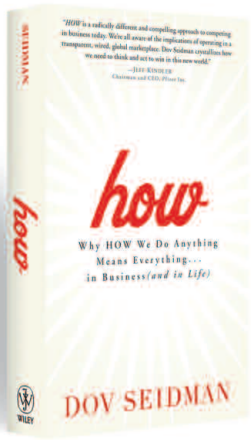
So let tomorrow be a different day than today. Let tomorrow be a stronger day than today. Let tomorrow begin with you asking yourself "What are my strengths, and how can I contribute them today?" and let every day thereafter begin the same way. You've always known what your strengths are. You've always known what lies within you. So trust your strengths, be proud of them, and take your stand. ■

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by Dov Seidman

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# Why HOW We Do Anything Means Everything ... in Business (and in Life)

# HOW

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In the 21st century, it isn't WHAT you do that matters most. In fact, if you line up all the winners in business today, you will notice that few win by what they make or do. If you make something new (or just better, faster and cheaper), the competition quickly comes up with a way to improve upon it and deliver it at the same or an even lower price. Customers instantly compare price, features, quality and service, effectively rendering almost every WHAT a commodity.

Yet, the drive for differentiation — personal, professional and organizational — lies at the heart of all our business endeavors. We all still want to stand out, to be bold, to be valuable, to distinguish ourselves from the competition, to do things others can't copy and to be No. 1. We always will. But in a commoditized world, we are running out of areas in which to do so.

However, there is one area where tremendous variation and variability still exist, one place that we have not yet analyzed, quantified, systemized or commoditized, one area which *cannot* be commoditized or copied: the realm of human behavior — HOW we do what we do.

The people and companies that will rise to the top today and stay on top tomorrow — that will be rewarded, promoted and celebrated — are those that get their HOWs right. The world has changed to make this idea more relevant than ever, and it now represents the most powerful way to chart a course of enduring personal and organizational business achievement.

This summary breaks down what it's like to live in the transparent, hyperconnected world and points out the advantages associated with focusing on your HOWs instead of being absorbed with your WHATs.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How technological advances have created a hyperconnected world that demands transparency.
- What recent factors have increased the Certainty Gap throughout the world.
- How rules have failed in the 21st century business world.
- How "soft" things like trust and reputation are essential for success in today's transparent world.
- Why values-based self-governance is the future of business.

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**by Dov Seidman**

# From Land to Information

Back in feudal Europe — circa 1335 A.D. — we were a land-based world, and the people who ruled had control over more high-value land than anyone else. Land meant crops, as well as rent from serfs — tradesmen, farmers and craftspeople — who created the goods and consumables that drove the economy.

Fast forward a few hundred years to the birth of the Industrial Revolution. The invention of machines, powered mainly by the steam engine, brought a host of innovative ways to make things. The rate and scale of manufacturing increased exponentially. Fast forward again to 1994 and the birth of the information age. Technology allowed multifold leaps in the way we did things. Opportunity was everywhere, and though few had a clear vision of where it would lead, inventions, products and processes made things possible that were previously only a dream.

### *Getting Flattened*

In *The World Is Flat*, Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* journalist Thomas L. Friedman details the global effects of this newly unfettered flow of information. He describes some of the unprecedented possibilities suddenly available, many of which are being exploited by the business world: new paradigms of collaboration, specialization, supply and distribution, and expansion of core competencies.

Friedman's macroeconomic and social analysis of our newly "flat" and interconnected world presents a vision of the forces reshaping global business in the 21st century. The free flow of information significantly changes the way internal business units perform and are governed and how individuals work together every day. ■

# Technology's Trespass

Relationships. Communication. Connection. Collaboration. This is how we fill the spaces between us. *Communicate* comes from the Latin word *communicare*, meaning "to share." So it follows that as the nature of the way we communicate changes, so does the nature of our relationships. Over the past decade, the intercession of technology into our relationships has radically altered what goes on in the spaces between us, has changed the way we do business and has given us easy access to information, creating a double-edged sword that cuts both for and against us.

### *The Ties That Bind Us*

In the days of feudal capitalism, running a company like IBM was a far simpler proposition than it is today. Remember the blue suits? IBM used to be famous for its strong corporate culture, so it impressed on everyone who worked there that the blue suit was the de facto uniform of the work force. If you worked at IBM, you knew what to put on every morning. Enforcing a companywide point of view was easier when the old fortress mentality still held sway. You could communicate policies, values, rules, goals and perspectives to your work force through vertical channels. Both corporation and employee benefited from this way of operating: Orders were given and everyone knew where to march.

Few businesses have fortress walls that shield and contain their work force anymore. Communication technology has replaced the concept of a work force with an array of laborers affiliated in countless open relationships. Full-time employees work hand in hand with members of joint ventures, colleagues in independently managed subsidiaries, on-site independent contractors,

***(continued on page 3)***

**The author:** Dov Seidman is the founder, chairman and CEO of LRN Inc. LRN helps companies such as Disney, 3M and eBay shape their corporate cultures and build strong, principled organizations that win in the marketplace.

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## Technology's Trespass

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remote representatives of outsourcing companies, consultants working from home and as many more creative interrelationships that you can conceive. Add to that a global supply and distribution chain, and you get an organic tangle of human relationships that is difficult to control. The traditional fortresses of business have been overrun by an organic ecosystem filled with possibility.

### *Distance Unites Us*

Business in the information age is complicated not only by the new forms of relationships, but also by the increasing remoteness of those people. For centuries, local proximity determined the majority of our social functions. We dealt on a day-to-day basis with people who shared a common culture and therefore easily understood the behaviors and signals that occurred in the spaces between us.

Global connectivity sets that whole idea on its ear. We now find ourselves in a world where we are thrust together in all aspects of our lives without borders and without the homogenizing pressures of locality. From purchasing items from a seller on eBay to video chats with team members halfway around the world, at any time you might find yourself interacting with people whom you have never met in person and who don't necessarily speak the same language you do.

Before the Internet, our lives moved at a slower pace. We had time to get to know people, as well as experience personal contact in all of our dealings. Today, multinational companies commonly form teams of employees chosen from various divisions, countries and cultures. Global supply chains and international customer bases multiply and mutate faster than a flu virus. Mergers and acquisitions fuel growth and value creation with little regard to how the individuals will interrelate each day. We build our business relationships in a collage-like construct of hotel meetings, video chats, cell phone calls, e-mails and faxes.

Opportunity conjoins us faster than we have developed frameworks for understanding each other and getting along. Distance no longer separates us; new communication capabilities render distance irrelevant by connecting us instantly. Electronic communication is both a boon and a bane. It makes new, powerful networks of collaboration possible, but does so in strange and fractured language. It's the paradox of the information age: Technology connects us more than ever before, but those connections are more fractured and incomplete than we are accustomed to.

## The Expectation of Response Factor

Another pressure of instant communication is the Expectation of Response Factor. Messages appear instantly, implicitly insisting on a quick response. The Expectation of Response Factor exerts an influence on the quality of our communication, often forcing us to respond in less considered ways. In a medium whose nature transmits only part of our intended symbols at best, the virtual ticking of the electronic clock cheats us of the time we need for careful or meaningful expression.

### *The Age of Transparency*

We live in the age of transparency. With everything from personal records and profiles to databases easily accessed over the Internet, virtually everything about you can be discovered quite easily. The fact that *The New Oxford American Dictionary* lists "google" as a verb makes this clear, as does the sample sentence to illuminate its meaning: "You meet someone, swap numbers, fix a date and then google them."

Transparency exerts a profound influence on business. Before transparency, companies could form joint ventures to protect themselves from the ramifications of a dubious enterprise, believing that if the unit got into trouble it would not hurt the reputation of the parent company.

In a transparent world, however, when your joint venture transgresses, everybody knows who owns it. In the past, training its managers in proper conduct was sufficient to protect a company's reputation because line employees had little contact with the outside world and rarely got a company into trouble. Now, any employee can say something about a company in a chat room or in a blog and the next day it might appear on Web sites such as The DrudgeReport or The Smoking Gun. The new transparency doesn't allow you to hide. ■

# The Journey to How

Information is king, hyperconnectedness puts that information in the hands of many and transparency reveals all: This is our new reality. To fully consider the changes to the geography of business, we must open our minds to how these forces have created a new playing field for success.

### *The Certainty Gap*

We all carry a vision of ideal stability and security. We never achieve this ideal state because at any given time the conditions of our lives or the world around us create

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## Journey to How

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varying degrees of uncertainty and disequilibrium. This opens a gap between our ideal state and the realties of life, known as the "Certainty Gap," which exerts a profound influence on our ability to succeed. The Certainty Gap never disappears entirely; it gets larger or smaller as conditions change. When it is small, we hardly pay it any attention. When the Certainty Gap grows, as it has in recent years, we reach out for reassurance, for things that can stabilize us and give us confidence to go on. We look for something to fill the gap — *trust*.

Trust allows us to function in times of uncertainty, because trust calms the fears that uncertainty breeds. In times of high uncertainty we pay more attention to the source of trust: human conduct. Trust becomes, more vitally than ever, the currency of human exchange. Trust fills the Certainty Gap; it fills the space between where we are and where we would like to be.

### *Recent Factors Have Increased the Certainty Gap*

The following four factors have played a hand in expanding the current Certainty Gap:

**1. The dot-bomb:** When the dot-bomb fell, it exploded the bubble economy and set off a severe economic recession that has exerted persistent dislocating effects on employment and financial security.

**2. A rapid succession of egregious corporate scandals:** Corporate scandals like Enron, WorldCom and Parmalat have helped make corporations one of the least-trusted segments of society.

**3. The ever-increasing revelatory power of technology:** Suddenly, every facet of society seemed laid bare, flaws exposed for all to see: religious scandals, professional athletes on steroids, reporters for the *New York Times* inventing stories. Icons at every level of society suddenly seemed vulnerable.

**4. The 9/11 attacks:** 9/11 seemed to usher in a series of global attacks against civilians — Madrid, London, Bali and other places — that, coupled with destabilizing regional wars, left much of the world uneasy. The needs and procedures of physical security suddenly intruded into the day-to-day lives of many who had long felt safe.

### *Outbehaving the Competition*

To succeed, we must differentiate ourselves from the competition in an enduring fashion. As the market becomes more crowded, however, the possible areas of differentiation become fewer, creating new questions about the personal qualities the new world requires of us in order to thrive.

Leaders in 20th century capitalist enterprises historically differentiated themselves by WHAT they did. Those who could invent something and patent it won, and those who could not do so gleaned the fields for survival. The market provided great incentives and protections to innovate in WHAT.

But those days are gone. It is difficult to invent a better product in a world of commodities, and that is where we find ourselves. For example, Starbucks unleashes a newfound appreciation for coffee drinks, and now every diner and greasy spoon serves café lattes. It is harder now to innovate in WHAT. It takes a lot of luck and money to be a pioneer, and even if you pull it off, the ability of someone to reverse engineer your product in six months and not six years eliminates a lot of the incentive for doing so.

So businesses began to concentrate on innovating in HOW. Beginning in the 1980s, the focus turned to process management, or the HOWs of WHAT. We now live in a time when winning is about HOW generally. Total Quality Management (TQM), Six Sigma, Just-In-Time (JIT) Inventory, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), etc. — process culture now dominates business practice, aiming to improve profitability by reducing inefficiencies at every stage of the product development process.

However, everyone has gotten so good at process management, or the HOW of WHAT, that we have effectively leveled the playing field again. We have commoditized process and performance in the same way we have so much else, possibly to the point of diminishing returns. Still, there is one area where tremendous variability still exists, one place that we have not yet analyzed and commoditized, and which *cannot* be commoditized: the realm of human behavior — HOW we do WHAT we do. The tapestry of human behavior is so varied, so rich and global that it presents a rare opportunity, *the opportunity to outbehave the competition*.

It is no longer WHAT you do that makes a difference; it is HOW you do it. The emerging trend among leading-edge businesses today involves delivering not so much a better product, but a better experience to their customers. ■

## From *Can* to *Should*

Rules are rules, but unlike our desire to connect with others and our tendency toward value-based thinking, our brains are not hardwired for rules. Rules are a social phenomenon. However, as we begin to consider the new thinking needed to succeed in a world of HOW, we need

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## From *Can* to *Should*

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to examine our relationship to rules, and how our thinking about them helps us and sometimes holds us back.

### *Rules as Proxies*

Why do we employ rules as proxies? Because rules seem efficient, and modern society (and industrial age capitalism) was built on the foundations of efficiency. In a rules-based society, we often choose efficiency over value, but, while rules-based governance systems may often serve the values of fairness and representation, their seeming efficiency hides a deep and important flaw: *We often rely on rules when they are not the most efficient or effective solution to getting the result that we desire*. Understanding that flaw is vital to thriving in a world of HOW.

Another problem with rules is that they are not created in a very efficient or systematic way. Despite the best of intentions, people create rules haphazardly and often in *reaction* to behaviors deemed unacceptable to the larger goals of the group. Rules respond to behavior; they don't lead it. *Rules don't govern human progress; they govern the human past.*

### *Wrestling With Rules*

The central conflict with rules lies in the essential nature of our relationship to them: *Rules live outside of us*. Because of this, we spend a lot of time and effort wrestling with them, trying to find ways around them or ways of living within them. We will always invent new loopholes, and no rule can govern all the cracks.

Some think that breaking all the rules qualifies as creative thinking, but it is quite the opposite. *Working in opposition to rules is simply the negative space of working within them;* thinking in terms of what a rule excludes is as limiting as being bound by what it includes.

Human conduct is more complicated than what language can describe. It has a lot to do with aspirations and intentions, with back-and-forth interactions. Our relationships are two-way streets, and the interactions that travel them are dynamic. Rules, because they are made reactively, have difficulty keeping up with the infinite permutations and various shades of meaning that pass between people.

This presents us with a question: In a fast-changing world, is there a way to govern human behavior that proactively embraces change? The answer is yes. The key to long-term, sustained success does not lie in breaking the rules; it lies in transcending the rules and harnessing the power of values.

### *UMHS Says 'I'm Sorry'*

In 2001, the University of Michigan Hospital System (UMHS) in Ann Arbor suffered under a budget-busting load of medical malpractice litigation, a phenomenon that had seen exponential growth nationwide over the preceeding decade. Given the increasingly transparent nature of medical care, UMHS realized that it was going to incur liabilities in some percentage of cases despite doing everything it could to eliminate systemic errors. That year the hospital fought many malpractice claims and lawsuits in court but also settled more than 260 others at a cost of $18 million.

UMHS realized that it could do little to avoid lawsuits stemming from catastrophic errors that resulted in loss of life or limb. Instead, it focused on suits involving less serious consequences. In cases like these, UMHS administrators asked themselves, what *should* we be doing for our patients? Continuing to fight malpractice claims remained an option, but they chose a different course of action. They encouraged their doctors to say "I'm sorry" and helped doctors understand how to step up and admit when a mistake was made.

When UMHS announced this new approach, it was widely ridiculed as legal suicide. However, in the three years following the hospital's decision to apologize, medical malpractice claims and lawsuits against them dropped by nearly 50 percent and the per-case cost of defending against the remaining suits dropped 50 percent as well, saving UMHS millions of dollars.

How did UMHS arrive at a counterintuitive solution like apologizing? The hospital employs a values-based approach to pursuing corporate goals. Respect, compassion, trust, integrity and leadership — their stated values — inform everything they do. As an organization whose very core was grounded in the language of values, they tackled their mounting litigation problem by asking themselves not "What *can* we do?" but rather "Based on our values, what *should* we do?"

### *Unlocking 'Should'*

There is little in rules that inspires; by definition, you comply with them. To be capable of true success, you need an organizing principle more inspirational and compelling than rules. Thinking and communicating in the language of *should* — values-based language — by its very nature inspires. Values do double duty; they inspire us to do *more than* while simultaneously preventing us from doing *less than*. They create natural floors without creating inadvertent ceilings.

Twenty-first century business craves creativity and

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## From *Can* to *Should*

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innovation, and freeing yourself from the constraints of rules-based thought unleashes new pathways of exploration and possibility. There is hardly a business that doesn't suffer from the "grocery store syndrome." We can choose from any number of grocery stores, each one offering competitive prices. After price, the choice of where to shop boils down to customer experience. To provide this sort of experience, you need to think in ways that inspire your best achievement, to think in the language of *should*. ■

**For additional information on the problems with rules, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Doing Transparency

As the world transitions to a bottom-up model in which each individual can contribute to the free flow of ideas, it opens up and becomes more transparent. An information society is a dialogical society, one based on the interactive sharing of information among mutually interested parties. Equalized access to information allows more people to act in an informed manner.

Transparency — the new condition of the world that allows us to see past the medium to get to the heart of the message — fundamentally changes almost every way we conduct our lives, demanding a new set of HOWs if we really want to thrive. To understand these changes, we must consider two types of transparency:

• ***Technological transparency*** describes the ever-evolving state of the networked world, the transparency that happens to us — transparency as a noun.

• ***Interpersonal transparency*** centers on the realm of how we do what we do — transparency as an action or as a verb. This is the active transparency we bring to our interactions with others.

The question before us is: How do we conquer our fear of exposure and turn these new realities into new abilities and behaviors? How can we become proactive about transparency?

### *Beyond Proxies and Surrogates*

In the days before information transparency made almost everything easily knowable, all we could really know about a company's "character" were the programs and procedures that stood as proxies for it. Those days seem to be gone. Think of how easy it is to see through to the inner workings of a company today versus just a few years ago. Chat rooms, online forums, instant access to financial reports, news coverage from around the globe — almost nothing goes unreported somewhere online, where it can be quickly retrieved.

Consumers, customers, regulators, judges and juries have begun to view companies from a characterological viewpoint. They pay more attention to, and care more about, the inner lives and characters of the companies with which they do business. They've begun to ask themselves whether a company has integrity and character. In such an environment, programs and proxies alone no longer suffice. Those passing judgment in our newly transparent age look past programs and proxies, deep into the culture of the company.

Soon these judgments will become pervasive and ingrained, affecting every evaluation of a company's prospects and its ability to perform in the marketplace. People will habitually ask: Does this company have a culture that is nimble and responsive, or one full of friction and dissonance? Due diligence will take on new and added dimensions, with these formerly soft issues weighing as heavily in the mix as balance sheets and assets. ■

# Reputation in a Wired World

Reputation is another one of those "soft" things, like trust, that everyone wants but few think about how to get. Today, the world of business is faster, more spread out, more transient and more fluid than ever before. Yet, paradoxically, the overwhelming capacity of technology to connect us and transmit information to us instantly and cheaply binds us together as never before. It creates conditions of interdependence as high if not higher than when locality bound us in commonality. In some sense, the whole world is now local (or *glocal)*. What does this mean for individuals and companies? From a reputation standpoint, what is old is new again. Reputation — how others think of you — is now more critical to your ability to build long-term sustained success than ever before.

Reputation is the sum total of your HOWs: what you stand for, what you can be trusted to do, your track record of accomplishment, the esteem you have earned and how you have been experienced by others. In a transparent world, reputation leads. It records your past but also creates expectations for your future. For individuals, reputation is also continuity. In a world where the average worker entering the job force will work for an average of 10.5 companies over the course of a career, external structures can no longer provide personal continuity, only your reputation can. Your reputation is a far more integral part of your personal package than ever

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### Reputation in a Wired World

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before. And reputation is built over time by your HOWs.

Conversely, a company can no longer assume that its corporate reputation supercedes that of its personnel. In a transparent world, people can see between the lines of what you do and discern HOW you do it. Nuance becomes revealed, and reputation accrues to those companies whose individuals represent those nuances to the world. ■

**For additional information on how reputation affects business deals in Japan, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Doing Culture

The General Electric Aircraft Engine Assembly plant in Durham, N.C., produces some of the most powerful and technically complex aircraft engines in the world. Every year, more than 400 of the largest engines across the globe roll out the door — engines that power large commercial aircraft like the Boeing 777 and the Airbus A320, including the engines that keep Air Force One aloft.

The special nature of GE/Durham does not reveal itself in its WHATs but rather in its HOWs. Over 200 people work at the plant, grouped into teams of fewer than 20 techs whose only command from management is the date their engine is scheduled to ship; the team decides everything else.

There are a number of things absent from the Durham plant: a time clock, a cleaning crew and tool lock-up. With the exception of a daily team meeting, workers come and go as they like, everyone cleans up after themselves and tools are not locked away, because the feeling is that if you can trust people to build an aircraft engine, you can trust them not to walk off with a torque wrench. There is also only one boss at GE/Durham, the plant manager, who often focuses on growth and improvement, not the specifics of every engine assignment.

The seemingly ungoverned culture has achieved some remarkable things. Over the course of five years in the late 1990s, GE/Durham reduced the cost of airplane engine assembly by over 50 percent. The plant reduced quality defects by over 75 percent. One in four engines ship with just a single flaw — usually cosmetic, like a scratch. Within the massive bureaucracy that is GE, GE/Durham stands as an outpost of team-oriented, consensus-based self-governance, a culture unto itself.

### *The Sum of All HOWs*

Culture is a company's DNA, the sum total of its history, values, aspirations and endeavors. For a company, culture is its unique character and lifeblood. Culture can be thought of as the destiny of an organization. The culture that grows around any given group of people is unique to them and can't be copied. Others can perhaps duplicate your HOWs in general, but the specific texture and quality of what they total thrive uniquely in the people who live by them.

Mastering culture is no longer a job for just those at the top of the organizational chart. An organizational culture represents the collective action of all the individuals that comprise it, so it is incumbent upon everyone who wants to do well to understand the intricacies of how culture works. ■

## The Four Types of Culture

Within the spectrum of culture, there are four specific types:

**1. Anarchy and lawlessness:** a state where everyone acts in their own self-interest with little regard for the group dynamic or organizational ethos. These cultures, by their very nature, build little of the predictability and certainty that capital-based enterprises require to thrive.

**2. Blind obedience:** a culture where no one questions authority and everyone does what they are told or faces the consequences.

**3. Informed acquiescence:** a rules-based culture, where those wishing to participate in the culture learn the rules and agree to abide by them. The rules are clearly spelled out and workers either embrace them or spend time trying to make things work under the rules. Informed acquiescence cultures tend to be management-oriented, with an established managing class and well-entrenched bureaucracy.

**4. Values-based self-governance:** a culture where employees believe in a set of values and uphold them through their actions rather than simply complying with rules. A values-based culture is governed by *should*. Employees believe in a value; they act on that belief; and they self-govern in the name of it.

There are no hard walls between these four basic cultures; most groups organize themselves in a progressive and evolutionary state embracing elements of all four.

## The Case for Self-Governing Cultures

Blind obedience, informed acquiescence and values-based self-governance are not just types of culture; they

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## The Case for Self-Governing Cultures

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also describe an approach to governing. Blind obedience and informed acquiescence cultures place most governance outside the individual in the hands of a boss or a set of rules.

Transparency and connectedness, however, make cultures based on one form of external control or another less ideal for our new world. Today, we need a working environment that connects people and groups more intensely, is powered by communication and information flow, and enfranchises individuals at all levels of the company to act quickly and autonomously when presented with new opportunities by the fast-moving marketplace.

### *Why Self-Governance Is the Future of Business*

There are many reasons why getting more values-based self-governance into every culture makes sense, including:

• **A horizontal world calls for a horizontal governance architecture:** Values-based governance minimizes the layers of hierarchy within an organization.

• **Self-governing cultures thrive on the free flow of information:** To unleash the power and creativity of a work force of inspired leaders, you must create an environment that unleashes the information they need to succeed. Transparency between people at all levels in all transactions actually makes these cultures stronger and more effective, and the free flow of information makes cultures more self-governing by increasing trust.

• **A leading company needs to be a company of leaders:** To push the bounds of creativity and innovation, you need people to live out there every day. Rules-based cultures contain an inherent tension between outside-the-box thinking and inside-the-box compliance. Self-governing requires each individual to step up and lead, to take responsibility both for their own work and for the performance of others.

• **Values-based self-governance cultures encourage employee development:** The conditions of the networked world make pushing vast amounts of information to workers' fingertips cheap and easy, but a values-based culture goes a step further and dedicates itself to educating its work force.

• **Self-governance builds universal vigilance:** Sometimes individuals join an organization but do not embrace its goals. In values-based self-governed groups, these individuals can't fool the culture; the vigilance of the group identifies the people who do not truly align with the values of the group and ejects them. Cultures like these are self-enforcing, thus reducing the need for external management controls. This form of self-governance takes advantage of the collective intelligence of the group to regulate the culture as a whole.

• **Self-governance shifts decision making from the pragmatic to the principled:** Values-based self-governance cultures are inspired by a mission and steered by values. They enshrine long-term principles in place of short-term gain and challenge each decision maker to fulfill them in every act they perform. Decisions made on the basis of sound principles provide a steady rudder in stormy seas.

• **Self-governance is a higher concept:** Values-based self-governance governs in the name of principles and values, not rules, and only principles and values have the ability to inspire. It speaks in the language of *should* rather than *can*. It calls us forth to wed our highest goals and aspirations to how we do what we do each day.

If values become the engine of culture, self-governance provides the scaffolding that allows everyone throughout the hierarchy to embrace and put into operation those values daily in everything that they do. ■

### SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**If you liked *How*, you'll also like:**

1. ***Success Built to Last* by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson.** Through interviews with 300 successful individuals, the authors uncover the secrets of their accomplishments.
2. ***Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell.** According to Maxwell, talent is often misunderstood and overrated. To combat this, he suggests that people build their strengths and become a "talent-plus person."
3. ***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink.** Pink offers a fresh look at what it takes for businesspeople and organizations to move from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age.

# Afterword

In a dialogic society, answering the phone on the second ring or always having a smile on your face is no longer enough; a connected, transparent world now looks past the proxies of service and looks to how the companies and people with whom they do business engage and interact with them.

Experience matters in a world where interrelationships matter, and not just customer experience, but every interaction with every person you encounter throughout the business day. Experience is becoming the great differentiator. Can you do experience? Can you do innovation? Can you do excellence? How do you measure success? Success is something you get when you pursue something greater than yourself, something of *significance*. Pursuing significance, in the end, is the ultimate HOW. ■

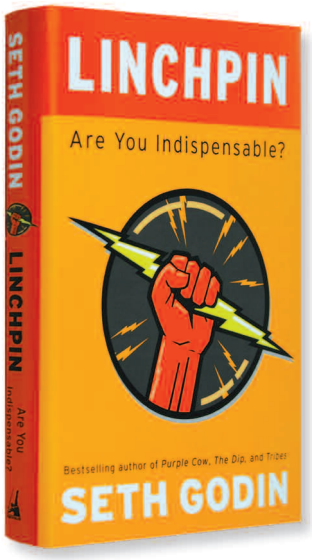
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Career & Self-Development: Business Skills




# Linchpin

## Are You Indispensable?

by Seth Godin

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

There used to be two teams in every workplace: management and labor. Now there's a third team, "the linchpins." These people invent, lead (regardless of title), connect others, make things happen and create order out of chaos. They love their work, pour their best selves into it and turn each day into a kind of art.

Author Seth Godin, CEO of Squidoo.com, explains that linchpins are the essential building blocks of great organizations. Like the small piece of hardware that keeps a wheel from falling off its axle, they may not be famous, but they're indispensable. And in today's world, they get the best jobs and the most freedom.

Have you ever found a shortcut that others missed? Seen a new way to resolve a conflict? Then you have what it takes to become indispensable, by overcoming the resistance that holds people back.

The world has changed (again) and the stakes are higher than ever. Now we're facing a full-fledged revolution — a hypercompetitive world involving arts and gifts and fear and the ability for you (or anyone) to make an indispensable contribution to something you care about. If you're not indispensable (yet) it's because you haven't made that choice. *Linchpin* will help you see that the choice is yours.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to focus on the things that really matter.
- How to get your dream job without a resume.
- How to see every customer interaction as a chance to give a gift.
- How to become a linchpin in your organization.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **LINCHPIN**

**by Seth Godin**

**The author:** Seth Godin is the author of *Tribes, The Dip, Purple Cow, All Marketers Are Liars, Permission Marketing* and other international best-sellers that have changed the way businesspeople think and act. He's the founder and CEO of Squidoo.com and a very popular blogger and speaker.

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com or visit www.SethGodin.com.

## Introduction

Where does average come from?

It comes from two places:

1. You have been brainwashed by school and by the system into believing that your job is to do your job and follow instructions. It's not — not anymore.
2. Everyone has a little voice inside his or her head that's angry and afraid. That voice is the resistance — your lizard brain — and it wants you to be average (and safe).

If you're not doing as well as you had hoped, perhaps it's because the rules of the game were changed and no one told you.

The rules were written just over 200 years ago; they worked for a long time, but no longer.

### Developing Indispensability

You weren't born to be a cog in the giant industrial machine. You were *trained* to become a cog.

There's an alternative available to you. Becoming a linchpin is a step-wise process, a path in which you develop the attributes that make you indispensable. You can train yourself to matter. The first step is the most difficult, the step where you acknowledge that this is a skill, and like all skills, you can (and will) get better at it. Every day, if you focus on the gifts, art and connections that characterize the linchpin, you'll become a little more indispensable.

## The New World of Work

The first chapter of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* makes it clear that the way for businesses to win is to break the production of goods into tiny tasks, tasks that can be undertaken by low-paid people following simple instructions. Smith writes about how incredibly efficient a pin-making factory is compared to a few pin artisans making pins by hand. Why hire a super-talented pin maker when 10 barely trained pin-making factory workers using a machine and working together can produce a *thousand* times more pins, more quickly, than one talented person working alone can?

For nearly 300 years, that was the way work worked. What factory owners want is compliant, low-paid, replaceable cogs to run their efficient machines.

Our society is struggling because during times of change the very last people you need on your team are well-paid bureaucrats, note takers, literalists, manual readers, TGIF laborers, map followers and fearful employees. The compliant masses don't help so much when you don't know what to do next.

### We Need Artists

What we want, what we need, what we must have are indispensable human beings. We need original thinkers, provocateurs and people who care. We need marketers who can lead, salespeople able to risk making a human connection, passionate change makers willing to be shunned if it is necessary for them to make a point. Every organization needs a linchpin — the one person who can bring it together and make a difference. We need artists.

Artists are people with a genius for finding a new answer, a new connection or a new way of getting things done.

That would be you.

**1-800-SUMMARY**
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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

### Average Is Over

Our world no longer fairly compensates people who are cogs in a giant machine.

It turns out that what we need are gifts and connections and humanity — and the artists who create them.

Leaders don't get a map or a set of rules. Living life without a map requires a different attitude. It requires you to be a linchpin.

The only way to get what you're worth is to stand out, to exert emotional labor, to be seen as indispensable and to produce interactions that organizations and people care deeply about.

## Thinking About Your Choice

Can you become indispensable?

Yes, you can.

The linchpins among us are not the ones born with a magical talent. No, they are people who have decided that a new kind of work is important, and they're training themselves to do it.

It's not about what you're born with, it's about what you do.

### Teaching Remarkable

A great school experience won't keep you from being remarkable, but it's usually not sufficient to guarantee that you will become so. There's something else at work here.

Great schools might work; lousy schools definitely stack the deck against you. Why is society working so hard to kill our natural-born artists? When we try to drill and practice someone into subservient obedience, we're stamping out the artist that lives within.

Why are you working so hard to bury your natural-born instincts? Everyone has art in them, though it's buried sometimes. Markets are crying out. We need you to stand up and be remarkable. Be human. Contribute. Interact. Take the risk that you might make someone upset with your initiative, innovation and insight — it turns out that you'll probably delight that person instead.

Consumers say that all they want are cheap commodities. Given the choice, though, most of us, most of the time, seek out art. We seek out experiences and products that deliver more value, more connection and more experience, and those that change us for the better. You can learn how to do this if you want to.

### The New American Dream

Do you remember the old American Dream? It struck a chord with millions of people (in the United States and in the rest of the world too). Here's how it goes:

Keep your head down.

Follow instructions.

Show up on time.

Work hard.

Suck it up.

… And you will be rewarded.

As we've seen, that dream is over.

The new American Dream, though, the one that markets around the world are embracing as fast as they can, is this:

Be remarkable.

Be generous.

Create art.

Make judgment calls.

Connect people and ideas.

… And we have no choice but to reward you.

## The Skill of Leading

Leading is a skill, not a gift. You're not born with it, you learn how. And schools can teach leadership as easily as they figured out how to teach compliance. Schools can teach us to be socially smart, to be open to connection, to understand the elements that build a tribe. While schools provide outlets for natural-born leaders, they don't teach it. And leadership is now worth far more than compliance is.

## Indoctrination: How We Got Here

We've been taught to be a replaceable cog in a giant machine.

We've been taught to consume as a shortcut to happiness.

We've been taught not to care about our jobs or our customers.

And we've been taught to fit in.

None of these things helps you get what you deserve.

### Mediocre Obedience

It seems "natural" to live the life so many of us live, but in fact, it's quite recent and totally manmade. We exist in a corporate manufacturing mindset, one so complete that anyone off the grid seems like an oddity. In the past few years, though, it's become clear that people

who reject the worst of the current system are actually *more* likely to succeed.

Evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould wrote, "Violence, sexism and general nastiness are biological since they represent one subset of a possible range of behaviors. But peacefulness, equality and kindness are just as biological — and we may see their influence increase if we can create social structures that permit them to flourish."

Mediocre obedience is certainly something we're capable of, but if we take initiative and add a little bravery, artistic leadership is something that's equally (or more) possible and productive. We've been trained to believe that mediocre obedience is a genetic fact for most of the population, but it's interesting to note that this trait doesn't show up until after a few years of schooling.

### In Search of Great Teachers

Great teachers are precious. Lousy teachers cause damage that lasts forever.

We need to reorganize our schools to free the great teachers from tests and reports and busywork, and to expel the lousy teachers. When schools were organized to produce laborers, lousy teachers were exactly what we needed. Now, lousy teachers are dangerous.

Don't blame the teachers. Blame the corporate system that is still training compliant workers who test well.

## Becoming the Linchpin

A linchpin is an unassuming piece of hardware, something you can buy for 69 cents at the local hardware store. It's not glamorous, but it's essential. It holds the wheel onto the wagon.

Every successful organization has at least one linchpin; some have dozens or even thousands. The linchpin is the essential element, the person who holds part of the operation together. Without the linchpin, the thing falls apart.

Is there anyone in an organization who is absolutely irreplaceable? Probably not. But the most essential people are so difficult to replace, so risky to lose and so valuable that they might as well be irreplaceable. Entire corporations are built around a linchpin or, more likely, a scattering of them, essential individuals who are worth holding on to.

1. Your business needs more linchpins. It's scary to rely on a particular employee, but in a postindustrial economy, you have no choice.
2. You are capable of becoming a linchpin. And if you do become one, you'll discover that it's worth the effort.

The easiest linchpin examples are CEOs and entrepreneurs, because they're the ones who get all the press. Steve Jobs at Apple or Jeff Bezos at Amazon or Ben Zander at the Boston Philharmonic or Anne Jackson at flowerdust.net. We look at these leaders and say, "Of course they're the linchpin. The organization wouldn't be the same without them."

### Create a Magical Experience

What about the way you feel when you walk into an Anthropologie store, unwrap a piece of Lake Champlain chocolate or send a package using FedEx's website? The experience could have been merely ordinary, merely another bit of good enough. But it's not. It's magical. It was created by someone who cared, who contributed, who did more than he or she was told. A linchpin.

Anthropologie has a buyer, Keith Johnson, who spends six months a year traveling the world, visiting flea markets and garage sales, looking for extraordinary things. Not to sell, perhaps, but to beautify a store. It's not easy to hire a Keith Johnson, which is precisely why his work is so essential to the company's success.

If your organization would get out of the way, and if you would step up, there'd be a slot like that available. For anyone.

## Is It Possible to Do Hard Work in a Cubicle?

Emotional labor is the task of doing important work, even when it isn't easy.

It turns out that digging into the difficult work of emotional labor is exactly what we're expected (and needed) to do. Work is nothing but a platform for art and the emotional labor that goes with it.

### The Gift of Emotional Labor

When you do emotional labor, you benefit.

Not just the company, not just your boss, but you.

The act of giving someone a smile, of connecting to a human, of taking initiative, of being surprising, of being creative, of putting on a show — these are things that we do for free all our lives. And then we get to work and we expect to merely do what we're told and get paid for it.

This gulf creates tension. If you reserve your emotional labor for when you are off duty but you work all the

time, you are deprived of the joy you get when you do this labor. Now, you're not giving gifts on duty, but you're not off duty much at all. Spend eight or 10 or 12 hours a day at work (not only in the office but online or on the phone or in your dreams) and there's not a lot of time left for the very human acts that make you who you are and who you want to be.

So bring that gift to work.

And what do you get in return? There are companies that now value this sort of labor and encourage it. More organizations are embracing this idea and hiring for it and rewarding for it.

In most cases, though, you get little in return. At least, little in terms of formal entries in your permanent file or bonuses in your year-end pay. But you do benefit.

First, you benefit from the making and the giving. The act of the gift is in itself a reward. And second, you benefit from the response of those around you. When you develop the habit of contributing this gift, your co-workers become more open, your boss becomes more flexible and your customers become more loyal.

## The Resistance

Your mind, the thing that drives you crazy and makes you special, has two distinct sections: the "daemon" and the resistance.

The daemon is the source of great ideas, groundbreaking insights, generosity, love, connection and kindness.

The resistance spends all its time insulating the world from our daemon. The resistance lives inside the lizard brain.

Daemon is a Greek term (the Romans called it a "genius"). The Greeks believed that the daemon was a separate being inside each of us. The genius living inside of us would struggle to express itself in art or writing or some other endeavor. When the genius felt like showing up, great stuff happened. If not, you were sort of out of luck.

Every time you find yourself following the manual instead of writing the manual, you're avoiding the anguish and giving in to the resistance.

### How the Resistance Evolved

The first part of our brain, the part that shows up first in the womb, the part that was there a million years ago — that's our lizard brain. The lizard brain is in charge of fight or flight, of anger and of survival. That's all we used to need, and even now, when there's an emergency, the lizard brain is still in charge.

There are several small parts of your brain near the end of your spinal cord responsible for survival and other wild-animal traits. The whole thing is called the basal ganglia, and there are two almond-shaped bits in everyone's brain. Scientists call these the amygdala, and this mini-brain apparently takes over when you are angry, afraid, aroused, hungry or in search of revenge.

It's only recently that our brains evolved to allow big thoughts, generosity, speech, consciousness and, yes, art. When you look at a picture of the brain, the new part is what you see: the neocortex. That's the wrinkly gray part on the outside. It's big, but it's weak. In the face of screaming resistance from the amygdala, the rest of your brain is helpless. It freezes and surrenders. The lizard brain takes over and tries to protect itself.

The challenge is to create an environment where the lizard brain snoozes. You can't beat it, so you must seduce it. One part of your brain worries about survival and anger and lust. The rest of it creates civilization.

The lizard brain is here to keep you alive; the rest of your brain merely makes you a happy, successful, connected member of society.

So the two parts duke it out. And when you're put on alert, the lizard brain wins every time unless you've established new habits and better patterns — patterns that keep the lizard brain at bay.

## The Powerful Culture of Gifts

In the beginning, there was the culture of potlatch and gifts. Caveman culture has a long tradition of reciprocity, and as Marcel Mauss has written, this reciprocity was used to build relationships and power. In the Pacific Northwest, Native American tribe leaders established their power by giving *everything* away. They could afford to give everyone a gift because they were so powerful and the gifts were a symbol of that power. Any leader who hoarded saw his power quickly diminish.

Then, quite suddenly, this ancient tradition changed. Money and structured society flipped the system, and now you get, you don't give. Power used to be about giving, not getting.

In the linchpin economy, the winners are once again the artists who give gifts. Giving a gift makes you indispensable. Inventing a gift, creating art — these are what the market seeks out, and the givers are the ones who earn our respect and attention.

### Giving, Receiving, Giving

Part of the reason for this flip is the digital nature of our new gift system. The Internet makes it possible for a

gift to spread everywhere, quite quickly, at no cost. Digital gifts, ideas that spread — these allow the artist to be far more generous than he could ever be in an analog world.

Thomas Hawk is the most successful digital photographer in the world. He has taken tens of thousands of pictures on his way to his goal of taking a million in his lifetime. The remarkable thing about Hawk's rise is that his pictures are licensed under the Creative Commons license and are freely shared with anyone, with no permission required for personal use. Hawk is both an artist and a giver of gifts. The result is that he leads a tribe, he has plenty of paid work and he is known for his talents. In short, he is indispensable. ●

## There Is No Map

What does it take to lead?

The key distinction is the ability to forge your own path, to discover a route from one place to another that hasn't been paved, measured and quantified. So many times we want someone to tell us exactly what to do, and so many times that's exactly the wrong approach.

Diamond cutters have an intrinsic understanding of the stone in their hands. They can touch and see exactly where the best lines are; they *know*.

The greatest artists do just that. They see and understand the challenges before them, without carrying the baggage of expectations or attachment. The diamond cutter doesn't imagine the diamond he wants. Instead, he sees the diamond that is possible.

### Seeing, Discernment and Prajna

You can't make a map unless you can see the world as it is. You have to know where you are and know where you're going before you can figure out how to go about getting there.

No one has a transparent view of the world. In fact, we all carry around a personal worldview — the biases and experiences and expectations that color the way we perceive the world.

The loyal employee has a worldview shaped by experience. She wants a stable place to work and she believes in you. So when you show her your plan, her worldview changes her feelings and her analysis of your plan.

And the lawyer and the competitor and the skeptic and the mother-in-law each have their own worldviews, biases and expectations. None of us knows the absolute truth, of course, but the goal is to approach a situation with the least possible bias.

So the manager and the investor seek out an employee with discernment, the ability to see things as they truly are. A Buddhist might call this "prajna."

A life without attachment and stress can give you the freedom to see things as they are and call them as you see them. If you had this skill, what an asset you would be to any organization. ●

## Making the Choice

You can either fit in or stand out. Not both.

You are either defending the status quo or challenging it: playing defense and trying to keep everything "all right" or leading and provoking and striving to make everything better.

Either you are embracing the drama of your everyday life or seeing the world as it is. These are all choices; you can't have it both ways.

### Heads, You Win

Perhaps the biggest shift the new economy brings is self-determination. Access to capital and appropriate connections aren't nearly as essential as they were. Linchpins are made, not born.

There's no doubt that environment still plays a huge role. The right teacher or the right family support or the accidents of race or birth location are still significant factors. But the new rules mean that even if you've got all the right background, you won't make it unless you choose to.

These are internal choices, not external factors. How we respond to the opportunities and challenges of the outside world now determines how much the outside world values us.

### How Does a Linchpin Work?

In a world with only a few indispensable people, the linchpin has two elegant choices:

1. **Hire plenty of factory workers.** Scale like crazy. Take advantage of the facts that most people want a map, most people are willing to work cheaply, most people want to be the factory. You win because you extract the value of their labor the labor they're surrendering too cheaply.
2. **Find a boss who can't live without a linchpin.** Find a boss who adequately values your scarcity and your contribution, who will reward you with freedom and respect. Do the work. Make a difference.

If you are not currently doing either of these, refuse to settle. You deserve better. ●

## The Culture of Connection

Most psychologists agree that there are five traits that are essential in how people look at us: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability.

Here's the thing: These are *also* the signs of the linchpin. Work — great work — has been transformed in just 100 years from doing things that involve heavy lifting to leveraging and enhancing your personality. If you hope to succeed because you are able to connect and work with other people, then that will require you to improve your personality in each of these five elements.

Do you know someone who is more open to new ideas or more agreeable than you are? More stable or extroverted? More conscientious? If so, then you better get moving. It's so easy to fall into the trap of focusing on using a spreadsheet or a time clock to measure your progress, but in fact, it's the investment you make in your interactions that will pay off.

### Creating a Culture of Connection

Think about business-to-business sales. The key point of distinction between vendors calling on a company is rarely price. It's the perceived connection between the prospect and the organization.

Now, consider job satisfaction. The key point of distinction between places to work is rarely the work you'll be asking the employee to do. It's the perceived connection between the employee and the people he or she works with.

Thus, the individual in the organization who collects, connects and nurtures relationships is indispensable. This isn't about recording the information in a database somewhere. This is about holding the relationships as sacred as they deserve to be. ●

## The Seven Abilities of the Linchpin

Linchpins do two things for the organization. They exert emotional labor and they make a map. Those contributions take many forms. Here is one way to think about the list of what makes you indispensable:

1. **Providing a unique interface between members of the organization.** A linchpin helps lead and connects people in the organization, actively and with finesse. This takes emotional labor, and it can't be done by following the instructions in a manual.
2. **Delivering unique creativity.** *Creativity* is personal, original, unexpected and useful. *Unique creativity* requires domain knowledge, a position of trust and generosity to actually contribute. "Unique" implies that the creativity is focused and insightful.
3. **Managing a situation or organization of great complexity.** When the situation gets too complex, it's impossible to follow the manual, because there is no manual. Linchpins make their own maps and thus allow the organization to navigate more quickly than it ever could if it had to wait for the paralyzed crowd to figure out what to do next.
4. **Leading customers.** The new model of commerce is interactive, fluid and decentralized. That means that organizations need more than a tiny team. It means that every person who interacts with a consumer (or a business being sold to, or a donor to a nonprofit, or a voter) is doing marketing as leadership. There's no script for leadership.
5. **Inspiring staff.** You can't say, "Get more excited and insightful or you're fired." Actually, you can, but it won't work. The front-desk worker at a hotel who runs out in the middle of the night to buy gym shorts for a guest isn't doing it out of fear of being reprimanded. He does it because he was inspired to do so by a leader who wasn't even in the hotel when the clerk decided to contribute.
6. **Providing deep domain knowledge.** Having deep domain knowledge by itself is rarely sufficient to becoming indispensable. Combining that knowledge with smart decisions and generous contributions, though, changes things.
7. **Possessing a unique talent.** If you want to be a linchpin, the power you bring to the table has to be very difficult to replace. Be bolder and think bigger. If you're not the best in the world (the customer's world) at your unique talent, you have only two choices: Develop the other attributes that make you a linchpin or get a lot better at your unique talent. ●

## When It Doesn't Work

What happens when the conversation doesn't happen, the product doesn't sell, the consumer is not delighted, your boss is not happy and the people aren't moved?

Make more art.

Give more gifts.

Learn from what you did and then do more.

The only alternative is to give up and to become an old-school cog. Which means failing. Trying and failing is better than merely failing, because trying makes you an artist and gives you the right to try again.

### Pulitzer Prize Fighting: You Might Not Be Good Enough

There's no guarantee that anyone who sets out to win a Pulitzer is going to win it. There's no guarantee that merely because you're passionate about Web design, your site is actually going to be popular.

The vivid truth is this: Now that we have the freedom to create, we must embrace the fact that not all creations are equal and some people aren't going to win.

That doesn't mean you're a loser. It might mean that you're making the wrong art, drawing the wrong map. If you're not winning as a stockbroker, perhaps your art lies somewhere else.

The challenge lies in knowing your market and yourself well enough to see the truth.

### Two Tactics That Can Help You

The system we work in is changing, but it's an evolutionary change, not a revolutionary one. Organizations rarely give linchpins all the support and encouragement they deserve. Which means that your efforts won't always get what they need to succeed.

There are two tactics that can help you:

1. **Understand that there's a difference between the right answer and the answer you can sell.**

Too often, heretical ideas in organizations are shot down. They're not refused because they're wrong; they're refused because the person doing the selling doesn't have the stature or track record to sell them. Your boss has a worldview too. When you propose something that triggers his resistance, what do you expect will happen?

2. **Focus on making changes that work down, not up.**

Interacting with customers and employees is often easier than influencing bosses and investors. Over time, as you create an environment where your insight and generosity pay off, the people above you will notice and you'll get more freedom and authority.

Don't ask your boss to run interference, cover for you or take the blame. Instead, create moments where your boss can happily take credit. Once that cycle begins, you can be sure it will continue. ●

## Summary

Every successful organization is built around people. Humans who do art. People who interact with other people. Men and women who don't merely shuffle money but interact, give gifts and connect.

All these interactions are art. Art isn't only a painting; it's anything that changes someone for the better, a non-anonymous interaction that leads to a human (not simply a commercial) conclusion.

Art can't be bought and sold. It must contain an element that's a gift, something that brings the artist closer to the viewer, not something that insulates one from the other. So, we need to remember how to be artists.

Artists, at least the great ones, see the world more clearly than the rest of us. They have prajna, a sense of what actually is, not simply the artist's take on it. That honest sight allows them to see the future over the cloudy horizon. As our world changes faster and faster, it is these honest artists who will describe our future and lead us there.

### Last Word

The only thing keeping you from being one of these artists is the resistance: the loud voice of the lizard brain telling you that you can't possibly do it, that you don't deserve it, that people will laugh at you. Anyone who makes the choice to overcome the resistance and has the insight to make the right map can become a successful linchpin.

You can't fake it, though, because human beings are too talented at sensing when a gift is not a gift, when we're being played or manipulated. And sometimes, our art isn't enough. It's not enough to get us a sale or even make us a living. But we persist because making art is what we do.

The result of this art, these risks, the gifts and the humanity coming together is both wonderful and ironic. The result of getting back in touch with our pre-commercial selves will actually create a post-commercial world that feeds us, enriches us and gives us the stability we've been seeking for so long. ●

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Linchpin*, you'll also like:

1. ***Be a Shortcut* by Scott G. Halford.** Shortcuts are individuals and companies that function like lifelines to the people and organizations that most depend on them. Halford explains how to become indispensable to employers.
2. ***Meatball Sundae* by Seth Godin.** Godin offers a definitive guide to get your products, marketing messages and internal systems in sync.
3. ***Tribes* by Seth Godin.** Godin offers the perspective that lasting and substantive change can be best effected by a tribe: a group of people connected to each other, to a leader and to an idea.

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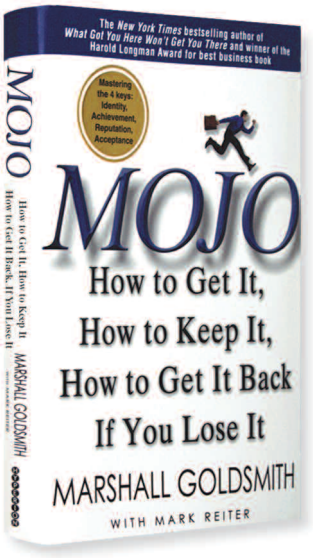
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Career & Self-Development: Advancement

# Mojo

## How to Get It, How to Keep It, How to Get It Back If You Lose It




by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Mojo comes from the moment we do something that is purposeful, powerful and positive, and the rest of the world recognizes it. *Mojo* is about that moment — and how we can create it in our lives, maintain it and recapture it when we need it.

Top executive coach Marshall Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get — and keep — our Mojo. He explains how our professional and personal Mojo is impacted by four key factors and the questions they ask: *identity* (Who do you think you are?), *achievement* (What have you done lately?), *reputation*, (Who do other people think you are — and what have you done lately?) and *acceptance* (What can you change — and when do you need to just "let it go"?).

Mojo is that positive spirit — toward what we are doing now — that starts from the inside and radiates to the outside. Mojo is at its peak when we are experiencing both happiness and meaning in what we are doing and communicating this experience to the world around us. This summary provides practical tools that can help anyone achieve both happiness and meaning, not only in business, but in life.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to integrate and focus your life and work.
- How to contribute to the world.
- How to find more meaning for your life through self-realization and self-actualization.
- How to deal with human behavior in your business and personal life.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **MOJO**

**by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter**

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## You and Your Mojo

The word "mojo" originally referred to a folk belief in the supernatural powers of a voodoo charm, often in the form of a piece of cloth or a small pouch.

Over time, the word has evolved to describe a sense of positive spirit and direction, especially in the shifting tides of sports, business and politics.

To other people, Mojo is a more elusive sense of personal advancement through the world. You're moving forward, making progress, achieving goals, clearing hurdles, passing the competition — and doing so with increasing ease. Sports people call this being "in the zone." Others describe it under the umbrella term "flow."

A new definition of Mojo spins off from the great value attached to finding happiness and meaning in life.

Mojo plays a vital role in our pursuit of happiness and meaning because it is about achieving two simple goals: loving what you do and showing it. These goals govern an operational definition: **Mojo is that positive spirit toward what we are doing now that starts from the inside and radiates to the outside.**

Our Mojo is apparent when the positive feelings toward what we are doing come from inside us and are evident for others to see.

Four vital ingredients need to be combined in order for you to have great Mojo: *identity, achievement, reputation* and *acceptance*.

### Measuring Your Mojo

How much Mojo do you have? How can you measure your Mojo?

There are people, who by all external measures — money, respect, power, status — are "winning." They are outpacing their peers and competition quite handily. And yet inside they derive little satisfaction or meaning from their job or achievements.

Mojo is not merely about the rush we feel when we're on a winning streak. It's not only about the direction we're heading in, nor is it about the pace of change we're creating around us. Mojo is an expression of the harmony — or lack of harmony — between what we feel inside about whatever we are doing and what we show on the outside. ●

## The Mojo Paradox

As much as we all claim to want happiness and meaning in our lives, there's a paradoxical catch that thwarts us at every turn. It is called the Mojo Paradox and it states: *Our default response in life is not to experience happiness. Our default response in life is not to experience meaning. Our default response in life is to experience inertia.*

In other words, our most common, everyday process — the thing we do more often than anything else — is *continue to do what we're already doing.*

Once you appreciate the Mojo Paradox, you become aware of its paralyzing effect on every aspect of your life, not just the mindless routines of eating or watching TV, but also things that really matter — such as the level of happiness and meaning in your life — and you become more thoughtful about turning things around.

How do we break the cycle of inertia? All that's required is the use of a simple discipline.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

As you go through your day, evaluate every activity on a 1 to 10 scale (with 10 being the highest score) on two simple questions: How much long-term benefit or meaning did I experience from this activity? How much short-term satisfaction or happiness did I experience in this activity?

Simply record the activities that make up your day, both at work and at home, and then evaluate each activity by applying these two questions. At the end of the day you will have a chart that tracks your experience of happiness and meaning.

If you journey through life knowing that all of your activities will be evaluated on these two simple questions, you will tend to experience more happiness and meaning in each activity and, in the aggregate, you will have a happier and more meaningful life. ●

## The Building Blocks of Mojo

Before you can assess your Mojo, you have to determine who "you" are. How do you define yourself?

The first building block is identity. Identity is a complicated subject, and we make it even more complicated when we're not sure where to look for the best answer. Many people hurtle back to their past — to signal events, memorable triumphs, painful disasters — to define themselves. Some rely on the testimony of others — a boss or teacher's good review — as a means of defining themselves. Still others project themselves into the future, defining themselves as who they would like to be rather than who they actually are.

How do we know who we are? Our identities are *remembered, reflected, programmed* and *created*. First, review the various components of your current identity. Where did they originate? If your present identity is fine with you, just work on becoming an even better version of who you are. If you want to make a change in your identity, be open to the fact you may be able to change more than you originally believed that you could.

Assuming that you do not have "incurable" or "unchangeable" limitations, you can create a new identity for your future without sacrificing your past.

Your Mojo is that positive spirit toward what you are doing now that starts on the inside and radiates to the outside. To understand how you are relating to any activity, you need to understand your identity — who you are. To change your Mojo, you may need to create a new identity for yourself. ●

### Waiters and Mojo

What is interesting about waiters, at least in terms of Mojo, is the wide variety of attitudes that people bring to a narrowly defined job that ends with a monetary tip.

The best ones appreciate the process. They realize that the more engaging and positive they are, the bigger their tip. So no matter how they feel about their circumstances, they radiate a positive spirit (high Mojo).

The worst ones make it a point of honor to let you know that they find the job demeaning (low Mojo), that they are really more interesting in their other life (with more Mojo).

Finally, there are the career waiters. There's a professional snap to how they do their job, and they never hint that they would rather be doing something else. They are committed to doing the task well and they are capable of mining personal satisfaction from it. If they have a bad day, they don't take it out on their customers.

## Achievement: What Have You Done Lately?

Our achievements are the second component in creating our Mojo.

We tend to gauge our achievements by using two differing criteria. On the one hand, there are the accomplishments that make others aware of our ability and result in their recognizing us. This is what most people think about when they discuss achievement. On the other hand, there are the accomplishments that only we are aware of, related to our own abilities, that make us feel good about ourselves. Both are legitimate in their own way.

In the "best of all worlds" the two types of achievement could be the same — what we do that impresses others makes us feel great about ourselves. But it doesn't always work out that way. Sometimes we perform magnificently at work, to great acclaim, but it doesn't elevate how we feel about ourselves. Sometimes we do something wonderful for the world and no one else is impressed.

### False Assumptions

Chip away at the false assumptions that distort your achievements and you'll get a much clearer picture of what you've done lately. Without it, you'll never be

able to envision everything else you can do.

By increasing our understanding of achievement — what it means to us and what it means to the world — we can increase our Mojo. We can look at ourselves more objectively. We can determine what really matters in our lives. We can strive for achievement that really matters to us — and let go of achievement that does not create happiness and meaning in our lives. If we want to increase our Mojo, we can either change the degree of our achievement (how well we are doing) or change the definition of our achievement (what we are trying to do well). ●

## Reputation: Who Do People Think You Are?

Reputation is the third element in establishing your Mojo. It's where you add up who you are (identity) and what you've done (achievement) and toss the combined sum out into the world to see how people respond. Your reputation is people's recognition — or rejection — of your identity and achievement. Sometimes you'll agree with the world's opinion. Sometimes you won't. But many times you may not even be aware of it. You cannot create your reputation by yourself (the rest of the world, by definition, always has something to say about it). But you can influence it.

### How to Change Your Reputation

The truth is, reputation doesn't happen overnight. In the same way that *one event* can't form your reputation, *one corrective gesture* can't reform it either. You need a sequence of consistent, similar actions to begin the rebuilding process.

It's doable, but it requires personal insight and, most of all, discipline.

You have to be consistent in how you present yourself — to the point where you don't mind being "guilty of repeating yourself." If you abandon that consistency, people will get confused. The reputation you're trying to form gets muddied by conflicting evidence and eventually loses its sharp focus.

By impacting our reputation we can impact our Mojo. Having a reputation that others find bothersome can make keeping your Mojo as easy as "pushing a big rock up a steep hill." It is theoretically possible, but practically challenging. Having a great reputation — in an area that matters in your life — makes Mojo maintenance more of a joy than a chore. ●

## Acceptance: When Can You Let Go?

Worrying about the past and being anxious about the future can easily destroy our Mojo. It upsets us emotionally; it clouds our judgment; it fills us with regret and it can lead to self-punishment.

When we cannot accept a situation for what it is and refuse to forgive people for causing that situation, who do we ultimately hurt? The answer is always the same: ourselves. By carrying around anger and negative baggage, we weigh ourselves down. We limit our opportunities to find meaning and happiness. We kill our Mojo.

That's what makes acceptance as important as identity, achievement and reputation in building our Mojo. It's the element that liberates us from toxic emotions. When everything around us seems confusing, acceptance reminds us what really matters.

Try it the next time you find yourself engorged with anger at someone who has disappointed or hurt you. Ask yourself who is making you feel upset, angry or crazy. Then set aside every thought, every argument and every image about the people who are upsetting you. Blank all of it out — and focus on these people as they are in your life now. Not for what they did in the past. Not on what you want to happen to them in the future. They're being who they are. (If you had their parents, their genes, their résumé, you might be them, too.) You don't have to like them, agree with them or even respect them. Just accept them for being who they are.

When you can do that, you can forgive them for being who they are — and forgive yourself for being who you are.

Change what you can and "let go" of what you cannot change. ●

## Mojo Killers

When people lose their Mojo, it's usually because of a series of simple, hard-to-spot mistakes that lead up to the humiliating result — mistakes like these:

**1. Over-Committing.** Before replying with an enthusiastic "yes" to that next request, think of the long-term impact on your Mojo.

**2. Waiting for the Facts to Change.** When the facts are not to your liking, ask yourself, "What path would I take if I knew that the situation would not get better?" Then get ready to do that.

**3. Looking for Logic in All the Wrong Places**. If you focus on making a positive difference, instead of just

being satisfied with feeling "objective," you will benefit both your company and your career.

**4. Bashing the Boss.** The next time you start to bash the boss, think about what you may be doing to your own Mojo and the Mojo of the people around you. If you really have a problem with bosses, *talk to them* about it. If you feel that you cannot talk with them, leave. If you cannot talk with them and cannot leave, accept them and make the best of it.

**5. Refusing to Change Because of "Sunk Costs."** Are your decisions based on what you might lose or what you have to gain? If it's the former, your devotion to sunk costs might be costing you more than you know. It may cost you your Mojo.

**6. Confusing the Mode You're In.** If you look around your company, you'll see that the executives you most admire tend to be those who, with consistent discipline, never drift out of professional mode. They have clear ideas about their identity, achievement and reputation. They have chosen a role for themselves and they rarely go off script. That's why they have Mojo. ●

## Four Pointless Arguments

Arguing can put our Mojo at risk by needlessly creating enemies that could have been allies. Many of our arguments fall into classic patterns that, if looked at from a distance, would seem silly and beneath our dignity.

It is worth arguing over true injustice in the workplace or the world. But it is pointless to argue about perceived injustices that usually say more about our own egos than the "cause" we are championing.

By recognizing classic argument traps, we can better determine which battles to fight — and which to avoid.

**1. Let Me Keep Talking.** When we keep "fighting after the bell has rung," we can start damaging our reputation and, ultimately, our Mojo. In the end we will not win more arguments, we will win less. Our arguing will be viewed more as our own stubborn need to prove we are right than as a sincere commitment to help our organization.

**2. I Had It Rougher Than You.** You end up looking foolish when you try to glorify your past for all its deficiencies and all the suffering it brought upon you. All you're doing is creating a contest of competing memories.

**3. Why Did You Do That?** We never really know other people's motives for doing something that affects us. People do things that annoy or enrage us, and it's almost impossible to get to the bottom of why they did them, yet we waste hours trying.

**4. It's Not Fair.** Great influencers are like great salespeople. When the customers don't buy, they don't whine and blame the customers. They focus on what they can learn and do a better job next time. Great influencers keep their Mojo. Poor influencers lose it. ●

## That Job Is Gone!

Many jobs don't exist anymore. They've been exported beyond our borders. And even if they've stayed inside the United States, many of the long-term benefits that made them so attractive have been stripped out by cost-cutting and global competition. What's even harder to accept is that those jobs are not coming back.

The forces that created this new high-stress environment are not mysterious.

The biggest factor is globalization. Westerners not only compete with other Americans and Europeans for the best jobs, they have to compete with a wave of smart, highly motivated candidates from India, China and Eastern Europe.

Another factor is the dramatically increased gap in compensation between the top people in an organization and everyone else.

A third factor is decreased job security. The shortage of mid-level jobs has only widened the gap between society's economic winners and losers.

Another factor is the steady erosion in the past 20 years of company-funded guaranteed health care and retirement security. This affects professionals as well as wage earners, meaning that everyone worries more about long-term security.

A fifth factor is the global financial crisis that began in 2008. It has heightened the already-present fear in the workplace — fear of losing a job, or a home, or of ever finding high-quality professional work again.

The sixth and most lethal factor is new technology. New technology, hand in hand with globalization, has created a 24/7 world where work never seems to stop.

In this new world, Mojo is both harder to attain and more important to keep. When your competition is already responding to a tough new environment by working harder and longer, you need unique tools to separate yourself from the throng. ●

## Your Mojo Tool Kit

If you step back, you'll discover that you're still in control of your life and destiny. You have the power to create significant positive change.

*What can you change?* The answer is simple: You can change either You or It.

*You* is how you think, how you feel, what you say — basically everything about you that's under your control.

*It,* on the other hand, refers to any influencing forces in your life that are not you. It could be another individual, or a group of people, or a job, or a place, or a relationship, or the results of a choice you made in the past that needs undoing. It is everything that's not You.

Changing You is not inherently preferable or easier than changing It (and vice versa). The best approach depends on the situation.

Once you're aware of this "You or It" dichotomy, you begin to see manifestations everywhere and you begin to realize its impact on Mojo. You see that in all work and personal situations, Mojo is a function of the relationship between who you are (i.e., You) and your situation (i.e., It). If you cannot change You, Mojo is influenced by your relationship to It. If you cannot change It, Mojo is influenced by your relationship to You. It's your choice.

The following 14 actions can help you attack the challenge of changing You or It. Like tools, they don't work unless you grab them in your hands and use them.

These actions are organized into four parts, each corresponding to one of the four building blocks of Mojo: Identity, Achievement, Reputation and Acceptance. ●

## Identity: Making Sense of Who You Are

The following four tools can help reshape or refine the "you" that you present to the world:

**Tool #1: Establish Criteria That Matter to You**. Before you can establish or regain your Mojo, you first have to imagine what it looks like and what it takes to get there. If you write it down, that's your criteria. It's a good place to start.

**Tool #2: Find Out Where You're "Living."** A great way to test your Mojo is to consider your life at work — then consider your life outside of work. Research shows that people who find happiness and meaning at work tend to be the same people that find happiness and meaning at home! In other words, our Mojo is coming from inside ourselves — as much as it is from what we are doing. For the majority of people, the only way to increase overall satisfaction with life is to increase *both* happiness and meaning.

**Tool #3: Be the Optimist in the Room.** If you can maintain your optimism in the face of negative forces, you have an enormous advantage over most people. Optimism is not just a mind-set; it's a form of behavior that guides everything we do. It can be self-fulfilling. And it's contagious. The optimist in the room always has more influence than anyone else. People pick up on optimism and gravitate toward it.

**Tool #4: Take Away One Thing.** The untapped power of subtraction is within your grasp. It's as easy as saying to yourself, *My life might actually be better if I took away* _____ and fill in the blank. Subtract something from your life that is a "big deal." There are so many things we can lose in our daily lives without harming our Mojo that it's inexcusable if we can't identify *one item* to toss away to increase our Mojo. ●

## Achievement: Making It Easier to Get Things Done

The following tools offer courses of action that put our achievements in sharper relief:

**Tool #5: Rebuild One Brick at a Time.** Here are some rules to consider so you finish what you've started and people take note:

***First rule:*** Stop trying to be an oracle. Stop waiting for more information or for better circumstances before you get started.

***Second rule:*** Move quickly. You're constructing a sequence of successes, and you might as well do it quickly.

***Third rule:*** Say two no's for every yes. Be more ruthless about saying no, especially when other people try to steer you off course.

***Fourth rule:*** It pays to advertise. People have preconceptions about you. They not only filter everything you do through those preconceptions, but they are constantly looking for evidence that confirms them.

**Tool #6: Live Your Mission in the Small Moments Too.** Mission statements are now regarded as overbaked relics of the 1980s — a faddish buzzword of the same vintage as "excellence" and "quality." That may be true, but the fact that a concept is no longer the newest fad does not mean it doesn't have value. What turned mission statements into a corporate joke was how quickly companies broadcast their embrace of a concept and then didn't follow up on it with consistent action. You don't *write* a mission statement. You live it and breathe it. A lot of organizations never did that.

When you have a mission, you give yourself a purpose — and that adds clarity to all the actions and decisions that follow.

There's an underestimated value to articulating your mission: It focuses you, points you in a new direction, alters your behavior and, as a result, changes other people's perception of you.

**Tool #7: Swim in the Blue Water.** It's dangerous to extrapolate a personal strategy out of a corporate competitive strategy. We are human beings, not strategic business units. But there's some appeal in the idea that we can find a "blue water" alternative (the uncontested space) as we shape our personal aspirations. Our identities and reputations are made in small, incisive moments. We can't all be transformative geniuses who see the world in a paradigm-shifting light. But we can all find a way to differentiate ourselves, however minimally, from the thundering herd — and in doing so, we achieve a small slice of singularity in our world.

If you want to enhance your Mojo, you can do worse than pursue an achievement that has everyone wondering, *Why didn't I think of that?* ●

## Reputation: Taking Control of Your 'Story'

The following tools operate in that space where our identity and achievements intersect with the world and shape our reputation:

**Tool #8: When to Stay, When to Go.** Can you find more happiness and meaning by changing the situation? Can you find more happiness and meaning by changing yourself? What are your real alternatives? Conduct a Mojo analysis that clarifies what you need to change — make your decision — accept the trade-offs — and get on with life.

**Tool #9: Hello, Goodbye.** No matter how you dress up a dismissal, you still have to deal with the perception that something went wrong, you came up short and you may not be all that you're cracked up to be.

But it doesn't have to be quite that bad, not if you have a pre-exit strategy; leave the company (on positive terms) — before the company leaves you (on negative terms); accept that your identification with your vanished job is pointless, and move quickly to transfer your affections to something else; and ask yourself: How solid is my reputation? And is it solid because of what I've done or who I work for?

**Tool #10: Adopt a Metrics System.** We all employ personal metrics to measure our progress during the day. If we're on a diet, our metric is stepping on the bathroom scale each morning. Applying personal metrics when the numbers may be depressing not only tells us where we're failing but how to change our luck.

Once you have your personal metric, no matter how alarming the data, you'll know what to do next.

**Tool #11: Reduce This Number.** How much of our interpersonal communication is spent on pointless, negative, nonproductive topics?

What percent of all interpersonal communication time is spent on people talking about how smart, special or wonderful they are — or listening while someone else does this, plus people talking about how stupid, inept or bad someone else is — or listening while someone else does this? Reducing this number costs nothing, it will save you time and it will make your work and home life more positive. ●

## Why Blue Water?

The blue/red water metaphor comes from *Blue Ocean Strategy,* in which W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne, two professors at INSEAD, France's leading business school, divided the marketing universe into Red Oceans (the known market space comprising all the markets in existence today), where companies outperform rivals by grabbing a greater share of existing demand, and Blue Oceans (the unknown market space, untainted by competition, comprising all the markets not in existence today), where demand is created rather than fought over and the growth potential is limited only by one's imagination.

## Acceptance: Change What You Can, Let Go of What You Can't

The following tools will help you deal with some elements of life that you may not be able to directly control:

**Tool #12: Influence Up as Well as Down.** Every decision in the world is made by the person who has the power to make that decision, and in most cases not you. If you influence the decision maker, you will make a positive difference. If you do not influence this person, you will not make a positive difference. Make peace with this. You will have a better life! And you will make more of a positive difference in your organization and you will be happier.

**Tool #13: Name It, Frame It, Claim It.** If you want to improve your understanding of a situation, give it a name.

Naming something lets us organize the action into a

coherent shape. It lets us compare the action to what has gone before. It helps us retain it for future purposes, so that we may recognize — and respond to — the action more brilliantly the next time we face it. Naming helps us learn, make sense and take control.

**Tool #14: Give Your Friends a Lifetime Pass.** When considering the actions of a friend who has offended you, ask one question: Am I better off or worse off because of having this person in my life?

If we can be that forgiving with family members, why can't we extend the same level of acceptance to people who, when all is said and done, have demonstrably made our lives better? ●

## Connecting Inside to Outside

You should not feel obligated do any of this alone! If you want to improve your performance at almost anything, your odds of success improve considerably the moment you enlist someone else to help you.

Some of us already practice this instinctively, when we enlist a friend to attend yoga class with us or commit to training for a marathon (an inherently lonely sport) the moment a friend agrees to join us. We enjoy the companionship and support, but knowing we're answerable to someone else, even if it's only to schedule a time for a training run, is also motivating. That small obligation keeps us focused. At some point we reach a point of no return where we don't want to disappoint a friend or don't want to be the first to give up. Pairing up provides us with a discipline that we cannot summon as readily working solo.

This "power of two" thinking works well for overt personal objectives, such as quitting smoking or losing weight or athletic training, where we're relying more on moral support, rather than instructive coaching, to reach a clearly marked finish line.

But enlisting someone else to help us isn't our first impulse when we dive into a self-improvement campaign involving our professional lives. Whether it's upgrading the quality of our customer base, or landing a big promotion, or executing a career U-turn, our initial impulse is to do it on our own. After all, it's our goal, our effort, our accomplishment and our payoff if we succeed. How can we share the burden — and glory — with someone else?

Part of the reason behind this is psychic self-preservation on our part; if we fall short of our goal, we want to contain the failure to a circle of one: ourselves. If no one knows what we're striving for, then no one can criticize us for faltering.

Don't let your ego block you from your goals. Start seeing every challenge as a choice between (a) I can do it by myself and (b) I may be able to do it better with help.

Once you accept that you are judged more on the result than on how many hands played a part in achieving it, you'll make the right choice. ●

## Coda: You Go First!

Do you want the people who love you at home to be happy? Do you want the people who respect you at work to be happy? You go first. You be happy. Mojo is that positive spirit toward what you are doing that starts on the inside and radiates to the outside.

Do you want the people that you love and respect to have Mojo? Show them yours! There are good people out there who look up to us. They respect us. They want to be like us. We are role models for them.

What message do we send to the people we love at home when we communicate that we are unhappy and that our lives at home are meaningless? *Being with you does not bring me joy and my life at home really doesn't matter that much to me.*

What message do we send to the people who we respect at work when we communicate that we are unhappy and that our jobs are meaningless? *I wish that I were not here today. I would rather be doing almost anything than working with you or in this company.*

On the other hand, what message do we send to the people — at work and home — when our Mojo is high? *I find joy in my life when I am with you. Being with you — in this home or in this workplace — matters to me. You are important and what I am doing with you is important.*

Is there any better message that we can communicate to the people who trust us, respect us and love us? Having a happier and more meaningful life will help the wonderful people in your life find more happiness and meaning. Don't just do it for you. Do it for them! ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Mojo*, you'll also like:

1. ***How the Best Leaders Lead* by Brian Tracy.** Management expert Tracy teaches you the secrets he's taught executives over his long career.
2. ***Derailed* by Tim Irwin.** Sometimes the best way to learn the right way is to learn what others have done wrong. This book profiles the tragic downfall of several notable executives.
3. ***Execution* by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan.** This book sets out a five-step process for getting successful results. It advises leaders to get more involved in the details of execution to get the job done.

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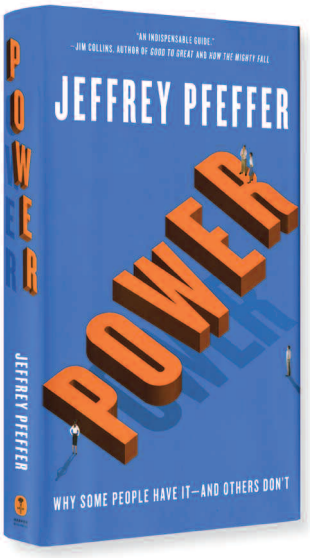
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Career & Self-Development: Change & Advancement

# Power

## Why Some People Have It — and Others Don't




by Jeffrey Pfeffer

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Over decades of consulting with corporations and teaching MBA students the nuances of organizational power, Jeffrey Pfeffer has watched numerous people suffer career reversals even as others prevail despite the odds.

He explains that our most common mistake is not having a realistic understanding of what makes some people more successful than others. By believing that life is fair, he writes, we tend to subscribe to the "just-world phenomenon," which leaves us unprepared for the challenges and competition of the real world.

In *Power* Pfeffer brings decades of insights to a wider audience. Brimming with counterintuitive advice, examples from various countries and surprising findings based on his research, this groundbreaking guide reveals the strategies and tactics that separate winners from losers.

Power, Pfeffer explains, is not something that can be learned from those in charge: Their advice often puts a rosy spin on their ascent and focuses on what should have worked, rather than what actually did. Instead, *Power* reveals the true paths to power and career success. Iconoclastic and grounded in real human interaction, this summary is an essential organizational survival manual and a new standard in the field of leadership.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How working in underexploited niches can help you develop leverage.
- How power can be used and harnessed not only for individual gain but also for the benefit of others.
- How well-established principles can help you obtain more influence.
- How to succeed and wield power in the real world.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **POWER**

**by Jeffrey Pfeffer**

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## Introduction: Be Prepared for Power

Being politically savvy and seeking power are related to career success and even to managerial performance. For instance, one study investigated the primary motivations of managers and their professional success. One group of managers was primarily motivated by a need for affiliation — they were more interested in being liked than getting things done. A second group was primarily motivated by a need for achievement — goal attainment for themselves. And a third group was primarily interested in power. The evidence showed that this third group, the managers primarily interested in power, was the most effective, not only in achieving positions of influence inside companies but also in accomplishing their jobs.

In another example, Gerald Ferris of Florida State University and colleagues have developed an 18-item political skills inventory. Research on 35 school administrators in the Midwestern United States and 474 branch managers of a national financial services firm showed that people who had more political skill received higher performance evaluations and were rated as more effective leaders.

### The Real World

So welcome to the real world — not necessarily the world we want, but the world that exists. It can be a tough world out there and building and using power are useful organizational survival skills. There is a lot of zero-sum competition for status and jobs. Most organizations have only one CEO. There is only one managing partner in professional services firms, only one school superintendent in each district, only one prime minister or president at a time — you get the picture. With more well-qualified people competing for each step on the organizational ladder all the time, rivalry is intense and only getting more so as there are fewer and fewer management positions.

Some of the individuals competing for advancement bend the rules of fair play or ignore them completely. Don't complain about this or wish the world were different. You can compete and even triumph in organizations of all types, large and small, public or private sector, if you understand the principles of power and are willing to use them. Your task is to know how to prevail in the political battles you will face. ●

## It Takes More Than Performance

People in power are busy with their own agendas and jobs. Such people, including those higher up in your own organization, probably aren't paying that much attention to you and what you are doing. You should not assume that your boss knows or notices everything about your job performance or has perfect information about your activities. Therefore, your first responsibility is to ensure that those at higher levels in your company know what you are accomplishing. And the best way to ensure they know what you are achieving is to tell them.

For you to attain a position of power, those in power have to choose you for a senior role. If you blend into the woodwork, no one will care about you, even if you are doing a great job.

### Beyond Visibility

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

In advertising, one of the most prominent measures of effectiveness is ad recall — not taste, logic or artistry — simply, do you remember the ad and the product? The same holds true for you and your path to power. That's because of the importance of what is called "the mere exposure effect." As originally described by the late social psychologist Robert Zajonc, the effect refers to the fact that people, other things being equal, prefer and choose what is familiar to them — what they have seen or experienced before. Research shows that repeated exposure increases positive affect and reduces negative feelings, that people prefer the familiar because this preference reduces uncertainty and that the effect of exposure on liking and decision making is a robust phenomenon that occurs in different cultures and in a variety of different domains of choice.

The simple fact is that people like what they remember — and that includes you. In order for your great performance to be appreciated, it needs to be visible. But beyond visibility, the mere exposure research teaches us that familiarity produces preference. Simply put, in many cases, being memorable equals getting chosen.

## The Personal Qualities That Bring Influence

Ron Meyer, the president and chief operating officer of Universal Studios since 1995, is the longest serving head of a major motion picture company. A powerful figure in the film industry, he also provides an example of a life transformed. Meyer dropped out of high school when he was 15 and a couple of years later he joined the U.S. Marines. After leaving the Marines he got a job at a talent agency as a chauffer, a position that permitted him to learn a lot about the entertainment business as he listened to the conversations of clients. After working as an agent for the William Morris Agency, Meyer and some friends founded the Creative Artists Agency, a position that helped establish him as a power broker in Hollywood.

Meyer, like many successful people, profoundly changed over the course of his life. He developed qualities that permitted him to obtain and hold on to influence. If you are going to do likewise, you need to successfully surmount three obstacles:

- First, you must come to believe that personal change is possible. Otherwise, you won't even try to develop the attributes that bring power — you will just accept that you are who you are rather than embarking on a sometimes difficult path of personal growth and development.
- Second, you need to see yourself and your strengths and weaknesses as objectively as possible. This is difficult because in our desire to self-enhance — to think good things about ourselves — we avoid negative information and overemphasize any positive feedback we receive.
- And third, you need to understand the most important qualities for building a power base so you can focus your inevitably limited time and attention on developing those.

### Change Is Always Possible

People often think that whatever qualities are needed for building a path to power, either you have them or you don't, at least by the time you're an adult. But the biographies of Meyer and scores of other figures in political and business life belie that idea.

## Choosing Where to Start

Where you begin your career affects your rate of progress as well as how far you go. At two University of California campuses, the speed with which professors moved up a civil service-type salary ladder reflected the power of their academic department — those in more powerful departments moved up the salary scale more quickly. A study of 338 managers who began their career in a 3,500-employee public utility found that the power of the unit where people began their careers affected the rate of salary growth, with people starting in more powerful units moving up more rapidly. That study also found that managers who began their careers in higher-power departments, such as operations, distribution and customer service, were more likely to remain in high-power units as they changed jobs.

Prior to its breakup by the government, the road to the CEO position at AT&T was through the Illinois Bell subsidiary. If you wanted to be CEO at Pacific Gas and Electric, the legal department was the best place to build your career. The shift in power from engineers to lawyers was visible over time: In 1950, only three of the company's most senior positions were occupied by attorneys; by 1980, the comparable number was 18. For many years, finance was the route to the top at General Motors. At the University of Illinois, senior university positions were often filled with people from the physics department.

### Path to Power

We intuitively know that not all career platforms are

equal in value as a path to power, and research supports that intuition. But people often err in choosing where to start building their power base. The most common mistake is to locate in the department dealing with the organization's current core activity, skill or product — the unit that is the most powerful at the moment. This turns out to not always be a good idea because the organization's most central work is where you are going to encounter the most talented competition and also the most well-established career paths and processes. Moreover, what is the most important function or product today may not be in the future.

So if you want to move up quickly, go to underexploited niches where you can develop leverage with less resistance and build a power base in activities that are going to be more important in the near future than they are today. ●

## Getting In: Standing Out and Breaking Some Rules

The late Reginald Lewis was a successful African American corporate lawyer and founder of a buyout firm, TLC Group. TLC bought the McCall Pattern Co. in the early 1980s and, under Lewis' turnaround efforts, returned investors 90 times back their money. TLC later bought Beatrice Foods, creating the first black-owned company with revenues of over $1 billion and making Lewis one of the wealthiest people in the United States.

But back in 1965, Lewis wasn't someone with a prominent place in African American business history. He didn't have an international law program at Harvard and an African American history museum in Maryland named after him. He was just a young man from a tough Baltimore neighborhood who was graduating from Virginia State University and had set his sights on going to Harvard Law School. During that summer he was in a Rockefeller Foundation-funded program at Harvard Law School for high-potential black college students designed to interest them in careers in the law and help them prepare for the application process. There was just one problem — one of the rules of the program was that no one who participated could even be considered for admission to Harvard Law School. Moreover, Lewis had not taken the Law School Aptitude Test, or even applied to Harvard Law, and he wanted to start the program that fall.

Even as he was doing well in the summer program by expending enormous effort and standing out in the mock court trial to such an extent that 30 years later professors still talked about his performance, Lewis met with a Harvard Law professor and then with the dean of admissions. With these faculty members he pressed his case by forcefully arguing "the myriad ways an association between Reginald Lewis and the law school would be mutually beneficial." At the end of the summer, Lewis matriculated at Harvard Law School, becoming the only person in the history of the school who was admitted before he filled out an application.

### What's the Worst That Could Happen?

Lewis understood that the worst that could happen from asking for something would be getting turned down. And if he were turned down, so what? People who don't ask would not be any worse off than if they had not asked in the first place. If they didn't ask or if they were refused, they would not receive what they sought, but at least with asking, there was some hope. Some people do believe that worse things could occur: that their bold behavior could offend those exposed to it and they could develop a "bad reputation." Probably not, and the risk of standing out is well worth taking. ●

## Making Something Out of Nothing: Creating Resources

Resources are great because once you have them, maintaining power becomes a self-reinforcing process.

There are two simple but important implications of resources as a source of power. The first is that in choosing among jobs, choose positions that have greater direct resource control of more budget or staff. That generally means preferring line to staff positions, since line positions typically control more staff hiring and more budgetary authority.

Most headhunters will tell you that when they seek candidates for senior general management positions, including the CEO job, they look to people who have had responsibility running operations, and the larger the division or operation the potential candidate has run, the better, other things being equal. Job analyses such as the Hay system used to determine salary ranges consider the number of direct and indirect reports you have, as well as the amount of budget you can spend without higher-level authorization, as measures of your responsibility and consequently the economic value of your job. Getting control of resources is an important step on your path to power.

### Self-Enhancement

The second straightforward implication is that your

power comes in large measure from the position you hold and the resources and other things you control as a consequence of holding that position. It is easy for people, motivated by self-enhancement, to believe that the deference and flattery of others is due to their inherent intelligence, experience and charm. This may be the case, but not often. When you retire or otherwise leave a position in which you once had control over substantial amounts of resources, people will pay you much less heed and give you less attention. ●

## Building Efficient and Effective Social Networks

Two German professors, Hans-Georg Wolff and Klaus Moser, offer a good definition of networking: "Behaviors that are aimed at building, maintaining and using informal relationships that possess the (potential) benefit of facilitating work-related activities of individuals by voluntarily gaining access to resources and maximizing … advantages." Their study of more than 200 people in Germany developed some scales of networking behaviors that demonstrate what actions are required. These included:

1. Building internal contacts (e.g., "I use company events to make new contacts.")
2. Maintaining internal contacts (e.g., "I catch up with colleagues from other departments about what they are working on.")
3. Using internal contacts (e.g., "I use my contacts with colleagues in other departments in order to get confidential advice in business matters.")
4. Building external contacts (e.g., "I accept invitations to official functions or festivities out of professional interest.")
5. Maintaining external contacts (e.g., "I ask others to give my regards to business acquaintances outside of our company.")
6. Using external contacts (e.g., "I exchange professional tips and hints with acquaintances from other organizations.")

The networking behaviors they describe entail making some incremental effort to build, maintain and use social ties with people. The people targeted are not necessarily in your sights if you are focused just on your immediate job and company.

In general, jobs high in networking content require bridging separate organizations, brokering deals and relationship building to influence decision making. ●

### Jack Valenti's Political Power

When in 1966 Jack Valenti left his position as a White House aide to become head of the Motion Picture Association of America, he could provide political access to the movie studios that needed help staving off censorship and dealing with foreign governments on commercial issues, including the repatriation of funds. At the same time, he could provide an entrée to Hollywood and its enormous fundraising potential for the Democratic Party and Valenti's patron, Lyndon Johnson.

## Acting and Speaking with Power

We choose how we will act and talk, and those decisions are consequential for acquiring and holding on to power. Harriet Rubin was, for 11 years, the editor of a line of books called *Currency* devoted to understanding leadership. During that time she at once occupied a position of leadership and published leaders' autobiographies and books on leadership. Her experience suggested that the secret of leadership was the ability to play a role, to pretend, to be skilled in the theatrical arts. Rubin is right. Differences in the ability to convey power through how we talk, appear and act matter in our everyday interactions, from seeking a job to attempting to win a vital contract to presenting a company's growth prospects before investment analysts.

### Speaking Powerfully

The language people use and how they construct presentations and arguments help determine their power. Great orators move masses — Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech and the speeches of Barack Obama in his campaign for the presidency being two notable examples. But power gets created in private interactions and small meetings, not just on a huge stage. There are some well-established principles that can help you subtly obtain more influence as you speak with power:

- **Interruption.** One source of power in every interaction is interruption. Those with power interrupt, those with less power get interrupted. In conversation, interrupting others, although not polite, can indicate power and be an effective power move.
- **Contest the premises of the discussion.** In most companies, the strategy and market dynamics are taken for granted. If someone challenges these assumptions — such as how the company is compet-

ing, how it is measuring success, what the strategy is, who the real competitors are now and in the future — this can be a very potent power play.

- **Persuasive language.** Language that influences is able to create powerful images and emotions that overwhelm reason. Such language is evocative, specific and filled with strong language and visual imagery. ●

## Building a Reputation: Perception Is Reality

For more than a decade, John Browne served as CEO of British Petroleum; under his aegis, BP bought Amoco and Arco as well as making numerous smaller acquisitions. Browne was named to the British House of Lords and was voted the country's most admired business leader numerous times. But as many observers point out, Browne is not necessarily the most obvious leader: He is short, less than 5 feet 6 inches tall; soft-spoken and awkward in social settings, essentially an introvert; and an intellectual in an industry known for brash, bold leaders who take big chances. Browne's rise to power and his consolidation of his position were based in part on his ability to build an image that served him well.

### Three Dimensions of John Browne's Reputation

Although Browne's reputation is multifaceted, three dimensions stand out: hard work and dedication, intelligence and intimidation of others. Browne was at BP throughout his working life, spending over 30 years in the company. He moved around the world including Anchorage, Alaska, New York, Cleveland and London, among others. He worked enormous hours. It is helpful to be seen as someone devoted to the company.

Browne's intelligence is legendary. Trained in physics, Browne always emphasized first principles and asked inquisitive questions. His analytical training permitted him to do well in his jobs both in finance and in exploration. But what comes across is how he used his intelligence and memory to build his reputation as being super smart.

The specifics of a useful reputation will obviously vary depending on the context and your own personal strengths and weaknesses. What is important is that you think carefully about the dimensions of the reputation you want to build, and then do everything in your power, from how you spend your time to what organizations and people you associate with, to ensure that is the image that you project. ●

## Overcoming Opposition and Setbacks

Because people come from different backgrounds, face different rewards and see different information, they are going to see the world differently. Consequently, disagreements are inevitable in organizations. Unfortunately, many people are conflict-averse, finding disagreement disagreeable and avoiding surfacing differences of opinion and engaging in difficult conversations with their adversaries.

As school leader Rudy Crew has said, "Conflict is just an opportunity for another person's education," for exploring why people think the way they do, and for sharing perspectives so the parties to the conflict can learn about and from each other.

Here are some ideas to make you more successful in surmounting opposition:

- **Try a little tenderness and leave people a graceful out.** One way to deal with opponents is to treat them well and leave them a nice way to retreat.
- **Don't get emotionally entangled.** Conflict arouses strong emotions, including anger, and these strong feelings interfere with our ability to think strategically about what we are really trying to do.
- **Don't take things personally — make important relationships work.**
- **Be persistent.** Persistence works because it wears down the opposition.
- **Advance on multiple fronts.** Leverage power from one setting to get influence in another.
- **Move first — seize the initiative.** If you move quickly, you can often catch your opponents off guard and secure victory before they even know what is happening.

### Coping With Setbacks

Most successful people have encountered setbacks along the way and survived. Reed Hastings, the highly successful founder and CEO of Netflix, had a much less successful experience with his first software startup, Pure Software, where he tried to fire himself twice. Bad things sometimes happen to good people. The issue becomes how and if they recover.

If you are going to persevere and recover, you need to stop blaming yourself, letting your opponents dominate the discussion of what happened and feeling bad about your complicity in your demise.

The best way to overcome any possible embarrassment is to talk about what happened to as many people as

possible. Making what happened less emotionally fraught is absolutely essential for your being able to think strategically about your next moves.

## The Price of Power

It was the late Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman who famously said, "There is no free lunch." Nothing comes without cost, and that is certainly true of power.

As you chart your course and make decisions about what you will and will not do to acquire power, consider carefully what you are striving for and if you really want it.

People who seek and attain power often pay some price for the quest, for holding on to their positions and confronting the difficult but inevitable transitions out of powerful roles. Here are some of the costs incurred by those who successfully pursue a path to power:

**Cost 1: Visibility and Public Scrutiny.**
An important lesson: If you are going to misbehave in any way, do so before you achieve a high-level position that makes you the object of constant attention by peers, subordinates, superiors and the media.

**Cost 2: The Loss of Autonomy.**
Many CEOs and other senior leaders block out time for themselves and the activities that they want to do. But all of them talk about the loss of control over how they spend their time as one of the big costs of being in a position of power.

**Cost 3: The Time and Effort Required.**
Building and maintaining power requires time and effort, there are no two ways about it. Time spent on your quest for power and status is time that you cannot spend on other things, such as hobbies or personal relationships and families. The quest for power often exacts a high toll on people's personal lives.

**Cost 4: Trust Dilemmas.**
The higher you rise and the more powerful the position you occupy, the greater the number of people who will want your job. The constant vigilance required by those in power — to ensure they are hearing the truth and to maintain their position vis-à-vis rivals — is yet another cost of occupying a job that many others want.

**Cost 5: Power as an Addictive Drug.**
The addictive quality of power makes it tough to leave powerful positions. But everyone eventually has to step down, and the drug-like nature of power makes leaving a powerful position a truly wrenching experience for some.

## How — and Why — People Lose Power

Studies of the effects of power on the power holder consistently find that power produces overconfidence and risk taking, insensitivity to others, stereotyping and a tendency to see other people as a means to the power holder's gratification.

In a study all too reminiscent of what goes on in workplaces every day, David Kipnis put research participants in a simulated work situation with a subordinate. Some people in the managerial role had little formal control over resources and had to influence through persuasion, while others were given the power to reward and punish those working for them. The more control participants had over levers of power such as pay increases or decreases, the more attempts they made to influence their subordinates. Moreover, those with more power came to see their subordinates' job performance as resulting from their control and less from the efforts or motivation of those they were supervising. And because the supervisors with power saw themselves as superior to those they were supervising, they evidenced less desire to spend time with their subordinates and wanted to distance themselves from those less powerful — even though in this experimental study who was a supervisor and how much power that person had was randomly determined and temporary.

### A Power Mindset

One lesson from the growing number of studies on the effects of power is how little it takes to get people into a power mindset were they engage in all kinds of disrespectful and rude behavior. Just giving them even modest control over meaningless rewards in temporary groups of strangers seems to be sufficient.

Overconfidence and insensitivity lead to losing power, as people become so full of themselves that they fail to attend to the needs of those whose enmity can cause them problems. Conversely, not letting power go to your head and acting as if you were all-powerful can help you maintain your position.

## Power Dynamics: Good for Organizations, Good for You?

Research shows what common sense suggests is true: Political struggles are more likely to occur and to be more fierce and power is used more often when resources are scarcer and therefore there is more struggle over their allocation. Studies of budget allocations in

universities found that when money was tighter, the relationship between departmental power and amount of the budget obtained was stronger.

The lesson is clear: You should always watch your back, but be particularly wary and sensitive to what is occurring during times of economic stress. That is when political turmoil and the use of power are likely to be at their peak.

The employer-employee relationship has profoundly changed over the past several decades, not just in the United States but in many countries. In ways big and small, both implicitly and explicitly, employers and their leaders have told their employees that they themselves are responsible for their own careers and, in many instances, their own health care and retirement.

So don't worry about how your efforts to build your path to power are affecting your employer, because your employer is probably not worrying about you. Neither are your co-workers or "partners," if you happen to have any — they are undoubtedly thinking about your usefulness to them, and you will be gone, if they can manage it, when you are no longer of use. You need to take care of yourself and use whatever means you have to do so — after all, that has been the message of companies and business pundits for years. Take those admonitions seriously.

## It's Easier Than You Think

It's important for you to find the right place given your aptitude and interests.

Although it is possible and desirable to develop your power skills, few people are comfortable changing their likes and dislikes. Yes, you can evolve and change, but only within limits. Therefore, the first step in building a path to power is to pick an environment that fits your aptitudes and interests — one where you can be successful in both the technical and political aspects, if any, of the work.

Finding the right place for you requires several steps.

- First, you must be brutally honest about your strengths, weaknesses and preferences — and because of the self-enhancement motive, not many people are as objective about themselves as they need to be.
- Second, you can't get trapped into following the crowd and doing something just because everyone else is.
- Third, to pick the right place for yourself, you must be objective not only about yourself but about the job and its risks and opportunities.

## The Dark Side of Politics

One dominant perspective in the research literature on organizations is that "politics is associated with the 'dark side' of workplace behavior and researchers have described political behavior as inherently divisive, stressful and a cause of dissent and reduced performance." The empirical evidence supports this view. Higher levels of perceived politics inside organizations are associated with reduced job satisfaction, morale and organizational commitment and higher levels of perceived politics are also correlated with higher intentions to quit.

### Take Care of Yourself — Don't Expect Justice

It's not just that the world is not always fair so you should stop counting on the triumph of your merit. People align with who they think is going to win. If you don't stand up for yourself and actively promote your own interests, few will be willing to be on you side. Since observers will see you as not trying to triumph and therefore losing, they will either not join your side or desert you, making your organizational demise more certain. Therefore, although self-promotion and fighting for your interests can seem unattractive, the alternative scenario is invariably much worse.

Not only can you survive, but you can even succeed if you learn the principles and the rules and are willing to implement them in your daily organizational life.

So don't complain about how life isn't fair, or that your organizational culture isn't healthy or that your boss is a jerk. You have both the responsibility and the potential to change your situation, either in your present job or in some new place. Stop waiting for things to get better or for other people to acquire power and use it in a benevolent fashion to improve the situation. It's up to you to find — or create — a better place for yourself. And it's up to you to build your own path to power.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Power*, you'll also like:

1. ***Talent Is Overrated* by Geoff Colvin.** What's the real solution to the mystery of high performance? According to journalist Geoff Colvin, it is a highly specific kind of effort, what he calls "deliberate practice."
2. ***Fierce Conversations* by Susan Scott.** Learn the effective ways to transform everyday conversations to get your message across.
3. ***MOJO* by Marshall Goldsmith.** Mojo comes from the moment we do something that is purposeful, powerful, and positive, and the rest of the world recognizes it. Executive coach Marshall Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get and keep our professional and personal Mojo.

· Book 9 of 269 ·

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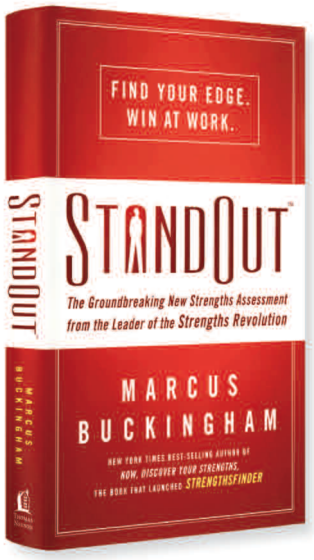
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Career & Self-Development

# StandOut™

## The Groundbreaking New Strengths Assessment from the Leader of the Strengths Revolution




by Marcus Buckingham

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*StandOut* is a one-of-a-kind invitation to discover and activate your unique competitive advantage at work every day.

*StandOut* offers top-notch business and leadership knowledge from one of the world's most acclaimed authorities on strengths. You also gain access to a powerful, cutting-edge online assessment tool — the product of a decade-long research initiative, rigorous statistical analysis and sophisticated psychometrics. Marcus Buckingham's *StandOut* offers actions you can use to find your edge and win at work.

Where other assessments stop at discovery and affirmation, *StandOut* takes the next step and provides practical advice on what to do to make the most of the strengths you have. Each of the nine possible strength roles is fully delineated with a wealth of detail.

While the advice and assessment are invaluable for people at every level of an organization, *StandOut* offers new insights and powerful tools specifically designed for managers.

Whether you are an individual who wants to find your edge, a manager trying to fully understand the strengths of your team or a leader in an organization looking to stay on the cutting edge of the strengths movement, you need *StandOut*.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Where you will be at your most powerful.
- How you can make an immediate impact.
- How you can win as a leader, manager, salesperson or individual contributor.
- How to use your strengths to win at work.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **STANDOUT**

**by Marcus Buckingham**

**The author:** Beginning with *First, Break All the Rules*, Marcus Buckingham's books have sold more than 4 million copies. Through his training and development firm TMBC (www.TMBC.com), he teaches managers how to turn their associates' strengths into performance. Before launching TMBC, he spent nearly two decades at The Gallup Organization studying what drives exceptional performance in the world's best managers.

*StandOut: The Groundbreaking New Strengths Assessment from the Leader of the Strengths Revolution* by Marcus Buckingham. Copyright © 2011 by One Thing Productions, Inc. Summarized by permission of Thomas Nelson Publishers (ISBN 978-1-4002-02379), $22.99, 227 pages. Audiobook available through Oasis Audio (ISBN 978-1-6137-50360).

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## How to Accelerate Innovation

The StandOut strengths assessment *(available at standout.tmbc.com)* is an innovation delivery system. We designed it to reveal your edge and then feed you practical innovations, tips and techniques that you can use to sharpen this edge and win at work.

We all revere innovation. It is the mystical driver of progress, the secret sauce, the touchstone we reach for whenever our backs are against the wall. Our managers, our leaders, even our president cajole us to outthink, outsmart, "out-innovate" the competition. In these accelerated times, only innovation will keep us relevant, only innovation will allow us to keep thriving, only innovation can get us ahead and keep us there.

Every organization is on a near-constant search for "best practice." They convene conferences of top performers, pick their brains for the precious few actions and then capture what they hear in online "knowledge centers" in videos or in the course books of their corporate university. Though it is not always stated explicitly, the vision driving all of this activity is that innovation can be harvested and that, once harvested, it can be deployed at scale. Find a few key innovations, so the thinking goes, and we'll spread them to the many.

Normally what happens is this: An enterprising employee will come up with a new way of doing things. This new practice will spring from within her as an irrepressible manifestation of her personality. It will be authentic and natural, and she will use it to outperform her colleagues. This success will bring her to the attention of her superiors, who will interview her to discover her secret. Her new practice will be elevated up the corporate ladder, vetted by operations, human resources, training, communications and legal until, eventually, stripped of its unique characteristics and the person who made them, it will be introduced to the rest of the "field" where it will end its life as just another corporate program, smoothed out and lifeless, inauthentic for everyone else and ineffective for the company.

### The Best of the Best

We have studied the best high school principals, the best affiliate leaders of Habitat for Humanity, the best emergency room nurses and the best pharmaceutical sales reps, and whenever we interview excellent performers in the same position, we find this same phenomenon — extraordinary results achieved in radically different ways. Yes, there may be some similar practices among those who excel in a certain position, but no, for any position, there is no "perfect" profile; there are only perfect practices that fit your particular profile.

What your organization wants are not the few innovations that can be scaled to the many. Instead, what your organization wants are *many* practical innovations and a way to deliver these innovations to those *few* people who share the strengths of the person who dreamed up each one of them.

And this is what you want too. Instead of top-down initiatives that feel awkward and inauthentic, you want to be introduced to practical innovations that you might well have thought of ... but haven't yet; techniques that, when you try them out, feel as though you've done them before. You want to accelerate your creativity and

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

yet still retain your authenticity.

This is why we built the StandOut strengths assessment. Over the last decade, we captured many hundreds of techniques, practices and insights — for leaders, managers, client service positions, sales and for individual contributors of all kinds — and we loaded them into the back end of the assessment. Once you've completed it, you will receive only those practices that fit your particular strengths. You will receive the best practical innovations, broadcast on the You channel. ●

## The New StandOut Strengths Assessment

Spend 20 years building and analyzing tests that measure people's themes of talent and, over time, it becomes apparent that no matter how thinly you slice each aspect of each theme, certain themes wind up clustering into patterns.

For example, it is entirely possible to design an assessment that draws a distinction between themes such as significance, self-assurance, achievement drive and assertiveness and then measures them separately — Dr. Don Clifton and I did this with StrengthsFinder. What we now know, however, is that these four themes correlate closely with one another. In statistical parlance a set of highly correlated themes is called a "factor," but in the real world they combine to create a certain "personality," a certain way of engaging with the world. In the case of these four themes, we know this personality well. It is the person who wants others to come around to his way of thinking, who enjoys persuading, outsmarting or outwitting people, and who can even, on occasion, come across as aggressive. In the language of StandOut, this person is an Influencer.

Similarly, a combination of the themes strategic thinking, optimism, impatience and ambiguity tolerance creates another kind of person. This is the person who is at her best charging into the future, believing in every fiber that the world is a friendly place, that setbacks are opportunities in disguise and that the best way to find out what is around the next corner is to walk around the corner and see for herself. In the language of StandOut, this person is a Pioneer and is different from the rest of us: The uncertainty that unnerves us, thrills a Pioneer.

### StandOut and the 'Strength Roles'

To create the StandOut strengths assessment, we combed through the many hundreds of themes that are possible to measure, and identified the most common and powerful theme combinations. Of course, the number of ways to measure the fine shadings of human uniqueness is infinite; however, the number of powerful theme combinations is not. We found nine. We call them "Strength Roles." ●

## THE NINE STRENGTHS ROLES

## Advisor

You begin by asking, *"What is the best thing to do?"* and your thrill comes from knowing that you are the person others turn to for the answer. You don't necessarily want to be the person who actually makes the changes happen. Rather, being valued by others for your insight and judgment is what excites you. Since you live to be the expert, you are constantly on the lookout for information that will help people make better decisions. When you look out at the world, you pay attention to fine shadings of detail because these details will ensure that you give better advice. You know that the best advice is never general, but rather is tailored to the unique characteristics of the person's situation.

You can be demanding and opinionated, but, above all, you are discriminating: "good enough" is never good enough for you. There is always a better way, a better arrangement, a better solution and you come alive when you are called upon to find it. And when you do, you don't question your decision. The reason people seek your advice is precisely because you are so assured, so confident in your intuition. Instinctively you know this and you're proud of it.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• An Advisor always needs people to advise. Analysis is fine, and can be fun, but the day you discover that you have no direct audience for your conclusions — sitting by yourself, analyzing for the sake of it — will be a very bad day for you. **Make sure you are always being paid to offer your conclusions to someone.**

• You are the kind of person who respects experts. Why? Because experts have studied their subjects deeply and can pinpoint which details make the difference, which distinctions really matter. You are wired to appreciate this kind of inquiry. **So ally yourself with a couple of carefully chosen experts in your field.**

• **Become a credentialed expert yourself.** Choose your discipline and then build your career around deepening your expertise in this discipline. Pursue all the professional and academic qualifications available within this discipline. ●

## Connector

You begin by asking, *"Whom can I connect?"* You see the world as a web of relationships and you are excited by the prospect of connecting people within your web. Not because they will like each other — though they might — but rather because of what they will create together. Your mantra is "One and one makes three" or 30 or 300. On your optimistic days, you see almost no limit to what people with different strengths and perspectives can create together.

You are a naturally inquisitive person, always asking questions about each person's background, experience and skills. You know instinctively that each person brings something unique and distinct to the table, something that no matter how small, might prove to be the vital ingredient.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• **Stay attentive.** Interesting people are everywhere, not just at work or professional gatherings, but sitting next to you on the plane, at your child's birthday party, at the church planning meeting.

• You are inspired by extremely talented people, so try to **find at least two groups of experts in which you can play a leadership or organizing role.** It doesn't really matter what the group's expertise is. What's invigorating for you is hearing the discussions and listening to the different viewpoints of these "masters." Listen long enough and you will almost certainly come up with a new mission, a new possibility.

• **Discipline yourself to connect someone to something every day.** For example, send an e-mail each day that begins "I thought of you when I read this …" and then include a line or two about how this particular person might benefit or learn from what you sent. We rely on you for practical possibility thinking, so be sure to draw a clear connection between what you sent and what the person might be able to do with it.

• To expand your network, **go beyond your usual haunts and gatherings**. Once or twice a year, sign up for an exciting group experience — a cycling trip, a charity walk, a river rafting expedition — and go alone. Given your nature, it's almost guaranteed that you'll encounter someone who'll spark an idea of a new connection you can make. ●

## Creator

You begin by asking, *"What do I understand?"* You aren't immune to the feelings and perspectives of others, but your starting point is your own insight your and understanding. You see the world as a series of collisions between competing parts, pieces and agendas, and you are compelled to figure it all out. For you there's nothing quite as thrilling as finding a pattern beneath life's complexities, a core concept that can explain why things play out the way they do or, better yet, predict how things are *going* to play out.

You are a thoughtful person, someone who needs time alone to mull and muse. Without this alone time, events pile up on you haphazardly and your confusion starts to overwhelm you. So you look forward to time by yourself — early in the morning, late at night, long walks — and you use this time to get clear. You are a creative person. What form this creativity takes will depend on your other traits and talents, but whether you write, paint, sing, complete projects or make presentations, you are drawn toward making things. Each thing you make is a tangible sign that you have made some sense of the world, that you have organized the chaos in some useful way. You look at what you've made, you take pleasure in what you now understand and then you move on to the next creation.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• As a Creator you will have to **figure out how to "own" your creations.** At one extreme, this might mean working only in fields where you are allowed to own the intellectual property you create, such as journalism or entertainment. Or you might work for a large organization only if they allow you to write papers under your name or file for patents under your name. If neither of these is a possibility for you, you will still need to figure out a way to "sign" your work.

### How Connectors Connect

In your head, or in your contacts, you store a large network of people who, you've met, learned about, catalogued and positioned somewhere within this network — each person with a link to at least one other person, and each with an open port for another link to be added. People are drawn to you because you are so obviously passionate about their particular expertise, and because you have so many practical ideas about how their expertise can be combined with others. You enliven and enlarge others' vision of who they are and what they can achieve.

• **Create a forum for safe experimentation,** a place where you can share new, as yet fragile, patterns of understanding. It could be a cross-industry group of like-minded thinkers. It could be an informal Skunk Works within your own organization. Whatever it is, it should be comprised of people who question you and challenge you with no agenda other than helping you to strengthen (or break) the sense you've made. This group will become your testing ground.

• **Seek out the "enemy camp."** Deliberately forge a relationship with people who see things very differently from you. They may discredit the sense you make. But by exposing yourself to them, you will prevent yourself from becoming complacent. ●

## Equalizer

You begin by asking, *"What is the right thing to do?"* You are sensitive to how everything in the world is interdependent, how movement in one part of the world causes everything else to move as well. Alive to this interconnectedness, you feel compelled to keep everything aligned. This need for alignment might be organizational — you sense when your world is disorganized and you get a kick out of restoring everything back to its rightful place. Or it might be ethical — you are acutely aware of who is responsible for what and you are quick to take action if someone doesn't live up to her responsibilities. You have no problem calling her out if she hasn't followed through, and you are just as willing to call yourself out when you drop the ball.

You see the commitments we make to one another as threads that connect us and allow us to share in each other's success. It pains you when you see these threads break, and so you are their passionate protector. At your best, you are our conscience, helping us realize how much we owe one another and how much we rely on one another. You hold us together.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• **Seek out situations where you can stand up for the rights of others**. You are in your zone when you do this. No matter what your talents may be in other aspects of your work, when it comes to explaining what people truly deserve, you will instinctively find the words and the arguments to persuasively make their case.

• **Establish your precedents.** When has this situation happened before? What were the outcomes? People will always look to you for a fair hearing and your rationales will be better and clearer if you can point to previous experiences and situations.

• **Be thorough.** As your career progresses people will place more and more weight on your judgments. Always have at your disposal all the facts and, if possible, the data behind these facts. You need, and they need, to have confidence in your judgments. Lacking the facts and the data, you run the risk of being seen as merely judgmental. ●

## Influencer

You begin by asking, *"How can I move you to act?"* In virtually every situation, your eye goes to the outcome. Whether you are in a long meeting at work, helping a colleague get his work done or talking a friend off a ledge, you measure your success by your ability to persuade the other person to do something he didn't necessarily intend to do. You may do this by the force of your arguments, your charm, your ability to outwit him or perhaps by some combination of all of these. But regardless of your method, what really matters to you is moving the other person to action.

Why? Partly because you see where things will lead if the other person doesn't act, and partly because you are instinctively aware of momentum and become frustrated when you bump into someone who slows your momentum down — but mostly because you just can't help it. It's simply fun for you to influence people's behavior through the power of your personality. It's challenging, mysterious and thrilling and, in the end, of course, it makes good things happen.

### How to Make an Immediate Impact

• You are instinctively impatient. To ensure this does not rub your new colleagues the wrong way, **pick a roadblock that everyone agrees on and volunteer to be the one to tackle it.**

• Initially, because you are so action focused, people will wonder what your agenda is. To stop their wondering, be explicit with your teammates about it. **Tell them your agenda.**

• **Look for ways to measure your results.** You will be energized by the "proof" of whether you're ahead or behind. You are always at your best when you know exactly where you stand.

• Whenever you succeed in making something happen, **be deliberate in thanking people for their help.** If you don't do this, they may come to feel as though they are merely instruments in your plan of action. ●

## Pioneer

You begin by asking, *"What's new?"* You are, by nature, an explorer, excited by things you haven't seen before, people you haven't met. Whereas others are intimidated by the unfamiliar, you are intrigued by it. It fires your curiosity and heightens your senses — you are smarter and more perceptive when you're doing something you've never done before. With ambiguity comes risk and you welcome this.

Instinctively you know you are a resourceful person and, since you enjoy calling upon this aspect of yourself, you actively seek out situations where there is no beaten path, where it's up to you to figure out how to keep moving forward. You sense that your appetite for the unknown might be an attempt to fill a void and some days you wonder what you are trying to prove to yourself. But mostly you leave the questioning and the analyzing to others and revel in your pioneering nature. You are at your best when you ask a question no one has asked, try a technique no one has tried, feel an experience few have felt. We need you at your best. You lead us into undiscovered country.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• You have a natural instinct for change. It will serve you well to "bottle" that instinct. **Work out a formula that captures your natural instincts for how to handle uncertainty**. Turn them into a clear process that other, less risk-oriented people can follow.

• **Find ways to showcase how your innovations have succeeded in creating new business opportunities or new products**. These examples of how inquisitiveness turns into performance will give people more certainty and they will become increasingly tolerant and even supportive of your pioneering spirit**.** ●

## Provider

You begin by asking, *"Is everyone OK?"* You are acutely aware of others' emotional states, particularly if you sense they are feeling hurt or slighted. You are instinctively inclusive, always looking for ways to draw others into the circle and make them feel wanted, heard and appreciated. You pay close attention to the differences between people, each person's likes, dislikes and foibles. *It's the only way to attend to their feelings,* you think.

You are protective of other people and will get angry or upset if you see behavior that is cavalier or dismissive of people's feelings. You are an intensely loyal and forgiving friend, but you are no pushover. Although your circle is large, it does have a perimeter and if someone's behavior offends you, you will exile them beyond the perimeter. But this exile will not last because in your heart you believe everyone can be understood, everyone can be redeemed, everyone can, in the end, be forgiven. At home and work, many will come to trust you and rely on you. You are their safe harbor, a consistently supportive presence in a world that doesn't care. And they love you for it.

### How to Make an Immediate Impact

• **Start by taking the temperature of your team.** You have an excellent sense of the institution you are joining — as in who is in relationship with whom, who are the heroes, what are the war stories — so feed this sense by listening and watching closely.

• **Get to know the troublemakers first** because in their minds they are misunderstood. You have a gift for allowing people to have their say and holding what they say without either criticizing it or condoning it. You just take it on. And this "taking on" lets them move out from their defensive mode and into a healthier, more productive frame of mind.

• If there are no troublemakers on the team, **start with those who need the most help**. How can you help them? If you're not the one to help, then can you secure the resources they need? ●

## Stimulator

You begin by asking, *"How can I raise the energy?"* You are acutely aware of the energy in the room and you feel compelled to do what you can to elevate it. You do this with your outlook — you are an instinctively positive person. You do this with your actions — you take a seat at the front of the room, you raise your hand to ask questions, you call upon others to contribute and volunteer. You do this with your humor — the smile in your voice.

Because you are an energy-giving person, other people are attracted to you. The world beats them down, but they know that in you they will find the power to lift themselves back up. You aren't soft and gentle. On the contrary, you challenge people to unleash their own energy and you become impatient when someone refuses to do so, sucking energy from you and generating none of their own. But others will continue to be drawn to you because they sense that, at heart, you cannot help being encouraging.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• Over time people will come to lean on you for emotional uplift. This is a wonderful gift you offer them and to ensure that you can keep offering it, **you must set clear boundaries for your friends and colleagues.** You cannot take on everyone's full range of emotions.

• You are skilled at handling difficult people. **Volunteer for situations where success depends on you turning around an angry or obstinate person.** It's not that you should necessarily seek out conflict — you are not, by nature, a conflict seeker. It's more that you are driven to make everything right and you are at your best when you have to pull out all the stops to make this happen.

• You are naturally interested in human energy of all kinds — emotional, physiological, spiritual. **Research this subject.** Whatever your preferred research style, keep looking and you will soon find some new trick, insight or technique that will help you get better at what you do naturally. ●

## Teacher

You begin by asking, *"What can he learn from this?"* Your focus is instinctively toward the other person. Not his feelings, necessarily, but his understanding, his skills and his performance. You see each person as a work in progress, and you are comfortable with this messiness. You don't expect him to be perfect; in fact, you don't want him to be perfect. You see the possibility in imperfection. You know that imperfection creates choice, and that choice leads to learning.

Since you are energized by another person's growth, you look for signs of it. *Where was he last month?* you ask yourself. *What measurable progress have I seen?* You create novel ways to keep track of his performance and celebrate with him when he reaches new heights. You ask him a lot of questions to figure out what he knows and what he doesn't, how he learns best, what is important to him and what journey he is on. Only then can you join him at the appropriate level and in the appropriate way. Only then can you help him learn.

### How to Take Your Performance to the Next Level

• **Keep learning.** Keep researching your subject. Attend the cutting-edge conferences. Read the expert posts. Make this a priority.

### Why Teachers Should Develop Theory

As an instinctive collector of factual bric-a-brac, you will always be a fount of new ideas and insights. But if you want to excel at helping others learn, you need a set of theories on which to hang all that your inquisitiveness has yielded. Theories clarify. They help others make sense of things. And so they will make you a better delegator.

• **Become an overt champion of others.** Discipline yourself to reach across the organization and place people whose raw talent you have spotted into positions of real responsibility.

• When you champion young talent in this way, **make sure your explanations for why this is the right person, the right responsibility and the right time are vivid and detailed.** Become adept at describing the strengths you have seen in the person and why you think this strength will translate to the new, larger responsibility.

• **Always stay in touch with those whom you have helped to learn and grow.** Their continued success will be a constant source of joy for you. ●

## The Three Strengths Principles

The most basic challenge, of course, is that it's hard to see your own uniqueness. Your strengths are a part of you whether you're conscious of them or not. And because they're so woven into the fabric of who you are, they can actually be quite difficult to pinpoint. Certain things come so naturally to you that you don't see your ability to do them as unique; you just think it's you. Or rather, you don't even think anything. You just do what you do because it comes to you too easily to require any analysis.

Which points to a second challenge: other people don't care what makes them unique. As oblivious as we can be to our own strengths, it's even easier to ignore the particular and unique strengths of others. We assume that if we have a talent or inherent ability, everybody else does too. Or if we're not naturally drawn to doing something, we find it hard to understand why anybody else would be.

*Though your genius is ingrained, the right way to channel it is not.* This final challenge is that even if you do cut through the noise and identify what unique strengths

you have to offer, that's still not enough. To be truly your best, it isn't sufficient merely to understand *that* you're unique or even to understand what *makes* you unique. Sustained success comes only when you take what's unique about you and figure out how to make it *useful.*

Your strengths, in essence, are value-neutral. They can be put to good use or they can be put to bad use. If you don't own your strengths, they *will* come out anyway. But you won't be in control of how they do.

On your own personal strengths journey, here are three principles to guide you:

## Principle #1: Your Genius Is Precise

Current thinking about effectiveness advises us to be flexible, versatile quick studies, ready-willing-and-able to jump from one challenge to another. A close scrutiny of excellence, however, reveals that our edge — our particular genius — is quite precise.

We each have specific areas where we consistently stand out, where we can do things, see things, understand things and learn things better and faster than 10,000 other people can. And when we find ourselves in these areas, our "strengths zone" if you will, we are magnificent. Self-assured and flushed with success, we imagine we can do just about anything that we turn our minds to.

And yet we can't. Move us even slightly out of our strengths zone and our outstanding performance falls to average alarmingly quickly.

Robert Nardelli, president of GE's Power Systems division, is a genius-level leader, and leadership is transferable, right? Not necessarily. Install him as CEO of Home Depot or Chrysler and he doesn't look quite so impressive.

Malcolm Gladwell is a phenomenal writer, and since writing is writing, shouldn't his skill be transferable from articles to books? Not exactly. His true genius is the carefully argued, silky-prosed, 3,000-word article — today there is no one better. But when he comes to write his books, this genius accompanies him, he can't shake it and so his books all have the same recognizable quality: a series of elegant articles wrapped around a common theme.

Your genius will be similarly precise. This doesn't mean you shouldn't experiment with new positions or stretch yourself with new challenges, as Gladwell did in moving from articles to books. You should. But when you do, know that, consciously or not, you will bring your particular brand of genius with you.

## Principle #2: You Can't Respect What You Don't Remember

In a world that doesn't really care about you and your strengths, the responsibility falls to you to apply your strengths *consciously* every day. Ironically, the unconscious nature of strengths — the fact that you are most yourself when you vanish into whatever you are doing — makes this quite difficult to do. And yet, if you don't do it, if you allow your strengths to remain as unconscious, subliminal reactions, you won't have a lifeline to grab on to when events conspire to yank, lull or lure you off your strengths path.

One of the most important outcomes from taking the StandOut assessment is simply that you remember your results. This is why we've chosen to target only your top two strength Roles. We could keep cutting these Roles into ever-thinner slices or drill down into your third, fourth and fifth Roles, but what we would gain in complexity we would lose in practicality — a week after taking the test you wouldn't be able to recall what your strengths were, and since you can't consciously apply that which you can't recall, much of StandOut's power would slip away.

## Principle #3: You Must Reach Beyond Your Roles

Conventional wisdom tells you to push yourself beyond your comfort zone. Yet when you study the most successful people you discover that they do something quite different: They push themselves *within* their strengths zone. They certainly aren't complacent. It's more that they realize they will be at their most productive, their most creative, their most generous, their most collaborative if having found their edge, they spend their life sharpening it. How do they do this? By using the raw material of their life to add detail to their understanding of their strengths.

To sharpen your edge, use your top two Roles as a starting point for investigating what your strengths look like in the real world. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *StandOut*, you'll also like:

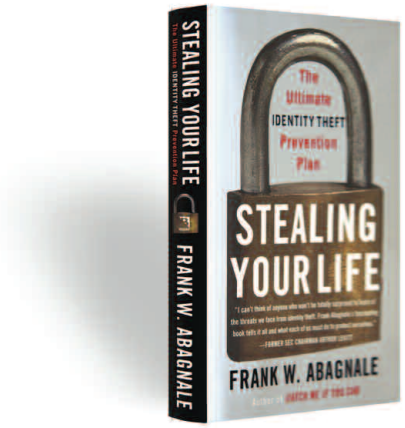
1. ***Linchpin* by Seth Godin.** Linchpins get the best jobs and the most freedom. Godin's book shows you how to become a linchpin in your organization.
2. ***Be a Shortcut* by Scott Halford.** When you become a Shortcut in the workplace, you carve out the straightest path between you and your ultimate goal. Learn how to be the difference-maker for your company.
3. ***First, Break All the Rules* by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman.** Buckingham and Coffman reveal in this summary what great managers do differently from ordinary managers to coax world class performance out of their workers.

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by Frank W. Abagnale

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### The Ultimate Identity Theft Prevention Plan

# STEALING YOUR LIFE

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Before the age of 19, Frank Abagnale had successfully conned millions of dollars worth of checks while posing as a Pan Am pilot, doctor and legal prosecutor. It is his early life that has been captured in his best-selling memoir and 2002 blockbuster film *Catch Me If You Can*. However, now he has gone from fraud to a fraud-fighting consultant.

When Abagnale trains law enforcement officers around the country about identity theft, he asks them for their names and addresses and nothing more. In a matter of hours, he can obtain everything he would need to steal their lives: Social Security numbers, dates of birth, current salaries, checking account numbers, the names of everyone in their families and more. This exercise illustrates how easy it is for anyone from anywhere in the world to assume your identity and, in a matter of hours, devastate your life.

Considering that a fresh victim is hit every four seconds, this summary offers important tips and techniques from an unsurpassed authority on the latest identity theft schemes.

Abagnale offers dozens of concrete steps to transform anyone from an easy mark into a hard case that criminals are likely to bypass. Several anecdotes of creative criminality are included, which are as entertaining as they are enlightening. This summary provides clear, practical ways to protect yourself from one of today's most common crimes.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Who is at risk for identity theft.
- Why you should avoid offers that appeal to greed or fear in exchange for personal data.
- How to monitor your credit report regularly and know if anyone's been "knocking on your door."
- How to identify the people stealing identities.
- Why you should read privacy statements carefully and choose to opt out of sharing information whenever possible.

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**by Frank W. Abagnale**

# The Sweetest Con of All

Identity theft is the wholesale lifting of someone's identity for illicit gain. It's stealing that identity, then using it to access a person's bank account, their personal information and their personal finances. It's becoming someone else for the bucks.

The rewards are enormous for a thief. Identity theft will afford you access not only to someone's wallet and bank account but to his or her very life, character and ability to borrow and spend. Technology has made identity theft easy to execute behind the shadowy cloak of a computer keyboard. You don't even have to be in the same city or country as your victim. You can steal someone's identity without being able to speak his language or pronounce her name.

### *A Federal Crime*

The federal Identity Theft and Assumption Deterrence Act, passed in 1998, made identity theft a federal crime. It carries maximum penalties of 15 years in prison and substantial fines. But police say they have little incentive to go out and arrest an identity thief. The FBI is under a directive not to investigate any white-collar crime under $100,000 in value, due to lack of resources and the shift in manpower over to fighting terrorism.

### *Who's at Risk?*

In recent years, identity theft has become a crime so versatile that the list of potential targets is endless. Anyone who has a credit card or a bank account, or who pays bills is at risk. Anyone who has a mortgage, a car loan, a debit card, a driver's license, a Social Security number, phone service, health insurance or a job is also at risk. If you use the Internet, you are at risk.

A 35-year-old New York busboy had the hubris to choose names off the Forbes 400 list, including Ross Perot, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Bloomberg and Ted Turner, gleaned additional information on them from the Internet, and became them. Tiger Woods was victimized by a California man who rented a moving truck and a storage locker in his name. Even the dead can become targets of this insidious crime. Identity theft is the fastest growing criminal activity in the country.

### *Every Four Seconds*

In 2001, there were about 750,000 documented victims of identity theft, and losses to banks and credit card companies amounted to $5 billion. In 2003, the Federal Trade Commission released the most exhaustive government study to date on identity theft, estimating that there had been 27.3 million victims in the prior five years. In 2004 alone, around 10 million consumers suffered from some variation of identity theft, and losses exceeded $54 billion. In 2005, it's believed that an identity was stolen *every four seconds*.

By shining a light on the diabolically creative and clever criminal mind, you as a consumer can clearly understand just how vulnerable you are to somebody becoming you. To effectively keep this crime from happening to you, you need to understand how it works in a comprehensive way — what the telltale signs are, who does it, how thieves get information and what they do with it. ■

# The Next Victim — and It's You

A woman with especially fussy tastes had been searching for her dream house for what seemed like forever. And then there it was: a postmodern house that was just the right size, in just the right neighborhood, and best of all, at just the right price. She had to move fast — others

***(continued on page 3)***

**The author:** Frank W. Abagnale is the author of the best-selling memoir *Catch Me If You Can* and *The Art of the Steal*. He works closely with the FBI and corporations around the world as an expert on counterfeiting and secure documents.

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## The Next Victim — and It's You

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had appointments to view it that afternoon — and so she said she'd take it. All that was left was to fill out the necessary paperwork, talk to the right people and have the bank process her loan application. Then word came back from the bank, and its verdict was bad. The mortgage was denied. Her credit was insufficient, and there was nothing they could do about it. She was shocked.

### *What Went Wrong?*

The deal breaker was identity theft. While she had been minding her own business and paying her bills on time, an impersonator posing as her was making mincemeat of her credit. Her doctor's receptionist had pilfered her information from his files, obtained multiple credit cards in her name, and then run them up to their limits, costing the woman the house she so fervently desired.

There are four key events that suggest that someone has become a victim of identity theft:

**1. Denial.** Denial of credit is the first sign of identity theft. Another form of denial is a notification of a rate increase on your car insurance or home insurance, or that your insurance is being canceled.

**2. Ripped off.** It's a pretty good tip-off that something is wrong when your credit card, bank or other financial statement contains charges that you never made. An even more obvious tip-off is a statement for a credit card or loan that you didn't know you had.

**3. Harassed and hounded.** When you get calls to collect on debts that you never incurred, an alarm ought to go off in your head. Get the information from the collector, then contact the company. When you speak to the company, tell them that you didn't purchase anything from them or apply for a loan, and if they'd like a sworn affidavit, tell them you'll send it.

**4. Where did the mail go?** If your bills stop coming, or there's an unusual decline in the quantity of mail you receive, that's a problem well worth investigating. It might mean that an identity thief has stolen your mail or has changed the address on your credit card statement so you won't notice the fraudulent charges on your account.

Often there is no sign at all that you've become the target of identity theft. Complacency always works to the very profitable benefit of criminals. ■

# The Road to Becoming You

The Internet is one of the most versatile research tools a criminal has ever been handed. It's no exaggeration to say that there are thousands of free and paid resources on the Web that can be unsuspectingly used for identity theft.

Every time you share a piece of information about yourself, without obtaining a binding guarantee that it will not be sold or shared, that information instantly enters the public domain and becomes fodder for an expanding information industry. The only exception is medical information. For that to be shared, a release has to be signed.

Between nosy washer warranties, dog pound questionnaires and computer disks tumbling off trucks, your private information is vulnerable in a million different ways, limited only by the ingenuity of the thieves.

### *Nigerian Letter Scams*

You might have received an e-mail that purportedly comes from the wife of a Lebanese businessman who has been killed in an explosion in Beirut. He left behind $86 million, and $20 million of it is yours if you help get the money into the United States.

This is one version of a classic scam with very long legs. This type of trap is known as a Nigerian Letter scam or a 419 letter, named after the pertinent African criminal code under which it can be prosecuted.

As identity theft has become the top game in town, Nigerian Letter scams have been reconfigured to steal your identity information. They don't necessarily even ask for your bank account number anymore. They'd rather get your name and Social Security number and use them for a full-scale identity assumption.

### *Phishing*

These e-mails, and numerous other renditions, are called phishing attacks. Today, phishing is one of the most productive ways identity thieves gather their source material. Phishing is highly efficient. Sending spam e-mail out to a million people doesn't cost a cent, but every

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## Fake Bank Ads

One popular e-mail phishing category is fake bank ads. If you call, you are asked the usual personal information. Later on, customers are told that they need to make an advance payment on their loan through a Western Union wire transfer to an address in Canada, identified as a "third-party consultant."

If you follow the instructions, the criminals succeed in making a double strike: They acquire some immediate cash, plus they get sufficient personal information to launch an even more rewarding identity theft.

## The Road to Becoming You

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"phish" that is hooked can be worth thousands of dollars.

The standard strategy is to phish using a cover that people are likely to recognize and trust, usually a bank, brokerage house, corporation or government agency. Citibank, eBay and AOL have been common choices. The message will set forth a phony but believable reason why you need to respond with your personal information.You're asked to respond to the e-mail or click on a linked Web address and answer the questions there. ■

# It Could Be Public Enemy No. 1 or It Could Be Grandma

An astonishingly diverse group of individuals is perfectly comfortable making at least a part-time living as identity thieves. They are people of all ages, all races, both sexes, all cultures, all religions, educated and uneducated, blue collar and white collar.

According to a 2004 study by Judith Collins, a professor at Michigan State University, in more than a thousand randomly selected identity theft cases, roughly half the culprits were women.

### *It's the Woman Who Served Your Omelet*

A 23-year-old waitress at a popular restaurant in Fenwick Island, Del., was arrested for using a hand-held credit card reader, known as a skimmer, to steal identities. The device reads and records the information on magnetic stripes, thus allowing criminals to make fake cards. She explained that at a party, a Russian man, who set up the scheme, approached her. He paid her $10 for Visa and MasterCard numbers and $15 for American Express.

Collins and her students at Michigan State, in their examination of identity theft complaints that had been filed with the police, called or wrote these victims and asked them, "How did the person get the information to steal your identity?" Of those who knew, a shocking 70 percent responded that the thief obtained the information from a low-level employee who sold it to somebody else.

Your information is everywhere, and workers with little if any security clearance know where the stuff is — and have the means and authority to get to it. ■

# What Your Duplicate Is Doing as You

In early 2003, a 72-year-old British man named Derek Bond, a retired engineer, grandfather of six, Rotarian and wine enthusiast, was arrested in South Africa, where he had been on a wine-tasting vacation with his wife. Told that the FBI had identified him as a wanted fugitive, he was imprisoned in a Durban jail. He was fingered, the authorities informed him, for masterminding a marketing scheme supposedly intended to market telephone calling cards that fleeced more than 200 investors of millions of dollars. Though he insistently professed his innocence, the police were convinced that they had their man. For three weeks, Bond was forced to sleep on a concrete floor.

After 20 days, he caught a break. The real culprit, an identity thief, was nabbed in a Las Vegas hotel room. Bond was released. It turned out that the crook had been using Bond's identity since as far back as 1989. Oddly enough, they were the same age.

### *They Go Bankrupt*

Crooks aren't particularly proficient at managing their finances, and being freelancers, their incomes can fluctuate a lot. Once they start relying on your credit, they draw you into all sorts of nasty outcomes.

Not long ago, a woman saw a notice in the mail that was addressed to her son. She opened it and was stunned to find him being summoned to appear at a meeting of creditors that was to be conducted as part of his Chapter 13 bankruptcy case. This was rather disturbing. Her son wasn't in any debt that she was aware of. After all, he was 5 years old.

A sweeping new federal bankruptcy law went into effect in October 2005, designed to eliminate so-called "bankruptcies of convenience" by people who have abused their credit without ever intending to pay the bills. The law is having a perverse effect on victims of identity theft. Debtors now have to repay some of their old debt, and there are no exclusions. That means that if an identity thief runs up excessive debt in your name and files for bankruptcy, you'll be held responsible for the bills. ■

# The 20 Steps to Prevent Identity Theft

Identity thieves — the professionals, at least — spend all their time trying to outwit you so they can steal your money, while you spend at most a small portion of your time trying to keep them from getting it. So the odds distinctly favor them. But you can reduce those percentages significantly if you take a number of fairly simple precautions.

The following are the 20 crucial steps that can best

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## The 20 Steps to Prevent Identity Theft

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keep you from becoming a victim:

**1. Check your credit report.** Keeping abreast of your credit history is your best self-protection technique by far. If an identity thief uses your Social Security number and name to open a new credit card account with a fake address and phone number, you may not find out about it until the damage is long done — unless you check your credit report periodically.

**2. Don't give out your SSN.** Just because a form contains a space for your Social Security number doesn't mean you have to fill it in. A good rule to adhere to is, the less information you give out, the better.

**3. Protect your computer.** If you're using a wireless connection to access the Internet, make sure it's secure. Use an encrypted service. It's vital to update your virus protection regularly. Install an adequate firewall. Assume that any e-mail that asks for your personal information is a fraud.

**4. Keep track of your billing cycles.** A missing bill doesn't mean that a credit card company or a mortgage holder is giving you a month off. Rather, it may mean that a thief has changed your address. If you know the MasterCard bill usually comes on the 15th and now it's the 27th, then something's up. Call and figure it out.

**5. Examine your financial statements like an obsessed accountant.** As soon as a credit card statement arrives, go over it carefully to make sure you really bought all that stuff. If you didn't, deal with it right away.

**6. Guard your mail from theft.** Make a practice of picking up your mail as soon as possible after it is delivered, lest some well-intentioned thief concludes you won't mind if he takes it. Consider investing in a locked mailbox, or if you live in a high-crime area, play it extra safe with a post office box. Take your outgoing mail to a drop box rather than leaving it in the mailbox in front of your home.

**7. Invest in a shredder.** Get into the habit of shredding all documents before you toss them in the garbage. This goes for all bills and papers that contain personal information, especially Social Security numbers and financial account numbers. And it certainly goes for those pre-approved credit card and loan offerings. If you're going to sell or discard your computer, wipe the hard drive.

**8. Practice safe shopping.** Shop only from secure sites that will encrypt your order information and your credit card number before sending them to a merchant.

**9. Avoid sketchy ATMs.** Be skeptical of portable machines that you see in delis and hotel lobbies, especially ones that have a cord protruding from the back that's not plugged in. That means the data isn't being sent anywhere — it's just recorded for a crook's eyes. Stick with real, secure bank ATMs.

**10. Be suspicious of unexpected calls or letters.** When a business calls or e-mails you and asks for personal information, indulge in a little healthy paranoia. It's usually a clue that something's wrong. Make it a rigid policy not to get personal unless you're the one who initiated the contact.

**11. Put real passwords on your accounts.** Come up with one password that you can use in multiple applications that no one else will know. And never write it down. A strong password is a random eight-character combination of numbers, letters and symbols. Better yet, pick something familiar to you but that only you will know.

**12. Keep your credit card close when shopping or eating out.** When you're out spending money, watch how salespeople and waiters handle your cards — make sure they don't have a chance to copy them. Be especially alert at a store or restaurant that you've never been to before.

**13. Use safe checks, and use them sparingly.** Make it a habit to always get your checks from your bank, because banks are far more likely to use ones that contain fraud protection features. These include things like a watermark, thermochromatic ink, chemically reactive paper, and light-sensitive ink and fibers.

**14. Secure the home front and office front.** Find a non-obvious location in your home where you can store your Social Security card, passport and all records, including credit card statements and tax forms, which contain personal information. Don't leave valuable personal information on your desk or computer screen.

**15. Carry only what you need.** Leave your Social Security card at home in a secure place. Carry only credit cards you plan to use.

**16. Spring clean your credit cards.** If you aren't regularly using a credit card, cancel it. The more cards you have, the more opportunities a thief has to steal from you. Maintain organized records of all your credit cards so that if a theft does occur, you can report it promptly and thoroughly.

**17. Opt out.** Get your name off of marketing lists that get sold and resold. If fewer businesses have and sell your data, fewer thieves will be able to steal it.

**18. Read privacy policies.** They are essential for understanding what your bank, financial institutions and

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### The 20 Steps to Prevent Identity Theft

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other businesses that you deal with do with your information. They will also tell you what restrictions you can place on the dispersal of your information. Elect all the restrictions available to you.

**19. Protect a deceased relative.** When someone dies, contact the credit bureaus and have a "deceased" alert put on the person's reports. Inform Social Security of the death yourself, directly, with a copy of the death certificate.

**20. Place fraud alerts on your credit reports.** Putting a *fraud alert* tag on your credit report will limit a thief's ability to open accounts in your name. If you've been a victim of identity theft, you can place an extended fraud alert on your report that remains in place for seven years. These alerts will slow down your ability to get credit, but as long as you're willing to accept that slight inconvenience, give yourself all the protection that's available.

Nothing is foolproof. But if you make it hard for thieves to get your identity, then their inclination will be to leave you alone and try someone else. ■

## Understanding Trade Lines and the Meaning of R2

One of the primary reasons identity thieves are so successful is that most people don't bother to read their credit report or even know how to read one. And even those who do often fail to appreciate how important it is and how a single line buried somewhere in the dense body of their report can radically affect their future.

As it is, something like 4.5 billion pieces of data are entered each month into credit records: bill payments, bankruptcies, court judgments, overdue child support payments, foreclosures and liens. One reason to read your reports religiously is that much of that information is wrong.

The Credit History section of your credit report enumerates all of your credit accounts and credit behavior. It's basically your history of borrowing, reduced to names and digits.

The accounts enumerated here are known as *trade lines*. Each trade line includes the creditor's name and the account number. Each trade line discloses when you opened the account and the nature of the credit.

When you look over your report, check each trade line very closely for accounts that you don't recognize. For the accounts that are legitimately yours, make sure the number in the Balance Owing column jibes with what you've actually spent.

### You Can Correct Your Credit Report

Any time you detect something amiss in your credit report, correct the discrepancy as quickly as possible.

The first thing to know is, it's your right to have your report corrected. The law states that both the credit bureaus and the information sources — the credit grantors who gave them the information about you — are responsible for correcting inaccuracies in your report. To make sure they really do, attack on both fronts: contact the credit bureaus as well as the information providers. Call all three major credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — then follow up in writing. The credit bureau is allowed 30 days to investigate your case. The credit bureau then sends you a written report on the outcome.

### *Payment Codes*

Often the reports rely on payment codes that range from 1 to 9. The reports will use "R" to stand for revolving credit and "I" for installment, and then grade each account.

An R1 or I1 means you pay that bill within one month — in other words, on time. R2 means you pay within two months, and so on into escalating lengths of tardiness. R7 or I7 means your debts have been bunched together and are being repaid under consolidation. R8 is rather dismal news — your debt was satisfied by repossession. The worst news is an R9, which is when you've defaulted and the debt has been deemed uncollectible. R0 means you've just entered the wonderful world of credit and haven't been out there long enough for the credit wizards to judge your behavior.

If a trade line is unfamiliar to you but the bill payments are up to date, don't ignore it. An identity thief may have used your name and ID to get a loan, which he or she is temporarily repaying promptly so as not to attract attention. Don't make the mistake of thinking that an up-to-date account is a benefit to your credit score. You could wind up being denied credit later on when the person suddenly defaults on "your" loan — or even simply because you now have too much credit. ■

## Remember That Privacy Statement You Threw Away?

A privacy policy essentially tells you what personal information a business collects and how it collects it. It tells you

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## Remember That Privacy Statement You Threw Away?

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how the business uses your information, who it shares it with, and what "opt-out" options you have for limiting how your personal information is compiled and distributed.

When it comes to the opt-out options contained in privacy policies, there's only one smart move to make. Use them, all of them.

### *Selective Shopping*

Read your privacy statements and then evaluate the contents to decide who you want to do business with. Select your banks based on who does a better job of protecting your information.

If your bank doesn't offer the controls that it ought to, use another one. If a shopping site falls short in its privacy policy, shop at another place. Or complain vigorously about the policy, and maybe a miracle will happen and they'll rectify the deficiencies. ■

**For additional information on privacy policy statements, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# A Farewell to Checks

These days, Americans write something like 39 billion checks a year. That figure is starting to come down a little bit, but the prevalence of checks is still huge.

Writing checks is just too dangerous. Every check you write to the hairstylist or the cleaner has your name and signature, your bank's name and address, your account number and your routing number. Salespeople routinely ask for a driver's license or work number, as well as other personal information, and scribble that on the check. Certainly just the check front alone contains more than enough information to draft on your bank account — or become you.

### *Washing Checks*

If you are going to write a check to pay the electric bill or the gas bill, don't put it in the mailbox outside your house. Typically people put their outgoing mail in the mailbox and put the flag up, which is sort of like raising a red flag. It makes you vulnerable to an extremely common scam called *washing checks*.

There are criminals who drive through neighborhoods early in the morning to see that red flag, and remove the envelope containing your check to the electric company. They take that check home, put a piece of Scotch tape over your signature, and use an everyday household chemical to wash off all the information on that check except your signature. Then they can make the check out to themselves, fill in any amount and cash it.

So if you're going to mail a check, take it directly to the post office mailbox and mail it there. An even better precaution is to use a pen with permanent ink. ■

# They Got Me — Now What?

No matter how many precautions you take, you might become the victim of identity theft. It's important to follow an orderly protocol. Here are the steps to take:

1. **Call the credit bureau fraud departments.** Report the crime to the three credit bureaus so that they can put an alert on your file.

**2. Shut down all compromised accounts and documents.** Immediately pull the plug on the old and the new, both your own accounts that the thief may have been misusing and any new accounts that he or she opened in your name. When you reopen your accounts, make sure you have a new account number, and guard it with a fresh password.

**3. File a police report.** The report will help you remove the fraud from your credit report. Companies will want some kind of proof that you really are a victim. A police report is the best proof you can offer, because creditors assume you wouldn't file a police report unless you really meant it.

**4. Establish good records — of everything!** Send all letters certified mail, return receipt requested, from your local post office. That way you'll have a record of when you sent something and when it was received.

**5. File a complaint with the FTC.** Finally, once you've determined as best you can the extent of the fraud, file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, which can be done online at www.consumer.gov/idtheft, or by phone at 1-877-IDTHEFT. The FTC doesn't get involved in resolving individual cases, but the complaint is useful information in its work to investigate fraud, and it could spur a law enforcement response. ■

**For additional information on credit bureau fraud departments, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# The Crime That Keeps on Stealing

The dark side of identity theft is that it doesn't necessarily end, even when you take the recommended steps.

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## The Crime That Keeps on Stealing

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You're dealing with persistent criminals who don't relent and an imperfect resolution system. That combination makes it very hard to completely come out from under this insidious crime.

Even after one particular thief appears to be finished stealing your money, he or she continues to steal your sense of security. Once you've been violated, it's hard to feel safe again.

An elderly couple had a registered nurse living with them for years, caring for the man, who was sickly. When he died, the nurse left — along with his identity. When his widow wrote a check for his funeral, it bounced because the nurse had already cleaned out his account.

### *Criminal Records Live Forever*

When thieves commit other crimes in your name, you really face a burden that won't go away. It's easy enough to check your credit record, but there's no easy way to check your criminal record. If an identity thief has put a blot on your record, you don't know it until the police stop you. And you never know when it's going to reappear. ■

## Write Your Company and Congressperson — Now!

Society and public officials have a big responsibility. Congress and state legislatures need to provide consumers with more protection; so do the businesses that you patronize.

A group that calls itself Artists Against 419 — exasperated that law enforcement and companies don't do more about phishing scams — has actually been pursuing thieves on its own, a rare instance of a vigilante group aimed at white-collar crime. When one man found out that a department store had a videotape of the thief who had assumed his identity, he managed to obtain a copy of the tape and convinced a local TV station to run it on the evening news. Several viewers recognized the man and called in to finger him.

Every company in America, every government agency, every municipality and every health-care provider has to ask itself one simple question: What are we doing to protect the identity of our customers and our employees?

As a consumer, you've got to push them to get an answer to that question, because if they don't have the right answer, they're putting you at needless risk. ■

## Staying Two Steps Ahead (Or Three)

Identity theft will intensify in its tried and tested forms and in new variations as well. Identity thieves have already begun to invade cell phones and personal digital assistants and steal data from them. We're going to continue to see information swiped on a massive scale from companies and databases and sold not only in this country but overseas to those who wish to assume the identities of Americans. Even terrorists would be able to slip into someone's identity and get a job here and join a sleeper cell, because it is so easy to do.

Every precautionary action we undertake to prevent identity theft, therefore, has to take into account what could come next. Crime is a full-time job for its practitioners. Every move to thwart it has to anticipate the criminals' next move.

Here's a good example: The average phishing site lasts only five days before the crooks abandon it and move on to a new one. Why? It usually takes about six days for law enforcement or security experts to shut it down. So the thieves head elsewhere just before they hear the footsteps of the authorities closing in.

So you have to think two (if not three) steps ahead.

### *Protect Yourself*

We need to wake up to the fact that identity theft is a drama still in its first act. You must take steps to protect yourself. And you must start thinking like a criminal, and remember that a crook always looks for the easiest route to riches. Don't hand him or her a map.

We can't be idealistic and think we can stop identity theft altogether, but we can slow it down — a lot. We can possibly transform identity theft from a growth industry to one that is in steady decline. To do so, we must take prevention more seriously and press businesses, legislators and law enforcement to do the same.

We live busy lives, but this is a terrible problem. Remember, everyone is a potential victim. ■

### Recommended Reading List

**If you liked *Stealing Your Life*, you'll also like:**

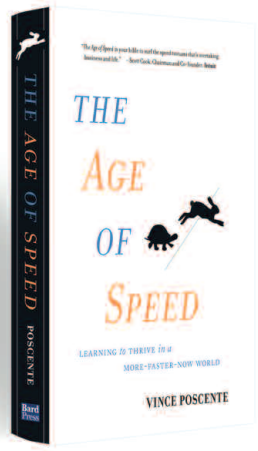
1. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There*** **by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The corporate world is full of intelligent and skilled executives, but few will ever reach the top and, according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.
2. ***Wikinomics*** **by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams.** The authors address how the Internet's social network offers new, decentralized ways to produce content, goods, services and profit in the emerging world of massive peer collaboration.
3. ***Words That Work*** **by Dr. Frank Luntz.** To effectively obtain the power of communication, you must learn that it's not always what you say, but how you say it. Luntz offers sound advice on how to tactically use words and phrases to get what you want in life.

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SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®






by Vince Poscente

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### How to Thrive in a More-Faster-Now World

# THE AGE OF SPEED

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We are willing to make dramatic sacrifices to achieve greater speed because today our society pulses with new priorities and new demands. We've created a 24/7, CrackBerry, more-faster-now culture, and it is changing the way we work, relate, communicate and live. It's changing what makes an individual successful and what makes an organization viable. And it's changing key aspects of the basic human experience.

While this may seem terrifying to some, speed has a unique power to enrich our lives on an individual, organizational and even societal level. It is the lifeblood of the information age, it pushes businesses forward and it helps people spend less time doing meaningless things and make room for more significant living.

Speed is a fact of modern life. Yet many people and organizations let speed control them instead of the other way around. *The Age of Speed* is an examination of the role of speed in business and the individual experience and a proposal for a new perspective: that speed can be a powerful ally on both a personal and an organizational level.

By using case studies from renegade companies such as Geico, Patagonia, Nintendo and Netflix, author Vince Poscente unravels the notion that in today's world we need to slow down. Instead, he illustrates why harnessing the power of speed is the ultimate solution for those seeking less stress, less busyness and more balance.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The dramatic impact of the more-faster-now revolution.
- Why we must redefine the work-home-leisure model of time.
- How to categorize people and organizations into four types of speed profiles.
- Why being open to new ideas and opportunities allows you to be faster.
- Why multitasking is actually an impediment to speed.
- How being aligned with your authentic purpose allows you to take full advantage of speed.

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**by Vince Poscente**

# The Speed Phenomenon

We crave speed, and we won't be satisfied until we get it. Our tolerance of slow has decreased dramatically as our yearning for speed has increased. Today, wait time and downtime are considered unacceptable. Our tolerance is so low that 23 percent of Americans say they lose patience within five minutes of waiting in line. Though this may seem immature on the surface, the core of our intolerance may be rooted in something quite reasonable: Five minutes waiting is equivalent to surrendering five units of our most valued commodity — time. We've explored the potential of each minute, and we know just what we could have accomplished in those lost five minutes.

Consider what speed means for businesses. There is a new standard for fast but also a big opportunity: a widespread, deeply felt, unmet demand. People are desperate to save time — even 18 seconds makes a difference in the Age of Speed. Chase Manhattan Bank used its ability to cut average ATM transaction time from 42 seconds to 24 as a positioning strategy to appeal to the many speed seekers in its potential customer pool.

Think about the offbeat car insurance provider Geico. Geico used Speed Racer as a spokesperson and branded a tagline that's become almost unforgettable: "Fifteen minutes could save you 15 percent or more on car insurance." Geico's direct-to-consumer model is hardly business as usual in the slow-moving auto insurance market, but it works — in part by emphasizing the speed and instant gratification the model can bring to customers.

### *More Life, Please*

Today, a fantastic amount of living is within reach. Not only do we have the ability to pursue more options, we also have more options available for pursuing.

With more options available, we can chase more dreams. And since we have an unprecedented ability to achieve them, we manage to catch more dreams. The difference between what we can accomplish in 60 modern minutes and what we could do in an hour 30 years ago is astounding.

Every time we speed up the time it takes to complete an unimportant task, we create the possibility of more time to spend doing what we feel is significant. We want to spend less time on things we deem inconsequential, so we devour every chance to speed up the minutiae in our lives. Why do we need speed? We need it because it lets us live more meaningful lives. ■

# Evolution

Today, even when there is no clear reason to resist speed, our instincts often tell us to proceed with caution. Outdated perspectives, irrational fears and incongruous desires are often steering our response because negative perceptions of speed are ingrained in both our conscious and subconscious minds.

If we continue to reject speed out of hand, we'll never be able to get ahead of it. We'll be in constant conflict with the world around us — a world pulsing with speed. So we need to identify the root of our resistance and work to change our view so we can see speed for the positive force it can be and end our opposition.

### *Smelling the Roses*

Using speed to live a more meaningful life is counterintuitive for most people, because speeding up means compromising the journey, missing out on smelling the roses, right? Well, not necessarily. Not every experience holds deep intrinsic value. The suggestion of embracing speed is the idea of speeding up the *minutiae* in your life and work.

The key is identifying the difference between repetitive

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**The author:** Vince Poscente is a business consultant, author, inductee into the Speaker Hall of Fame and one of North America's most sought-after keynote speakers.

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## Evolution

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chores and passionate pursuits. If the activity is something you love, that you have a passion for, you may want to immerse yourself in the full experience each and every time. But for some things in life, we should pursue speed with zeal. When we speed up the drudgery, we have *more* time to cherish significant experiences.

In addition to asking ourselves if we need to stop and smell the roses, we should also question whether or not we're compromising our satisfaction by sacrificing the dramatic build of anticipation.

When choosing the best opportunities for speeding up, consider the value of both the experience leading up to the end and the value of the end. When the value of both is small, it is a good opportunity to use speed. On the other hand, when the value of one or both is significant, speed may compromise the pleasure you get from that experience.

### *A Love Triangle: Time, Quality and Cost*

Ingrained in our perception of products, services and activities is a very basic microeconomic concept: There is a balance that must be maintained between time, quality and cost; if you want more of one, you have to sacrifice another. It's a time-tested formula and the foundation of many decisions we make in our personal and business lives.

But in the Age of Speed, the rules have changed. Though it is unlikely that trade-offs among time, quality and cost will ever cease to exist, the old model is no longer a given. Because of technology, we have more shortcuts available than ever before, and these shortcuts not only save us time but often also save us money and produce equal or better quality.

If we can accept the positive potential that speed offers, we can do more, be more, live more. We don't have to assume that if we embrace speed, our lives will just get busier and busier. We need to adapt, evolve and shed our outdated or misguided perceptions of speed. We need to reshape the way we define, manage and categorize our time. ■

## The Big Blur

One of the most common side effects of the Age of Speed is blurred boundaries between work and home. One reason for the blur is that disconnection is becoming extinct at a phenomenal rate. Although work no longer keeps us chained to desks or even desktops, we're experiencing by "always-on" phenomenon — whether it's an e-mail, text message, instant message or cell phone call, we're almost always accessible.

The big blur between free time and work time makes us feel that our overall time is compromised and that it isn't ours to control. No matter how fast we think we're going, it seems harder and harder to dedicate time to the things we feel are significant.

Time has been associated with physical boundaries for more than a century. We got used to the idea that we work when we are in the office or at the factory. We do chores when we are in the kitchen. We relax when we are in the living room or at the park. This made time easy to define: work, home, leisure.

Today, however, work is no longer a place, it's a state of mind. Instead of three distinct segments of time, we have ended with one large pie of time filled with a constantly morphing mixture of work, home and leisure.

However, if we define a new alternative to the work-home-leisure model, we will be able to take advantage of all the opportunities available to us today more easily, and we will feel the benefits of an evolved way of life.

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## How Best Buy Uses the Values-Based Time Model

There is a growing trend among companies to promote boundary-free time for both employee development and bottom-line results. Best Buy, through its Results-Only Work Environment (ROWE), allows employees the freedom to decide where, when and how they work — as long as they get the job done.

Best Buy has moved far beyond the typical approach to flextime — allowing employees to start and end their days around a core set of hours — and encourages employees to break all the rules of standard business operating procedure. It's no longer about how many hours you spend in the office; it's about productivity and outcomes. This now leads to a totally different evaluation of how you spend your time.

The benefits are remarkable. Employees in divisions that are part of ROWE report that their family relationships, company loyalty and focus on their work have all improved since the program began. And these results are affecting the bottom line. Surveys have shown a 35 percent increase in productivity for employees working in the ROWE program.

Perhaps Steve Hance, employee relations manager, said it best: "I used to schedule my life around my work. Now I schedule my work around my life."

## The Big Blur

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### *Making a New Model*

Yvon Chouinard, founder and CEO of Patagonia, often tells the story of a trip he took with the leaders of his company to South America. The company had experienced phenomenal growth in the mid-1980s, but the recession at the end of the decade hit them hard. In a tough spot, they had to do something radical, so they headed to Argentina and climbed a mountain. When they reached the top, they didn't talk about strategy and bottom lines; they talked about their vision for an ideal future — not what they had to do, but what they wanted to do. They knew that if they went back to their roots and their passion, they could solve the problems they faced.

The Patagonia team realized that in their ideal company, there was no separation between work and home or leisure. They believed that they should enjoy the eight to 10 hours a day at work as much or more than the other hours of the day. They didn't think they should have to redefine their values and passion during business hours. And if their values didn't change from hour to hour or from Sunday to Monday, why should the way they focused their time?

When we stop applying the work-home-leisure framework to our time and start applying a framework based on values, we shift from a choked perspective focused on spatial context and tasks to an open, conscious perspective based on what we value and what we want to accomplish. In the Age of Speed, our time is more fluid — and that should be working in our favor, not making us feel stressed out and exhausted.

When we implement the values-based time model in our lives, time becomes the tool we use to organize our priorities and values rather than our duties and location, and how we spend our time reflects who we are rather than where we are or what we're doing.

If we stop judging our time according to outdated definitions of work, home and leisure, we are less likely to feel stressed out about the blurred lines. If we stop forcing the separation between those three areas of our lives, we won't suffer when they merge — instead, we'll find solutions.

Regardless of your work situation, shifting your perspective of time from a focus on tasks and physical location to a focus on values can help you deal with the daily pressures common in the Age of Speed. ■

**For additional information on a new work–home–leisure model, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Four Profiles

If you're in an environment that requires speed, you must embrace it. And if you embrace it, you must know what it takes to succeed so you don't crash.

When evaluating these three core issues — whether speed is embraced or resisted, whether it is required in a specific environment or irrelevant, and whether it works for or against the person or organization in question — you will notice that there are four behavior patterns or profiles that have emerged in the Age of Speed: Zeppelins, Balloons, Bottle Rockets and Jets. Once you get to know them, you'll recognize the behaviors that categorize these profiles everywhere you look — in your colleagues, your family, your company, the receptionist at your dentist's office or the talking heads on TV. You may even recognize yourself.

### *Four Behavior Patterns in the Age of Speed*

**Profile No. 1:** Have you ever worked with or for a company that required five, seven or even 11 levels of approval for the simplest initiative or communication? You've probably been touched by a **Zeppelin**, and chances are good that you came away from the encounter trying not to scream in frustration.

Zeppelins proceed at a sloth-like pace and have a tough time maneuvering or changing course quickly. Today, they are obsolete: Zeppelins can't fly fast enough or soar high enough for the Age of Speed.

Zeppelins see speed as a harbinger of impending doom: greater stress, more work, chaos. They're blind to the world of options and opportunities that speed offers. Zeppelins commonly feel rushed, stressed out, not in control of their own lives. The only option for taking control, at least according to Zeppelins, is to slow down. If they need something fast, they feel sure they'll have to sacrifice something for speed. They'd rather take their time, whatever the cost.

**Profile No. 2: Balloons** are the happy individuals and successful organizations that don't seek speed and don't need to. Balloons have chosen to live outside the Age of Speed. Instead, they seek or create environments in which there are few external pressures demanding that they speed up. They interact with our fast culture only from a distance.

Where Zeppelins resist speed and face inevitable failure, Balloons resist speed but find success. Like their namesake — the hot-air balloon — these resistors float along, content to reach a general destination eventually. They can change their environment the way a hot-air balloon can change its altitude, so they can avoid situa-

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## Four Profiles

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tions that require them to move at speeds faster than they are comfortable with.

Balloons often inhabit niche markets, where their specialized skills are valued regardless of the time they cost. They find success primarily because they aren't actively resisting speed by putting themselves in its path and trying to erect a barricade. Their resistance is really more a form of avoidance.

In their general detachment from speed, Balloons give up some of their potential and some of their opportunities. But they make the sacrifice mindfully. Because they're almost always conscious of their choice and have sought out an environment that supports that choice, it usually works out well for them.

**Profile No. 3:** You can easily identify a **Bottle Rocket** as the endlessly energetic co-worker who powers through the day at top speed — always moving fast, but never managing to achieve anything of substance. It's the company that takes off and embraces speed at every turn — but either loses sight of its goals and fails to reach its once-glorious potential or stays stubbornly focused on the wrong path.

Bottle Rockets are devoted to speed — they embrace it in all things and their demand for it is high. Lacking agility, Bottle Rocket companies have difficulty adjusting to new standards, practices, new ideas and developments in their industry. They're so focused on going fast, they don't take time to understand why they're going fast, where they're trying to go, or what might be holding them back. The trajectory they follow doesn't necessarily lead to their true calling — nor to fast results.

**Profile No. 4:** Like Bottle Rockets, **Jets** embrace speed and actively pursue it; unlike Bottle Rockets, Jets have outstanding records for reaching their destinations safe and intact.

Jets harness the power of speed, turning it to their advantage. They are agile — open to change and innovation and in constant pursuit of new opportunities. They're aerodynamic — free from the drag that slows down others' lives, work and organizations. And they're aligned — in pursuit of a clear goal that is true to their strengths, passions and environment, with all their energy focused on that purpose.

Like Balloons, Jets have found their calling, but because they embrace speed instead of rejecting it, they flourish in their environment and don't need to place limits on their growth. They move fast but not just to keep up. Jets see speed as an ally, a power that propels them further toward their desires faster. They see it as a beneficent force that increases life, growth, energy and the value of what they do. They let the speed of their environment work for them.

If we don't want to resist speed by limiting our potential like Balloons or risking obsolescence like Zeppelins, but we also don't want to speed ahead recklessly and explode like Bottle Rockets, then we must learn to harness the power of speed like Jets. ■

**For information on how Google represents a Jet, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Agility

Threats and opportunities for a business surface faster today than ever before. Globalization and technology have multiplied the ranks of potential competitors and customers and raised the stakes of success and failure. This means that it's harder to compete and keep up with the rate of change, but it also means there are new opportunities at every turn. To speed up when we feel we cannot possibly go any faster, we have to open our minds and our organizations to the world around us. We have to be more sensitive to new possibilities.

To master the discipline of agility, we must also be flexible in our thoughts and actions. Being flexible is a test of our willingness to acknowledge weakness. To be truly flexible or create a truly flexible culture, we have to be willing to take risks — and we must have the courage to fail.

If we want to speed up, we also need to be responsive and be able to adjust quickly and correctly to changes in our jobs, our economy, our family dynamics, our customer or colleague relationships and our worlds. The rate of change has accelerated to such a degree that even people and organizations that want to be responsive are falling behind. Responding to change in modern times means being ultrasensitive to even the slightest shifts, rapidly analyzing those shifts and taking appropriate action immediately.

We can all speed up by making adjustments based on changes in our environment. Consider it an agility imperative, a requirement for going faster in a world that keeps going faster. ■

# Aerodynamics

To be aerodynamic is to be free of clutter, to be in your metaphorical perfect form, ensuring that excessive drag doesn't slow you down and add chaos to your

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## Aerodynamics

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organization, work, family, relationships and well-being.

Today's most common source of drag for individuals is obsessive multitasking — ironically, something we do in an effort to speed up and get more out of each moment. We multitask to stave off boredom or because it seems the only way to get everything done.

The problem is that multitasking doesn't necessarily speed us up; sometimes it slows us down. Brain scan studies reveal that if we do two tasks at the same time, we have only half our usual brainpower to devote to each. So when we multitask, we're really only half there for each activity.

Multitasking isn't the only issue. A different but related trend is that of accepting constant interruptions. But even if accepting interruptions has a negative effect on productivity, it would be foolish to suggest that we should — or could — stop it altogether. In the Age of Speed, the idea that we can proceed through our days by focusing on one project until completion, then another and another, is unrealistic, even a bit obtuse.

Today, we face real-time demands, so the way we work is more complex. We begin one task, shift to another, start something else, complete the first thing we started, continue the third thing we started and so forth.

It's gotten to the point that our activity patterns aren't even linear any more. We can — and often must — respond to issues as they arise, so our activity shifts from task to task as we race to keep all our plates spinning.

### *An Exercise in Consciousness*

How do we balance the speed benefits that interruptions and multitasking can provide with the clear drag they exert?

The answer is to take a conscious, analytical approach. We need to allow the disruptions that add speed but avoid the ones that detract from it. To simplify our lifestyles and cut back on unnecessary drag, we have to take control over what interruptions we accept and when we choose to accept them — when to multitask and when to focus.

The first step is to evaluate the importance of each task and decide whether to let it be interrupted. If we consciously assess the importance of the interruption and decide whether it's worth the switch, our behavior and results will more accurately reflect our priorities. For decisions about multitasking, ask yourself whether it's best to stay fully engaged in the activity at hand.

Next, we need to examine the total number of interruptions we allow and how often we multitask. By juggling too many tasks or allowing too many distractions, you condition your brain to stay over-stimulated, weakening your ability to concentrate.

Finally, we need to assess what kinds of tasks we're trying to perform simultaneously. Multitasking is a good option only if what we're doing is unimportant or simple enough that the decreased brainpower won't negatively affect our productivity or results.

### *Too Much of a Good Thing*

Once we've rid our workdays of unnecessary interruptions and productivity-sapping multitasking, work becomes less cluttered — more aerodynamic and faster. But if there's still just too much to do, consider ways to filter and process the information and work that's pouring onto your desk.

We drown ourselves in trivia and excess. Instead of simply letting this ocean of information and people flood unchecked into our minds, onto our desks, and into our lives, we have to limit the inflow by establishing trusted sources. Set aside time to review the volume of information, requests, personal contacts and distractions that enter your life each hour. How much of that would you be better off without?

### *Off the Desk and Out of the Inbox*

To clear away the excess, assign priorities to each task and curtail the amount of information that penetrates your consciousness. The next step is to process the tasks and information quickly. Note that this is not the same as completing tasks and consuming information. The difference is important. When you're processing tasks and information, you may end up completing or consuming some of them, but others you pass on to trusted destinations.

A trusted destination is someone or something you can rely on to give you what you need without supervision. Obviously, you have to choose your destinations wisely, but the system at work is an aerodynamic wonder. You don't have to do everything on your to-do list, you just need to get it where it needs to go to get done.

Within organizations, determining trusted destinations can be difficult. The more bogged down employees get doing work that somebody else could do faster and better, the slower the organization runs and the longer it takes for individuals, teams, departments and divisions to reach their goals. To help employees feel safe passing along tasks, contacts or ideas to others, leaders and managers must foster a culture of trust and implement tools to make finding trusted destinations possible.

The goal — for individuals and organizations — is to

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### Aerodynamics

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eliminate drag and to be sleek and aerodynamic. Once we are aerodynamic, we have the potential to be aligned. ■

## Alignment

To thrive in the Age of Speed, we need to find our focus point at the end of a tightrope that we never lose sight of as we race across. That focus point is our authentic purpose, whether it be personal, professional or organizational. When we are aligned with an authentic purpose, we get from beginning to end of any course with ease, balance and greater speed.

When you pursue an authentic purpose and your actions are aligned with it, everything happens faster. Speed comes naturally, almost effortlessly, with fewer obstacles.

It's just as important for an organization to identify its authentic purpose as it is for an individual. If a business is trying to achieve something that its employees, leaders, investors, customers or other stakeholders do not feel passionate about or at least connected to, advancement will come slowly, if at all. To find the authentic purpose, the leaders of an organization need to understand its true nature.

In the end, an authentic purpose is that thing, that dream, that gives people a sort of emotional buzz — that thing that they know beyond a shadow of a doubt is true and right.

But identifying the authentic purpose is only step one. For both individuals and organizations, it's vital to stay focused on the authentic purpose and make sure our actions consistently promote that vision.

How do you find your own authentic vision and support it through your decisions, actions and goals? You have to start with where you are and evaluate your current focus to see if it's locked onto a destination you sincerely want, need and can get to.

Like so many things in the Age of Speed, achieving alignment requires profound awareness of the things you do in everyday life. Take a step back for a moment, examine the ways you're expending your energy and resources and ask yourself: Are they aligned with my vision?

### *The Aligned Organization*

A business that is aligned knows exactly why it exists, is sensitive to how it fits into the world around it and acts only in ways that promote both of those forces. It has developed a vision that is intrinsically suited to it, and it is focused on its destination, supporting its vision with every single decision, action and goal. Because it knows exactly where it's going and is concentrating on getting there, it moves at top speed.

### *The Aligned Individual*

Individuals who are aligned achieve their goals at a remarkable pace, because they pursue things that matter to them and make the most of their true talents.

Once you have identified your authentic purpose and committed to aligning your efforts with it, finding the path of alignment is easy: To become aligned, seek simplicity.

Simplicity is needed to achieve and maintain speed. So the act of pursuing speed in life and business results in an environment of simplicity. This is counterintuitive, because we tend to think of slow as simple and fast as chaotic, but fast can be the surest way to simplicity. By its very nature, fast is simple, so simplicity is one of the foundations of success in the Age of Speed.

Being aware of the importance of alignment and conscious of its benefits in the Age of Speed will motivate us to discover our authentic vision and put all our efforts behind it. Without authentic alignment, we cannot achieve top speed; with it, we can accomplish phenomenal things. ■

### Nintendo's Alignment

The specs for Nintendo's newest video game console, the Wii, came from an era long ago when things were (or seemed) simpler. Released at the end of 2006, the machine has no DVD drive, no internal hard drive, no high-definition capability. Its graphics are only slightly better than those of the last generation of consoles, released around 2000. And it costs only $250 — compared with Sony's $600 PS3 and Microsoft's $400 Xbox 360.

But the lower-tech design isn't a mistake. Nintendo understands that graphics and technological advances are important but secondary to the pursuit of its authentic purpose of creating a fun, engaging play experience for people of all ages and skill levels. Because of its authentic alignment, even though Nintendo is in third place in industry market share, it's on the fast track to success.

## Harnessing the Power of Speed

We can leverage speed, using it to attain our goals. When we do that, we can get ahead of the rush, the demands and the exhaustion. Once and for all, we can make speed an ally.

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## Harnessing the Power of Speed

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If we don't learn to anticipate speed now, the consequences will become more and more negative over time, because the demand for it will only continue to increase.

Our desire for speed has almost completely evolved into full-fledged expectation. As our expectation for speed is met more regularly and in more situations, that expectation spreads to more and more facets of life.

Speed is rapidly becoming a commodity, and if we fail to compete in the area of speed in our environments and markets, we'll have no chance of attracting customers, clients or investors. Anticipating speed is not only necessary to be wildly successful, it's necessary to survive in the business world.

### *How to Reach for Speed and Turn It to Your Advantage*

When face to face with speed, we need to reach for it and turn it to our advantage — as a little Internet mail order business in northern California began to do in 1997. The company specialized in providing products its clients could get at brick-and-mortar stores around town, but with better prices, better selection and better convenience (the customer didn't even have to leave home). It was fast too: Customers' items generally showed up within 24 hours.

The company had it all — price, selection, convenience and speed — and its success in the local market set it up for expansion. Los Angeles was the obvious second market — a huge pool of potential customers not far from headquarters. But the city was out of range of the company's warehouses, so L.A. customers wouldn't get the quick delivery its current clients enjoyed. Suddenly, the company faced a decision: downplay the importance of speed to its customers or reach for speed and turn it to its advantage.

The company's leaders figured that if they met and even exceeded the demand for speed, they'd put themselves in a sweet spot for growth and market domination. Actively seeking speed would give the business momentum it could use to keep expanding. So the owners put it all on the line and decided to embrace speed. With a strong vision toward future growth, the company went $159 million into debt to ensure that it could distribute its products quickly to every new area it served.

The investment paid off. By 2006, Netflix, the once-small California company became a publicly traded corporation with 1,350 employees and $996.7 million in gross revenue.

Netflix can get DVDs to almost 90 percent of its customers in one business day, and its membership has increased from 239,000 in the first year to more than 6 million in 2006.

### *Anticipating Speed*

Once we anticipate speed and understand that the stakes are rising, the next step in an active approach to the advance of speed is to step forward and reach for it, to seek it out.

Reaching for speed itself is straightforward; the complicated part is finding the right places and the right ways to apply a fast, innovative touch. Anticipating speed, reaching for it and turning it to your advantage is the ultimate solution for harnessing the power of speed. It's a shift in perspective and a change in behavior: rather than reacting to speed as something to combat or stop, you seek it out, constantly looking for new ways to use speed to your benefit. ■

SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**If you liked *The Age of Speed*, you'll also like:**

1. ***Words That Work* by Dr. Frank Luntz.** To effectively obtain the power of communication, you must learn that it's not always what you say, but how you say it.
2. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The corporate world is full of skilled executives, but few will ever reach the top and, according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.
3. ***How* by Dov Seidman.** According to Seidman, in this increasingly competitive world, it's not what you do but how you do it that sets you apart from the pack.

# Conclusion

If we want to thrive in an accelerated world, we need to use the power of speed to our advantage. It's the only way to get ahead of the rush that seems to be overtaking our lives and businesses.

Take a minute to think about the four profiles. If we want to be Jets, we have to embrace a perspective that promotes speed.

To be a Jet is to appreciate the benefits that speed offers — more life, more opportunities, more significance. Also, it is to be conscious of how we spend our time, of the tasks we accept, of how we embrace speed or when we reject it. If we truly want to soar, we have to understand our authentic purpose, be nimble and open to opportunities, be free of clutter and drag that can limit our potential, and seek speed out in unique and innovative ways. These changes are key to thriving in our more-faster-now world.

Your challenge is to embrace the oncoming force of speed and put these ideas to work in your life and business — to allow these concepts to inspire real action and extraordinary results. ■

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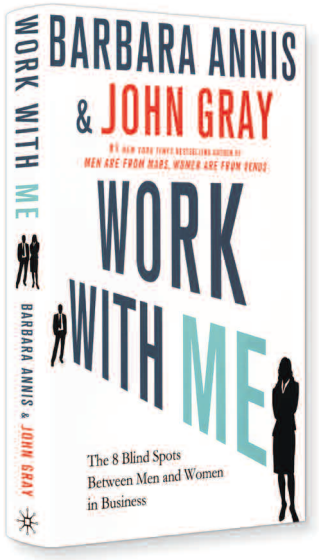
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# Work With Me

## The 8 Blind Spots Between Men and Women in Business




by Barbara Annis and John Gray

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Each day, men and women looking to bring their best to work are often challenged by false assumptions and mistaken opinions about the other gender-persistent blind spots that frequently result in misunderstandings and miscommunication, affecting their ability to find success and satisfaction in their work lives as well as in their personal lives.

*Work With Me* is a timely collaboration of Barbara Annis, world-renowned expert on gender issues in the workplace, and John Gray, author of the bestselling relationship book, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. Told through science, stories and the results of over 100,000 in-depth interviews with male and female executives of over 60 Fortune 500 companies, *Work With Me* reveals the Eight Gender Blind Spots that create tension between the sexes at work and in their personal relations: Do Women Want Men to Change? Do Men Appreciate Women? Are Women Being Excluded? Do Men Have to Walk on Eggshells with Women? Do Women Ask Too Many Questions? Do Men Listen? Are Women Too Emotional? Are Men Insensitive?

This work-personal life relational guide brings insights and offers solutions to help both men and women remove the blind spots that separate them, allowing for greater success and satisfaction in their professional and personal lives.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What "Gender Blind Spots" are.
- What "Gender Intelligence" is.
- How we stop misunderstanding each other.
- How we build trust and credibility with each other.
- How we achieve work-personal life harmony.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **WORK WITH ME**

**by Barbara Annis and John Gray**

**The authors:** Barbara Annis is a world-renowned expert on Gender Intelligence® and inclusive leadership, advocating the value and practice of Gender Intelligence in Fortune 500 companies, governments and numerous organizations across the globe. Her book *Same Words, Different Language* is considered a seminal contribution to the new conversation between men and women at work. She serves as chair emeritus of the Women's Leadership Board at the Harvard Kennedy School.

John Gray, Ph.D. is a leading relationship expert in the world and bestselling author. His book *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* is ranked by *USA Today* as one of the top 10 most influential books over the last 25 years. Founder of Mars Venus coaching, he has trained over 500 coaches in 27 countries to bridge the gender gap in business through gender-smart leadership, sales and team-building training programs.

*Work With Me: The 8 Blind Spots Between Men and Women in Business* by Barbara Annis & John Gray. Copyright © 2013 Barbara Annis and John Gray. Summarized by permission of the publisher PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®. 249 pages, $27.00, ISBN-978-0-230-34190-6. To purchase this book, go to www.amazon.com or www.bn.com.

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## Introduction

Have you ever felt this way or heard comments such as these expressed by friends or coworkers? "I'm tired of being excluded and having my ideas dismissed." "Being the best person for the job means nothing here." "I have to be so careful in what I say and do." "I can't and won't act like someone I'm not."

There are millions of people like this who are stuck, failing or quitting — not because of their abilities but because they haven't figured out how to work effectively with the opposite gender. Women and men may see the same things, but they do so through a completely different set of lenses, very often thinking and talking past each other. This is due to what we call "gender blind spots": incorrect assumptions held by both men and women, stereotypic baggage that continues to cause our miscommunications and fuel our misunderstandings.

It's time for a cultural shift in our thinking. What we need now — more than ever before — is a new level of awareness and attentiveness to each other's needs, a depth of understanding called "gender intelligence." Gender intelligence is an awareness of the intrinsic nature of men and women beyond the physical and cultural. It's an understanding of and appreciation for our differences. It recognizes that gender is a function of both nature and nurture.

Only by understanding the nature of our differences can we then gain the insight into how to nurture, develop and complement our differences instead of denying and suppressing our own uniqueness and that of the other gender. ●

## Are We Really the Same?

Men and women are often uncertain how to act with each other and how to react to each other. Many men admit they don't understand women. Male behavior is more predictable, but not understanding or not trying to understand can lead to avoidance and not working well together. Both men and women are often hesitant to speak their minds or act in ways that feel authentic.

**Gender Facts:**

- **9 percent of men say they "understand women."**
- **68 percent of women say they "understand men."**

One major problem is we're trying too hard to be "equal" to each other, which has grown more to mean "acting the same." The fact is, men and women are different. We do almost everything differently. We communicate, solve problems, prioritize, make decisions, resolve conflicts, handle emotions and deal with stress differently. It's easy to say "we're all equal" and go about treating each other the same. But in the end, that leads us further away from valuing each other and finding the complement in each other. Without gender intelligence, men and women will never truly understand and appreciate each other's complementary nature. ●

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## THE EIGHT GENDER BLIND SPOTS

# Do Women Want Men to Change?

Women are not as content in today's workplace as men are. From the boardroom to the conference room to the call center, women feel valued differently than men. Women often sense that they have to work harder than men do just to prove themselves, and they feel doubted for their competence and commitment.

Men, on the other hand, are generally comfortable with the rules of engagement in today's corporate culture. They're not aware of how their behavior affects women, and they don't feel that they're acting intentionally against women.

**Gender Facts:**

- **58 percent of men believe that women have as equal a chance of getting ahead as men do. Only 24 percent of women share that outlook.**
- **83 percent of men believe both men and women are experiencing the same level of job satisfaction.**
- **93 percent of women believe men have job satisfaction. Only 62 percent of women feel job satisfaction.**

Two generations ago, for a woman to pursue a career may have been a choice, but today it's an economic necessity. Yet, the work environment that women are entering does not welcome the way in which women communicate, collaborate and generally engage in business. When women say they want men to change, they are really asking men to remove the obstacles to their success and to value their contributions.

Here are some examples of how men unknowingly dismiss women by pursuing a course of action that may be understandable to themselves and other men, but that tends to prevent women from participating in ways that work for them:

What men say: *"Those issues aren't directly related. We need to focus on what's critical and doable now."*

What women say: *"Those issues seem relevant and may impact our decision. All things should be considered."*

What men say: *"There's risk involved, but beating competition to the marketplace is worth it."*

What women say: *"To minimize the risk, let's think through the options one more time. We may not be first to market, but we'll have a solid product."*

As much as men need to understand how women think and behave, women need to understand the same about men. ●

# Do Men Appreciate Women?

In the late 1940s, companies began surveying employees in an attempt to understand what motivated them to perform at their best. A pattern emerged, and the underlying principles are still found in almost every management training book today. These included offering employees a challenging job that aligned with their skills and interests, giving them the time and resources needed to accomplish the task, allowing them the autonomy to get the job done, and recognizing and rewarding them for their accomplishments. Back then, men made up the vast majority of the workforce. These ideas and principles were aligned with how men thought, behaved and preferred to work. Fast forward to this era, and the belief is that women will seek appreciation for the same reasons, but the data suggests otherwise.

**Gender Facts:**

- **79 percent of men feel appreciated at work while only 48 percent of women feel the same.**
- **82 percent of women want to be recognized for their effort in achieving the results.**
- **89 percent of men want to be recognized for their results.**

Men appreciate being acknowledged for their results. For men, it's not so much the journey or the efforts undertaken while achieving their objectives, but the successful completion of the task itself.

Men appreciate having the freedom to make their own decisions, not being micromanaged during the process of achieving their objectives, and having the latitude to make mistakes and learn from their errors.

What detracts from a man's sense of independence is offering him unsolicited help. It indicates to a man that he is not trusted or capable of accomplishing the job on his own.

Women feel most appreciated and validated when they're acknowledged for the challenges they faced in attaining those results. To most women, experiencing the journey is as valuable as arriving at their destination.

In addition, women tend to be relationship-oriented. Women generally approach projects collaboratively and cooperatively, while men tend to engage in work independently and competitively.

Only through expanding our gender intelligence can we begin to understand and respect our gender differences and learn to demonstrate and communicate appreciation in ways valued by the other gender and, in turn, acknowledge the ways appreciation is being offered. ●

## Are Women Being Excluded?

**Gender Facts:**

- **82 percent of women say they feel some form of exclusion — whether in business social events and casual meetings, in conversations or in receiving direct feedback.**
- **92 percent of men don't believe they're excluding women.**

A woman's feelings of exclusion don't stem from isolated instances or specific incidents but rather from a recurring pattern of male behavior at work that tends to dismiss a woman's ideas and questions during meetings, prevents her from participating in informal networks, and impedes her chances of benefiting from valuable mentoring opportunities.

One of the major obstacles impeding women's visibility, and therefore their chances for advancement, is their omission from informal networks of communication — those casual situations and social settings in which team bonding takes place. These informal networks and settings can include client lunches, drinks and cigars after a meeting, shooting pool and golf outings.

Many of the networks and events are typically exclusive to men, primarily because they've been traditionally designed around men's interests. Women don't necessarily want to prevent men from engaging in male-related activities, but they do want to feel a part of the team and benefit, as men do, from the personal growth opportunities that tend to surface during these informal events.

Women will commonly point to "men's club" behavior in meetings and at business socials and maintain that it's men's *intention* to exclude. A man, confronted with those comments, will recall all the times he was inclusive and respond with, "No, that's not true. I really did want to include you." He'll discount the claim because, in his mind, his intent was never to exclude. Men, in general, want to find ways to work with women. Men behave in ways that are natural for themselves and understandable to other men, and they assume women want to be treated the same way.

Women derive personal gratification and support by questioning issues and being questioned and by sharing their discoveries and decisions with others. As a result, women derive feelings of acceptance and involvement that are typically not as important to men.

Inclusion is generally not a top-of-mind issue for men. As a result, a woman may misread a man's behavior in team meetings as being aloof and indifferent, which tends to amplify a woman's feelings of exclusion. ●

## Do Men Have to Walk on Eggshells with Women?

Men often find themselves walking on eggshells with women in the workplace, an apprehensive and hesitant feeling that can potentially surface any time men interact with women. Examples of situations that men say they feel most uncomfortable in and take extra care not to offend and provoke an emotional reaction include bringing up certain topics that may raise too many questions and delay decisions; giving feedback during performance reviews; careless language, including sexual innuendo, off-color jokes and profanity; opening doors, holding elevators, buying lunch, or offering to carry heavy packages.

**Gender Facts:**

- **79 percent of men feel they have to be careful and indirect when providing women critical and timely feedback.**
- **82 percent of women say they want to receive direct feedback from men.**

Women don't believe that men need to walk on eggshells around them. They wish that men didn't feel that way and are often surprised that it occurs to the degree that it does. However, men often claim that they have a history of "saying the wrong thing," an awkwardness that many men confess dates back to their adolescence. They admit that their sense of caution is often a reaction to past situations and experiences, even if it was only an isolated incident when something they said or did caused a woman to react negatively.

Men walking on eggshells with women is clearly detrimental to both genders. It prevents men and women from bringing their authentic selves to work, being open and honest in their thoughts and actions, and building trusting relationships that can result in greater personal happiness and professional success. The only way to achieve a higher level of personal authenticity and trust is for both men and women to take steps toward understanding and valuing each other and not expecting the other gender to make all the effort. ●

## Do Women Ask Too Many Questions?

*"How long before we see the results of the new product test?"*

*"Two weeks, Susan. I'll email each of you the stats as soon as I receive them."*

*"But our regional sales managers are flying in next week for training."*

*"It's the best the vendor can do. The product has to be in test market long enough to validate the design. There's a number of other things I'd like to cover before this meeting is over, so if we can please move through the agenda."*

*"I'm still uncomfortable with this waiting period. Why didn't we let the vendor know we needed results sooner? Why do we have to wait two weeks?"*

*The team leader gets increasingly frustrated. "We interviewed three vendors before settling on the one we're using. Two weeks is the fastest response time we can hope for."*

*"Does sales support know about this delay? They're already preparing collateral and training modules for the sales managers' arrival next week, and everything is based on the current design."*

**Gender Facts:**

- **72 percent of men state that women ask too many questions.**
- **80 percent of women say they prefer to ask questions even when they know the answers.**

When we explore the challenges men and women face in working with each other, men often state that women tend to ask too many questions. Some men even say it's a major problem, especially during meetings in which they believe women's questions tend to slow down progress on action items and delay decision making.

Women generally acknowledge that they do ask more questions than men but that their questions are their best contribution, intended to stimulate an exchange of ideas, discover what's important and arrive at a best possible outcome.

The challenge for women is not in asking fewer questions but in understanding why men tend to believe women ask too many and in discovering how to frame their questions in ways that communicate better with men.

In our workshops, we often find that women ask questions aimed at four different purposes: to build consensus, to show concern for a project or for others, to offer feedback and to ask for support. Men typically don't ask as many questions. Men aren't as prone to building consensus and tend to think and process their ideas alone, even when they're working with others. They're more inclined to announce their opinions, be more direct in their requests and when offering feedback, and seldom ask for support unless they're overwhelmed with a problem and unable to solve it themselves.

The bottom line is that companies that have a blend of both approaches realize better results. Those that haven't yet learned to complement the different behaviors tend not to be as successful. ●

## Do Men Listen?

Without understanding the different ways and reasons a woman may ask a question to share what she knows or needs, make an opening remark to stimulate conversation, or express her feelings to show support, a man will often respond inappropriately or fail to react at all.

Common ways that indicate to a woman that a man is not listening are

- He ignores what she's saying,
- He interrupts her in mid-thought.
- He presumes to know what she's thinking.
- He becomes easily distracted.

### You Missed My Point

When men fail to give the proper signals that they're listening, women begin to feel that their words are not getting through.

Men love to solve problems and often feel honored to have the opportunity to help resolve an issue. Bringing a problem to a man is an open invitation for his advice. If he senses frustration or anxiety in a woman's voice, a man will tend to assume that it's his responsibility to step in and put her mind at ease. She'll feel he isn't listening when he interrupts her in midsentence with something like, "No, no, no, here's what you should do." He thinks his quick reaction and the relevance of his solution prove he was listening. The woman may only have wanted him to lend an ear, not render a decision.

When a man shows himself to be distracted, by not looking directly at a woman when she's talking with him, fidgeting with his watch, or looking around the room, a woman tends to take it personally and conclude that he's not interested in what she's saying or that she's unimportant to him.

In coaching women, I often stress that it's a communication style difference for women and a listening style difference for men that we need to bring together in the workplace.

Men need to learn the value of incorporating women's connective and consequential way of thinking to enhance problem solving and decision making. Women, though, need to verbally make that link so men can more readily associate the implicit value that women are bringing to that particular topic and to men's linear way of thinking. ●

## Are Women Too Emotional?

Yes, women are emotional, and they tend to express their experiences — their joys and frustrations, regardless of how large or small — more often than men do.

**Gender Facts:**

- **A man will tell up to three people of a negative or positive experience, but only if it's relevant and only if he knows them.**
- **A woman will tell up to 32 people of a negative or positive experience, even if it's not relevant and whether she knows them or not.**

Plainly stated, women share with others, while men tend to seek space and solitude.

When men have strong feelings, they'll externalize the issue and explode if it's a major problem or become quiet and shut down, especially if there's nothing they can do to immediately resolve the issue. They'll focus on something else to distract their attention away from the problem.

Women don't react as quietly and can't change their focus as easily as men can. They'll tend to personalize the situation — blame themselves — and find others to share their experience.

Men and women simply manage and express their emotions differently. A man at work tends to show very little emotion during the course of his day, whether in team meetings or in one-on-one conversations. A woman, in expressing what she may feel is a moderate and reasonable show of concern for a project or for a client, can be misinterpreted by her male colleague as being too emotional.

At work, one of the biggest problems with the perception that women are too emotional is that a man will tend to avoid a woman expressing her emotions or even attempt to tamp down her feelings by dismissing them out of hand or by rushing in with a quick solution: "Don't worry about it" or "It's not that big a deal."

Women often say they don't feel comfortable or safe showing their true feelings at work, whether it's happiness, anger, frustration or fear. They don't ever want to be perceived by the men in the office as being weak or irrational.

Validating a woman's perspective doesn't necessarily mean that a man has to agree with her feelings or intuitions. Her heightened emotional tone may, on the surface, suggest to him that she's feeling negatively, her feelings are final, and her mind is closed, but none of these is necessarily her intention.

A woman's emotional reaction and reflective thoughts can often be the perfect complement to a man's impulse to take immediate actions. Men can benefit from taking the time to explore the consequences of their decisions before acting too quickly. And women can gain from the impulse for forward momentum and the ever-present energy offered by the men on their team.

As men and women in the workplace learn to support each other more effectively, emotional tension decreases, while cooperation and collaboration increase. The result is better problem-solving, enhanced decision making and greater productivity. ●

## Are Men Insensitive?

It seems that since the beginning of time, a man has responded to a woman's claims that he is being insensitive with the same innocent, perplexed reaction: "No I'm not … How's that? ... When?"

Women often read and react to people and environments differently than men do, and they tend to bring more memory and empathy to virtually every relation and situation. Men are generally not as attentive. That doesn't necessarily mean that they aren't observant. Men simply tend to take in less, focus only on those things directly related to an objective, and often do this with far less concern for details. The actual blind spot is the belief that men are often purposeful in their indifference and forgetfulness.

**Gender Facts:**

- **72 percent of women say that men are not as attentive as women to people's feelings, situations and environment.**
- **68 percent of men tend to agree.**

Men understand, more than ever, that successful leadership requires becoming more perceptive of their environment and mindful of the needs, motivations and interests of the people around them. Nevertheless, being sensitive is not a natural and effortless response for men.

Knowing this, a woman can become more understanding when a man appears to be indifferent, self-absorbed or noncollaborative. She can appreciate that it's more than likely not personal or intentional on his part but stems from his preoccupation with his own thoughts.

A man's tendency is to be singularly focused and sequential and to make decisions as quickly as possible. Although a woman may have her own position already thought through, her inclination is not to give her opinion as much as it is to encourage ideas from others. Her tendency is to have everyone weigh in before she'll share her thoughts. She'll feel more comfortable with a decision, knowing first that all ideas have been explored.

Men believe they are performing at their peak by offering their best ideas without hesitation. They also believe that if others have something to say, they'll speak

up without being prodded. A man feels he is being sensitive by not putting another person on the spot, so he avoids asking directly for other opinions.

When women communicate, they tend to look directly at each other throughout their conversation. The more intent women are, the more they focus on each other's eyes.

A man, on the other hand, will tend to look away to stimulate his thinking process as he asks himself, "What's the solution to this?" His inclination is not to maintain eye contact while he's searching for an answer or lending greater concentration to the discussion. Instead, he'll look up or over or down, or even cock his head to the side. Another man will be comfortable with this behavior and think, "He must be focusing intently about what I'm talking about," while a woman's personal reaction will be, "Hello in there! He's so easily distracted. He probably doesn't even care about what I'm saying."

The bottom line is that there is equal opportunity for learning by both genders. It's not enough for a man to simply say "I'm just being myself" and not make an effort to connect more deeply with his coworkers and read situations around him with heightened awareness.

Gender intelligence will help a woman understand that what she may perceive as insensitivity or lack of care on the part of a man is most likely not intentional. This understanding can help her to become more direct in her interactions and to frame her conversations in ways that will ensure her male coworkers are more aware of her meaning, needs and expectations. ●

## GROWING IN OUR GENDER INTELLIGENCE

## Building Trust with Women, Increasing Credibility with Men

Recognizing and dispelling our blind spots and understanding and valuing our gender differences are the important firsts in creating professional and personal relationships that are built on a foundation of trust.

Trust must be present before we willingly open ourselves up to greater understanding and acceptance. It's the most effective way of relating to others, working with others and getting results. We each want to be trusted, we respond to trust, and we thrive on it.

**Gender Facts:**

- **95 percent of men and women consider trust to be the foundation of a working relationship.**
- **92 percent of women say men earn their trust through caring and concern.**
- **89 percent of men say women earn their trust by showing credibility and competence.**

For a man, trust is all about credibility — aligning with his goals, believing in him and helping him succeed. A man will place trust in a woman who understands, aligns with and acts upon those things that matter most to him — achieving the results and winning.

A woman can build her credibility with a man by first seeing the good in him and his efforts and supporting instead of correcting those efforts. When a man feels that a woman is not trying to improve him, he is much more likely to seek her out for her ideas and go to her often for feedback and advice. ●

## Bridging Our Different Values

Men and women often find themselves at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to what they value at work, how they prefer to work, what they expect of others, and what they expect of themselves.

Women most value building alliances, developing relationships, and collaborating toward a common goal while improving processes and people along the way. Women value sharing their leadership and decision making and ensuring everyone is involved. Women place value on improving performance and maximizing productivity.

Men most value achieving results, from their own efforts and those of others. Men value independent work and, when on a team, getting each individual to work as effectively and efficiently as possible toward a shared goal as well as doing the right and necessary things in the shortest amount of time. They're comfortable working in hierarchies and often declare their leadership. Men place value on alignment, momentum and results.

The blind spot preventing change is men's and women's inability to understand what's most valued by the other gender and why.

### Improve — Maintain

A woman's sometimes-endless pursuit of improvement to get something just right can cause her to fall into an improvement cycle trap — a perfection trap — in which overpreparation always succeeds in driving up her stress levels but not necessarily improving her work product.

At a recent keynote address to women executives in the financial services industry, I asked, "How many of

you believe you overprepare for meetings? How many of you have difficulty in knowing and accepting when 'good enough is good enough'?" Every hand in the room shot up.

Women often find themselves in the weeds because of their impulse to overthink an issue, improve a report, write an article or perfect a speech.

Men are on the other end of this spectrum. If something is working, their tendency is not to waste time looking to improve what's not broken.

While there's commonly a drive in women to improve things, there's often a desire in men to achieve more with what's already there. Men want growth and results, but they'll only feel compelled to change something when that something stops functioning. Men will adapt to change, but only if it's necessary and proven to be more effective than what they're already doing.

### Sharing and Declaring in Leadership

We distinguish what women and men value and personify in their leadership as *Sharing* in leadership and *Declaring* in leadership. Since the 1980s, shifts have occurred away from an exclusively male paradigm of leadership to a more decentralized and participative mode. Much of this change has been driven by the complexity and speed of global business and the need for companies to make quick and informed decisions, sometimes worlds apart. But change is slow, even for global companies whose workforces are comprised of as many women as men and who have customers who are virtually all women.

The reality is that there's value on both sides of the leadership spectrum — a centerpoint of leadership that incorporates the best of what women and men bring to the table. Organizations that have a greater balance of women and men in leadership are dicovering one another's value points and accelerating toward the sharing of leadership.

**Female Leaders**

- Define their leadership in the strength and power of their networks.
- Are aware of the specific situations and needs of individuals and groups and how those issues can affect the organization.
- Decentralize planning and share decision making.
- Directly empathize, encourage and praise others, and seek to resolve emotional conflicts through communication: "Let's talk about it."

**Male Leaders**

- Define their leadership through their accomplishments and the results of others.
- Are more attentive at the macro-level — the financial and operational needs of the organization — and not as concerned at the individual level.
- Centralize planning with performance measures and hierarchal decision making.
- Promote independent resolution of problems and control emotional vulnerability: "Less feeling, more doing!" ●

## Achieving Work-Personal Life Harmony

Today, a dual-income household is a global social norm. There is perhaps no other phenomenon that has had a greater effect on society, altering the way men and women interact and how families live and spend their time. The greatest challenge facing men and women today is how to juggle their jobs and family responsibilities so that everyone feels appreciated and fulfilled.

Regardless of country, women and men tend to describe the lack of balance quite similarly. Men feel the endless pressure to perform and deliver, while women feel they have too little time for daily life activities. In finding a work-personal life harmony, it's important to begin with self-care, for the greatest value you can give to others is when you are whole and at your best.

It is not out of our reach or idealistic to think that women and men, working together, can make our world a better place. This is what we characterize as gender-intelligence — men and women seeing the world through each other's eyes and valuing each other's line of sight. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Work With Me,* you'll also like:

1. ***Leadership and the Sexes*** **by Michael Gurian and Barbara Annis.** Learn how to use scientific gender intelligence for business success.
2. ***Don't Think Pink*** **by Andrea Learned and Lisa Johnson.** The authors examine the different ways women think and how companies can engage women with visible and transparent marketing campaigns.
3. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There*** **by Marshall Goldsmith.** Only a handful of male and female executives will ever reach the pinnacle. Goldsmith shows that subtle nuances make all the difference.

· Book 13 of 269 ·

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Featured Book Review

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# The Journey to a More Complete Life

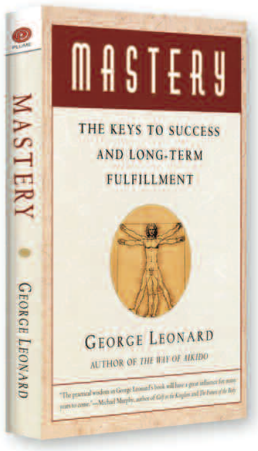
## How Everyone Possesses the Ability to Find Long-Term Fulfillment

***Review by Stephen Wolter***

In the mid 1980s, *Esquire* magazine began an annual series of articles about health, which it published under a special-section umbrella called "Ultimate Fitness." Author George Leonard, whose work was featured in the series, wrote at the time that fitness had "less to do with running a 2:30 marathon than with living a good life." In the fourth year of the series, the fitness section was dedicated to the concept of "mastery," a process in which something difficult becomes progressively easier through practice, until it ultimately turns pleasurable.

According to Leonard, reader response to the *Esquire* articles about mastery was phenomenal, so much so that he decided the topic deserved book-length treatment. His book *Mastery: The Keys to Success and Long-Term Fulfillment* was originally published in 1991 and remains in print today, having gone back to the publisher for 30 printings.

One reason for the book's continuing popularity — and not an altogether insignificant reason — may be its physical size. At 176 pages, you can read Leonard's *Mastery* in approximately two to three hours. The book is barely larger than the palm of your hand and can be tossed into a briefcase while adding only a few ounces of extra weight. Let's be honest here: Short books that cover some aspect of self-improvement are an ever-popular genre.




**MASTERY**
by George Leonard
*Published by Plume, Copyright © 1991, 176 pages, $14.00*

But an even more important reason that *Mastery* is still read 16 years after its publication may be that Leonard examines the topic of long-term fulfillment (something, just about everyone would agree, people want) and does so in straightforward, no-nonsense fashion. In fact, much of the book is the antithesis to an idea that Leonard loathes, namely, quick-fix solutions to whatever ails us. The quick-fix, antimastery idea described in this slim book is everything Leonard stands against. "We are continually bombarded with promises of immediate gratification, instant success, and fast temporary relief," he writes, "all of which lead in exactly the wrong direction." For every reader out there who's disillusioned by the notion of easy answers to difficult problems, Leonard's book should hold immediate interest.

The path to mastery can sometimes seem like an endless road, filled with setbacks and periods when little or no progress is made. But according to Leonard, it's the *journey* down that path that makes all the struggles worthwhile.

## Getting on the Path

Leonard writes that mastery resists definition even though it is something that can be instantly recognized. And in the book's first chapter, titled "What is Mastery?" he does a good job of dancing around a concrete definition of the term. Still, let's go with what Leonard does provide, which is that mastery comes in many varieties, follows a number of unchanging laws and brings rich rewards.

Most importantly, mastery is neither a goal or destination, but, as he puts it, a process, a journey. According to Leonard, it doesn't matter what you are trying to achieve, be it learning to type or learning the law, becoming a cook or becoming a doctor. Maybe it's just trying to be a better person, or a more content one. In any case, it's the *process* towards learning how to do or be those things that matters. That's what mastery is all about.

***"There's no way one can improve without practice. But the secret to mastery is when one begins to practice primarily for the sake of practice. 'Rather than being frustrated while on the plateau,' Leonard writes, 'you learn to appreciate and enjoy it just as much as you do the upward surges.' "***

The whole idea of mastering anything can be intimidating to many people, and Leonard writes that we tend to assume it is reserved for a relatively small number of individuals who possess exceptional abilities. But he believes the exact opposite is true. In his view, mastery is available to anyone who has started down the path of the learning process and is *willing to stay on it.*

## Mastering the Basics

To illustrate what he means, he uses the example of someone who, while not a skilled athlete, wants to learn the game of tennis. A teacher is needed, one who starts by leading the tennis student along in a series of baby steps: how to hold a racket, the correct motion of a forehand swing, how to move the hips and shoulders together with the arm's motion, and so on. The teacher stands in front of the student, on the same side of the net, and tosses ball after ball for the student to hit — not very exciting, perhaps, but the student gets to practice hitting a lot of balls with the tennis racket.

The most basic elements of the game of tennis are learned, and they are learned over a period of, say, five weeks. Meanwhile the student grows frustrated. He was hoping for exercise, competition, fun on the court. None of that is happening, and while the student has improved in all of the skills that he's practiced, he seems to have reached a plateau.

But the fact that the tennis student has learned some basics of the game, and that he has also reached a plateau during the five weeks of instruction, are two key ideas connected with mastery. At some point during the student's initial period of instruction there was a period of learning, and most likely, it took place in a short amount time; a "spurt," as Leonard refers to it.

That spurt of learning was followed by a longer period in which very little progress was evident to the student, just a lot of repetition, like practicing a forehand over and over and over. This is the period that Leonard calls the plateau. "There's really no way around it," Leonard writes. "Learning any new skill involves relatively brief spurts of progress, each of which is followed by a slight decline to a plateau somewhat higher in most cases than that which preceded it."

So here's the challenge for the tennis student, or any learner, who is trying to achieve mastery: How does one stay committed to the diligent practice that is necessary for improving the required skills, when the plateaus are often boring or even disheartening? Leonard doesn't mince words. There's no way one can improve without practice. But the secret to mastery is when one begins to practice primarily for *the sake of practice*. "Rather than being frustrated while on the plateau," Leonard writes, "you learn to appreciate and enjoy it just as much as you do the upward surges."

## The Enemies of Mastery: The Dabbler, the Obsessive and the Hacker

According to Leonard, the journey toward mastery is full of detours, and those detours start with the very people who are trying to make the journey. The author describes three different personality types who may be attracted to the idea of mastery, and who actually take the first steps in search of it, but who later deviate from the route that leads to achievement. He paints these personalities in broad, but distinctive strokes, and labels them the Dabbler, the Obsessive and the Hacker. Because the path to mastery is long and sometimes difficult, Leonard muses that these three personalities are drawn to other routes.

The Dabbler approaches new opportunities, pastimes or relationships with enthusiasm, and is overjoyed with the first signs of progress. But that joy quickly fades when the first plateau appears. A new job might get old very quickly, or a relationship can sour after the initial ardor cools down a bit. The Dabbler looks for a new pursuit before traveling any appreciable distance down the path towards mastery.

The Obsessive is a person who never settles for second best. Like the Dabbler, he is thrilled by the first spurt of progress because it is exactly what he expected. He worked hard to achieve that growth, but expects continued growth, even perfection, and he expects it *now*.

Because of this, he pushes himself mercilessly, ignoring the advice of friends who preach moderation. He's not like the Dabbler who gives up easily — he is, in fact, the opposite, a person who increases his efforts when he does not succeed immediately. Because of this, he doesn't understand the value of the plateau.

The Hacker, after learning and practicing enough to reach a plateau, finds himself content to stay there

indefinitely. He gets comfortable very fast, and then doesn't aspire to much more. As Leonard describes him, he might be a professional, a doctor or teacher perhaps, who doesn't bother with professional meetings. He's a worker who does just enough to get by. Or, back to our friend the tennis player, he develops a really solid forehand, but settles for a so-so backhand.

To Leonard, these three characters are emblematic of why so many people are not on the path to mastery. But for those individuals who conquer the negative personality traits of the Dabbler, Obsessive or Hacker, and who do find themselves pursuing mastery, an even bigger enemy awaits. This enemy is nothing less than modern American society and its rampant consumerism.

Instead of the path toward mastery, American culture — in Leonard's eyes — creates a path of endless climax, one in which each new experience is supposed to top the previous one. The path of endless climax, unfortunately, does not offer much opportunity to experience the plateau.

It's no surprise to Leonard that a culture in which the peak moment has to be *every* moment, would also find itself attracted to speed, quickness, and obtaining the next big thing *right now*. As mentioned earlier, Leonard has nothing but disdain for the concept of the quick-fix.

If anything is the polar opposite of mastery, it's the idea that great achievements can be achieved quickly and with little effort. Leonard mocks a culture that sells — even celebrates — concepts such as total fitness in 30 minutes a week, six-second abs, minute meals and speed reading as genuine substitutes for living a full and truly rewarding life. In Leonard's description of the pursuit of mastery, there is no such thing as a quick-fix solution. It simply does not exist.

## A Look at the Five Master Keys

Once a person makes the decision to pursue mastery, finding a way to successfully follow through and stay committed to this pursuit requires the proper tools. Leonard lists five tools that are essential for this task, tools that he refers to as "master keys." Leonard's keys are: (1) instruction, (2) practice, (3) surrender, (4) intentionality and (5) the edge; however the strongest and most accessible of these tools seem to be instruction and practice.

Self-instruction is certainly a possibility when learning a skill, and even practical for some pursuits. But on the journey to mastery, Leonard cautions against it. "The self-taught person is on a chancy path," he writes, and then goes on to describe a method for finding a good instructor instead.

This includes looking at a teacher's credentials, personality and even his students. How a teacher interacts with his students, what are his methods for instruction, and so on are issues that should be considered by the potential pupil.

Leonard draws on examples from his own life in this section of the book, sharing the story of when he was a young flight instructor during World War II. He is candid about both his successes and failures in the role of instructor, sharing with the reader how he had once made the mistake of separating his top-notch students from the mediocre ones.

The author writes that after the end of the war he came across one of his mediocre students, a shy man who finally got the nerve to tell Leonard exactly what he felt about his negative experience of having Leonard as a flight instructor. The author writes, "I had no adequate reply. Long before that time, I had begun to feel guilty about the way I had handled my first assignment as instructor. In fact, I never again segregated my students as I had done the first time."

***"Instead of the path toward mastery, American culture — in Leonard's eyes — creates a path of endless climax, one in which each new experience is supposed to top the previous one. The path of endless climax, unfortunately, does not offer much opportunity to experience the plateau."***

The second of Leonard's five keys is practice. As described by the author, practice should be both a verb and a noun when considering mastery. As a verb, the repeated act of practicing helps a person improve a particular skill. But on the journey towards mastery, Leonard finds that practice is even more significant as a noun — practice implies something that people are. A practice in this case is a calling, a vocation, an integral part of a person's life, or something one loves. "At the heart of it, mastery is practice," Leonard writes. "Mastery is staying on the path."

## More Tools for the Journey

In addition to his five keys, Leonard describes additional tools that will aid those trying to attain mastery. It's quite common for people to complain about how they lack energy when it comes to self-improvement. The desire may be there, but somehow even the simplest tasks are ignored, while precious energy is wasted on busywork.

Leonard traces this lack of energy back to childhood

and hypothesizes that from our earliest years we are taught that curiosity and independence are bad, while conformity is good. You may or may not agree with his ideas on how some of us evolve into lethargic 40-year-olds, but his antidote for this lethargy is full of solid and applicable advice. Maintain a program of physical fitness, he writes. Acknowledge the negative aspects of your life, but also, accentuate the positive ones. And tell the truth in your daily life. He describes the positive effect the truth has on an organization, when its executives are willing to tell it like it is.

There are other suggestions for regaining and maintaining energy that Leonard includes, and, on the flip side, he lists a baker's-dozen worth of pitfalls that can negate energy, commitment and any good intentions along the path towards mastery. These include personality traits such as an obsession with goals; being too competitive; a lazy lifestyle; vanity; and an unhealthy reliance on drugs. According to the author, it's often easy stepping onto the path of mastery, but getting waylaid is unfortunately all too common.

## Exercising the Body and the Mind

It should be noted that throughout the book Leonard makes frequent references to both Zen philosophy and, especially, to the martial art of aikido. He writes of the great influence aikido has had in his life, since he began studying it in 1970. As such, he includes a series of mind-body exercises from his Leonard Energy Training (LET), a discipline that was inspired by aikido, and which he feels will aid anyone in search of mastery. According to the author, "LET uses the body as a metaphor for the way you deal with the problems of daily life, and a learning facility for changing the way you deal with those problems, whether the problems are physical, mental or emotional." It is stated in the book that since 1973, LET has been introduced to approximately 50,000 people including corporate executives, couples and athletes — it's safe to say that since the book's publication that number has largely increased due to Leonard's continued popularity.

But beyond these exercises, the author sees aikido as a perfect example for illustrating mastery in action. He describes aikido as the most difficult of all martial arts, one that requires instruction from a skilled teacher, and something that takes years to learn. And with mastery, one must always be open to learning, no matter how long the journey.

## The Appeal of Mastery

The philosophy described in *Mastery* has something of a timeless quality to it, and that may be its greatest strength, along with its greatest appeal. The concept of mastery, as explained by Leonard, carries with it a simplicity that stands in stark contrast to our modern consumerist culture. And keep in mind, this book was written nearly a decade before the Internet and iPods were part of the national consciousness.

If in 1991 Leonard thought we were faced with numerous distractions that tempt us from the path of mastery, imagine what he could describe should he ever wish to publish a revised edition of his book.

Leonard, however, isn't advocating that our entire culture junk our laptop computers and cell phones. He is not writing about taking a giant step backward in time to some idealistic simpler time. That's not even a realistic option. Instead, he's describing a kind of road map through our modern world that leads to meaning, in spite of all the unsatisfying distractions that face us.

Towards the end of *Mastery,* Leonard writes that regardless of age, upbringing, or education, we are made up of mostly unused potential, and that it's our evolutionary destiny to use up that potential. That's a powerful thought, and an inspiring one — that each one of us has the ability to discover an unlimited amount of potential that we all possess.

Happily, putting all that potential to work *requires* work on our part. There are no shortcuts on the road to mastery, and that, according to Leonard, is one reason mastery provides such long-term fulfillment. It's a lifetime plan that provides satisfaction found in the simple virtues of learning, and practice, practice, practice. ■

**The author:** George Leonard has been called "the granddaddy of the consciousness movement" by *Newsweek* and *American Health* has dubbed him "the poet-philosopher of American health in the broadest sense." Leonard has written more than 10 books, including *The Life We Are Given* (1995) co-authored with Esalen Institute founder Michael Murphy and *The Way of Aikido* (1999) as the most recent. He is the president of the Esalen Institute and founder of Leonard Energy Training, a practice inspired by his decades-long interest in aikido.

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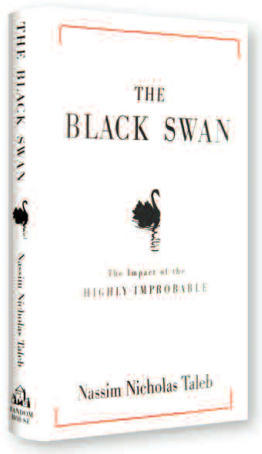
# Uncertain Times, All the Time

## How Improbable Events Shape the World We Live In

***Review by Stephen Wolter***

Trying to describe Nassim Nicholas Taleb's latest book, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, in a succinct fashion simply will not do the book justice. Yes, the ideas within *The Black Swan* can be condensed, and its abundance of fascinating ideas and observations can be discussed, dissected and explained. But in order to fully understand Taleb's absolute enthusiasm for the subject at hand — which in this case is how improbable events affect our lives and our world — the reader needs to pick up the book. *The Black Swan* is a kind of crazy kaleidoscope of ideas, each one practically bursting off the page, and Taleb has strong opinions about every one of those ideas. There's nothing lukewarm about this author.

In the book's prologue, Taleb calls his book a personal essay, and that's a fair self-assessment. Even when the book veers into the technical, Taleb's personal voice comes through loud and clear. Some readers might find Taleb abrasive. At times you might think he is full of himself, an egomaniac. But also consider that this is an extremely smart, confident individual who possesses a near effortless ability to explain complex ideas in an entertaining and thought-provoking manner.




**THE BLACK SWAN**
by Nassim Nicholas Taleb
*Published by Random House, Copyright © 2007, 366 pages, $26.95*

## All Swans Are White

Some 300 years ago, it was a popular assumption in the Old World that all species of swans were white. Every bit of empirical evidence confirmed this as true. But in the late 17th century, the discovery in Australia of a swan species that was completely black destroyed any previous notion that all swans are, and must be, white. It hardly mattered anymore that thousands of years of recorded history had only produced the undeniable truth that swans were white, because with the first sighting of a black swan, the undeniable truth was rendered false.

What does the story of the black swan teach us? Taleb describes it as a lesson that "illustrates a severe limitation to our learning from observations or experience and the fragility of our knowledge." Regardless of what we know from history, a single improbable event can change everything we think about the world. Taleb calls these improbable events Black Swans.

## How to See a Black Swan

There are three attributes found in Black Swans, according to Taleb. First, they are events that lie outside the realm of regular expectations. Black Swans are the name Taleb uses for outliers. No past events or prior evidence ever indicates that an outlier can possibly become a reality. In other words, outliers are completely unpredictable. Second, a Black Swan carries an extreme impact. And third, even though a Black Swan event is something that could not have been predicted, human nature compels people to create explanations for the occurrence of the event, making it explainable and, in retrospect, predictable.

By way of example, Taleb lists Black Swans from the last century: the events leading up to World War I; the rise of Adolf Hitler and World War II; the stock market crash of 1987; the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s; the fantastic worldwide growth of the Internet; and what is probably the most significant Black Swan in recent years — at least in the public's consciousness — the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. No doubt any number of historians

*"Wars, Taleb writes, are fundamentally unpredictable. The consequences of predicting the course of war can be disastrous if we live in a world in which we can only see white swans."*

would take issue with Taleb as to whether or not these events really were beyond the realm of imagination before they occurred, but readers should consider giving Taleb the benefit of the doubt. The argument concerning what major events in world history were truly improbable and what events were predictable can be discussed in another book — what Taleb is trying to explain in this book is the concept of improbable and unpredicatable occurrences.

As for the reliance on predictions, Taleb recoils from the idea, since according to his theory it is impossible to predict a Black Swan. Taleb writes that if these outlier events really are unpredictable, then by implication predicting the course of history is also impossible. Yet that is what human beings continue to do, much to Taleb's great distress.

"We produce 30-year projections of Social Security deficits and oil prices without realizing that we cannot even predict these for next summer," he writes. And even though colossal errors of prediction — from stock market returns to who will win the World Series — are ever present, what surprises Taleb even more is that people are seemingly unaware of how far off the mark these predictions are.

It's one thing to lose money on an investment, thanks to a prediction of a Wall Street analyst. But what happens when we make predictions and apply them to deadly conflicts? Wars, Taleb writes, are fundamentally unpredictable. The consequences of predicting the course of war can be disastrous if we live in a world in which we can only see white swans.

## The Day Before Thanksgiving

Picture this: Every day for three years a turkey is fed and cared for by a farmer. The turkey is well-treated and lives in a comfortable pen, and with every single feeding from the farmer, the turkey's belief in the farmer's role as a food provider is reinforced.

The pattern of feeding and care continues for three years, until one Wednesday in November when the farmer, carrying an ax, takes the turkey out behind the barn and … well, the next day is Thanksgiving, after all. What happens, from the turkey's point of view, is completely unexpected. As Taleb puts it, the event on that fateful Wednesday "will incur a revision of belief."

Taleb credits the story of the doomed bird to philosopher Bertrand Russell, and he uses it to illustrate this problem: How can we know what the future holds, based on our knowledge of the past? Making the question even more general, Taleb asks how it is possible to understand the properties of the unknown, based on what is known.

He considers the dilemma of "learning backward." If we learn from observation, shouldn't that tell us something regarding the world we live in? Well, consider the turkey, whose confidence in the farmer increases every day during its three years of life — right until the moment its head is placed on the chopping block. Suddenly, everything that has happened in the turkey's past proves worthless as far as predicting the future is concerned. (So much for observation.)

According to Taleb, the turkey's "naive projection" of future events can be applied to anything in our world. Not only might this learning backward be worse than having no value, he writes, it may actually have *negative* value. Something works in the past (the turkey gets fed), until one day when it no longer works (the turkey gets dressed for Thanksgiving dinner). This strikes at the very nature of empirical knowledge, because everything we have learned in the past turns out to be irrelevant, false or dangerously misleading.

History and societies, Taleb tells us, do not crawl along. Instead they make jumps. People, however, tend to believe that history moves in small and predictable increments. This is a form of self-delusion, not unlike that of the poor turkey who wasn't able to predict the monumental jump in his own life on the day before Thanksgiving.

## Tell Us a Story

One of the ways in which human beings are blind to the occurrence of Black Swans has to do with something that Taleb calls the "narrative fallacy," a problem that illustrates our need to turn abstract concepts into understandable stories. Taleb writes, "We like stories, we like to summarize, and we like to simplify, i.e., to reduce the dimension of matters." He sees this need for storytelling as something that distorts our view of the world, and this distortion is especially potent when we observe rare occurrences.

Taleb devotes an entire chapter of his book to examining both the psychological and physiological reasons that people need to create narratives in order to explain events. We can observe a sequence of facts easily enough, but Taleb writes that before long we start assigning explanations to link those facts together. In doing so, the facts become easy to remember and make

more sense to us.

The use of narratives affects our understanding of Black Swans. For one thing, we are attracted to the sensational, which is often an attribute of the narrative fallacy. As an example of the sensational, Taleb asks the reader to imagine sitting on an airplane bound for New York City. The passenger next to you tells a story about a person he knew who was murdered in Central Park in 1989. The victim left behind a wife and three children. It was a tragedy — one that could have been avoided — considering that the murdered man was a tourist who didn't have to take a stroll through the park on the day he was killed. Now, it would be possible for you to verify crime rates in New York City by using the Internet, or at the library, or from a variety of respectable sources. But anecdotal information has a strong pull, and it's difficult for you to shake this story about a single murder. As it turns out, you end up skipping a visit to the park.

Taleb is highly critical of the media for propagating narrative fallacies and the sensational. He chastises news sources that routinely attach causes to stories in which causes are not readily apparent. Market fluctuations are a prime example of how the media employs a narrative fallacy.

He describes the story of Bloomberg News reporting the movement in U.S. Treasury bonds on a day in December 2003. At 1:00 in the afternoon, Bloomberg linked a rise in U.S. securities to the belief that the recent capture of Saddam Hussein might not stem terrorist activity. Thirty minutes later, the same news source reported that with a fall in U.S. securities, the capture of Saddam suddenly made risky assets look like a good investment. An identical explanation was given as the cause of events that were completely opposite, all in the space of half an hour. The fact that bond prices fluctuate daily didn't seem to matter. Whether it's economic ups and downs or trying to explain why a certain candidate lost an election, Taleb writes that "a cause is proposed to make you swallow the news."

There are other reasons for our blindness to Black Swans, and Taleb spends a number of chapters discussing each at great length. These include focusing on preselected segments of known evidence, which can result in prejudices that are inaccurate; history's ability to hide Black Swans; and our inclination to "tunnel," which occurs when we focus on specific Black Swans, but ignore others that don't come to mind.

And finally, Taleb writes that we simply live as though Black Swans don't exist. Human beings really aren't hardwired to accept the phenomenon. Yet when a Black Swan occurs, and we can no longer deny its reality, we will try our hardest to explain how it happened in the first place.

## The World According to Taleb

Reading this book can remind the reader of having a long dinner conversation with someone who is extremely intelligent; someone who is curious about a seemingly endless number of topics, whose lengthy monologues are never dull and whose opinions are well-informed. The next morning you might not remember every topic you and your dinner companion spoke about during the course of your three-hour meal, but you know it was heady stuff, always interesting and occasionally exhilarating.

***"Taleb writes that we simply live as though Black Swans don't exist. Human beings really aren't hardwired to accept the phenomenon. Yet when a Black Swan occurs, and we can no longer deny its reality, we will try our hardest to explain how it happened in the first place."***

*The Black Swan* falls into a growing group of titles that is rapidly becoming a sort of specific genre, one that combines an intriguing mix of social psychology, economics, business and popular culture. This genre attracts a surprisingly large number of readers, and it might be a Black Swan for publishers. Titles in this genre include *Freakonomics*, *The Tipping Point*, *Blink*, *The Wisdom of Crowds* and *Made to Stick*, among others. Like these books, *The Black Swan* contains passages that can confound readers, leaving them with rereading as the only option. But then there's no shame in rereading, especially when the writer is as engaging as Taleb.

It is highly likely that among the titles listed above, — with the possible exception of *Freakonomics* — that *The Black Swan* will produce the most controversy of this genre. For one thing, Taleb isn't shy about doling out criticism, and he makes no attempt to sugarcoat his annoyance with economists, boring academics, journalists, Wall Street analysts, various Nobel laureates and any so-called expert (in apparently any field, except perhaps meteorology) whose primary function in life is to predict the future — a future that naturally does not include Black Swans. That's a lot of people Taleb might potentially pick a fight with. And experts aren't experts for nothing, even if Taleb thinks they're overrated.

He displays a special disdain for any true disciple of the bell curve. In one chapter, under the unambiguous title "The Bell Curve, That Great Intellectual Fraud," he

sets out to dismantle the theories of Gaussian distribution. It's a fairly technical portion of the book — Taleb advises some readers to just skip the chapter, especially if they are among the "fortunate people who do not know about the bell curve" — but he attacks his subject with the same enthusiasm that he displays in the rest of the book. In other words, he's not dull.

Some readers may accuse Taleb of repetition — that he is merely milking the same idea over and over across the space of 300-some pages. But then there will be other readers who disagree. Taleb is writing passionately about a topic he obviously loves to discuss. What some critics might see as repetition, others will view as an exploration of tangents. If some of these tangents don't seem pertinent to the promised topic of improbability, it is preferable to view them as part of a carefully layered argument in defense of a theory most laypeople were unfamiliar with, until now.

## Making an Example of a Swan

One of the only things that readers will have a true problem with in *The Black Swan* is Taleb's odd inclusion of the story about author Yevgenia Nikolayevna Krasnova, a neuroscientist whose first novel — originally published on the Web — later sold millions of copies in book form, but only after it was turned down by numerous publishers.

Her story, of course, is an example of a Black Swan, and if you've never heard of Ms. Krasnova, you shouldn't feel like you're living outside the literary loop. Krasnova is a fictional character that Taleb made up. He doesn't inform the reader of this fact until the chapter *after* he initially tells Krasnova's story. Why he would rely on such an odd device as using a fictional character to illustrate his idea about Black Swans is puzzling, especially an example that involves an unknown writer whose first book sells in the millions.

If that's the scenario he wanted, why not describe the story of a young British woman, an unemployed single mother, who gets it in her head to write a children's story about a boy wizard, and who ends up being England's most popular novelist since Dickens? That is undeniably a Black Swan! Not to mention, a Black Swan that actually happened. Instead, Taleb's fictional Krasnova comes off like one of those characters found in too many "how to" business books, in which the author needs to create a fake business populated with fake employees, just to prove his particular theories on how to manage a company.

That aside, *The Black Swan* is a terrific book, one that should make you think twice about how you perceive world events as well as events in your own neighborhood. It should certainly cause you to consider the source of the next prediction you read about, even if it's a prediction you agree with. Taleb can be blustery in his writing, like some opinionated old relative who never thinks he's wrong, but that only adds to the book's distinctiveness.

In the end, Taleb's world is one in which we can't predict Black Swans, and we can't stop them from occurring. "The rare event equals uncertainty," Taleb writes. An uncertain world is scary to most of us, but then it is the only world we have ever lived in. Taleb's introduction to this world is smart, entertaining and well worth the read. ■

## *The Black Swan* on the Lists

Since its publication in mid-April, Taleb's *The Black Swan* has managed to impress critics and readers as well as other authors. Chris Anderson, author of the 2006 best seller *The Long Tail*, has claimed the book to be "a delightful romp through history, economics, and the frailties of human nature."

The numbers don't lie either. *The Black Swan* has consistently been one of Amazon.com's best-selling books, and best sellers lists for *The New York Times* and *BusinessWeek* have both hosted the title for a number of months.

**The author:** Nassim Nicholas Taleb is an essayist, researcher and self-proclaimed "philosopher of randomness," in which he has a fascination with the issues surrounding uncertainty, probability, knowledge and luck. Taleb is the author of the best-selling book *Fooled by Randomness*, which has been translated into 20 languages. He earned an M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business and a Ph.D. from the University of Paris. Taleb is currently the Dean's Professor in the Sciences of Uncertainty at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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# 3225 Great Work, Great Career .qxd

Stephen R. Covey, Jennifer Colosimo

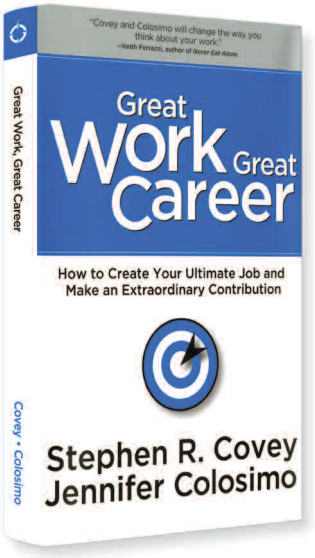
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Career & Self-Development: Business Skills

# Great Work, Great Career

## How to Create Your Ultimate Job and Make an Extraordinary Contribution




by Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Anybody can have a great career. Your line of work doesn't matter. It's all in how you define "great career." If you define it as something that brings you a lot of money and power, then you might or might not achieve that "Alexander the Great" level of greatness. Of course, a livable wage is important, but isn't there more to a great career than just a paycheck?

There are two key hallmarks of a great career. A person with a great career makes a distinctive contribution and generates a strong feeling of loyalty and trust in others. Anyone, regardless of title, position or profession, can do these things.

*Great Work, Great Career* is about today and tomorrow. It's about getting a great job now and enjoying a great career for life. When we say a person has had a great career, what do we mean? Would you describe your current career as "great"? When you get to the end of your productive life, will you be looking back on a great career? And how will you know?

Authors Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo grapple with these provocative questions. They have been associated in their work for many years as avid students of what it takes to build a great life and career. They provide tools and insights that will help you find answers for yourself, whether you're looking for a job or want to make the job you have more meaningful.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How you can bring a unique combination of talent, passion and conscience to the world of work.
- Why it is important to find and define the cause that matters most to you.
- How to understand your strengths and leverage them to make the contribution only you can make.
- How to create your own community of people who can help you in your great career — and how you can help them in turn.
- Why it is important to write out your personal contribution statement.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **GREAT WORK, GREAT CAREER**

**by Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo**

**The authors:** Dr. Stephen R. Covey is author of the historic best-seller, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, and is co-chairman of FranklinCovey. He has worked for decades with leaders of nations and corporations in their quest for great performance. His storied career remains, as he says, "forever in crescendo."

Jennifer Colosimo is EVP and COO at FranklinCovey. An executive coach and catalyst for high-performance organizations, she has rich experience as a change-management consultant with Accenture and as a keynoter before thousands of FranklinCovey clients on building career competency,

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For additional information on the authors, go to http://www.summary.com or www.franklincovey.com/greatcareer.

## Great Work, Great Career

Fiona Wood was a young English athlete who wanted a career in medicine. She followed the usual track through medical school, married and, while raising six children, completed a specialty in plastic surgery. After moving to Australia, she went to work in Perth at a clinic for the treatment of burn victims.

The agony and scarring suffered by her patients moved her to wonder if there could be better ways to treat them. She knew that the longer a burn takes to heal, the worse the scarring. If only she could speed up the healing process from weeks to days, much of the pain and disfigurement might be avoided. Her experiments led her to invent "spray-on skin," a method of applying new skin cells over burns. According to Dr. Wood, the technique starts healing in days instead of the weeks needed for conventional skin grafts to work.

Then on the night of Oct. 12, 2002, her small hospital was flooded with victims of a terrorist bombing in Bali, many of them horrifically burned. Wood and her small team worked without rest for days and managed to save 25 of their 28 burn patients. Spray-on skin was part of the treatment. This accomplishment brought worldwide acclaim to Wood, and for the next four years she was voted in national polls "Australia's most trusted person."

### It's About the Contribution

Wood clearly shows us what it means to have a great career. It's not the acclaim or the fame, it's the contribution. A great career is all about solving great problems, meeting great challenges and making great contributions.

Speaking of their life's work, the French use the word "métier," which originally meant "ministry" or "service." It's a good word. It contains echoes of giving of self, ministering to the needs of others and finding the satisfaction that comes from providing a real and meaningful service. A great career does not rise from a need for outside affirmation, but from within you, from your own curiosity, from your own unique mix of talents and passion. It also rises from your conscience — from the whispers deep inside that point you to what you should do.

Obviously, a person like Fiona Wood could not make her contribution without gaining the skill to do so. But her conscience is just as key to the making of her great career as her competence. A great career requires both of these dimensions — the desire and skill to contribute, and a character worthy of the trust and loyalty of others.

### The Shift to the Knowledge Economy

We are now living in a time when great forces are converging to produce a new world. The landscape of the economy is undergoing a seismic shift, and with it the landscape of opportunity for each one of us.

The new Knowledge Age is full of turmoil and uncertainty. One daunting consequence of the shift from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Age is the disappearance of job security. The lifetime job with a pension at retirement is about finished and probably not returning.

Still, there is a positive side to this risky but exciting new time: You can secure a great future for yourself by

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Tom Moore**, Contributing Editor

becoming an indispensable solution to important problems. Instead of pointing with alarm at these developments, we should welcome this complicated new world with passion for the opportunities it presents. There's no shortage of problems, just a shortage of answers.

### Begin (or Begin Again) Your Great Career

The word "career" comes from the French word "carrière," which originally meant "going around in a circle," like a car on a circular racetrack. Carrière can also mean a "quarry," a place where people go to break rocks all day. Unfortunately, too many of us experience our careers in this way. We feel like we're going around in circles, getting nowhere. Or we feel like we're hacking away uselessly like prisoners in a rock quarry.

If you feel this way about your career, it's time to rethink everything. You are no longer bound by the old mindset that you're just a cog in a machine, a gear in some great bureaucratic wheel that goes around in meaningless circles.

The Knowledge Age entices us to ask questions, to challenge old assumptions, to look at the old intractable problems of the world and bring to them our unique answers. It challenges us to look at human need, poverty, misunderstanding, pain, ignorance and fear, and say to the world, as Wood states, "It doesn't have to be that way."

### Charles Dickens: A Case Study

At a point early in his career, the young author Charles Dickens was discouraged. He had a wife and four children to support with another child on the way, and was essentially out of a job. Plagued by self-doubt and mounting financial pressures, he found it hard to write and spent long, sleepless nights walking the streets of London.

As he talked by night with struggling street people, observing firsthand the social strains of child labor, poverty and hopelessness, an idea formed in his mind. These sights fueled his passion to help the poor and he began to see beyond his own problems. How could he make a difference? What did he have within himself to contribute to making a better world?

On Oct. 14, 1843, Dickens sat down to write with a renewed zeal. He combined this newfound passion with his genius as a writer to create a small book that he hoped would change the world, as well as his own fortunes. Six weeks later, he published *A Christmas Carol*, an immortal story that at once became wildly popular and transformed public opinion. Some observers connect the beginning of Britain's social reform movement with the publication of the book. For Dickens, it was also the beginning of a prosperous writing career. His novels made him rich, which enabled him to get involved in educating and reintegrating the poor into society through his Urania Cottage charity.

What was it that recharged Dickens and refocused his great career? He found that unique combination of natural talent, passion for a cause, and the call of his conscience to fill a great need in the world. What was true for Dickens is true for anyone.

It all comes down to finding work that (1) taps your talent, (2) fuels your passions, and (3) satisfies your conscience. But it's not just about you. It's also about answering a significant need.

## What Will Be Your Contribution?

At the core, there is one simple, overarching reason why so many people remain unsatisfied in their careers. It stems from an incomplete paradigm of who they are, their fundamental view of themselves.

Your value as a human being is not outside yourself — it comes from inside. Deep down, you must know that you are a being of virtually infinite potential and, unlike a machine, you have the power to choose what you will be.

Too many of us base our self-worth on externals, on being compared to other people. So many people equate their self-worth — or the worth of what they achieve — to money. If 30 years of data is to be believed, studies continue to show that salary is actually not as motivating to people as making a contribution in which they themselves believe. Salary is an expectation, not an incentive.

Some people have been socialized by constantly comparing themselves to others to the point that the locus of their identity moves from themselves to other people's opinions of them — to how well they stack up. They lose their identity. This is true "identity theft." They become incapable of making a unique contribution because they have devalued and lost what is uniquely worthwhile about themselves.

In the Industrial Age, people simply asked, "What's my job description?" Now, according to Peter Drucker, "Knowledge Age workers must learn to ask, 'What should my contribution be?' This is a new question in human history. Traditionally, the task was a given. Until very recently, it was taken for granted that most people were subordinates who did as they were told. The advent of the knowledge worker is changing this, and fast."

Working in the Knowledge Age with the old paradigm of the Industrial Age leads nowhere. Passively carrying out a job description in the turbulent realties of this new world can quickly leave you irrelevant, stranded on the sidelines. Why? Because your job description is obsolete the moment it's written. If you are not constantly changing to adapt to the challenges your organization faces, you'll be left behind.

If you have an Industrial Age paradigm, you see yourself as a tool used by others. On the other hand, if you have a Knowledge Age paradigm, you see yourself as a solution provider who brings a singular set of tools to solving significant problems. The difference between the Industrial Age paradigm and the Knowledge Age paradigm is fundamental. It's the difference between a passive person with no initiative and active person who takes responsibility for the future.

Adopting a Knowledge Age paradigm means that you bring your individual portfolio of strengths to relevant, meaningful problems and challenges. You are not a job description with legs. You are a knowledgeable, skilled, proactive, thinking and creative human being with unlimited potential; and you can leverage that portfolio of strengths to make your own unique contribution.

### Identify Your Portfolio of Strengths

A key step is to identify a portfolio of strengths you can leverage. These strengths can be divided into three categories: your talents, your passion and your conscience.

Why these categories? Because they sum up what you are — not just what you do. You are more than just a bundle of capabilities; that would make you a machine. You are more than just your passion and instincts: That would make you merely an animal. A key distinction is your conscience — the part of you that whispers what you *should* do with your life, what your *responsibility* is. Your talents, passion and conscience together add up to a whole person.

**Talents.** What unique knowledge, talents or skills do you have that can help you make a contribution? The category of talent is all about the tools you carry with you. In the Industrial Age, the company owned the tools and the means of production; the talents of individual workers were pretty much irrelevant. That's not so anymore.

In the Knowledge Age, as Drucker says, we each literally own "the means of production. ... Those means are in our heads and at our fingertips. ... Intelligence has become the new form of property. Focused intelligence, the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and know-how, is the source of wealth."

## Discovering Your Passion

Often you will find your talents through your passion. Back in the 1940s, a young American, Julia Child, found herself living in Paris because of her husband's job. There she discovered a passion for French cuisine and a talent she never knew she had. On her arrival in France, she had lunch in a little restaurant at Rouen. That first meal of oysters and sole meuniere was a revelation to her, like nothing she had ever experienced before.

It was "absolute perfection. It was the most exciting meal of my life." She became fascinated by truffles and patés and cheeses and wines — "wrestling with the subject of butter in sauces" — everything stirred her interest.

Pursuing her passion, Child applied to the finest school for chefs in Paris, Le Cordon Bleu. "By now I knew that French food was it for me. I couldn't get over how absolutely delicious it was. My friends considered me some kind of nut. ... They did not understand how I could possibly enjoy doing all the shopping and cooking and serving. Well, I did!"

**Passion.** Enjoying your career is just as important as using your talents, and that brings us to the category of passion. What job-related opportunities are you passionate about? Never downplay your own passion. Your passion is what fulfills you. It's a fire that comes from within, not from without.

Think about times when you were so passionate about a project, you couldn't think about anything else. Did you need to be supervised? Of course not.

Of course, your passion and talents don't necessarily connect. But often you will *find* your talents through your passion.

**Conscience.** Once you've defined your passion, you need to examine your conscience. The category of conscience surprises some people. Why should you listen to your conscience as you build your great career? Because your conscience, your moral compass, will whisper to you and tell you what contribution you should make. So answer this question very thoughtfully: What is your real responsibility to your organization, your customers and your co-workers? Your conscience tells you what your responsibility is.

## Discover Your Cause

The 21st-century economy is giving everyone a wild ride. It seems that turbulent times are here to stay. The

seismic shift to a Knowledge Economy has so disoriented many people that they have a hard time getting their footing. Some see only disaster. They see only millions of jobs gone up in smoke, whole industries laid to waste, and an economic landscape barren and scarce.

To others, the landscape has never been greener. The volatile, burned-over economy of the new century provides opportunities no one ever dreamed of in industries that didn't even exist a few years ago. What seems to some a disaster holds the seeds of renewal for others.

Regardless of the economic climate, so much depends on the paradigm or mentality that governs your thinking and actions. If you have a scarcity paradigm, you see only burned ground around you — sparse opportunities, limited possibilities. On the other hand, if you have an abundance paradigm, you see prospects springing up everywhere.

We've never had such opportunity as we do today. Turbulent times offer the chance, the opening, the break people have been looking for. If you're let go from your job, you're free to change everything.

Just look at Steve Demeter of San Francisco, who used to work on ATMs for a big bank. When he got interested in programming applications for the iPhone, he created Trism, a game he sold on the Internet for five dollars per download, and made a quarter-million dollar profit in two months.

Most of us probably won't be starting our own businesses launching iPhone games. But plenty of existing businesses still need your energy and talent. Yes, hundreds or thousands of others may be competing for those jobs. And the job you already have might be in danger. You can lament this situation or you can act.

Here are two mindsets you'll need. First, become a volunteer, not an employee. Second, become a solution, not a problem.

## Become a Volunteer, Not an Employee

Stop thinking about "getting a job" and start "volunteering for a cause." A job is something you do for money. A cause is something you work at because you believe in it. People used to talk about their vocations, not their careers. The term vocation literally means "calling" — a cause you are driven to serve based on a deep commitment and a conviction that it's worthwhile.

So change your mindset. Don't think of yourself as an employee, but as a volunteer. Where an employee has a job description, a volunteer has a cause. A job description is external, and the employee reactively accepts it. A cause is internal, and you proactively volunteer for it. The motivation for a job comes from *outside* you, while the motivation for a cause comes from *within* you.

One difference between a great career and a mediocre career is finding a cause you can volunteer to serve. We're not talking about earthshaking causes like solving world hunger or curing cancer. We're talking about any worthwhile cause, regardless of your profession. Until you see your work as a cause, you won't find the passion for it that marks a great career.

## Become a Solution, Not a Problem

Become a *solution* for your employer. Adopt a solution mindset. Especially in tough times, your employer or prospective employer doesn't lack problems to solve and challenges to meet. So stop thinking that opportunities are lacking — they're not. The "we're not hiring" message so many companies put out is simply not true. They are hiring and they will hire *you* if you are the best solution to a problem they *must solve*.

So how do you become a solution instead of a problem? The most important thing you can do is to truly become a knowledge worker. This means you must gain profound knowledge about the needs you feel called on to serve. Obviously, to gain that kind of knowledge, you must really research the company you want to work for — or, if you're trying to save your job, the company you already work for. It's not an exaggeration to say that getting the job you want is 90 percent research.

To begin, you must clearly define the need or problem you are driven to solve. Here's the key question: What is the job that needs to be done — the job only you can do? Please don't define this job only in terms of an inward-looking job description. The job that needs to be done is the one your customers need from you — whether those customers are external or internal to your organization.

Obviously, if you can offer a solution to some critical problem, you've suddenly become very valuable to your employer. The classic way to define a business problem is to identify the gap between current reality and some desired outcome. If you can put meaningful numbers to the outcome, your solution becomes more meaningful.

- What is the size of the problem? What is the measurable impact in terms of money, quality of product or service, or customer relationships? Can you express the gap in terms of "X to Y"?
- What is the timing of the problem? Does it occur every day? month? hour? How long would it take to solve? By when could you show progress? Express the timing in terms of "From X to Y by when."

In the Knowledge Age, curiosity and research ability are premium if you're going to get the job you want.

### Have a Solution Conversation

After you've paid the price to understand the challenges a company faces, present yourself as a solution to its problems, not as just another job seeker. Do not go just for a job interview. Go instead for a Solution Conversation.

Describe the need they have and how you can help them meet it. Show a better understanding of their significant issue than the people they already employ. Explain the opportunity you bring to them to meet that need. Show them what life would be like with you and without you. Suggest a trial period — even at your own expense if you have to — until they're convinced that you really are an answer they've desperately needed.

In such an interview, they will learn a few things about you. They will learn that you are a leader. You take initiative to make good things happen. You don't wait to be told what needs to be done; you already know.

One caution: Remember that interviewers hire people they feel are trustworthy. Don't exaggerate anything for effect; don't pad your resume. Stay focused on the company's needs and what you can realistically bring to those needs. Know your facts, but frequently check the facts against the interviewer's perception. For example, "Am I on track?" "Is that how you see it?" Use a helpful voice, not a self-important voice. If you approach the Solution Conversation with EQ, you will get the attention of decision makers. You will blow them away with the depth of your preparation and discipline.

Another caution: Don't come across as a threat. You might look presumptuous to people if you march into their offices, publicly air their problems in front of them, and position yourself as the solution they've always needed. There's a right way to do this and a wrong way. There's a helpful tone of voice and an arrogant tone of voice, and you need to know the difference. ●

## Contribute Your Best

If you know your strengths and have discovered your cause, you're just about ready to write your Contribution Statement. This statement will provide the direction for everything you do in your current job, or even for your entire professional life.

Before you write your Contribution Statement, let's deal with a common and understandable feeling you might have: You might not think you have much to contribute. It could be you've tried to get job after job and have been turned down. Maybe you don't feel valued at work, or believe you're too young or too old or too unimportant to contribute anything. You may feel alienated, frustrated or obstructed on your career path.

Frankly, many of these feelings come from your view of yourself, not from the views of others. If you have a Job Seeker paradigm, you see yourself as a prepackaged product that you're trying to push on a buyer. Your resume is your product brochure. On the other hand, if you have a Contributor paradigm, you see yourself as a solution to a genuine problem, concern or opportunity. You have a proposal that will make a difference. Your main challenge is to change your paradigm of yourself from helpless job seeker to powerful contributor.

### Write Your Contribution Statement

Your Contribution Statement is similar to a life mission statement, except that Contribution Statement defines the high purpose you want to serve and what you intend to achieve in your career or in your current role.

This statement is your "personal value proposition," a summary of your strengths and your commitment to a cause that transcends any particular job. You can also write a Contribution Statement for your current role at work. Spend the time to give this statement your best thinking and quality research. It will pay you back a hundredfold.

Follow these six steps to write your Contribution Statement:

**1. Write a tribute to an influential person.** Think about the most effective, influential people you have ever known personally. Choose one of them and write a tribute to that person. It could be a teacher, a co-worker, a friend or a leader you have worked for. What contribution did that person make to your life? Writing this tribute to another person will help you crystalize in your own mind the kind of contribution you might make in your role.

**2. Write down the tributes you would like to receive from other key people in your work.** These people could include your boss, your fellow team members and/or your customers.

**3. Review your strengths.** What unique knowledge, talents or skills do you have that can help you make a contribution? What job-related opportunities are you passionate about? What is your real responsibility to your organization, your customers and your co-workers?

**4. Review your cause.** What company or industry are you interested in (or already employed in)? What key problem(s) do they face? What is the size of the problem in costs, quality or relationships? What is the timing of this problem? What solution will you propose?

**5. Draft your Contribution Statement.** Taking all of this input into consideration, draft your Contribution Statement. Write freely. Take your time. You can always go back and rethink, refine and reshape your statement.

**6. Share your Contribution Statement.** If you're applying for a job, consider sharing your statement with the interviewers. Make it the centerpiece of your Solution Conversation. If you want to upgrade or transform your job, share your statement with your supervisor. Make an appointment to discuss it in depth. Listen to your supervisor's input. Make a plan together to enable you to make your contribution. ●

## How Will You Make Your Contribution?

Now that you've written your Contribution Statement, your task is to make it happen. You have to give up being helpless — at the mercy of the economy or your boss or your weak education (or too much education), or your skinny resume or your youth or your age or your gender or your race or your face or your special case. In other words, you have to give up being a victim.

The job market can be a daunting place — hiring freezes, downsizing, restructuring of whole industries, reductions in force — it all means fewer traditional, secure, well-paying jobs. It also means a lot more competition for many of the best jobs.

At the same time, employers face a host of new challenges in this turbulent era while still grappling with the old problems. To familiar issues like improving sales, product development and marketing, they add global competition, social responsibility and online commerce. Ironically, while employers offload employees, they have to hire more and more part-timers, consultants and contractors. They must still get the work done.

That's where you come in. No company wants to hire just for the sake of hiring, but they all want to solve problems. They need your contribution like a thirsty man in the desert needs water, but they must first recognize that you *have* water to offer.

There are certain hard moments that, if we are strong, will make all the difference in our lives. Hard moments are conflicts between doing what leads to success and just giving up.

### Work in Your Circle of Influence

Now, what if nobody answers your phone calls or emails or carefully considered proposals? What if your employers aren't ready to see you in a new or expanded role? What if you're really not in a position to become much of a solution to the problems they care about? What if the obstacles to your success look overwhelming? If so, you need to work on your Circle of Influence, not your Circle of Concern.

Imagine a circle that contains all the barriers to your career success. This is your Circle of Concern. Now imagine another, smaller circle inside the Circle of Concern. It contains all the people, knowledge, tools and capital you have to work with. This is your Circle of Influence. It might be very small for now, but if you invest your energies in growing that Circle of Influence instead of wasting your energies worrying about your Circle of Concern, your power to build your career will grow.

### Elisabeth Kübler-Ross: A Case Study

A marvelous example of a person who started small within her Circle of Influence was Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a Swiss psychiatrist who, in the 1950s, began her career as a lowly intern in a very large hospital. Doing exhausting rounds as all new doctors do, she was disturbed by the way the hospital staff treated terminally ill patients. The dying were lied to about their condition, ignored and often left to die alone. So she began to break out of the routine and just sit with patients in the last stage of life, listening to their stories as they poured out their hearts to her. And she noticed that they would feel better, more at peace, after these visits.

Gradually, Dr. Kübler-Ross became more and more knowledgeable about how to treat the spirit of these patients who could no longer be treated for their physical ailments. Other doctors asked her to help their patients. Hospital administrators became interested in her work, which was entirely outside her job description. Eventually, a publisher approached her and, in 1969 she wrote *On Death and Dying*, a landmark book that transformed how the medical profession deals with patients at the end of life.

By working within her own small Circle of Influence, an intern of no particular importance with no institutional authority expanded that circle to influence the whole world. When she started her career, she had few

resources within her Circle of Influence — only her basic medical education and her own talents, passion and conscience. But she sensed a vast need and began to leverage her few resources to fill it. ●

## Build Your Own Village

There's another key principle to live by if you want a great job and a great career called "building your own village." That means creating and maintaining authentic relationships with key people who mutually support each other. They help you in building your great career, and you in turn contribute to their success. Your career success depends not only on yourself, but also on the people around you. In the workplace, you never achieve anything worthwhile alone.

One of the most common bits of advice for the job seeker is to "network." In some respects, networking is a relic of the Industrial Age. Too often, networking comes down to having a lot of contacts — a big list of names you will never know what to do with. Or you have a drawer full of business cards from people you can't even place any more. Industrial Age thinking sees people as tools. People are tempted to see each other as "means to an end." They seek out others only when they need something from them.

By contrast, in the Knowledge Age, people are important in themselves. Authentic relationships with co-workers, customers and suppliers are becoming essential. So network from a Knowledge Age mindset rather than an Industrial Age mindset. The best networkers are building a village of people who value one another for more than just what they can do for one another.

### Contribute to the Village

We tend to assume that some jobs, like teacher or social worker, are more about service than others. Some professions are even categorized as "service jobs," but this is a misleading paradigm. People with great careers always have a service paradigm. If you believe that what you do truly makes the lives of others better, if you satisfy a real business need or delight a child or inspire the mind, then you are serving others in your work.

One of the great paradoxes of life is that the self-serving careerist never has a great career. That's because such a person's vision never extends beyond the next rung on the corporate ladder. Someday, someone will sum up your career. Will you be just another link in a giant impersonal network? Or will you be remembered as one who served and contributed and gave your best to the "village"?

How do you build your village?

1. **Identify the members of your village.** There are two kinds of people: those you serve and support, and those who serve and support you.
2. **Create an Emotional Bank Account.** You know what a financial bank account is. You make deposits into it and build up a reserve from which you can make withdrawals when you need to. An Emotional Bank Account is a metaphor that describes the amount of trust and confidence in a relationship. When you plan your time, deliberately schedule activities to build your relationship with the members of your village.
3. **Carve out space for yourself on the Internet so people know to turn to you for expertise in your field.** You should start a career blog. On your blog, you can publish your career Contribution Statement, which will draw followers who value your contribution. Showcase your generic resume. Regularly post your ideas, discoveries, readings and accomplishments related to your contribution. Invite people who share your passion to add their own content. And stick with it — the richness and longevity of your blog can make a huge difference in building a great career.
4. **Practice synergy.** The village you build might ultimately be your greatest career achievement. It might even become the source of great new advances in understanding your field. It's a natural principle that you cannot achieve anything truly worthwhile alone — at least not in the world of work.

The energy you invest in *regularly* and *frequently* building your village will pay dividends not only in advancing your career, but also in personal satisfaction. You will get into the habit of service, which is the foundation of a great career. With a synergy mindset, you will learn from the best people in your life. And when you need them, they'll be there for you because you have been there for them. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Great Work, Great Career*, you'll also like:

1. ***Linchpin* by Seth Godin.** Godin shows you how to become an indispensable part of your organization.
2. ***Mojo* by Marshall Goldsmith.** If you've lost your drive and your job satisfaction has bottomed out, management legend Goldsmith will help you regain your lost Mojo and push for greater success.
3. ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey.** Covey's classic best-seller offers a holistic, integrated, principle-centered approach for solving personal and professional problems.

· Book 16 of 269 ·

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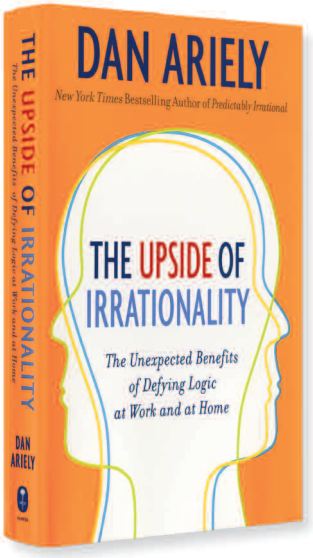
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# The Upside of Irrationality

## The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic at Work and at Home




by Dan Ariely

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In *The Upside of Irrationality*, social scientist Dan Ariely exposes the surprising negative and positive effects irrationality can have on our lives. Focusing on our behaviors at work and in relationships, he offers new insights and eye-opening truths about what really motivates us on the job, why we often overvalue the things we make, how we learn to love the ones we're with and more.

Drawing on the same type of experimental methods that made his previous book, *Predictably Irrational*, one of the most talked-about bestsellers of the past few years, Ariely uses data from his own original and entertaining experiments to draw arresting conclusions about how — and why — we behave the way we do. From our office attitudes, to our romantic relationships, to our search for purpose in life, Ariely explains how to break through our negative patterns of thought and behavior to make better decisions.

*The Upside of Irrationality* changes the way we see ourselves at work and at home — and casts our irrational behaviors in a more nuanced light. By showing how our irrational brains can affect our daily decisions, *The Upside of Irrationality* can help us become more aware of the inconvenient facts that often get ignored.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why large bonuses can make CEOs less productive.
- How people can be better motivated to do their work.
- Why revenge is so important to us.
- Why there is such a big difference between what we think will make us happy and what *really* makes us happy.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE UPSIDE OF IRRATIONALITY**

**by Dan Ariely**

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## Introduction

When the designers of modern technologies don't understand our fallibility, they design new and improved systems for stock markets, insurance, education, agriculture or health care that don't take our limitations into account (think "human-incompatible technologies," and they are everywhere). As a consequence, we inevitably end up making mistakes and sometimes fail magnificently.

Behavioral economists want to understand human frailty and find more compassionate, realistic and effective ways for people to avoid temptation, exert more self-control and ultimately reach their long-term goals. As a society, it's extremely beneficial to understand how and when we fail and to design/invent/create new ways to overcome our mistakes. As we gain some understanding about what really drives our behaviors and what steers us astray — from business decisions about bonuses and motivation to the most personal aspects of life, such as dating and happiness — we can gain control over our money, relationships, resources, safety and health, both as individuals and as a society.

This is the real goal of behavioral economics: to try to observe the way we really operate so that we can more readily observe our biases, be more aware of their influences on us and hopefully make better decisions. Although we might never become perfect decision makers, an improved understanding of the multiple irrational forces that influence us could be a useful first step toward making better decisions. And we don't have to stop there. Inventors, companies and policy makers can take the additional steps to redesign our working and living environments in ways that are naturally more compatible with what we can and cannot do.

In the end, this is what behavioral economics is about — figuring out the hidden forces that shape our decisions, across many different domains, and finding solutions to common problems that affect our personal, business and public lives. Once you understand the way our human nature truly operates, you can decide how to apply that knowledge to your professional and personal life. ●

## Paying More for Less: Why Big Bonuses Don't Always Work

An experiment was conducted with MIT students to examine the relationship between bonus size and performance when the task was purely mechanical, as opposed to a task that required some mental ability.

The experimental design had four parts, and each participant took part in all four of them. The students were asked to perform the cognitive task (simple math problems) twice: once with the potential of receiving a low bonus and once with the potential of receiving a high bonus. They were also asked to perform the mechanical task (clicking on a keyboard) twice: once with the potential of receiving a low bonus and once with the potential of receiving a high bonus.

What did the experiment reveal? As you might expect, a difference was seen between the effects of bonuses on the two types of tasks. When the job at hand involved only clicking two keys on a keyboard, higher bonuses led to higher performance. However, once the task required even some rudimentary cognitive skills (in the form of simple math problems), the higher incentives led to a negative effect on performance.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

The conclusion was clear: Paying people high bonuses can result in high performance when it comes to simple mechanical tasks, but the opposite can happen when you ask them to use their brains — which is usually what companies try to do when they pay executives very high bonuses. If senior vice presidents were paid to lay bricks, motivating them through high bonuses would achieve the desired outcome. But bonuses for people who need to think about mergers and acquisitions or coming up with complicated financial instruments could be far less effective than we tend to think — and there may even be negative consequences to really large bonuses.

The general conclusion is that using money to motivate people can be a double-edged sword. For tasks that require cognitive ability, low to moderate performance-based incentives can help. But when the incentive level is very high, it can command too much attention and thereby distract the person's mind with thoughts about the reward. This can create stress and ultimately reduce the level of performance.

## The Meaning of Labor: What Legos Can Teach Us About the Joy of Work

An experiment was created that would test people's reactions to small reductions in meaning for a task that did not have much meaning to start with.

One fall day in Boston, a tall mechanical engineering student named Joe entered the student union at Harvard University. On a crowded bulletin board boasting flyers about upcoming concerts, lectures, political events and roommates wanted, he caught sight of a sign reading "Get paid to build Legos!"

### Participant #1: Joe

A few days later, at the agreed-upon time, Joe showed up to take part in the experiment. As luck would have it, he was assigned to the meaningful condition. Sean, the research assistant, greeted Joe as he entered the room, directed him to a chair and explained the procedure to him. Sean showed Joe a Lego Bionicle — a small fighting robot — and then told Joe that his task would involve constructing this exact type of Bionicle, made up of 40 pieces. Next, Sean told Joe the rules for payment.

"The basic setup," he said, "is that you will get paid on a diminishing scale for each Bionicle you assemble. For the first Bionicle, you will receive $2. After you finish the first one, I will ask you if you want to build another one, this time for 11 cents less, which is $1.89. If you say that you want to build another one, I will hand you the next one. This same process will continue in the same way, and for each additional Bionicle you build, you will get 11 cents less, until you decide that you don't want to build any more Bionicles. At that point, you will receive the total amount of money for all the robots you've created. There is no time limit, and you can build Bionicles until the benefits you get no longer outweigh the costs."

Joe nodded, eager to get started. "And one last thing," Sean warned. "We use the same Bionicles for all of our participants, so at some point before the next participant shows up, I will have to disassemble all the Bionicles you build and place the parts back in their boxes for the next participant. Everything clear?"

Joe quickly opened the first box of plastic parts, scanned the assembly instructions and began building his first Bionicle. Once Joe started working on the next Bioncle, Sean took the construction that Joe had just finished and placed it in a box below the desk where it was destined to be disassembled for the next participant.

Like a man on a mission, Joe continued building one Bionicle after another, while Sean continued storing them in the box.

### Participant #2: Chad

The next person in line turned out to be a young man named Chad. Unlike Joe, Chad was subjected to a procedure called the "Sisyphean" condition. The term was used to describe the condition that the less fortunate among the participants experienced.

Sean explained the terms and conditions of the study to Chad in exactly the same way he had to Joe. Chad grabbed the box, opened it and began assembling the pieces, moving quickly from one to another. He went about the task cheerily, finished the first Bionicle in a few minutes, and handed it to Sean as instructed.

While Chad was putting together the first pieces of his next Bionicle (pay attention, because this is where the two conditions differed), Sean slowly disassembled the first Bionicle, piece by piece, and placed the pieces back into the original box.

"Why are you taking it apart?" Chad asked, looking both puzzled and dismayed.

"This is just the procedure," Sean explained. "We need to take this one apart in case you want to build another Bionicle."

Chad returned his attention to the robot he was building, but his energy and excitement about building

Bionicles was clearly diminished. When Chad finished his second construction, he paused and, after a few seconds, he said he would build another one.

Sean handed Chad the original box (the one Chad had assembled and Sean had disassembled), and Chad got to work. Meanwhile, Sean slowly took apart the second Bionicle Chad has just finished and placed the parts back into the second box.

### The Results

What did the results show? Joe and the other participants in the meaningful condition built an average of 10.6 Bionicles and received an average of $14.40 for their time. Even after they reached the point where their earnings for each Bionicle were less than $1 (half of the initial payment), 65 percent of those in the meaningful condition kept on working. In contrast, those in the Sisyphean condition stopped working much sooner. On average, that group built 7.2 Bionicles (68 percent of the number built by the participants in the meaningful condition) and earned an average of $11.52. Only 20 percent of the participants in the Sisyphean condition constructed Bionicles when the payment was less than $1 per robot.

In evaluating how the individuals' liking the Legos influenced their persistence in the task, you would expect that the more a participant loved playing with Legos, the more Bionicles he or she would complete. This was generally the case. But it also turned out that the two conditions were very different in terms of the relationship between Legos-love and persistence in the task. In the meaningful condition the correlation was high, but it was practically zero in the Sisyphean condition.

What this analysis says is that if you take people who love something and you place them in meaningful working conditions, the joy they derive from the activity is going to be a major driver in dictating their level of effort.

However, if you take the same people with the same initial passion and desire and place them in meaningless working conditions, you can easily kill any internal joy they might derive from the activity.

The translation of joy into willingness to work seems to depend, to a large degree, on how much meaning we can attribute to our own labor.

### The Division and Meaning of Labor

When we take tasks and break them down into smaller parts, we create local efficiencies; each person can become better and better at the small thing he or she does. But we often don't realize that the division of labor can also exact human cost. As early as 1844, Karl Marx pointed to the importance of what he called "the alienation of labor." For Marx, an alienated laborer is separated from his or her own activities, from the goals of his or her labor, and from the process of production. This makes work an external activity that does not allow the laborer to find identity or meaning in the work.

In today's economy, as we move to jobs that require more imagination, creativity, thinking and round-the-clock engagement, Marx's emphasis on alienation adds an important ingredient to the mix. At the same time, modern IT infrastructure allows us to break projects into very small, discrete parts and assign each person to do only one of the many parts. In so doing, companies run the risk of taking away employees' sense of the big picture, purpose, sense of completion and much of their motivation. ●

## The IKEA Effect: Why We Overvalue What We Make

The notion of attachment to the things we make, such as building a beautiful toy chest from IKEA, was deemed worthy of testing to understand the process by which labor begets love. In honor of the inspiration for the study, the overvaluation resulting from labor was called "the IKEA effect." The intent was to find out whether the greater perceived value resulting from the IKEA effect might be based on sentimental attachment ("It's crooked and barely strong enough to hold up my books, but it's my bookshelf!") or on self-delusion ("This bookshelf is easily as nice as the $500 version at Design Within Reach!").

Research results from an origami experiment showed that amateur origami creators had a substantial bias when evaluating their own work. Non-creators viewed the amateurish art as useless and the professional versions as much, much more exciting. In contrast, the creators saw their own work as almost as good as the experts' origami. It seemed that the difference between creators and non-creators was not in how they viewed the art of origami in general but in the way that the creators came to love and overvalue their own creations.

But investing effort is not enough. It turns out that completion is also a crucial ingredient for attachment. Research into this aspect led to results that implied that investing more effort does, indeed, increase our affection, but only when the effort leads to completion. When the effort is unfruitful, affection for one's work plummets.

In summary, these initial experiments suggest that once we build something, we do, in fact, view it with more loving eyes. As an old Arabic saying goes, "Even the monkey, in his mother's eyes, is an antelope."

According to the reasoning behind the IKEA effect, more effort imbues greater valuation and appreciation. This means that to increase your feelings of pride and ownership in your daily life, you should take a larger part in creating more of the things you use in your daily life.

### Labor and Love

The experiments related to the IKEA effect demonstrated four principles of human endeavor:

- The effort that we put into something does not just change the object. It changes us and the way we evaluate that object.
- Greater labor leads to greater love.
- Our overvaluation of the things we make runs so deep that we assume that others share our biased perspective.
- When we cannot complete something into which we have put great effort we don't feel so attached to it. ●

## The Not-Invented-Here Bias: Why 'My' Ideas Are Better Than 'Yours'

Regardless of what we create — a toy box, a new source of electricity, a new mathematical theorem — much of what really matters to us is that it is our creation. As long as we create it, we tend to feel rather certain that it's more useful and important than similar ideas that other people come up with.

### The Positive Side

Like many findings in behavioral economics, this, too, can be both useful and detrimental. On the positive side, if you understand the sense of ownership and pride that stems from investing time and energy in projects and ideas, you can inspire yourself and others to be more committed to and interested in the tasks at hand. It doesn't take much to increase a sense of ownership. Next time you unpack a manufactured item, look at the inspection tag and you might find someone's name proudly displayed on it.

There's a negative side to this, of course. For example, someone who understands how to manipulate another person's desire for ownership can lead an unsuspecting victim into doing something for him or her. Once we are addicted to our own ideas, it is less likely that we will be flexible when necessary ("staying the course" is inadvisable in many cases). We run the risk of dismissing others' ideas that might simply be better than our own.

Like many other aspects of our interesting and curious nature, our tendency to overvalue what we create is a mixed bag of good and bad. Our task is to figure out how we can get the most good and the least bad out of ourselves. ●

## The Case of Revenge: What Makes Us Seek Justice?

Revenge is one of the deepest-seated instincts we have. Throughout history, oceans of blood have been spilled and an endless number of lives ruined in an effort to settle scores — even when nothing good could possibly come of it.

It turns out that the threat of revenge — even at great personal expense — can serve as an effective enforcement mechanism that supports social cooperation and order. Overall, the threat of vengeance can have a certain efficacy.

What, exactly, are the mechanics and motivations underlying this primal urge? Under what circumstances do people want to take revenge? What drives us to spend our own time, money and energy — and even take risks — just to make another party suffer?

### 'Yours Is a Very Bad Hotel'

If you search for Tom Farmer and Shane Atchison on the Internet, you will find an amusing presentation called "Yours Is a Very Bad Hotel," an interesting PowerPoint act of comeuppance against the management of the Doubletree Club hotel in Houston.

One cold night in 2001, the two businessmen showed up at the hotel, where they had guaranteed and confirmed reservations. Sadly, upon arrival, they were told that the hotel was overbooked and that there was only one room available, but it was off limits due to air-conditioning and plumbing problems. Though the news was obviously annoying, what really irritated Farmer and Atchison was the nonchalant attitude of Mike, the clerk.

Since Mike was the service representative, they felt it was his job to demonstrate some compassion, and when he didn't, they got mad and got even. Like all good consultants, they prepared a PowerPoint presentation. Theirs described the sequence of events — complete with humorous quotes from "Night Clerk Mike." They included the calculated potential income that his incom-

petence would cost the hotel chain, along with the likelihood that they would never return to the Doubletree Club hotel.

The businessmen e-mailed the file to the general manager of the Doubletree Club hotel and to their clients in Houston. After that, the presentation enjoyed viral fame on the Internet. In the end, Doubletree offered to make amends with Farmer and Atchison. The two asked only that Doubletree fix the customer service problem, which it reportedly did. ●

## On Adaptation: Why We Get Used to Things (but Not All Things and Not Always)

To get a better view of the wonders of adaptation, let's consider the way our visual system functions. If you've ever gone to a matinee and walked from the dark movie theater to the sunny parking lot, the first moment outside is one of stunning brightness, but then your eyes adjust relatively quickly.

Our ability to adapt to light is just one example of our general adaptive skills. The same process takes place when we first encounter a new smell, texture, temperature or background noise. Initially, we are very aware of these sensations. But as time passes, we pay less and less attention to them until, at some point, we adapt and they become almost unnoticeable.

The bottom line is that we have only a limited amount of attention with which to observe and learn about the world around us — and adaptation is a very important novelty filter that helps us focus our limited attention on things that are changing and might therefore pose either opportunities or danger. Adaptation allows us to attend to the important changes among the millions that occur around us all the time and ignore the unimportant ones.

### What Can Pain Teach Us About Adaptation?

Another kind of adaptation is called hedonic adaptation. This has to do with the way we respond to painful or pleasurable experiences. For instance, try this thought experiment. Shut your eyes and think about what would happen if you were badly injured in a car accident that paralyzed you from the waist down. You see yourself in a wheelchair, no longer able to walk or run. You think that many of your future possibilities will no longer be open to you. In imagining such a thing, you probably think that the loss of your legs will make you miserable for as long as you live.

It turns out that we are very good at conceiving the future but we can't foresee how we will adapt to it. It's difficult to imagine that, over time, you might get used to the changes in your lifestyle, adapt to your injury and find that it's not as terrible as you once thought. It's even harder to imagine discovering new and unexpected joys in your new situation.

Yet, numerous studies have shown that we adapt more quickly and to a larger degree than we imagine.

### Faulty Predictions

In the end, although we can accurately predict what will happen when we walk from a dark movie theater to a sunny parking lot, we do a relatively poor job anticipating either the extent or the speed of hedonic adaptation. We usually get it wrong on both counts. In the long term, we don't end up being as happy as we thought we'd be when good things happen to us, and nor do we end up as sad as we expect when bad things occur.

Our reason for our difficulty in predicting the extent of our hedonic adaptation is that when making predictions, we usually forget to take into account the fact that life goes on and that, in time, other events (both positive and negative) will influence our sense of well-being. ●

## Hot or Not? Adaptation, Assortative Mating and the Beauty Market

To learn more about how people adapt to their own less-than-perfect looks, two ingenious young men, James Hong and Jim Young, helped to run a study using their Web site, HOT or NOT (www.hotornot.com). Upon entering the site, you're greeted with photos of a man or woman of almost any age (18 years of age or older only). Above the photo floats a box with a scale from 1 (NOT) to 10 (HOT). Once you've rated the picture, a new photo of a different person appears, as well as the average rating of the person you just rated.

Hong and Young provided us with the ratings and dating information of 16,550 HOT or NOT members during a 10-day period.

The data showed that the less hot individuals were, in fact, very aware of their own level of (un)attractiveness. Though this awareness did not influence how they perceived or judged the attractiveness of others (as shown by their hotness ratings), it did affect the choices they made about whom they asked to meet.

### Our Own Physical Attractiveness

The data from HOT or NOT and from other experiments showed that people do adapt to their own physical attractiveness by putting less emphasis on their partner's looks and learn to love other attributes such as kindness and sense of humor.

Simply put, less attractive people learn to view nonphysical attributes as more important. ●

## When a Market Fails

Basically, when a product doesn't work well for us, it misses the intended mark. One such example is online dating sites that try to reduce humans to a set of descriptive words too often fail to make real matches. More generally, companies disappoint when they don't translate what they're offering into something compatible with the way we think.

Take computers, for example. Most of us just want a computer that is reliable, runs fast and can help us do the thing we want to do. We couldn't care less about the amount of RAM, processor speed or bus speed (of course, some people really care about these things), but that's the way manufacturers describe their computers, not really helping us understand how the experience with a particular computer will feel. (The same goes for car insurance, annuities, etc.)

So how can markets be made more efficient and effective? Here's an example of social loans: Let's say you need to scrabble together money for a car. Many companies have now set up social lending structures that allow families and friends to borrow and lend from each other, which cuts the middlemen (banks) out of the equation, reduces the risk of nonpayment and provides better interest rates to both the lender and borrower. The companies that manage these loans take no risk and deal with the logistics of the loan behind the scenes. Everyone but the banks benefits.

The bottom line is this: Even when markets are not working for us, we are not utterly helpless. We can try to solve a problem by figuring out how a market is not providing the help we expect from it and take some steps to alleviate the problem (lending money to relatives, etc.). We can also try to solve the problem more generally and come up with products that are designed with an eye for meeting the needs of prospective customers. Sadly, but also happily, the opportunities for such improved products and services are everywhere. ●

## On Empathy and Emotion: Why We Respond to One Person Who Needs Help but Not to Many

Many results show that we are called to action only by individual, personalized suffering and are numbed when a crisis outgrows our ability to imagine it. If this is the case, what hope do we have of getting ourselves (or our politicians) to solve large-scale humanitarian problems? Clearly, we cannot simply trust that we will all do the right thing when the next disaster inevitably takes place.

Once we realize that the sheer size of a crisis causes us to care less rather than more, we can try to change the way we think about and approach human problems. For example, the next time a huge earthquake flattens a city and you hear about thousands of people killed, try to think specifically about helping one suffering person — a little girl who dreams of becoming a doctor, a teenage boy with a big smile and a talent for soccer, or a hard-working grandmother struggling to raise her deceased daughter's child. Once we imagine the problem this way, our emotions are activated and we can decide what steps to take.

In many ways, it is very sad that the only effective way to get people to respond to suffering is through an emotional appeal, rather than through an objective reading of massive need. The upside is that when our emotions are awakened, we can be tremendously caring. Once we attach an individual face to suffering, we're much more willing to help and, to a degree, that is far beyond what economists would expect from rational, selfish, maximizing agents. ●

## The Long-Term Effects of Short-Term Emotions: Why We Shouldn't Act on Our Negative Feelings

For better or worse, emotions are fleeting. A traffic jam may annoy, a gift may please and a stubbed toe will send us into a bout of cursing, but we don't stay annoyed, happy or upset for very long. However, if we react impulsively in response to what we're feeling, we may live to regret our behavior for a long time. If we send a furious e-mail to the boss, say something awful to someone we love or buy something we know we can't afford, we may regret what we've done as soon as the impulse wears off.

### Emotional Influences

Since it's impossible to avoid either relevant or irrelevant emotional influences altogether, is there anything we can do to keep social and romantic relationships from deteriorating? One simple piece of advice is to pick partners who would make an emotional downward spiral less likely. But how do you do this? Of course, you can avail yourself of hundreds of compatibility tests, from astrological to statistical, but all you need is a river, a canoe and two paddles.

Whenever I go canoeing, I see couples arguing as they unintentionally run aground or get hung up on a rock. Canoeing looks easier than it is, and that may be why it quickly brings couples to the brink of battle. Arguments occur far less frequently when meeting a couple for drinks or going to their home for dinner, and it isn't just because they are trying to be on their best behavior (after all, why wouldn't a couple also try to be on good behavior on the river?). It might have to do with the well-established patterns of behavior people have for their normal, day-to-day activities (arguing vehemently at the table in front of strangers is pretty much a no-no in most families).

### When There's No Clear Protocol

But when you're on a river, the situation is largely new. There isn't a clear protocol. There's also a fuzzy kind of division of labor between the front and back (or bow and stern, if you want to be technical). This context offers plenty of opportunities to establish and observe fresh patterns of behavior. And because the river is unpredictable, and canoes tend to drift and turn in ways you don't anticipate (much like life, which is full of new and surprising stresses and roadblocks), there is a lot of potential to create new behavioral patterns.

So if you're half of a couple, what happens when you go canoeing? Do you or your partner start blaming each other every time the canoe seems to misbehave? Do you get into a huge battle that ends with one or both of you jumping overboard, swimming to shore and not speaking for an hour? Or, when you hit a rock, do you work together trying to figure out who should do what and get along as best you can?

This means that before committing to any long-term relationship you should first explore your joint behavior in environments that don't have well-defined social protocols. It also means that it is worthwhile to keep an eye open for deteriorating patterns of behavior.

When we observe early-warning signs, we should take swift action to correct an undesirable course before the unfortunate patterns of dealing with each other fully develop. ●

## Lessons From Our Irrationalities: Why We Need to Test Everything

We humans are fond of the notion that we are objective, rational and logical. We take pride in the "fact" that we make decisions based on reason. When we decide to invest our money, buy a home, choose schools for our kids or pick a medical treatment, we usually assume that the choices we make are the right ones.

This is sometimes true, but it is also the case that our cognitive biases often lead us astray, particularly when we have to make big, difficult, painful choices.

### Know Your Limitations

Just as we use seat belts to protect ourselves from accidents and wear coats to keep the chill off our backs, we need to know our limitations when it comes to our ability to think and reason — particularly when making important decisions as individuals, business executives and public officials.

One of the best ways to discover our mistakes and the different ways to overcome them is by running experiments, gathering and scrutinizing data, comparing the effect of the experimental and control conditions, and seeing what's there.

Doubt your intuition and run your own experiments in an effort to make better decisions. Ask questions. Explore. Turn over rocks. Question your behavior, that of your company, employees and other businesses, and that of agencies, politicians and governments. By doing so, we may all discover ways to overcome some of our limitations, and that's the great hope of social science.

These are only the first steps of exploring our irrational side, and the journey ahead is long and exciting. ●

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Upside of Irrationality*, you'll also like:

1. ***Winning* by Jack Welch with Suzy Welch.** Welch addresses his own management techniques honed during his tenure as CEO of General Electric.
2. ***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink.** Right-brained individuals are leading the talent pack. Learn the six essential aptitudes you'll need to excel.
3. ***Executive Presence* by Harrison Monarth.** What is the difference between executives that exude confidence and those that draw skepticism from others? Monarth reveals the knowledge you need to have the edge.

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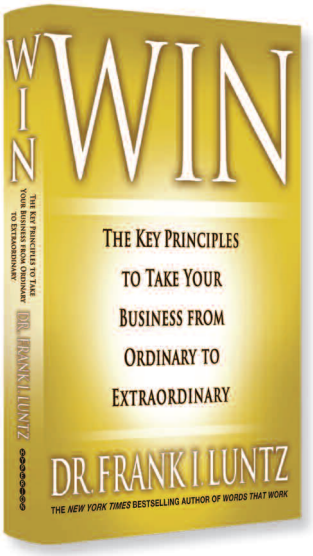
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Career & Self-Development

# Win

## The Key Principles to Take Your Business from Ordinary to Extraordinary




by Dr. Frank I. Luntz

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

From the *New York Times* best-selling author and top pollster Dr. Frank Luntz comes an unprecedented examination of communication excellence and how top performers win in all areas of human endeavor by utilizing superb communication skills. From politicians to business icons, from CEOs to legendary sports superstars and media legends, Luntz shares their stories — in their own words — and demonstrates how their style of operation and communication is absolutely essential to their success. Luntz makes it clear that following the rules of effective communication is indispensable in any successful venture.

Luntz, the author of *Words That Work*, offers many new *"words that work"* for private one-on-one meetings with your boss, for public presentations to hundreds of colleagues or for television appearances that reach millions. There are dozens of specific lessons and recommendations — and each one directly illustrates the nine essential action-oriented principles of winning at every level: People-Centered, Paradigm-Breaking, Prioritizing, Perfection, Partnerships, Passion, Persuasion, Persistence and Principled Actions.

*Win* is an unprecedented examination of the art, science and language of winning, and a must-have for people who want to understand and emulate the winners of today. Do you have what it takes?

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to grasp the human dimension of every situation.
- How to know what questions to ask and when to ask them.
- How to see the challenge, and the solution, from every angle.
- How to communicate your vision passionately and persuasively.
- How to connect with others and create an enduring chemistry.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **WIN**

**by Dr. Frank I. Luntz**

**The author:** Dr. Frank I. Luntz is one of the most honored communication professionals in America today. *Time* magazine named him one of "50 of America's most promising leaders aged 40 and under," and he is the "hottest pollster" in America according to the *Boston Globe*. He is the author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Words That Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear* and *What Americans Really Want … Really.*

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or www.LuntzGlobal.com.

## What Is a Winner? The 15 Attributes of Winners

If I were to summarize 20 years of corporate and political communication research and discussions with America's business, political, sports and entertainment elite into a single, simple checklist, what differentiates genuine winners from everyone else is the following:

- The ability to *grasp the human dimension* of every situation
- The ability to *know* what *questions* to ask and when to ask them
- The ability to *see* what *doesn't yet exist* and *bring it to life*
- The ability to *see* the *challenge*, and the *solution*, from every angle
- The ability to *distinguish* the *essential* from the *important*
- The ability and the drive to *do more* and *do it better*
- The ability to *communicate* their vision passionately and persuasively
- The ability to *move forward* when everyone around them is retrenching or slipping backward
- The ability to *connect* with others spontaneously
- A *curiosity* about the *unknown*
- A *passion* for life's *adventures*
- A *chemistry* with the people they work with and the people they want to influence
- The willingness to *fail* and the *fortitude* to get back up and try again
- A *belief* in luck and good fortune
- A *love of life* itself.

These 15 Attributes of Winners are fundamental to the Nine Principles of Winning (AKA the Nine *P*'s).

### Winners Recognize Their Own Strengths and Weaknesses

Winners are self-aware. They recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, and respond to situations accordingly. Don't underestimate this. From Lehman Brothers to Circuit City, countless companies have struggled or gone under because of leaders who stayed in their comfort zones and didn't take the right action at the right time because they were afraid to make the wrong move.

Winners are also tuned in to the needs and desires of others, and this outward focus guides them to deliver revolutionary solutions, not just better mousetraps. They recognize where their strengths meet someone else's needs and double down on delivering the greatest value while ignoring lesser distractions.

Winners don't preach; they persuade. Winners clearly articulate their own principles and kindly, subtly invite you to adopt them. But the choice is yours. Sure, they lead and you follow, but you ultimately come to their point of view on your own. ●

## The Nine *P*'s of Winning: What It Takes to Get to the Top

Winners don't make excuses.

Because winners live for epic change and radically rethinking the status quo, they must be able to make the case with force and skill. They begin by engaging and inspiring the people who work with them and for them.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

They persist over the objections of skeptics who are afraid of what change might mean. They prevail over critics who want to shut them down completely. Engage, inspire, persist, prevail — you need them all.

It's not as hard as it sounds. Most winners had certain attributes on the day they were born, but each of the nine essential principles can be incorporated into one's life. Winners are never satisfied with the status quo and always pursue more. Better. Higher. Faster. Easier. That's why they aren't satisfied with the skills they were born with; that's just the starting point on a path to greatness. These principles may not come naturally, they may take years of practice and you may not get them all right all the time, but the more you master, the more likely you are to win in the workplace and in the marketplace.

### The Nine *P*'s of Winning

So what are the nine principles of winning?

1. **People-Centeredness.** The job of all winning communicators is to recognize what is missing in the lives of others and then try to address it.
2. **Paradigm Breaking.** Winners are not improvers; they are game-changers. Three attributes define paradigm breaking: (1) the *attitude* of never settling for the conventional, (2) the *practice* of purposeful reinvention and (3) the *necessity* of using skilled communication to lead people in a new direction.
3. **Prioritization.** Winners know how to separate what must be done from what should be done — and that has a direct correlation to what they say and when they say it.
4. **Perfection.** If you're not driven to perfection, you'll never reach excellence. Without a burning desire to do what you do, it's almost impossible to find the internal strength to strive for perfection.
5. **Partnership.** Honest, open communication is paramount for a partnership to survive. Without it, trust and respect will simply wither on the vine. Your partnerships must also have balance. If one of you is a big risk taker, the other should probably be more prudent.
6. **Passion.** There isn't a winner anywhere who doesn't bring passion to what he or she does or how he or she communicates.
7. **Persuasion.** Winners don't preach; they persuade. They tell you exactly why you should accept their point of view, yet you feel like you came to their conclusions on your own.
8. **Persistence.** Winning is never really about a single game, product or performance. Winners know how to succeed over the long haul. In fact, they know that winning is *defined* by repeat performances and increasing achievements.
9. **Principled Action.** From Ken Lay to Jack Abramoff to Bernie Madoff, they will be known not for what they temporarily achieved, but for how they achieved it and, ultimately, how miserably they failed.

No, the *P*'s are not a simple gimmick. Look again and think about the most successful people you know: What may be just words to you are the principles by which they live. ●

### Passion at the Top

When you look at the expressions of passion of those at the top, there are three clear language attributes at play:

- First, they communicate confidence in themselves and in their products
- Second, the message always rests on results and solutions
- Third, there is a clear call to action at the end.

## People-Centeredness: Humanizing Your Approach

No matter what you may think of Bill Clinton's character or politics, he's the single most people-centered public figure alive today. Regardless of your ideology, when he speaks, you listen. He seems to have weighed the facts, studied the policy, listened to the different arguments and then subjected all those considerations to a simple question: How does this idea affect everyday people? It's no accident that the Clinton White House was famous for late-night, 12-round policy fights that were refereed by Clinton himself. He wanted you to know that he wasn't just feeling your pain; he was working hard to heal it. He studied like a wonk, but communicated like a friend. Translating one to the other is the rarest of political talents.

Clinton is the personification of a people-centered leader. He commands his voice and words — and even his face — in a manner that compels listeners, whether auditoriums packed with thousands, or individuals in one-on-one conversations, to stop, look, listen and learn. And whether he's actually in the room with you or simply on your TV screen, you almost always feel like he's talking to you and no one else. He creates an

authentic connection that can turn even his most ardent critics into momentary cheerleaders. Republican congressmen and senators routinely freeze like deer in the headlights when he speaks to them. Clinton understands people.

### What Every 'Would-Be Networker' Can Learn From Bill Clinton

Clinton provides a perfect example of what it means to be people-centered — and every would-be networker can learn from his example. For him, networking wasn't just a matter of passing out business cards, collecting those of others and making the most of the time at the event before calling it a night. And he didn't rely on charisma alone. Instead he had a *habitual practice* of coming home each night and meticulously recording each conversation in a growing library of index cards. He committed to memory not just where someone worked or what someone did, but *who they were*. So the next time he saw them, asking "How have you been?" wasn't just an empty formality; it was loaded with understanding that allowed him to meet that person's individual need to be known and valued. And no matter who we are, we all have that basic need for connection.

If you met Clinton, he remembered you. What's more, he treated you like an old friend. The lesson: Do not underestimate the simple power that recall has on an individual. Every person wants to be not just noticed, but memorable. In a world that moves faster and faster, and where people are treated more and more like commodities, the leader who slows it down — who truly treats people like individuals and not interchangeable pieces — wins. ●

## Paradigm Breaking: The Values of Being First

George Bernard Shaw once said, "You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'" Years later, Senator Robert F. Kennedy ended his presidential campaign speeches with a similar refrain: "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why … I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?" Winners don't accept the world for what it is. They're driven by their ideas of how the world should be. Their vision becomes a mission and that mission reshapes the human experience. If you're not asking "*Why not?*," you're not in the winning mentality.

Shaw and Kennedy fully understood that 1 percent of the world's dreamers effect exceptional progress that is enjoyed by the other 99 percent of us who are content to stand back and watch. Notice they even both use the word itself — *dream*. Unlike other acts, dreams allow us to break free of our human limitations. In dreams, there are no rules. Gravity melts away. The sky can be any color we want. Dreams allow us to see a world that's different from the one we live in now. Prescient or not, they give us the ability to imagine a radically different tomorrow. Envisioning this type of inspired change is what I call paradigm-breaking.

Generally defined, a paradigm is "a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline." In the simplest terms, paradigms are frames through which we look at the world. They help us organize information and make sense of it all. A paradigm-free world is a Hobbesian world where anything goes and no standards of evaluation exist. You cannot objectively judge things if there is no paradigm in place to create standards for evaluation.

### Winners Invent New Touchstones by Dreaming

By dreaming … by breaking paradigms … winners invent new touchstones and benchmarks and then *apply* the rules of the real world to those markers. This added level of creative freedom distinguishes winners from the rest of us and is the wellspring of many of mankind's greatest achievements.

Ultimately, paradigm breaking is the difference between innovation and breakthrough, between incremental and transformational. It's not just about making something "new and improved," it's about re-imagining the entire purpose of the original. But beware — transformation begets transformation. Even after you've broken a paradigm, you must continue to challenge yourself, because if you don't, others will. ●

## Prioritization: Creating Confidence One Step at a Time

Winners in politics and business have an uncanny ability to prioritize: to separate what must be done from what should be done. Winners are able to focus intensely on their priorities, and then pour all of their resources into those priorities. That enables them to underpromise and overdeliver. In an era of broken trust in institutions — where everyone promises the world and delivers peanuts — doing the opposite immediately distinguishes you.

Not surprisingly, the ability to define what matters most, to order tasks and allocate resources based on

commonly understood priorities, hinges on clear communication. You can accomplish the right things in the right order at the right time only when your entire organization understands what is important and why.

### Remarkably Efficient and Effective

Another essential trait that separates winners from everyone else is time management. You can't show me a winner in any profession who isn't remarkably efficient and effective in how he or she allocates his or her time. To the untrained eye, what winners accomplish in a typical day is unfathomable. In reality, they are *always* thinking, working and doing — and they do it faster and better than anyone else. There are entire books written about how to get the most out of every day, so I won't devote much time to it here. But I do have a time-management lesson from Rich DeVos, Amway's founder, that is worthy of a brief reference:

"It is fun to be in management. You sit in your big office and people come to see you. But that takes time, a lot of time, and I finally decided that I wouldn't see people in my office any longer. If somebody came to see me, I would say, 'Fine, I will be right down.' And I would go meet them by the front desk to find out what they wanted — money, a job, whatever. I would stand and talk to them right there, it would take five minutes and then I'd return to my office. But if they sit in your office, they are going to take five minutes just telling you what a beautiful office you have. By the time they get around to talking about what they want, it's a half hour or 45 minutes later. That's not an efficient way to mange your time."

### Articulate Your Priorities Quickly

Articulating your priorities quickly is one of the most important components of communication. First words build first impressions — impressions you have only a few precious seconds to make. Your audience walks into the room with their own set of priorities; time spent with you is time they're not spending on existing commitments. Thus, for you to get inside their heads and earn their attention, you have to move fast. If your first impression is powerful enough, people will never forget it. If not, they will *[forget your impression]* — and you as well.

If the first priority is about you, the second is about them, to determine exactly what matters most to the most people. FedEx CEO Fred Smith neatly summarizes his priorities in a single two-word catchphrase that can be explained in just one sentence: "If you talk to anyone who works for FedEx and ask them, 'What's the Purple Promise?' they will tell you 'I will make every FedEx experience outstanding.' There is not a lot of extra verbiage in there. It just says what every one of us has to do, every single day." His No.1 priority: predictability — which also happens to be America's top priority.

## Perfection: Why Great Is Not Good Enough

Many assume, incorrectly, that perfectionism is simply never being satisfied with what you're doing. But there's more to the story. Rarely will you find a perfectionist — an eccentric artist, a diligent writer, a world-renowned musician, a savvy businesswoman, an energized campaign volunteer — who goes around saying, "Yeah, that's good enough." For these people, the words good and enough never appear in the same sentence.

Anyone can criticize something, or say that others' work isn't good enough, or go around nitpicking the work that everyone else does. And, from time to time, these criticisms can be completely warranted and worth a second look. But what makes perfectionists different — and allows them to be winners — is that they take criticism and action a step further. They make excellence the standard by which they judge their work, the people around them and even themselves. They move us closer to the world as it could be, not just as it is.

### The Essential Nature of Communication Perfection

For my first book, *Words That Work*, General Colin Powell granted me two interviews — and both times he stressed the essential nature of communication perfection. In fact, Powell's words on the matter apply to almost every area of human endeavor. "If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude." True, excellence is not perfection, but it's what motivates you to come as near to perfection as human endeavor allows.

It's not so much being perfect that makes one a winner; it's the *driving need* to be perfect that sets winners ahead of the rest.

## Partnership: Creating Alignment in Words and Actions

Winners understand that they need other people to get where they want to go. They understand, even if they'd never admit it, that they're probably not the smartest per-

son in every room. But, most important, they understand that a whole is often greater than the sum of its parts. And this is the driving force behind some of the most powerful and successful partnerships the world has ever seen.

The best companies are governed by leaders who understand that they exist because of a partnership with their customers, their employees and the communities in which they operate. It is a four-legged stool that cannot function any other way. Destroy any leg of that partnership and you destroy the entire enterprise. Winners always remember one thing — they do not offend the people they most need on their side.

### What We Can Learn About Teamwork from Sports Stars

The business world has a lot to learn from the sports world. The principles of winning that sports stars take for granted the rest of us need to learn. Sportscaster Jim Gray has been an astute observer of athlete behavior for three decades. For him, it's the partnership, the teamwork, that turns great players into winners. Says Gray:

"You're only as good as your weakest link. Michael Jordan didn't just show up at a game. He can't inbound the ball to himself. He has to throw it to somebody so they'll throw it back to him. He understood that if it weren't for *[former Chicago Bulls head coach]* Phil Jackson, *[former Chicago Bulls assistant coaches]* Frank Hamblen, Tex Winter and Jim Cleamons putting all of the right people in the right places, defensively and offensively, if he didn't have the trainer to tape his ankles, if he didn't have the travel secretary to make sure that plane got him there on time, if he didn't have the whole confluence of events that it takes to win, then he wouldn't win.

"LeBron James is great, but has LeBron James won a championship? No. Why not? Because all of the people around him are not fulfilling the expectations that he has, and they're not able to lift him to where he has to be because they all aren't doing their job as well as they need to be.

"You have to trust people, you have to allow them to do their jobs, and you have to put the best people in their jobs so that you can succeed as a leader. If you don't have good people around you and you think it's all about you, you'll be the first to hit the door. A lot of people who get near the top don't understand that it's not just because of them, it's because of everything that everyone has done for them that's put them there." ●

## Passion: The Power of Intensity

Winners eat, breathe, talk, sleep and live passion. Their work is a *part* of them and, in some cases, it completely defines who they are. Winners strive for perfection because they're driven by something deeper and more powerful than mere interest or curiosity. They never stop looking for ways to do things better and for where they can do more, where they can go that extra mile — and more — to blow away expectations and people.

The best advertisers understand passion. They manufacture it in 30-second bites that capture not just our emotions, but our memories. In fact, taglines that emphasize passion of some sort are among the most memorable. They stay with you long after the commercials that introduced them have hit the shelf. See how many of the following examples you still remember.

The Most Passionate Taglines and Advertising Slogans

1. Nike: Just Do It
2. Lexus: The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection
3. Visa: It's Everywhere You Want to Be
4. BMW: The Ultimate Driving Machine
5. FedEx: When It Absolutely, Positively Has to Be There Overnight
6. *The New York Times*: All the News That's Fit to Print
7. Hallmark: When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best
8. U.S. Army: Be All You Can Be.

Three elements separate real winners from those who merely play the game:

*Emotion* without vision is just the heart's way of throwing a tantrum for no reason.

*Vision* without emotion won't get you anywhere because it lacks drive; it has no reason to keep fighting the good fight.

And *commitment* without vision is meaningless because without clear direction, there's no sense of achievement when you get there.

### Passion Personified

The biggest difference between winners and everyone else is in how they communicate their passion to the people around them. Since I began working with and talking to America's most successful politicians, CEOs, business leaders and entertainment moguls nearly 20 years ago, the only thing as consistent as their passion is their ability to inspire a passion in the people around them.

In order to really motivate your work force to care about what you care about, you have to give them rea-

sons that connect with *them*, not just with you. They have to feel an emotional response to what you say, not just a rational one.

## Persuasion: Building Reputation and Earning Trust in Politics and Business

Winners don't win by simply telling people, "This is the way it is" or "This is how it's going to be." They convince us that what they're saying is true, that they can be trusted, so that we willingly follow their lead. Thanks to his powers of persuasion, Winston Churchill sold the British the stoicism and determination they needed to triumph over Nazi Germany. Even if they were scared as hell, they didn't show it. Don't underestimate how hard a "sell" this would have been for Churchill. It's easy to armchair quarterback this from the 21st century. We know how the war ended — the good guys won. But if you lived in 1940 Britain, with Hitler on the march, Europe in the hands of the Nazis and tens of thousands of planes, warships, rockets and more pointed at your tiny island … would you be inclined to believe a politician who said it was all going to be OK?

### Winston Churchill's Powers of Persuasion

Churchill knew the power of language, and the determination of his people, and marshaled his best arguments and delivery to galvanize them. Britain was clearly overmatched, but he utilized Britain's greatest weakness — its size and vulnerability — to his persuasion advantage. The truth is, the British people long relished their ability to do great things of global consequence *in spite* of their relatively small homeland. It was that driving spirit that built an empire. So when it came time to defend that island, when public spirits were lowest, Churchill tapped into a deep-running national current and went on the offense. In a speech delivered in the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, Churchill said:

"We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets and on the hills. We shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for the moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old."

### Internet Revolutionaries Connect With Us

In more recent times, people like Bill Gates (Microsoft), Steve Jobs (Apple), Larry Page and Sergey Brin (Google), Jeff Bezos (Amazon) and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) have convinced us that computers, technology and the Internet will dramatically revolutionize the way people around the world shop, entertain themselves, find information, interact with one another and conduct business. They listened to what was missing, paid attention to what we wanted and came back to us with messages and products that resonated deep within our psyches. They connected with us, and because they were able to do so, we trusted them, we listened to them and eventually bought what they were selling.

Because they believed so strongly in what they were telling us, we were inclined to trust and believe in them as well. That's no small point. Trust is an integral part of communication and persuasion, and you can't really build trust if people don't think you actually believe in what you're saying.

## Persistence: Learning from Failure

Of all the attributes it takes to win, persistence is the most important because without it, winning is impossible.

I asked New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg, who is on everyone's top 10 list of most admired businesspeople, what he admired most in others. For him, adaptability and survival are the two essential characteristics of a winner:

"The business leaders that I really respect are people who are able to continue to do what they do in changing environments and for many years. Steve Jobs is in a business where you're only as good as your last product. He's gone from one business to another, he's mastered them all and he's in a business where even before your product goes out the door there's a competitor ready with something better. The most successful people can see what's coming and reinvent themselves. They don't sit around. They know how to stay relevant."

### Persistence Gnaws at You

Persistence, unlike its weaker, less successful little brother, effort, is a way of life. It gnaws at you. It will wake you up at 3 a.m. so you can go over the numbers one more time. And make no mistake: It will laugh at you when you stub your toe on the coffee table as you fumble for the light switch.

Everything about sports is preparation and persistence. "I'm going to give you the greatest Bill Walton-ism

ever, and I think he got it from Coach Wooden, 'Failing to prepare is preparing to fail,'" says sportscaster Jim Gray. "Preparation is everything in sports. You've got to do the work to achieve greatness. I've seen a lot of guys who've had magnificent talent who were in and out of the league before they started. You can have all the talent in the world, and all the pride in the world, but none of it means anything without the ability to endure. You have to endure to be great, and to be great you have to be prepared."

Says Sherry Lansing, the first female CEO of a Hollywood studio, "If the cause is bigger than you, you'll never be afraid of or hurt by rejection. Having been through a lot, I think you win by not giving up." ●

## Conclusion: Principled Action

With faith and trust in business, government, the media and many of the most important American institutions at an all-time low, these are the words that America wants to hear — and the qualities they want to see — from you:

### Language for Demonstrating Principles

***"Accountability"*** is the attribute most desired in the business community today — and, unfortunately, it's also the one perceived to be most lacking. Accountability is about those in power answering to those who put them there. It's about making things right when they go wrong.

The lack of ***"strict standards"*** is what sunk BP, Toyota, Goldman Sachs and other victims of the communication disasters of 2010. People want to know that your business won't bend to the wind as Arthur Andersen did to Enron. Standards alone are not enough; it's the diligence and rigor with which you uphold them that matters.

***"Corporate culture"*** has come to reflect a company's operating principles. Winners are acutely aware of their corporate culture and seek to define it as they define themselves. The most common corporate culture among winners: innovative, aggressive and even disruptive.

***"Moral compass"*** is to the individual what corporate culture is to the organization. It is desired (but not necessarily expected) of business and political leaders that they engage in socially acceptable behavior.

***"Social responsibility"*** is what Americans want more than good corporate citizenship. To them, social responsibility is defined first by respect for employees, followed by accountability to customers and service to the community.

***"Objective and unbiased"*** defines the kind of information Americans want from their business and political leaders. CEO letters in corporate annual reports that appear one-sided and lack candor will not just fail to resonate … they will actively undermine the credibility of even the most successful corporation.

***"Uncompromising integrity"*** is hard to prove, but if people believe you have it, you are a winner in their eyes. What differentiates a winner from everyone else is the willingness to make tough decisions in tough times.

In a survey we did in 2010, "***the simple truth***" was the second highest desired value in politics after accountability. It represents fundamental, commonsense principles many believe have been lost in the complications and compromises of modern life — and it appeals to their desire to see those truths restored.

***"A chief ethics/ethical officer"*** should exist in every corporation and organization in America, holding others accountable for their actions and behavior — an ombudsman but with C-level authority to instill accountability.

***"Say what you mean and mean what you say"*** is exactly what Americans want their political and business leaders to do. It defines accountability in action. Warren Buffett is the best illustration of a business leader whom Americans believe most upholds this desirable attribute.

### One Powerful Word: *If*

There is no single standard of winning. No secret recipe that — presto! — makes you a winner. However, there are many common traits of all winners. Together, they are factors you must incorporate in ways that suit your own style and objectives.

Every winner has elevated others, and in doing so, elevated him- or herself.

It comes down to a simple, powerful word: *If*.

If you can apply the principles of winning in a principled way, then you'll have truly won. If you can put others before you, and in doing so lift yourself *and* others to a higher place, then you are, indeed, a winner. ●

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Win*, you'll also like:

1. ***Words that Work* by Frank Luntz.** Luntz offers sound advice on how to tactically use words and phrases to get what you want in life.
2. ***You Already Know How to Be Great* by Alan Fine.** Fine, a former professional tennis coach, offers motivational secrets via a method he terms the GROW process.
3. ***Power* by Jeffrey Pfeffer.** This executive summary of his latest book, *Power*, is a groundbreaking guide that reveals the strategies and tactics that separate the winners from the losers.

· Book 18 of 269 ·

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Alan Fine with Rebecca R. Merrill

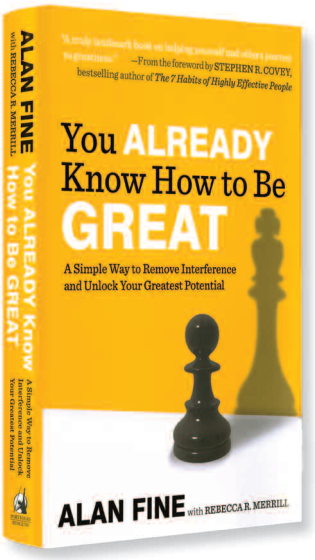
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Leadership: Development

# You Already Know How to Be Great

## A Simple Way to Remove Interference and Unlock Your Greatest Potential




by Alan Fine with Rebecca R. Merrill

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Most people who want to get better — at hitting golf shots, negotiating with clients, delivering presentations or any other field of endeavor — seek out new information. They read a book, take a class, hire an expert tutor. But as Alan Fine has learned from many years of coaching athletes and businesspeople, this "outside-in" approach often doesn't produce the results people want. More information becomes a distraction rather than a solution, and high performance remains elusive.

Fortunately, there is a better way, as he discovered years ago while working with a 9-year-old tennis student. The more tips and tricks he gave her, the worse she played. One day, he told her to just forget all his instructions. Then he used a simple tool to help her change how she paid attention and what she paid attention to. Her ability to hit over the net instantly improved 1,000 percent!

Since then Fine has developed and honed a unique "inside-out" approach to performance improvement. In *You Already Know How to Be Great*, he shows us how to unlock Faith, Fire and Focus: confidence in our ability, high energy and passion, and focused attention on the things that really matter.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to use essential coaching concepts to improve your work and life.
- The most common mistakes made by people conducting engagement conversations.
- How to recognize the biggest obstacles to our performance.
- A simple process that can help you achieve greatness in any area.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW TO BE GREAT**

**by Alan Fine with Rebecca R. Merrill**

**The authors:** Alan Fine is the president of InsideOut Development, which offers training programs, executive coaching and organizational consulting. Companies that have adopted his unique approach to performance improvement include IBM, NASA, Honeywell, Procter & Gamble, Gap and Coca-Cola. Rebecca R. Merrill is the co-author of many books, including *First Things First* with Stephen R. Covey.

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For additional information on the authors, go to http://www.summary.com or http://www.alan-fine.com.

## Up Front

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

- You know that if you had a regular exercise program you'd have more energy and feel better. You've bought a variety of exercise equipment. You've tried a lot of different types of programs. Each time, you've lasted about three weeks. You ask yourself: "What's the matter with me? Do I just not have the character to do this — or was I somewhere else when the exercise genes got passed out?"
- You've been told that your job as a manager includes coaching the people in your division, so you've been meeting with them regularly, giving them good instruction and trying to help them improve. But much of the time, your help doesn't seem to matter, and sometimes it's even rejected. One person you need to talk with about an accountability issue refuses to even meet with you. You think: "How can I coach these people, and how can I do it in a way that will truly make a difference?"
- Your organization is not performing as well as you'd like. You've tried a variety of approaches and had some success, but the goals you set at the top never really make it down the line and your employees are not fully engaged. You spend most of your days dealing with internal problems instead of external opportunities. You keep asking yourself: "How can I raise performance throughout the organization? What can I do to get everyone fully engaged and on the same page?"

These scenarios represent a range of common experience, but they have one important element in common: They all deal with issues of performance — either in self or in others. Most of us want the results of top performance. We want the enthused organization, the engaged work team, the exceeded sales quotas, the responsible child, the low handicap on the golf course, the increased energy and the washboard abs. But even when we know what it takes, we don't always have the tools that make those kinds of results possible.

The premise presented here is that EVERYONE has the potential to perform better; potential is blocked by interference; interference can be reduced by focused attention; and focused attention can be simply and systematically increased. ●

## Part 1: Paradigm and Principle

I decided to do the training necessary to qualify as a Registered Professional Coach, which was the highest tennis-teaching certification a person could get in the United Kingdom at the time.

It was as a certified coach eight years later that I stood on the court on that gray day that totally changed my life. I had been working with one of my students — a shy little 9-year-old girl. Her mother and I both agreed that she was a bit uncoordinated, but her mom felt that if I could help her improve a little, she would be able to participate in the group sessions, which would be very good for her socially. The instructions I'd given her had been very simple ("Shake hands with your racket." "Hit the ball on its way down." "Hit the back side of the ball."). But the best she'd been able to do was to hit the

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

ball about five times consecutively across the net.

Feeling frustrated as I watched her struggle, I decided to try something different. I'd just begun to expand my approach to coaching, including studying disciplines such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming™, psychosynthesis, Zen and everything I could find on sports psychology. One particular approach that caught my attention was Timothy Gallwey's *Inner Game of Tennis*. The basic idea is that we each have a Self 1, the analytical, critical self ("You didn't hold the racket right." "You should have hit that differently." "You moved too slowly, you dummy!") and a Self 2, the natural, curious self that learns by experience and performs best without the interference of Self 1. Performance improves when we're basically able to silence Self 1 and free Self 2 to do its thing.

### A Blinding Glimpse of the Obvious

So I said to this little girl, "Look, let's not worry about all the instructions I've given you over the past six weeks. Just say 'bounce' when the ball touches the ground and 'hit' when the ball hits your racket. That's all. Just focus on those two events. Don't worry about anything else." The first time she tried it, she hit 53 shots in a row over the net! The girl was thrilled. Her mother was so shocked she literally fell off her chair leaning forward to watch. Personally, I was astonished and frustrated. My fundamental view as an educator had been challenged. Was it possible that much of the specific technical instruction I'd been giving my students was not only not helping them but was actually getting in the way?

It was at that point that I was struck with a "blinding glimpse of the obvious." This girl hadn't been performing poorly because she didn't *know* what to do; it was simply that there was too much *interference* getting in the way of her doing it! And sadly, the principal source of that interference was me.

That day on the tennis court, that little girl improved her performance by over 1,000 percent, or 10X. Can you imagine what would happen if you were to get that kind of breakthrough performance — or even a 10th of it — in your team or organization or in other areas of your life?

Prior to that day, I had believed — as most people do — that the best way to improve performance is to increase knowledge. This is an "outside-in" approach. It assumes that people are lacking in some way and that additional knowledge has to be put in from the outside to help them improve. Clearly, this is the most common approach used to improve individual and organizational performance. It reflects the fact that individuals, managers and leaders tend to see performance problems as knowledge problems and therefore look for knowledge solutions.

There are times when a lack of knowledge really is the problem, but much of the time the biggest obstacle in performance isn't not knowing what to do; it's not doing what we know. In other words, the problem is not as much about knowledge *acquisition* as it is about knowledge *execution*. ●

## The Heart of Change

In their book *The Heart of Change,* Harvard Business professor John Kotter and Deloitte Consulting principal Dan Cohen assert that "changing behavior is less a matter of giving people analysis to influence their thoughts than helping them to see a truth to influence their feelings. Both thinking and feelings are essential, and both are found in successful organizations, but the heart of change is in the emotions. The flow of see-feel-change is more powerful than that of analysis-think-change."

## The Nature of Performance

As I continued to work to help people and organizations improve performance, I had another blinding glimpse of the obvious. Knowledge was not the only thing — or even the most important thing — being blocked by interference. There were three other elements at the very heart of high performance. And not only were these elements important in and of themselves; they were also important because they facilitated the use of knowledge. When these elements were blocked, performance suffered. When they were unleashed, performance soared.

I've come to call these elements Faith, Fire and Focus.

**Faith** has to do with our beliefs about ourselves and our beliefs about others.

**Fire** has to do with our energy, passion, motivation and commitment.

**Focus** has to do with what we pay attention to and how we pay attention.

Faith, Fire and Focus are what create engagement. They are how we get the 10X performance!

Because the impact of these three elements is so significant, I have become increasingly convinced that ***what separates high performers from everyone else is their Faith, Fire and Focus.*** And because the impact of inter-

ference on these elements is so profound, I have also become convinced that ***reducing interference to Faith, Fire and Focus is probably the least recognized but most effective way to improve performance.***

The good news is that there is a simple, scalable, replicable process that can make that happen.

### A Model of Performance

Together, Knowledge, Faith, Fire and Focus create the "K3F" model of human performance.

If you think of this model as a wheel, Knowledge represents the rim. Faith, Fire and Focus are like spokes supporting the wheel. The rim without the spokes or the spokes without the rim would render the wheel useless — as would a weakness of any of the four basic parts. Therefore, all four parts are vital to performance success.

Obviously, some basic Knowledge is essential. You'd find it hard to be a salesperson if you didn't know anything about your product, your customers or the competition. You'd find it difficult to excel at tennis without knowing what a racket is, what a ball is and the object and rules of the game.

However, it is Faith, Fire and Focus that drive the quality of performance and performance improvement. It is what creates results in organizations where people:

- genuinely believe in the viability, competency and purpose of the organization;
- are enthused about and engaged in their work;
- know what to pay attention to and are focused on the key objectives that would make the organization successful; and
- are able to fully execute on the Knowledge they already have.

When Faith, Fire and Focus are released, extraordinary things happen. This is when possibility opens up.

### Getting Rid of Interference

To one degree or another interference affects our Faith, Fire and Focus — and our performance — nearly every day. Some of this interference is external. It comes from things that are mostly outside our direct control. In the marketplace it might be the economy, new technology or increased competition. On the tennis court it might be the wind, the sun, the court surface or an opponent. At home it could be economics, the media or the demands and expectations of family members and others. Onstage it might be the lights, another performer's missed cue, the rustling of programs in the audience or the sound of a siren outside the theater. In many situations it's judgmental communication — both verbal and nonverbal — from other people.

But much of the interference that affects our performance is *internal*. A good deal of it comes from our response to external interference. It's reflected in the stories we tell about ourselves, the way we approach situations in watch-out mode, the way we worry about the past or the future or think of all the things we should be doing instead of focusing on the present. It's manifest in the conversations we have with the "800-pound gorillas inside our heads" — the internal dialogue that goes: "You have to do this the 'right' way." "Don't screw this up!" "What will others say?"

We all have our gorillas. No one is exempt. And it's the noisy chatter of these gorillas — not busyness — that creates internal interference. In fact, it's possible to be very busy and still have the quiet mind necessary for top performance, as long as you're focused.

So how do we get rid of interference? Usually, we can't change the external interference. It's just the way things are. However, by reducing the internal interference, we can free ourselves and/or others to get at higher performance. And the simplest and most accessible way to get rid of internal interference is through Focus — through changing *what* we pay attention to and *how* we pay attention.

After a lifetime of studying human performance, Claremont Graduate University professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi suggested that we all perform best when there is a balance between our perception of the challenge we are facing and our perception of the skill we have to meet the challenge. In other words, we need to have enough challenge to keep us excited, but not so much that it overwhelms or discourages us. According to Csikszentmihalyi, this is when we're most likely to get into a state of "flow" — a state where we're focused, fully engaged and intrinsically motivated. In this state, we process things faster, learn faster and are often not even aware of time or space. It's in this state that whatever we're doing seems almost effortless. ●

## Part 2: Process

In sports such as tennis and golf, the term *swing velocity* describes the speed and direction of the racket or club, which in turn controls the speed and direction (and therefore accuracy) of the ball. Obviously, the faster and more accurately you hit the ball, the more likely you are to win. This same combination of speed and accuracy has a similar effect on decision making and, therefore, on the results we get in any area of performance.

Decision Velocity, then — or the speed and accuracy with which we make decisions — is critical to top performance in any area of life.

So the question is: How can we create the Focus that increases Decision Velocity and leads to breakthrough results? We can do it through a process called GROW.

### Creating Focus Through 'GROW'

The GROW process is basically a map of human decision making. It provides a simple way to create Focus, reduce interference and improve performance in any area of life. Having since recognized the vital roles of Faith, Fire and Knowledge as well as Focus in top performance, I now place that performance model at the very center of the GROW process.

This is how GROW works. Whenever we make a decision, we eventually go through four phases. We think about the following:

**Goal:** What we want to do.

**Reality:** The circumstances we're dealing with (or how we perceive them).

**Options:** How we might move from our Reality to our Goal.

**Way Forward:** What action we want to take.

By giving order, discipline and focus to these phases as we go through, we can significantly reduce interference, increase the speed and accuracy of our decisions and improve performance.

### Using the GROW Questions

A few fundamental questions in each of the four areas make a significant difference in helping people clarify their thinking. These questions are listed below.

**Goal:** What issue do I want to work through? What do I want from this GROW "session" (meaning time devoted to resolving the issue)? What are the consequences if I do not take action?

**Reality:** Briefly, what's been happening? What have I tried so far? What were the results? In what different way might others describe this situation? Is my goal still realistic?

**Options:** Describe fantasyland. If I could do anything to make progress on this issue, what might I do? If others are involved, what would they need to see or hear to get their attention? If I were watching myself work through this issue, what would I recommend? Do any of these options interest me enough to explore further? If I were to act on this/these chosen option(s), how might I go about it?

**Way Forward:** Do any of these options interest me enough to take action? How will I go about it? What might get in my way? How might I overcome that? What and when is my next step? ●

## Coaching for Breakthrough

The inside-out approach gives us a different way to think about coaching itself. It's far less about providing additional Knowledge than it is about releasing the Faith, Fire and Focus that was inherent and natural in the performer as a child but is now suppressed by interference. It's not about looking at people in terms of what's wrong, broken or missing; it's about looking at them in terms of what's inside that we can help out. It's about removing interference and making it safe for people to dare to dream, to dare to think about what's possible — and then helping them find doable first steps.

Thus, a coach using the inside-out approach is always looking at an individual's performance through the lens of that person's Faith, Fire and Focus as well as Knowledge. He or she is constantly asking, "Where is the person low — in the area of belief, passion or attention? What is it that's getting in the way? How can I help remove it? What Focus will most significantly increase this person's Faith and Fire?"

### Getting Into the Performer's World

It's easy for coaches to get blindsided by what *they think* people have to pay attention to — to get so focused on the task that they miss the window through which a person can actually pay attention. What's helpful is for the coach to get into the world of the performer — to find the window through which the performer sees — and then ask him or her to look a little more carefully through that window. And if that window only allows someone to see one thing, to then work on that one thing and expand the view as the performer is able.

Inside-out coaching is not as much *Knowledge* coaching as it is *Focus* coaching. Even when the issue involves Knowledge, it's about helping the performer focus on the doable steps that enable him or her to gain or use Knowledge most effectively. It's not about solving the problem for someone; it's about helping that person solve the problem for him- or herself. It's about helping a person take full ownership for the solution.

Therefore, while a coach using the inside-out approach provides critical knowledge (such as the laws of physics, biomechanics or competitive tactics in sports), his or her primary objective is to increase the performer's awareness by helping that person focus on

and learn from real-time experience. And the more the coach can remove interference, the more quickly the performer will learn.

## Coaching for Engagement

When a performer is unwilling and/or unaware of a performance issue, you're no longer dealing with a performer-driven conversation. You're dealing with a coach-driven conversation. In other words, you can't begin by drawing Goal, Reality, Options and Way Forward out of your performer.

Instead, *you* have to start. *You* own the agenda. It's *your* goal. You're trying to take this valued person from where he or she is to where *you* want him or her to go — which is basically to where he or she is willing to engage in a performer-driven conversation about the issue. Until the performer reaches that point, you're the one who's driving the conversation.

In situations such as these, ***the biggest challenge isn't the situation or the performer; it's your own interference.*** And that changes your initial task as a coach. In breakthrough conversations, it's the performer who has the interference. Your job as a coach is to help the performer clarify his or her thinking.

Only by getting rid of your own interference first can you effectively help others get rid of theirs. This is the same principle you see in operation when a flight attendant instructs you to put on your own oxygen mask before trying to help others put on theirs.

### Giving Feedback

In the process of taking valued people from where they are to where they want to go, we often need to give performers feedback to help them become aware of an issue or an opportunity to improve their performance. Until we can help performers increase their awareness of the gap between what they think they're doing and what they're actually doing, they can't take responsibility for doing things differently.

For most people, feedback is a paradox. Most of us say we want it and on the surface will tell you it's valuable. But we're often anxious about receiving it.

The reason is that rather than understanding feedback as a perception of data, many of us see it as just another name for criticism delivered in a sensitive way. It creates interference because we hear the information as judgment. Our reaction is to discount, avoid, or become defensive when people tell us what we "should" have done.

## Common Mistakes in Engagement Conversations

As people work to integrate the inside-out approach in conducting engagement conversations, the most common mistakes are these:

1. **Failure to Plan.**
2. **Failure to Listen.**
3. **Failure to Follow the Process.**
4. **Falling Into Outside-In Coaching.**
5. **Making Comfort the Driving Force.**

## Inside-Out in Teams and Organizations

It's easy to tell the difference between teams and organizations in which Faith, Fire and Focus are high and those in which they are low.

An organization *with* Faith has a clear, compelling sense of mission and purpose that is effectively communicated to and passionately believed in by people on every level of the organization. People have a strong "We can!" belief and a firm conviction in the organization's resilience and ability to effectively learn and adapt in a changing environment. An organization *without* Faith is filled with fear, doubt or lack of clarity concerning its value proposition as well as the value of the organization's purpose and/or its viability in changing circumstances.

An organization *with* Fire has a positive energy directed toward the accomplishment of the purpose of the organization. An organization *without* Fire is filled with apathy, lack of interest and resigned compliance (rather than enthused commitment). What energy exists is often turned into negative fire, which is manifest in politicking, backbiting and criticizing.

An organization *with* Focus has clearly articulated key priorities that lead to the accomplishment of the organization's purpose, and those priorities are given robust attention on every level. An organization *without* Focus is filled with distraction, miscommunication, redundant effort, waste of resources and poor execution.

Just as the inside-out approach can help a coach look at the individual performer in terms of Faith, Fire and Focus as well as Knowledge, it can help managers and leaders look at teams and organizations through the same lens. And when teams and organizations move ahead with all four elements of high performance, the possibilities for breakthrough performance are truly amazing.

## Part 3: Practice

Inside-out is more than a process; it's a way of thinking and interacting with others that helps eliminate interference, increase Decision Velocity and improve performance in any area of life.

Although the inside-out approach is simple and most people are able to implement it immediately, there are times when you have to deal with a particularly difficult issue or you just get stuck.

Below are two of the most common types of responses:

### Creating Accountability

***"The person I'm trying to help says, 'I can't come up with any Goals' or 'I can't come up with any Options. You're the coach; you tell me what to do.'"***

"Tell me what to do!" is a phrase I used to hear often in coaching kids in tennis. They'd play really well in practice, but when the pressure was on, they'd want to abdicate their responsibility for deciding what to do next. They'd want a higher authority to tell them what to do.

One of the main purposes of the inside-out approach is to help people accept responsibility for their own performance. That's when they really get engaged. That's when they stop blaming and accusing and begin to tap into their own Faith, Fire and Focus.

No matter how hard it may be (and this is one of the main challenges for a coach), you're almost always better off if you avoid the temptation to simply tell people what to do. It may seem quicker and easier in the moment, and it may temporarily feed your ego. But it won't empower the individual to create consistently high performance.

The first time I went rock climbing, there was a man about 50 feet up on the rock face, completely frozen. He was holding onto the rock for dear life and, despite the instructor's calm and repeated instructions, he just couldn't seem to move. As the afternoon wore on, the man finally became convinced that he either had to get past his panic or he was going to be on the mountain face all night. It was at that point that he finally began to take action that would get him safely to the ground.

The key to working with someone who is paralyzed by some belief (whether that person is being overpowered by a gorilla or is stuck in an unproductive story) is to help him or her get in touch with reality and the consequences of different choices. You might say, "So what's going to happen if you don't take action? What is the consequence? Isn't that okay with you?" If he or she says, "No, that's not okay," then you can say, "Well then, let's look at our Options."

Helping someone who initially feels hopeless is a bit like pushing a stalled car to get it moving from a stationary position. It's that initial movement that's the hardest. But once there's a bit of momentum in any direction, the pushing doesn't take as much effort.

The first objective is to shift the belief from "it can't be done" to "maybe there's a possibility here." In other words, help shift the Faith in order to engage the Fire and Focus. One approach is to use empathic listening. You may even need to start in the Reality phase of the process and ask the person to describe what he or she sees as hopeless. Then you could do a bit of probing — "How do you know this is hopeless? What is it that's telling you it's hopeless?"

At some point the person will probably get enough off his or her chest that you can say, "Now given what you've said, are you open to the possibility that there may be another way to look at this? If so, what might your goal be?" If you time that question right, it will begin to engage the person's Faith, Fire and Focus so that he or she can begin to move forward.

### Managing Your Own Interference

***"I worry that my coaching skills are so poor that they will come across as artificial and manipulative to the person I'm trying to help."***

Those 800-pound gorillas in your head will always have something to say about anything you do. The trick in getting past their chatter is to focus on simply following the GROW process — even if you think it's going to be clunky. All the evidence I see is that even when the coach feels awkward in doing so, the performer doesn't experience it that way at all. This is because the GROW questions are not new to the performer. They're questions we all ask already; now we're simply asking them in a disciplined, ordered way that creates more Focus and reduces interference. In fact, you can just read them — even mechanically — and it doesn't come over as manipulative or artificial. Just be up front and make sure your motive is to help.

***"Sometimes it's hard for me to see people's potential, and that throws me back to the outside-in approach — 'Just listen to me and do what I say!'"***

Sometimes it is hard to suspend judgment and genuinely see someone's potential. I've got a judge in me that makes decisions about people just like anybody else. But I've learned to not believe everything that gorilla says to me. I make a conscious effort to look beyond what he's saying. I combine the results of that effort

with what I know about kids and learning and that's when I begin to see what's possible.

*Everybody* has the potential to perform better because everybody has a phenomenal ability to learn. We were all born with it — even that person in the organization you may have transferred out because you thought he was a disaster. Once upon a time, that person was a cute little one-year-old, hungry to learn and get into everything. What you're seeing now is a buildup of years of emotional defense against the world.

And as long as you judge him based on that buildup — "Oh, that's Chuck. That's just the way he is" — you're going to be scanning for evidence to validate that belief. It's like what happens when you buy a red car or name your new baby "Aidan." Suddenly, you become amazingly aware of all the red cars on the freeway and all the boys who've recently been named "Aidan." So you'll be scanning for evidence to validate your perception of what you see as the present (not the potential) Chuck. As a result, you will never be able to help him get rid of the interference that's blocking his Faith, Fire, and Focus and contribute most meaningfully to the organization.

## The Faith Behind the Focus and the Fire

I first met "Divot" at the National Sports Center for Wales in the winter of 1986, where he was training with the other members of the Welsh Amateur Golf Team. Born and raised in a mining town in South Wales, Divot was 20 years old.

He had a talent for golf that had enabled him to become a member of the national team. Even so, the national coach, who'd asked me to spend the weekend with the team, had taken me aside and said, "Don't waste too much time on this one. He's technically so poor he'll never make it. Besides, he's not the sharpest pencil in the box!"

By the end of the first day, there was one thing I knew for certain: If ever I saw a learner, this was one. Despite his discomfort, he was there, asking question after question and displaying all the symptoms of a rabid learner. So not only did I try to respond to his questions throughout the weekend; I continued to do so after the team event.

The more I engaged with Divot, the clearer it became to me that he had plenty of Fire. What we needed to address was his Focus and his Faith. Up to that point, he'd been focused on what he thought others believed about him and their opinions had formed the basis of what he believed about himself. What we needed to do was help him shift his attention to something that would help him change his belief about himself.

As we worked together over the next few years, our Way Forward included three areas of Focus. First, to keep his mind quiet as he hit the ball, he would focus on saying "back" when his club reached the top of his backswing and "hit" when the clubface hit the ball. Second, to keep his mind quiet when he wasn't hitting the ball, he would focus on maintaining a confident and upright posture — the same posture he had when he played well. And third, to change his belief about himself in general, he would focus on changing some things he was paying attention to that were giving him negative messages.

What enabled him to develop and carry out these options was creating an environment in which he felt safe to process his own experience without fear of judgment or being pushed. The more we were able to remove the interference to his Faith, Fire and Focus, the more his learning increased and the more his performance improved.

At the time of this writing, Divot had taken first place three times on the European Tour, represented his country nine times in the World Cup and been featured in the top 50 of the Official World Golf Rankings. He was also ranked in the top 40 of the all-time money winners on the PGA European Golf Tour.

***Your Own Way Forward: The finest service we can give to other human beings is to make it safe for them to explore their own experience.***

This is when people begin to reconnect with their Faith, Fire and Focus. This is when they begin to dare to dream, to think about what's possible. This is when transformations and breakthroughs happen.

The Faith, Fire and Focus inside you is something that is truly amazing, and your ability to release it in yourself and others will not only transform you and those you help; it will transform the world.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *You Already Know How to Be Great,* you'll also like:

1. ***Now, Build a Great Business* by Brian Tracy and Mark Thompson.** This summary is filled with straightforward, powerful strategies to ignite growth in your business.
2. ***Great Work, Great Career* by Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo.** How do your create a great career? Covey and change consultant Colosimo offer a complete handbook for anyone seeking answers.
3. ***Mojo* by Marshall Goldsmith.** In his follow up to *What Got You Here Won't Get You There,* #1 executive coach Marshall Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get — and keep — our Mojo.

· Book 19 of 269 ·

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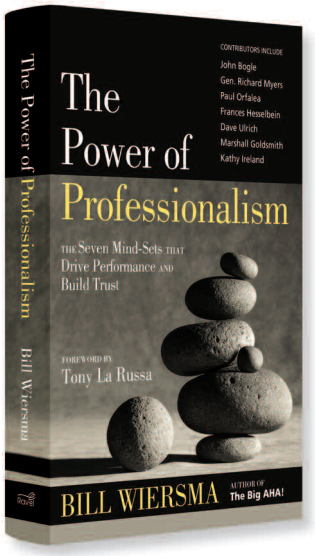
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# The Power of Professionalism

## The Seven Mind-Sets That Drive Performance and Build Trust




by Bill Wiersma

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

When only 17 percent of employees believe their leaders have the organization's best interests at heart … When only 18 percent of Americans trust lawyers completely ... When the Google search "Has U.S. business lost its way?" yields 159 million hits … Something is very, very wrong. Is it any wonder that cynicism is at an all-time high and trust at an all-time low?

The solution? Professionalism. Professional ideals build trust. And trust is the foundation for both personal and organizational success. Better professionals — and more of them — is the antidote for much of what ails the business world.

In the tradition of business consultant Bill Wiersma's demonstrated ability to shift people's thinking in new and powerful ways, be prepared to think about what it means to be a professional in a whole new light.

In *The Power of Professionalism*, Wiersma outlines the seven key mind-sets of trusted professionals, offering a blueprint for both individuals and organizations interested in fostering a culture of professionalism.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why defining professionals through an occupational lens is not only antiquated, but counterproductive.
- Why a professional's mind-set is more important than his or her technical skills.
- Why people, despite the inherent responsibilities, willingly embrace the mantle that comes with being a professional.
- Why organizations whose members view themselves as professionals outperform, outsmart and outlast other organizations.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE POWER OF PROFESSIONALISM**

**by Bill Wiersma**

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## Preface

Professional ideals, for both individuals and their organizations, have an inseparable correlation to success. Why? Because developing a culture centered on professional ideals, by default, builds trust.

To paraphrase Bill George, former chairman and CEO of Medtronic: We, in business, do not need more self-indulged people — whether revealed through financial shenanigans, power trips or appeasing one's ego. And we certainly don't need more laws. We need better professionals — and more of them — the great antidote for much of what ails business today.

If trust is the bedrock of personal and organizational success, then organizations should develop their people and culture with professional ideals as their cornerstone. Most organizations don't.

John Toland, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, said, "It is human nature that repeats itself, not history." And it's the unproductive aspects of human nature that produce distrust.

Consider the 2008 meltdown of the U.S. financial markets. To paraphrase a popular political catchphrase: "It was about confidence, stupid." Unfortunately, stupid is as stupid does. Financial institutions took brazen risks, regulators were asleep at the wheel and consumers bit off more than they could chew. The result? Stakeholders lost trust — that increasingly rare trait that makes everything from financial markets to executive teams work! A 2002 Watson Wyatt study showed that high-trust organizations outperformed low-trust organizations by 286 percent in total return to shareholders (that is, stock price plus dividends).

Professionalism is unique; it's the ladder upon which all other organizational virtues mount. The greater the quality of professional ideals within an organization, the greater the likelihood stakeholders will have confidence in it.

## PART I: WHY PROFESSIONALISM MATTERS

## The Power Within

Three days after an explosion at a plant had killed two and caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage, the company's team reassembled at headquarters. Everyone was surprised to see Steve taking the lead at the press conference.

Recent events had been particularly bittersweet for Steve. His well-deserved promotion to division head had been announced only a few days before the accident, and the scheduled start for his new assignment, several states away, was eminent. But Andre, Steve's best friend, had been killed in the explosion.

Rumors surfaced that a gas leak was behind the explosion. Predictably, the aggressive construction schedule associated with the plant's expansion work came into question.

How could Steve face the media?

The press conference started out innocently enough, with the usual suspects asking the usual questions. Then one reporter dropped a bombshell, asking if Steve would like to comment on the impending grand jury investigation that had been announced just hours earlier.

The company's team had not been apprised of the investigation, which in and of itself was a bad omen.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

The grand jury would be investigating possible criminal negligence on the company's part along with probable malfeasance by company officials.

### Holding It Together Under Difficult Circumstances

Steve had flawlessly and carefully addressed each reporter's questions. How he managed to hold it together under such difficult circumstances was a wonder to the entire staff. The latest question, however, was like a poke in the eye. Not only would the grand jury investigation challenge the actions and character of the exceptionally talented and dedicated staff, it would also threaten the future of the company, which had been a town fixture for more than 40 years.

Without wavering, Steve responded, "Clearly, many questions remain. But I do know that, as professionals, our people hold themselves to incredibly high standards. They would never knowingly compromise plant safety. In order to get to the bottom of this, I will personally be heading up our company's internal investigation."

Everyone's jaw dropped. Certainly Steve, as operations manager, was the most qualified to head up the investigation. But what about his promotion?

Despite the company advancement, Steve saw this unfortunate incident as vitally important unfinished business. It was something he could not walk away from. Steve postponed his long-awaited promotion indefinitely. His bosses understood and reluctantly supported his decision. Everyone marveled at the way Steve conducted himself. He distinguished himself and rose above the fray in a critical time of crisis.

People who conduct themselves as consummate professionals make everyone around them better. When your career is in its twilight, you'll look back fondly at the Steves you have known as having made the biggest difference. ●

## It's a Bigger Tent Than You Realize

Professionals know what they're doing, both technically and in other tangible ways. However, as important as technical competence is, professionals are not typically defined by their competence. Technical competency is the *minimum* requirement when considering whether or not someone is a professional.

Tammy Farris, program manager at the University of Arizona's Eller School of Management MBA program, characterized it perfectly: "Education and training (that is, technical competence) are just paying one's greens fees — they enable you to get in the game."

Once in the game, professional competence enables individuals to demonstrate that they technically know what they're doing. If you can do that, people will trust your technical competence; they'll have confidence in you. For example, a surgeon with an ability to bring relief to a suffering patient will be regarded as a professional much easier than a colleague who possesses the same training but lacks the skill to apply that knowledge effectively.

Too often, however, people automatically equate *expert* with *professional*. That's a natural, but often inappropriate conclusion. Experts are not necessarily professional.

### There Are Millions of Professionals

Beyond deserving nurses, paralegals, flight attendants and real estate agents, there are literally millions of people who (1) demonstrate mastery in their work and (2) conduct themselves in a way that engenders trust. You've met them. They're trusty auto mechanics, conscientious grocery store managers and invaluable executive assistants. Most of these people don't view themselves as professionals. This is unfortunate. If they thought of themselves as professionals, their performance and morale would jump up another notch. For those who don't quite measure up, the aspiration to become a professional becomes a springboard in raising their sights and performance.

People who view themselves as professionals have higher morale, better job satisfaction and more job longevity. Organizations whose members view

## The Power of Mind-Sets

First and foremost, the mind-set reflects who a person is, not what a person does. The seven mind-sets transcend temperament, social hierarchy and intellectual prowess. They are not techniques (that is, built from best practices or admired competencies, etc.) that work in one situation but not another. Rather, they're foundational or principle-centered.

However, they're just as applicable to savvy veterans as they are to brand-new hires, just as pertinent in an aggressive Wall Street firm as in a benevolent nonprofit, as helpful for the gregarious extrovert as for the reserved loner or as insightful for the Ph.D. boss as for the self-taught tradesman.

themselves as professionals outperform, outsmart and outlast other organizations. There's plenty of room for everyone if you're willing to put up a bigger tent.

## The Psychology of Being a Professional

The views we hold of ourselves are as important, if not more so, than the views we hold of others. Thus, it shouldn't come as a surprise that people who view themselves as professionals excel beyond those who don't.

The renowned psychologist Carl Rogers was a pioneer in his work on self-views. He actually referred to them as self-concepts. Whether you call them self-concepts, perceptions, views or self-views, identities or self-identities, it's really the same thing. These views define who we believe we are.

### Aspirational Identities

Leadership expert John Maxwell noted, "It's how we perceive ourselves to be that determines who we are." But there really is (as Paul Harvey would say) more to the story.

For myriad reasons, self-perceptions can simply be wrong. And even if they're right, those perceptions are defining what is, not what's possible.

For those with fairly accurate assessments of their self-esteem, it is significantly, although not exclusively, influenced by what you *do* — in other words, conduct. Each of us has certain standards of conduct — regardless of whether those standards originated from civil or ethical sources — that we understand to be appropriate. And our worthiness, if we're being honest, is measured against those standards. Cheating on an exam, for example, should lower your self-esteem if you understand that cheating is inappropriate.

Current assessments are more like a report card or a snapshot; they do not reflect future possibilities.

### Your Aspirational Identity Raises Your Sights

An aspirational identity, however, is primarily about who you are or wish to be — as opposed to what you do (which is defined by conduct). It's forward looking. It raises your sights. It suggests possibilities.

The way to master life's lessons in personal leadership (and, in the process, become a trusted professional) is to first aspire to be a leader.

Seeing yourself as a professional is one of the highest forms of motivation because it's intrinsic, internally driven.

## The Professional Balance Approach

Scissors require two blades in order to function properly. Over-dependence on only one blade (for example, technical competence) proves to be ineffective. It's only when the second blade (how you go about your work) is added that the scissors become viable. Naturally, the sharper the blades, the better they function.

Most of us know from experience that when things go wrong, the root cause is frequently attributed to how the situation was handled. Such moments of examination are unprofessional because they make lasting bad impressions. People should be motivated to avoid these and, over time, they will come to a greater appreciation of how important the *how* really is. They will appreciate people who, armed with two blades, prove to be the sharpest tools in the shed.

In the workplace, professional is arguably the ultimate aspirational identity, transcending your title, vocation or educational pedigree. People who view themselves as professionals tend to excel beyond those who don't because they expect more of themselves.

## Trust: The One Thing You Have to Get Right

Because of distrust, nations go to war, economies fail and cynicism breeds. In many ways, human history has been charted by the impacts of distrust. It's a game changer. With trust, people tend to be more confident, proactive and hopeful. Without trust, people tend to be more skeptical, withdrawn and pessimistic. Trust is to mental health what clean air and water are to physical health.

The most predictable and powerful way to demonstrate concern for the welfare of others is to prove one's trustworthiness with the things that are of greatest importance to others.

Trust is the emotional glue that supports one's priorities, protects one's self-interests and ensures respect for one's values. When someone is found to be untrustworthy, almost without fail, it is because of a violation of one of these three concerns. Taken collectively, what trust does for individuals also applies to organizations.

Three elements are needed in order to build trust: character, competence and judgment.

Is anything else expected of someone to be considered trustworthy? Yes! In a word, *consistency*. There's an inseparable correlation between trust and consistency, especially when it comes to behavior. You can have consistency without trust, but you cannot have trust without consistency.

Without consistency, you don't know who or what you can count on. And it's that uncertainty that can become an insurmountable barrier in developing trust. Aspiring professionals must commit to consistently show up as a professional should, not merely when it suits their needs. There's nothing like a mixed message, a double standard or creative rationalizations to undermine one's credibility.

Whether it's a leader issuing an organizational edict, someone declaring his intention or an employee making a personal commitment, if one's words and deeds don't match up, they simply won't be credible. Ultimately, these people won't be found to be trustworthy.

## The Big Picture

It's no wonder that we hear a lot about the need to return to homespun values, getting back to the basics and remembering what made us great as a country. It's about acting responsibly, being self-reliant, demonstrating loyalty, being industrious, exercising discipline and restraint, taking pride in one's work and having a reputation of being trustworthy.

What is the embodiment of homespun values? In a word, professionalism. Of course, that means being a professional. That's what this is all about — *being* something. *Being* honorable — something that characterizes professionals to a tee.

We need better professionals — and more of them — to be the great antidote for what ails business today. Trustworthiness provides an unshakable foundation for success, both individually and organizationally. But in order to leverage the power associated with professional ideals, people must understand them with some level of specificity and appreciate why it matters to them.

# PART II: THE SEVEN MIND-SETS OF TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS

## Mind-Set 1: Professionals Have a Bias for Results

This mind-set is not a bias for action. Nor is it a bias for execution or for success. It is a bias for results. It's the bottom line. But the results must be the *right* results. Results based on illegal activities or unethical behavior are, even in the best light, unacceptable imitations of the real thing. Likewise, results based on convoluted business models, while legal, later prove to be not only unsustainable, but foolhardy. The 2008–2009 financial crisis that was caused, in part, by intricate and sophisticated financial engineering schemes is a striking example of delivering the wrong results.

Delivering results demonstrates trustworthiness. Without it, you'll ultimately be forced out of the game regardless of how high-minded your people are or how noble your cause.

Just as important is the need to deliver the right results in the right way — ensuring that the outcomes are sustainable and not just a flash in the pan. Anyone can hit the bull's-eye once, but it takes professionals to do it time after time!

Sustainable results are dependent on going about your business in the right way.

### Don't Start Out in the Penalty Box

Getting results is much easier when you're passionate about what you're doing. When your work is stimulating, aligned with your values and complements your skill sets, you have a natural nexus for generating the right results.

But just being passionate about your work is not enough to produce results. Passion does not guarantee the right outcome.

What gets professionals to the starting line is their passion for positive results. What gets them to the finish line is — even when things are tough — is their professional will.

## Mind-Set 2: Professionals Realize (and Act Like) They're Part of Something Bigger Than Themselves

Each of us, as professionals, has an inherent obligation to the organization (or client) we are a part of to put its interests ahead of our own. Consider the alternative: an organization full of people holding a me-first mind-set. It won't be long before the organization is out of business. And, of course, organizations don't lose, people do. In this instance, owners and employees alike.

Of course, putting the organization's and client's interests ahead of our own — in the extreme — can be self-defeating. You cannot be married to your work, and

yet there isn't always a black-and-white distinction.

There's plenty of gray in these matters. So you've got to be prudent. You've got to be smart. But one thing is for sure, the individual who consistently looks out only for himself will quickly be shunned by conscientious colleagues and disdained by managers because he has proven himself to be untrustworthy. Those employees who prove themselves to be trustworthy do so because they have allowed their successes to be a byproduct of their organization's or client's success. As a professional they:

- Commit to the success of their firm, organization or client.
- Realize success transcends their own parochial interests.
- Collaborate as an effective team member.

## Mind-Set 3: Professionals Know Things Get Better When They Get Better

Mind-set 3 — which builds off and is dependent on Mind-set 2 (Something Bigger) — has as its aim the need to satisfy something bigger than oneself. It's outward looking. Its aims are to advance the interests of someone (or something) other than self (which is consistent with Mind-set 2). This mind-set enables things to get better. But make no mistake, in the course of achieving something bigger, personal growth (and perhaps personal wealth) occurs. But that wasn't the principle objective or the professional's motivation. Growth happens as a natural and powerful byproduct of practicing Mind-set 3.

For instance, talk to anyone who has worked in a disaster relief effort (Hurricane Katrina, the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti and Chili and China, the islands recovering from the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami). Aid workers come back changed for the better, but that change wasn't their original intention, aspiration or motive. Nevertheless, a profound change occurred as a byproduct of their selfless efforts.

### Selfless Efforts in the For-Profit World

This phenomenon is not limited to individuals in the midst of such altruistic deeds. Similar changes occur in the lives of people in the for-profit world. You see this metamorphosis in the members of an especially high-performing team involved in bringing an important product to the market (such as Medtronic), people who are transforming an industry (such as Apple) and especially in such transformative times as recessions and economic recovery in the men and women devoted to revitalizing a brand (such as Ford). These experiences often mark some of the most dramatic professional growth of a person's career, but this isn't growth for the sake of growth. Growth comes as a byproduct of serving a higher purpose.

## Mind-Set 4: Professionals Have Personal Standards That Often Transcend Organizational Ones

Best-selling author David McCullough, a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, is a master of the art of narrative history. His books are considered masterpieces. Some of his best-known works are *Truman, 1776, The Path Between the Seas* and *John Adams*.

McCullough has had 40 years of bliss as an author. He loves what he does. He won't name any of his books as his favorite, however, he readily acknowledges that his happiest, most fulfilling years were those invested in writing *John Adams*: "It was a privilege to keep company with those people. They set such a high standard for us." McCullough speaks openly and generously of his admiration for Adams (plus Adams' wife, Abigail) noting, "Character is what counts, above all."

HBO ran *John Adams* — starring Paul Giamatti and Laura Linney — as an eight-part mini-series to rave reviews. What made this possible? It was the trust McCullough had in producer Tom Hanks. The standards he saw in Adams (the ones that drew McCullough so fervently to him) were the same ones that attracted him to Hanks.

### Professionals Hold Themselves to Exacting Standards

Hanks is like so many trusted professionals who hold themselves to exacting standards. And while it helps that their organizations also have standards, these professionals aren't necessarily dependent on them to do a good job, to be responsible or to be respectful to others. Their standards are integral to their character. Professionals who hold this mind-set:

- Have personalized a core set of values.
- Do what's right over what's expedient by taking a long view.
- Rise above the fray, stay focused and avoid pointless drama.

For clarification, personal standards can mean a myriad

of things. Used here, it means one's personal values, one's moral compass (one's definition of right and wrong) or one's core beliefs.

## Mind-Set 5: Professionals Know That Personal Integrity Is All They Have

It has been said that integrity is the mother of many virtues. How true! For those holding this mind-set, it's much more about who they are as individuals and much less concerned with having to think about doing the right thing. In other words, people who hold this mind-set act naturally (and usually quickly) when faced with having to make a tough call. After all, it's who they are and it's consistent with their character.

There are three important underpinnings of integrity:

- Authenticity and honesty.
- Delivering on one's commitments (both explicit and implicit).
- Refusing to violate the trust others have extended to us.

Perhaps more than any other mind-set, the integrity mind-set has the greatest potential to inspire trust.

## Mind-Set 6: Professionals Aspire to Be Masters of Their Emotions, Not Enslaved by Them

Mastery of one's emotions produces three especially important byproducts. Each is essential in inspiring trust in others:

- Professionals are respecting when it's difficult to be respectful.
- Professionals maintain their objectivity and keep their wits about them.
- Professionals manage their ego and resist the urge for immediate gratification.

Let's be clear, emotions aren't bad. After all, our emotions "wind us up and make us go." Trust is an emotion. Trust is a good emotion. Trust is emotional glue.

### Emotional Consistency Is Important

Some would have you believe that professionals should be dispassionate. Please disregard that notion. The passion you have for your work, your values, your ideas and your people is wonderful. Keep these emotions alive. Feed them. But keep in mind that emotional consistency is important. People distrust those who exhibit emotional extremes.

As author C. Terry Warner noted, "One sign of the immature mind is the ease and frequency it feels offended." Emotions, as we have learned through sad experience, can trip us up and make smart people dumb.

Here are two important points: (1) Each of us is responsible for our emotional reactions to experiences and people, and (2) we, alone, are responsible for our external responses to those internal emotional reactions.

### Emotions Are Self-Induced

Events trigger emotions. This is an automatic reaction — or that's what most people believe. But that's not really the way it works. Rather, emotions are determined by what we think about an event, not by the event itself. In other words, our interpretation of an event ultimately becomes the precursor to the emotion we experience. Simply put: Emotions are self-induced.

Thus, to master one's emotions is to master one's constructive thinking. As renowned psychologist Seymour Epstein said, "It is one thing to suppress the expression of an unwanted emotion or impulse and quite another not to have the emotion or impulse in the first place." Constructive thinking enables that level of mastery! This is what enables especially effective leaders to remain calm in a crisis while others are swept up in the moment.

## Mind-Set 7: Professionals Aspire to Reveal Value in Others

Mind-set 7 is all about aspiring to reveal value in others. The word *aspire* is especially important and illustrative in understanding this particular mind-set. Aspire suggests intent, priority and, most importantly, proactivity. For those who possess this mind-set, what they do for people is not an afterthought, it's a long-term investment in people. Professionals with this mind-set find great pleasure in the growth and success of others. They're comfortable in their own skin. They aren't threatened by another's success.

Professionals who hold this mind-set:

- Readily extend trust.
- Recognize the value other professionals bring to the table.
- Aspire to lift others through their demeanor and actions.

The genesis of this mind-set can sometimes be traced to one's philosophy of life, sometimes to purely practical reasons and sometimes to altruistic values based on idealism. Or perhaps a combination of these. Regardless of

the reason, Mind-set 7 has an undeniably positive impact on the recipient because it builds confidence and inspires trust.

## PART III: UPGRADING THE CULTURE

## Your Competitive Advantage Is Hiding in Plain Sight

Understanding the importance of trust is one thing; building it is quite another. Build professionals and, by default, you build trust. Trust is the one thing you must get right in order to achieve competitive advantage.

Culture is learned. The trick for leaders is to shape the environment in a way that is stimulating. Since people, especially professionals, motivate themselves, it's imperative that a leader creates the right environment, assignments, opportunities and sanctions for professionals to motivate themselves to get the job done. Leaders *can* shape their organization's DNA. David Lawrence, CEO of Kaiser Permanente, observed, "The winners do it less wrong."

### Make Professional Standards the Foundation

Your ideal culture will be the one that delivers the results your organization demands. Regardless of the form your culture takes, it's imperative that its foundation is based on professional standards. Former Harvard Business School Professor David Maister said, "It is easier to find the discipline and motivation to behave professionally if everyone around you is doing the same." But not only does a culture of professionals provide superior competitive advantage, it uplifts and motivates more than any other culture.

While creating a professional environment is no easy task, it raises the bar and expectations. And great expectations are evidence of great respect, which is not lost on professionals. Given the never-ending waves of retirements in the years ahead, and the cultural teaching that goes with them, there's no better time than now to get the lesson plans right.

## Professional Ideals: The Centerpiece of Success

Here are three things to consider implementing that constitute a digest of how to more effectively integrate professional values into your organization:

- **Start with Yourself.** The laws of credibility demand that we walk our talk. This prompts a thorough look in the mirror. Realize that this is not about leading others; it's about leading yourself.
- **Leverage People's Natural Motivations.** Despite the apparent costs, people willingly embrace the mantle that comes with being a professional. It proves to be a free and often untapped source of motivation.
- **Be Persistent.** People are proud to associate with an organization they deem professional. Given the opportunity, they will welcome the prospect to make it so.

### Build Your Culture

The priorities that are of the utmost importance to the leaders of virtually any organization are all driven by the degree of professionalism achieved by leaders, managers and employees. The higher the degree of professionalism, the better the attainment of priorities, all of which drives better results. This is the underpinning of my advice to every leader: Build your culture around professional ideals.

This is especially important because culture is to an organization what character is to an individual. And organizations whose culture encourages members to practice the seven professional mind-sets will have a competitive advantage over those who don't.

Clearly, leadership holds the biggest lever of all when it comes to driving professional ideals deep into an organization's culture.

The hope is that more people will begin to see themselves as professionals and start taking advantage of their many opportunities. Of course, they need to live up to the ideals associated with being a professional. But as they do, they will begin their own transformation and gain tremendous personal power.

The second hope is that leaders will embrace these professional ideals as the centerpiece of their cultures and instill the seven mind-sets in their people. It's in their interests to do so. An unprofessional environment repulses, frustrates and dispirits, but a professional environment attracts, challenges and uplifts.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Power of Professionalism*, you'll also like:

1. ***Executive Presence* by Harrison Monarth.** Monarth reveals how highly influential people leverage the power of perception in their favor.
2. ***Great Work, Great Career* by Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo.** The most respected business thinker of our time, Dr. Stephen R. Covey, and change consultant Jennifer Colosimo offer a complete handbook for anyone seeking to build a truly great career.
3. ***The Truth About Leadership* by James Kouzes and Barry Posner.** Kouzes and Posner share 10 time-tested fundamental truths about leadership and becoming an effective leader.

· Book 20 of 269 ·

# 35-30 What Keeps Leaders Up At Night

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# Brief

## Make a Bigger Impact by Saying Less




by Joseph McCormack

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The only way to survive in business today is to be a lean communicator. Busy executives expect you to respect and manage their time more effectively than ever. You need to do the groundwork to make your message tight and to the point. The problem is most people don't have the know-how or verbal discipline to do the up-front groundwork and get to the point. As a result, they waste precious opportunities with decision-makers and get too comfortable and verbally sloppy with co-workers and long-time clients.

*Brief* is a step-by-step approach to getting to the point quickly and ensuring that your message is delivered with maximum impact. Author and senior marketing executive Joseph McCormack tackles the challenges of inattention, interruptions and impatience that every professional faces. His proven B.R.I.E.F. approach, which stands for Background, Relevance, Information, Ending and Follow up, helps simplify and clarify complex communication.

*Brief* will help you summarize lengthy information, tell a short story, harness the power of infographics and videos, and turn monologue presentations into controlled conversations. Long story short: *Brief* will help you gain the muscle you need to eliminate wasteful words and stand out from the rest.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The forces demanding our attention and making brevity more important than ever.
- The Seven Capital Sins that prevent clear, simple communication.
- How to use BRIEF maps, narratives and visual media to make your message more succinct and compelling.
- How to apply BRIEF principles to every message, from simple progress updates to company victories.

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# PART I: HEIGHTENED AWARENESS IN A WORLD BEGGING FOR BRIEF

## Why Brevity Is Vital

Today's world is on information overload, and there isn't enough time to sift through all the messages. If you can't capture people's attention and deliver your message with brevity, you'll lose them. Smart people present to busy people, who are constantly flooded with information, are regularly interrupted, are easily distracted and often grow impatient. When they don't get the clarity they need quickly, they check out. You know you have terrific ideas to pitch and important information to share. So how do you get the other person to listen to it?

The modern, multitasking mind is a barrier — and brevity is the key to entry. When you think you have an hour and you wait to deliver the good stuff until the end, you're too late. You already lost your audience in the first few minutes. But if you capture their attention and manage it right away, none of these challenging circumstances will affect your presentation. You have to get to the point in five minutes, not 50. A master of brevity says less and gets more done.

### BRIEF Balance: The Harmony of Clear, Concise and Compelling

To be brief doesn't just mean being concise. Your responsibility is to balance how long it takes to convey a message well enough to cause a person to act on it. That's the harmony of brevity when it's striking the right chords. There's a tendency to think brevity is pushing for less and runs the risk of being superficial and lacking substance.

Brevity starts with deep expertise. Only with thorough knowledge can you accurately make a summary. Being brief can demonstrate how you've gone through that learning experience. The road to brevity, then, requires hard work and lots of time. Doing all the digging and analysis on your own time saves the members of your audience from doing the labor themselves.

## Mindful of Mind-filled-ness

People can think clearly when they are safe on land. When they are drowning, however, there is only one thing on their mind: finding a life preserver. The new brutal reality is that people are drowning in information. It floods them everywhere they go.

Executives today wake up in the morning and immediately grab their smartphones to check texts, email, updates, sports, stocks and news. On the commute into the office, they make calls and send and receive a dozen emails, all the while trying to "relax" by listening to music. They get to work to face meeting requests, more emails, funny YouTube videos, the company newsletter and a few voicemails, and then they jump onto the corporate portal. And the day hasn't even started yet.

By the time you step into the picture, their attention is severely taxed. Although you may get a head nod every once in a while, that doesn't mean you've broken through. They're just being nice. You need to understand your enemies to defeat them. These four forces are constantly playing against you:

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

- **Information inundation:** an unending flood of words, images, sounds and social media.
- **Inattention:** an inability to stay focused on one item for more than 10 seconds.
- **Interruptions:** a steady stream of problems competing for time and consideration.
- **Impatience:** a growing intolerance for results.

### What Does It All Mean?

These days, it's no longer possible to get by on the merit of your idea, title or allotted time. You have to put it in a smaller package and make it easier to consume and digest. You must boil it down and get to the point quickly, or be forgotten. Get ready — it's a whole new world. If you are used to preparing a seven-course meal, get ready to serve tapas. Lean communication is your new advantage.

## Why You Struggle with Brevity: The Seven Capital Sins

Why can't we simply add "being succinct" to our tool belt, alongside punctuality and neat handwriting? There is no single reason why people find it hard to be brief. Love of talking seems to be the logical front-runner, but in reality, it is among a short list of seven key contributors that can be deadly if left unchecked.

**1. Cowardice:** You hide behind meaningless words and don't have the guts to be clear and take a stand. Your leadership team doesn't know what to do with your assessment and guidance and subconsciously starts questioning your leadership ability.

**2. Confidence:** You are a know-it-all and, to everyone's dismay, cannot restrain yourself from explaining every painful detail. Nobody likes to talk to you because once you start, there is little they can do to stop you.

**3. Callousness:** You are selfish and don't respect people's time. Even though you are in a hurry when people speak to you, time stands still when you have the floor. If people see that you don't respect their time, they'll stop respecting you.

**4. Comfort:** You let yourself get loose and wordy with people who know you. You have a double standard: you're succinct with important people, yet long-winded with those you know well. You should treat everyone the same way; they are busy and begging you to be brief.

**5. Confusion:** You choose to think out loud when it is still not clear to you what you are thinking — which is a big mistake. Even though your idea is still developing and in lots of pieces, people will make judgments about you and your abilities.

**6. Complication:** You firmly believe that there are some things too complex to be simplified — even though the world highly values people who can simplify difficult concepts. When they don't get it, they lose patience and trust.

**7. Carelessness:** You are often verbally sloppy and let your mind and message get mixed up, leaving people guessing and frustrated.

Consider this list to be a personal checklist of what you need to work on to become a lean communicator and a master of brevity.

# PART II: HOW TO GAIN DISCIPLINE TO BE CLEAR AND CONCISE

## Mental Muscle Memory to Master Brevity

To learn brevity, you need a plan of attack — details on *how* you're going to change. Four proven approaches can be used alone or together to create *mental muscle memory*, that is, habits we should adopt and never abandon because they make us better professionals. The approach looks something like this:

- **Map it:** BRIEF Maps are used to condense and trim volumes of information.
- **Tell it:** Narrative storytelling is used to explain in a way that's clear, concise and compelling.
- **Talk it.** TALC Tracks (talk, active listening, converse) turn monologues into controlled conversations.
- **Show it:** Visuals attract attention and capture imagination.

Each of these helps you manage people's mind-filledness and keeps them focused and on track.

## Map It: From Mind Mapping to BRIEF Maps

Professionals seem to think they can outgrow outlines. Although it's a common requirement in school, people abandon them as they get older. This is especially true — surprisingly — when preparing for important communication, whether it's a big pitch, meeting, progress report or email correspondence. There's no outline to be seen.

It's a huge mistake to make, especially when you consider the vast amount of information you have to handle, distill and disseminate in these situations. Five immediate benefits to outlining are they keep you prepared, organized, clear, contextual and confident.

The practice of mind mapping — or visual outlining — is spreading steadily through the business world. Its adoption makes sense, since all the ingredients that make this method so attractive are present nowadays: a widespread adoption of software, broad use of whiteboards, growing impatience with linear learning, and a strong preference for visual presentations.

Mind mapping software providers like Mindjet are giving individuals a simpler and more powerful tool to wrestle with information overload and put order to chaos. What makes software like Mindjet — and even free, toned-down tools like Bubbl.us — so appealing is that they're highly visual, logical and intuitive to use and share.

### BRIEF Maps: A Practical Tool for Delivering Brevity

A specific type of mind map — a BRIEF Map — improves communication by simplifying complex messages into a one-page visual outline. BRIEF Maps can outline progress reports, capture meeting summaries and synthesize strategies. They can articulate a corporate vision, isolate a key aspect of a new product, or simplify a complex initiative or issue that could potentially take a long time to understand. The focal point or headline of your communication is called the BRIEF Box; that is step 1. From there every BRIEF Map is organized the following way:

**B:** Background or beginning
**R:** Reason or relevance
**I:** Key information
**E:** Intended ending
**F:** Expected follow-up questions

Brevity is all about preparation and preassembly. When you successfully prepare to deliver important messages, you are confident that you've already thought through the key information your audience needs. You're giving people a preconstructed message. A BRIEF Map is a visual outlining tool that prepares you to be succinct.

## Tell It: The Role of Narratives

It can be frustrating for people to visit a company's website, read it and leave without knowing what the company does. And that happens all too often — not just online but in meetings, presentations and conferences. Businesspeople talk but *say* nothing.

Thankfully, organizations are beginning to notice that telling stories is a strategic way to manage people's attention. It's not only an acceptable business practice these days; it's the key to establishing a powerful, common and lasting understanding. Yet how many companies tell a good story? Most are eminently forgettable, usually because they all sound the same.

### Think About Your Audience: Journalism 2.0

You're not a journalist, and you don't think like one — but you should. Anybody who regularly communicates important information and wants to get and hold people's attention can benefit from a crash course in journalism. Key considerations of a great story include a strong headline, compelling lead paragraph, clear sense of conflict, personal voice, consistent narrative thread, logical sequence of events, character development and a powerful conclusion. And it must make sense, have a point and come to a resolution.

Keep stories short and to the point. We're not talking about "Once upon a time" here. We're talking about a corporate narrative that explains why, how, who, when, where and so what. These stories must tackle and decode business issues, strategic decisions, new trends and complex market dynamics — while making all of it personal and intelligible. People are buried in corporate-speak, but you can help them by embracing narrative storytelling to be clear, concise and compelling.

## Talk It: Controlled Conversations and TALC Tracks

To be brief means to avoid endless monologues and to start having conversations with a rhythm, a purpose and a point. Real brevity invites and encourages really good, meaningful, *controlled* conversations, meaning two people talking willingly — and enjoying it — but not feeling the conversation has to last forever to be worthwhile.

A controlled conversation is a disciplined conversation. What you're talking about matters to the person you're talking to, and your active listening tells you what matters to that person. You have the other person's interest and assent. Controlled conversations make you feel free to stop at any time and not risk alienating anybody or feeling awkward.

### TALC Tracks: A Structure for Balance and Brevity

TALC Tracks — talk, active listening, converse — are a tactic for organizing almost any exchange in a powerful way to keep it brief and memorable. The TALC approach is not a formula; it is an adjustable method that helps you track the ideas your conversation partner shares and

project interesting paths for the conversation to follow. It doesn't just call on the techniques of mapping or storytelling; it's about having a balanced, controlled conversation. Let's look at each part in detail.

- **T, or talk:** Somebody starts talking. Let that person say what he or she is going to say. Don't worry if it lasts one minute or five; just let the person talk.
- **AL, or actively listen:** Closely listen to what the other person is saying with interest the entire time. Listen for key words, names, dates and even a basic narrative thread.
- **C, or converse.** When a natural pause comes, jump in and comment, question or even bridge to a different topic that's related to what's being said. Contribute to building *one* conversation.

The concept of the controlled conversation and TALC Tracks means that you'll be prepared for conflict or agreement. You can keep a conversation on point and represent your agenda effectively while respecting what someone else has to say. Controlled conversation isn't about controlling *the conversation* as much as it is controlling *yourself* in the conversation. That is what will make you an effective communicator.

## Show It: Powerful Ways to Make a Picture Exceed a Thousand Words

We are transitioning from a text-based world to a visual one. Screens and interactive media pervade all parts of our lives. Screens are in our homes, our classrooms, our elevators, even our bathrooms. They have replaced phones, books, newspapers, billboards and printed menus.

Studies show that whereas we remember only 10 percent of what we hear and 30 percent of what we read, we remember a whopping 80 percent of what we see. There is an enormous opportunity for visual communication to increase the effectiveness and brevity of what we communicate. The days of text-heavy news pages are over. For *all* industries, communicating effectively today requires communicating visually.

### Connect an Image with Your Story

Infographic designers need to first understand the essential point of what they are trying to communicate. This is the easy part. The hard part is finding a correlating visual that explains the story with images. Here are some easy ways to jump into the visual world: Google images that relate to your presentation; draw during your presentations; find short videos online; make short videos of your own; use a whiteboard to illustrate; bring in small items for show-and-tell lessons; look into prezi.com for a different kind of presentation; show stunning photography instead of words; substitute icons for frequently used words.

### The Age of YouTube and Business

Video storytelling is becoming a more prominent way not only to educate and market but also to entertain and engage audiences. Companies around the world are creating their own YouTube or Vimeo channels to tell their story visually. But as with any form of communication, when you create a video, you must be highly sensitive to your audience. You want to keep videos short. The average video on YouTube is about three to five minutes; after that amount of time, people start to lose interest and click away. Also, be mindful of the time *and* the quality. If your videos have an amateurish feel, you will lose your audience immediately. You want to think more like a broadcaster and less like a marketer.

## PART III: GAINING THE DECISIVENESS TO KNOW WHEN AND WHERE TO BE BRIEF

## Meeting You Halfway

When you're in a meeting, you're not working. You're stuck in a conference room, and all your productivity has screeched to a halt. But how can brevity break the bonds of wasteful meetings? Let's look at a few easy targets we can hit to make a dent:

**Meeting Villain #1:** Time. Meetings often waste time because people schedule *too much* time for them. Trim your agenda to what's necessary. If you need to talk about one item for only seven minutes, don't allocate 10. Although three extra minutes might not seem like much, this habit will accumulate hours of lost time. Giving yourself more than you need is like throwing valuable minutes down the garbage chute.

**Meeting Villain #2:** Type. There is very little creativity when it comes to meeting design. From the agenda to the way the room is set up, organizers often end up repeating old, tired habits. But to get more done, you need to find innovative ways for attendees to interact. Design meetings to be succinct and to succeed. One approach is to stand in huddle formation to indicate you won't be there for long. It's a novel method that removes the comfort of the common meeting. Another effective way to change up meeting design is eliminating PowerPoint altogether. Speakers can use video, illustrations, or even have their comments

drawn in real time by meeting illustrators.

**Meeting Villain #3: Tyrants.** A widespread brevity killer in meetings is the *tyrant* — the dominant voice that stifles the chance for conversation. This type A personality does most of the talking because of rank, personality or position in the company. Three polite ways to offset the overbearing voice include assigning active listeners (appoint someone to moderate a more balanced meeting), use a talking stick (whoever has the stick can speak, while everyone else must listen), designate time slots (give everyone a limited time to talk).

## Leaving a Smaller Digital Imprint

It's official: we're all wired. Everyone's glued to his or her electronic devices — in airports; at the office; walking between meetings; before, during and after work; even sneaking it at home. A 2013 study on Internet trends by Mary Meeker and Liang Yu reports that people check their smartphones an average of 150 times a day.

So what are the dos and don'ts of brevity in the digital age? You need to be economical with every word, or you'll be chalked up as just another source of white noise. The last thing people want to read are paragraph-long status updates. You're doubtlessly connected to people who are serial online updaters, begging for constant attention, yet unwittingly screaming to be passed over. Don't imitate their bad habits.

This new, long-winded abuse of power can quickly be career limiting — because these individuals are training the world to tune them out. They may have good intentions, but they aren't sensitive to being brief. They fail to appreciate that everything they post, share or send must be valuable, pertinent and to the point.

### Social Media Squeeze

Social media is an arena where masters of brevity thrive. Your content can reach an unlimited audience, so make sure it is finely tuned to meet customers' expectations of brevity. According to Adam Brown, corporate social media pioneer, "the most effective social media posts are around 80 characters." From blogs to microblogs to Twitter, Instagram and beyond, there has been a growing emphasis to make communication easier and short to produce and share content online.

But the level of energy and commitment needed to create quality social media cannot be ignored. Brown states, "Most people consume social media on their mobile devices. It's very likely the person is on the move — on the subway, waiting to pick up their kids. The bottom line is, they're doing something else. So you've got to get those nuggets of wisdom or conversation or storytelling briefer and more succinct."

## Presenting a Briefer Case

If the mere mention of the word *presentations* immediately triggers what your PowerPoint is going to include, then you need to think again. Your mind should instead leap to your audience's needs and wants. However, few executives feel comfortable without the crutch of their slides when left standing alone in front of a room of people. Unfortunately, the people in your audience don't care. They have even more on their minds and will check out mentally or grab their smartphones or tablets if you don't get to the point. Thankfully, we are seeing some relief on the horizon. New presentation formats from conferences like TED limit the presenters to no more than 18 minutes and dictate strict presenter guidelines.

### Training as a TED Talk

TED is a set of global conferences focused on technology, entertainment and design. TED presentations showcase videos of the best, most inspiring ideas in 18 minutes or less. TED speakers and employees always use plain, short words; they know that being brief honors their audience's time and attention. Their mission is simple — "ideas worth sharing." And while your idea might be worthy, it's the sharing part that gets tricky.

TED website editor Emily McManus explains that you need to invest time in honing your presentation's structure and content. It's all about timing the material to guide the audience through the necessary premises. "By five minutes in, you need to get into the middle arc of your story," McManus said. "The best thing you can do if you're trying to compress is *not* try to tell the entire story of your entire field in 15 minutes. Rather, you want to give an intriguing single story."

You can use official TED standards to make your presentation TED Talk-worthy. If you can't meet that challenge, then it's time to go back to the drawing board. For your next PowerPoint presentation, cut the number of slides in half. Then do it again. And again. Even better, present *without* slides. If people want or need more information, they'll come to you. As long as you value their time, they will see you as a treasured, objective source of information.

## Trimming Your Sales (Pitch)

Everyone is in the business of buying and selling ideas. And whatever side of the table you've sat on — either as the seller or buyer — you've seen what both great *and* terrible look like when it comes to brevity. Regardless of which end you're on, people should feel balance, respect and restraint throughout the buying and selling process. Executive Elie Maalouf knows that even if you have all the right experience and recommendations, you still need to convince the board during your presentation. Those critical moments are the time to tailor your material to the audience.

This is also true for sales presentations. Don't waste time introducing yourself to clients who already have access to basic information. It's your job to *convince* them why your recommendation should merit their support. Sharing only new and meaningful information will transform your presentation into a conversation. Timing is crucial in these situations. As Maalouf explains, "If you don't make an impression that you have something different and valuable in the first five or 10 minutes, the chances of the next 20 minutes being of use to you are slim — because people are going to fault that impression very early."

Remember, simple and clear doesn't mean trivial and juvenile. Relieve your audience by delivering the right information clearly and at a pace that doesn't cause people to fall behind. "Brevity should not be conflated or confused with lack of information," Maalouf warns. "Give your audience brevity and assurance." Imagine that you're in an office elevator with a potential customer. Can you deliver your pitch in the time it takes to get to your floor? Practice giving it in two minutes. Don't make the mistake of assuming that the more you say, the more prepared you will sound. Busy executives will cut you off or tune you out.

## Help Wanted: Master of Brevity

Even the most well-prepared and accomplished professionals go into job interviews nervous and self-conscious. Brevity plays a key role during an interview. It helps you stand out clearly from the others, ask good questions and listen. When people get nervous, they start talking — a lot. An interview is a time for control, discipline and awareness. Don't pour it on. Make a positive impression in the first five minutes. Stay in the moment, and be in the conversation. You may be the best candidate in the world on paper. But if you're not careful in person, you can flush away everything that you've worked for.

Good interviews live the principles of BRIEF. You are short and to the point. You make it easy for your potential employer to understand who you are, where you've come from, and why you've been successful. People understand that you and your resume are the same.

### Let Others Lead the Conversation

Doug Hinderer, head of human resources at the National Association of Realtors (NAR), observes, "The most common mistake a candidate makes in an interview is talking too much." According to Doug, it's just a matter of time until an undisciplined interviewee either says something stupid or reveals too much information. "When I talk to people about how to interview for a job, I tell them to look at it like a tennis match. The interviewer is going to serve up a question. Respond to it, be done with it, and wait for the next question."

*For the candidate:* Be prepared; create a BRIEF map that quickly explains why you're qualified; tell a story, and have a few snapshots of successes that you can share; keep it conversational; listen closely; ask good questions, and make sure it's a balanced dialogue.

*For the interviewer:* Listen closely; sandwich the better questions; put the meat of the interview into the middle so you're more comfortable and you are not rushing at the end; don't sell; if you believe the candidate is strong, don't start hyping the benefits of the opportunity.

## I've Got Some Good News

Certainly brevity applies to bad news, but why do we have to exercise brevity when sharing good news? Everybody loves to hear something positive. But consider that your role is to deliver the headline and let it sink in, not pile it on. Those moments when you share a success story or an accomplishment need to put you and your company in a positive light. Especially in these instances, discipline and choice details give people a good impression without making them feel as though you're bragging or overconfident. It's time for clarity and humility.

### Speak the Language of Success

International marketing strategist David Meerman Scott has redefined how businesses share their success stories. "The new rules of marketing and PR are to create great content on the Web and that serves to generate attention," Scott said. Unfortunately, for most businesses, telling the stories of their success gets lost in translation. They choose to speak an unintelligible language that is more confusing than

compelling. "It tends to be just the same words that everybody else uses, to the point that words like 'innovative' or 'cutting-edge' are just completely meaningless," Scott said.

Being creative with your content is vital, yet Scott aptly warns against letting your ideas wander too far from the main point. Analogies can help simplify your idea — *if* they accurately reflect your core message. Scott has angled the language at technology company HubSpot to talk directly to the company's target audience. This keeps their brief message from getting lost in unfamiliar terms or turns of phrase. "They're communicating like human beings — because when human beings have a conversation, they don't use that impressive, overused language."

## And the Bad News Is …

If it's hard to give someone bad news, don't make it harder by dragging it out. Nobody wants to be the bearer of bad news — whether telling your boss the project is going to be late, telling your significant other you've bounced a check, sharing negative feedback from your most important client, or having the unfortunate responsibility of having to fire somebody.

In all of these moments, taking the time to prepare and get to the core of the issue quickly will make the pill easier to swallow. Remember, there's almost always a silver lining. No matter how dire the situation looks, we're never really doomed. Yet, belaboring a point will make what's painful unbearable.

### Give It To Them Straight

If you have the unfortunate responsibility to fire someone, deliver the bad news in a kind, humane but firm way. You have to talk about the details, but it's not a time to get into a long discussion that could lead to a stressful, unnecessary dispute. Consider these three things:

- Avoid lengthy discussions.
- Keep it short. Realize that the person will need time to process after you've delivered the bad news; don't try to have the person understand on the spot.
- Doors close all the time. Help those who hear bad news recognize the moment and then focus their energy on rebuilding.

Delivering bad news is a matter of mastering and minimizing a moment. It's about having integrity. Being brief is your best bet to being honest.

## Got-a-Minute Updates

When someone asks you, "How's it going?" be ready to give a straight answer. Everyone needs to give superiors updates. It's a part of our daily reality. Typically, we give these progress reports on the go. People stop by the office, shoot off an email, bump into each other in the hallway, or pick up the phone and call. These are moments when it's vital to paint a clear picture.

If you are giving people progress reports, being brief requires that you give them *what they are looking for* — not all of the other details and information they really don't care about. They want to know about what *result* you are driving. Some people refer to this as the say-do ratio: the relationship between what you say and what you do. When it comes to progress reports, it's better for you to get to the point. Just say, "This is what I'm doing; this is what I am getting done." Then, you have the results speak for themselves.

### The Most Important Question: Why Am I Here?

For the past several years, Jim Metcalf, CEO of USG Corporation, has required all his direct reports to state the purpose of each meeting up front. Metcalf realized that his direct reports were draining his valuable time because they simply wanted to update him, not get a decision from him. He prefers short meetings, and if he can get them, short summaries and no meeting at all. Metcalf asks the same follow-up question at every meeting. "Why do you need me here?" That direct, no-nonsense approach sends a clear signal: brevity is part of the business.

In a world where we are inundated with information and highly inattentive, we have very small windows of time to make an impact, with no margin for error. The impact of BRIEF starts here with you when it's lived every day. Be better. Be brief.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Brief* you'll also like:

1. ***How to Say Anything to Anyone* by Shari Harley.** Learn how to tell people when you're frustrated in a way that resonates, take action on your ideas and feelings, and get honest feedback on your performance.

2. ***The Art of Explanation* by Lee LeFever.** LeFever provides a guide to helping audiences fall in love with your ideas, products or services through better explanations in any medium.

3. ***Words that Work* by Dr. Frank I. Luntz.** Learn that it's not always what you say, but how you say it. Luntz offers sound advice on how to tactically use words and phrases to get what you want in life.

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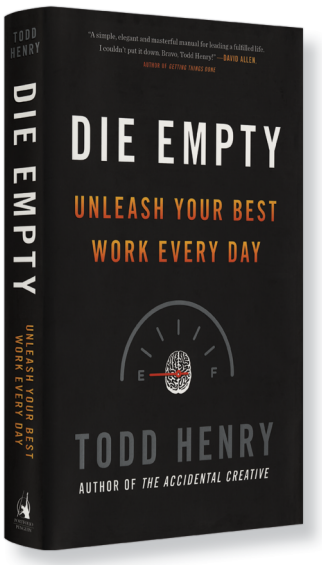
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Career & Self-Development

# Die Empty

## Unleash Your Best Work Every Day




by Todd Henry

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Most of us live with the stubborn idea that we'll always have tomorrow to do our most important and valuable work. We fill our days with frantic activity, bouncing from task to task, scrambling to make deadlines and chase the next promotion. But by the end of each day we're often left asking ourselves, "Does the work I did today really matter?" We feel the ticking of the clock, but we're stuck in first gear, unsure of the path forward and without a road map to guide us.

*Die Empty* is a tool for people who aren't willing to put off their most important work for another day. Author Todd Henry explains the forces that keep us in stagnation and introduces a process for instilling consistent practices into your life that will keep you on a true and steady course.

It's not about slaving over a project or living on a whim — it's about embracing the idea that time is finite and making the unique contribution to the world that only you can make. Henry shows how to cultivate the mindset and the methods you need to sustain your enthusiasm, push through mental barriers, and unleash your best work each day.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to find your sweet spot and balance the three kinds of work to become a developer.
- How to recognize and avoid the Seven Deadly Sins of Mediocrity.
- How to define your battles and learn to be fiercely curious so you can find your voice.
- The five areas of conversation that bring better clarity, focus and trust to the team.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **DIE EMPTY**

**by Todd Henry**

**The author:** Todd Henry is the founder and CEO of Accidental Creative, a consultancy that helps organizations generate brilliant ideas. He is the author of *The Accidental Creative* and runs a top business podcast of the same name. He is a sought-after speaker, consultant, and coach.

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## Die Empty

We have only a certain amount of time available to us, and how we choose to spend our days is significant. There are things we would like to do and experiences we would like to have before we die, many of which are desires we've suppressed for months or even years. We feel the ticking of the clock and the accompanying sense that we may be missing our opportunity to make a contribution to the world. However, we often ignore these impulses as a result of the relentless pragmatics of life and work.

How do you set in motion a course of action that will allow you to unleash your best, most valuable work while you still can? The marketplace is filled with platitudes about living a life of fulfillment, landing your dream job, and discovering your purpose, but when you are in the midst of the fray, it can feel futile to think about anything other than hitting your deadlines and chasing the next promotion. The only way to avoid this scenario is to instill consistent practices into your life that keep you on a true and steady course.

### Don't Die Full of Your Best Work

You've probably heard, "No one ever lay on their deathbed wishing for another day of work." Yet, a great many people do regret not having treated their life with more purpose and would give anything to have one more chance to approach it with the kind of intention and conviction that imminent death makes palpable.

Work encompasses much more than just how we make a living. Any value we create that requires us to spend our time, focus and energy — whether in the context of occupation, relationships or parenting — is *work*. Humans are wired to find satisfaction by adding value through toil. Thus, for centuries work has been a deeply ingrained part of our identity and our understanding of our place in the world.

The phrase "die empty" could easily be misunderstood to mean spending every ounce of yourself on your career. In fact, it means that you possess a one-of-a-kind combination of passions, skills and experiences; there is something you bring to your work that no one else could. If you relinquish that power, then it will never see the light of day, and you will always wonder "what if?" The price of regret is incalculable.

### Your Sweet Spot

In baseball, there is a place on the bat called the "sweet spot," the best part with which to strike the ball. It will send the ball soaring a lot farther than if you hit it even a few fractions of an inch off the mark with the same effort. Similarly, you have a "sweet spot" in your life by which you will add the most unique value through your efforts.

These opportunities will only become clear over time as you act. You have to try different things and devote yourself to developing your skills and intuition before you will begin to see noticeable patterns and understand your unique value. The one overriding goal is to bring a newfound clarity and sense of urgency to how you approach your work on a daily basis and over your lifetime. Patience is required. This is a long-arc game, but it must begin now.

## Your Contribution

When you're gone, your work will stand as the single biggest testament to who you were and what you

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believed. Engaging in deeply gratifying work does not require you to check out of life, pack your bags, and head off on a pilgrimage. It simply requires consistent, focused efforts to cultivate your instincts and skills and make measured progress on your goals.

As you consider your current body of work and the sum of the value you've created, is it reflective of what you truly care about? Because we are biologically hardwired to form habits around rewarding activity, when we accomplish a goal or taste the sweet fruit of success, it's tempting to keep pushing the same levers over and over again. However, this approach is often a fast track to mediocrity. The key to long-term success is a willingness to disrupt your own comfort for the sake of continued growth.

### The Three Kinds of Work

Even though work sometimes feels like one massive, melded blend of tasks, conversations and meetings, it can be parsed into three different forms: Mapping, Making, and Meshing. To truly unleash your full capability and to ultimately find your sweet spot of contribution, you must engage in all three.

**Mapping** is planning, plotting your objectives and setting priorities. You often map instinctually, as when you make a list of tasks to accomplish or block off time on the calendar.

**Making** is actually *doing* the work. It is creating value of any kind, including executing tasks, making sales calls, designing, writing, engaging with your direct reports, and tackling your objectives.

**Meshing** involves the "work between the work" that actually makes you effective. It's composed of activities that stretch and grow you, such as acquiring new skills, reinforcing or enhancing knowledge or cultivating your curiosity.

In the hustle of daily life, it's easy to overlook Meshing and focus mostly on Mapping and Making, largely because they provide a more immediate payoff. Depending on how disciplined you are about engaging in the three types of work, there are four profiles you can fall into: Developer, Driver, Drifter, Dreamer.

**Mapping + Making + Meshing = Developer.** The Developer is constantly weaving together available resources and opportunities to create value. He works with urgency and diligence, making plans and then executing them, learning from his action and then redirecting as needed. He knows that opportunities are valuable only if he is prepared to take advantage of them. If you want to die empty of regret, you must focus on becoming a Developer.

**Mapping + Making – Meshing = Driver.** The Driver is extremely focused on results and spends most of his time planning and checking tasks off lists. He is obsessed with today's results but does little to increase his platform for future effectiveness. The Driver typically fails to unleash his full potential or find his sweet spot.

**Mapping + Meshing – Mapping = Drifter.** The Drifter frequently bounces from project to project and goes wherever his latest whim carries him. Because of his failure to map effectively, the Drifter fails to follow through on many of his ideas and projects.

**Meshing + Mapping – Making = Dreamer.** The Dreamer is a talker, but he rarely accomplishes much. He can be effective when he wants to but quickly loses interest and rarely finishes what he starts because he's always moving on to the next great thing.

There is nothing inherently wrong with any of the types in moderation, as long as you are aware of how they have the potential to consume your work. To truly put yourself in the best possible position to unleash your best work, you must adopt a Developer mindset, meaning that you are disciplined about Mapping, Making and Meshing so that you leverage all the opportunities and resources at your disposal.

## The Siren Song of Mediocrity

When we start our career or an exciting project, everything is new. We throw ourselves into the work with full vigor, because we know that we need to prove our worth to our manager or clients. However, over time familiarity sets in, and some of the aspects that once seemed new and exciting become predicable and mundane.

It's a cycle that we will go through many times as we take on a new job or assume new responsibilities. As we progress in our career and accumulate more knowledge, there are fewer experiences that instinctively spark our curiosity and challenge us to rise to the occasion. We quickly grow stagnant, relying on our existing skills to perform our work. We've succumbed to mediocrity.

The key to avoiding this slippery slope isn't just to work harder or longer; it's to ensure that you are intentionally disrupting your own work rather than circling the wagons and protecting the ground you've already taken.

### Seven Deadly Sins of Mediocrity

There are several key areas where mediocrity repeatedly creeps in and causes neglect of Mapping, Making and

Meshing, leading to ineffectiveness. These common and destructive slipping points are referred to as the "Seven Deadly Sins of Mediocrity." They are organized alphabetically to make them easier to remember, "A-B-C-D-E-F-G."

**1. Aimlessness.** A general lack of cohesiveness within your day-to-day activities, not a lack of drive to succeed. The key to conquering aimlessness is to concretely define the battles that you need to fight each day in order to make meaningful progress; then focus your efforts on those above all else.

**2. Boredom.** Boredom means your mind has grown weary of the rut you're in and is ready to jump the tracks and try something new. Yet, we often succumb to it and allow it to zap our brain of its creative firepower. The cure for boredom is intentional and applied curiosity.

**3. Comfort.** When comfort becomes the goal of life, we cannibalize future progress for the sake of temporary stability. The key to overcoming the ill effects of a love of comfort is a commitment to continual growth and skill development.

**4. Delusion.** To add the value you're capable of adding, you need to cultivate self-awareness. You must have an accurate sense of your skills, weaknesses and core drivers. Then, you need to orient your daily activity around that self-knowledge so that you are building on a solid foundation rather than on wishful thinking.

**5. Ego.** No matter how successful or skilled you are, you will inevitably fail at many things in your work. For some people, the stigma of failure is simply unbearable. To countermand ego, you must be in a state of continual learning and openness to correction.

**6. Fear.** The key to countermanding fear is to instill a practice of strategic, intentional and purposeful risk-taking in your life in work. Experiment, play, and find your voice through taking small chances to express yourself through your work.

**7. Guardedness.** When life is flush with obligations and pressures, the first thing that often gets the boot is our relationships. When you isolate yourself from other people, you cut yourself off from some of the most valuable opportunities to grow and collaborate. The solution to guardedness is to build a system of checks into your life to help you scan for relational outages, and to remedy them before they become destructive.

Be on the lookout for the Seven Deadly Sins of Mediocrity and eliminate them whenever you can. The best defense is almost always an at-the-ready offense.

## Define Your Battles

Success in emptying yourself of your best work each day depends on your ability to define the right battles, and do the small but critical tasks that will help you progress toward your true objectives rather than just the ones that others expect you to strive for.

Have you ever thought about what's truly important to you? What battle would you be willing to fight anytime for any reason? What triggers your primal instinct to act? Your through line is the theme of your life and work. It's your thesis statement. It's the "delta," or the change, that you wish to see through your efforts. Unfortunately, the complexity of the modern workplace can squelch our sense of mission and cause us to drift. We grow numb to the prompts and cues that once lit a fire inside of us.

Some "calls to arms" that were once vibrant and clear to us can subtly fade over time. Perhaps we are admonished to be more practical, patient and realistic. Over time, we learn the art of compromise. The problem is we often compromise the most valuable thing: the fire that drives our best work.

Identifying a through line around which to devote your focus, time and energy is a journey, not a onetime task. The process requires persistence and a good deal of self-awareness, both of which can be challenging to muster when you are already managing the complexity of expectations, objectives and relationships that comprise an average workday. But if you want to lay your head down each night satisfied with how you spent your day, it's important that you draw the right battle lines and stand on principle in how you engage your work.

### Misguided Passion Can Fuel Aimlessness

The inherent problem with the advice "follow your passion" is that it frames the conversation as if you are the center of the world, or as if a state of joy, bliss or fulfillment is the objective of life. When this is your mindset, you're starting off with the wrong question and will ultimately spend your life chasing after the next buzz when things get dull. The most fulfilled people I've encountered in the marketplace approach their work, in any context, with the question "What can I add?" rather than "What can I get?" They choose worthy battles, then engage in them with everything they have.

### Welcome to the Battle

No army would charge into battle without understanding the battlefront. Yet, many of us do this daily with our work. Priorities are difficult. When you choose one thing

to focus on, you automatically choose not to focus on others. This is why some people fall into aimlessness: They don't like the discomfort of having to say no to very good things that *aren't* the most important things. Remember, you cannot fight on every front. You must choose your battles wisely and win them every time.

Consider these questions to help you establish your battle lines:

- What will you stand for today? What will you refuse to compromise on no matter what? What will define your terms of engagement?
- What do you know you should be doing but have been ignoring? These are things that have been weighing on your mind for a while now and things that you care deeply about, but you've been ignoring them either (a) you fear that you won't have time for them or (b) you haven't defined them enough to know your next steps.
- Where are your "open loops"? These are the unfinished projects, the halfhearted efforts or the unreconciled relationships. These must be either acted upon and made a priority or immediately closed and put aside. You must become good at pruning your projects and commitments so that you have energy available for your most important work.

*To avoid aimlessness, you have to stand for something.* You will ultimately be remembered for the battles you chose to spend your time fighting. Act with urgency and diligence today to define your through line and your battles; then carefully allocate your focus, time and energy on things that matter to you.

## Be Fiercely Curious

All great feats and brilliant accomplishments begin with a question: Why? How? What if? The pursuit of sustained, great work demands a commitment to pursuing the answers to a never-ending series of inquiries. However, in dealing with daily life and work, our curiosity can become worn. We can fall out of touch with our deeper questions and lose the will to ponder. While a curious, questioning mindset may seem inefficient when we're under pressure, it actually makes us more effective in everything we do.

The phrase I use for highly productive but mentally stagnant professionals is "busily bored." They're cranking through a lot of work, and they're doing what they have to do to meet their expectations, but they are bored silly. They no longer find their work stimulating and they're kind of going through the motions.

They're not stretching their mind.

They're not acknowledging their deeper questions.

They're not trying new things.

They're living with unchecked, limiting assumptions.

The saddest part is that when confronted with a topic other than work, they light up with enthusiasm and delight. The problem isn't that they lack the capacity for wonder and interest; it's that they can't seem to apply the same level of curiosity to their work.

To avoid becoming one of the busily bored, you need to stoke the fires of your curiosity by addressing its two forms: specific (diving deep into topics of interest) and diverse (exploring possibilities through purposeful questioning). There are two strategies for doing so: Establish hunting trails, and develop possibility thinking.

### Establish Hunting Trails

If you want to integrate applied curiosity into your work and life, you need to have a system to support that aim. You must establish parcels of structured curiosity in your life, which means setting aside time and giving your self permission to stoke the fire of your curiosity in a way that doesn't interfere with your more urgent work.

Give yourself permission to not know things. Some people see ignorance as a point of failure, but successful people see it as acknowledgment of reality and opportunity for growth. As you go through your day, note things that you don't understand, and rather than shying away from them, turn them into questions to pursue. Keep a list of questions in a place where you'll see them often.

Set aside time on a regular basis to immerse yourself in books, films, magazines and other resources to stoke the fire of your curiosity. Keep a list of resources that strike you as interesting, and set aside time to experience them each day.

As you consider a problem you're trying to solve in your work, how could you develop a prototype that will help you begin to explore it in new ways? Is there something you could build or sketch that would give you a fresh perspective? Are there ways you could play around with the problem, break it apart, and recombine the pieces into something new? You may find that the shift in perspective radically alters your insight into the core issues you're trying to solve.

### Develop Possibility Thinking

A second strategy for developing your curiosity is to leverage possibility thinking, especially in how you engage with your projects. With a little intentional effort at the beginning of the process to define the "edges" of the

problem you're solving, it's possible to get up to speed more quickly, explore more potentially relevant solutions, and leverage your full creative problem-solving skill.

When you have clear boundaries to work within, you can feel more comfortable asking extremely divergent questions and exploring initially irrelevant-seeming possibilities. Structure yields freedom to creatively roam. There are four elements that can help you explore the edges of your problem:

**Aspirations:** Ask yourself what the project is aspiring to become. List three to five words; then use those as a jumping-off point for ideas or new questions to pursue.

**Affinities:** Ask, "What is this problem or project like," or "Can I see any patterns here?" See if you can identify any similarities that can provide you with traction.

**Assumptions:** As you consider your project, ask yourself, "What assumptions might I be making about this?" Spend time intentionally challenging any assumptions you uncover, and use them as a basis for generating new thoughts and ideas.

**Attributes:** What does the problem look, feel and sound like? Once you've listed several attributes, use them as a jumping-off point to generate ideas.

## Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

Growth is about daily, measured and disciplined action. It's about embracing purposeful skill development and pursuing new opportunities that stretch you to step beyond your comfort zone, even when it means venturing boldly into the unknown.

Yes, there are always others who are more qualified to act. Yes, you will certainly be more safe in your comfort zone — for a while. But eventually, this craving for safety will become a suffocating force.

There is always the possibility of failure, but unless we assume that risk, there will also be little chance of great success.

### Step, Sprint, and Stretch

Growth doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of intentional effort and consistent progress. There are three kinds of goals that help you grow: Step, Sprint, and Stretch. A step goal is a very short-arc goal (often daily) that helps you maintain forward progress, even if it's small progress. A sprint goal is a medium-arc goal (a week or two weeks) that causes you to go beyond yourself for a season in order to increase your capacity, and a stretch goal is a long-arc goal that forces you to go far beyond your comfort zone.

For step goals, ask yourself, "What will I do today, no matter what?" Sequence enough step goals in a row, and you will eventually make significant progress. For a sprint goal, consider an intermediate goal that will help you make progress on your stretch goal, and determine what you will have to do each day to accomplish it. Turn the daily increments into step goals.

The important factor when choosing a stretch goal is that it's something you can control and measure. If you can't control it, you can't plan for it. What's important is that you focus on consistent, measurable progress, and always have each kind of goal in your life at all times. You should have a set of step goals you are accomplishing today, which should be helping you accomplish a set of sprint goals over the next few weeks, which should be leading you toward a set of long-term stretch goals.

It's important to be choosy about which goals you pursue and how. You probably already know where you are falling short or playing it safe. *You cannot pursue greatness and comfort at the same time.* Commit today to stepping outside your comfort zone and set some goals to help you get there. In short, grow.

## Know Yourself

The stories we believe about how the world works often play a critical role in helping us interpret the meaning of events. They provide a framework — a *worldview* — through which we filter our experiences. As such, the stories we tell ourselves can be either motivating, contributive forces or limiting, destructive forces as we strive to unleash our best work. It's important that we gain an understanding of not only what those deeply held beliefs are but also how they might be affecting our daily activity.

As much as damaging beliefs can derail you, helpful and strategically chosen narratives can energize you and keep you aligned with what truly matters. You must choose an ethic to guide your choices, then ensure that this ethic is carried out in your actions.

### Establish Your Code of Ethics

Values alone, while important, are inadequate to drive daily action. Instead of falling back on a set of passive values, you must transform them into a code of ethics — a set of operating instructions for your daily activity. This "code of ethics" is a series of words that concretely defines how you will engage in your work. It defines ahead of time how you will make decisions, interact with others, and make choices when things get difficult.

To establish your code of ethics, dedicate a few hours to reflecting on your life and work and how you might want to engage differently. Consider the conclusions you came to when examining the people you admire and while excavating the narratives/assumptions you carry.

Were there any themes that you discovered? What characteristics of your heroes do you wish to emulate? What patterns/narratives/assumptions do you want to break? How would you want others to describe you?

Begin writing words that describe how you'd like to engage in your work. Narrow them down to three or four. Put them someplace you'll see them frequently. It's not about achieving perfection; it's about giving yourself a lens through which to view your work and a starting point for measuring your effectiveness. Your code of ethics will (and should) change over time as your needs evolve.

Strive to know yourself, because once you do, you will be brilliantly positioned to make a valuable and unique contribution.

## Be Confidently Adaptable

Confidence and adaptability prevent an inflated ego from stalling progress on your most important work. While a deep confidence is typically necessary for success, an overinflated ego can cause you to forfeit your best work if you do not feel that you are being appropriately recognized for your efforts. Your ego becomes a problem when it gets in the way of your ability to set aside your personal need for recognition in the face of work. The key counterpoint to ego is adaptability. This means cultivating the willingness to confidently bend to your environment while still maintaining a strong sense of self and purpose. To maintain traction and prevent ego from stalling your progress, you must develop the ability to subvert your egocentric needs for the sake of the work, which in the end is often the best thing for you as well.

Rather than striving for control, we should instead be striving for influence. I can attempt to corral my organization by instilling stringent rules or by requiring that I be a part of every decision, but it is far more beneficial for me to influence the organization to think and act effectively.

### Confidence vs. Overinflated Ego

You should be certifiably and aggressively confident in your abilities and opinions. You should fight to have your work seen and utilized, and you should never bow in the face of pressure to compromise. You must never allow your fear of developing an inflated ego to cause you to shrink back from the important work that's before you. You can't be afraid to confidently draw lines in the sand.

The difference between someone with confidence and a person with an overinflated ego is that the confident person is willing to take a stand on behalf of the work and what they believe is right, whereas the person with the overinflated ego is more concerned with how they will be perceived and how much credit they will receive.

In the end, an overinflated ego is about protection, whereas confidence is about progression. While confidence is essential to performance, it's critical that you not allow your need for an ego boost to usurp your ability to pour yourself fully into your work, even absent the recognition you rightly deserve. It is a tragedy to look back and realize that you failed to engage fully and freely because your ego demanded something more.

## Find Your Voice

We all do lots of activities as a function of our job. We have roles and responsibilities, tasks to check off, and so on. But what do you do when you *work*? What are the things that you look back on after a long day and think, "*That* was great." That work — that you alone are capable of — is your voice. It is the unique combination of passions, skills and experiences with which you alone are capable of approaching your work.

However, many people succumb to the paralyzing forces of fear and choose to stay "close to the middle" or simply do what's expected by others rather than engaging in the small risks necessary to uncover and apply their voice to their work. In doing this, they sadly leave much of their unique contribution unrealized.

You will discover your voice through tiny clues that become apparent over time and as you follow them and apply what you learn to your work.

### Open Your Eyes

Great work results when you stop doing only what you *know* you can do and instead begin pursuing what you believe you *might* be able to do with a little focused effort. Make an inventory of your most important work, and then spend some time considering each project. Are there hunches you have about the direction of these projects that you're ignoring because you're afraid of where they might lead or of what they might cost you? Have you been ignoring any intuitive nudges?

In order to discover and act on your voice, you need to develop the capacity to pay attention to little clues. Don't worry that society tends to celebrate stories of overnight success even when there's no foundation to sustain it. Your best work will emerge with patient attention, time and

strategic action. Start now, but don't rush. Walk slowly, and you'll discover your voice along the way.

## Stay Connected

From the earliest moments of our lives, we understand our place in the world through our interactions with others. But relationships can be uncomfortable and challenging at times. However, closing ourselves off to others — especially in hectic times — is the worst thing we can do. When we disconnect or become guarded, we reduce the potential for serendipitous insights and connections that often come through unexpected interactions with others, and we also limit our own ability to stretch outside our relational comfort zone, which is the very thing that often leads to the discovery of new insights about our abilities and preferences.

Relationships — especially in the workplace — take effort, and to stay connected demands that we build practices to help us engage with purpose. But even if you have these practices in place, it's still possible to allow your connections with others to remain shallow and without the kind of honest urgency that forges trust, commitment and effectiveness.

Avoidance is a common tactic in the face of uncertainty. We may instinctively do it to defer dealing with a relationship, but that tends to create even more damage.

You need to have a structure in your work rhythms to help you "clear the decks" and engage in these important, though not urgent, conversations frequently so that you are freed up to do your best work.

There is a false belief in many organizations that tension and conflict are signs of an unhealthy team. But an effective team consists of people willing to fight for their ideas, challenge others when necessary, and stand their ground when confronted. In the end, however, those same people must be willing to bend to the ideas of others and submit to the decisions made by the leader, knowing that they can't win every battle.

Unfortunately, managers are often uncomfortable with these fits and spurts and attempt to squash team conflicts so as to preserve peace. There's a false belief that tranquility equals health, but a tranquil team is often a sign of imminent death because it may mean that no one cares enough to make waves.

### Use Probing Questions

Teams are often great at talking about tasks and strategy but abysmal at discussing the intangible factors that affect their workflow. There are five areas of conversation that can bring better clarity, focus and trust to the team:

**The Clarity Conversation.** This conversation is designed to bring alignment and combat dissonance. Key questions include, "How does what I'm doing tie into why our company exists?"

**The Expectations Conversation.** The objective is to clarify each person's expectations so that there is no misunderstanding or room for misinterpretation.

**The Fear Conversation.** The fear conversation is all about shining light into dark, unspoken places and neutralizing fear where it lives.

**The Engagement Conversation.** This conversation is about helping you identify patterns of energy and enthusiasm in others and tap into the deep well of inspiration around you.

**The "Final 10 Percent" Conversation.** This conversation is about getting the "final remnant" of feedback that others may not volunteer unless you ask for it.

The better you get at these conversations, the more clarity, alignment and energy you'll find in the work environment, and the better equipped you'll be to unleash your best work. We need to fall in love with the process, not just the end product of our work. Make sure you're nurturing your process. It's the only thing you can truly control, and it's the thing you'll always have regardless of where you end up.

## Forward

You can have the map, and there can be gas in the tank, but unless you're willing to fire up the engine and put your foot on the gas, you'll never get anywhere. Intention and theory don't change the world; decisive action does.

Your life will be measured by what you gave, not what you received. Spend it building a body of work you will be proud of. Engage today with urgency and diligence. Live and work as if today is all you have. If you do, you will be able to lay your head down each night satisfied with your work, and in the end, you will die empty of regret but full of satisfaction for a life well lived.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Die Empty*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Accidental Creative*** **by Todd Henry.** In today's marketplace, all of us have to be ready to generate brilliant ideas on demand. Henry teaches effective practices that support your creative process.

2. ***Extreme Productivity*** **by Robert C. Pozen.** Pozen explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.

3. ***A Leader's Legacy*** **by James Kouzes, Barry Posner.** This s a compilation of powerful essays that are grouped into categories covering significance, relationships, aspirations and courage.

· Book 22 of 269 ·

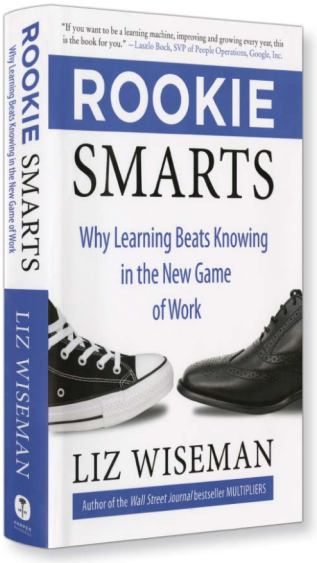
# 35-30 What Keeps Leaders Up At Night

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# Rookie Smarts

## Why Learning Beats Knowing in the New Game of Work




by Liz Wiseman

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Is it possible to be at your best even when you are underqualified or doing something for the first time? Is it still possible, even after decades of experience, to recapture the enthusiasm, curiosity and fearlessness of youth to take on new challenges? With the right mindset you can.

In a rapidly changing world, experience can be a curse. Being new, naive and even clueless can be an asset. For today's knowledge workers, constant learning is more valuable than mastery.

In this essential guide, leadership expert Liz Wiseman explains how to reclaim and cultivate the curious, flexible, youthful mindset called Rookie Smarts. Wiseman reveals the different modes of the rookie mindset that lead to success: Backpacker, Hunter-Gatherer, Firewalker and Pioneer.

*Rookie Smarts* addresses the questions every experienced professional faces: Will my knowledge and skills become obsolete and irrelevant? How will I keep up? The answer is to stay fresh, keep learning and know when to think like a rookie.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to cultivate a curious, flexible mindset.
- How rookie and veteran talent can form powerful teams.
- The four modes of the rookie mindset that lead to success.
- How to be at your best when doing something for the first time.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **ROOKIE SMARTS**

**by Liz Wiseman**

**The author:** Liz Wiseman is a researcher, executive advisor and speaker who teaches leaders around the world. She is a former executive and the author of the bestselling books *Multipliers* and *The Multiplier Effect*. She has been listed on the Thinkers50 ranking and named as one of the top 10 leadership thinkers in the world.

*Rookie Smarts: Why Learning Beats Knowing in the New Game of Work* by Liz Wiseman. Copyright © 2014 by Liz Wiseman. Summarized with permission of the publisher, HarperCollins Publishers. 290 pages, $28.99, ISBN: 978-0-06-232263-0.

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## Introduction

Sometimes not knowing is more valuable than knowing. A certain genius gets sparked in our rookie state, and a learner's advantage kicks in.

Is it possible that we can be at our best when we are underqualified, doing something for the first time? With the right mindset we can. When we are stretched to reach beyond our current capabilities, we can open ourselves up to learning from everyone and everything around us and tap into a different mindset called "Rookie Smarts."

Sometimes a young professional has been given the chance to hit above his weight class. Other times an executive has taken on a new assignment outside her area of expertise. Once out of their comfort zones, these rookies experience a sense of challenge and exhilaration. Whether the rookie is a new college grad or a seasoned executive, behind them you will likely find a manager who took a risk and bet on their ability to learn quickly.

In other organizations, driven people can be seen idling away at a job they've been doing for years. They confess that they've become stale in their jobs, working well past their sell-by date. They feel themselves wasting away, anxious that their hard-earned knowledge and skills will become obsolete, wondering if they will be fit to work anywhere else.

While experience provides a distinct advantage in a stable field — like the realms of bridge building, ballet or concert piano performance — it can actually impede progress in an unstable or rapidly evolving arena. When the world is changing quickly, experience can become a curse, trapping us in old ways of doing and knowing, while inexperience can be a blessing, freeing us to improvise and adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

Fortunately, even the most experienced professionals and organizations can tap into their rookie smarts. Those who choose to live and work on a learning curve will experience greater vitality in their careers and will be well positioned in the new game of work.

## PART I: ROOKIE SMARTS LIVING ON THE LEARNING CURVE

## The Rise of the Rookie

Rookies are more capable than we might expect. We often see it on the athletic field, but it also plays out in the halls of the workplace. Research suggests that, in many cases, inexperience can work to your advantage: It can spark a dazzling performance and help you compete with, if not surpass, even the most talented, experienced players. Not only does inexperience confer an advantage, but also it is desperately needed in today's rapidly evolving world of work.

### The Research on Rookies

My team of researchers studied almost 400 workplace scenarios, comparing how rookies versus veterans tackled work assignments. We defined a rookie as someone who had never done that type of work and a veteran as someone who had previous experience with that type of work — both regardless of their age. Our work yielded four major, surprising observations.

**First, rookies are strong performers.** Rookies consistently outperformed veterans in innovation and time to completion.

**Second, rookies have a unique success profile.** The highest-performing rookies sought out expertise in others, connected the dots, experimented, learned from

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **S. Dayton,** Contributing Editor

mistakes, and focused on making incremental gains. Conversely, the top-performing veterans were fast to act, marshaled resources, found simple solutions, persisted along a path, and focused on solving the right problem.

**Third, rookies aren't always what they seem.** While we might think of rookies as clueless and bumbling, in actuality, rookies listen more, are more likely to ask for help, believe they have a lot more to learn and learn faster. And while we might think of rookies as bold risk-takers, the research showed that rookies actually work more cautiously, biting off smaller pieces and checking in frequently with stakeholders to minimize risk.

**Finally, experience creates dangerous blind spots.** With experience come habits, and once we form a habit, our brain stops working. As we build (and come to rely on) experience, we also become desensitized to the world around us. As we climb to the top of the learning curve, we also tend to stop seeking feedback. We also stop exploring new domains and paths. With experience inevitably comes bad experiences. While these quickly scar over, we often dismiss ideas and ventures that might reopen these wounds.

### The Rookie Smart Mindset

You can start drinking from an intellectual fountain of youth by putting yourself into the rookie smarts mindset, which is characterized by four distinct modes: Backpacker, Hunter-Gatherer, Firewalker and Pioneer. Each mode is a component of how we tend to think and act when we are in a rookie assignment: doing something for the first time.

**1. Backpacker:** Because rookies typically have nothing to weigh them down and nothing to lose, they are open to new possibilities, explore new terrain, and act wholeheartedly. The mindset is *unencumbered*. In contrast, veterans can too easily act as Caretakers. Having accumulated a track record, a trophy case and the spoils of success, they maintain the status quo. The mindset is *protecting*.

**2. Hunter-Gatherer:** Because rookies are disoriented and lack know-how, they are forced into a sense-making mode that causes them to pay close attention to their environment and reach out to others for guidance. The mindset is *alert and seeking*. In contrast, because veterans are often confident that they understand their environment, they don't seek new information. They act like Local Guides who stay close to what they know, doling out advice rather than seeking out learning. The mindset is *advising*.

**3. Firewalker:** Because rookies lack situational confidence, they operate cautiously but quickly in an effort to close a knowledge or a performance gap. They take small, calculated steps, move fast and seek feedback to stay on track. The mindset is *cautious and quick*. In contrast, because veterans feel capable, they tend to operate like Marathoners running the long race. It is a mindset of *staying steady, pacing oneself and plodding along*, assuming one is still doing a great job.

**4. Pioneer:** Because rookies are traversing uncharted and often uncomfortable territory, they improvise and work tirelessly to provide for basic needs. Their work pushes boundaries as they take ownership and create value for others who follow in their footsteps. The mindset is one of *hunger and relentless pursuit*. In contrast, because veterans are well established and have access to more resources, they tend to behave like Settlers and put down roots. Having already established themselves, they stay in their comfort zone, follow protocols and rely on what's available. The mindset is one of *comfort and consumption*.

### The Perpetual Rookie

Learning how to pivot between savvy veteran in some situations to rookie in others gives you the agility and helps you innovate and stay relevant. For example, if you are beginning a new product development cycle, you might invoke your rookie smarts by talking to outside experts, asking the naive questions, and carefully orchestrating a quick experiment to test the viability of bold ideas. However, if your project team is floundering, dead in the murky waters of corporate bureaucracy, you might toggle to your veteran savvy — what veterans are capable of contributing when they are at their best — helping the team clarify their goals, simplifying their approach, and connecting them to the people inside the organization who can speed their progress.

When the world is changing fast, you want a rookie on the job. Not just any rookie — you want someone with rookie smarts. You want someone who can free herself from the past, mobilize the expertise of others, operate cautiously but quickly and then forge ahead into new territory. In short, you want someone who can learn.

## Backpackers: An Unencumbered Mind

Too often our managers become burdened by yesterday's ideas, today's resources and the expectations for continued performance tomorrow. Instead of using their success as a launching pad, they become anchored in place, guarding and protecting the status quo.

### The Backpacker's Way

The rookie has an unencumbered mind that allows him to question the establishment and a hopeful mindset that allows him to see new possibilities.

**Practice 1: See New Possibilities.** Like a hiker who trudges obliviously past a snake lying quietly in the brush, rookies simply walk past the obstacles they don't see. And because they don't know what they are supposed to be looking for, they can end up seeing what others fail to notice. How do rookies identify new possibilities? They ask fundamental questions, see new patterns and find mistakes.

- **Ask the Fundamental Questions.** Newcomers, without the weight of knowledge, ritual and rule to constrain their thinking, often ask questions that cut to the core of an issue. It isn't that experienced people don't recognize problems. But the longer we live with a problem, the less likely we are to think we can do anything about it. People fresh to a problem haven't convinced themselves that they can't solve it.
- **See New Patterns and Find the Mistakes.** When we have identified a pattern, it becomes difficult to ignore the pattern and to see what actually exists. We fill in the blanks, mentally forcing reality to conform to the pattern we expect to see. Fundamental errors can go undetected by those with mastery. On the other hand, novices can find mistakes and logical flaws in conventional wisdom. Their lack of pattern recognition also accelerates and fortifies their learning since our brains retain what they work harder to obtain.

**Practice 2: Explore New Terrain.** It is difficult to escape the gravitational pull of comfortable competence. But when we have not yet developed a body of expertise, we are free to explore new terrain and find new paths.

- **Take Shorter Paths.** Freed from convention and protocol, neophytes find simple patterns and direct paths.
- **Make Bigger Asks.** Not knowing perceived limits enables rookies to score more often, and it also allows them to score bigger gains.
- **Act Erratically.** Without a preestablished pattern, rookies can act erratically, which can confuse those with mastery and catch them off guard.

**Practice 3: Act Wholeheartedly.** Without reputation, rookies can operate without ego or fear of falling. They have nothing to lose and nowhere to go but up, which spurs them to act boldly and reach higher.

- **Act Boldly and Recover Quickly.** Bold action brings mistakes and necessitates the courage to recover quickly.
- **Work Passionately.** Working wholeheartedly — without reservation, without exception, without limitation — is at the very core of our humanity. Through full engagement we find deep meaning in our work and serve beyond self.

The unencumbered Backpacker can venture out, but the rookie's naivete prevents him from wandering aimlessly. Aware of his own lack of knowledge, the rookie embarks on a desperate, focused, diligent search, hunting for experts who can teach him and guide his way.

## Hunter-Gatherers: Finding Expertise

The *echo chamber* is a pervasive disease of our time. This term captures our tendency to customize and configure our environment so that we only hear and see our own thoughts and beliefs echoed back to us.

Veterans, brimming with opinions formed by years of experience, can insulate themselves in this echo chamber and begin acting like small-town locals — old codgers sitting around Joe Bob's coffee shop, having the same conversation they've been having for the last 20 years. Their opinions are predictable, their observations routine. In this mode, we are confident that we understand our surroundings, and we stop asking questions and seeking guidance. Old ideas and opinions reign supreme, while new ideas and information bounce off the walls.

### The Hunter-Gatherer's Way

In a hunter-gatherer system, the focus is outward, venturing forth, harvesting game and foraging for resources to bring back to the tribe. Rookies work in Hunter-Gatherer mode because they have no existing resources or expertise to tend to or rely on. Here's what rookies do when operating in Hunter-Gatherer mode:

**Practice 1: Scan the Environment.** Sense making, or rapidly converting information into intelligence, begins with gathering data. Rookies are sense-making machines. Whether they are connecting the dots between data points or connecting with colleagues across a company, their value comes in their outward orientation. And, in this hungry search for much-needed knowledge, they seek out experts to teach and guide them.

**Practice 2: Seek Out Experts.** Rookies are four times more likely than veterans to ask for help. With little to lose and everything to gain, rookies seek help and reach out to experts who can guide them and augment their deficits. In addition to reaching out more often, when they do reach out, they reach out to far more people — five times as many on average. When you ask one veteran, you get one expert. When you ask a smart rookie, you gain access to a team of experts.

**Practice 3: Mobilize Ideas and Resources.** The best rookies seek out and marshal expertise and bring back their newfound network, like a big-game hunting prize to feed their community. In complex environments, winning organizations tap into the greatest number of brains. Crowdsourcing is growing as a viable and efficient alternative to in-house or expert-led solutions to complex problems. Perhaps it is a flash mob of talent, mobilized around an immediate challenge, which then dissipates when the problem is solved. But these talent pools can extend beyond simple crowdsourcing to form lasting learning communities.

## Firewalkers: Moving Cautiously but Quickly

Understanding the physics behind walking on fire unlocks one of the keys to those with rookie smarts. They move like firewalkers: both cautious and quick. How can a lack of experience actually help someone take bold action without getting burned?

The rookie's reality consists of a glaring, gaping hole between what they've previously done and what they must now do. They don't necessarily lack self-confidence. What they do lack is situational confidence — the easy assurance that you've successfully completed a similar task in the past. Consequently, the rookie feels anxious, uncertain of his footing and eager to prove himself.

The rookie's anxiety is not of the clinical variety that causes people to shut down; rather it is a productive paranoia, an urge to break out of one's comfort zone, to join a new peer group, to move to the next level of performance. Our study revealed that people in rookie situations were twice as likely to feel pressure to impress their coworkers than in situations in which they were more experienced. They also reported feeling more pressure to impress their bosses in these rookie situations. Yet, counterintuitively, employees were more likely to feel a debilitating sense of pressure in situations in which they had more experience. In other words, pressure to perform propels rookies forward while the same sort of pressure impedes progress for veterans.

### The Firewalker's Way

Anxious to establish themselves as productive members of a peer group, top-performing newcomers propel themselves forward through iterative cycles of experimentation while learning to stay deeply connected to their stakeholders. In their mad dash to advance, the top-performing newcomers tend to take small steps, move quickly, and seek feedback and coaching.

**Practice 1: Take Small, Calculated Steps.** The newcomer is operating in the dark, so she minimizes risk by taking small steps. Rookies use every available sense to navigate their way through an unfamiliar environment. They maintain close contact with their surroundings to avoid unanticipated obstacles and calibrate their movements in order to mitigate the risk associated with exploring new territory. Rookies aren't big risk takers. They only act boldly when they don't realize they are acting boldly. They take risk out of a venture with their small steps and continual feedback loops. Once they realize how clueless they actually are, rookies become risk-mitigating machines.

**Practice 2: Deliver Quickly.** Instead of pacing themselves for a long, slow race, rookies tend to operate in bursts and often at full throttle. Despite, or perhaps because of their speed, rookies can quickly get off track. Just because they solve problems quickly doesn't mean that they are good at figuring out which problems are the most important. Knowing they are highly motivated to move fast, a wise manager will make sure the rookie is pointed in the right direction before the starting gun goes off.

**Practice 3: Seek Feedback and Coaching.** Moving cautiously but quickly in unfamiliar terrain, rookies require constant feedback to know if they are on track. Because rookies seek frequent feedback, they regularly receive vital information that helps them quickly learn and calibrate their performance. As they adjust, their adaptability invites the coaching that so naturally follows feedback.

Smart managers need to make sure rookies have a regular stream of feedback and information to help them calibrate their performance and the connection points to stay on track. And, if experienced managers are truly smart, they will ensure that they, too, are receiving the same sorts of feedback to help them optimize their own performance.

Because rookies lack confidence, they operate cautiously but they also operate quickly, seeking to close the knowledge gap. Through feedback, they rapidly convert information into intelligence.

You don't need to walk on coals to develop a Firewalker's mindset. You simply need to move closer to the heat in whatever venture you are pursuing and begin to take well-considered risks. And if you fail fast, make sure you learn faster.

## Pioneers: Forging Ahead

Like pioneers, rookies build paths through new territory every day, whereas veterans tend to stay where it is comfortable and settle in. For too many wizened workplace veterans, work becomes the equivalent of ordering a hamburger at every new restaurant we try. Once comfortable and consuming the fruits of previous labor, we can slip into a mode of behavior where we rely on what's available, follow protocol and stay in a comfort zone.

### The Pioneer Way

Rookies are willing to tolerate discomfort and evince a relentless drive to tame the wilderness and survive. In our research, we've found that those who are new to a situation or type of work tend to build new tools and structures, improvise and work relentlessly.

**Practice 1: Build New Tools and Structures.** How does working in "survival mode" focus your energy and attention? We learn because we have to. Out in the field, in the moment, we must improvise and adapt to ever-changing conditions in order to survive.

**Practice 2: Improvise.** We found that those new to a task were twice as likely to believe they didn't have the resources or skills they needed. So they have to get scrappy and make do with the resources they can scrounge up. Rookies are improvisers and imperfectionists.

When faced with constraints, we improvise. We get creative. Improvisation can lead to discovery and land us in new places.

**Practice 3: Work Relentlessly.** Perhaps the most motivated are those who lack another choice. For example, when the boss has already hired a backfill for our former job, we have no choice but to push forward. There are several conditions that cause newcomers, facing large gaps in their knowledge and capability, to move forward with urgency, working relentlessly along the way.

1. Basic needs are not yet met. When we are on the bottom rung of the ladder, and when that rung is mostly underwater, we are propelled to climb.
2. New player. When we are the new guys on a team, we are highly motivated to establish ourselves as players.
3. Public scrutiny. When all eyes are on us, retreat can equal failure.

## PART II: CULTIVATING ROOKIE SMARTS

## The Perpetual Rookie

Perpetual rookies are leaders who, despite years of experience and success, maintain a rookie mindset. They stay amazed — curious, humble and fun-loving. Instead of clinging to a false sense of mastery, they live and work perpetually on the steep side of the learning curve. These leaders aren't just rookies by circumstance; they are rookies by choice and through deliberate practice. It is a choice available to each of us.

**Curious.** Most researchers agree that curiosity is an innate, basic emotion that can be nevertheless easily extinguished by habit, routine and other life experiences. Once lost, how do we rediscover our innate curiosity? By breaking habits and thrusting ourselves into new and unfamiliar circumstances where our assumptions are challenged and our senses can be overloaded.

**Humble.** The first step to learning is accepting that we don't know everything. When we recognize our own limitations, we seek guidance and remain open to correction. Humility, without regard for expertise or position, allows for the development of coachability and teachability. In fast times, everyone is winging it — even the leaders at the top. But amazing things can happen when we admit that we don't know.

**Playful.** If mastery requires deliberate practice, being a perpetual rookie requires purposeful play. When our work is play, time flies and we stick with it. We forgive mistakes, improvise and learn. We invite others to join the fun. This levity effect lightens our load as we climb an arduous learning curve.

**Deliberate.** Perpetual rookies are also deliberate; they approach their work with a great deal of intentionality. They are likely to be mindful of what they are doing and how they will do it. They don't jump in impulsively or erratically; instead they deliberately adopt an open mindset. The real skill of the perpetual rookie is knowing when to play the role of veteran and when to don the rookie cloak. In times of tumult and transition the best leaders know when it is time to stop, unlearn and relearn.

## Rookie Revival

What does it take to rouse us from the comforts of convention, from the boredom and complacency and downright unhappiness that so many professionals experience?

In surveying approximately 1,000 professionals, we found a strong correlation between "challenge level" at work and "satisfaction level" at work. As the challenge level goes up, so does satisfaction. Unfortunately, job satisfaction plummets for those shielded from real challenge.

Taking on more work can be exhausting, and yet, ironically, the antidote to this strain of burnout isn't *less* work.

The cure for burnout is *harder* work. The escape from a mountain of work is not *through*, but *up* — up the learning curve, that is. It is in these moments, when we start working our intellectual "muscles" again, that we feel the most engaged.

### Learning to Relearn

Here are some strategies for planning your own climb on new terrains. First, change your mindset: Shift from the certainty of leadership to the uncertainty of learnership. Second, change your venue: Place yourself in a situation that demands rookie thinking and behavior. Finally, pace yourself.

**1. Shift from Leader to Learner.** Psychologists use the term "confirmation bias" to capture the tendency of people to favor information that supports their preexisting beliefs or hypotheses. One reason we are susceptible to confirmation bias is that once we are deemed experts, once we are in a position of power, the costs of being wrong can feel dangerously high. Another reason we accept information that supports our preexisting beliefs is that doing so often appears to be the shortest, most direct route between where we are and where we'd like to be. To defeat the blinders of confirmation bias, we need to shift our sights: Instead of looking down from our position of leadership, we need to begin looking outward and upward.

**2. Step into a Discomfort Zone.** When we leave our comfort zones, we become more likely to encounter what cognitive scientists call "expectation failure." These are situations when we expect one thing to happen but are surprised when something else takes place. When things work as we expect them to, we begin to assemble mental scripts that explain the world around us. These scripts help us predict the outcomes of our actions while at the same time limiting our thinking. It is easy to become boxed in by our scripts. But when we are in an unfamiliar situation and things don't work the way we expect them to, our scripts fail. Without a way to explain events, we are motivated to seek and find new explanations — we are motivated to learn.

**3. Take Small Steps.** When the gap is too big, we break. We may simply give up, or we may even be forced out. Those who master the learning curve, on the other hand, have sized the gap just right by taking on challenges that are uncomfortable but not impossible to achieve. As we take small steps, we build our capacity to climb up steeper, higher paths.

Aspiring perpetual rookies must continually guard against routines. The very rituals that rejuvenate us, at some point become the habits that bind us. In your pursuit of renewal, break routines, change rituals and be skeptical of dogma. Maintaining our rookie smarts is like maintaining a house or your health — it is never done.

## The Rookie Organization

Rookies are more capable than most people imagine. A manager at eBay remarked, "I had thought that people who were new to the work were empty and I needed to fill them up. But they come whole and full, just like any other collaboration." Still, rookies need leadership and guidance. In fact, rookies tend to operate at their best working under vigilant, mindful leaders — leaders who give them freedom to explore new possibilities coupled with enough responsibility to propel them up a learning curve. Rookies need managers who know when to rein them in and when to unleash them, and they need to be placed in an environment conducive to learning and insight. Here are three ways vigilant leaders can maximize the contributions of their rookie talent:

**1. Freedom with Direction.** To provide clear direction, do the obvious — clarify what needs to be accomplished and why it's important. Set the guardrails and criteria for completeness of solution. But remember to also direct them to the experts who can provide guidance. You can help activate the Hunter-Gatherer mode by providing a set of contacts, making introductions, and even challenging them to consult with at least five experts. Once you've given clear guidance on what, why and who, let them figure out how.

**2. A Constructive Challenge.** Offer stretch goals, but don't overwhelm rookies. When someone is in a rookie assignment, err on the side of making the first challenge doable — make it a constructive "micro-challenge," one with enough tension to create movement and with just the right mix of relevance, difficulty and opportunity for recognition. When leaders offer a right-size challenge, people contribute quickly, build confidence and are readied for bigger challenges.

Along with a micro-challenge, rookies need micro-feedback — a steady stream of information to help them correct course and stay on track. The best feedback comes in small doses and quick bursts. It is typically delivered in drive-by fashion rather than in formal meetings.

**3. A Tightrope with a Safety Net.** When people are working above their current skill level, with real responsibility and visibility, they are essentially walking on a tightrope. Veteran leaders and mentors must not only place the rookie up on the tightrope; they must also be there

to catch them when they fall. In establishing a safety net, remember that:

1) the best safety nets aren't managers, but rather senior colleagues and project managers (who oversee the client engagements rather than directly manage staff).

2) the safety net should be positioned as a service, a benefit to which an employee is entitled, rather than a punishment.

3) managers should have a large enough span of control that they can offer meaningful coaching and mentoring but not enough time to micromanage their junior talent.

4) when someone is a complete rookie, the rope may be set low and the net set high. But as rookies gain experience and have success, the manager can raise the rope and lower the net without rookies even knowing the parameters have changed.

The rookie holds an equal if not greater obligation. Rookies need to be willing to work outside their comfort zones, ask for help and learn quickly. They also need to let their management know when they are ready for a stretch assignment. Despite these expectations for rookies, managers don't need to wait for someone to declare their readiness. Sometimes people just need a push.

## Building Powerful Teams

Not only are rookies capable of doing amazing work themselves; they are frequently the critical spark that ignites a team of veterans. Often the combinations of rookies working in tandem with veterans is what produces truly spectacular results. Here are four configurations that have the potential to produce stellar results.

**The Ground and the Spark.** In this power duo, the veteran typically brings clarity, gravitas of purpose and a ground to reality. The rookie brings new energy and determination.

**The Talent Scout and the New Talent.** In this power duo, the rookie brings novel ideas and an innovative approach, while the veteran sees and champions the promise and potential in their work.

**The Advisor and the Entrepreneur.** One of the most powerful talent configurations in technology and innovation-driven organizations is the partnership between the rookie entrepreneur and the veteran business adviser. The rookie brings new ideas and technologies that have the potential to disrupt an entire industry. The veterans typically open up their business networks, creating rich terrain for rookies in Hunter-Gatherer mode. Veteran business leaders provide critical advice and words of caution. To generate a big impact, pair someone who wants to change the world with someone who already knows how the world works.

**A Hetero-Genius Team.** When a team is composed of people of dissimilar backgrounds and experience levels, working together can be harder, but it can also produce better outcomes, especially where creative, cutting-edge thinking is needed. When the distinct talents of both the veteran and the rookie are appreciated, the tension between their disparate contributions sparks collective brilliance. When either is dismissed, the tension dissipates into frictional loss.

## Rethinking Talent Management

Adjust your talent management practices to keep the entire organization agile and in a state of constructive challenge. For example:

**Hiring** — Hire for traits shared by perpetual rookies, such as curiosity, humility, playfulness, and deliberateness.

**Job design and succession planning** — Design jobs so that each job has a rookie component, rotate talent to keep it fresh, and, when considering a candidate for promotion, look for a history of success in rookie assignments.

**Learning and development** — Target your development investments when people are in rookie assignments and are most open to learning.

Rookie smarts isn't an age or an experience level; it is a state of mind — one that is available to those willing to unlearn and relearn. It is also a choice. As the world of work speeds up, we can either slow down and get left behind, or we can quicken our step and keep up. It is a choice between the dull ache of stagnation and the short-lived discomfort of unlearning what has worked for us in the past, and then relearning what we need to know now.

In the new world of work, the game will go to the learners.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Rookie Smarts*, you'll also like:

1. ***Multipliers*** **by Liz Wiseman, Greg McKeown.** Learn how to become a multiplier of talent and people.

2. ***The 2020 Workplace*** **by Jeanne C. Meister, Karie Willyerd.** By 2020 employers will be challenged to manage employees who have vastly different values, beliefs and expectations. Here is a functional guide that can help.

3. ***The Inclusion Breakthrough*** **by Frederick A. Miller, Judith H. Katz.** Miller and Katz explain how to make diversity a central and profitable part of an organization's strategy.

· Book 23 of 269 ·

# 35-30 What Keeps Leaders Up At Night

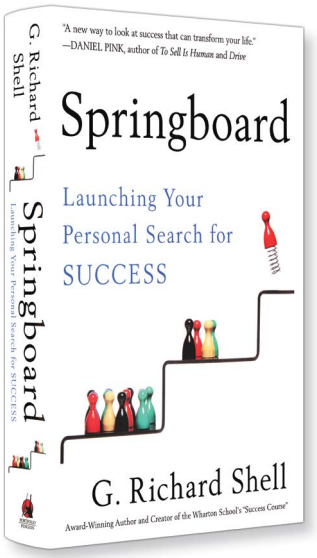
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# Springboard

## Launching Your Personal Search for SUCCESS




by G. Richard Shell

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone knows that you are supposed to "follow your dream." But where is the road map to help you discover what that dream is? In *Springboard*, award-winning author and teacher G. Richard Shell helps you find your future. His advice: Take an honest look inside and then answer two questions: "What, for me, is success?" and "How will I achieve it?"

You will begin by assessing your current beliefs about success, including hidden influences of family, media and culture. These are where the pressures to live "someone else's life" come from. Once you gain perspective on these outside forces, you will be ready to look inside at your unique combination of passions and capabilities. The goal is to focus more on what gives meaning and excitement to your life and less on what you are "supposed" to want.

Drawing on his decades of research, Shell offers personalized assessments to help you probe your past, imagine your future, and measure your strengths. He then combines these with the latest scientific insights on everything from self-confidence and happiness to relationships and careers.

*Springboard* will help you reevaluate your future and envision success on your own terms.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to discover your innermost desires and follow them to success.
- How to ask the right questions in order to discover what success means to you.
- How to craft your own goals and devise your own success based on your unique skills and personality.
- How to focus on what gives meaning and excitement to your life, not just on what you think you are "supposed" to want.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **SPRINGBOARD**

**by G. Richard Shell**

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com and www.grichardshell.com.

## PART I: THE FIRST QUESTION: WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Examine your current assumptions and beliefs about success. Once you begin to think about it, you may be surprised at how many of your ideas about success originate from your culture, family, friends and exposure to mass media. As you become more aware of these sources for your beliefs, you can decide whether to embrace, reject or integrate them into new and more creative ways to approach your life. Life usually demands trade-offs. Where do you set your priorities?

## The First Answer: Choose Your Life

Consider these four important theories about success.

First, finding out what success means to you often involves trial and error, not just theoretical contemplation. You have to take risks, try things out and experiment. Your search may involve flashes of insight that will turn out to be false signals. But you must nevertheless summon the courage to try out new roles, admit they do not suit you, and return to the search process.

Second, your goals do not just appear out of thin air. You need to become aware of the success values your culture and family endorsed. That way, you can be sure the ideals you are shaping your life around truly reflect *your own freely chosen* values.

Third, success is a multidimensional concept, not just a work-related one. Family and personal relationships matter too. Fourth and finally, success is not a single, once-and-for-all destination. It is a journey with way stations, stopovers and campgrounds. You can get to one place, enjoy it and then move on.

### Your Success Values

To help you understand your own intuitions about success, I have devised a values assessment called the Six Lives Exercise. This diagnostic will help you investigate where your ideas about success come from and lead you to more detailed reflections on all the topics ahead. Here's how it works: Read through all six of the following biographical sketches. Then, go back and think more carefully about them. Finally, rank them from most to least "successful," giving your top choice number "1" and your bottom choice number "6." No ties are allowed. Respond as honestly as you can. Once you have ranked them all, we will see what your choices may reveal about your current success thinking.

**Teacher.** Patricia Kelly teaches physics and serves as head coach of women's track at a suburban high school (children ages 14-18). Her spouse manages a chain of retail stores his family founded 30 years ago. Pat has led her school's "Science Olympics" teams to three regional championships and one National title over the past five years. Under Pat's guidance, the high school has placed a number of students in the country's top scientific universities (places such as MIT and Cal Tech in the U.S.). Pat has two daughters, one of whom earned a Ph.D. in physics and is now working for a high-tech company. The other ran into trouble in high school, never graduated, and lives in a distant city. She has rebuffed all attempts by the family to stay in touch with her.

**Banker.** Jane Ruly has worked for her entire career at a multi-national bank in a large city, where she has risen through the ranks to become a regional vice president for wealth management services. She is fiercely loyal to both her employer and its customer base. Jane is an accomplished marathon runner and a single parent who divides her non-working time between fitness training and her young child, Julie, who has severe learning and physical disabilities. Friends and family members have encouraged Jane to find an institutional home for Julie so she can "get on with her life," but Jane responds that "Julie

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is my life — I would never dream of letting anyone else take over her care." Last year, Jane ran the New York Marathon while pushing Julie in a specially-rigged carriage — a feat that earned her a segment on an international news television program about parents of children with disabilities. She has dated several men over the past few years, but she has never believed in marriage — in part because her own parents were so unhappy together.

**Wealthy Investor.** Peter Tailor is a private equity investor who balances his mostly single life (he married once but divorced four years later) between homes in London, New York and Bermuda. He made his first fortune guiding a startup Internet company through its early stages and then selling it to a large competitor. His $240,000 investment turned into a handsome payoff of $50 million. It has been all "upside" since then. A leading business magazine recently published a cover story on Peter, revealing him to be an avowed free thinker, lover of freedom and committed libertarian. In the article, he said, "I love the excitement of placing a big bet and seeing it pay off." His passions outside the office include parties in far-flung places ("I like to work hard and play hard") and hang-gliding ("being in the air alone gives me a sense of freedom"). He donates generously to conservative political causes and is consulted by influential politicians across the globe for his opinions regarding the global economy.

**Stone Mason.** Fred Hampshire is a stone mason who has lived his whole life near a large city. A passionate student of historical architectural design, he has been married to his wife Mary for 52 years, and he has three children (a lawyer, a banker and a homemaker) and seven grandchildren. "Every piece of stone you pick up is different," he once told a news reporter. "In my work, I can see what I did the first day I started and watch it grow. And I go back years later and it is still there to see. It's a good day laying brick or stone. It is hard work, but you get interested in fitting each piece in just its right spot, and the day is over before you know it." Hampshire admits that money has sometimes been a problem, but he proudly points out that he personally helped to build homes for each of his three children.

**Tennis Pro.** Janice Chung is a hardworking, professional tennis player who has won four major tournaments in her career and finished in the top 15 money-winners in seven of the past 10 years. She started playing tennis with her father at the age of 5, and, as a result of the relentless drills her father insisted on, she perfected her game. Tennis has dominated her life since then. A few years ago, she founded the Chung Tennis Institute, a group that provides free tennis instruction and "life skills training" to young women who live in a poor urban neighborhoods. She is married to a real-estate developer and, unable to have children herself, has adopted three Korean kids, now aged 2, 6 and 7. "It's a tough life on the tennis circuit," she told a tennis magazine recently. "You don't get as much time with your children as you would like."

**Nonprofit Executive.** Bill Paulson used to be an award-winning investment advisor for wealthy families in a major city, where he was well known for his ability to manage complex estates. He has been married for 20 years to his wife Terry (a child development counselor), and they have four children. Bill was considered a "top producer" in his office and earned more than anyone else in his group. But five years ago, Bill quit his job and took a huge pay cut to become a top administrator at a fast-growing nonprofit service organization founded by a charismatic religious leader from South Africa. "I heard God's call," Bill told the local paper, "and I answered." Bill's main project has been help to carry out the group's "international mission" helping rural African villages secure clean water supplies. Bill helped to organize a coalition of religious charities to fund this work, and his investment skills have doubled the investment value of the money raised to date. The family is planning to take the next two years off to go live and work in a rural community in an impoverished African country, where they will run one of the coalition-funded water projects. Bill's and Terry's kids range in age from 8 to 16, and none of them want to go. But Bill and Terry are determined take the entire family.

## The Two Sides of Success

If you are like most people, you probably measure success in two different ways. The first is the private, "inner" perspectives of fulfillment, satisfaction and happiness. Each person profiled in the Six Lives Exercise has some claim to inner fulfillment. But most also have something missing. The Wealthy Investor has no family. The Tennis Pro's work takes her away from her children. One of the Teacher's children won't speak to her. The Banker's disabled child dominates her life, and she seems unable to commit to a long-term relationship. The Nonprofit Executive's children are in rebellion about leaving their friends for an isolated life in rural Africa.

Against these compromised claims to inner harmony, only the Stone Mason appears to "have it all." He has a stable, loving relationship with his wife of 52 years. His three accomplished children and grandchildren live nearby. And he takes a sincere, craftsmanlike satisfaction in his work — a job that he controls and which enables him to see the fruits of his labors every day. His work appears to be meaningful to him. There is almost a Zen-like, spiritual dimension to the Stone Mason's life.

Thus, people who pick the Stone Mason's life as number one or number two are usually voting for a life with more of this "inner" dimension of success. Most of us would be hard put to define anyone as "successful" whose life lacks joy or satisfaction.

But there is a second, more public "outer" perspective on success that motivates many day-to-day actions and decisions much more than the quest for inner happiness. These are desires for achievement, social recognition and respect.

Seen from this perspective, the Stone Mason's life is missing something that all the other lives seem to have: a notable accomplishment that has been recognized by his society or his peers. All the other people profiled have achieved something that a broader social group has taken note of, ranging from quasi-celebrity status (the Wealthy Investor and Tennis Pro) to international media attention on behalf of a worthy cause (the Banker) to good works on behalf of the poor in Africa (Nonprofit Executive and Teacher).

People who rank the Stone Mason near the bottom of their Six Lives may admire the Stone Mason's devotion to the satisfactions of a craft and a family, but they see overall success in life as including more emphasis on that outer-achievement perspective.

If one of these lives spoke much more clearly to you than the others, that may be telling you something about

the direction you want your life to take and what, for you, constitutes the true measure of success.

Balancing the inner and outer sides of success is not always an either-or trade-off. If you pick the right work, for example, you can gain inner satisfaction from the activities that result in outer achievements. And if you seek the right inner satisfactions, work sometimes takes care of itself.

**Success Step #1: Balance the two sides of success.**

## An Easy Answer: Be Happy

People often define success in terms of happiness, but you may be surprised, once you start to think about it, at how hard happiness is to pin down.

People use the word "happiness" to describe at least three different things: a momentary positive emotion, an overall evaluation of the past or hope for the future, and a deep sense of joy, connection and meaning.

### Momentary Happiness

Happiness is one of life's great positive feelings, an emotional experience of joy, love, warmth, rapture, pleasure, tenderness, intimacy or exhilaration. Momentary Happiness comes in bursts. It makes gloomy days brighter and sunny days sweet. No matter how you define success, Momentary Happiness ought to play some role in it.

Two simple ideas can increase your supply:

**Slow down and pay attention.** Increase Momentary Happiness through one simple adjustment in your life: pay more attention to the pleasant aspects of it.

**Reframe your expectations.** Research by Professor Dan Gilbert at Harvard reveals that expectations surrounding events such as weddings, graduations and birthdays that are grounded in cultural assumptions about what is "supposed" to make us happy often interfere with experiencing Momentary Happiness. When expectations run high, future events seldom measure up.

Just as mindfulness helps you focus more on the pleasant things that are already happening, it can also help cure you of unrealistic expectations and adaptations.

### Overall Happiness

Raising your Overall Happiness is not the same as increasing the number of Momentary Happiness experiences you have on a given day. Increasing Overall Happiness can pay meaningful dividends.

To measure your Overall Happiness, imagine a ladder with steps numbered zero (worst possible life) to 10 (best). On which step do you stand at this time?

Most people rank themselves between six and 10 on Overall Happiness scales. We are not happy all the time; neither are we sad all the time. Like the earth's tides, feelings of overall satisfaction ebb and flow.

Researchers suggest four ways to help raise one's score:

1. **Make your health a priority.**
2. **Achieve some long-term goals.**
3. **Invest in your relationships.**
4. **Make enough money.** Research shows that wealth can improve your Overall Happiness. Achieving it produces a bump in Overall Happiness associated with conquering difficult-to-achieve challenges.

### The Third Path: Wisdom Experiences

Wisdom Experiences may be more important to inner success than any form of conventional happiness. Marty Seligman, author of *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*, argues that the cheerful moods of Momentary Happiness and the positive memories that provide the sources for Overall Happiness are "not entitled to a central place in any theory" of the meaningful life. Seligman suggests combining five elements to create a life worth living: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, a sense of meaning that comes from serving a purpose larger than yourself, and accomplishments, both short-term and long-term. When folded together, these create well-being.

**Success Step #2: Define happiness for yourself.**

## Society's Answer: Seek Status, Fame and Fortune

When everyone around you agrees on what success means, it is all too easy to join them. And if you allow others to define your goals for you, then there is a pretty good chance you will end up holding a prize you did not choose and do not want. At that point, you will finally have to define success for yourself. Examine two of the most important outside influences on success beliefs: culture and family. Each can pose unique problems.

Families sometimes complicate the journey to authentic success by laying a heavy burden of expectations on their children. Later in life, the habit of striving to satisfy other people's aspirations can be hard to break.

Individuals take their cues about what is "good or desirable" in life from what they think their culture judges to be good and desirable.

Success values within any given community are often invisible because they are so little debated. Parents, siblings, coaches, bosses, clergy, inspirational speakers, lyrics to

popular songs communicate powerful suggestions about success. All these cultural inputs work their way into the subconscious mind.

The invisible cues provided by your culture then set the benchmark that, when you meet or exceed them, give you a sense of achievement. Those same benchmarks also instill dismal, defeated feelings when you think you have fallen short.

The values your family and culture instilled in you will play a defining role in how you measure your success. To define it for yourself, you need to consider which of those values you endorse and which ones you reject.

### Success Addicts: Hungry Ghosts

Those who acquire an obsession with symbols of conventional success turn into Hungry Ghosts, which is the name Buddhists give to people who cannot get enough status, wealth or power. The "Big Two" — fame and fortune — dominate mass media images of what success means. Anyone who relentlessly seeks status, recognition or power to bolster his or her self-image as a "somebody" is at risk.

As you consider your own ideas of success, keep these factors in mind:

1. You can never be successful if you spend your life living someone else's dreams.
2. People who choose status, fame or fortune for its own sake will never feel secure enough, famous enough or rich enough.
3. When you get past all the cultural success symbols, two things stand out as worth achieving: financial security and the informed respect of people who know you well.

**Success Step #3: Gain perspective on your family and your cultural beliefs.**

## An Inspired Answer: Find Meaningful Work

Your concept of success may be about more than work. But doing work that matters to you is probably a step in the right direction. Consider what deeply felt experiences may serve as sources of inspiration to find meaningful work.

The concept of meaningful work encompasses three interlocking circles: *Reward Driven Work*, which is work that others will reward you for doing; *Talent-Driven Work*, or work that uses your talents and strengths; and *Work That Ignites You Emotionally*, which is work you are passionate about, paid or not.

The place where all three circles intersect is where many people find the most sustainable forms of meaningful work.

### Seven Foundations for Meaningful Work

Here are seven specific foundations on which to build a conception of work as more than just a job or a career. These are captured by the acronym PERFECT.

**Foundation #1: Personal Growth and Development**

"Jobs are like college courses. Each one you take teaches you a set of new skills and offers a fresh perspective on life. They aren't meant to be permanent, most of them. They are only stepping stones." Holly Robinson, *Huffington Post*

**Foundation #2: Entrepreneurial Independence**

Meaningful work can be as simple as "autonomous work." People find their way into a life of entrepreneurial independence from almost any imaginable background.

**Foundation #3: Religious or Spiritual Identity**

Religious faith is not required for work to have meaning, but vocations that embody commitment to religious or spiritual values can and do constitute meaningful work for millions.

**Foundation #4: Family**

The right kind of parent-child relationship can foster a deep sense of vocation-based meaning, promoting growth in parent and child alike. Children given the freedom to choose their own path often find meaning in the work they select by striving to justify the confidence their families placed in them.

**Foundation #5: Expressing Yourself through Ideas, Invention or the Arts**

For those with creative talents, history suggests that work involving personal, original expression — whether through music, painting, words, designs or inventions — can be deeply meaningful. The people who choose a life of self-expression are the creators of culture in each new generation.

**Foundation #6: Community — Serving a Cause, Helping People in Need**

Work that serves a purpose bigger than yourself, whether it is helping people in the community or serving a cause you believe in, can be a source of deep meaning.

**Foundation #7: Talent-Based Striving for Excellence**

Aspire to the highest standards of excellence in any field for which you have talents. Start with a passion and develop it into a lifelong commitment to excellence. Or start with a talent, commit to developing it, deepen it with hard work, and finally arrive at a passionate commitment.

Final word of advice: The distance between a job or career and "meaningful work" is often shorter than you

think. Consider the "sweet spot" where talent, passion and your ability to earn a living overlap.

**Success Step #4: Seek meaningful work.**

## PART 2: THE SECOND QUESTION: HOW WILL I ACHIEVE IT?

# Discover What You Can Do Better Than Most: Capabilities

Julia Child, the world's first television food celebrity, once summed up her success in a single sentence: "The more I cook, the more I like to cook." When you enjoy some activity, you tend to practice it. And when you practice hard at something, you keep getting better. Eventually, it is something you do better than most. Sometimes it becomes something you can do better than anyone else in the world.

Success starts with the thing you do better than most, whether that is writing, working with your hands, doing calculations in your head, making a tight and convincing argument, cooking or creating designs. It usually resides in the unique *combination* of capabilities you bring to what you do.

### Capabilities: They Are Always Closer Than You Think

The tools you need to make a more satisfying life are usually close at hand. Success often comes from building on what you already know — and know how to do.

In his famous Acres of Diamonds speech in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Russell Conwell, one of the most famous motivational speakers in America and founder of Temple University, told of Ali Hafed, a wealthy, happy farmer who went on a fruitless search for diamonds throughout the Middle East and all across Europe. Finding nothing, he was reduced to rags and threw himself into the ocean, dying a broken man. Meanwhile, the new owner of his farm came across a "curious flash of light" in the stream. It was not long before he discovered that the river in Ali Hafed's backyard was littered with diamonds. The farm went on to become one of the largest diamond mines in the world.

What exactly is involved in looking for diamonds? Be self-aware and honest about two things. First, you must pay attention when you feel dissatisfied with the status quo. Without some measure of dissatisfaction, you lack the motivation to start your search. Second, you must tune in to your inner voice — your intuition — and monitor the excitement you feel about your new directions.

Start looking for four diamonds — capabilities that are in your own backyard and that will create your bridge to the future.

**Diamond #1: Interests and Passions**

No matter who you are or what stage of life you are in, you have natural interests and passions for particular activities, subjects, sports, people, careers, purposes, shows, media or even games.

Start your diamond hunt by surveying passions and interests. Do not leave anything off the list, even common interests. These activities become the foundations in some successful lives.

**Diamond #2: Aptitudes and Skills**

The search for your capabilities also involves cataloging the things you do "a bit better than others" — your natural talents.

Understand the role genes play in abilities. Your ultimate income level, educational attainment and professional status will have a lot to do with the genes your parents passed on to you.

Experiences in life — both inside and outside the home — interact with genes to bring out those capabilities so they can become skills and talents the outside world observes.

You can choose to expose yourself to new experiences and environmental pressures throughout your life. Rapid progress in any new activity triggers a new genetic "expression."

**Diamond #3: Past Experience**

Each stage of life builds on the last. Successful people find constructive ways to repurpose what they have already done to launch into the next stage. Capabilities change and expand as you move from first jobs through later career moves, hobbies, additional education and training.

Successful people are smart about reaching out to create the experiences they need to give them credibility for the leap.

New experiences — especially those associated with getting trained and credentialed — frequently open up areas of activity never explored. It is the combination of these activities with your prior experiences, skills and aptitudes that offer fresh, potentially satisfying ways to spend time.

Keep in mind that the process of gaining experiences usually involves improvisation and trial and error. You need to be ready to change direction as you figure out which aspects of a new activity actually suit you and which do not.

**The Final Diamond: Your Personality Strengths**

One of the most important capabilities you bring to any activity is your unique combination of personality-based strengths. Four key aspects of personality that relate most directly to success are your attitudes about other people (Social Styles), your drive to achieve (Action-Orienta-

tions), inclinations toward intellectual or creative activities (Mindsets), and your emotional response system (Emotional Temperaments.)

We learn a lot when we see ourselves reflected in the looking glass of other people's perceptions. And you will be surprised to learn about the different versions of "you" other people reflect back to you based on the social role you play when you interact with them.

Of course, in the end, you — and only you — get the last word on defining yourself.

**Success Step #5: Look inside to find your unique combination of capabilities.**

## Set Yourself on Fire: Motivation

To motivate yourself to succeed, you need two kinds of energy. First, there is the slow-burning fuel of innate, satisfaction-based motivation. Second, there is the hotter, more urgent energy of competition for resources, rewards and recognition. The first kind of motivation aims you in a direction and gives you a reliable, steady, renewable supply of energy to keep moving. The second turbocharges your performance, adds adrenaline and powers you up when you need a motivational surge.

Satisfaction-based motivation is critically important to sustaining any interest or activity for a long time. But without reward-based drives, you may lack the intensity needed to do your best work. The highest levels of performance result from a combination of *both* satisfaction and reward-based motivations.

### Staying Motivated: Six Renewal Rituals

No matter what your sources of motivation, you need ways to renew it as you move through a day that poses different challenges and calls on different levels of effort. Here are six techniques that can make the difference between success and failure.

1. **Make yourself accountable:** Bring your posse. Set up a support group.
2. **Connect with role models:** Find people who inspire you.
3. **Create a motivational ritual:** Make it a habit.
4. **Compete with yourself:** Make up a prize. Create your own reward-penalty plan.
5. **Prove someone wrong:** Show them what you've got. "I'll show them!"
6. **Channel your strongest emotions:** Turn up the heat. Achieve a level of "creative stress" based on strong emotional energy.

**Success Step #6: Energize yourself by combining satisfaction-based and reward-based motivations.**

## Learn to Fail: Self-Confidence

The right kind of self-confidence is central to achievement. Confidence operates on two levels.

Level One Confidence relates to your basic and deepest sense of self — the belief in your own autonomy, moral character and ability to take action in the world. These beliefs can be forged at any stage of life through successfully overcoming a challenging obstacle that life throws in front of you. Level One Confidence can also be instilled through respect shown to you by people whom you yourself respect — based on their genuine accomplishments and character. Finally, this basic form of confidence sometimes develops through sincere faith in powers beyond your own if you are a person inclined toward such faith. The best kind of Level One Confidence combines a secure belief in yourself with an equally firm commitment to high standards of personal character.

The second type of self-confidence — Level Two — applies to specific skills and activities you undertake. Level Two Confidence, built on the belief that you can "get smarter and better" when you set your mind to it, can literally transform your actual capabilities, including problem-solving ability, academic performance and work outcomes.

A success "mindset" includes the willingness to learn, challenge your skills, focus on effort more than results, and treat failure as a stage on the journey rather than as the end of the road.

**Success Step #7: Cultivate Self-Confidence**

## Focus Your Mind: Passion, Imagination, Intuition and Reason

There are four distinct personal powers everyone uses to get things done. Think of the four forces of Passion, Imagination, Intuition and Reason (PIIR — pronounced "peer") as your achievement team — a group made up of four talented specialists each offering something unique and valuable.

When it is aroused, your Passion is the strongest, most dominant member. Your basic needs, fears and desires provide the impetus for everything you do — and play special roles in keeping you excited about long-term projects and pushing you across the finish line.

Reason contributes the analytic, logical planning skills you need to craft and carry out the goals your Passions dictate. Imagination and Intuition provide creative and integrative talents. They help you envision the future, create new solutions, and make lightning-quick adjustments when unexpected problems arise.

With these four mental powers at your command, the achievement process can get underway.

**Step #1: Consult Your Passions — Identify a Worthy Goal.** What do you want that could make your life more fun, purposeful, interesting or challenging?

**Step #2: Let Your Imagination and Intuition Generate Ideas.** To engage the powers of the subconscious mind, frame a good problem, load up on data related to it, and trust the intuitive powers to start coming up with ideas. Ideas often occur when the intentional parts of the mind either are shut down entirely or are in a distinctly relaxed state: during sleep and during relaxed moments of daydreaming, meditating, bathing, walking or driving.

**Step #3: Commit to a Specific, Challenging Plan.** Consider a set of criteria used by many businesses called SMART: A SMART plan is one that is Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant and Timely. Bring more commitment to your goal: write it down, talk to others, announce it in public, and acquire a sense of accountability for it.

**Step #4: Break it Down into Small Steps.** Big goals are inspiring but are also daunting. Break them down into small, manageable chunks.

**Step #5: Improvise and Adjust — Then Close the Deal.** Life rarely works out exactly as we planned it. Successful people understand that chance and serendipity play an important part in life. When one plan falls through, step back, remember your focus and take another path.

**Success Step #8: Focus the powers of your mind to achieve long-term goals.**

## Influence Others: Credibility and Dialogue

Nobody achieves success alone. Sooner or later, you need to influence other people to make things happen. When you do, the most important tools you bring will be your credibility and your ability to engage others in genuine, give-and-take dialogue.

A large part of your success in dealing with others derives from your awareness of the automatic, semiconscious reflexes that enable humans to signal to one another that they are willing to engage in everyday cooperation.

### Getting Things Done Through Working Relationships: Credibility

Building rapport is key, but to influence someone about an important idea, you need something more than rapport. You need the substance that comes with having credibility. Credibility arises from other people's perceptions of four things: your formal and informal authority, knowledge, reputation for getting things done and your trustworthiness.

Think of credibility as a chair supported by four legs. The more secure your credibility is on each of its four supporting columns, the easier it is for your audience to take you seriously on an important matter. Your influence starts to wobble — or collapses altogether — as you take away each leg of the chair. If your audience thinks you lack relevant authority, are poorly informed about a subject, have never handled a similar problem or cannot be trusted, then you will have a much harder time being heard.

**Success Step #9: Engage others; exercise influence.**

## Conclusion

Defining and striving for success give you the opportunity to think about your life, relationships, talents and future goals. That kind of reflection, when focused on the right subjects, almost always yields substantial dividends. It can help you recognize which pathways have a better chance of leading you toward your own vision of success.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Springboard,* you'll also like:

1. ***The Art of Woo*** by G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa. The authors explain how to strengthen persuasion skills in every aspect of life by using the four-step Woo process.

2. ***The ONE Thing*** by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan. You want more productivity from your work. You want more satisfaction from life. Keller and Papasan show how you can have both.

3. ***Extreme Productivity*** by Robert C. Pozen. Pozen explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.

· Book 24 of 269 ·

# 35-30 What Keeps Leaders Up At Night

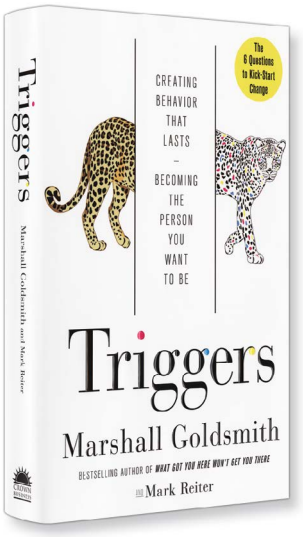
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# Triggers

## Creating Behavior That Lasts — Becoming the Person You Want to Be




by Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Reiter

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you ever find that you are not the patient, compassionate problem solver you believe yourself to be? Are you surprised at how irritated or flustered the normally unflappable you becomes in the presence of a specific colleague at work? Have you ever felt your temper accelerate from zero to sixty when another driver cuts you off in traffic?

As Marshall Goldsmith points out in *Triggers*, our reactions don't occur in a vacuum. They are usually the result of unappreciated triggers in our environment — the people and situations that lure us into behaving in a manner diametrically opposed to the colleague, partner, parent or friend we imagine ourselves to be. So often, the environment seems to be outside our control.

Even if that is true, as Goldsmith points out, we have a choice in how we respond. In *Triggers*, Goldsmith shows how we can overcome the trigger points in our lives and enact meaningful and lasting change. Goldsmith offers a simple "magic bullet" solution in the form of daily self-monitoring, hinging around what he calls "active" questions, six "engaging questions" that can help us take responsibility for our efforts to improve and help us recognize when we fall short.

With these and other strategies, *Triggers* can help us to achieve change in our lives, make it stick and become the person we want to be.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The most common belief triggers that keep us from changing.
- To identify your triggers and use active questions to counter them.
- The power of the environment to influence behavior and the importance of structure to change behavior.
- Why a "good enough" attitude can harm interpersonal relationships.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **TRIGGERS**

**by Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Reiter**

**The authors:** Marshall Goldsmith has been recognized as one of the top 10 most influential business thinkers in the world. He is the author or editor of 35 best-selling books, which have been translated into 30 languages. He is one of a select few executive advisors who have been asked to work with over 150 CEOs and their management teams. Mark Reiter is a literary agent and writer who has collaborated on books with Twyla Tharp, Phil Dusenberry and Mark McCormack, in addition to Marshall Goldsmith. From the book *Triggers: Creating Behavior That Lasts — Becoming the Person You Want to Be*. Copyright © 2015 by Marshall Goldsmith,Inc. Published by Crown Business, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. 272 pages, $27.00, ISBN 978-0-804-14123-9. Summary copyright ©2015 by Soundview Executive Book Summaries www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY.

## PART I: WHY DON'T WE BECOME THE PERSON WE WANT TO BE?

### The Immutable Truths of Behavioral Change

There are two immutable truths of behavioral change:

**Truth #1: Meaningful behavioral change is very hard to do.** It's hard to initiate behavioral change, even harder to stay the course, hardest of all to make the change stick. Adult behavioral change is the most difficult thing for sentient human beings to accomplish.

There are three problems we face in introducing change into our lives:

- We can't admit that we need to change — either because we're unaware that a change is desirable, or, more likely, we're aware but have reasoned our way into elaborate excuses that deny our need for change.
- We do not appreciate inertia's power over us. Given the choice, we prefer to do nothing.
- We don't know how to execute a change. There's a difference between motivation and understanding and ability.

**Truth #2: No one can make us change unless we truly want to change.** This should be self-evident. Change has to come from within. It can't be dictated, demanded, or otherwise forced upon people. A man or woman who does not wholeheartedly commit to change will never change.

If you want to be a better partner at home or a better manager at work, you not only have to change your ways, you have to get some buy-in from your partner or co-workers. Everyone around you has to recognize that you're changing. Relying on other people increases the degree of difficulty exponentially.

What makes positive, lasting behavioral change so challenging — and causes most of us to give up early in the game — is that we have to do it in our imperfect world, full of triggers that may pull and push us off course.

The good news is that behavioral change does not have to be complicated. Achieving meaningful and lasting change may be simple — simpler than we imagine. But *simple* is far from *easy*.

### Belief Triggers That Stop Behavioral Change in Its Tracks

Even when the individual and societal benefits of changing a specific behavior are indisputable, we are geniuses at inventing reasons to avoid change. It is much easier, and more fun, to attack the strategy of the person who's trying to help than to try to solve the problem.

That genius becomes more acute when it applies to us — when it's our turn to change how we behave. We fall back on a set of beliefs that trigger denial, resistance and ultimately self-delusion. They sabotage lasting change by canceling its possibility. We employ these beliefs as articles of faith to justify our inaction and then wish away the result. These are called *belief triggers* and they are:

- If I understand, I will do.
- I have willpower and won't give in to temptation.
- Today is a special day.
- "At least I'm better than..."

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

- I shouldn't need help and structure.
- I won't get tired and my enthusiasm will not fade.
- I have all the time in the world?
- I won't get distracted and nothing unexpected will occur.
- An epiphany will suddenly change my life.
- My change will be permanent and I will never have to worry again.
- My elimination of old problems will not bring on new problems.
- My efforts will be fairly rewarded.
- No one is paying attention to me.
- If I change I am "inauthentic."
- I have the wisdom to assess my own behavior.

There is an even larger reason that explains why we don't make the changes we want to make — greater than the high quality of our excuses or our devotion to our belief triggers. It's called the environment.

## It's the Environment

Most of us go through life unaware of how our environment shapes our behavior. When we experience "road rage" on a crowded freeway, it's not because we're sociopathic monsters. It's because the temporary condition of being behind the wheel in a car, surrounded by rude, impatient drivers, triggers a change in our otherwise placid demeanor. We've unwittingly placed ourselves in an environment of impatience, competitiveness, and hostility — and it alters us.

Even when we're aware of our environment and welcome being in it, we become victims of its ruthless power. We think we are in sync with our environment, but actually it's at war with us. We think we control our environment, but in fact it controls us. We think our external environment is conspiring in our favor — that is, helping us — when actually it is taxing and draining us. It is not interested in what it can give us. It's only interested in what it can take from us.

It's not all bad. Our environment can be the angel on our shoulder, making us a better person. Much of the time, however, our environment is the devil. That's the part that eludes us: Entering a new environment changes our behavior in sly ways, whether we're sitting in a conference room with colleagues or visiting friends for dinner or enduring our weekly phone call with an aging parent.

Some environments are designed precisely to lure us into acting against our interest. That's what happens when we overspend at the high-end mall. Other environments are not as manipulative and predatory as a luxury store. But they're still not working *for* us.

Consider the perennial goal of getting a good night's sleep. Sleep should be easy to achieve. We have the *motivation* to sleep well. We *understand* how much sleep we need. And we have *control*: Sleep is a self-regulated activity that happens in an environment totally governed by us — our home. So why don't we do what we know is good for us?

It can be blamed on a fundamental misunderstanding of how our environment shapes our behavior. It leads to a phenomenon that Dutch sleep researchers at Utrecht University call "bedtime procrastination." We put off going to bed at the intended time because we prefer to remain in our current environment — watching a late-night movie or playing video games or cleaning the kitchen — rather than move to the relative calm and comfort of our bedroom. It's a choice between competing environments.

The environment that is most concerning is *situational*. It's a hyperactive shape-shifter. Every time we enter a new situation, with its mutating who- what- when- where- and- why-specifics, we are surrendering ourselves to a new environment — and putting our goals, our plans, our behavioral integrity at risk. It's a simple dynamic: a changing environment changes us.

## Identifying Our Triggers

What if we could control our environment so it triggered our most desired behavior — like an elegantly designed feedback loop? To achieve that, we first have to clarify the term *trigger*: A behavioral trigger is any stimulus that impacts our behavior.

A behavioral trigger can be

- direct or indirect
- internal or external
- conscious or unconscious
- anticipated or unexpected
- encouraging or discouraging
- productive or counterproductive

It's helpful to take a closer look at these last two dimensions of triggers — encouraging or discouraging, productive or counterproductive. They express the timeless tension between *what we want* and *what we need*. We want short-term gratification while we need long-term benefit. And we never get a break from choosing one or the other. Encouraging triggers lead us toward what we want and productive triggers lead us toward what we need.

Try this modest exercise: Pick a behavioral goal you're still pursuing. List the people and situations that influence the quality of your performance. Don't list all the triggers in your day; stick to the trigger or two that relate to one specific goal. Then define it. Is it encouraging or discouraging, productive or counterproductive? If you're falling short of your goal, this simple exercise will tell you why. You're getting too much of what you want, not enough of what you need.

This exercise can 1) make us smarter about specific triggers and 2) help us connect them directly to our behavioral successes and failures. It's a reminder that, no matter how extreme the circumstances, when it comes to our behavior, we always have a choice.

## How Triggers Work

How does a trigger actually work within us? Are there moving parts between the trigger and the behavior?

The classic sequencing template for analyzing problem behavior in children is known as ABC, for antecedent, behavior and consequence. The antecedent is the event that prompts the behavior. The behavior creates a consequence. A common classroom example is: a student is drawing pictures instead of working on the class assignment. The teacher asks the child to finish the task (the request is the antecedent). The child reacts by throwing a tantrum (behavior). The teacher responds by sending the student to the principal's office (consequence).

But when we're changing interpersonal behavior, we're adding a layer of complexity in the form of other people. Our triggered response can't always be automatic and unthinking and habitual — because as caring human beings we have to consider how people will respond to our actions.

In adult behavioral change, there is a modification to the sequence of antecedent, behavior, and consequence. There are three eye-blink moments — first impulse, then awareness, then a choice — that comprise crucial intervals between the trigger and our eventual behavior. These intervals are so brief that we sometimes fail to segregate them from what we regard as our "behavior." But experience and common sense tell us they're real.

When a trigger is pulled, we have an impulse to behave a certain way. We can think. We can make any impulse run in place for a brief moment while we choose to obey or ignore it. We make a choice not out of unthinking habit but as evidence of our intelligence and engagement. In other words, we are paying attention.

The more aware we are, the less likely any trigger, even in the most mundane circumstances, will prompt hasty unthinking behavior that leads to undesirable consequences. Rather than operate on autopilot, we'll slow down time to think it over and make a more considered choice.

We already do this in the big moments. It's the little moments that trigger some of our most outsized and unproductive responses. The slow line at the coffee shop, the second cousin who asks why you're still single, the colleague who doesn't remove his sunglasses indoors to talk to you.

Some of us suppress the impulse. Some of us are easily triggered — and can't resist our first impulse. We have to speak up. This is how ugly public scenes begin. These tiny annoyances should trigger bemusement over life's rich tapestry instead of turning us into umbrage-taking characters from a Seinfeld episode.

# PART II: TRY

## The Power of Active Questions

Asking active questions is a magic move. Like apologizing or asking for help, it's easy to do. But it's a different kind of triggering mechanism. Its objective is to alter our behavior, not the behavior of others. But that doesn't make it less magical. The act of self-questioning — so simple, so misunderstood, so infrequently pursued — changes everything.

When asked exclusively, passive questions can be the natural enemy of taking personal responsibility and demonstrating accountability. They can give people the unearned permission to pass the buck to anyone and anything but themselves.

Active questions are the alternative to passive questions. There's a difference between "Do you have clear goals?" and "Did you do your best to set clear goals for yourself?" The former is trying to determine the employee's state of mind; the latter challenges the employee to describe or defend a course of action.

### The Engaging Questions

In an ongoing study with a steady stream of participants in leadership seminars, people answered six active questions every day for 10 working days.

1. Did I do my best to set clear goals today?
2. Did I do my best to make progress toward my goals today?

3. Did I do my best to find meaning today?
4. Did I do my best to be happy today?
5. Did I do my best to build positive relationships today?
6. Did I do my best to be fully engaged today?

Thirty-seven percent of participants reported improvement in all six areas; 65 percent improved on at least four items; and 89 percent improved on at least one item.

Given people's demonstrable reluctance to change at all, this study shows that active self-questioning can trigger a new way of interacting with our world. Active questions reveal where we are trying and where we are giving up. In doing so, they sharpen our sense of what we can actually change. We gain a sense of control and responsibility instead of victimhood.

Injecting the phrase "Did I do my best to . . ." triggers trying. Trying not only changes our behavior but how we interpret and react to that behavior. Trying is more than a semantic tweak to our standard list of goals. It delivers some unexpected emotional wallops that inspire change or knock us out of the game completely.

Imagine the Daily Questions you'd want on your behavioral change list. If you're like most people, the objectives would fall into a predictable set of broad categories: health, family, relationships, money, enlightenment, and discipline. List the goals on a chart so you can score them at the end of each day. Where appropriate make sure you begin each question with "Did I do my best to . . ." Now study the list and rate your chances of doing well over the next thirty days. If you're like most people — and 90 percent of all people rate themselves above average — you will give yourself a better than 50 percent chance of hitting your targets on all your goals.

At the start of any self-improvement project, when our confidence is high, that's a reasonable assumption. But in a world where we are superior planners and inferior doers, it rarely works out that way.

That's the secret power of daily self-questioning. If we fall short on our goals eventually we either abandon the questions or push ourselves into action. We feel ashamed or embarrassed because we wrote the questions, knew the answers and still failed the test. When the questions begin with "Did I do my best to . . ." the feeling is even worse. We have to admit that we didn't even try to do what we know we should have done.

Commitment. Motivation. Self-d iscipline. Self-control. Patience. Those are powerful allies when we try to change our ways, courtesy of Daily Questions.

There's one other ally we've left out of this discussion — the coach.

## Planner, Doer *and* Coach

There's no inherent magic to charting our Daily Questions on a spreadsheet. The only essential element is that the scores are reported somehow — via direct phone contact, email or a voice message — to someone every day. And that someone is the coach.

At the most basic level, a coach is a follow-up mechanism, like a supervisor who regularly checks in on how we're doing (we're more productive when we know we're being watched from above). At a slightly more sophisticated level, a coach instills accountability. In the self-scoring system of Daily Questions, we must answer for our answers. If we're displeased, we face a choice. Do we continue suffering our self-created disappointment, or do we try harder?

At the highest level, a coach is a source of mediation, bridging the gap between the visionary Planner and short-sighted Doer in us. The Planner in us may say "I'm going to read *Anna Karenina* over vacation," but during a holiday packed with enticing distractions, it's the Doer who has to find a quiet corner and get through Tolstoy's many pages. A Coach reminds us of the unreliable person we become after we make our plans.

Three benefits of Daily Questions are 1) If we do it, we get better; 2) We get better faster and 3) Eventually we become our own Coach. Over time, after many reminders, we learn and adapt. We recognize the situations where we'll likely stray from our plans. We think, "I've been here before. I know what works and what doesn't." And after many failures, one day we make a better choice. That's the moment when the Planner and Doer in us are joined by the Coach in us. We don't need an outside agency to point out our behavioral danger zones, or urge us to toe the line, or even hear our nightly scores. We can do it on our own.

## AIWATT

Here is a first principle for becoming the person you want to be. Follow it and it will shrink your daily volume of stress, conflict, unpleasant debate and wasted time. It is phrased in the form of a question you should be asking yourself whenever you must choose to either engage or "let it go."

**"Am I willing, at this time, to make the investment required to make a positive difference on this topic?"**

The first five words form an acronym, AIWATT (it rhymes with "say what"). Like the physician's principle, "First, do no harm," it doesn't require you to do anything, merely avoid doing something foolish.

AIWATT is the delaying mechanism we should be deploying in the interval between trigger and behavior — after a trigger creates an impulse and before behavior we may regret. AIWATT creates a split-second delay in our prideful, cynical, judgmental, argumentative and selfish responses to our triggering environment. The delay gives us time to consider a more positive response.

The 19-word text deserves close parsing: "Am I willing" implies that we are exercising volition — taking responsibility — rather than surfing along the waves of inertia that otherwise rule our day. We are asking, "Do I really want to do this?"

"At this time" reminds us that we're operating in the present. Circumstances will differ later on, demanding a different response. The only issue is what we're facing now. "To make the investment" reminds us that responding to others is work, an expenditure of time, energy and opportunity.

"To make a positive difference" places the emphasis on the kinder, gentler side of our nature. It's a reminder that we can help create a better us or a better world. If we're not accomplishing one or the other, why are we getting involved? "On this topic" focuses us on the matter at hand. We can't solve every problem. The time we spend on topics where we can't make a positive difference is stolen from topics where we can.

AIWATT isn't a universal panacea for all our interpersonal problems. It's been given prominence here because it has a specific utility. It's a reminder that our environment tempts us many times a day to engage in pointless skirmishes. And we can do something about it — by doing nothing.

## PART III: MORE STRUCTURE, PLEASE

## We Do Not Get Better Without Structure

We do not get better without structure. Structure limits our options so that we're not thrown off course by externalities. If we're only allowed five minutes to speak, we find a way to make our case with a newfound concision — and it's usually a better speech because of the structural limitations (most audiences would agree).

Imposing structure on parts of our day is how we seize control of our otherwise unruly environment. When we formulate our bucket list we're imposing structure on the rest of our life. When we attend church every Sunday or track our weekly running mileage, we're using some form of structure to gain control of the wayward corners of our lives. We're telling ourselves, "In this area I need help." And structure provides the help.

Successful people know all this intuitively. Yet we discount structure when it comes to honing our interpersonal behavior. Structure is fine for organizing our calendar, or learning a technically difficult task, or managing other people, or improving a quantifiable skill. But for the simple tasks of interacting with other people, we prefer to wing it — for reasons that sound like misguided variations on "I shouldn't need to do that."

## We Need Help When We're Least Likely to Get It

At the intersection where structure and behavior bump up against each other, there's a paradox. We rely on structure to govern the predictable parts of our lives. But what about all the unguarded interpersonal moments that aren't marked down on our schedules? The annoying colleague, noisy neighbor, rude customer, angry client, distressed child or disappointed spouse who unexpectedly demand attention when we're neither prepared nor in the best shape to respond well?

That's the paradox: *We need help when we're least likely to get it.* Our environment is loaded with surprises that trigger odd, unfamiliar responses from us. We end up behaving against our interests. Quite often, we don't even realize it.

### The Awful Meeting

Imagine that you have to go to a one-hour meeting that will be pointless, boring, a time-suck better spent catching up on your "real" work. (We've all been there.) You have no interest in masking how you feel about the meeting. You walk in sporting a sullen look on your face, signaling that you'd rather be anywhere but here. You slouch in your chair, resisting eye contact, doodling on a notepad, speaking only when you're called on, making perfunctory contributions. At meeting's end, you're the first one out the door. Your goal was to spend the hour being miserable — and you succeeded.

Now imagine at meeting's end you will be tested — just you — with four simple questions about how you spent that hour: Did I do my best to be happy? Did I do my best to find meaning? Did I do my best to build positive relationships? Did I do my best to be fully engaged? If you knew that you were going to be tested, what would you do differently to raise your score on any of these four items?

Some typical responses are: "I would go into the meeting with a positive attitude." "Instead of waiting for someone to make it interesting, I'd make it interesting myself." "I'd try to help the presenter in some way instead of critiquing him in my head."

Everyone has good answers. That's the motivational kicker in knowing you'll be tested afterward. It turns the indifferent environment of a boring meeting into a keen competition with yourself. It makes you hyperaware of your behavior.

By taking personal responsibility for your own engagement, you make a positive contribution to your company — and begin creating a better you.

## The Trouble with 'Good Enough'

There are no absolutes in behavioral change. We never achieve perfect patience or generosity or empathy or humility (you pick the virtue). It's nothing to be ashamed of. The best we can hope for is a consistency in our effort — a persistence of striving — that makes other people more charitable about our shortcomings.

What's worrisome is when the striving stops, our lapses become more frequent, and we begin to coast on our reputation. That's the perilous moment when we start to settle for "good enough." Good enough isn't necessarily a bad thing. In many areas of life, chasing perfection is a fool's errand, or at least a poor use of our time. We don't need to spend hours taste-testing every mustard on the gourmet shelf to find the absolute best; a good enough brand will suffice for our sandwich.

The problem begins when this "good enough" attitude spills beyond our marketplace choices and into the things we say and do. In the interpersonal realm, good enough is setting the bar too low. It disappoints people, creates distress where there should be harmony, and, taken to extremes, ends up destroying relationships.

Let's look at four environments that trigger good enough behavior:

**When our motivation is marginal:** If your motivation for a task or goal is in any way compromised — because you lack the skill, or don't take the task seriously, or think what you've done so far is good enough — don't take it on. Find something else to show the world how much you care, not how little.

**When we're working pro bono:** Pro bono is an adjective, not an excuse. If you think doing folks a favor justifies doing less than your best, you're not doing anyone any favors, including yourself. People forget your promise, remember your performance. Better than nothing is not even close to good enough — and good enough, after we make a promise, is never good enough.

**When we behave like "amateurs":** We are professionals at what we do, amateurs at what we want to become. We need to erase this distinction — or at least close the gap between professional and amateur — to become the person we want to be. Being good over here does not excuse being not so good over there.

**When we have compliance issues:** When we engage in noncompliance, we're not just being sloppy and lazy. It's more aggressive and rude than that. We're thumbing our noses at the world, announcing, "The rules don't apply to us. Don't rely on us. We don't care." We're drawing a line at good enough and refusing to budge beyond it.

# PART IV: NO REGRETS

## The Circle of Engagement

Forcing people to think about their environment in the context of fundamental desires like happiness, purpose and engagement concentrates the mind, makes people reflect on how they're measuring up in those areas — and why.

When we assess our performance against the Engaging Questions and come up wanting in any way, we can lay the blame on either the environment or ourselves. We love to scapegoat our environment. We don't set clear goals because we answer to too many people. We falter on existing goals because we have too much on our plate. We're unhappy because our job is a dead end. We don't form positive relationships because other people won't meet us halfway. And so on.

And as skilled as we are at scapegoating our environment, we are equally masterful at granting ourselves absolution for any shortcomings. Honestly assessing the interplay in our lives between these two forces — the environment and ourselves — is how we become the person we want to be.

But don't forget to highlight the value of two other objectives. The first is awareness — being awake to what's going on around us. Few of us go through our day being more than fractionally aware. We turn off our brains when we travel or commute to work. Our minds wander in meetings. Who knows what we're missing when we're not paying attention?

The second is engagement. We're not only awake in our environment, we're actively participating in it — and the people who matter to us recognize our engagement. In most contexts, engagement is the most admirable state of being. Is there higher praise coming from a partner or child than to hear them tell us, "You are always there for me"? Or anything more painful than to be told, "You were never there for me"? That's how much engagement matters to us. It is the finest end product of adult behavioral change.

When we embrace a desire for awareness and engagement, we are in the best position to appreciate all the triggers the environment throws at us. We might not know what to expect — the triggering power of our environment is a constant surprise — but we know what others expect of us. And we know what we expect of ourselves.

The results can be astonishing. We no longer have to treat our environment as if it's a train rushing toward us while we stand helplessly on the track waiting for impact. The interplay between us and our environment becomes reciprocal, a give-and-take arrangement where we are creating it as much as it creates us. We achieve an equilibrium described as the Circle of Engagement.

## The Reciprocal Miracle

Here is an example of how it works: Jim's wife, Barbara, called him at work when he was having one of those Category 4 hurricane kind of days. Everything going wrong: clients ticked off, division chief riding him, assistant called in sick. His wife said, "I just need someone to talk to." Evidently she was having a rough day at her job, too.

The statement "I just need someone to talk to" is a trigger — a trigger for Jim to stop what he's doing and listen. He's not being asked for his opinion or help. He's not being asked to say anything at all. Just listen. It is the easiest "ask" of his day. He should cherish it as an unexpected gift.

But at the precise moment Jim hears Barbara's voice, it's not a certainty that he will accept the call as a blessing. A trigger, after all, leads directly to an impulse to behave in a specific way, and Jim had a full menu of impulses to choose from, not all of them desirable.

He could become even more frazzled than he was before the phone rang. In other words, use the trigger to elevate his existing emotions. He could tell his wife that he's really swamped at the moment and promise to call her back later or discuss it at home. He could give Barbara his perfunctory attention and multi-task while she's talking. In other words, award the trigger a lower priority than his wife attaches to it — and hope she doesn't notice.

He could have self-righteous thoughts about how his wife's problems pale in both severity and significance to his own and then demonstrate in exquisite detail that she is not as miserable as he is. In other words, he could compete with Barbara's trigger and "win." He could pursue the highly dubious strategy of proving that, once again, he is right and she is wrong.

Or he could listen.

Jim made the right choice: He said, "I was getting ready to point out that she wasn't the only person having problems. Then I remembered the words: 'Am I willing at this time to make the investment required to make a positive contribution on this topic?' I took a breath and decided to be the guy who she needed to talk to. I didn't say a thing. When she finished venting, she said, 'That felt good.' All I could say was, 'I love you.'"

This is the reciprocal miracle that appears when we are aware and engaged. We recognize a trigger for what it really is and respond wisely and appropriately. Our behavior creates a trigger that itself generates more appropriate behavior from the other person. Jim's wife triggered something thoughtful and wonderful in him, and he reciprocated by triggering a feel-good response in her. In the most positive way, each had become the other's trigger. Whether they knew it or not, they were running laps in a virtuous circle of engagement — and keeping the circle unbroken.

Now it's your turn. Think about one change, one triggering gesture, that you won't regret later on. Then do it. It will be better for you. So much better, you will want to do it again.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Triggers*, you'll also like:

1. ***Mojo* by Marshall Goldsmith, Mark Reiter.** Mojo comes from the moment we do something that is purposeful, powerful, and positive, and the rest of the world recognizes it. Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get — and keep — our professional and personal Mojo.

2. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith.** The corporate world is filled with executives who have worked hard to reach the upper levels of management. But only a handful of them will ever reach the pinnacle. Goldsmith shows that subtle nuances make all the difference.

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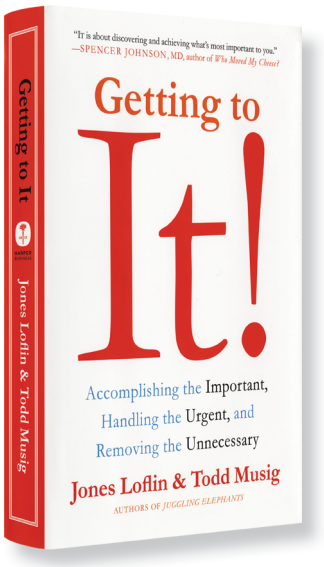
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# Getting to It!

## Accomplishing the Important, Handling the Urgent, and Removing the Unnecessary




by Jones Loflin and Todd Musig

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

From the authors of *Juggling Elephants* comes the only guide you need to sort through the many priorities of your life, know what your IT (Important Thing) should be, and understand how to get IT done.

How busy are you? Is your mind constantly racing through lists of all the things you could and should be doing? Does your day often feel as though you're treading water in an ocean of rushes and deadlines, trying to keep from drowning while handling the increasing demands of your work and life?

Don't give up — help is on the way. You just have to find your IT. The Important Thing. Define IT. Plan IT. Focus on IT. Get excited about IT.

Identifying IT isn't just the first step in the process of getting focused and heading in the right direction: it's every step. *Getting to It* provides the necessary tools to accomplish the important, handle the urgent, and get rid of the unnecessary. Want to enjoy a more fulfilling life? Get to IT.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to recognize when you're working too hard on the wrong things.
- How to devote your physical, mental and emotional resources to getting what is important done.
- How to better evaluate where you're spending your time and energy.
- How to set yourself up to achieve more success at work and in your personal life.
- How to work on and accomplish your most important things.
- How to get those you work with on board with your goals.
- How to say "yes" to what is important and "no" to what is not.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **GETTING TO IT!**

**by Jones Loflin and Todd Musig**

**The authors:** Jones Loflin is an internationally recognized speaker/trainer and the coauthor of the award-winning book *Juggling Elephants*. He has developed and delivered solutions for many Fortune 500 companies in the areas of time management, focus, motivation and work-life balance. Loflin has also worked as the trainer of trainers for Who Moved My Cheese? LLC.

Todd Musig is a senior training industry executive and consultant, with extensive experience in marketing and business operations. He has been associated with FranklinCovey, AcheiveGlobal and Who Moved My Cheese? LLC, and he is the coauthor of *Juggling Elephants*.

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For additional information on the authors, go to www.summary.com or www.gettingtoit.com.

## What Is IT?

### In Your Struggle to Get It All Done, What's Not Getting Done?

It's possible that other people already admire you as someone who has it all together. Do you privately wonder how much longer you can maintain your pace and your reputation for always delivering on time? Are you often merely getting by rather than thriving, hoping that something (other than retirement or winning the lottery) will come along to rescue you from this stormy ocean of hurry, deadlines, and the constant juggling act of balancing never-ending work and life demands?

There is a solution to help get you focused and pointed in the right direction. In a word: IT. *Of everything you could do in the next moment, IT is the most important thing.*

The problem, you tell yourself, isn't in deciding what must be done; often circumstances or other people have made those decisions for you. The problem is in all the steps required to accomplish a number one priority.

Constantly stepping back and analyzing what's driving your choice of IT is more than just a useful exercise; it's critical. Clarity of thought and purpose is necessary not only in determining IT; it's essential to efficiently organizing all the steps required to accomplish IT.

So where do you begin?

### Types of ITs and the Need to Identify Them

There are ITs that make you want to get out of bed in the morning and ITs that make you want to hide under the bedcovers all day.

Long-term ITs might range from your lifetime achievements to goals that require only a year or two to accomplish. Short-term ITs are goals you want to accomplish in six months to a year. Daily ITs are the "here and nows." Most often, they're in competition with a thousand other demands on your time and energy.

When you identify your IT for any period of time, you start a process of planning to make IT successful.

But without a well-conceived plan for how you're going to spend your time, almost anything can arise to distract you from what you really want to accomplish.

The question for you is, "What price are you paying for allowing things of lesser importance to dominate your schedule instead of spending more time on those you care most about?"

## Defining IT

### Define IT or Everything Else Will Define You

How do you narrow the list and define what IT is for you? The process we suggest consists of five steps:

1. Stop what you're doing for a moment.
2. Review your funnel.
3. Evaluate your possibilities.
4. Use your filters.
5. Develop plans to say no to everything that's not IT.

A key challenge for people with too much to do is that they are overwhelmed with so many potential activities that they don't know where to start or how to determine what should or shouldn't get done.

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The typical solution is just to tackle the task that is most convenient or enjoyable and work as long and as fast as possible, or focus on the task that is screaming the loudest for attention.

Let your first IT be to stop.

## Reviewing Your Funnel

The narrow neck of a funnel demonstrates the limiting effect of time and resources on our ability to tackle potential tasks or activities. It's important to remember that only so much can be done to increase the flow of tasks that actually get completed; there are only so many hours in the day.

Our mental funnel does the initial work of helping us determine what gets done. With a universe of possibilities flowing into our finite funnels, there's a limit to what can flow out. Pour too much liquid into a funnel, and it overflows. The actions we know are important are displaced by those that seem urgent or unnecessary. Just because something forces its way into your schedule does not make it important.

Even with impossible demands, we often say, "I'll see what I can do." Then the task of determining whether the seemingly impossible is really impossible becomes just another item in the funnel.

A strong understanding of what you have done to let tasks enter your funnel prepares you for the next step in the process: filtering what makes it through the funnel to become IT.

## Evaluating Your Possibilities

You already employ some mental filters as you determine what possibilities become IT for you. Mental filters used to define IT can be positive or negative. Negative filters can come in the form of harmful attitudes that limit you from undertaking tasks for poorly examined reasons, such as assuming you're too old, not educated enough, too poor or not handsome enough.

When evaluating your possibilities, be prepared to search out the negative filters you might have in place that prevent you from making room for activities, attitudes, dreams and goals that would actually enhance or improve your life.

More recognizable are the positive benefits of filters. There are moral filters, safety filters, social norms, religious principles, and filters you have developed over time based on your unique wisdom and understanding.

There are also practical filters that can limit or enhance your ability to get things done, such as resources or lack of resources and your health.

## Using Your Filters

Your goal with filters is to line up your options to ensure an orderly flow through your funnel so you have clearly defined ITs. Being conscious of your filters ensures that you won't make choices haphazardly.

Generally, the key to refining your choices to the optimum IT is to be proactive and strategic rather than reactive and tactical.

To get what is *most* important, you might need to employ some "tactical prioritization." With a tactical filter, you're looking at the immediate situation and environment around you and making frequent adjustments.

Take time to ask yourself these questions:

- What deadlines are approaching?
- As an employee, what priorities are set for me (either documented or implied) by my organization?
- How much time do I have to devote to the ideal goal right now?
- What is the one action I could take today — this hour — that would get me an inch closer to accomplishing my most important goals?
- What is the one obstacle that needs to be removed before I can make progress toward the ultimate goal?
- What is the one conversation or discussion I should have with someone that would help me (and possibly others) clarify what is most important?

Commit to selecting your goal carefully and consciously and then choosing courses of action that align with the goal. Invest the time it takes to identify fully what is most important in the long run and also what is most important right now to move you in the straightest possible line toward that goal.

Choosing your IT wisely and being willing to say no to things that matter and instead saying yes to that which matters most can make a difference.

Scope creep is a common challenge in many organizations and a prime example of the need to have the right filters in place. You are assigned a project with specific outcomes, but as you begin to complete each element of the project successfully, the scope is broadened, more tasks are added, and it's now grown beyond you or your team's ability to accomplish with any degree of excellence. Having (and communicating) the filters that prompt you to resist adding new tasks to this project is critical.

There will always be more possibilities in your funnel than you can ever hope to complete. Ultimately, you will have to say no to the possibilities recommended by others that don't align with your filters.

## Believing IT

### You Know What You Believe About IT, But Do You Believe What You Know?

Regardless of the scale of your IT, a firm conviction that IT can be done is crucial to staying on track. You can reinforce this conviction by doing the following:

- Confirm your commitment of time and energy.
- Engage your heart.
- Remove the "Four Ns."
- Visualize the eventual benefits.

Whatever IT is, IT rarely gets accomplished without the willpower to make IT a reality. Without the involvement of your heart, you might quickly be overwhelmed with countless reasons why you can't possibly succeed at IT.

To maintain your belief in IT, you must eliminate as much as possible of the negativity you're likely to encounter. The most prevalent negative thoughts typically stem from fear.

If it's the fear of failure, find someone who has accomplished something similar, and learn from him or her. If it's the fear of risking financial loss, counter it with rational measures to minimize the potential downside — what financial managers call "hedges." If it's the fear of not having enough time, go back and review your filters. Also, think about other items on your schedule that you could delegate, delay or delete to make more room for IT.

The key is to focus on completing IT. The more your capacity is occupied with positive thoughts and possibilities, the less room there will be for your mind to engage in negative thinking.

The mental strength needed to accomplish IT is available to you if you have a positive attitude. Once you master the skill of keeping a positive attitude, you'll naturally be looking forward to the benefits of accomplishing IT: "We're going to get this marketing plan implemented, and then I can have my life back!" Visualize those benefits. Find words to describe what your situation will be like when you accomplish IT. Stick with positive words like clarity, peace, fulfillment and relief. Draw on the power of visualization.

Believing you can accomplish what is most important to you simply means that you know that the joy, satisfaction, peace or reward that comes from accomplishing IT is worth far more than merely allowing the possibility to stay indefinitely in your funnel or get forced out by a million other things. Allow yourself to make the journey. Believe IT can happen.

## Communicating IT

### Many Are the Plans and Few Are the Successes of the Person Who Has Dreams but Tells No One

Communicating the most Important Thing you're working on to those who have (or should have) a great interest in ITs success can be a crucial part of the process. Communicating your values, goals and activities builds a framework of support that helps you in your quest to achieve what is most important to you.

Communicating a goal, project plans, or an intended change in attitude, work habits or behavior allows other people to assist you when you need help. They can provide resources, serve as a sounding board, give encouragement, or even offer ideas.

Your ability to communicate your vision and passion is what will convince them of ITs importance and your level of commitment.

Remember that communicating IT warns others that things will change not only for you but for them as well. As you plan your communication, ask yourself these questions:

- What's in IT for them?
- Why should they be excited about IT for me?
- Why should they be excited about IT for themselves?

You might need to accept accountability and tolerate some pressure once you've announced your goal to others, especially if there's a deadline involved.

You might see the attention of others as pressure, but bear in mind there are two kinds of stress: eustress (positive) and distress (negative). Whether that pressure comes from within yourself or you're aware of people monitoring whether you're going to make your goal, you have the option of viewing whatever stress you encounter as eustress, pressure that drives you forward to your goal.

Your willingness to share your own story about achieving IT despite daunting odds can encourage others to have confidence that their own IT is achievable.

## Planning for IT

### ITs Rarely Scream at Us. They Wait Patiently Behind Everything Else

Individuals and organizations often develop elaborate plans to improve their attitudes, income and prospects for future performance, but then they fail to follow through on the plan. What determines success or failure is both a plan and the execution of that plan.

As you plan to accomplish IT, consider other priorities already on your schedule for the year, month or week ahead. The big question to answer is, "How do I accomplish IT given the commitments I already have in place?"

Consider the obstacles and limitations likely to impede your progress. Make a list! It may be finances: How are you going to pay for IT? Personnel: Do you have the right people in place, and do they share your commitment? For whatever roadblocks and speed bumps you can anticipate, prepare workarounds and alternate routes.

### Determine Milestones

Simply put: What do you want to accomplish, and by when? People identify their IT but then let time pass until IT is no longer relevant. Here are two suggestions to keep in mind when setting milestones on the way toward completing IT.

• Set a deadline. Pick a date for completion, and then plan backward, determining as realistically as possible how much time will be allocated for each step along the trajectory to reaching that deadline. If the time required by all the steps added together extends well beyond your deadline, ask yourself whether it's possible for several subprojects to proceed in parallel, or put your imagination to work coming up with unconventional but workable shortcuts.

• Equip yourself with ways to measure work in progress. Your planning might indicate you'll reach your goal with plenty of time to spare, but real-world situations often prove to be stubbornly unyielding. If you set daily or weekly benchmarks and then have a system to compare actual progress against predetermined interim goals, you'll at least avoid being surprised too late to make adjustments.

### Create Your Actual Plan for IT

Consider these time-tested tips when planning your stepping stones toward IT:

• **Write things down.** Getting things out of your head and onto paper (or into a computer file or smartphone app) frees your memory for moment-to-moment tasks.

• **Plan to focus** on the ITs that require a lot of mental work at the beginning of the day, when you're fresh and energetic.

• **Prioritize, prioritize, prioritize.** Prioritizing allows you to devote your brainpower to getting one thing done rather than bouncing from possibility to possibility.

• **Do a double-check on your to-do list.** Starting with your highest priority task, block out on your calendar when you are going to begin it and how long it will take. Continue down your task list, blocking out times for each task.

• **Employ the Four-D strategy.** The Ds are delegate, delete or delay — and one more D: do! More often than we admit, tasks that ought to take only a couple of minutes to complete end up taking much more time when they've been put off. In many cases, the most effective way of keeping a molehill from becoming a mountain is simply to finish it while it's manageable.

• **Create gaps and buffers of time.** Be realistic about what you can accomplish in an hour or in a day. Allow time for the inevitable interruptions and crises. If your schedule is too full, the tendency is to drop the Important Things for the merely urgent ones. Research suggests that tasks typically take 20 percent more time than expected. So if you have a task you think will take an hour, add another 12-15 minutes just in case.

• **Develop a habit or build a routine into your plan.** A routine can walk you through a series of ITs that need to be accomplished on a regular basis. If you give some thought to how best to order tasks, the most logical and productive flow, you can execute a series of tasks almost as if it's a single task.

If you create a plan to accomplish each IT, your days have the potential to go much more smoothly — and you're more likely to get your most Important Thing done. You'll know where your time and energy need to be applied.

## Doing IT

### Failure at an IT is Often Better Than Success at Something Else

A seemingly small number of people have the capacity to get everything done. They're on top of deadlines, prepared when called upon, and can execute well at a moment's notice. It would appear as if their funnel doesn't narrow at the bottom — everything imaginable flows through to completion. They have an amazing ability to make things happen.

You can be such a person.

Conversely, many people have a very narrow outlet at the bottom of their funnel. They may have all sorts of plans, possibilities and ideas but fall short when it comes to executing them ... they simply can't get IT done.

You can be that person as well.

### Focus on IT

To accomplish IT and do IT well requires that every resource you have at your disposal be aligned with IT. Even if IT requires only five minutes to complete, being able to focus your physical, mental, emotional and even financial

energy effectively on IT for those few moments can have a major impact on getting IT done.

Remember that IT is your first priority — that's the whole point. Instead of thinking of IT last, reflect on IT first, and schedule the appropriate tasks and activities to achieve IT. That way, you're less likely to run out of time or energy before you get around to IT.

Deep, focused attention to IT is your best hope for completing IT effectively and efficiently instead of leaving IT unfinished and having to return to IT later — turning it into yet another distraction preventing you from making progress on the next IT.

Multitasking may sound like an effective way to work on IT, but don't be tempted. The end result is frequently time and energy wasted in jumping from one item to the next (and back), inhibiting your natural ability to focus intently on getting IT done.

## Manage Interruptions While Working on IT

An MIT study found that when employees are interrupted, they lose time and efficiency in two ways: First, the diversion itself takes them away from the task. Second, to get back into the task, they need to warm up their thinking again and refamiliarize themselves with where they left off.

Most interruptions probably do have some connection to your work responsibility or personal values. To better manage your interruptions and minimize their impact, consider the following strategies:

• Review some reasons why other people interrupt you, and address their workflow habits before changing your own. Are the interruptions the result of people lacking information, knowledge or skills that only you possess, a situation that could be easily corrected by documenting and distributing what you know? Are their requests similar? If there's a pattern, what one change would eliminate a host of interruptions?

• Determine whether the interruption is important enough for you to change your current workflow. Will handling this interruption help improve the productivity of other members of your team, allowing you to get more ITs done as well?

• Be less available when you want to focus on IT. Turn off email notifications and send your phone calls directly to voice mail. Physically move out of an environment where you're frequently interrupted.

## Measure Your Time on IT — or Not on IT

People who are successful at accomplishing what is most important don't have to guess where their time is spent. They know. They realize that spending time on the "right work" is key.

A good way to measure where your time is spent (or not spent) is to use a time log for a week or two. It's a simple experiment. Just label the days of the week across the top of a spreadsheet and the time you want to track in 15- or 30-minute increments down the side. Set an alarm for the top of each hour. When the alarm goes off, stop what you're doing, and record in detail what you've accomplished over the past hour — an entry for each 15- or 30-minute segment. We realize this exercise is unnatural and a hassle, but the information you'll be gathering is likely to be very telling.

At the end of the week, review your activities. Total the amount of time you spent in definable categories such as meetings, returning calls, writing email, working on the XYZ report, talking with customers, eating meals, taking breaks, etc. Be honest with yourself — total up the time you feel you've been less than productive. Have your team do the same.

Now, what are you going to do about it? Ask yourself these questions:

- What activities are getting the bulk of my time? Are they IT for me by choice?
- How can I alter what I'm doing so that I'm spending more time on IT?
- What activities can be eliminated to allow more room for IT?

## Take Care of Yourself so You Can Take Care of IT

Take care of yourself so that you're in the best condition to accomplish IT. Here are some statistics from the Families and Work Institute:

- *Thirty-two percent of Americans report that their work life has a primarily negative impact on their lives off the job.*
- *Nearly two out of three individuals are overweight or obese.*
- *Nearly half (48 percent) of U.S. employees have not engaged in regular physical exercise in the last 30 days.*
- *One third of the workforce shows signs of clinical depression.*
- *Thirty-nine percent of U.S. employees took fewer vacation days than the number for which they were eligible.*

To keep your body humming along and working at peak performance, keep these suggestions in mind:

• **Set warning signals** that tell you when you're working too hard or putting too much stress on your body.

• **Get enough sleep.** You'll be less able to focus and you'll have less energy during the day if you don't get enough rest. Sleep deprivation is implicated in all kinds of

physical maladies, too, from high blood pressure to obesity.

• **Exercise.** Walk, run, bike, do yoga, lift weights, swim, mountain climb ... mix it up! Exercise is vital.

• **Take a break.** You should have bursts or sprints of focus and productivity (no more than 90 minutes at a time), and then take a break.

• **Watch what you eat.** Make sure you have a good breakfast to jumpstart your day and your energy level. Monitor the quality and quantity of your lunch. Keep lunch light and healthy. Consider energy foods throughout the day.

• **Do more of the things you love.** Doing the things you enjoy builds positive-feedback routines and helps you maintain your energy level.

• **Don't get discouraged!** Overcoming self-destructive habits is hard work, but do you really prefer keeping them to making a little effort to form positive habits?

## After Accomplishing IT

### The Journey May Be More Valuable Than the IT Itself

The moment of bringing closure to IT is a good time to take stock of your achievement and what you've learned. There is much to gain from reflection and consideration of what went well and what didn't, which steps were effectively planned, and which were overlooked on the path to accomplishing IT.

While reflecting, consider questions such as these:

- What is the single biggest thing I learned during this process that I can apply to the future?
- What was the source of my greatest struggle?
- What can I do to better prepare myself or my team so that I don't face setbacks next time?
- What was an "aha moment" for me? What did I learn about myself?
- How could I have communicated better and gotten more people "on board"?

If others were involved in IT, get their observations and reflections as well.

Construction contractors make punch lists of all the little things that need to be wrapped up before closing out a project. The items on this list are usually the fine details that really put the finishing touches on the project. As part of your planning, make a punch list and finalize it so you don't have to keep adding trivial afterthoughts that drag out the conclusion of IT. When all items on the list are checked off, have a celebration — and move on.

## Doing IT Again

### Your Next IT Awaits

You know the next Important Thing awaits. Once you've successfully accomplished an IT, you probably have a clearer idea of where you want to go next, and you've equipped yourself with valuable tools to guide you efficiently. You just have to answer, "What's my next IT?"

Before you move too quickly, however, reflect on the possibilities that have been in your funnel for some time, waiting for their chance. Which opportunities can you now move along into your action plan, and which no longer belong?

You might not want to assume that you know what your next Important Thing should be. You might not want to engage in the next action until you've given yourself a chance to review your situation.

Consider giving your attention first to your values, beliefs and priorities filters. Don't put off the opportunity to concentrate on the deeper and richer things in life. You can be constantly busy checking items off your to-do list, or you can spend your time on something that really adds value and meaning to your existence.

To ensure that you are continually aligned with your values and goals, ask yourself some of the following questions:

- What circumstances or conditions are different than they were one year ago? Six months ago? Two weeks ago? The key is to be aware of how possibilities in your funnel may have changed based on these conditions.
- Based on these changing circumstances or conditions, what new goals, opportunities or passions do I need to consider now to determine what IT will be for me?
- Are my daily activities fulfilling my needs?
- Is my focus on a major IT causing me to neglect other areas?
- Am I moving forward, staying the same (getting stale) or moving backward (regressing)? Ask this question as it relates to work, relationships and your personal well-being.

The value of a course correction or adjustment cannot be overstated. In fact, the busier you are, the more important it is to take stock of the conditions around you and see how they affect your choice of IT.

People often jump to the conclusion that an Important Thing has to be a major change or giant project. This doesn't need to be the case. Ask yourself what small adjustments, repeated and amplified over time, might make a big difference in your life or the life of someone near you.

You are ultimately the one who decides what you will accomplish and focus on. Whether your next IT is a baby step or a big leap, don't sit back and watch your life go by. Seize the moment, hour, week and year to accomplish what is important to you and those around you.

## Working with Others on IT

### Is Some Part of Your IT also an IT for Them?

Most ITs will require some level of "buy-in" or participation from others. Fail to get other people to change, and the IT you're working on may remain unnecessary, misguided or even threatening in their hearts and minds. And without the participation of others, it might mean that you end up doing all the work yourself. So how do you lead others to and through it? Communication is key.

### Encourage Feedback and Ideas on How to Accomplish IT

When individuals are asked for input on how a community lot — a neighborhood vegetable garden, a local park — should be changed, they develop a sense of ownership and engage more fully in making IT successful. Although you may already have the end result in mind, asking questions and synthesizing responses allows others to come to the same conclusion. The process of collectively reaching the same conclusion can be so much more effective than simply telling the team, "Here's the objective and here's how we're going to do it." Working together on the strategies, tactics and outcomes creates buy-in that's crucial to success. You also might be pleasantly surprised as new and even better ideas are brought to the table.

We recommend using the Six S strategy to create an action plan that best accomplishes IT:

1. *Seek* out the strengths of those on your team.
2. *Set* clear expectations. Clearly describe each individual's responsibility, actions that need to be taken, and the desired outcome from those actions.
3. *Search* for opportunities to stretch others.
4. *Schedule* clear deadlines: What is to be completed in what form, by whom, by when?
5. *Synchronize* goals, outcomes and values that will eliminate or at least minimize activities that don't fully contribute to achieving the desired end.
6. *Sustain* a focus on IT — keep the "heat," the sense of urgency, simmering through strong communication and firm accountability.

### Closure

When IT is completed, assign final tasks, and formally declare the project complete once they're accomplished. Don't savor your achievements so long that everyone forgets the feeling of being in the throes of a battle with an uncertain outcome; rather, put IT behind, and align everyone to move forward to the next Important Thing.

## Wrapping IT Up

### A Successful Life is a Succession of Successful ITs

Focusing on and achieving your Important Thing is a process ... one that never ends.

Be the one in the meeting who helps the group find clarity on IT. Don't hesitate to seek assistance when you lose your own path toward IT. Set an example for others by the way you strive to achieve IT. Too many of us have been settling for something else rather than the Important Thing for far too long.

Henry David Thoreau offered a powerful and somewhat painful observation: "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation ... and go to the grave with the song still in them." Your sense of defeat or frustration may come from your awareness of a task at work that never got accomplished. You might have felt it during a difficult time in a relationship or when you gave up a private goal or dream. Thoreau intended to remind us that we all have some potential, ability or purpose within us that we may never achieve if we don't set aside desperation and take committed, purposeful action.

What's the song within you waiting to be sung? Your Important Thing is waiting. Get to IT.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Getting to It!* you'll also like:

1. ***The ONE Thing*** by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan. You want more satisfaction from life and more time. In *The ONE Thing,* you will learn how you can have both by cutting through clutter and staying on track.

2. ***No More Pointless Meetings*** by Martin Murphy. Murphy introduces four "Work Sessions" that replace meetings to get more done faster than ever before.

3. ***Springboard*** by G. Richard Shell. *Springboard* will help you reevaluate your future and envision success on your own terms.

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# 36CTFS Fred 2.0

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# Fred 2.0

## New Ideas on How to Keep Delivering Extraordinary Results

by Mark Sanborn

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Since writing *The Fred Factor* almost 10 years ago, Mark Sanborn has met many people who were inspired by the original Fred to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. What motivates these real-world "Freds"? In *Fred 2.0*, Sanborn digs deeper, revealing principles that inspire these Fred-like individuals.

Freds are millions of people who have been inspired by Mark Sanborn's real-life mailman Fred Shea — and the millions more who exemplify Fred's code for success without knowing the real-life Fred. What makes Fred so extraordinary? He's a man who is passionate about his ordinary job, treating those on his mail route as his friends. In the process, he has turned an ordinary job into something truly extraordinary — and you can too.

*Fred 2.0* explains how maintaining a creative focus on extraordinary service can drive the results you're seeking. The lessons from *Fred 2.0* will truly benefit readers whether they work on their own or lead massive organizations. Sanborn reminds us that your life is what you make it. Let *Fred 2.0* inspire you to reach even higher and do more!

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The four most powerful benefits of pursuing the extraordinary.
- How to cultivate creativity without additional time and stress.
- How to discover and apply your signature difference.
- Steps to elevate your customer experience.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **FRED 2.0**

**by Mark Sanborn**

**The author:** Mark Sanborn is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Fred Factor* as well as six other popular books. He is president of Sanborn and Associates Inc., an idea studio dedicated to developing leaders in business and in life. He is a noted authority and an in-demand speaker on leadership, customer service and extraordinary performance.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or www.MarkSanborn.com.

## Normal Is Overrated

The Fred concept is based on the story of the real-life postal carrier Fred Shea, who delivered my mail for nearly a decade. When I first met Fred, I was so impressed by his performance that I started paying attention, taking notes about him and talking about him in my speeches and seminars, and ultimately writing a book about him. The account of his ability to take the ordinary job of putting mail in a box day after day and make it extraordinary made a connection with those who heard or read it.

Why did the book succeed? I think a main reason is because it wasn't about a big name like Bill Gates or Warren Buffett. What does Fred have to work with? He has a blue-gray uniform and a bag. That's pretty much it once he leaves the substation. And yet he makes artistry out of his work. If Fred can be extraordinary in what could be a tedious job, then there is no reason why you and I can't reinvent our own work, whatever it may be.

### Why Be Normal

We don't talk much about normal unless we want to get back to it after a period of upheaval. That's because normal is what we get used to. Normal is easy, familiar. But is that the best we can aim for each day — to be normal? Is it possible that we aim too low?

If you want more out of life, go for more. Raise your expectations. Settle up, rather than down. In other words, *recalibrate to great*. What's the point of exerting extra thought and effort into being extraordinary? Being extraordinary brings us delight, sets us apart, defends our position, and determines our happiness and success. The good news is that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary isn't as big as you might think.

## It's Always About Service

The Fred philosophy is built on timeless values like personal responsibility, authentic relationships and respect for others. It is a mindset that looks for and seizes opportunities to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. Even so, it's one thing to know and another thing to do. Being a Fred is about what we believe and what we do.

### The Why Is Always a Who

Why do you do business with a certain company? Great prices? A person was responsible for the pricing. Wonderful service? Obviously people provide that. High-quality products? Thank the people in research, development and manufacturing. Being a Fred isn't about the job you hold but how you do the job. Freds can be in any department, and in the best organizations they are in *every* department.

### Fred Throws Birthday Parties

Dr. Matt Messina is a dentist in Ohio. We met many years ago at a dental association meeting. I asked him how he applies the Fred principles in his practice. Here's what he shared with me: "My staff began looking for elderly patients in the schedule with appointments near their birthdays. They started stocking cupcakes and candles and made a point of singing 'Happy Birthday' for the patients at the end of their appointments."

A smile came across Dr. Messina's face. "There's nothing as heartwarming as seeing an 87-year-old man cry because someone remembered his birthday. We discovered that he had no family nearby and thought his birthday would pass without any fanfare. We have learned so much about our patients, their family birthday traditions, their

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joys and their sorrows. People began to intentionally schedule appointments on their birthdays."

That is the nature of Fred. Fred may not be in the customer service department, but you'll always find him serving others. Practicing the Fred Factor is about being of great service, building better relationships, and creating new value — regardless of what department you work in or what your job description says.

## Start With Commitment

It's not always easy being a Fred. It takes commitment. But that commitment gets easier as time goes on. Why? Here's Fred's secret: The person who benefits most when you act like a Fred is *you*. Being a Fred enriches others, but it also expands you, breaks the bonds of self-absorption, makes you more employable, creates positive influence and is more fun, among other benefits.

All any of us have are ordinary days and ordinary work. But we have a choice about how we will do that work. If we commit to an attitude of service and excellence, our ordinary tasks will become extraordinary.

### The Three Characteristics of Committed People

1. Committed people are generally happy: Not everything we must do each day — at home or at work — makes us happy. In those cases we need to remember that how we choose to do anything has a significant influence on the emotions we experience. Doing an unpleasant task cheerfully trumps doing a pleasant task begrudgingly.
2. Committed people are clear about what they do and why they do it: What you do to make a difference is important, but so is the reason you do it. It's true that providing great value as an individual or an organization often results in great benefits to the provider. But even if it doesn't, the reward is in the doing.
3. Committed people have goals: A commitment without a goal is like a trip without a map: Odds are you won't get to where you want to be. Knowing the kind of difference you hope to make greatly increases the likelihood of success.

## Work With Passion

Being a Fred is possible only if you have the right purpose and are driven by your passion. But passion isn't about doing only the things we like to do because that isn't real life. Passion is about arranging your work and your life as much as possible to do the things you are passionate about as often as you can. Passion is something we're willing to give ourselves to despite the cost.

### How Can You Find Your Passion?

Here are some questions to prompt your thinking about what you're passionate about:

- What would you do for free? Is there an activity you enjoy so much that you'd do it for free even if other people would consider it work?
- What riles you? Are there problems or annoyances that drive you up the wall? Perhaps you can find your passion in fixing them.
- What interests you? What do you like to read about and study? Do you find yourself returning to the same topics again and again? Your heart may be telling you what it wants; you just need to recognize it.
- Who interests you? What groups of people do you tend to notice? Are you drawn to coach, counsel, encourage or teach? Some people have a heart for young children. Other people like to support young entrepreneurs. Find out what demographic you're wired to connect with.
- What will minimize your regrets? If you have regrets at the end of your life, what do you think they'll be? We tend to ask ourselves, "Will I regret doing this?" But often the better question is, "Will I regret *not* doing this?" Minimizing regret means being able to seize the moment when opportunity arises. We can do this only when we're clear about what is both important and worthy to us.

## Cultivate Your Creativity

Creativity is an essential ingredient in delivering extraordinary results like Fred does. The simplest definition of creativity is producing something new or different that has value. By definition, then, to be creative is to offer value to those you live with and work with. Creativity isn't just about macro-level ideas that come from the top of an organization. It also encompasses our smaller, daily routines.

### Jump-Start Your Creativity

Here are a few simple ways to jump-start your everyday creativity:

**Think Again:** Don't underestimate the value of second, third and fourth thoughts. In our jobs and home life, our first answer is often to do things the way they've always

been done. But the best solution may lie elsewhere. And we may not arrive at it until we've thought about the problem two or three or even four different ways.

**Noodle on It:** *Noodling* is my favorite slang word for letting little ideas simmer. This might sound counterintuitive when you're trying to be productive, but rest and downtime go hand in hand with creativity. If you want your brain to do your work for you, you have to treat it right. If you aren't able to sleep on it, give yourself a break and daydream a little.

**If You Don't Know, Ask:** Creativity often comes from asking questions — of ourselves and of others. Is there a better way to do this? Why has it always been done this way? More often than not, these simple questions will spark some creativity, and that creativity will create value.

**Go Back to the Drawing Board:** When we encounter a problem, the easiest approach seems to be the one that has been tried before. But what would happen if we started with a clean slate? Sometimes a fresh start is exactly what we need to reach our goal.

**Use "Creative Sparks":** The inspiration for creativity can come from anywhere. When you come across something that stimulates your thinking, chances are it will do the same for others. So look for inspiration, and then take time to share it — whether it comes in the form of pithy quotes, insightful articles, funny videos or inspiring images.

**Break the Rules:** Conventional wisdom controls much of what we do. These little rules usually start with someone saying, "Everyone knows …" or "They always say …" But are "they" always right?

**Add and Subtract:** Give more of what your customers want, and get rid of what they don't want. Adding a little something could be just what you or your company needs to do to deliver excellent service. Sometimes a solution you're working on might be one step too complicated. Are there unnecessary hoops that you or your customers are jumping through that could be eliminated?

**View the Problem Through a Different Lens:** How is the problem you're facing solved in Mexico or in Europe? Even if you physically can't travel, think about how you might solve your problem if you lived in the Caribbean or in Scandinavia. Visit a retailer, a museum, an auto dealer, a library or a business different from your own. Look for ideas they're using successfully, and find a way to adapt them to your work.

## Develop Your Difference

We all make a difference, from small to significant, in our interactions each day. Being a Fred is about choosing to make a positive difference. You'll be most influential when your difference-making is based on your unique abilities, desires and passion. You can make a difference in the world, or you can commit to making *your* difference.

### What About "Them"?

*Them:* the naysayers, critics and curmudgeons who not only choose not to make a positive difference but also discourage you from and judge you for doing so. I asked Fred the Postman for advice about negative coworkers. He said, "Keep on keeping on. Let criticism roll off your shoulders. They need your example."

Many years ago I spoke to the staff of one of the top restaurants on the Las Vegas strip. Their reputation for both food and service was world-renowned. I assumed I'd be preaching to the converted when I talked about the Fred principles, but afterward a waitstaff employee pulled me aside. "What you talked about is my philosophy too," she said. "But I take a lot of heat for it. Some of the others here say I'm working too hard and making them look bad. They tell me to relax and be more like them. What should I do?"

I addressed the key issue: "They don't have the same enthusiasm and passion you do. Your good work is making their mediocre work apparent. So here's your choice: You can bow to their criticism and become mediocre too. Or you can use your best sense of humor to laugh it off and keep doing what's important to you."

That's the choice all of us have: bow to the critics or live by our own values.

### Discovering Your Signature Difference

These four simple questions will help you uncover your signature difference and live it out:

*What is Your Unique Style?* Authenticity means being true to yourself. What is your temperament like? Are you bold and outgoing? Or are you quiet and even-tempered in your approach? When people describe you, what are the words they most often use? Don't just think of your signature difference as the difference you want to make but also as an extension of what makes you different.

*What Are Your Signature Strengths?* What do you see as your "best self"? What do others say your strengths are? Knowing your strengths and talents will give you some clues as to the ways you can make the most significant difference. One lawyer I know who specializes in business negotiations offers his services as a mediator to individuals who can't afford legal representation.

*What Are Your True Passions?* We might assume that the things we love are limited to our hobbies or our free time, but our passions can be the fuel to make a true difference in our world.

*What do You Want to be Remembered for?* Your legacy is what you will be remembered for. Think about what you might want to be known for after you're gone. Then ask yourself, "What did I do to build my legacy today? Did I make sure that everyone I crossed paths with will remember me the way I want to be remembered?"

### Defining Your Signature Difference

In order to make a signature difference, you need to find the intersections between your contributions and the needs of those around you. First, consider your unique style, strengths and passions. Next, think about the needs of those around you — in your workplace, your family, your circle of friends and your community. Then write out your signature difference in the form of a personal commitment statement.

## Build Better Relationships

Fred Shea stood out from other postal carriers for many reasons, but the primary one was his sincere interest in getting to know me. Fred's influence came from his ability to relate to others and build genuine relationships with those on his route.

### Steps to Building Better Relationships

You may be convinced that relationships are essential to the health of your business or organization, but you aren't sure how to strengthen the ones you have and build new ones. These six steps will give you a place to start:

1. **It Isn't Enough to Build Relationships if You Don't Maintain Them:** The only thing worse than not creating a good relationship at all is creating a connection with customers that they can't rely on. When a service provider seems interested initially but doesn't maintain the relationship after the sale, the customer feels manipulated.
2. **It Doesn't Have to Take Much Time:** It isn't about how much time you spend with those in a professional setting (although that is important) but how quickly and authentically you are able to demonstrate your concern and commitment. Being fully present when engaging with others is effective and doesn't have to take much extra time.
3. **Friendliness Is a Choice, Not a Response:** The test of friendliness is the ability to be pleasant to someone who is being unpleasant to you. Instead of fighting fire with fire, try responding to negativity with positivity. It may not change the other person, but it will keep him or her from changing you.
4. **Employees Rarely Treat Customers Better Than Their Employer Treats Them:** Treating employees differently than you expect them to treat customers is shortsighted, if not delusional. You communicate more powerfully with your behavior than you do with your words.
5. **Nice Isn't Enough if You're Not Competent:** Relationship is important, but make sure you're offering a good product and good service first.
6. **Relationships Aren't Built in a Day:** We build relationships over time by giving those we interact with our consistent and undivided attention.

### Five Surprising Words For Building Better Relationships

Here are a few key words to remember as you pursue connections with people at work and at home.

*Love:* Love in work clothes is about treating people with dignity and respect. The real test of love is the ability to be kind and considerate to those who don't make it easy to do. I'm not talking here about abusers or situations where you might need to draw boundaries. I'm talking about extending love to those who can be prickly, unhappy or indifferent. We can't always win such people over, but we can refuse to respond in kind to their negativity.

*Redemption:* Redemption isn't a word you hear much in business, but it can transform relationships. It is about recovering something that was lost at some cost to yourself — whether through your actions, words or money.

*Mercy:* Mercy means not giving people what they deserve when they fall short of your expectations. It's also about giving them the benefit of the doubt — or cutting them some slack.

*Grace:* Grace is about giving people what they don't deserve — extending unmerited favor. If we all got exactly what we deserved and only what we deserved, most of us would not be where we are today. If you approach others with the attitude that you will only give them as much as they give to you, your relationship never will have the chance to grow beyond that point.

*Compassion:* Compassion isn't just a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another person who is stricken by misfortune; it is a feeling that is also accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.

## Elevate the Experience

An elevated experience happens when you are expecting something standard or run of the mill, and you end

up with something more. The best proof of your commitment to customers is to C.A.R.E.: Create A Rare Experience. Here are ways to elevate the experiences you provide and to really C.A.R.E.

- **Eliminate Worry:** In my years of observing the business world, I've come to define a professional as someone who is more worried about the solutions to your problems and needs than you are. If you are willing to take on your customers' problems to reduce the worry in their lives, they'll reward you with loyalty.
- **Be Involved Before, During and After:** A sale doesn't create a customer. Selling merely creates a transaction. What happens before and after the transaction determines whether you have a customer for life or a customer for that transaction only.
- **Pay Attention to Details:** Despite our best intentions to provide something extra or something elevated, if we don't attend to details, all our efforts will be wasted when the customer gets something less than he or she expected.
- **Fabricate Fun:** Entertainment really elevates the experience when it happens in a nontraditional environment. The attendants at Southwest Airlines are known for joking or even singing their way through the preflight instructions. Some are so entertaining that passengers have posted videos of them on YouTube. Talk about free advertising and brand evangelism!
- **Look for Problems to Solve:** Are there some simple measures that would elevate your customers' experiences? Are there problems your customers are facing that could be solved easily? Often an elevated experience can be provided by solving simple problems that no one else has identified. Be the first to find them.

## Renew Your Resolve

I frequently encounter people who tell me they used to practice the Fred philosophy. But not anymore. The common explanation is they lost their passion and enthusiasm. They got tired, burned out or discouraged. The challenges of life overcame their commitment, and they lost heart. If you truly desire to be extraordinary, you have to keep your commitment vital and ongoing. It may be time to renew your resolve.

### Staying the Same Just Isn't Enough

Success, however it's defined, is a moving target. Staying the same isn't enough because yesterday's success can easily become tomorrow's mediocrity. We need to be intentional about keeping our commitment solid and our enthusiasm strong. Here are some ways to renew our resolve:

- **Decide to be Happy Here and Now:** We all have our lot in life. But often it's simpler than we make it. We have a choice: We can change our lot, or we can accept it. If we aren't able to change our lot in life despite our best efforts, we're down to one option: Accept it. But the way we accept it makes all the difference.
- **Try Something Different:** While it's wise to find a career that's a good fit for you, don't make the mistake of thinking a different environment is necessarily going to solve all your problems. People often think they will be happy if they could just find a different job. However, I've observed that unhappiness tends to follow people. If you aren't happy now, a different job probably won't make you happy either. A better alternative might be to do your current job differently.
- **Remind Yourself Regularly:** Sometimes when we're making life changes, our biggest challenge is remembering to carry out the decisions we've made. It isn't that we're not committed to taking this step to do something new or implement something better. It just takes a lot less energy to do things the same way we've always done them.
- **Rethink Your Perspective:** Take some time for reflection. Are you living by your values? Are you happy and successful? Are you productive or just busy?
- **Reward Yourself:** Every day do two things: something challenging and something fun. One will make you better, and the other will make you happier.
- **Take Time to Rest:** Renewing your resolve can help you keep your nose to the grindstone when you need to. But you can't keep your nose to the grindstone for long periods of time without breaks, or you will lose both your nose and your resolve. Rest is a critical ingredient for both happiness and productivity.

## What If You're a Head Fred?

Some people think leadership is about telling a better story, but leaders don't just tell a better story; they make the story better. A leader has the unique power to instill a sense of significance in others. That means it's not enough to be a Fred yourself; you also need to develop and lead other Freds.

### How to Lead Freds

Here are 10 things you need to do to be a head Fred.

1. **Lead by Example:** Fred-like behavior isn't something you can command or demand. Instead, you must be willing to model what that behavior looks like in your own performance — not only in how you treat customers but also in how your treat your employees and colleagues.
2. **Start With What's Right Instead of What's Wrong: When you start with what's right and who is responsible, good things start happening:** You give recognition where it's due; you focus the rest of the team on a positive example; and you feel better about your role as the head Fred.
3. **Encourage People to Try:** You might need to prove your employees' own significance to them. Show them specifically where they can shine, and encourage them to try. Reward the attempt, not just the outcome.
4. **Ask for and Share Ideas About How to be Like Fred:** Regularly solicit examples and techniques from everyone on your team about how to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.
5. **Remove Barriers and Obstacles:** One of your goals as a leader is to make it as easy as possible for your team members to succeed. If you have protocols that hinder performance, either remove them or give people a free pass if they break them. As long as their behavior is moral and ethical, don't get hung up on needless policies and procedures.
6. **Be Their Champion:** When your Freds do something noteworthy, tell everybody, including other departments. And make sure higher-ups in the company know.
7. **Give Them the Freedom They Need:** Don't treat everyone equally, or you'll create an organization of mediocrity. Treat everyone *fairly*, but make sure that those who perform best get appropriate preference. Performance should have its privileges.
8. **Teach the Fred Principles Consistently:** The four basic Fred principles are everybody makes a difference; it is all built on relationship; you can add value to everything you do; and you can reinvent yourself continually. Consistently remind people about the principles and practices you want them to implement.
9. **Recognize and Reward:** Behavior that is rewarded tends to be repeated. Use both formal and informal rewards when you see people acting like Freds.
10. **Enjoy:** Someone recently asked how they could achieve Fred-like performance without creating added stress. If your attempts to encourage extraordinary performance are stressful, you're not doing something right. Freds don't work harder because they have to but because they want to.

## Build a Team Fred

While our individual actions have an effect, our group efforts have the potential of even greater impact. The only thing more powerful than a committed individual is a team of committed individuals.

### How to Build a Team of Freds

1. **Hire for Fredness:** Paul Noris, president and CEO of the Bank of Central Florida, says that when his company has an opening, the team looks for applicants who tend to enjoy being of service — who have a heart to serve. He believes the bank's ability to provide a high level of client service starts with a willing employee who sees service as the core of his or her being.
2. **Theme the Team:** Using a theme not only focuses the attention of your team, but it also creates a fun, celebratory atmosphere, which is part of what the Fred philosophy is all about.
3. **Freducate Everyone:** There is power in reading good books and sharing ideas as a team. People tend to learn more (and implement more) when they are engaged in educational opportunities together.
4. **Deal With Derfs:** The opposite of a Fred is a Derf. That's *Fred* spelled backward. What's the best way to deal with Derfs? The first strategy is to use positive peer pressure. When you recognize and reward others for doing the right thing, they'll become less tolerant of those who intentionally or inadvertently undo their good work. Another strategy is to give constructive feedback. With gentleness but directness, let the person know how he or she is perceived and why. People can't change what they don't understand.

## Raise a Fred Jr.

Parents and educators frequently remind me about the importance of teaching the Fred principles to children. The sooner someone understands these timeless truths, the sooner they'll start experiencing the benefits, and the sooner they'll start developing healthy, lifelong habits.

Whether they learn these lessons at home, in school or in extracurricular activities, kids need to know that they can make a difference. They need to know that education isn't a preparation for life — education is life. Students need to learn how to build healthy relationships and use their creativity to build value for themselves, for their family and friends, and eventually for an employer. Young people also need to realize that each day is a chance to try again — to be better than the day before.

## Create a Community of Freds

What can you do to help spread the Fred spirit in your own community? Find like-minded people. You always can accomplish more by cooperating with others (think Team Fred). With the energy of a group, not only will you have more good ideas, but you'll also be buoyed by your teammates' moral support and encouragement.

Create Interest. Share Fred's story and explain the benefits, both practical and personal. Use all the media at your disposal to spotlight what you are trying to accomplish. Everyone has limited time, energy and resources, so people need to see the payoff — not just psychologically and spiritually but also practically.

## Best Always

*Best Always.* That's how I've been signing correspondence and autographing my books for years. I have two reasons for this signature: First, I want to wish the recipient the best of life always. Second, it is my philosophy and commitment to give my best always. When I do anything less, I not only disappoint those who depend on me, but I also disappoint myself.

That doesn't mean that every single thing I do gets the same investment of attention and effort. That would be wasteful and downright impossible. When you know what is important to you in your life and work, you should apportion your talents and efforts so you can give the best you have to those things.

Once we've made a commitment to do our best, where do we begin? These steps may seem like common sense, but unless we make a conscious effort to implement, it's easy for them to slip through the cracks.

- Slow Down. If you're moving too fast, good things will have a hard time catching you.
- Get Out. Opportunity will rarely come to your door.
- Pay Attention. We learn more when we start noticing more.
- Do Something. Don't be a spectator in the game of life.
- Enjoy Life. We enjoy life no more and no less than we choose.
- Get Better. Better is always an improvement. It moves us forward.

### The Three Loves

In order to do and be your best, you need three kinds of love:

1. **Love What You Do:** That doesn't mean you love every single moment of every day, but it does mean that at the end of the day, you realize you're doing work that is important and beneficial.
2. **Love the People You Serve With:** Next to your family, you probably spend more of your life with your coworkers and colleagues than anyone else. Loving them is a key to a rewarding career. The good news is that you don't necessarily have to *like* them. Love is a higher calling, a deeper value. At work, the basis of love is a shared commitment to striving toward a common purpose, servicing customers, and making a positive difference. Life is too short to work with people you find impossible to love. Make the choice to love.
3. **Love the People You Serve:** Customers vote with their time and money. People could get their needs met at any number of businesses or organizations, but they've chosen yours. They've given you their trust and their money. That transaction is so valuable, but it's often taken for granted. We should honor that trust by reciprocating with a love born out of appreciation.

If you can have all three of these loves, it sets the stage for you to do and be your best always. And if you have these three loves, I can assure you that you are a Fred.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you." Doing your best in whatever you do will make you the best you can be. What we do, especially for others, defines the impact of our lives. It's all we have to offer. Make it better. Make it *the best*.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Fred 2.0*, you'll also like:

1. ***Springboard*** **by G. Richard Shell.** Armed with his extensive research, Shell will help you reevaluate your future and envision success on your own terms.

2. ***Extreme Productivity*** **by Robert C. Pozen.** Pozen explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.

3. ***The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*** **by Cy Wakeman.** Wakeman shows how to calculate your true value to your organization by understanding your current and future potential against your "emotional expense."

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# 37-26 The Achievement Habit

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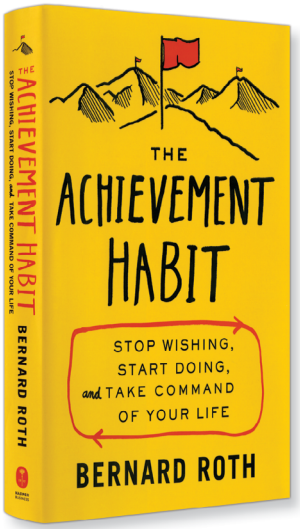
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Career & Self-Development

# The Achievement Habit

## Stop Wishing, Start Doing and Take Command of Your Life




by Bernard Roth

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Co-founder of the Stanford d.school Bernard Roth introduces the power of design thinking to help you achieve goals you never thought possible. Achievement can be learned. It's a muscle, and once you learn how to flex it, you'll be able to meet life's challenges and fulfill your goals.

In *The Achievement Habit*, Roth applies the remarkable insights that stem from design thinking — previously used to solve large-scale projects — to help us realize the power for positive change we all have within us. Roth leads us through a series of discussions, stories, recommendations and exercises designed to help us create a different experience in our lives. He shares invaluable insights we can use to gain confidence to do what we've always wanted and overcome obstacles that hamper us from reaching our potential, including don't try — DO; excuses are self-defeating; believe you are a doer and achiever, and you'll become one; become open to learning from your own experience and from those around you; and more.

The brain is complex and is always working with our egos to sabotage our best intentions. But we can be mindful; we can create habits that make our lives better. Thoughtful and powerful, *The Achievement Habit* shows you how.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How you define the meaning of everything in your life.
- Why reasons can sabotage your achievement goals.
- The difference between trying and doing.
- Strategies for getting unstuck and finding assistance.
- The assumptions underlying your self-image and how to redesign it.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ACHIEVEMENT HABIT**

**by Bernard Roth**

**The author:** Bernard Roth is the Rodney H. Adams Professor of Engineering and the academic director of the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (the d.school) at Stanford University. He is a leading expert in kinematics, the science of motion, and one of the world's pioneers in the area of robotics. In addition, he has created courses that allow students to directly gain understanding and experience about personal issues that matter to them.

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## Introduction

Ask people to think about who stops them from accomplishing the things they want. It's always entertaining to listen to them explain how their parents, spouses, children, colleagues, bosses — you name it — prevent them from reaching their goals. These perceived obstacles are simply excuses; in almost every case, when you really dig down, it's you who are sabotaging yourself. Yes, sometimes there are real external obstacles, and most people don't realize that they have the power to overcome them.

When you *do*, you are using *power*; when you *try*, you are using *force*. In life, if you want to get things done, it is much better to be powerful than to be forceful.

Of course the switch isn't so easy to make in real life. We've all had the experience of making up our minds to do something and then not doing it. In order to make the switch we must understand our behavior. The classic model (and popular wisdom) says that we think things through first and then act on our thoughts. Interestingly, this does not hold up in clinical testing. Most of our action is more the result of habit than reasoning.

So that leads to a question: How do you bridge the gap between trying and doing, between talking about something and acting on it, and ultimately between failure and success?

Design thinking is a set of general practices developed over the years that are effective in solving design challenges. A design challenge can apply to just about any kind of product or experience. It's not just about how to build a better mousetrap (though that's part of it); it's also about things that are not physical objects: how to improve the wait time at a popular amusement park, how to clean up a highway, how to more efficiently get food to needy people, how to improve online dating and so on.

Design thinking is normally applied outward — toward building solutions for other people's problems in a business or school setting. Here it is used toward improving your own life and interpersonal relationships, designing the best version of yourself.

## Nothing Is What You Think It Is

Let's first acknowledge that the meaning we find in people, objects and our own circumstances is subjective. These things have no inherent meaning. Functional and dysfunctional behavior both result from choices people make based on meanings they create. This also means that we have the power to alter our perceptions, revising perceptions that bring us down and enhancing those that help us. To learn how to get a better handle on your perceptions, emotions and behavior, it is useful to look at how you think.

Take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes for a few minutes. Then open them and move your attention around the room from one object to another. Each time you notice an object, say it has no meaning (as in, "The chair has no meaning"). Then think of people in your family and in your life and things you hold dear, such as your biggest accomplishments and most prized possessions. Name each, saying it has no meaning. When you are finished, sit quietly for a few minutes and then reflect on your experience.

The point of the exercise is not to get you to change any of your relationships. Rather, it is to empower you with the realization that you have chosen the meanings you give to all of your relationships. People who do this exercise often become more aware of how important a

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person or item is to them, and they realize that they have the ability to change the meaning something has to them.

### The Familiar Unfamiliar

To forge a new attitude toward the events and relationships in your life, you must learn to look at them with a fresh perspective.

Most people have a cognitive bias called functional fixedness that causes them to see objects only in their normal context. There are creativity exercises structured so that the use of the materials and tools in their ordinary way will generally lead to no workable solutions or, at the very most, mundane ones. The really exciting solutions come from overcoming functional fixedness and using these everyday items in new ways. To see the possibilities it is helpful to take the viewpoint that *nothing is what you think it is*. You need to make the familiar unfamiliar.

Just as things in the material world can be transformed from their common use into something different, so too can behavior and relationships. It's difficult at first to break through preconceived notions; however, once you do it, you'll find it opens the world up to you. Stop labeling things in their usual way. You are not a loser because you lost your job. Make the familiar into the unfamiliar, and the result can be amazing and delightful, as opposed to dull, nonfunctional and ordinary.

You can remove labels entirely; you can also re-label to great effect. Recent studies reinforce the idea that relabeling can change behavior. Experimenters have found statistical evidence that, for instance, if you ask people to be voters, you get more voter turnout than if you simply ask people to vote. Similarly, if you ask people not to be cheaters, there is less cheating than if you just ask people not to cheat. The inference is that people are more concerned with reinforcing their self-image than with their actions; thus, to change behavior, you first change self-image.

Once you learn that it is possible to change your habits and develop new attitudes about things, you have a new tool to use in both your professional and your personal life. For most people it is probably easier to change their attitude toward dishwashing than their attitude toward depression. Yet if you start with the small stuff, you will find it easier to tackle the harder stuff in life.

## Reasons Are Bullshit

The problem with reasons is that they're just excuses prettied up. Our society loves reasons. Perhaps the illusion that there is a single known reason for each thing we do is comforting. Unfortunately, the world doesn't work that way.

Reasons exist because if people didn't explain their behavior, they would seem unreasonable. So we are faced with a paradox: We need reasons so we appear reasonable, yet when we use reasons we are not taking full responsibility for our behavior. We use them to hide our shortcomings from ourselves. When we stop using reasons to justify ourselves, we increase our chances of changing behavior, gaining a realistic self-image and living a more satisfying and productive life.

Letting go of the need for reasons to justify your behavior is useful in every part of the design-thinking process. It can get you unstuck from dead ends and lead to new approaches and insights.

Many reasons are simply excuses to hide the fact that we are not willing to give something a high enough priority in our lives. But not having reasons would lead to a strange existence. Without reasons, you would look like an unreasonable person to everyone else. So where does this leave us?

There is a twofold approach to the problem: one for the external persona and one for the internal self. *Externally* you use reasons in everyday conversation when you need to, and thus appear to be perfectly normal and reasonable. *Internally* you look at the reasons your external self offers, and question each of them. The internal self also looks at the reasons given by the people you are interacting with. Simply by noticing how reasons are used, you can gain insight into your own behavior and your relationships with others.

## Getting Unstuck

Once we see an obstacle in our path, we walk around that obstacle. Unfortunately we sometimes have difficulty. We often think we're surrounded. How do you walk around obstacles? The answer lies in changing the way you think about the problem.

Design thinking emphasizes that you always make sure you are working on the real problem. When you can't find the answer, it is often because you are not asking the correct question.

One of the main causes of losing sleep over a problem is that we think we are dealing with a question when in fact we are dealing with an answer (a solution) that turns out not to be a good fit to our actual problem.

A way around this dilemma is to ask, "What would it do for me if I solved this problem?" The answer to this can then be converted into a new, more generative question.

By changing the question, you alter your point of view and dramatically expand the number of possible solutions.

Changing the question is often enough to lead to a satisfactory resolution and to make the original difficulty disappear.

### Ways to Get Unstuck

Once you have a problem statement, there are many formal methods that can assist you in generating solutions.

- Hard work
- Create a supportive environment
- Relax
- Brainstorming
- Lists
- Meta-lists: lists that contain the names of things from which to make more detailed lists.
- Idea logs
- Humor
- Conversation
- Forced transformations: purposefully modifying your ideas to make the conventional into the unconventional.
- "What if?": a great way to start a question during idea generation. What if there was no gravity? What if there was blast-off house paint?
- Working backward: Imagine that the problem has been solved, and then work back to the beginning. This way you can see what all the milestones are.
- Storyboards
- Mind maps: Mind maps are great for providing a broad understanding of how diverse parts relate to the whole.
- Diagram yourself: In this method you examine your own problem-solving process and strive to make it ambidextrous, meaning that you use both right-brain and left-brain activities equally.

## Finding Assistance

When it comes to achieving what you want in life, it's rare that you can do it entirely on your own. Often you'll need a little assistance from your friends. We are all better off when we assist each other to figure things out.

It's okay to ask for assistance. Look for people in your life who have accomplished things that you want to accomplish, and talk to them about how they did it and what they would do differently if they had to do it over. Get feedback from as many people as you can. You don't need to follow all or even most of it. Keep in mind that the more input you get, the more you have to sift through for gems.

### Good Artists Copy; Great Artists Steal

Steve Jobs often mentioned that he believed "good artists copy; great artists steal," a quote he attributed to Pablo Picasso. The truth is, there's very little new under the sun. Everything you can think of has, at least in part, been thought of before, and it would be stupid to ignore the wisdom of the people who've preceded you.

So don't be too concerned about "stealing." Of course, don't take credit for someone else's work or simply copy something outright without improving it or putting your own spin on it. Understand that it's okay to build off others' ideas, and don't be too possessive of your own. Some people are fiercely protective of their own data and ideas, often for years, until they can publish their work. The public good would be much better served if people worked more collaboratively. Commit yourself to radical collaboration.

### The Curse of Networking

You've undoubtedly been told about the power of networking — handing out your business card at social luncheons, showing up at key events and promoting yourself.

But if what you're really doing is trying to buddy up to people you think are on a higher plane than you are to get help from them, it's a lecherous relationship and it's not genuine. Never pretend that you have a relationship with someone that goes beyond what's really there. Don't assume it's okay to use someone's name to get in the door, even if you consider that person a friend. Ask first, or it's likely to backfire. Life is not about using other people as you climb to the top.

Stay real, instead, and build friendships. When you forge real relationships, the word networking doesn't even come into play. You naturally think of each other when opportunities arise. You ask for assistance and they show up, because they are friends and that's what friends do, not because you gave them a fake smile and a firm handshake at a luncheon. Let people see you as human. Be real. Be proactive in making friendships wherever you land. Invite people out to eat or over to your house. When you hear that a loved one of theirs is sick, follow up and ask about it the next day.

What it comes down to is that if you want people to assist you, you should (a) ask them, because not everyone

is that attuned to what you need, and (b) be a decent human being. Do not pretend you know more than you do. Most people are flattered when you have a genuine need and ask for their expertise. When you're offered assistance, respect others' time constraints — don't call every day or expect them to write responses to a hundred questions — and be appreciative.

## Doing Is Everything

There is a big difference between *trying* to do something and actually *doing* it. They're two totally different actions. The difficulty arises when people conflate them. If you *try* to do something, it may or may not happen. If it does not happen, you might try using an altered strategy, and again it may not happen. Although this could go on indefinitely, usually it lasts until you luck out and succeed, get tired of trying or get distracted by something else. Clearly this is a very unproductive way to go about your life.

If you are *doing* something, then no matter how many times you hit a barrier or how frustrated your original strategy becomes, you intend to get the job done, and you bring to bear on it the inner resolve and attention necessary to fulfill your intention. Doing takes *intention* and *attention*.

*Do* — don't *try* — this: List as many of your core beliefs as possible, and then ask yourself what basis you have for each belief. Unsurprisingly, a large number of core beliefs come from parents, the social and physical environment we grew up in and various peer groups.

The next question to ask is, "Which of your beliefs still serve you, and which have become dysfunctional and are best discarded?"

When you make decisions based on "the research," you can easily be led astray by researchers' biases. Even when the data is sound — like the fact that half of all marriages end in divorce — does that mean that you should give up the idea of getting married because it has too high a potential failure rate? Statistics can show you trends; they can't predict your life.

Likewise, consider that the odds have *always* been against greatness. If one were to decide on a career path just by the odds of financial success, we would have no movie stars, authors, poets or musicians. The odds were against the Beatles, Elvis and the Grateful Dead, too. They could have been "scientific" about the whole thing and chosen more reasonable career paths, and what a loss for the world that would have been! If you succeed, the odds are meaningless. Any path may have a 2 percent success rate, yet if you're in that 2 percent, there's a 100 percent chance of success for you. The long shots are often the most rewarding.

### The Gift of Failure

Almost without exception, people who have done great things have also experienced great failures — and in many cases, getting fired or a similar devastating failure turned out to be a gift that allowed them to ultimately find great success.

At the d.school, one of the basic principles is a *bias toward action*: that is, it is better to start to do something and fail than it is to do nothing and wait for the correct path of action to appear. Failure is part of the result to expect if you have a bias toward action. The idea is not to be paralyzed in the face of uncertainty. If you do something and it works, great! If you do something and it fails, maybe even better. You do, you fail and you learn. You do again, you fail again and you learn some more.

If you are mindful about what you have done, failure is a teacher. With a little luck, after enough failures you will succeed. In many cases this is a much better approach than a long, drawn-out investigation into the right way to proceed.

Nobody wants to fail, and yet we all do. Don't be afraid of failure. It is part of the price you pay for action; there's no need to sweep it under the rug and pretend it does not exist. The most liberating way to acknowledge failure is to celebrate it.

## Watch Your Language

The way we communicate with people has a significant effect on their opinions of us. It's not just about what we say but about how we say it. Becoming better communicators can heal relationships, lead to better job opportunities and enable us to reach wider audiences with whatever messages we want to share.

Language influences the way we see things. It has long been known that using different labels for the same thing will promote different behaviors. For our purposes it is important to understand what we do to ourselves with our own choice of words and use of language. Once we are aware of our usage, we can adjust our language to be more in keeping with our true intentions and the existential situations we are describing.

### Have to/Want to

On the list of words to be used as little as possible is the phrase "I have to." The true situation is usually best

described instead by "I want to." To get the flavor of this, change *have* into *want* in your mind the next few times you say "I have to." Do this silently, simply repeating to yourself the sentence that you just said out loud, with just the one word changed. This exercise is very effective in getting people to realize that what they do in their lives — even the things they find unpleasant — is in fact what they have chosen.

Next let's look at "I can't" and test it against "I won't." A good way to make the test is to use the same procedure as in the previous exercise. So, for example, if you said out loud, "I can't stop breathing," you would then say to yourself, "I won't stop breathing." The simple change of *can't* to *won't* is often empowering. *Can't* implies helplessness; *won't* signifies volition and choice.

### Conversations

The question of intention lies behind all communication. What is it that you intend to communicate? Simply saying something does not mean it has been actually communicated. Even if all parties agree on what has been said or even if there is a signed, written agreement, it does not mean that everyone is really agreeing to the same thing. There are often honest misunderstandings.

These take place largely because people do not make sure their meanings — not only their words — are shared. Remember, successful communication takes both *intention* and *attention*. It requires the explicit intention that the meaning be shared, and it also takes the explicit attention to be sure it has been shared.

Suggestions for good interpersonal communications:

- Speak for yourself. Say "I know," "I think," "My reaction is," not "Everyone knows," "We all feel."
- Don't be judgmental.
- Acknowledge other people's issues. People want to know that you've heard them.
- Don't ask *why* questions. Asking people why they do things puts them on the defensive.
- Really listen. Even if you think you know what they will be saying or you have heard it before.
- When you are telling a story, be clear what your point is. Be prepared to be misunderstood.
- Make sure your communication is heard as intended.
- Make sure you understand what is being communicated to you.

When another person feels understood, you've given him a great gift.

## Group Habits

Belonging to groups gives us an important way to express our humanity. Most of us are affiliated with many groups: In addition to family, we have groups of friends; professional, political, health and school groups; and so on. The way you interact within those groups can change the way you feel about each situation and can enrich (or screw up) your life.

### Constructive Criticism

The d.school workshops have adopted a system for criticism originally learned from the late George M. Prince in a Synectics workshop. The idea is to give criticism in a supportive way that promotes positive evolution of the students' work, by saying two "I like" statements followed by one "I wish" statement. For example, I might say, "I like the way you took into account concerns about safety, and I like the way it looks." Then, after a short pause, I would continue, "I wish we could find a way to make it smaller."

The first thing to notice about this feedback is that there is no "but" between the "I like" and the "I wish." They are separated by only a short pause, nothing else. The second thing to notice is that "I wish" is said in a way that encourages further refinement in a positive way. It enlists everyone who hears the comment, including the commentator, to work on figuring out a solution.

### Minimizing Competition

Whenever there is a hierarchy of positions and pay scales, it's likely that you'll also encounter some people who will step on each other as they attempt to climb the ladder. You'll know them as the office gossips, the backstabbers, the users, the phonies. Steer clear of this entire culture. It is important to ask yourself what kind of satisfaction you'll derive from being that kind of person, even if it does mean you get the title you want. Don't lose sight of your humanity in the pursuit of a fancier car.

Many businesses and academic organizations use competition as a means of encouraging people to do their best — they literally have contests (sales contests, design contests, etc.) pitting people against each other. Our culture is habituated to winner-take-all athletics and other zero-sum games. While it can have a strong upside for the winner, it has a strong downside for everyone else. It can lower morale, foster jealousy and hurt relationships.

It's important to learn to be motivated to do your personal best, regardless of what happens around you. Look for ways to be inclusive rather than competitive — for ways to help the whole team win rather than just one

individual. As much as possible, it behooves you to erase the idea of competition in the workplace from your mind. You have to be satisfied only with yourself — not worried about what the Joneses are up to.

## Self-Image by Design

What you can achieve in life has a lot to do with your self-image. If you see yourself as a risk taker and a doer, you're more likely to take risks and do! If you see yourself as cautious and scared, it may make the road to achieving your goals a lot more protracted and difficult. You may not even know for sure how you define yourself, so let's figure out where your self-image comes from and if it suits where you want to be.

### Examine Your Role Models

When we are young, we learn from those around us. Naturally, our parents and siblings have a strong influence on who we become as we start to mature. We may be very fortunate and start life in a warm, supporting environment. We may be less fortunate and start in a harsh, threatening environment. Whether we grow up feeling accepted and loved by our family or harshly judged and rejected, it is almost impossible to escape those imprints.

Examine your family's viewpoints and how they have affected your adult life.

- What do they think about money?
- What do they think is a suitable life path for you?
- What are their views on authority?
- What are their views on hard work? Grades? Blue-collar versus white-collar work? Getting ahead in life? Work versus play? Hobbies? Taking risks professionally and personally? Personal fulfillment?
- Which of their views do you agree with, and which don't you? Have you tailored your life in response to their views? Is it helpful to you, harmful or neutral? Which influences of theirs are better off discarded? Which can you learn from?

If we realize we have a unique persona and a history different from that of our teachers and parents, we can end up being creators of a new synthesis that honors our influences yet is also a true expression of our very being. It is important that we look at our life and work not only from the point of view of its content but also from the question of what our actual intentions are.

Create a list of all the things you intend to accomplish with your work. You can get there by asking yourself a series of questions: What is my intention? Is it simply to get through the day? Is it to get a specific task done? Is it to have a good time? Is it to bolster my ego? Is it to delight? Is it to inspire? Is it to motivate? Is it to escape?

Then, once it is clear what your basic intentions are, the next issue is how to accomplish them. Before you get to that, it is important to be sure your intentions are real and not simply a series of clichés that you have been programmed to recite or have created to appease your self-image. Once you have your basic intentions clear, you can view the method of implementing them as a creative problem-solving activity that will get you unshackled from past practices and mimicked constraints.

## The Big Picture

Life on every level is full of complexity and uncertainty. As individuals we face a life of unknown duration, during which we are likely to go through periods of family, career or personal crisis. The world around us is even more unpredictable. It's a very good idea to have a general sense of your goals in life and an equally good idea not to get too rigid about your path. Stay open to possibility: Let other people in, and listen when new opportunities present themselves.

### The Blessing of Work

In his classic essay "Buddhist Economics," E.F. Schumacher points out that work serves to feed our basic need for association with other people. In fact, work supplies several of our basic human needs: 1. It gives people a chance to utilize and develop their faculties. 2. It enables people to overcome their ego-centeredness by joining with others in a common task. 3. It brings forth the goods and services for a becoming existence.

With this in mind, Schumacher points out that work is a basic human function that transcends the usual economic meanings associated with it: "To organize work in such a manner that it becomes meaningless, boring, stultifying or nerve wracking for the worker would be little short of criminal; it would indicate a greater concern with goods than with people, an evil lack of compassion and a soul-destroying degree of attachment to the most primitive side of this worldly existence. Equally, to strive for leisure as an alternative to work would be a complete misunderstanding of one of the basic truths of human existence, namely that work and leisure are complementary parts of the same living process and cannot be separated without destroying the joy of work and the bliss of leisure."

The constraints on our career paths tend to be self-imposed. We tend to *rise without thinking*. There is a ladder

that exists in many career paths, and society brainwashes people to think they are supposed to climb it. Not every new award, degree or promotion is a good thing for the individual. Keep asking "What do I *really* want?" over and over, until you feel you have gained insight into your own desires so you're no longer at the mercy of society's ideas of what is good for you.

## Make Achievement Your Habit

The word *problem* has negative connotations. It implies there is something wrong that needs fixing. However, if a problem is reframed as an opportunity to make things in our life better, then it becomes a positive, and problem solving can be recognized as one of our basic life forces.

So what are problems? The word *problem* describes any situation that we want to change. Usually problems are stated as questions ("How do I get a job?") or statements ("I cannot afford college"). Generally we want to deal with problems in order to effect a positive change in some situation. Life consists of solving a series of problems. We all have unsolved issues in our lives. There are situations and people that bug us, and there are vexing personal and professional problems.

If you reframe your problem, many possible options become apparent, and the path to a solution often becomes obvious.

### Prototype Your Way to Success

A *prototype* is a sample or model created to show or test a concept — something to be learned from. In solving problems, an excellent way to move forward is to incorporate prototyping into your process.

Early in the problem-solving process it is best to think of prototypes as simply trial balloons — ideas or statements sent out to gauge people's reactions to your ideas. Prototypes do not necessarily have to resemble a physical object. They can take any form. They could be conversations, written drafts, short movies, skits, physical embodiments of social or personal problems or actual physical models of objects. Prototypes can be in any form that gives information. They do not need to *look like* or *work like* the final solution, and they certainly do not need to do both.

The road to a final solution is strewn with ideas that have been prototyped as ways to get information, directions to take, ideas to modify and ideas to abandon. Prototyping is a great way to show people what you have in mind, so you can elicit their feedback.

The next time you are asked to do something, don't spend too much time thinking. Simply charge ahead. Do this by taking the first idea that comes into your head and make a quick prototype. Then think about what you have learned from this. If you are brave enough, try it out on some people and get their thoughts.

### Be the Cause in the Matter

Being the "cause in the matter" means taking full responsibility for whatever you're dealing with and whatever happens in your life, even when it seems that things are not totally in your control. It's a declaration of choice: Instead of playing the role of passive protagonist in your life, choose to take charge of your future. Resolve to get things done, whatever it takes, and no matter how many valid "reasons" pop up.

Adopt an attitude of willingness to give things a chance; allow yourself to test things out and see what happens without thinking you know the outcome. To test things, you need to give them your attention. Attention begins with noticing your behaviors and interactions. Notice both yourself and the people you interact with. What works and what doesn't? What could work better? Then test the various tools and exercises by inserting them into your everyday interactions.

Realize that your mind is trickier than you think and is always working with your ego to make you believe you are doing better than you really are. That's the human condition. What you have going for yourself is that, if you choose to, you can be mindful about controlling both your intentions and your attention to make your life better for yourself and for those around you. You can choose to be the *cause in the matter* of the circumstances of your life, and you can instill in yourself the habit of achievement for a more functional and satisfying life.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Achievement Habit*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg**. Duhigg brings to life a whole new understanding of human nature and its potential for transformation.

2. ***Triggers* by Marshall Goldsmith.** Goldsmith details six engaging questions that can help us enact meaningful and lasting change in order to become the person we want to be.

3. ***Springboard* by G. Richard Shell.** *Springboard* will help you re-evaluate your future and envision success on your own terms. It may even change your life.

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# 37CS10D The EQ Difference

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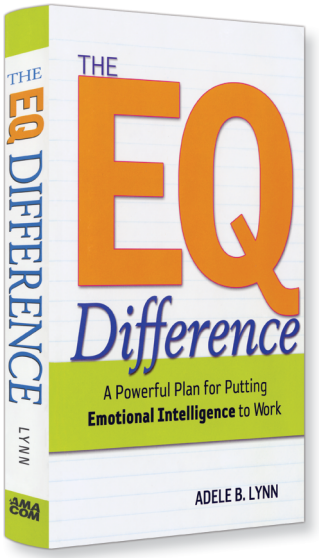
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# The EQ Difference

## A Powerful Plan for Putting Emotional Intelligence to Work




by Adele B. Lynn

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Quality of life is essential. Defining it, however, depends on the individual pursuing it. Some would consider it to be good health. Others may desire ample leisure. Still others would define it as possessions and material wealth.

By picking up *The EQ Difference*, readers are probably indicating they value another type of wealth — emotional wealth. Emotional wealth may be the most important asset of all, because in times of material poverty or poor health, emotional wealth sustains people. The dividends gained from investing in relationships and the comfort found in them can often make everything else bearable. Rich relationships, coupled with the strong inner peace that comes from managing oneself, is the hallmark of emotional intelligence. Unlike material possessions or health, emotional wealth is not only immune to the rise and fall of the markets or the ravages of disease and age, but it continues to grow and pay dividends.

Until recently, living an emotionally healthy and intelligent life was more or less left to chance, but today people take steps to improve all different aspects of their lives. Improving emotional intelligence is just one more avenue to living a healthy, productive life. The steps presented make up a comprehensive plan for developing emotional intelligence and living according to one's intentions.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The physiology of emotions.
- How emotional intelligence supports living our intentions and values.
- The seven steps to train your "self coach" to develop EQ.
- Methods for dealing with the difficult coaching client.
- How to apply a 360-degree assessment that covers the 10 most essential skill sets of well-balanced, effective leaders.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE EQ DIFFERENCE**

**by Adele B. Lynn**

**The author:** Adele B. Lynn is the author of *The Emotional Intelligence Activity Book*. She is a popular speaker and consultant specializing in emotional intelligence, mentoring and building trust in the workplace.

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## PART I: EMOTIONS: THE FUEL OF LIFE

## The Connection Among Behavior, Feelings and Performance

Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships so we can live our intentions. Indeed, emotional intelligence is about making choices.

Other people's behavior can definitely influence your feelings. Think about the last time someone cut you off on the freeway. That behavior could have caused you anything from mild irritation to road rage. Or think about the last time at work that people expressed gratitude for your efforts. More than likely, that had some positive effect on your feelings.

Emotions can also affect performance; in fact, some emotions translate into action and others into inaction. Recognizing this is an important foundation to understanding how emotions can be channeled in the workplace.

Even though feelings can affect performance, many factors contribute to overall high performance at work. Blending workplace knowledge and emotional intelligence can help businesses and organizations achieve the highest level of success.

## The Mystery of Human Behavior

Because behavior has such an important effect on performance, it would be worthwhile to understand the complicated factors leading to human behavior, especially our own. Family and societal values, laws and mores of church and state, personality, group influences, assumptions and beliefs, life experiences, and reinforcement and punishment all drive human behavior.

What do you know about your own behavior? Probably a good deal. However, no matter what your current knowledge, increasing that knowledge is a worthwhile and lifelong process. Also, what you do with that knowledge may be the difference between a life of mastery and one filled with repeated errors and struggles.

### The Dance Between Values and Emotions

Most major companies have eloquently written values statements suggesting that people — both leaders and employees — know how to behave. But people don't always behave the way they "should."

When emotion overrides values or intention, it is called emotional hijacking. Everyone has experienced this at some time. Daniel Goleman, who described the term in Emotional Intelligence, compares emotional hijacking to an emergency signal sent to a part of our brain.

No doubt you've either contributed to or witnessed a hijacking when someone appears with the wrong message. Anger is one of the most obvious forms of emotional hijacking, but muting (feeling one has lost one's voice) and inertia are other manifestations. With effort, these responses can be replaced with new behaviors and reactions.

## The Way We Are Wired

Emotions are rooted in our biochemistry; they are not simply a matter of the heart. Therefore, a rudimentary understanding of the science of our brains is necessary to understand emotional hijacking.

### Three-Brain Structure

Our brains consist of three fundamental areas. One area is our autonomic, or first, brain. According to scientists,

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the autonomic brain is responsible for such important functions as breathing and the beating of our hearts.

Another area of our brain structure is our emotional brain, or limbic system, which consists mainly of the amygdala and the hippocampus. The limbic system records danger and fear, giving us the basis for deciding whether to instantly fight or run in particular circumstances.

As our evolutionary development continued, the cortex and neocortex developed as the center for cognitive responses. The cortex is responsible for higher-order rational thought. It is the seat of problem-solving and decision making. The rational brain can help us navigate the path to living our intentions and avoiding emotional hijacking.

### Why Hijacking Occurs

It's important to know that your limbic system works really fast. In a hijacking situation, your limbic system just takes over, and your rational brain is simply not consulted.

Perceived threats have created well-ingrained pathways for reactions. But the reality is that even though our physical survival is not usually threatened, our limbic system still sends signals of risk and danger. Why? Because it has created patterned responses that serve our needs. If screaming and yelling for a cookie at age two produced the desired result, we may still be using that method in production meetings to get something we want. Those pathways are still working as if nothing has changed. The neuropathways contribute as much, if not more, to our behavior than rational thought.

## Emotions: What Are They?

For our discussion about emotional intelligence, we need to understand the three basic components of emotions: the cognitive component, the physiological component and the behavioral component.

### The Cognitive Component

Consider Tom in the Information Technology department. Tom thinks nothing is more interesting, challenging and stimulating than writing computer programs. On the other hand, Karen, a landscape designer, believes nothing is more boring than sitting in front of a computer all day. Tom and Karen have completely different perceptions about the work they like. The thoughts, beliefs and expectations housed in our rational brain definitely contribute to our emotions.

### The Physiological Component

Our limbic system goes to work with us every day. In every meeting and interaction, it's scanning the environment for even the slightest perceived threat. The more in tune you are with the physical reactions triggered by your limbic system, the better you will understand your emotions. Physical reactions are a credible source of information regarding your feelings.

### The Behavioral Component

The behavioral component of emotions is how emotion is expressed. A smile is a universal symbol of the emotion of happiness. In fact, nonverbal behaviors are the most common expression of emotions.

The cognitive and behavioral components of emotions are the two areas where we can focus our attention in emotional intelligence. If we can change what we think and how we behave in certain situations, we can positively influence our emotional intelligence.

## Rewiring for Greater Performance and to Live Our Intentions

Emotional intelligence can best be viewed as a partnership between our rational and limbic brain. By blending the thoughts offered by our rational brain with the rich information from our limbic brain, we can direct our own actions and behaviors. Emotional intelligence allows us to harness our emotions so we can honor our intentions.

### Introducing Your Self-Coach

It would be great if we all had someone who could follow us around during the day and help us know exactly what, when and how to interact with others, but in reality, we're generally left to our own devices. By creating a self-coach, we would have someone to consult, someone to whisper in our ear and someone to advise us about the sometimes treacherous path of human interaction.

## The Five Areas of Emotional Intelligence

Many people think emotional intelligence is equivalent to social skills. That, however, is like thinking that a car is a steering wheel. You're simply missing a huge part of the picture.

Emotional intelligence, therefore, includes skills that drive our internal world as well as our response to the external world.

The model for emotional intelligence contains the following five components.

1. **Self-Awareness and Self-Control.** The ability to fully understand oneself and use that information to manage emotions productively.
2. **Empathy.** The ability to understand the perspectives of others.
3. **Social Expertness.** The ability to build genuine relationships and to express caring, concern and conflict in healthy ways.
4. **Personal Influence.** The ability to positively lead and inspire others as well as oneself.
5. **Mastery of Purpose and Vision.** The ability to bring authenticity to one's life and live out one's intentions and values.

Three of the components of emotional intelligence relate to our internal world (self-awareness and control, empathy, and mastery of purpose and vision); the other two form our relations to the external world (social expertness and personal influence). All are interrelated, and one builds on the next.

To build emotional intelligence, the model requires that we work from the inside out. For example, you can't influence others until you have mastered self-awareness and self-control.

## PART II: TRAINING YOUR SELF-COACH

# The Doorway to Emotional Intelligence

The doorway to emotional intelligence opens with self-awareness. Self-awareness is our ability to understand ourselves and then to use that information to fully live our intentions. In your quest for greater emotional intelligence, you will find that self-awareness is a circular and cumulative process that is never fully achieved.

### The Self-Coach: Your Self-Awareness Partner

So what exactly is the role of your self-coach. First, let's distinguish your self-coach from your conscience. Your self-coach isn't there to tell you right from wrong. The self-coach isn't there to impose guilt when you've done something wrong but rather to help you learn from your experiences. Your self-coach is there to help you monitor your progress; to be a clearing-house for lessons learned; to offer tips, suggestions and advice based on your experiences.

### Seven Steps to Emotional Intelligence for the Self-Coach

The Seven Steps to Emotional Intelligence for the Self-Coach are 1. Observe. 2. Interpret. 3. Pause. 4. Direct. 5. Reflect. 6. Celebrate. 7. Repeat.

With continued practice and patience, you'll find your self-coach an invaluable partner in your daily experiences.

# Step 1: Observe

Every great coach, regardless of the sport or discipline, observes. Coaches watch and analyze each movement of their players.

How can you strengthen the power of observation? For starters, your self-coach needs to get out more; in other words, distance himself or herself. Imagine him just watching, perhaps perched on a ledge and observing you. He can sense your mood, your body language, your breathing and your voice intonations. He can also observe these things in other people around you.

After you practice observing yourself in pleasant situations, you're ready to assume the challenge of observing yourself during conflict or high-stress situations. In conflict situations, at first, try to pay particular attention to your physical reactions. Your physical reactions may well be the first indicators of trouble.

As you cue into your physical reactions, you'll also want to observe other things about yourself. While your self-coach is in training, it might be helpful to ask a trusted colleague or friend to help you with this observation process. It's particularly difficult to see your own nonverbal behavior.

### Scanning

Scanning is a technique widely taught in law enforcement to sharpen and broaden officers' perceptions in high-stress situations. Scanning allows a look at the whole picture rather than only one detail. This technique engages your rational brain to help you think and interpret signals from your limbic system. Both systems are giving you data; scanning ensures you are accessing both systems equally and can build a far more realistic picture of the whole situation.

### Observing Mood and Emotion

Mood is the underlying effect you experience in a situation. It sets the framework for how you may assess a particular event. Emotion is the reaction to a particular stimulus. For instance, if you're in a good mood and you spill a cup of coffee, you may joke about being a klutz. Spilling a cup of coffee when you're in a bad mood may cause you to become angry and lash out.

Moods and emotions fall within continuums. Depending on your mood, someone cutting in front of you on the freeway may cause you mild annoyance or rage. These different degrees are important to recognize. As you become more familiar with moods and emotions in yourself, you should become more able to key in to the moods and emotions of others.

### Voices

The next step in self-awareness is to assess how others' moods and emotions affect you. One way to do this is to begin to observe your internal dialogue. You'll notice that certain voices appear over and over again. These voices have a powerful influence over our moods and actions.

Getting a handle on the voices that speak most often in your inner dialogue is an important grasp for your self-coach. As he becomes aware of your tendency toward a particular voice, your coach will be able to quickly recognize the voice and determine how it affects behavior.

### Triggers

Another important concept for your self-coach is to understand your triggers. Triggers are those factors that influence emotional reactions. Those emotional reactions can be either positive emotional reactions or negative emotional reactions, depending on the trigger. Triggers include mood, moods and attitudes of others, personality, hot words/hot buttons, perceived criticism and situations, among others.

### Observing Bias, Prejudice and Filters

It's important to stretch your observation skills to include bias and prejudice. Limbic reactions can be so subtle that your self-coach may need help to see your prejudices. One way to begin is to monitor your self-talk about various groups. Especially look for ways that you are filtering information with your rational brain. Your self-coach can pose questions like, "How might I be excluding others? How might I be sending subtle messages of bias or prejudice?"

## Step 2: Interpret

Step 1 focused on training the self-coach to be an astute observer. What do we do with all the data garnered through observation? Here again, you need to ask your rational brain for some assistance.

### Modus Operandi

One of the most useful concepts for interpreting information is modus operandi (MO), or method of operation. Each person has unique patterns of behavior that repeat as circumstances repeat. Ask yourself, "How do I typically behave when I experience a particular emotion?" Or "What is the impact of a particular emotion on my behavior?"

### Combining MOs with Triggers

The next task in interpreting data is to combine what you know about your MOs with knowledge about your triggers. When your self-coach can quickly determine what triggers cause what emotional reactions, you will be on your way to greater emotional intelligence. You're interpreting not only what triggers hijack you but also how you react when you're hijacked.

### Impact on Others

As you observe other people, you'll find that your behavior affects them in different ways. Distinguishing the impact you have on others will help you know how to adjust your behavior. Just understanding that you have an impact on others is a huge accomplishment of self-awareness.

### Beware the Pitfalls of Interpretation

If you've done a good job at observation, you should be able to keep bias and judgments at bay as you interpret and analyze your findings. Right? Wrong.

Each of us has an enormous capacity to interpret incorrectly based on some common erroneous beliefs. The problem is compounded because our rational brian has been fooled to think that these beliefs are actually facts.

### Decision Time

At this point, your self-coach has assimilated important information for you. He understands your MO and your triggers. He has checked all of this data against potential confirmation bias and suggestion. Now it's decision time. In the moment, your self-coach will have to make the call. If you continue on your present path at this particular meeting or encounter, are you at risk for being hijacked? If so, the red flag should be waving.

## Step 3: Pause

There are moments when your self-coach decides that if you continue on your present path, you are at risk of being hijacked and not living your intentions. At such times, your self-coach needs a planned and practiced technique for pausing.

First, breathe. Close your mouth and count to eight while breathing in slowly through your nose.

Second, there should be some physical movement you can immediately revert to as you breathe. Examples

include taking a long sip of coffee, removing your eyeglasses or shifting your body weight.

Third, you should have a mantra to recite while breathing and performing the physical movement. That mantra should be uniquely yours, something that helps you gain perspective.

These actions should be practiced until you can instantly revert to this pattern. Thoughtful pause isn't about extinguishing the emotion you're experiencing but about allowing for another form of expression of that emotion — one that will ultimately serve you better.

## Step 4: Direct

Step 4 is about behaving in a way that will increase your likelihood of living your intentions. It's about careful selection of words and behaviors so they are congruent with your values.

For your self-coach to help you choose techniques that will keep you from being hijacked, you need to understand a common basic formula. In an unwanted emotional response, A (activating event) + B (belief about the event fueled by triggers) = C (upsetting emotional response and regrettable action).

This is the typical formula that drives emotional hijacking. If, however, you could insert one more step, you could drastically change the situation. This step is redirecting thoughts and beliefs. Let's change the formula to A (activating event) + B (belief about the event fueled by triggers) + C (redirect thoughts and beliefs) = D (new emotional response and action).

Your self-coach can use a variety of techniques to help you redirect irrational beliefs. These include challenging those beliefs with rational thought, adding humor to your thought processes and amplifying the voices that serve your intentions. As you practice these, you'll notice new assumptions forming; for example, "Others want to see me succeed, not fail" and "I have the power to change many things."

## Step 5: Reflect

Reflection is a wonderful way to get you closer to understanding your emotional reactions in a given moment, which is the true mastery of emotional intelligence.

Reflection is not about regret. It's not about rationalizing or justifying, and it isn't about reflecting solely on our feelings. It should take into consideration not only your intentions and how you felt about your reactions but, more importantly, how others viewed your actions.

### Reflection Methods

Your method of reflection will depend on many things, such as your personality and your comfort level with some of these techniques. Experiment with a variety of things, including journaling, mentoring, coaching, volunteering and reading.

Whatever your methods, reflection is a critical component of emotional intelligence. If you keep in mind that its purpose is to draw you closer to living your intentions, the insights will pour into your consciousness.

## Step 6: Celebrate

Some of the most significant breakthroughs in our thoughts or behaviors probably defined and changed us as much as, if not more, than a graduation or anniversary. In Step 6, we develop an appreciation for those moments and celebrate them.

How should you celebrate? However you like. The only guidelines are that you are clear on what specifically you have accomplished and to celebrate as soon as possible. This will lead to greater reinforcement. Remember, there's a purpose to celebration, and that is to rewire your limbic brain.

Another important thought, so that reinforcement takes hold, is to be sure that you are reinforcing improvements or advancements more frequently than you are chiding yourself for disappointing performance. If you are not, you are likely killing potential progress toward your emotional intelligence because your limbic system is registering negatives and failure. Yes, you are going to make mistakes, but if you pay attention, you're also making progress.

## Step 7: Repeat

Step 7 is about helping you recognize that the quest for emotional intelligence is a way of life, not a destination. Repeating is about renewing the sense of awe that life has to bring every day.

Most people recognize that new life experiences have added to their insights. As new parents hold their infants, they seem to believe that this birth marks the first time anyone has ever done anything so miraculous. It's that sense of wonder and awe in this new experience that changes the essence of who we are. But subtle experiences also change us. The best way to think of those subtle experiences is that they can accumulate and sneak up as wisdom. All of them can change you if you repeat them and allow them to accumulate into wisdom. But you have to be ready.

Repeat sets the stage for you to meet each encounter in life with a new mindset. Knowing how requires practice and discipline until it becomes automatic. Becoming emotionally intelligent is about practicing Steps 1-7 repeatedly.

## PART III: FIVE AREAS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORK

## Self Awareness and Self-Control at Work

Understanding your emotions is central to more effectively relating to people and creating a positive emotional climate at work. Conversely, if you have low self-awareness, people may see you as emotionally out of touch or insensitive. As you may be unaware of your emotions and/or your strengths and weaknesses, you may be unable to develop to your fullest potential.

Self-awareness allows us to understand our limitations, and self-control allows us to address them. Self-control is about selecting the words, appropriate time and demeanor that give you the results you seek.

### Suggestions for Improving EQ at Work in the Area of Self-Awareness and Self-Control

- Solicit feedback from your manager, employees and peers about your strengths and weaknesses.
- Pay attention to how you feel during a conflict situation. What effect are your feelings having on your actions, word, tone of voice and body language?
- Ask yourself, "If I express my emotion here without thoughtful purpose, what is the risk? What is the benefit?"
- Mentally rehearse staying calm in crisis.
- Given your personality, think about ways you could authentically express positive emotions.

## Empathy at Work

Empathy is an essential component of success, regardless of your job or level within the organization. Empathy is understanding the perspective of others, and listening is a tool of empathy. Empathy occurs when listening turns to full understanding of why people said what they said. This listening leads to understanding, not only from an intellectual level but also from an emotional level.

Our life experiences can be crucial in supplying us data that will help us become more empathetic. Our goal is to use those life experiences and the people we encounter as a laboratory where we consciously choose to consider the perspectives of others.

### Suggestions for Improving EQ at Work in the Area of Empathy

- When someone is talking to you, ask yourself what emotion is underlying his or her words.
- When someone says something you disagree with, active-listen to his or her statement in a non-judgmental way. Notice the reaction this precipitates.
- When someone says something you agree with, stay silent about your views. Draw the other person out, and ask them to tell you more.
- Think about the times you have jumped to a wrong conclusion. What can you learn from these experiences?

## Social Expertness at Work

Once you have a firm understanding of yourself (self-awareness), can control your emotional reactions for the desired outcomes (self-control) and are empathetic to others' viewpoints (empathy), you are perfectly positioned to create social bonds, collaborate with others and resolve conflicts effectively. These skills are the components of social expertness.

### Suggestions for Improving EQ at Work in the Area of Social Bonds, Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

- Connect regularly with your contacts.
- Always smile and say hello in passing.
- Remember people's names.
- Find ways to collaborate: It strengthens your social bonds and allows you both to give and take.
- Always respect a different view and be willing to change yours when a case is made for the good of the organization.
- When in conflict with someone, encourage them to state their views. Do not dominate the discussion. If anything, do more listening than speaking.

## Personal Influence at Work

Personal influence is the essence of leadership. Inspiring others through example, words and deeds requires a firm foundation in all the areas of emotional intelligence already discussed.

Persons with strong personal influence are optimistic. Their optimism even affects their health. They live longer than pessimists. A person with strong personal influence exhibits motivation for one's visions, missions, core values and beliefs. Therefore, influence is directed in two directions: internal to self and external to others.

### Suggestions for Improving EQ at Work in the Area of Influencing Self and Others

- Surround yourself with optimistic people. Allow yourself to feel inspired by them.
- Work to your strengths. Gain a good understanding of what you do well. Use that information to advance your ideas, stay motivated and persist. Your strengths will deliver your desired outcomes if you persist long enough.
- Watch your reaction to failure. Are you learning from your mistakes?
- Think about your participation in a truly satisfying and accomplished team. What elements were present to cause this reaction?
- What actions drain you?
- Think about a time when you did not act on something you believed in. How did you feel?
- Think about a time when you took an action on something you believed in. How did you feel?

Purpose is the foundation of emotional intelligence. When we understand our purpose, our emotional response is much easier to craft. Clarity of intention produces a picture of appropriate emotional response. This works for our lives as a whole and in daily situations.

Discovering purpose is hard work. Skills, knowledge, gifts, values, resources, likes and dislikes all offer clues to our purpose. True discovery, however, requires deep reflection and re-evaluation of all that we are. It also requires sacrifice. But the payoff is profound.

## Mastery of Purpose and Vision at Work

Each of us has a purpose to which we are uniquely called. Your purpose is your reason for being here. Purpose is not about your job or the roles you have in life; it's larger than that.

Mastery of purpose crystallizes our intentions. We can continually review our intentions by touching this base. Remember playing tag as a child? You knew you would always be safe at home base. Home base is our purpose. We know that when we come from this place, everything is aligned. We feel comfort. We live authentically.

Purpose also requires that you use your natural gifts and talents.

### Suggestions for Improving EQ at Work in the Area of Mastery of Purpose and Vision

- Think about times when you are truly your best and happiest. What defines these times?
- Think about times when you feel compromised. What defines these times?
- Take an inventory of the things in life that you feel passionate about. How many do you do daily?
- Assess and challenge your values. What do you truly believe in? What beliefs do you hold because others around you expect you to believe in them?

## Letter to Readers

Quality of life is essential. Defining it, however, depends on the individual pursuing it. Some would consider it to be good health. Others may desire ample leisure. Still others would define it as possessions and material wealth.

Emotional wealth may be the most important asset of all, because in times of material poverty or poor health, our emotional wealth will sustain us. The dividends that we reap from investing in our relationships and the comfort we find in those relationships can often make all else bearable.

As you continue to write the story of your life, go deep within yourself. The amount of emotional wealth you can accumulate is unlimited. Perhaps, at times, you just need to be reminded of your potential.

Carefully consider your words and actions. Honor your relationships with others. Honor the whisper in your own soul regarding your purpose, and expect it to grow into a roar. Honor yourself. Take off and soar.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The EQ Difference*, you'll also like:

1. ***Working with Emotional Intelligence*** by Daniel Goleman. Goleman identifies the skills of emotional intelligence and shows how they can be fostered.

2. ***Emotional Intelligence for Project Managers*** by Anthony Mersino. Become a better manager by learning these finely tuned interpersonal skills and emotional cues to get the job done right and on time.

3. ***The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace*** by Cy Wakeman. Learn to calculate your true value to the organization by understanding your current and future potential against your "emotional expense."

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# 37CS11B - The Laws of Charisma

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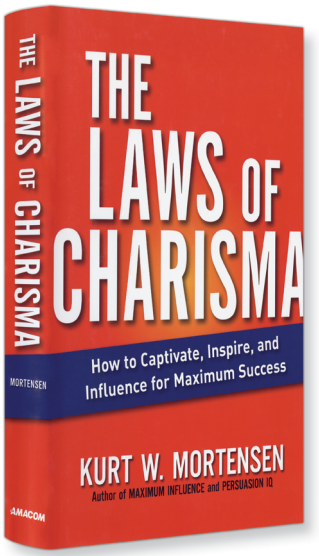
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Career & Self-Development

# The Laws of Charisma

## How to Captivate, Inspire and Influence for Maximum Success




by Kurt W. Mortensen

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

It's breathtaking to watch someone with charisma enter a room. The sound of their voice and their mere presence seem to have a captivating effect on everyone around them. It's as if an invisible field of energy surrounds them, mesmerizing others like a magical spell.

Your career, your relationships and your income are all related to your ability to radiate this mysterious trait. But what is charisma? Is it something with which only a lucky few are born? Or is it something that can be learned?

Much more than simply charm, likability, presence or passion, charisma allows you to build rapport instantly, inspire others and influence them to your way of thinking, all while putting them at ease. In *The Laws of Charisma*, Kurt W. Mortensen, one of America's leading authorities on persuasion and influence, reveals the specific skills, traits and attributes associated with charisma that you can learn, develop and master.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to get others to believe in you, trust you and want to be influenced by you.
- How to energize everyone around you with your enthusiasm, passion and expectations.
- The communication skills that will enable you to communicate effectively without speaking.
- Ways to win contagious cooperation from even the unlikeliest of allies.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE LAWS OF CHARISMA**

**by Kurt W. Mortensen**

**The author:** Kurt W. Mortensen is one of America's leading authorities on persuasion, motivation and influence. A highly sought-after consultant, trainer, seminar leader and speaker, he is the author of *Maximum Influence* and *Persuasion IQ*.

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## Introduction

Have you ever noticed how some people can captivate, inspire and influence others without effort? Other people instantly like them and want to be around them. How do they command such instant attention and influence everyone they meet?

This is the power of charisma. Charisma is a vital motivational and life skill that can and must be mastered if you are going to influence others.

When we hear the word "charisma," sometimes we are not sure what to think. It can be a mysterious attribute. Here's a definition of charisma: the ability to easily build rapport, effectively influence others to your way of thinking, inspire them to achieve more and, in the process, make an ally for life.

Research on charisma shows that you must learn and master certain skills, traits and attributes. As you read on, you will learn a number of critical skills or traits required to master charisma.

### Self-Perception Bias: The Great Blind Spot

What is the greatest roadblock to charisma? We all have blind spots in our lives that impede us from working on the things that can launch us into greater success. The inability to see these blind spots is called self-perception bias. We all tend to rate our skills and traits higher than they actually are. However, to improve, grow and become more successful, we have to know our weaknesses and be able to identify blind spots. If we don't know what they are, then we can never truly improve.

### The Solution

The solution is all about true self-assessment. We all have different strengths and weaknesses. Try to honestly assess yourself or have someone you trust give you feedback. Charismatic people are able to take a good, hard look at themselves and come to grips with the facts, both the good and the bad. When you can do this, you are able to make real progress.

## PRESENCE: WHAT DO YOU RADIATE?

## Passion: The Transfer of Pure Energy

Passion is critical to influencing others and transmitting charisma. Charismatic people radiate heartfelt passion. When your audience can sense your passion and sincere conviction for your cause, they will jump on board emotionally. When you transfer your passion, the people around you start to absorb your energy. They begin to perform better. Being on the job no longer seems like work. They become more proactive, more willing to work as a team and more optimistic.

### Application

Those with charisma increase enthusiasm by gaining insight and knowledge about their subject. They have developed a true belief and conviction in what they do. Believe in yourself and in your message; radiate enthusiasm in all that you do. On the flip side, fake enthusiasm, unrealistic hype and false energy destroy charisma. You can enhance your charisma by doing the following:

- Always maintain your credibility.
- Be sincere in all your interactions.
- Always be connecting with others.
- Always be authentic.
- Maintain constant confidence.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Andrew Clancy**, Executive Editor; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Andy Ghillyer**, Contributing Editor

## Confidence: Conviction Is Contagious

True confidence is a state of mind. Charismatic people can maintain confidence in all situations even if they have encountered defeats, setbacks or unpredicted outcomes. We all have a tendency to feel insufficient or inferior at times. When you lose faith in yourself or have had failure in your life, you lose confidence through fear, which can be defined simply as magnified doubt.

Fear breeds doubt and doubt destroys confidence. You need to make sure that your confidence is bigger than your doubts. What does your audience really sense in you? Are you afraid to exercise confidence and charisma? The desire to overcome your fear needs to be bigger than the fear itself. Bottom line: no confidence, no charisma.

### Application

Here are some additional ways you can avoid the trap of seeming overly confident or arrogant:

- Always take feedback or criticism with an open heart.
- Spend more time listening than talking.
- Be able to admit that you were wrong.
- Don't always attempt to prove you are right.
- Ask questions to demonstrate concern.

## Congruence: Action Versus Intention

Congruence opens the door to influence and charisma. It increases your believability and likability. You attain congruence when your message is synchronized with your beliefs and values. It occurs when your voice, body language, words and vocal tone are all congruent and aligned. It comes from making sure that your verbal and nonverbal messages are in agreement.

### Blind Spot

Even when you feel congruent, you may not look congruent. Whether you are deceiving or not, whether you are insincere or not, you might be coming across as if you are. A little fib? A white lie? No one will know. We think others can't tell. They haven't said anything about not believing you or your message. A little deception has worked before, and no one has called you on it. Most people can sense incongruence and rarely will say anything about it. You will either come across as congruent or incongruent. Do your gestures match your message?

### Application

Everyone can pick up on nonverbal behavior. We sense something is not quite right. Here are some things that can trigger a sense of deception:

- Forced eye contact.
- Shifting back in chair.
- Scratching your face.
- Rising voice pitch.

# CORE QUALITIES: THE INSIDE DICTATES THE OUTSIDE

## Competence: What You Don't Know Will Hurt You

A critical ingredient to radiating charisma and enhancing your ability to influence others is to have comprehensive competence, knowledge or expertise in the area where others expect you to have it.

Competence consists of your knowledge and capability in your field. Competence comes from lifelong learning and experience. Having more knowledge or expertise than your audience enhances your charisma.

Passion is a great thing to have, but without the perception of competence you cannot radiate charisma or influence anyone. True competence is when you combine your ability, capabilities and skills.

### Application

The key to developing competence is patience. Nothing works perfectly the first time we learn or try it. Keep focused and keep learning until you feel you can demonstrate competence in your field. In the short term, you can increase others' perception of your competence in a number of ways:

- Have someone endorse you or explain your qualifications.
- Make sure your office and external surroundings radiate competence.
- Keep your reputation untarnished.
- Get others to refer you.
- Always have a definite opinion about your area of expertise.

## Purpose: Tapping into Unlimited Drive

Many people confuse emotion with purpose. Your emotions will constantly change. When you have true purpose, not only do you attract more people and become more influential, but your purpose drives them. Purpose causes you to ooze charisma.

### Application

Do you know your purpose? Do you want to know exactly what greatness lies within you? Do you want to get a better feel for the direction you should take in life? Give these questions some continuous thought and meditation. The answers might come right away, or they might take days, weeks or even months to reveal themselves. Answer the following questions:

- If you knew you would succeed — if you knew you could not fail — what would you do if you were guaranteed success? What would you try? What would you become?
- If you could magically and instantly change one thing in the world, what would it be? What would you change?
- Imagine you became financially independent and no longer had to work, no longer had to think about making money and paying bills. What would you do with your time? How would you spend your day?

## Integrity: Character Counts

The word *integrity* comes from the Latin word *integritas*. It means purity, correctness, soundness and blamelessness. It can also be defined as consistency between your values and actions, between what you believe and what you actually do. When you want to influence others and enhance your charisma, you must radiate integrity. People must know and feel that you believe what you say and will do what you say. Tapping into your integrity requires knowing yourself, knowing your values and knowing exactly what you stand for.

Having great integrity is also part of your character. Character is made up of such qualities as honesty, sincerity and predictability. Solid character and integrity are the very foundation of one's ability to succeed. No success is going to be great or lasting if it stems from questionable ethics, motives or behaviors.

### Application

Tapping into your values will increase your passion, your integrity and your ability to influence others. You cannot influence or inspire others if you do not know your own values and are therefore unable to share them with others. Here are some tips to help you tap into and discover your values and how to live by those values:

- Write down your definition of a value.
- Take time to ponder and reflect on your true beliefs.
- Find people you respect, and define their values.
- Find people in history you admire, and determine whether their values are your values.
- Live up to everything you say you are going to do.
- Tell the truth even though it hurts.

# DELIVERY AND COMMUNICATION: SPEAK WITH CONVICTION

## Presentation Skills: Educate, Inspire and Entertain

Charismatic people have excellent communication skills that captivate, inspire and rivet their audience. Whether on the phone, in face-to-face interactions, during group presentations, amid negotiations and even when texting and emailing, they can articulate their message and make it come alive in your mind. They make you feel as though you're watching a movie; they have created a mental picture so strong that it feels real. These kinds of presentation skills have been described as energetic, enthusiastic and emotional.

### Blind Spot

Being able to talk or create a PowerPoint does not mean you know how to communicate, inspire and present. Most people feel that they have above-average communication skills and average presentation skills. That's the blind spot. The reality is that they are lucky to have average communication skills and below-average presentation skills. Sure, you can give a presentation and no one leaves the room or says anything negative, but did you really have charisma? Charismatic people have mastered their presentation skills, yet they are constantly working on them. There is always something to fine-tune, to learn and to improve.

### Application

How would you describe your presentation skills? Take a look at this checklist to see whether you are making any of these common communication blunders:

- Speaking in a monotone.
- Avoiding eye contact.
- Fidgeting and displaying other annoying mannerisms.

- Using vocal fillers ("uhm," "uh," "er").
- Lacking emotion or conviction.
- Sounding mechanical or rehearsed.
- Rushing through the presentation.
- Overloading the audience with too much information.
- Displaying nervousness or fear.

## Influence: Help Others Persuade Themselves

Charisma and influence go hand in hand. In other words, charisma is getting others to do what you want them to do and like doing it. People get uneasy when you talk about influence, but, just like power, influence is neutral.

Most people misunderstand the concept of persuasion and influence. Influence is usually undervalued and underutilized. True influence is not forceful, devious or manipulative. Make no mistake: Influence can be learned. Understanding the theories of persuasion, motivation and influence will create charisma.

### Blind Spot

The blind spot is that most people exert influence in the wrong way. They tend to influence others as they like to be influenced, and that is completely wrong. You need to adapt your approach to the person and to the situation. As you master charisma, you must influence others in the way they want. Just because you are getting short-term compliance does not mean you have influence over others. Charismatic people don't seek short-term compliance; they are after long-term influence. Short-term is easier, but it works only when you are around, as opposed to long-term influence, which works no matter where you are.

### Application

When people attempt to persuade and influence, they tend to use techniques that are old-school and that no longer work. Make sure you remove these common blunders from your persuasion and influence techniques:

- Getting too friendly too fast.
- The data dump — too much information.
- Persuading people in the way you like to be persuaded.
- Using force or coercion.
- Tired old-school closing tactics.
- Winning the argument but losing the ability to influence.

## EMPOWERING OTHERS: CONTAGIOUS COOPERATION

## Inspiration: Strengthen and Energize

If you are uninspired, you will not be inspiring. Charismatic people have the ability to inspire others, to instantly lift their moods, to adjust their emotions and to increase the energy in the room. When you have the ability to inspire others, people rise to your expectations. They want to grow and improve themselves; they thrive on your high expectations.

If you want your charisma to last, you need to rely on the inspiration that is rooted in your emotions and your vision. When you radiate inspiration, you move people away from despair, inaction and blame. You give them hope in themselves and in the future. You will be able to lead and inspire with charisma and the future in mind.

### Application

So how do you know whether you inspire others? How do you know whether you can promote teamwork? Here are a few questions to think about in order to understand whether people are inspired or stuck in desperation:

- Do others feel better about themselves after interacting with you, or do they feel worse?
- Do they know you are pleased or grateful for their work, or do they think you don't care?
- Do they know you truly care and would go to bat for them, or do they feel they are just another member of the team?
- Do you listen and care about their suggestions and their feedback, or do they get defensive when you critique them?

## Motivation: Light Their Fire

Charismatic people get others to motivate themselves for the long term. They are able to help others visualize goals and make them feel they can attain those goals. Such motivation allows them to set their own goals, solve their own challenges, make their own decisions but still feel they are on the team. The journey to achieve goals can get long, hard, tiring and frustrating. Your charisma is what carries them, motivates them and lifts their spirits when they are feeling down.

You can enhance motivation and empower people in two ways. The first is personal development. When you help others use their minds, increase their knowledge

and enhance their skills, you will find untapped drive and motivation. They will develop a sense of urgency and direction that will propel them faster and higher than before.

The second way to motivate and empower others is to get them to set goals. We live in a world where we want everything now. Moreover, we want it all with minimal effort. How do you motivate this type of person? One way is to understand the power of goal setting. Very few really know how to do it. They key is not only helping others to set and achieve goals, but also being able to communicate exactly what each goal is. People should welcome the new challenge and believe they can meet it. They also should know you are committed to them and believe they can achieve their goal.

### Application

We already know that true motivation does not involve manipulation, force or demeaning people. In the workplace, what can we apply right now to enhance and increase employee motivation?

- Clear and concise expectations.
- Increased training and personal development.
- Jointly setting realistic and exciting goals.
- Limiting negative reinforcement and pessimistic coworkers.
- Recognizing and rewarding improvement.
- Making sure workers have the tools and resources they need.

## Respect: Give It to Get It

Long-term charisma is all about valuing people. It is about the respect you give to others, which breeds more charisma and influence. Respect is viral and highly contagious. When respect is high between two people or within a group, people have more trust, they are more open about feelings and they are able to stay focused on the objective. Learn to build respect in others. The more respect you give, the more influential you become.

The respect you are earning is a combination of how you conduct yourself in all your affairs. When you show respect and character in all your dealings, people will see how you work with others and will talk about it. They also will be able to instantly sense the respect in you. Another word that applies is honorable. Be honorable, and other people will trust, respect and follow you.

If you are finding that people are not taking you, your message or your company seriously, you could be looking at a red flag indicating a lack of respect. Because no respect means no influence and definitely no charisma. The more respect you can earn, the more successful you will be in your communications.

### Application

Respect needs to be mutual. Once you show it, you can get it. And you can show it in many ways. Here are a few things you can start implementing when you are interacting with people:

- Always have integrity.
- Be dependable.
- Show long-term stability.
- Constantly practice your good manners.
- Be grateful to others.

## SUBCONSCIOUS TRIGGERS: IT JUST FEELS RIGHT — OR WRONG

Most people think if we give people all the logic, facts and figures, things will work in our favor. *Wrong!* We do have a logical side, but studies show that we are extremely emotional. Our subconscious mind and emotions are huge factors in our decisions and in how we feel and treat other people.

A subconscious trigger is a feeling that says "I like/don't like this person." Everything you do or say can trigger a response (good or bad) in others. It could be your word choice, your tone of voice, your gestures or your appearance; it could also be the atmosphere, the effect of music or the mood of the audience.

When you become charismatic, you will be able to read people, find patterns in their behavior and know which emotions you are creating. Human behavior is usually predictable; we all have certain triggers or knee-jerk reactions. Long-term charisma depends on knowing these triggers and how they work.

## Verbal Presentation: It Is How You Say It

If you sound either uncertain and timid or arrogant and demanding, your ability to gain charisma will falter. Your voice is your calling card: It must exude confidence, courage and conviction. Charismatic voices have a soothing volume, varied emphases, good articulation and a pleasing pitch.

To create an effective verbal presentation, you need to understand the following critical aspects of verbal packaging:

**1. Word choice.** Words help people form thoughts, feelings and attitudes toward a person or subject. One size does not fit all. Word choice can also be essential to defuse emotional situations and get people to accept your point of view and enhance your charisma.

**2. Rate of speech.** Speeches delivered at a fast rate are rated more influential and charismatic than those presented at slow or even moderate speeds, because people who speak faster appear more competent and knowledgeable.

**3. Vocal fillers.** You are probably using these and don't know it. "Um," "er," "us" or even "ya know." These types of fillers can destroy your presentation, annoy people, hurt your credibility and make listeners tense. Work to eliminate all vocal fillers from your verbal presentations.

**4. Pitch and inflection.** Pitch is the level of your voice frequency. A low pitch tends to show more strength, confidence and assurance. Inflection is when you alter the pitch or tone of your voice. You will notice that influential people use inflection in their voices to show confidence and authority. At the end of their sentences, they will usually inflect downward.

**5. Volume.** This aspect of speaking is easy to understand but often abused. You only have three options: too soft, too loud or just right. Plant someone in the back of the room to rate your volume, or ask a friend on the phone whether your volume sounds good.

**6. Articulation.** When you are talking to someone or delivering a speech, clearly articulate every phrase and word. A clear and coherent presentation radiates congruence. People are more likely to be won over by your message and feel your charisma when you are easy to understand.

**7. Silence.** A well-placed pause can grab attention at any time and with any audience. Pauses let the audience mentally prepare for what you are about to say and allow you to emphasize your point. As you come to the pause, be sure to keep your pitch a little high.

### Takeaway

Does your voice work for you or against you? Do you sound compelling or convincing? Effective use of vocal variety catches and holds other people's attention. If you don't like how you sound, take a deep breath and find a solution. Many people do not like their own voices. Make sure that you listen for specific aspects that you don't like, instead of the blanket reaction of not liking anything about your voice. Focus on the exact aspects of your voice that you'd like to change; then make one improvement at a time.

## Nonverbal Communication: Gestures Trump Words

To captivate and mesmerize their audiences, charismatic people express themselves in positive, nonverbal ways. Their gestures look spontaneous, but they are well planned and practiced. Think of your body as a prop. You are telling a story and keeping the attention of your audience. Make sure your gestures are positive and come across as natural and purposeful.

Not only do charismatic people use nonverbal gestures in the right way, they also have the ability to read and interpret the nonverbal gestures of others. When you are able to read people in this way, you can obtain the knowledge you need to adjust yourself and your presentation based on what you are reading.

Let's look at the different parts of the body and how different gestures can be perceived as either positive, negative or deceptive. Remember you are looking for clusters, that is, two or three of these nonverbals going on at the same time. A single nonverbal does not exactly define what is going on.

**Eyes.** Make sure there is plenty of light for your audience to see your eyes. When someone is attempting deception, look for decreased or forced eye contact, increased blinking, pupils dilating.

**Hands.** Clenching your hands in a fist detracts from your presence and your message and indicates anger, aggression or tension. When someone is attempting deception, look for decreased hand movements, hiding parts of the face with the hands or palms becoming sweaty.

**Legs.** A person's legs pointing in your direction often indicates interest. Tapping a foot means the person is either wishing you would shut up or a sign of boredom. When someone is attempting deception, look for crossing and uncrossing of legs, wiggling or tapping of feet or feet underneath the chair.

**Head.** This is the one body part that most people attempt to control during a conversation because they are the most aware of it. When people get nervous, more blood flows to the head, and you will see increased touching to any part of the head. When someone is attempting deception, look for people biting their lips, dry mouth or ears or nose that turns red.

**Body.** When two people are connected, the movement increases; when there is a disconnect, physical movement will be minimal. When someone is attempting deception, look for an increase in perspiration, more mechanical movements and physically moving back.

Practice learning to read people in every situation throughout the day. Turn the audio off on a movie or sitcom to get a better read on how to interpret body language. Be more aware of your own body movements and nonverbal behavior.

## Emotional States: Understanding Feelings and Moods

Charismatic people know there is a fine line between logic and emotion. To influence someone, you have to have both, but be aware that people's emotions will override logic every time. Logic tends to be temporary, whereas emotion will carry your message into the future. Emotion inspires us to take action, whereas logic justifies those actions. You may be able to form a logical argument, but you must understand emotions if you want to become more charismatic. Your goal is either to change the emotional state of others if it's running against you or to maintain it if it is working for you.

Your ability to change people's moods and handle emotions is a critical factor in your ability to maintain charisma. Let's look at some common emotions and what they mean to you when you try to influence others.

### Emotions that Detract from Your Charisma and Decrease Your Ability to Influence

**Anger.** Anger is a sign that something is out of line. Anger is also known as a secondary emotion. In other words, what people say they are angry about and what they are really upset about are usually two different things. You can help decrease a person's anger by finding out the real reason for the anger.

**Worry.** Worry causes people to feel nervous, uneasy or anxious. Worry can be referred to as a negative vision of the future. You can therefore help your audience by bringing them back to reality, back to the now. Worry will subside when you can substitute positive images for their negative ones.

**Fear.** Fear motivates us and moves us away from perceived unpleasant circumstances or certain danger. Logic rarely helps in reducing fear. The key to understanding fear is to realize that it has been learned from a past experience. Make sure when they are afraid that you can provide a solution. Then your job as a great influencer is to help them feel capable of overcoming their fear.

### External Factors that Affect Emotions

External factors can change perceptions, moods and emotions. This phenomenon is not something your audience can quantify. Let's learn how we can change other people's state of mind and how they are feeling.

**Music.** Understand that music can trigger good or bad feelings and good or bad memories. We know music can lull you to sleep, give you more energy, make you feel more romantic or even make you want to smack the person next to you.

**Smell.** The right smell can make you comfortable or like you have been friends with someone forever. The wrong smell will do the opposite. A strange smell can put someone in the wrong state of mind for you to be able to influence them.

**Colors.** Colors can trigger a mood, a feeling or an attitude. They do so at a subconscious level. Color impacts our thinking and our reactions. Learn to choose the right colors for the right experience and the right state of mind.

## What's Next?

Charisma is a lifetime pursuit. Be careful you don't confuse popularity or the number of friends you have with charisma. Even if you can influence people to do things, you do not necessarily have long-term influence over them. Keep working on your charisma. The more tools you learn, the more successful you are going to be.

The challenge is not finishing; the challenge is starting. Make up your mind to start the race, and then you will know that you are moving toward your goal of finishing. You can come up with all the excuses you want, but none of them will bring you success or happiness. Practice these techniques everyday. The first time you try anything, it might feel a little awkward or might not even work. Stick to the plan, stick to the race and you will see success.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Laws of Charisma,* you'll also like:

1. ***Persuasion Equation*** by Mark Rodgers. This insightful guide reveals what drives decisions and introduces the persuasion equation — a powerful combination of factors proven to speed agreement.

2. ***Executive Presence*** by Harrison Monarth. People reach highly influential positions because they deeply understand the power of perception and know how to leverage it in their favor.

3. ***Pitch Perfect*** by Bill McGowan and Alisa Bowman. Renowned media coach Bill McGowan shows how to communicate with confidence during the pivotal moments of life.

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# 37OTFS The Curriculum

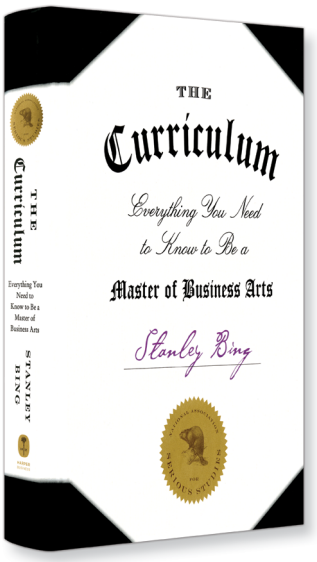
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# The Curriculum

## Everything You Need to Know to Be a Master of Business Arts




by Stanley Bing

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

From the mind of best-selling author Stanley Bing, the ultimate corporate mentor, comes *The Curriculum: Everything You Need to Know to Be a Master of Business Arts*, a no-nonsense, real-world strategy for success. Sharp, practical and amusing when it needs to be, *The Curriculum* is certain to occupy a place of pride on any shelf dedicated to books that explain how business works and how that knowledge can be used to achieve power, happiness and indefensible amounts of money.

Included in *The Curriculum* are key chapters on not appearing stupid (mandatory for entry-level students), fabricating a sustainable business personality, management, group dynamics, mastering electronic communications and dealing with bosses and other crazy people.

After contributing thousands of columns to *Fortune*, *Esquire* and the *Wall Street Journal* and writing nearly a dozen books on corporate strategy, Stanley Bing is at the top of his game, dispensing a lifetime's worth of hard-won wisdom to the next generation of masters. Enroll in *The Curriculum*, and his secrets will be yours.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to not look stupid.
- Methods to fabricate a sustainable business personality.
- Tips to engage in the art of selling, self-branding and self-marketing.
- How to understand and use the fundamentals of power to your benefit.

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Skillsoft

# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE CURRICULUM**

**by Stanley Bing**

**The author:** Stanley Bing is a longtime columnist for Fortune magazine and the best-selling author of *What Would Machiavelli Do?, Throwing the Elephant, Sun Tzu Was a Sissy, 100 Bullshit Jobs ... and How to Get Them* and *The Big Bing*. By day, he is a top executive in a gigantic multinational corporation whose identity is one of the worst-kept secrets in business.

*The Curriculum* by Stanley Bing. Copyright © 2014 by Stanley Bing. Summarized by permission of the publisher, HarperCollins Publishers. 374 pages, $35.00, ISBN 978-0-06-199853-9.

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## 001. Preface

This core curriculum and extensive elective courses are based not on ivory-tower musings but on actual workplace experience augmented by as much research as seems necessary to back it up. The course is comprehensive but will certainly not take anywhere near the two years and up to $250,000 involved in those offered by well-established, time-consuming and tedious ivy-covered institutions stocked with professors who would be eaten for lunch by most serious business executives.

## 003. Curriculum Overview: The Road to Power

This book is divided into four major sections: First, the core curriculum will teach you the fundamentals of the real world. After that, there is a hefty dose of advanced material that tries to help you get granular and muscular as you deal with the daily world that right now you may be ill prepared to encounter.

### Power: The Ultimate Payoff

In the end, business is like ballet. Some have a talent for it. Those who do never stop taking classes, practicing, working out their muscles and sinews, even when they sleep. The art of learning is never done. One layer builds on another, conveying the one true coin of the realm. Power. The goal is power. The Curriculum is the way. Let's begin.

The Core Curriculum establishes a common language and foundation upon which a real-world business career can be mounted.

While the core is not in itself sufficient for mastery in the business arts, it must be completed before more sophisticated development is possible. Those who ignore the core and proceed directly to the helter-skelter world of daily business are in the same position as monkeys given the assignment to type on a keyboard until they achieve *Hamlet*. There's always a chance it may work out, but if it does it will be by accident and only after an unacceptable length of time.

# 100. THE CORE

## Course 101: Not Appearing Stupid

The workplace is accepting of all kinds of people, but not those who appear to be stupid. Looking stupid is almost always an impediment to success, and in certain fields it is a virtual roadblock.

Those who wish to succeed in the higher levels of business life must appear to be the least stupid. While they most often are not smarter than anybody else, those who prosper and advance under the big tent are clearly more adept at *appearing not stupid* than the rest of us, not only in everyday life but, perhaps more important, in crucial business situations as well.

### Mastering the Elements of Nonstupid Discourse

Fortunately, one does not have to be a genius to grasp and then successfully employ the tenets of excellent business discourse both written and verbal. A smattering of knowledge and the ability to exude confidence is key.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Kezia Endsley**, Contributing Editor

Here are the makings of the crucial foundation upon which the appearance of nonstupidity may be built:

**Reading and writing basic business English.**

1. Say what you mean. Don't be afraid to do so, within reason. Of course, "what you mean" may, in fact, be a reiteration of what someone else means; that is up to you, but don't make people read a bunch of gibberish to finally ascertain what you intend to communicate.

Consider "I agree with Lenny." Or "OK by me." The thing that distinguishes these utterances is that 1) they are clear, 2) they are in declarative form and 3) you don't have to be a genius to get it. That's good writing.

2. Adhere to common forms of English. English is made up of some very basic fundamentals: a subject, a verb, an occasional object and a reason for its existence. Consider "Chuck can do it" or "There is absolutely no research to support that. Show me some research, and maybe we can formulate further strategic alternatives."

The last, obviously, is a more complex sentence. But it says what it means and also puts off definitive action for a later date. That's a good sentence. It does, however, utilize *jargon*, which may be defined as a business-specific term that implies knowledge of the subject and also injects unnecessary complexity for the purpose of 1) obfuscation and 2) showing off.

Beyond coherent written expression, the effort to avoid the appearance of stupidity also mandates ... an ability to conceal that which you do not know. Many smart people are, for instance, scared of economics. They think that if they talk about it, they will look stupid. Such is not necessarily the case. Let's put it more simply: You don't need to know anything about economics to talk about it. Just stay out of it, and your risk of seeming stupid will be cut roughly in half.

The best way to avoid looking stupid is simple — but very difficult to accomplish if you are, in fact, either stupid or prone to error, due to lust, pride or even good intentions. And the best absolute inoculation against the appearance of stupidity is this: Don't do stupid things.

How painfully basic! And yet ... every day, in every walk of life, in government, the military, academic establishments and, of course, the world of business, smart people are doing stupid things.

## Course 102: Fabricating a Business Personality

You will never move forward if you do not assume a working personality that supplants your own, at least in part, while you grow on the job. For the most part, the ability — and the right — to reveal one's true self grows over time, until you reach the highest levels of power, where people are unalterably and irrevocably authentic, gigantic, festering warts and all. Sometimes all that's left are the warts ... and a lot of money.

The relationship between self-expression and power may be calculated mathematically:

G = PX2

In this formulation, permissible Genuine Personality (G) is a function of two things:

- An individual's Personal Power (P, on a scale of 1-10), multiplied by ...
- The square of a certain indefinable quality that one cannot conceal (X). It's measured on a scale of 1-100.

In senior management, the expression of Genuine Personality (G) may be huge — a product not only of the Power (P) conferred by the rank and title but also by the enormous size of that uncontainable, irrepressible X factor (X2) that makes a George Washington the leader of his country and Bill Clinton the most charismatic guy in any restaurant he chooses to enter.

A low X factor means a diminished ability to express whatever genuine human being resides within you (G). The answer lies in *building your X factor over time*.

### The Functional Business Personality

Each student has to determine what kind of mix upon which he or she will settle, but the parts of the whole are relatively immutable:

1. **Grooming (5%).** There are men who still use strong aftershave and women who travel in a cloud of seductive scent. Others (men, mostly) have facial hair. These contribute mightily to one's definition of organizational self.
2. **Costume (11%).** For many years, everybody in China and at, say, Westinghouse dressed in the same blue suit. Deviations from that norm made a statement.
3. **Choice of hardware (17%).** At this stage of history, the display of your hardware makes a powerful statement about you, particularly if the implement you fish out when the phone rings is a clamshell that belongs in the Smithsonian.
4. **Work habits (23%).** What does "on time" mean to you? Are you organized? Responsive? Available to do a conference call while attending your mother's funeral?
5. **Substance abuse (7%).** Alcohol and other stimulants and depressants play an enormous role in business, government and the arts. You need to establish your positioning vis-a-vis this important issue to ensure minimum destruction of your newly minted persona.

6. **Approach to aggression, rage and violence (10%).** There are those, even when young, who operate on a short fuse. This gives the ones destined for greatness immediate and credible power — the power to scare people. The other kind of angry people are the ones you see picking up cigarette butts on the sidewalk and screaming about fluoride in their water. You'll want to apprehend the difference.
7. **Friends (17%).** Friends can sometimes, if not always, be counted upon as allies, which are more important than friends.
8. **Craziness (10%).** Each individual must wrangle his or her personal insanity and use it for the best business objectives. One must also learn to manage the insanity of others. Those who do not currently possess insanity are encouraged to acquire some.

### On Conforming to Expectations

The core concept the student must master, as he or she goes about the gradual and serious business of fabricating a sustainable business personality, is the necessity to *conform to cultural and pre-established personal expectations*. It is recognition that one's appearance and behavior must be in accordance, within a certain zone, with what people expect. Falling outside that zone will make people uncomfortable with you. But more important, it will make them begin to see you as *not part of the program*.

Establishing consistent expectations and then meeting them is at the heart of corporate life. As you fabricate your personality, make sure to keep that fact firmly in mind, because the creature you create will have to be sustainable, admirable and capable of growth. It also helps not to hate yourself when you're done.

## Course 103: Selling, Marketing and Negotiating

There are three legs to the salesman's stool, without which the salesman would be sitting on the floor, a position less congenial to negotiating a deal than some others. The three legs:

- **Marketing:** Invented to help sell things people don't need. Products and services that people actually need do not require marketing's song and dance. The more silly and useless the object or activity to be sold, the more intense the marketing needs to be.
- **Selling:** The art of selling transcends the product that is itself the subject of the enterprise. Selling is persuasion, an exercise of self. Selling involves getting another human being to part with something, usually money, in exchange for whatever it is you are telling them they need.
- **Negotiating:** One of the most important skills of all, negotiation is the seductive dance of all business relationships, successful or not. It involves, at one time or another, bargaining, wheedling, cajoling, bullying, reasoning and, when necessary, threats and promises in equal measure.

You can't have marketing without sales or, in most cases, sales without marketing, and you can't close a deal you can't negotiate. Give deep thought to the relationship between the three.

## Course 104: Managing

No matter how small a fish one might be, one must know how to manage. Those who do not manage will, in short order, find things unmanageable. There are four directions in which an effective manager must manage.

### Managing the Boss

No individuals are more in need of guidance and assistance than those whose job it is to provide leadership. Managing your boss includes running errands, disaster control, cleanup, tapping into their fantasy life and keeping paranoia, suspicion of others and rank terror of failure from bubbling.

### Managing Subordinates

The secret of managing other people is complex. Intimately involved are several arts: listening, thinking, questioning, validating, questioning and appropriating other peoples' ideas as one's own.

### Managing Peers

The most neglected skill rarely identified or studied, the ability to manage peers and colleagues is also crucial. The budding future manager will have a lot of work and no one else to do if for them. Sharing the workload is the art of exerting influence without power.

### Managing Yourself

Perhaps the most important management challenge of all: management of yourself. This involves getting it done, thinking hard, fighting fear and chasing the dream.

What just might be the most important quality of great management and those who have a gift for it is listening. Listen to your boss, employees, colleagues, clients and customers, family, research people, vendors, critics and even, at times, to the media when the spotlight beckons. Listen to it all.

And finally: Listen to yourself. The great ones do that better than normal people. And who knows? You may be one of them. But you won't know if you don't listen.

## Course 105: Group Dynamics

Business is often seen as a personal occupation; it is not. It is the functioning of the individual within the context of groups, not just one group but a series of groups that form, dissolve and reform hourly, daily, over months and years. Understanding group dynamics and what an important role they play in any business career is critical. There are four main subjects:

**What is a group?** A group is not simply more than one or two people sitting in a room. It is a living organism, as long as it lasts, whose workings have an impact on each of its members.

**Understanding other people.** What are they? Gifted businesspeople tend to be self-obsessed, driven narcissists who often have an incomplete grasp of the nature and, indeed, the existence of "other people" as entities distinct from themselves. Yet this task must be learned as well.

**Social relationships as a function of group dynamics.** To succeed in groups, the businessperson must build and sustain what are apparently not purely business relations with a variety of people in whom he or she would have no interest in any other context. No one but a true ultra-senior executive can do without human interactions.

**Meetings and other gatherings as a form of work as well as an alternative to it.** The meeting is the spine of much of the "work" that people do at any office. It is also at times the antithesis of work.

Beware of people who tell you that there is no "I" in "Team" unless they are kidding about it. They are usually the people who put the "I" in "Team." If they're around, you probably should keep plenty of "I" in mind, too.

## Course 106: Fundamentals of Power

Hard work and patient achievement is fine, but only a true master can transform labor into power. It is a talent that can be taught only to those possessing the four essential building blocks: desire, obsession, anger and will.

**The First Element: Desire**

The undeniable urge to *get what they want* is what characterizes all people of power. In your development, you will need to begin cultivating this irrational level of desire, the kind that justifies war, revolution, bloodshed, pain and humiliation on the part of your adversaries. Desire escalates through frustration and rage, resolves on a level of action that is frightening to other people, then uses that fear to achieve power.

**The Second Element, Part 1: Obsession**

Beyond the extremity of wanting lies the unique ability of the powerful to obsess about the object of their desire. There are many kinds of obsession that drive the will to power. Although all are forms of madness, some are power builders and, as such, are useful. Others are power drainers and must be avoided. The obsession with winning is a necessary one. No one achieves power without it.

**The Second Element, Part 2: Compulsion**

Compulsion is the flip side of obsession. All these driving obsessive forces arise from and generate more anxiety, the feeling that something is very, very wrong and needs to be made right immediately if the world is not to fall apart. This horrible and pervasive feeling is at least temporarily assuaged by a variety of powerful, ritualistic behaviors that ease the anxiety and give the suffering obsessive an illusion of control, at least briefly.

**The Third Element: Anger**

Anger confers power because people who are not angry are afraid of people who are. Anger is a sword that, in the right hands, becomes the most effective tool. There are other tools, but without anger they are simply less effective.

The aptitude for great anger comes at a cost. Businesspeople interested in permanent, usable power learn to manage their anger and employ it for good use.

**The Fourth Element: Will**

How much risk can you stand? When a tough situation is staring everybody in the face that can only be resolved by an intricate, dangerous, one-on-one engagement, will it be you who quietly says, "Okay, I'll do it"? Power is seized, then used. If not fully utilized, it is lost.

Every piece of the core is useful, but the extent to which you can draw power to yourself and use it wisely will determine the height and depth of your business career.

Having established a strong core, you are now ready for field-based studies to better prepare you for the vicissitudes of everyday work life.

# 200. THE ADVANCED CURRICULUM

## 201: Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking is utilized to produce a strategy. It helps you come to the conclusion that all hairy situations are amenable to management, even when they're not.

It takes discipline and practice. The six steps of strategic thinking are

1. **Underestimating the problem.** The strategic thinker wants to do some light cognition in a good frame of mind, without freaking out. Consequently, the true strategic thinker is the first to say, "It's not going to be a big deal" when the company's $25 million celebrity spokesperson is found facedown in a bowl of oatmeal, dead.
2. **Fear.** The 3 a.m. kind. Fear is a terrific motivator. It does one of two things in people. Some run away. Some run forward braced and energized by how big and scary everything is all of a sudden.
3. **Rage.** The mind turns black. *Why do these things always happen to me!* you scream, silently to yourself, unless you're the CEO, in which case you can scream audibly at virtually anybody you choose.
4. **Intense, microscopic plotting.** Now it's time to focus. Get a big picture of where you want to go before you start listing stuff. The big picture is very important. Without it you're not building a strategy. Make a list of actions to be taken. Divide your list into three time periods: immediate, intermediate and long-term.
5. **Getting it done.** While the Getting It Done people are getting it done, really tough Strategic Thinking must be taking place by the Getting the Strategy people as well.
6. **Mopping up.** You may think for a moment that the beast is dead, because you chopped its head off yourself. But look. The body is twitching. Better get busy doing some more thinking!

It is always better to go into the engagement with a strategy than without one. Most people in a conundrum of some sort have no idea what to do. They are not thinking strategically. Eventually, they will look to a person who appears to have some idea of what might be done if somebody knew what to do. That will be you. Pretty soon, they'll be calling you a leader.

## 202: On Branding Yourself

Now we're going to take a look at how you might go about marketing the most important product you will ever sell: You. When people buy your brand, they must know that they are getting something consistent, with known properties, that will live up to expectations again and again. That's what your brand must promise.

To begin, think of yourself as a product.

- What are those qualities that make up your personal brand and differentiate you from the generic hordes?
- Who is the target audience? Senior management? Folks in the field? One person in particular?
- How does the product look, smell, taste? Are there aspects of it that you want to stress or conceal?
- Select all other attributes you can put into action. A brand is all about what you do.

Good is good and bad is good. Good attributes make for solid, straightforward positioning. "This is Barb. She works hard. She plays hard. She's trustworthy and bright." That's Barb's brand. Bad attributes can be used to sell a different kind of product. "Don't make Barb angry. She turns into a fucking monster." Not a bad brand at all, particularly if it comes with intelligence, ruthlessness and charm.

A good brand is more than hype. It must live up to its positioning every day by establishing its authenticity over and over again on the job. Establish it. Expand it. Enjoy it. It will bring you power.

## 203: Crisis Management

Every meltdown has an arc — a mistake, a gestation period, a realization by the wounded party, a period marked by gossip when the situation could evaporate or metastasize and, finally, the opportunity for apology and regeneration. Each of these phases must be confronted and nagged in its own particular way. Consider the 14 steps of crisis management:

1. **Examine the horizon.** Crises are always preceded by a precipitating incident that doesn't look so bad.
2. **Stop bad behavior.** There comes a crucial moment where 95 percent of all bad situations can be avoided. Seize that moment!
3. **Foster manageable paranoia.** The good crisis manager makes sure that the decision makers realize that there may be consequences to their actions!
4. **Catch it early.** Here's the point where most people freak out and overreact. Resist the urge. Take a step back!
5. **Gather information.** As soberly and rationally as you can, find out what is going on.
6. **Play whack-a-mole.** Most crises seem to pop up, disappear for a while, then pop up again in a different place. Perch over each hole in the ground and wait.
7. **No sir, you can't hide.** Those responsible for the crisis or for repairing it must be on location, available and visible.
8. **Accept chaos.** The good crisis manager allows all the false solution, the quick fixes, the dumb, dramatic reactions to swirl around while a true and lasting course is found.

9. **Remain cool.** There's no punishment for taking a few moments to think.
10. **Establish the plan.** It's not perfect. But it's the only way to go. Launch the plan!
11. **Communicate.** Even if the message is very, very minimal, there must be some message that tells the world that you have a story and you're sticking to it.
12. **Don't apologize indiscriminately.** Most of the time the crisis is not ended by the apology. It is, in fact, extended to include a merry dance that ends in the decapitation of the apologizer.
13. **Declare yourself closed for business on this stupid thing.** It's time to get back to the real world. You're not playing the crisis game anymore.
14. **Learn something.** This phase is optional. Others are going to want to skip it. Try not to.

In the end, nothing can stop the crisis once it has started on a path to your door. Shit happens. That's OK. You'll live. Unless, you know, it kills you.

## 204: Electronic Communications

Sometimes it's tough to tame the rolling river of electronic sludge. The issue is, how can we make the tsunami of email, text messages, tweets, Instagrams, etc., work for us, not against us? Some of the problems we all face:

**Problem 1: There are too many empty communications.** There is no fighting this with direct action. A more Zen approach based in Not Knowing may be more appropriate.

**Problem 2: People always checking their implements instead of focusing on what's going on around them, including you.** All this constant peering into implements does not improve business or the lives of those who pursue it. Like all tools, electronic ones must be put into a proper framework and managed.

Your electronic communications are an extension of your business persona. Some sensible guidelines to observe:

- Keep your emails brief.
- If you must go on and on, put all the important stuff up front.
- With every email, text message and tweet that you send, imagine it being read by someone who is suing your corporation and has the right of discovery over your electronic communications.

## 205: Crazy People

The realm of business often rewards those who are, by any sane measure, nuts. This is because those who are bound to rigid solutions, are focused on themselves to the exclusion of others and are irrational in pursuit of their goals are likely to do very well in the game. In other words, in the world we're trying to master, it's very useful to be a certain kind of crazy.

### The Seven Kinds of Crazy People

**Bully.** He is willing to do anything to get what he wants. Emotionally vacant and without moral scruple.

**Strategy.** Flattery and backbone. Obsessive attention to the crazy person's mood.

**Narcissist:** He or she is a charming, brisk, highly intelligent, willful, big visionary with a "why not?" attitude that's hard to resist.

**Strategy.** Don't waste time with the truth. He will kill its messenger.

**Paranoid Mind.** A maniac for order. If something falls out of place, it must be restored. Very bad temper.

**Strategy.** Be the solution to his problems, even if they are imaginary. Conveniently, imaginary problems are often easier to solve than real ones.

**Evil Wizard.** While bullies and sociopaths can be a lot of fun when they're in a good mood, these scary people are always a bummer, conjuring winged warthogs from the black depths.

**Strategy.** Only in groups of the righteous is power against evil wizards found. It helps to have a dragon on your side, too.

**Self-Destructive People.** They are vulnerable due to an enormous, crushing lack of judgment.

**Strategy.** Advice and guidance may be offered.

**Hit Men.** They are truly off the rails. The people who dedicate themselves to hurting, maiming and destroying because they work for somebody really, really bad.

**Strategy.** It's tough to work for a stone-cold psycho.

**Cipher.** Who is this fucking guy? Do we know him? Can we count on him not to flake out, burn out, flame out, sell out? No, we can't. Because he is a cipher.

**Strategy.** Whatev.

## 206: Friends, Enemies and Frenemies

In a business setting, there are many differences between a "real" friend and a "business" friend.

Frenemies are neither friends nor enemies but situational associates who, at one time or another, are neither or both. Friends who don't support you and enemies who help you for their own reasons are frenemies. They may be used situationally but watched very carefully, because their support, affection and reliability are inconsistent.

Here are seven ways to make and maintain friends in business:

1. Be nice to people.
2. Don't shame anyone in public. If an ass must be kicked, do it in private.
3. Listen to people.
4. Always say hello to people in lobbies, elevators and so on, no matter how lowly or insignificant their position.
5. Display a happy demeanor. Manage your face.
6. Solve problems; don't create them.
7. Make people happy.

Maintain your friends, and treat them like the precious treasure they are. Take equal care of your enemies; always look for ways your interests and theirs might intersect. Use your frenemies as you would a hammer or a personal digital assistant, tools that will help you get your job done.

## 210: A Short Course in Ethics

Ethics are very easy to have until you need to exercise them. Then it's kind of amazing how many of them can be discussed rationally and modified. "Thou shalt not steal" moves to "maximizing value isn't stealing," which moves to "the rules are unclear about these investment vehicles," which moves to "we'd be morons not to get into this on the ground floor," which results in "it's good for shareholders!"

Rationalizations are at the heart of ethics moderation. Popular ones include

- Everybody does this kind of thing.
- This is chickenfeed compared to what the big boys do.
- My family comes first, not the SEC.

Our brief is *to be as ethical as we can be* on a day-to-day basis, even if the solutions we reach are not perfect, and we do not succeed in guiding matters as we might have wished. In any complex situation, with decisions on the line, the general layout of individual behavior within the closed environment of the business ecosystem is likely to be as variegated as a hummingbird's wing.

You and your company are in this together. The company is juggling regulatory questions, the threat of bad publicity and the immediate punishment that Wall Street might inflict. You have to wrestle with your own ambitions and the expectations of those that rely on you. Finding your way to some ethical comfort level as you go about your business life will be one of the great challenges you will face going forward. Don't expect perfection.

# ELECTIVES

## 316. Boondoggles and Other Opportunities for Public Humiliation

A boondoggle is not what those in Silicon Valley refer to as an "off-site," in which one sits in a closed conference room and fights off sleep while pretentious guys with open collars play with empty concepts on a white board.

The classic boondoggle is an organized excuse by senior management to indoctrinate middle and senior management, forge a common identity, make people happy about who they work for and incidentally have a little fun along the way. There are meetings, always in the morning, always intended to be somewhat mind-expanding or out of the run of daily business. In the afternoon, there is sometimes golf or tennis. At certain times during the three-to-five-day boondoggle, there will be entire group events designed to forge unity of spirit and enhance morale among those who perhaps need some.

It should be noted that boondoggles are fewer and farther between at this writing. But as the economy improves and senior managements get too bored staying at home, the boondoggle will pop up again for those who are doing well, and certain understanding of the opportunities and dangers involved will be essential to those who wish to avoid personal destruction. The elective begins with a look at the consequences sustained by those who choose to dance with a tie around their heads, and goes on from there.

## 325. No Guts, No Glory

Required for Graduation.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Curriculum*, you'll also like:

1. ***The No Asshole Rule*** **by Robert I. Sutton**. Take a compelling, humorous look into the difficult challenge of having to work with other human beings. Sutton provides readers with practical advice about what to do with a poisonous work environment.

2. ***Behavior Breakthrough*** **by Steve Jacobs**. Jacobs and his colleagues explain the quiet revolution that is underway in pioneering organizations.

3. ***Managers Not MBAs*** **by Henry Mintzberg**. Mintzberg argues that the current MBA system ensures that the wrong people will get educated the wrong way. Discover his International Masters in Practicing Management.

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# 38-10 Stretch

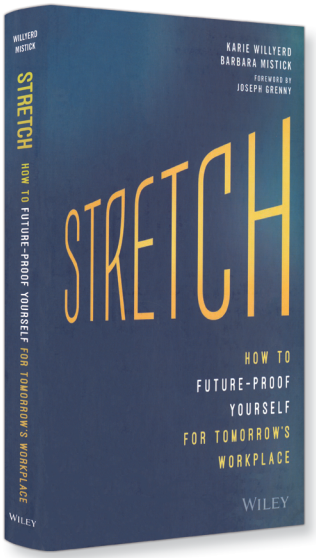
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# Stretch

## How to Future-Proof Yourself for Tomorrow's Workplace




by Karie Willyerd and Barbara Mistick

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You know you can do more with your career. And the future is going to demand more of you. The problem is you are so busy keeping up with the day-to-day that you can't prepare for tomorrow. *Stretch: How to Future-Proof Yourself for Tomorrow's Workplace* gives you the confidence and knowledge you need to achieve your goals in an ever-changing world. Karie Willyerd and Barbara Mistick — established experts and the collective winners of dozens of awards in the field of personal development and learning — offer evidence-based guidance on obtaining the skills you will need to thrive in tomorrow's workplace.

*Stretch* offers advice, valuable insights, anecdotes and recommendations to make achieving your goals practical and within reach. To remain relevant in spite of change, you need to know how to learn in any situation, open your thinking to a world beyond where you are now, connect to the people who can help you make your future happen, seek experiences that will prepare you for tomorrow and stay motivated through the ups and downs of a career so you can bounce forward.

*Stretch* offers five practices to help you start, enhance and lengthen your career by anticipating the needs of tomorrow's work environment. Don't become obsolete. Instead, stretch to achieve your potential.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The global megatrends that will affect your future.
- The three stretch imperatives and the five practices that will allow you to fulfill those imperatives.
- The top 10 capabilities you will need for the future.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **STRETCH**

**by Karie Willyerd and Barbara Mistick**

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## PART I: INTRODUCTION

## The Stretch Imperative

Gallup reports that the majority of us are disengaged at work. And as people live and therefore work longer lives, it becomes necessary to reshape the identities we formed in our careers. The future beckons. Will you remain one of the 70 percent of the disengaged zombies at work? Are you facing obsolescence? Instead, what if the life you are living is your bucket list, and all you want is to ensure that you get to live more of the life you have, work and all?

It's time to stretch, to prepare for tomorrow's workplace and put yourself in control of the career of your dreams.

### Megatrends That Will Affect Your Future

In order to point ourselves in the right direction, first we need an idea of where we are going. Here are seven megatrends that will certainly have an impact on the types of jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities and skills needed for workers in the future.

**Globalization.** McKinsey estimates that half of the world's largest companies will be headquartered in what are now emerging markets, such as Brazil, India and eastern European countries. Pressure from global competition and other factors resulted in over 40 percent of the companies that were in the Fortune 500 in 2000 falling off the list by 2010. These were replaced largely by new global entrants and technology companies. The types of jobs most affected by globalization will be ones that can be done anywhere in the world and shipped over the Internet. We are all interconnected.

**Demographics Shifts.** In many economies around the world, advances in healthcare and declining birth rates have resulted in a population that is graying and a workforce that is shrinking. Diversity is also on an uptick. An increasingly diverse workforce will demand more representation in leadership positions and in pay equity.

**Explosion of Data.** Experts estimate that from 2009 to 2020, data will grow 4300 percent. Organizations that can mine this data to reveal customer trends will lead the markets of the future. No matter what field you are in, the interface with data and machines will increasingly become a factor.

**Emerging Technologies.** In April of 2015, the first driverless car to cross the United States arrived at its destination in Manhattan after nine days. With 3D printing, manufacturing will move from being a subtractive process to an additive one, where objects are built in layers by printing rather than by machining a block of material. How soon will you interact with a robot providing customer service? The answer may be sooner than you think.

**Climate Change.** The OECD anticipates that by 2050, more than 40 percent of the world's population will live under severe water stress, resulting in floods or drought that, combined, can put the economic value of assets at risk at record highs. Becoming efficient with resources is socially responsible and cost beneficial.

**Redefined Jobs.** The nature of work is going to be increasingly a transactional task exchange, which is to say, those with in-demand skills will be hired to accomplish one specific project, rather than given a full-time position.

**Complexity.** At the organizational level, complexity multiplies with layers upon layers of government regulations, in multiple countries, combined with requirements

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

from customers with their own unique specifications. At the individual level, the need to master this complexity and balance competing demands is also on the increase. Stanford researchers identified a number of stressors that affect overall health and wellness for employees, including long hours, job insecurity, extraordinary job demands, work-family conflict, unfair work situations and others.

Studies agree resoundingly that these megatrends are forging the working landscape of the future. The question is not whether you have a sell-by date. You do. The real question is what you are doing to extend that date.

### The Stretch Imperatives

Three themes represent the realities of today's workplace. They are called the Stretch Imperatives.

**Stretch Imperative 1: It's All on You.** Not only is your engagement all on you, but your development is too. Research shows that the number one attribute executives value in employees is a high degree of education and qualification. Yet fewer than one-third reported that their companies offered incentives or benefits related to obtaining more education, whether it was degree-oriented or job-specific.

**Stretch Imperative 2: You Need Options.** Even if you have a defined career path at your company, you may not be willing to follow that prescribed plan. You need options in order to maximize your personal development.

**Stretch Imperative 3: You Have Dreams.** Survey respondents and interview subjects shared hopes and aspirations for building their careers now to achieve loftier goals in the future. That might be bigger and more significant roles at your company or another one, or it might mean starting your own business. You want more for yourself and your family, and you are willing to take the steps to be career-ready.

There are five practices that people who stretch to their potential employ. The five practices connect to the Stretch Imperatives.

- Since the first Stretch Imperative confirms that it's all on you, you must be able to learn on the fly in any situation and open your thinking to a world beyond where you are now.
- Because you need options, the practices included in the second imperative will help you connect to the people who can help you make your future happen and seek experiences that will prepare you for tomorrow.
- Finally, to ensure you are able to fulfill your dreams, as cited in the third imperative, we offer some motivational strategies to bounce forward and stay motivated through the ups and downs of a career.

These five practices form the foundation for supporting your ability to reach your career goals and to be resilient and prepared for a future you have yet to envision.

## PART II: IT'S ALL ON YOU

# Learn on the Fly

To avoid becoming obsolete, you must continue to learn and not just in a classroom or in other formal learning settings. In a sense, we must all learn a living because, as people said repeatedly in interviews, "It's on me to develop myself." You must learn on the job, often "on the fly" if you are to have any hope of keeping up.

### Strategies for Learning on the Fly

Here are some strategies to help you become more adept at learning on the fly.

**Adopt a Growth Mindset.** The first strategy to learn on the fly is to commit to a mindset that you have the capacity to learn and grow. According to author Carol Dweck, a person with a growth mindset believes that true potential is "unknown and unknowable because it is impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil and training." People with a growth mindset, Dweck asserts, "don't just seek challenge, they thrive on it. The bigger the challenge, the more they stretch." With a growth mindset, opportunities to learn will abound and you will find yourself more open to new experiences, and you will be more likely to achieve the skill improvement and professional development goals you set for yourself.

**Cultivate Curiosity.** Committing to a learning mindset and observing in the moment are stronger when followed up with curiosity about why. Curiosity helps us avoid complacency and disengagement. Since we all work from a set of unconscious rules we have acquired from our experiences, asking "Why?" with a sense of curiosity can help bring the unconscious rules to the conscious level.

**Know When to Unlearn.** EMC, the IT storage company, reports that by 2020 there will be more data bits available now than there are stars in the universe. If you considered just the knowledge you need to absorb in your field, the amount of content is beyond what any one individual can absorb in a lifetime, and also facts change. The half-life of facts is changing constantly and differs between fields, but what you learned in school or on the

job might actually now be wrong or outdated. We have to be able to rapidly unlearn as well as learn new things.

Expect to be frustrated when you are unlearning, as that is a natural part of the process. Feeling like you are back to ground zero is the uncomfortable phase you have to go through when unlearning. Having your career goals in mind makes it worth the effort to push through.

### What Organizations and Managers Can Do

Forward-thinking organizations can provide an environment that makes it easier for their employees to learn on the job and to fulfill their potential.

**Create On-Boarding Success Maps for All Transitions.** Help employees consider all the new things they will need to learn and know in any new role. Good on-boarding or transition plans can encourage learning on the job by defining early on what the employee will need to learn, from whom they can learn it and then encouraging those connections.

**Curate Learning Options for Employees.** LinkedIn helps their own employees sift through their ample corporate learning offerings by giving them a variety of lenses with which to cull resources. Not only do they have their training or knowledge resources sorted by functional categories and topic areas, but they also use a tool to ask employees, "How would you like to transform?" Through a series of questions, the system refines suggestions for the employee. As they drill into the specific expertise area, a limited set of curated items are available, including online courses, downloadable books, links to TED talks, articles, Lynda.com training resources or executive videos.

## Be Open

As the first Stretch Imperative tells us, it's all on you, so you must be able to consider many possibilities to progress in your career. You don't want to become stuck in a view of the world that limits your possibilities, even if that worldview has been successful in the past.

Preparing for a changing future requires that you allow yourself to be open to options you may have rejected in the past or to approaches you find uncomfortable at first. Career growth demands adaptation.

### Stretch Strategies to Be Open

The following strategies can help you recognize when there might be opportunities to develop, career shortcuts to take or new options to open your career journey.

**Consider Yourself a Lean Startup.** Successful entrepreneurs start with an idea and adjust as they learn what people respond to. The least successful entrepreneurs are the ones who never test new ideas and, instead, remain steadfast on their current track. Thinking of yourself as if you were a lean startup means that you generate and engage the ideas of where you want your career to go, put some of them into play and test whether those ideas are working. Adapt accordingly. Just like Silicon Valley startups, by doing your due diligence, you are increasing the odds that your time and money will pay off.

**Develop Drone Abilities.** In spite of all the controversy around drones, there are some useful analogies that can help you to remain open to job and career development opportunities. You may be a person who tends to see the big picture and operate at a high level, or you may build the big picture by aggregating the details. Rotating between the two views can help achieve the most comprehensive understanding of options and possibilities. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, author and Harvard professor, calls this zooming in and zooming out. Every decision lies in a broader context. No matter how tempting a promotion may seem, if you step back to a higher level and look at, for example, your industry, is it in trouble? Would taking the promotion make you feel obligated to the company at a time when you may have more options if you left your industry?

**Seek Feedback.** The search for genuine feedback becomes more and more your own responsibility over the course of a career, so it's good to start early. When you are receiving feedback, it's best to switch to a listening and recording mode, so that you can write down both the positive feedback you receive along with the critical information. It's important not to react to criticism. Instead, try taking a reflective stance and thank the person giving the criticism.

### What Organizations and Managers Can Do

It's important that organizations support employees in remaining open to all their career options and to the feedback that will help them grow. The good news is that some of the most effective strategies that follow are not expensive or time-consuming. Simple cultural choices and management practices have yielded big financial results for organizations.

**Create a Development Culture.** Robert Kegan and his colleagues have spent hundreds of hours observing organizations that they refer to as Deliberately Developmental Organizations (DDOs). One of those is Decurion, a privately held company operating businesses such as ArcLight Cinemas, Pacific Cinemas and Hollybrook Senior Living. However, to define Decurion by its businesses is a great disservice. When you land on their

main home page, this is how they begin the description of who they are: "Decurion provides places for people to flourish." That central purpose is shown in practices such as weekly conversations between managers about employees and what job assignments will allow them to grow, public competency boards where everyone can see who has developed new capabilities, and talent assessments as part of the business review that include promotion-ready candidates.

**Provide Training on How Your Organization Really Operates.** To help people develop drone capabilities — the ability to zoom in and zoom out — having access to training on how the organization operates can really help. People who understand the strategy and bigger picture of their organization make fewer errors, are more productive and are more satisfied. If you want more collaboration across your organization, train your employees on how the organization fits together via a custom-developed program.

## PART III: YOU NEED OPTIONS

# Build a Diverse Network

The reward of an ever-expanding network is powerful and often transformational. That is why developing a diverse network is one of the practices that address the second Stretch Imperative: You need options. Networks facilitate collaboration on the job, assist in meeting your overall career goals, and provide support in celebrating life's successes and rebounding from its disappointments.

Building diversity into your networks prepares you to anticipate change and make sure you have the resources to stay relevant at work. It's your personal system to access when you need to understand changes in your field of work or industry.

### Strategies to Build a Diverse Network

Social networks are powerful tools that can help us develop, maintain and expand our contacts. Having the largest number of followers or contacts is not necessarily a sign of network strength. The secret is to find the right balance for your career goals between online social networks and off-line relationships, perhaps by using some of the following strategies.

**Groom a Clan.** As we've fallen into the habit of gathering friends and contacts, many people think that just accepting every request to connect can help build their networks. As it turns out, in most cases, quality matters more than quantity. If you are likely to have dozens of vendors contacting you to try to sell to you, then a more selective approach might make sense; but in an example of "the more the merrier," if you are in sales, knowing as many people as possible might be a better strategy. Understanding what you want your network to do for you can help you determine its ideal size and makeup.

**Adjust Constantly.** Just building a network is not enough. Our experience and research have shown a need for dynamic, adaptive networks that can shift over time because our relationships with our relationships change. The colleagues you saw every day at work change when you change organizations. Although your hometown stays constant, when you move, the proximity to your relationships change and new relationships are formed. When you change to a new role, you must also think about what and how your network needs to shift.

**Strive for Five to Thrive.** The best network stretches you. While you may have hundreds of people in your network, who are the five people who can help you be a better person, especially when it comes to your work? Every time you are with them, you feel you have upped your game and are thinking a little differently. Since we can't maintain close connections to everyone in our networks, focus on the five you could groom to help you thrive.

### What Organizations and Managers Can Do

Collaboration relies on people having good networks to know who they should reach out to without spending an inordinate amount of time finding the right connections. Here are some ideas to consider.

**Sponsor Mentoring and Affinity Programs.** Having a mentor who can help navigate the political and organizational structure at work improves your employees' networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness and, ultimately, their career outcomes. Establishing communities of practice based on common interests or function-based networks is ideal.

**Conduct Speed Networking Events.** The typical approach at speed dating is to have women sit at tables and men move from station to station. One organization uses a variation of this to introduce potential mentors to mentees. They have those looking for mentors sit at tables while the executives move from table to table. It's a great way to meet a lot of people in a short amount of time. The next time you have a management meeting, can you invite in some up-and-coming talent and do a speed-networking session with them?

## Be Greedy About Experiences

Whether you are launching your career, considering a career shift or simply wanting to stay relevant where you are, it's important to have a plan to manage and acquire a variety of experiences.

The word "greedy" is almost never used in a positive context. However, when it comes to experiences, the best way to future-proof yourself is to be voracious in seeking out as many opportunities as you can. Experiences are the most effective way to learn new skills, reinforce what you know and help you build on your strengths. People who have developed a repertoire of skills throughout their career know that this is a gradual and continuous process. It takes practice and repetition.

For example, once you have experienced the anxieties of presenting in front of groups, you understand the value of having well-developed strategies that help you feel confident. You learn that, even when a big deal is on the cusp of falling apart, you have to keep a level head and keep everyone talking until the deal is finished.

The more varied you can make your experiences, the greater the likelihood of developing a broad set of skills. Stepping outside your comfort zone into new situations that call for untested abilities is a great way to boost your confidence and discover new capabilities. If you don't feel in over your head at least three to four times a year, you are not aiming high enough. You are not stretching.

### Strategies for Being Greedy About Experiences

Our natural default is to work on things that interest us. That may not be the best strategy. Instead, think strategically, both in terms of the number of experiences you'd like to acquire and the timeframe in which you hope to accomplish them. Don't just let experiences happen to you, but choose the experiences that benefit you the most.

**Approach Work with a Development Stance.** According to researchers at Harvard, we can approach our work from one of three stances: completion, performance or development. The stance we take will affect how much we learn in any given situation. In the completion stance, our primary goal is to get the task or job done. If any learning happens, it is somewhat accidental. The stakes in a performance stance are little higher. Here you care more about high-quality results and may push yourself with new challenges. Surmounting these challenges leads to learning, even though it may not have been a conscious goal. In a development stance, you care about getting the task done really well and using what you learn to do even better work in the future.

**Get Global.** In today's globalized economy, international experience will differentiate you. Understanding culture and community in different countries is one of the benefits you can get from global experiences. You could also gain language skills and an opportunity to demonstrate that you can manage a multicultural, multilingual working environment while producing great work. Succeeding despite being outside your comfort zone lets organizations know that you are adaptable.

**Stretch Your Limits.** Stretching your limits doesn't always mean an upward step, as Lori Goler demonstrated. When Lori was looking to leave eBay, she called Sheryl Sandberg at Facebook and asked, "What is your biggest problem, and how can I solve it?" Lori's deep expertise in marketing at eBay was not a skill fit for Facebook at the time. Instead, Sheryl hired Lori to address Facebook's biggest problem — recruiting. Because Lori was willing to drop down a level to learn a new function and let go of her seniority status at eBay, she gained new skills and a successful career, rebooting her sell-by date.

### What Organizations and Managers Can Do

Deliberate effort and encouragement can create space for people to be open to new ideas and experimentation, yielding big results for organizations while helping to ensure retention and maximum performance as jobs shift and change.

**Give Employees Customer Experience.** What if everyone in the organization could understand the customer experience by being in a front-line position at some point? At the Canadian telecommunication company TELUS, they can. Closer to the Customer (C2C) gives non-customer-facing employees a short experience away from their regular jobs to shadow other people. For example, a person in accounts receivable might shadow a store manager. Team members find insights into the customer experience that can help them make more informed decisions down the road, and they are exposed to other parts of TELUS.

**Sponsor Mid-Life Internships.** The British bank Barclays announced a mature workers program designed for those who have been out of the workforce for at least two years and want to return. Unlike unpaid college internships, older interns receive salaries and can provide an opportunity for companies to test prospective employees before committing. The head of the apprenticeship program at Barclays remarks, "We see real benefit in employing a workforce . . . who have had previous careers and greater life experiences . . . and are able to really understand and support our customers."

## PART IV: YOU HAVE DREAMS

# Bounce Forward

Bouncing Forward is a key practice of people who have the ability to overcome even the most extreme hardships. At any moment, many of us are dealing with insecurities and uncertainties. Mounting performance pressures in the workplace, radical changes in the global business world plus strained economic forecasts mean we need to figure out how to thrive and not simply survive. It's not just about having the mental stamina to bounce back but about moving forward — bouncing forward.

### The Recipe for Springing Back

To be prepared for the future, you will need an understanding of grit, resilience, and motivation and the ways in which they combine to create the multiplier effect you need to succeed.

**Grit.** The only way to achieve true genius in a field is to dedicate to the mastery of it. This is the underlying rationale for grit: a never-yielding commitment to self-discipline. Grit is like having the discipline to be disciplined. Not to be confused with motivation, which is merely the willingness to do something, grit is the determination to do whatever it takes over time. Your grittiness increases achievement by acting as a multiplier of skills and knowledge, at the same time increasing skills and knowledge, which results in increased chances of success.

**Resilience.** Harvard journalist Diane Coutu reports that resilience is not just genetic, as people can become more resilient over their lifetimes. Resilient people invest a lot of effort in what Coutu calls an uncanny ability to improvise in seeking solutions. They understand that, when searching for answers in difficult situations, the more realistically they grasped the true situation, the more quickly they were able to move into a problem-solving mode.

**Motivation.** Many companies are still focused on compensation as a primary motivator. However, extensive research substantiates that money is not the answer. Rewards may help you accomplish the things you don't enjoy doing, but for the things you love, intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor in inspiring performance. To facilitate your own intrinsic motivation, consider the five sources of meaning for humans at work: the impact of your work on society, the customer, the company, the team and "me." According to McKinsey, connecting to one or more of these five sources of meaning can help you tap into your enthusiasm.

### Mental Strategies to Help You Bounce Forward

Now that you've learned the three fundamental components of bouncing forward, it's time to consider the practical strategies to deploy them.

**Renounce.** If you aren't receiving feedback at work, ask for it. And when you hear something you don't like, use it as an opportunity to bounce forward. Renounce the fixed mindset that you always have to be right or in control. Instead, adopt a growth mindset where you learn as much from failure and feedback as you do from success.

**Pounce.** In his breakthrough book *The Resiliency Advantage*, Al Siebert advocates adopting a curiosity habit. First, he asks, "How do you react to surprising incidents?" Do you hunker down and try to stay the course, or do you wonder what's going on, look for answers about cause and effect? Curious people ask a lot of questions, which is a great way to gather information and stage the best action for the best outcome — pouncing.

**Trounce.** Setting the stage for winning comes from practice and repetition. Just like basketball players, we can't expect to score if we aren't prepared to shoot. Being prepared to shoot comes from a relentless commitment to practice. Not just practicing before games but practicing every day. Not just weekdays but every day. Not just this year but year in and year out.

**Announce.** Announcing your intentions to others can help you find the motivation you need to stay focused on your goals. Enroll a few people directly in your sprint goals. When you announce a goal, people will jump in to help you and keep you on track.

**Denounce the Small Stuff.** We all need to be able to hold onto inspiration to stay motivated. Too often the first year in a job becomes the fifth and then the tenth, indistinguishable from one another. Not sweating the small stuff let's us put our focus elsewhere and think about the big picture.

## PART V: CHARTING THE PATH FORWARD

# Stretch Into Your Future

How do you future-proof yourself for tomorrow? To help you make a concrete plan for the capabilities you need for the workplace to come, here is a synthesis of dozens of studies and expertise identifying the top 10 capabilities you will need for the future.

**Capability 1: Functional Excellence**. Tim Brown, the CEO of the design consultancy IDEO, says he likes to hire people with T-shaped skills. "T-shaped people have two kinds of characteristics, hence the use of the letter 'T' to describe them. The vertical stroke of the 'T' is a depth of skill that allows them to contribute to the creative process." This part of the T refers to functional excellence, which means having a set of honed skills related to a specific discipline, such as finance, architecture, social science or software engineering. You want to be the go-to person for expertise in your area at work.

**Capability 2: Emotional Intelligence**. "The horizontal stroke of the T," Brown continues, "is the disposition for collaboration across disciplines. It is composed of two things. First, empathy. It's important because it allows people to imagine the problem from another perspective — to stand in somebody else's shoes. Second, they tend to get very enthusiastic about other people's disciplines, to the point that they may actually start to practice them."

**Capability 3: Personal Advocacy**. Personal advocacy means the ability to publicly support and promote yourself in a way that persuades others to engage with you. This includes both in-person and virtual personas, allowing you to have connections and options in many forums. An essential building block of personal advocacy is establishing and building a personal brand. The trick is in the balance: Sell yourself, keep relationships two-sided and have fun content to share.

**Capability 4: Cross-Cultural Dexterity**. You can anticipate an increasingly diverse set of colleagues, even in your own country, whether it's the elderly front desk receptionist, the Gen Y software engineer celebrating his marriage to an arranged bride, or your female black manager — a Gen X MBA from Harvard. Embracing and flourishing in diversity will be a key criteria for success both now and in the near future.

**Capability 5: Geek Acumen**. The phrase "I'm not really that technical" should be banned from everyone's thinking. To be ready for the future, we all must embrace at least the technologies and the enabling power of machine learning in our own fields. Otherwise, be prepared to become obsolete.

**Capability 6: Virtual Collaboration**. Virtual collaboration has three components. First, it requires being able to work independently to achieve a set of shared goals. Second, you must be able to communicate and share knowledge effectively with others who are not in time or space proximity to you. Finally, people who have a capability to virtually collaborate are able to use technology-mediated communication tools.

**Capability 7: Entrepreneurial Spirit**. Successful entrepreneurs bring a set of skills and competencies, such as the ability to identify a niche market, financially manage a business and build customer relationships, among others. Additional entrepreneurial traits are initiative, passion, innovation and the willingness to take risks.

**Capability 8: Creative Problem Solving**. Traditional problem solving followed a fairly linear path: First identify a problem, involve others in seeking solutions, collect data and conduct analyses, search for best solutions and, finally, make a decision. The valued contributor of tomorrow will adapt to any situation with creative resolve and always have the ability to revisit and modify while still engaged in a methodical problem-solving process.

**Capability 9: Leadership**. Research showed that employees yearn to be inspired by others, to have a vision to follow, to see meaning in their work and to be guided with a clear pathway for making the vision come alive. These are the responsibilities of leadership, and they will remain an important capability in the future. New leaders must be able to collaborate and connect in real ways with employees, making social media and other technology and staff tools the delivery system for the company mission.

**Capability 10: Stretchpertise**. Stretchpertise is the professional ability to creatively restructure and repurpose in order to adjust to changing environmental demands. Stretchpertise means adapting your career to meet your own evolving personal needs and motivation. You must be able to learn on the fly, be open, create an effective network and gather a variety of experiences. Stretchpertise is the immunization against obsolescence and requires the bounce-forward skills of grit, resilience and motivation to aim toward longer-term goals.

The future beckons. Will you be one of the disengaged, or will you stretch to new capabilities, extending your sell-by date? The fulfillment of dreams doesn't happen by luck. Stretch to become your best self — the person who you know you can be.

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Stretch*, you'll also like:

1. ***The 2020 Workplace*** **by Jeanne C. Meister, Karie Willyerd**. Meister and Willyerd present a functional guide to help you and your organization create tomorrow's workplace of choice.

2. ***Triggers*** **by Marshall Goldsmith**. Goldsmith details six engaging questions that can help us enact meaningful and lasting change in order to become the person we want to be.

3. ***Rookie Smarts*** **by Liz Wiseman**. Wiseman explains how to reclaim and cultivate the curious, flexible, youthful mindset of a rookie in order to keep up with what's needed from employees in a rapidly changing world.

· Book 32 of 269 ·

# 38-15 Deep Work

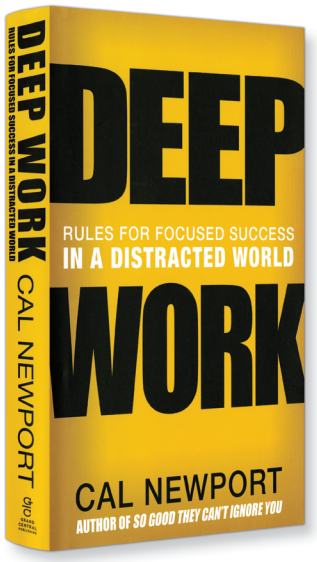
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# Deep Work

## Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World




by Cal Newport

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Deep work is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. It's a skill that allows you to quickly master complicated information and produce better results in less time. Deep work will make you better at what you do and provide the sense of true fulfillment that comes from craftsmanship. In short, deep work is like a super power in our increasingly competitive 21st-century economy. And yet, most people have lost the ability to go deep — spending their days instead in a frantic blur of email and social media, not even realizing there's a better way.

In *Deep Work*, author and professor Cal Newport flips the narrative on impact in a connected age. Instead of arguing distraction is bad, he instead celebrates the power of its opposite. Dividing this book into two parts, he first makes the case that in almost any profession, cultivating a deep work ethic will produce massive benefits. He then presents a rigorous training regimen, presented as a series of four "rules," for transforming your mind and habits to support this skill.

A mix of cultural criticism and actionable advice, such as the claim that most serious professionals should quit social media and that you should practice being bored, *Deep Work* is an indispensable guide to anyone seeking focused success in a distracted world.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why deep work is valuable, rare and meaningful.
- Strategies to help you learn to embrace deep work.
- What it means to embrace boredom.
- To determine the true value of social media in your work and life.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **DEEP WORK**

**by Cal Newport**

**The author:** Cal Newport is a writer and a professor of computer science at Georgetown University. He is the author of five books and runs the popular advice blog Study Hacks, which attempts to decode "patterns of success" in both school and the working world. His contrarian ideas on building a successful, meaningful life have been featured on TV, radio and in many major publications, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and *New York Post*.

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## Introduction

Deep work is professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill and are hard to replicate. We now know from decades of research in both psychology and neuroscience that the state of mental strain that accompanies deep work is also necessary to improve your abilities.

Deep work stands in sharp contrast to the behavior of most modern knowledge workers — a group that's rapidly forgetting the value of going deep. The reason knowledge workers are losing their familiarity with deep work is well established: network tools. This is a broad category that captures communication services like email and SMS, social media networks like Twitter and Facebook, and the shiny tangle of infotainment sites like BuzzFeed and Reddit. In aggregate, the rise of these tools, combined with ubiquitous access to them through smartphones and networked office computers, has fragmented most knowledge workers' attention into slivers.

A 2012 McKinsey study found that the average knowledge worker now spends more than 60 percent of the workweek engaged in electronic communication and Internet searching, with close to 30 percent of a worker's time dedicated to reading and answering email alone.

This state of fragmented attention cannot accommodate deep work, which requires long periods of uninterrupted thinking. At the same time, however, modern knowledge workers are not loafing. In fact, they report that they are as busy as ever. What explains the discrepancy? A lot can be explained by another type of effort, which provides a counterpart to the idea of deep work: Shallow Work: noncognitively demanding, logistical-style tasks, often performed while distracted. These efforts tend to not create much new value in the world and are easy to replicate.

Our work culture's shift toward the shallow (whether you think it's philosophically good or bad) is exposing a massive economic and personal opportunity for the few who recognize the potential of resisting this trend and prioritizing depth.

The Deep Work Hypothesis says that the ability to perform deep work is becoming increasingly rare at exactly the same time it is becoming increasingly valuable in our economy. As a consequence, the few who cultivate this skill, and then make it the core of their working life, will thrive.

## PART I: THE IDEA

## Deep Work Is Valuable

MIT economists Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, in their influential 2011 book, *Race Against the Machine*, provide a compelling case that among various forces at play, it's the rise of digital technology in particular that's transforming our labor markets in unexpected ways. "We are in the early throes of a Great Restructuring," Brynjolfsson and McAfee explain early in their book. "Our technologies are racing ahead but many of our skills and organizations are lagging behind." For many workers, this lag predicts bad news. As intelligent machines improve, and the gap between machine and human abilities shrinks, employers are becoming increasingly likely to hire "new machines" instead of "new people."

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

This reality is not, however, universally grim. As Brynjolfsson and McAfee emphasize, this Great Restructuring is not driving down all jobs but is instead dividing them. Though an increasing number of people will lose in this new economy as their skill becomes automatable or easily outsourced, there are others who will not only survive but thrive — becoming more valued (and therefore more rewarded) than before.

In this new economy, three groups will have a particular advantage: those who can work well and creatively with intelligent machines, those who are the best at what they do and those with access to capital. If you can join any of these groups, therefore, you'll do well. How does one join these winners? There is no secret for quickly amassing capital. The other two winning groups, however, are accessible. The following two core abilities are crucial:

1. The ability to quickly master hard things.
2. The ability to produce at an elite level, in terms of both quality and speed.

Let's begin with the first ability. To start, we must remember that we've been spoiled by the intuitive and drop-dead-simple user experience of many consumer-facing technologies, like Twitter and the iPhone. These examples, however, are consumer products, not serious tools: Most of the intelligent machines driving the Great Restructuring are significantly more complex to understand and master. To join the group of those who can work well with these machines, therefore, requires that you hone your ability to master hard things. And because these technologies change rapidly, this process of mastering hard things never ends: You must be able to do it quickly, again and again.

If you want to become a superstar, mastering the relevant skills is necessary but not sufficient. You must then transform that latent potential into tangible results that people value.

The two core abilities just described depend on your ability to perform deep work. To learn hard things quickly, you must focus intensely without distraction. To learn, in other words, is an act of deep work. If you're comfortable going deep, you'll be comfortable mastering the increasingly complex systems and skills needed to thrive in our economy. If you're not comfortable going deep for extended periods of time, it'll be difficult to get your performance to the peak levels of quality and quantity increasingly necessary to thrive professionally. Unless your talent and skills absolutely dwarf those of your competition, the deep workers among them will outproduce you.

## Deep Work Is Rare

In 2015, Facebook moved into a new headquarters designed by Frank Gehry. At the center of this new building is what CEO Mark Zuckerberg has called "the largest open floor plan in the world": More than 3,000 employees work on movable furniture spread over a 10-acre expanse. Facebook, of course, is not the only Silicon Valley heavyweight to embrace the open office concept. When Jack Dorsey bought the old San Francisco Chronicle building to house Square, he configured the space so that his developers work in common spaces on long, shared desks.

Another big business trend in recent years is the rise of instant messaging. A third trend is the push for content producers of all types to maintain a social media presence.

These three business trends highlight a paradox. Deep work is more valuable than ever before in our shifting economy. If this is true, however, you would expect to see this skill promoted not just by ambitious individuals but also by organizations hoping to get the most out of their employees. This is not happening. Open offices, for example, might create more opportunities for collaboration, but they do so at the cost of "massive distraction," to quote the results of experiments conducted for a British TV special titled "The Secret Life of Office Buildings." Instant messenger systems are meant to be always active — magnifying the impact of interruption.

Forcing content producers onto social media also has negative effects on the ability to go deep. Serious journalists, for example, need to focus on doing serious journalism — diving into complicated sources, pulling out connective threads, crafting persuasive prose — so to ask them to interrupt this deep thinking throughout the day to participate in the frothy back-and-forth of online tittering seems irrelevant (and somewhat demeaning) at best and devastatingly distracting at worst.

Although our current embrace of distraction is a real phenomenon, it's built on an unstable foundation and can be easily dismissed once you decide to cultivate a deep work ethic.

### The Metric Black Hole

Even though we abstractly accept that distraction has costs and depth has value, these impacts are difficult to measure. We should not, therefore, expect the bottom-line impact of depth-destroying behaviors to be easily detected. Such metrics fall into an opaque region resistant to easy measurement — a region we can call the metric black hole. None of the distracting behaviors would survive

long if it was clear that they were hurting the bottom line, but the metric black hole prevents this clarity and allows the shift toward distraction we increasingly encounter in the professional world.

When it comes to distracting behaviors embraced in the workplace, we must give a position of dominance to the now ubiquitous culture of connectivity, where one is expected to read and respond to emails (and related communication) quickly. Why do so many foster a culture of connectivity even though it's likely, as researcher Leslie Perlow found, that it hurts employees' well-being and productivity and probably doesn't help the bottom line?

The answer can be found in the Principle of Least Resistance: In a business setting, without clear feedback on the impact of various behaviors to the bottom line, we will tend toward behaviors that are easiest in the moment. If you work in an environment where you can get an answer to a question or a specific piece of information immediately when the need arises, this makes your life easier — at least, in the moment. Constant connectivity is just one of many examples of business behaviors that are antithetical to depth, and likely reducing the bottom-line value produced by the company, that nonetheless thrive because, in the absence of metrics, most people fall back on what's easiest.

If you believe in the value of depth, this reality spells bad news for businesses in general, as it's leading them to miss out on potentially massive increases in their value production. But for you, as an individual, good news lurks. Assuming the trends outlined here continue, depth will become increasingly rare and therefore increasingly valuable.

## Deep Work Is Meaningful

The science writer Winifred Gallagher stumbled onto a connection between attention and happiness after an unexpected and terrifying event, a cancer diagnosis — "not just cancer," she clarifies, "but a particularly nasty, fairly advanced kind." As Gallagher recalls in her 2009 book, *Rapt*, as she walked away from the hospital after the diagnosis, she formed a sudden and strong intuition: "This disease wanted to monopolize my attention, but as much as possible, I would focus on my life instead."

Gallagher set out to better understand the role that attention — that is, what we choose to focus on and what we choose to ignore — plays in defining the quality of our life. After five years of science reporting, she came away convinced that she was witness to a "grand unified theory" of the mind: "Like fingers pointing to the moon, other diverse disciplines, from anthropology to education, behavioral economics to family counseling, similarly suggest that the skillful management of attention is the sine qua non of the good life and the key to improving virtually every aspect of your experience."

We tend to place a lot of emphasis on our circumstances, assuming that what happens to us (or fails to happen) determines how we feel. From this perspective, the small-scale details of how you spend your day aren't that important, because what matters are the large-scale outcomes, such as whether or not you get a promotion or move to that nicer apartment.

According to Gallagher, decades of research contradict this understanding. Our brains instead construct our worldview based on what we pay attention to. If you focus on a cancer diagnosis, you and your life become unhappy and dark, but if you focus instead on an evening martini, you and your life become more pleasant — even though the circumstances in both scenarios are the same. As Gallagher summarizes, "Who you are, what you think, feel and do, what you love — is the sum of what you focus on."

Consider for a moment the type of mental world constructed when you dedicate significant time to deep endeavors. There's a gravity and sense of importance inherent in deep work — whether you're a craftsman smithing a sword or a computer programmer optimizing an algorithm. Gallagher's theory, therefore, predicts that if you spend enough time in this state, your mind will understand your world as rich in meaning and importance.

### A Psychological Argument for Depth

Our second argument for why depth generates meaning comes from the work of one of the world's best-known (and most misspelled) psychologists, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Csikszentmihalyi's work helped validate a theory he had been developing over the preceding decade: "The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."

Csikszentmihalyi calls this mental state *flow* (a term he popularized with a 1990 book of the same title). At the time, this finding pushed back against conventional wisdom. Most people assumed (and still do) that relaxation makes them happy. We want to work less and spend more time in the hammock. But the results from Csikszentmihalyi's studies reveal that most people have this wrong: "Ironically, jobs are actually easier to enjoy than free time, because like flow activities they have built-in goals, feedback rules and challenges, all of which encourage one to become involved in one's work, to concentrate and lose

oneself in it. Free time, on the other hand, is unstructured, and requires much greater effort to be shaped into something that can be enjoyed."

The connection between deep work and flow should be clear: Deep work is an activity well suited to generate a flow state. And as we just learned, flow generates happiness. Combining these two ideas, we get a powerful argument from psychology in favor of depth.

## PART II: THE RULES

# Rule #1: Work Deeply

In an ideal world — one in which the true value of deep work is accepted and celebrated — we'd all have access to a work environment (and culture) designed to help us extract as much value as possible from our brains. Unfortunately, this vision is far from our current reality. We instead find ourselves in distracting open offices where inboxes cannot be neglected and meetings are incessant — a setting where colleagues would rather you respond quickly to their latest email than produce the best possible results.

This rule is designed to reduce this conflict. The strategies that follow can be understood as an arsenal of routines and rituals designed with the science of limited willpower in mind to maximize the amount of deep work you consistently accomplish in your schedule.

**1. Decide on your depth philosophy.** You need your own philosophy for integrating deep work into your professional life. Here are four different depth philosophies that work exceptionally well in practice.

- **The monastic philosophy of deep work scheduling** attempts to maximize deep efforts by eliminating or radically minimizing shallow obligations. Practitioners of the monastic philosophy tend to have a well-defined and highly valued professional goal that they're pursuing, and the bulk of their professional success comes from doing this one thing exceptionally well.
- **The bimodal philosophy of deep work scheduling** asks that you divide your time, dedicating some clearly defined stretches to deep pursuits and leaving the rest open to everything else. During the deep time, the bimodal worker will act monastically — seeking intense and uninterrupted concentration. For example, on the scale of a week, you might dedicate a four-day weekend to depth and the rest to open time.
- **The rhythmic philosophy of deep work scheduling** argues that the easiest way to consistently start deep work sessions is to transform them into a simple regular habit. The goal, in other words, is to generate a rhythm for this work that removes the need for you to invest energy in deciding if and when you're going to go deep. A common way to implement the rhythmic philosophy is to have a set starting time that you use every day for deep work.
- **The journalistic philosophy of deep work scheduling** is a nod to the fact that journalists are trained to shift into a writing mode on a moment's notice, as is required by the deadline-driven nature of their profession. This approach is not for the deep work novice. The ability to rapidly switch your mind from shallow to deep mode doesn't come naturally. Without practice, such switches can seriously deplete your finite willpower reserves. This habit also requires a sense of confidence in your abilities — a conviction that what you're doing is important and will succeed.

**2. Ritualize.** An often-overlooked observation about those who use their minds to create valuable things is that they're rarely haphazard in their work habits. Charles Darwin had a strict structure for his working life during the period when he was perfecting *On the Origin of Species*. He would rise promptly at seven to take a short walk. He would then eat breakfast alone and retire to his study from eight to nine thirty. The next hour was dedicated to reading his letters from the day before, after which he would return to his study from ten-thirty until noon. After this session, he would mull over challenging ideas while walking on a prescribed route that started at his greenhouse and then circled a path on his property. He would walk until satisfied with his thinking, then declare his workday done.

Great minds like Darwin and others didn't deploy rituals to be weird; they did so because success in their work depended on their ability to go deep, again and again. Their rituals minimized the friction in this transition to depth, allowing them to go deep more easily and stay in the state longer.

There's no one correct deep work ritual — the right fit depends on both the person and the type of project pursued. But there are some general questions that any effective ritual must address: where you'll work and for how long, how you'll work once you start and how you'll support your work.

**3. Be lazy.** This strategy argues that you should inject regular and substantial freedom from professional concerns into your day, providing you with the idleness

paradoxically required to get (deep) work done. At the end of the workday, shut down your consideration of work issues until the next morning — no after-dinner email check, no mental replays of conversations and no scheming about how you'll handle an upcoming challenge; shut down work thinking completely. Downtime aids insights and helps recharge the energy needed to work deeply.

## Rule #2: Embrace Boredom

Rule #1 taught you how to integrate deep work into your schedule and support it with routines and rituals designed to help you consistently reach the current limit of your concentration ability. Rule #2 will help you significantly improve this limit. The strategies that follow are motivated by the key idea that getting the most out of your deep work habit requires training, and as clarified previously, this training must address two goals: improving your ability to concentrate intensely and overcoming your desire for distraction.

**1. Don't take breaks from distraction. Instead, take breaks from focus.** Instead of scheduling the occasional break from distraction so you can focus, you should instead schedule the occasional break from focus to give in to distraction. To make this suggestion more concrete, let's make the simplifying assumption that Internet use is synonymous with seeking distracting stimuli. Similarly, let's consider working in the absence of the Internet to be synonymous with more focused work.

With these rough categorizations established, the strategy works as follows: Schedule in advance when you'll use the Internet, and then avoid it altogether outside these times. Keep a notepad near your computer at work. On this pad, record the next time you're allowed to use the Internet. Until you arrive at that time, absolutely no network connectivity is allowed — no matter how tempting.

The idea motivating this strategy is that the use of a distracting service does not, by itself, reduce your brain's ability to focus. It's instead the constant switching from low-stimuli/high-value activities to high-stimuli/low-value activities, at the slightest hint of boredom or cognitive challenge, that teaches your mind to never tolerate an absence of novelty. This constant switching can be understood analogously as weakening the mental muscles responsible for organizing the many sources vying for your attention. By segregating Internet use (and therefore segregating distractions) you're minimizing the number of times you give in to distraction, and by doing so you let these attention-selecting muscles strengthen.

If you're required to spend hours every day online or answer emails quickly, that's fine: This simply means that your Internet blocks will be more numerous than those of someone whose job requires less connectivity. The total number or duration of your Internet blocks doesn't matter nearly as much as making sure that the integrity of your offline blocks remains intact.

**2. Meditate productively.** The goal of productive meditation is to take a period in which you're occupied physically but not mentally — walking, jogging, driving, showering — and focus your attention on a single well-defined professional problem. Depending on your profession, this problem might be outlining an article, writing a talk, making progress on a proof or attempting to sharpen a business strategy. As in mindfulness meditation, you must continue to bring your attention back to the problem at hand when it wanders or stalls.

You don't necessarily need a serious session every day, but your goal should be to participate in at least two or three such sessions in a typical week.

By forcing you to resist distraction and return your attention repeatedly to a well-defined problem, it helps strengthen your distraction-resisting muscles, and by forcing you to push your focus deeper and deeper on a single problem, it sharpens your concentration.

The key to this strategy is not the specifics but, instead, the motivating idea that your ability to concentrate is only as strong as your commitment to train it.

## Rule #3: Quit Social Media

The idea that a drastic Internet sabbatical is the only alternative to the distraction generated by social media and infotainment has increasingly pervaded our cultural conversation. The problem with this binary response to this issue is that these two choices are much too crude to be useful. The notion that you would quit the Internet is, of course, an overstuffed straw man, infeasible for most (unless you're a journalist writing a piece about distraction).

This rule attempts to break us out of this rut by proposing a third option: accepting that these tools are not inherently evil and that some of them might be quite vital to your success and happiness, but at the same time also accepting that the threshold for allowing a site regular access to your time and attention (not to mention personal data) should be much more stringent, and that most people should therefore be using many fewer such tools.

**1. Apply the Law of the Vital Few to your Internet habits.** The first step of this strategy is to identify the

main high-level goals in both your professional and your personal life. Once you've identified these goals, list for each the two or three most important activities that help you satisfy the goal. These activities should be specific enough to allow you to clearly picture doing them. On the other hand, they should be general enough that they're not tied to a onetime outcome. A good activity in this context would be something like "regularly read and understand the cutting-edge results in my field."

The next step in this strategy is to consider the network tools you currently use. For each such tool, go through the key activities you identified, and ask whether the use of the tool has a substantially positive impact, a substantially negative impact or little impact on your regular and successful participation in the activity.

Now comes the important decision: Keep using this tool only if you concluded that it has substantial positive impacts and that these outweigh the negative impacts.

This radical reduction of priorities is not arbitrary but is instead motivated by an idea that has arisen repeatedly in any number of different fields, from client profitability to social equality to prevention of crashes in computer programs: The Law of the Vital Few: In many settings, 80 percent of a given effect is due to just 20 percent of the possible causes.

**2. Quit social media.** This strategy offers you a different but complementary approach, in which you ban yourself from using social media services for 30 days. All of them: Facebook, Instagram, Google +, Twitter, Snapchat, Vine — or whatever other services have risen to popularity. Don't formally deactivate these services, and (this is important) don't mention online that you'll be signing off: Just stop using them, cold turkey. If someone reaches out to you by other means and asks why your activity on a particular service has fallen off, you can explain, but don't go out of your way to tell people.

After 30 days of this self-imposed network isolation, ask yourself the following two questions about each of the services you temporarily quit:

- Would the last 30 days have been notably better if I had been able to use this service?
- Did people care that I wasn't using this service?

If your answer is "no" to both questions, quit the service permanently. If your answer was a clear "yes," then return to using the service. If your answers are qualified or ambiguous, it's up to you whether you return to the service.

This strategy picks specifically on social media because among the different network tools that can claim your time and attention, these services, if used without limit, can be particularly devastating to your quest to work deeper. They offer personalized information arriving on an unpredictable, intermittent schedule — making them massively addictive and therefore capable of severely damaging your attempts to schedule and succeed with any act of concentration.

**3. Don't use the Internet to entertain yourself.** A class of network tools that are particularly relevant to the fight for depth are entertainment-focused websites designed to capture and hold your attention for as long as possible. These sites share the use of carefully crafted titles and easily digestible content, often honed by algorithms to be maximally attention catching. Once you've landed on one article in one of these sites, links on the side or bottom of the page beckon you to click on another, then another. Every available trick of human psychology, from listing titles as "popular" or "trending," to the use of arresting photos, is used to keep you engaged.

These sites are especially harmful after the workday is over, where the freedom in your schedule enables them to become central to your leisure time.

This strategy suggests that when it comes to your relaxation, don't default to whatever catches your attention at the moment, but instead dedicate some advance thinking to the question of how you want to spend your "day within a day." It's crucial, therefore, that you figure out in advance what you're going to do with your evenings and weekends before they begin. Structured hobbies provide good fodder for these hours, as they generate specific actions with specific goals to fill your time. A set program of reading, where you spend regular time each night making progress on a series of deliberately chosen books, is also a good option, as is, of course, exercise or the enjoyment of good (in-person) company.

If you want to eliminate the addictive pull of entertainment sites on your time and attention, give your brain a quality alternative.

## Rule #4: Drain the Shallows

The shallow work that increasingly dominates the time and attention of knowledge workers is less vital than it often seems in the moment. For most businesses, if you eliminated significant amounts of this shallowness, their bottom line would likely remain unaffected. If you not only eliminate shallow work but also replace this recovered time with more of the deep alternative, not only will the business continue to function; it can become more successful.

This rule asks you to apply these insights to your personal work life. The strategies that follow are designed to help you ruthlessly identify the shallowness in your current schedule, then cull it down to minimum levels — leaving more time for the deep efforts that ultimately matter most.

**1. Schedule every minute of your day.** We spend much of our day on autopilot — not giving much thought to what we're doing with our time. This is a problem. It's difficult to prevent the trivial from creeping into every corner of your schedule if you don't face, without flinching, your current balance between deep and shallow work, and then adopt the habit of pausing before action and asking, "What makes the most sense right now?"

At the beginning of each workday, turn to a new page of lined paper in a notebook you dedicate to this purpose. Down the left-hand side of the page, mark every other line with an hour of the day, covering the full set of hours you typically work. Now comes the important part: Divide the hours of your workday into blocks, and assign activities to the blocks. For example, you might block off nine a.m. to eleven a.m. for writing a client's press release. To do so, actually draw a box that covers the lines corresponding to these hours, then write "press release" inside the box. Not every block need be dedicated to a work task. There might be time blocks for lunch or relaxation breaks.

When you're done scheduling your day, every minute should be part of a block. You have, in effect, given every minute of your workday a job. Now, as you go through your day, use this schedule to guide you. If your schedule is disrupted, you should, at the next available moment, take a few minutes to create a revised schedule for the time that remains in the day. Your goal is not to stick to a given schedule at all costs; it's instead to maintain, at all times, a thoughtful say in what you're doing with your time going forward — even if these decisions are reworked again and again as the day unfolds.

**2. Quantify the depth of every activity.** Some activities clearly satisfy the definition of shallow work. But the classification of other activities can be more ambiguous. To do so, ask a simple (but surprisingly illuminating) question: "How long would it take (in months) to train a smart recent college graduate with no specialized training in my field to complete this task?"

If our hypothetical college graduate requires many months of training to replicate a task, then this indicates that the task leverages hard-won expertise. Tasks that leverage your expertise tend to be deep tasks, and they can therefore provide a double benefit: They return more value per time spent, and they stretch your abilities, leading to improvement. On the other hand, a task that our hypothetical college graduate can pick up quickly is one that does not leverage expertise, and therefore it can be understood as shallow. What should you do with this strategy? Once you know where your activities fall on the deep-to-shallow scale, bias your time toward the former.

**3. Ask your boss for a shallow work budget.** Here's an important question that's rarely asked: "What percentage of my time should be spent on shallow work?" If you have a boss, have a conversation about this question. If you work for yourself, ask yourself this question. In both cases, settle on a specific answer. Then try to stick to this budget. For most people in most non-entry-level knowledge work jobs, the answer to the question will be somewhere in the 30 to 50 percent range.

Obeying this budget will likely require changes to your behavior. You'll almost certainly end up forced into saying no to projects that seem infused with shallowness while also more aggressively reducing the amount of shallowness in your existing projects.

The reason why these decisions should start with a conversation with your boss is that this agreement establishes implicit support from your workplace. If you work for yourself, this exercise will force you to confront the reality of how little time in your "busy" schedule you're actually producing value.

By ruthlessly reducing the shallow while preserving the deep, this strategy frees up our time without diminishing the amount of new value we generate.

A commitment to deep work is not a moral stance and it's not a philosophical statement — it is instead a pragmatic recognition that the ability to concentrate is a skill that gets valuable things done. If you're willing to struggle to deploy your mind to its fullest capacity to create things that matter, then you'll discover, as others have before you, that depth generates a life rich with productivity and meaning.

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Deep Work*, you'll also like:

1. ***Focus*** **by Daniel Goleman**. Goleman argues that we must learn to sharpen our focus in order to contend with and thrive in a complex world. It requires "smart practice" to improve habits, add new skills and sustain excellence.

2. ***Extreme Productivity*** **by Robert C. Pozen**. Pozen reveals the secrets to workplace productivity and high performance.

3. ***The 80/20 Manager*** **by Richard Koch**. Koch describes how managers can apply the 80/20 Principle — the idea that just 20 percent of our time, effort and key decisions generate 80 percent of our success.

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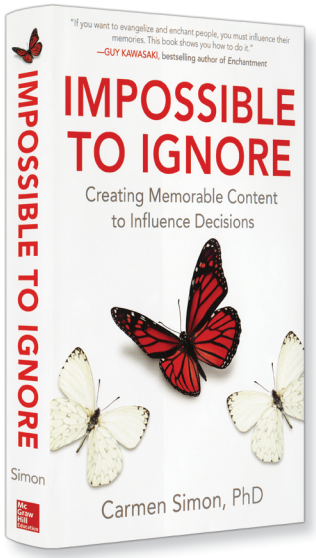
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# Impossible to Ignore

## Creating Memorable Content to Influence Decisions




by Carmen Simon, Ph.D.

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Audiences forget up to 90 percent of what you communicate. How can your employees and customers decide to act on your message if they only remember a tenth of it? How do you know which tenth they'll remember? How will you stay on their minds long enough to spark the action you need?

Many experts have offered techniques on how to improve your own memory but not how to influence other people's memory — and impact their decisions. Drawing on the latest research in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, Carmen Simon, Ph.D., reveals how to avoid the hazards of random recall and deliver just the right amount of content. In *Impossible to Ignore,* she shows you how to execute a proven three-step plan for persuasion: create cues that attract attention and connect with your audience's needs; use memory-influencing variables to control what your audience remembers; and turn today's intentions into tomorrow's actions.

Whether you're giving a presentation, conducting a meeting, delivering training, making a sales pitch or creating a marketing campaign, these field-tested techniques will help you develop content that speaks to people's hearts, stays in their heads and influences their decisions. It's not just memorable — it's *Impossible to Ignore.*

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To view memory from the angle of the future, which is more practical when influencing behavior.
- To use three key steps to influence memory and decisions.
- To create distinct, repeatable messages that your customers won't forget.
- How to differentiate between expectation and anticipation and why it matters for memorable content.
- How to retrieve memories through narrative techniques.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE**

**by Carmen Simon, Ph.D.**

**The author:** Carmen Simon, Ph.D., is a recognized cognitive scientist who specializes in neuroscience research and takes a daring approach to persuasion by placing memory at the heart of all decision-making. She is the co-founder of Rexi Media, a presentation design and training firm that uses brain science to help business professionals stay on their audiences' minds long enough to make a difference.

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## Memory Is a Means to an End

### Why Memory Matters in Decision Making

At some point, we all create something and hope that other people will act on it: read it, listen to it, like it, buy it or recommend it to others. But how do we get others to act in our favor in an age of increasing competition, complexity and noise? You can spark action by using an overlooked variable: memory.

When we aspire to be a part of people's future decisions, we implicitly ask what the future will bring. All neurologically intact people are relentlessly on fast-forward. Think of your own situation: When you woke up this morning, did you think about meetings you might have to attend, the lunch you might have to eat, the work you really didn't want to do after dinner? The brain has evolved to be a prediction engine because natural selection favors those who can accurately predict the future.

If the brain is a prediction engine, memory is its fuel. In our everyday life, we make behavioral choices that maximize our biological fitness; we rely on memory to predict rewards and we guide our behavior in three ways:

1. A reflexive way, through which we subconsciously alter behavior to ensure biological fitness. It takes only one experience with a hot surface (stimulus) to remember what to do next time to prolong survival (reward).
2. Another way we make decisions is habitual: We tend to repeat actions that proved rewarding in the past, such as taking the same route to work.
3. There is also a goal-oriented way toward decisions, through which we anticipate outcomes based on the past but are willing to change our minds in light of new information. Imagine looking for a new job when the current one is unsatisfying.

So…if you want to stay on people's minds, you must create content that hooks into one or more of these three pathways to decision making. Hook into people's reflexes, such as their preference for aesthetics, social connections or controlling one's environment. Or hook into their habits, such as placing new content in an application they are already using. Or hook into goals they consider valuable, such as the excitement of discovering new things or the desire to be creative or socially desirable.

In addition to these three ways of using memory to influence decisions, what are some other ways in which we can stay on people's minds? Here are 15 variables we can use to influence others' memory: context, cues, distinctiveness, emotion, facts, familiarity, motivation, novelty, quantity of information, relevance, repetition, self-generated content, sensory intensity, social aspects and surprise.

All these variables will be addressed in more detail. We don't have to use all 15 variables in a communication artifact all at once. Research shows that nine out of these 15 variables will impact someone's memory. The combination is up to you. Also, 40 percent of the segments in a communication sequence must have at least seven variables in the same segment. For example, if you're developing a PowerPoint presentation with 30 slides, identify 12 slides that include seven memory variables in the same slide. This way, you can be sure that you're making some critical messages stand out and become memorable. A mistake that business communicators make is to include segments that are too weak or too varied, and nothing has a chance to stand out.

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## A Business Approach to Memory

### 3 Steps to Influence Memory and Decisions

Instead of viewing memory as merely recollecting things from the past, let's look at memory from the lens of the future. Imagine that we share content at Point A, and we hope people remember and act on it sometime in the future, at Point B. This "future" can be as close as two minutes from now, two days, two weeks or longer. So it is pragmatic to ask, what is happening in people's lives, and what do they intend to do at Point B? If we know this already at Point A, we can prepare for Point B so we can become part of people's memories and future intentions.

Research reveals that when people act on future intentions successfully, they complete three steps, sometimes within fractions of seconds: 1) *Notice cues* that are linked to their intentions; 2) *Search their memory* for something related to those cues and intentions; 3) And if something is rewarding enough … *execute.*

Let's say you have a dinner party and want to buy some wine on your way home from work. You tell yourself in the morning, "When I drive by the store tonight, I must stop and buy the wine." The intention is to buy the wine, and the reward is your guests will think of you as a wonderful host. On your way back, you see the store (so you notice a cue); you think, "What was I supposed to do? Oh, yes, buy wine" (so you search your memory); and you pull into the store (therefore, you execute on an intention).

Consider your own content, and imagine you must help your audiences go through these three steps. With a prospective memory model in mind at Point A, you can prime your audiences with the proper cues, help them to keep in long-term memory what is important, and make it easier for them to execute on intentions at Point B.

Let's imagine you have to create a training program and want to divide it into three sections. At Point A, during the training, people see these three sections. But at Point B, will there be any cues in participants' environment to remind them of these exact three sections? Let's imagine that at Point B, participants will see a software application, which they're supposed to use in combination with your new content. A much better approach is to create the training content at Point A using segments from the software tool because this increases the likelihood that at Point B, people will see cues that will trigger the new behavior you're after. If the content at Point A also includes some of the memory variables we will discuss next and the reward is strong enough for participants to use the new content, then you will have a much higher chance for action because people will notice cues; they will remember what they're supposed to remember and act.

## Control What Your Audience Remembers

### Practical Ways to Avoid the Hazards of Random Memory

When we want to influence others' memory, we must start with this question: What is it exactly that we want them to remember and act on? In asking this question, we implicitly ask another: How much would we like others to remember?

A concept called the "forgetting curve" hypothesizes that we lose information over time when we make no effort to retain it. The forgetting curve is exponential after the first session, meaning that in the first few days after exposure to content, we forget most of it, up to 90 percent by some accounts. Even memories that are strong at first are fated to be forgotten. The little that we do keep in our minds stabilizes over time. Let's call this the metaphorical 10 percent, since it is difficult to measure definitively how much business content people really remember, because they don't typically consume it with the intent to memorize.

Despite a lot of forgetting, there is the opportunity for a small percentage — that "10 percent" — to become part of our audiences' long-term memory, and it is important not to leave it to chance.

The scientific approach to memory has borrowed from fuzzy logic and has produced the fuzzy-trace theory, according to which we form two types of memories: verbatim and gist. Verbatim memories are word-for-word, accurate representations of what we learned in the past, such as recollecting the exact names of all European capitals. By contrast, gist memories include the general meaning of something that happened in the past, and they are less accurate and specific, such as remembering a vacation spent in Paris years ago. Gist memories tend to be longer lasting than verbatim memories. Verbatim memory requires stimuli that people can process easily (such as simple words or actions that are reflexive or habitual) and more intensive and repeated exposure to stimuli.

When you create content, you have three ways in which to evaluate whether you're staying in people's minds with the accuracy you desire: 1) Accept only verbatim. 2) Accept a combination of verbatim and gist. 3) Accept only gist.

If you work in a courtroom or academia and specialize in topics based on hard facts, it is likely you will want to be remembered verbatim, in which case you must create simple content and provide a lot of repetition. If you work in the corporate world, you're mostly hoping that the audience would remember a combination of verbatim and gist. It's advisable to insist on verbatim memory any time you want to differentiate from competition, otherwise gist memory may enable *others* to receive credit for your work. If you work in a creative field (such as fashion or design), you will probably aim for gist memory. In this case, aim for colorful storytelling and varied content, which gives an audience a strong feeling of comfort and familiarity.

## Made You Look

### How Cues Pave the Way to Action

Cues are important because they are reminders of what to do next, such as seeing a hanger in your closet reminds you to pick up the dry cleaning. Most people in the business world don't sit around and wait for cues. This means the cues we create for them at Point A must be distinctive enough at Point B to attract attention and prompt a specific memory, even when people are busy doing something else.

When the cues you use to attract attention at Point A are similar to what people encounter later at Point B, they are more likely to signal action. For example, let's say that a husband and wife must lower their cholesterol and have to take pills. At home, they can remember to do that if they tie an old routine — drinking coffee — to the new routine of taking pills. Setting the pills by the coffeemaker helps them to act on their intention. This process is in danger when they go on vacation and the coffee drinking does not happen in the same location. Suddenly a routine that served as a cue is no longer in its place, so it's easy to forget to take the pills.

**Consider cuing people's senses in an automatic way.** The physical properties of various stimuli have the power to attract our attention. A bright-red jacket, a loud sound or the unexpected touch of a lover's cold feet will get our attention in a reflexive, automatic, effortless way. This happens because humans have an outstanding vigilance system, which constantly scouts the environment through an attentional filter and zooms in on what's important for survival. Consequently, physical properties that suddenly alter our environment, such as unusual or bright colors, textures, size, motion, loud sounds, harmony or orientation of objects, force us to look.

What can be externalized to the environment to cue your audiences automatically? Spend time finding the answer to this question because it pays a huge reward: There is an increased likelihood that your audiences will act on what you believe is important because they don't expand too much cognitive energy.

**You can also consider tying your content to an audience's current but unfulfilled goal.** People tend to pay greater attention to and remember more of what is not finished because the brain seeks closure — and it is seeking it now. Having an active goal enhances recall of relevant information only so long as that goal has not been attained. The goal can be attainable in one shot, such as getting a meal or a winter coat, or it can be something that is process-based and always lingers in the background, such as staying healthy or being socially desirable.

Consider offering the people in your audience both something they can complete using your content and something they cannot complete during a certain amount of time, for which they will have to return to you later on. For example, "There are four steps to create an effective investment plan. Today, we have time to cover the first three."

## Sweet Anticipation

### How to Build Excitement for What Happens Next

There are many advantages associated with anticipation: It provides a cue that something interesting or important will happen, and it leads to improved attention, memory and the decision to act. This is why it is worthwhile to understand anticipation and learn how to create it for your listeners in the quest to become impossible to ignore.

While general expectations are about seeing the future (e.g., "Here is what to expect during business meetings"), anticipation is about feeling the future (e.g., "Here are three reasons to get excited about our next meeting"). Imaginative thought is aspirational, but it's imaginative emotions that push us into action. Anticipation is therefore a stronger expectation, a boost that gets us ready to act.

Why does anticipation have so much power over our brains? The power stems from the "juice" that fuels it: dopamine. When we simulate the future, we are looking for rewards, and neuroscientists confirm that stimuli predicting the possibility of a reward invoke the same neuronal activity as the one triggered by the reward itself.

So far, we know two things: 1) if there is an anticipated reward, people notice and are willing to exert some effort

to get it; and 2) dopamine is released in even higher doses when there is an unexpected but pleasant reward. Let's see how we can put these findings into practice.

Providing a modicum of uncertainty in your communications is effective because dopamine spikes in the face of unexpected events. In general, uncertainty makes us uneasy, which is why it is often referred to as "tension." We can tolerate some tension as long as 1) we know its degree, 2) we are reminded about the importance of the final outcome, and 3) we can tolerate the amount of delay until that outcome is realized. Let's identify practical guidelines associated with each.

First, let's look at **the degree of uncertainty.** As a communicator, you must balance how much information to reveal (and allow listeners' brains to predict accurately) and how much information to withhold (and get listeners ready for action, even if the action only implies people showing up to listen to you). Uncertainty can derive from the "what" or the "when" of a situation, which means you can manipulate these two variables when you create a message of anticipation. For example, telling your friend you have a gift for her but not telling her when she will receive it plays with the clarity of *what* and the surprise of *when*. Or, saying that "the meeting at 8am will reveal some insights" plays with the clarity of *when* but not *what*.

Second, let's address **the importance of possible outcomes.** When we anticipate events, the brain typically estimates the worst and best possible outcomes, consciously or subconsciously. Reflect on your own messages. When you build anticipation for an upcoming event, ask from your listeners' perspective: What are some possible outcomes? How important are they? And is there a big difference between the best and worst outcome? For example, scheduling a conference in Hawaii cannot have too many bad outcomes. Even if the conference sessions are subpar, the location mitigates the tension.

**The delay before the outcome is realized** contributes to uncertainty too. This is the time that elapses before an outcome is realized. When you create any sort of communication, you essentially take your audience from one state to another state. The time lapse between the starting point and the destination can be short (seconds, minutes) or long (weeks, months, even years). In business communication, the length of the delay depends on your audience. Sometimes casual business audiences are in such a rush that only a short delay is effective, such as revealing an important point at the end of a 300-word blog. When your audience is patient and extremely interested, you can create a slightly longer delay with longer sentences and stories instead of just a few words and bulleted lists.

## What Makes a Message Repeatable?

### Techniques to Convince Others to Repeat Your Words

When we share information at Point A, we hope others will retain it and retrieve it at Point B to inform their next action. This means that at Point A we must create a memory strong enough that it endures long term. One technique for solidifying memory is repetition. However, since we are looking at memory from the perspective of the future, this chapter is not so much about repeating the same message over and over at Point A. That's only part of the technique. The challenge is to make sure people can repeat that same message at Point B on their own. And how to create a message so it is repeatable in the long term is something that demands investigation.

One way to make a message repeatable long-term is to ensure it is **portable,** meaning that you can use it in different contexts. For example, a team of scientists at Cornell University studied the attributes of a quotable movie line. The team built a computer program that analyzed thousands of quotes tagged by users on IMDb, or Internet Movie Database. The program compared quotable lines in a specific movie against other lines of the same length said by the same character in the same movie. Their observation was that most memorable lines were applicable in various contexts. For instance, the famous line in Jaws, "You're gonna need a bigger boat," is portable; you can use it on or off the water to allude to the need for more resources.

Start by creating generic statements, using few personal pronouns or indefinite articles, and keeping the statements in the present tense. Can people repeat your favorite message at the supermarket, gym, dog-boarding facility or new hair salon where a total stranger is approaching you with scissors? May the force be with you.

You can also create distinct **words tied by simple syntax,** such as "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die." If asked to quote anything from the movie "Princess Bride," people who have seen it would most likely repeat this quote. The syntax in this quote and the order of words are simple and easy to understand. Yet the word choice attracts extra attention. The name "Inigo Montoya" is unusual. The word "prepare" is something we may expect in the context of preparing a meal or preparing for a meeting, not preparing to die.

The impact of simple syntax on memory is backed by scientific studies. Research shows that people are able to reproduce sentence structures independent of meaning, words or sounds, even when they have amnesia. Research also shows that once the syntax is simple, providing a safe canvas, the foreground must be marked by distinct words, or disfluency. Disfluency has benefits because it induces cognitive roadblocks, which, in a counterintuitive way, invite deeper processing. Another advantage of disfluency in messages is that it encourages us to ignore surface properties and focus on deeper meaning. This leads to the formation of abstract thoughts. A burst of disfluency, when attention is likely to fade, is especially effective. But…use it sparingly. If all characters in the "Princess Bride" movie had unusual and difficult-to-pronounce names, we would not remember them as much.

## Become Memorable With Distinction

### How to Stay on People's Minds Long Enough to Spark Action

One way to avoid forgettable content is to make it distinct from what your audiences see elsewhere. However, it is one thing to draw viewers' attention to a distinct stimulus and another for them to remember that stimulus long term.

Researchers suggest that when the brain detects differences between isolated and background items, encoding results in two categories: the isolated items and the background items. Imagine three red dots surrounded by 50 black dots. Since the isolated items represent a smaller category compared with the background items, recall is better for isolates. The probability of retrieving an item from one of the two categories is inversely proportional to the size of the category. This is why, when we create content, it is useful to ask 1) How many items do we want to isolate? 2) Do they represent the most important content we want others to remember?

It is practical to regard any messages you create as a set of items placed along a temporal continuum (e.g., a set of paragraphs in an email or blog, a set of sounds in a meeting, a set of slides in a presentation, a set of campaigns in a marketing initiative). Audiences can discriminate between items depending on their position along this continuum. Similar items that crowd a psychological space are harder to discriminate compared with something that is distinct in a crowd or that does not have much in its close proximity. For instance, you may remember a word better if it was followed by five pictures but not if it was followed by five other words.

You can also **create distinctiveness by thinking in opposites.** If distinctiveness is providing a stimulus that is different from neighboring items, we can create it by choosing the opposite of what an audience just saw. This idea may be easy to understand, but opposites are not always easy to identify because not everything can be described in opposition. It is useful to consider opposites from a contextual angle, with a fuzzy-trace approach. In underdeveloped nations, rich and poor consider themselves opposites, but an outsider from a well-developed nation may consider them both poor and not opposites at all. What matters in your content creation is, What does your audience consider the opposite of what you presented for a while? Maybe a dialogue after a monologue? Maybe seeing something dynamic after something static? Maybe being informal after a formal segment?

You can also **achieve distinctiveness with a human touch.** If we consider distinctiveness "departure from the expected," a deviation that many will appreciate and find impossible to ignore is one with a human touch. We create our communication in the service of other people. Notice what happens when we shift from a formal, technology-oriented message to an informal, human-oriented language. "When I'm not deep into algorithm design, data modeling or analytic visualizations, I really like to ski," says Pedro Desouza, data scientist from EMC.

Patagonia's CEO Rose Marcario also achieves distinctiveness with a human touch. Recently, she embraced an environmental approach to business for her company. Patagonia advises consumers not to buy its clothes. By doing so, it sacrifices some of its earnings. The company also shares product breakthroughs with competitors — all in an effort to cause less wear and tear on the environment. The message in Patagonia's paradoxical campaign "Don't buy this jacket" is do not buy more than you need. Can you identify ways to create distinctive content using a human approach to business?

## 'I Write This Sitting in the Kitchen Sink'

### The Science of Retrieving Memories Through Stories

Let's consider a story from Kevin Kregel, a former NASA astronaut. I had the opportunity to interview him, and no interview with an astronaut is complete without a story about seeing our planet from an exclusive vantage

point. Here is what Kregel remembers from one of his missions, after being in space for eight days: "The flight deck on the space shuttle is not that much bigger than a 737," he said. "A bit wider, a bit deeper, but not by much. There are six windows and two overhead windows. We turned off all the displays on the flight deck and blocked off the access to the mid-deck because there are lights there that you can't shut off. It was pitch black. Even though there was not much room, we all had good body control, and floated, and put our faces in front of a window so you could not see anybody else. You could see the Earth below, and the stars, and we floated that way for 45 minutes, listening to Pink Floyd, "The Dark Side of the Moon." It felt like you were just flying and you weren't really in the shuttle. Nobody said a word. Nobody moved. Nobody touched anything. We were all floating in our separate window and the sun finally came up, and it was gorgeous." He concluded humbly, "I guess that's what it must have been like to be on LSD in the '60s."

The reason this story has a chance to be remembered is because it meets the three criteria for a memorable story: It has perceptive, cognitive and affective elements. Perceptive elements are based on sensory impressions in context (such as experiencing pitch black in a flight deck slightly larger than a 737's), and include actions on a timeline, such as first turning off display lights, *then* blocking off lights from other areas, *then* taking a spot in front of a window and *then* listening to Pink Floyd until the sun comes up. Cognitive elements include facts, abstracts and meaning, such as how big the space shuttle is and how many windows it has, the name of a music album and the abstract thought of being on LSD. Affective elements include emotions, such as enjoying a gorgeous sunrise from space.

The absence or imbalance of perceptive, cognitive and affective elements in a story is what makes business content forgettable. Ineffective communicators tell "stories" that 1) stay too factual or too abstract; there is nothing wrong with facts or abstract ideas, but when the other components are missing, it leads to forgetting; 2) have no plot — nothing really happens across a timeline; and 3) lack emotional intensity.

Emotion is a particularly critical component in memorable stories because emotional stimuli lead to neurochemical activity in the areas of the brain responsible for encoding, storing and recalling memories. How do we include emotion in our messages, especially when business content is dry, technical and complex, and audiences increasingly cynical?

Nostalgia is an emotion that helps to abstract and extract meaning. It is especially effective with cynical audiences because it levels the knowledge in the room. Romancing the past has the potential to strengthen the bond with others. When everyone feels like an equal, people are more likely to trust each other and are more likely to allow themselves to be swayed in a certain direction by others. This is why messages that start with "Remember when …" are so effective.

Also, use **intense** emotions. An old Nike ad with a lot of attitude says, "If you're serious about sports, buy Nike shoes. If you want to dance, buy Reebok." This works for memory because it adds tension, which generates emotion. It is not a flat statement such as, "Buy these shoes to enjoy running." This would generate an emotion, too, but not a strong one. You don't need to bash the competition, but it is important to ask, "How intense is the emotion I include in my content?"

## How Much Content Is Too Much?

### How to Handle Content Sacrifice

Brevity is advantageous because it gets attention and sustains it since there is not much to absorb. It also creates a feeling of mastery and completion, which generates positive emotions. But what happens when we can't bow to the rhetoric of the micromessage? Consider the steps below when determining the length of your message.

**Consider what the audience must remember.** When we want others to remember precise information, to recollect it with details, we aim for verbatim. If we are satisfied when others are familiar with what we said, without recalling many details, or use some of their own words to describe what they remember, we are aiming for gist.

If we aim for verbatim, we have to leave some room for repetition and elaboration to make sure concepts stick in a precise way. If we aim for gist memory, we can get away with more content as long as at least one main message is clear and we draw attention to it often.

You must also **determine what the audience must act on next.** If our intent for a communication effort is to have others simply "like" the content, leave a comment or share it with others, these intentions are better achieved with shorter content. On the other hand, if the audience needs to make a difficult decision, such as awarding us a significant amount of money, effort or time, then longer content is necessary to be convincing.

Quite often, we have to **meet time constraints imposed by others.** A client says, "You have an hour for this presentation." Someone may be a bit thriftier: "We can

give you only 30 minutes." In an investor presentation, you may have 10 minutes. Adjust to any of these situations by starting with two questions: "What do I want the audiences to remember?" and "What do I want them to act on?" If these are clear — and knowing that we speak at a rate of about 140 to 160 words per minute — you have a metric for how much you can say in 30 seconds, 10 minutes or one hour. Treat each of these segments as a stepping-stone for the audience to get closer to a reward.

## How Does the Brain Decide?

### The Neurobiology and Neuroeconomics of Choice

As our lives unfold in a series of decisions, ranging from fully automatic to fully strategic, we may experience some tension balancing them. A little voice in your head may say, "I am craving something sweet." The automatic voice adds, "A KitKat bar would be really good." And the strategic voice asks, "Can I afford the calories?"

Reflecting on your own content, ask this: What gives your own audiences a rush? What do they crave? What lights their fire naturally? Can you divide your content approaches so as to appeal to something automatic and strategic in balanced proportions? For example, in a current antismoking campaign, we see a young girl, Amanda Green, writing a "contract" in which she agrees to relinquish part of her freedom to a cigarette. The voiceover bluntly states, "There is a contract in every cigarette; when you light up, you sign up." The commercial appeals to all three decision drivers: a reflex, our automatic desire to be in control; an existing habit, smoking; and a goal, quitting. The ad ends with "Know the real cost," which appeals to a strategic approach for quitting.

In any decision, the brain will select a choice to maximize a reward, which is based on what the brain values. But how do we know what people value? Here are some dimensions to consider. We value what is functional, in the sense of having tangible attributes, such as a dishwasher, a type of detergent, or even insurance. We value things for their *emotional* value: think of the last time you used your GoPro or enjoyed food, drinks, or a film with friends. We value things because of their epistemological value, meaning products or experiences that give us the opportunity for *knowledge* development and intellectual stimulation, such as books and seminars. We value things for their *aesthetics,* such as clothes and decorations. We also seek *hedonistic* values because they evoke sensory pleasure, which is why we enjoy good hotels and fun nightclubs. Sometimes we choose because of *situational* value, such as selecting champagne versus wine because of a special occasion. And if we're lucky enough, we may be exposed to things of *holistic* value: choosing a vacation in Paris with a new lover is likely to appeal to a range of values from emotional to epistemological, aesthetic to hedonistic.

Which of these values do your customers appreciate, and are those values coming across clearly in your communication? If so, then there is a greater likelihood of action.

## The Right to Be Forgotten and the Intent to Be Remembered

### How to Balance Accidental and Purposeful Forgetting

The ability of your audiences to remember will influence their decisions, but their ability to forget may be equally important to your cause. Think of it this way: Forgetting is accidental or purposeful. *Accidental* forgetting happens when people fail to encode new information we provide them or when existing knowledge we've given them decays over time because of a lack of reactivation. Forgetting is *purposeful* when we want to convince people to give up old routines in favor of new thinking. In this case, it is preferable that audiences forget the old and remember the new.

Reflecting on your own content, consider catering to both types of forgetting. Reactivate your most important message often to avoid accidental forgetting, and purposefully direct your audiences' attention toward new things when the old does not serve them any longer.

Being on someone's mind and influencing decisions is a position of honor and responsibility. Using the guidelines, consider placing in people's minds thoughts and ideas that are enduring enough and rewarding enough to help humanity evolve and take us all on fulfilling paths.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Impossible to Ignore*, you'll also like:

1. ***360 Degrees of Influence* by Harrison Monarth**. Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.

2. ***Resonate* by Nancy Duarte**. Nancy Duarte shows how to transform any presentation into an engaging journey by understanding your audience, creating persuasive content and eliciting a groundswell response.

3. ***Pitch Perfect* by Bill McGowan, Alisa Bowman**. Bill McGowan offers seven principles of persuasion to use to establish the right tone for the right message to the right person at the right time.

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# 38-25 Winning the Brain Game

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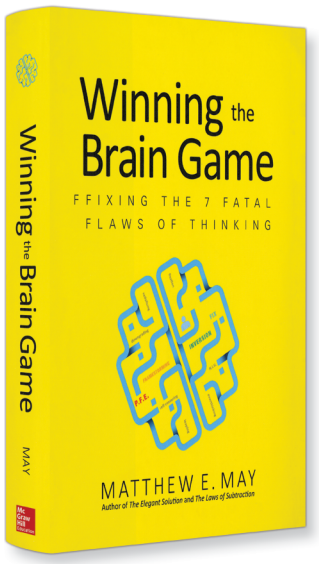
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# Winning the Brain Game

## Fixing the 7 Fatal Flaws of Thinking




by Matthew E. May

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Each day, a game of mind versus matter plays out on a field defined by the problems we must solve. Most are routine and don't demand a more mindful approach. It's when we're faced with more difficult challenges that our thinking becomes vulnerable to brain patterns that can lead us astray. We leap to solutions that simply don't work. We fixate on old mindsets that keep us stuck in neutral. We overthink problems and make them worse. We kill the ideas of others as well as our own. Worse, we keep doing these things, over and over again, naturally and instinctively.

But it doesn't have to be that way. In *Winning the Brain Game,* author and creative strategist Matthew E. May explains these and other "fatal flaws" of thinking, revealing seven observable problem-solving patterns that can block our best thinking. Calling on modern neuroscience and psychology to help explain the seven fatal flaws, May draws insights from some of the world's most innovative thinkers. He then blends in a super-curated, field-tested set of "fixes" proven through hundreds of creative sessions to raise our thinking game to a more mindful level. Regardless of the playing field, mindful thinking is the new competitive advantage, and the seven fixes are a magic set of tools for achieving it.

*Winning the Brain Game* will lead you to better decision-making, higher levels of creativity, clearer strategies and overall success in business, work and life.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The seven fatal flaws of thinking and the fix for each one.
- The importance of reframing and generating the right questions.
- Concrete ideas and strategies for practicing each cure.
- How neuroscience can help solve problems.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **WINNING THE BRAIN GAME**

**by Matthew E. May**

**The author:** Matthew E. May is an award-winning author and noted thought leader on strategy and innovation. A creative advisor to Toyota for eight years, he is now a popular speaker, facilitator and coach, who works worldwide with individuals and organizations. He has written five books and writes a column called "Brain Game" for *Inc.* magazine.

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## Introduction: 7 Fatal Flaws

An elegant solution is one that achieves the maximum effect with minimum means. But there are seven fatal thinking flaws. Each carries with it the potential to kill a great idea and prevent an elegant solution from ever seeing the light of day.

- **Leaping.** Immediately and instinctively leaping to solutions in a sort of mental knee jerk almost never leads to an elegant solution to an unfamiliar, complex problem, because not enough time is devoted to framing the issue properly.
- **Fixation.** Fixation is an umbrella term for our general mental rigidity and linear thinking — our go-to mindsets, blind spots, paradigms, schemas, biases, mental maps and models — that make it easier for us to make it through the day but harder for us to flex and shift our perception.
- **Overthinking.** This can be thought of as our knack for creating problems that weren't even there in the first place. Overthinking is a rather deep bucket filled with a host of variations on a theme: overanalyzing, overplanning and generally complicating matters by adding unnecessary complexity and cost.
- **Satisficing.** By nature we satisfice, a term combining satisfy and suffice, and coined by Nobel laureate Herbert Simon in his 1957 book *Models of Man.* We glom on to what's easy and obvious and stop looking for the best or optimal solution, the one that resolves the problem within the given goals and constraints.
- **Downgrading.** Downgrading is the close cousin of satisficing, with a twist: a formal downward or backward revision of the goal or situation, often resulting in wholesale disengagement from the challenge.
- **Not Invented Here (NIH).** This is defined as an automatic negative perception of and visceral aversion to concepts and solutions developed somewhere else, somewhere external to the individual or team, often resulting in an unnecessary reinvention of the wheel. We don't trust other people's solutions.
- **Self-Censoring.** When we reject, deny, stifle, squelch, strike, silence and otherwise put ideas of our own to death, sometimes even before they're born, it is an act of Self-Censoring. Self-Censoring is the deadliest of the fatal flaws, because any voluntary shutdown of the imagination is an act of mindlessness, the long-term effects of which eventually kill off our natural curiosity and creativity.

Regardless of the playing field, mindful thinking is the new competitive advantage, and the seven fixes for the seven flaws are a magic set of tools for achieving it. The seven can all be placed in a larger toolbox properly called Reframing. Reframing is the singular response to the question of how to respond to the following mantra: "What appears to be the problem, isn't; what appears to be the solution, isn't; what appears to be impossible, isn't."

## PART I: MISLEADING

## Leaping

Perhaps the easiest way to explain Leaping is to do what psychologists and neuroscientists alike do: categorize our thinking into two main circuits. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman in his 2011 book *Thinking, Fast and Slow* uses terms coined by psychologists Keith Stanovich and

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

Richard West: System 1 and System 2. Let's just keep it simple and memorable, taking our cues from Kahneman: FAST and SLOW.

FAST does the rapid, automatic, reactive, unconscious and instinctive thinking we employ to solve routine problems. SLOW handles the labored, effortful, conscious and rational thinking we employ to solve more complex and unfamiliar challenges. FAST is where our expertise and confidence live, where our intuitive "sixth sense" operates. It's also where almost all of our mistakes get made. And it's where Leaping occurs. Kahneman tells us that our FAST circuit is a "machine for jumping to conclusions" when information is limited.

While deeper thinking SLOW should be the one that prevents mistakes and keeps us out of trouble, it's lazy. It wants to act like FAST. SLOW thinking is just plain hard work, requiring too much mental and physical effort. And our formative years have not focused on thinking slow but, rather, how to economize thinking to make it fast.

What can we do to improve the tension between FAST and SLOW? We can leverage our FAST circuit to improve our SLOW and train our minds to fix our brain's fatal flaw of Leaping. The secret lies in how to trigger SLOW so that it acts and feels like FAST.

### The Fix: Framestorming

The fix for Leaping is Framestorming. Framestorming is a mash-up of framing and brainstorming. Framestorming operates under the same basic rules of brainstorming: Go for quantity, build on ideas, withhold judgment. That's the storming part. It's the part that feels good, because it calls up FAST. What about the frame part?

How we frame something has everything to do with how well it turns out. The ability to properly frame an issue or problem goes far in avoiding the typical pitfalls that limit our ability to reach the elegant solution. With framestorming, the focus is on generating questions, not solutions. The power of framestorming lies in its ability to engage our SLOW thinking in a manner that feels like FAST thinking.

Framestorming consists of three straightforward steps conducted under the general rules of brainstorming, with the ultimate goal of stating the challenge as a compelling question that acts to frame a problem as an intriguing puzzle, one that engages our more imaginative SLOW thinking.

**Step 1: Cue the language of frames.** Good frames are stated as questions. Author Warren Berger writes, "a beautiful question is an ambitious yet actionable question that can begin to shift the way we perceive or think about something — and that might serve as a catalyst to bring about change." Warren advises cycling through three stages of inquiry: why, what if and how?

"Why is this a problem?" "Why hasn't anyone solved it?" "Why might it represent an opportunity?" At some point, the innovator moves from "why" to "what-if" questions — imagining possible solutions, often by connecting ideas. "What if we tried X?" "What if we combined Y with Z?" That's the idea stage. Then, you have to get from imaginative, what-if possibilities to something more practical and concrete; you begin to ask, "How might we do this?"

**Step 2: Generate questions.** Now generate as many "why," "what-if" and "how" questions as you can. As in brainstorming, framestorming initially favors quantity over quality. Go for at least a dozen questions that frame the challenge, preferably more. Don't stop until you're well into the double digits. Reserve judgment or evaluation for step three — the last thing you want to do at this point is be conservative or critical.

**Step 3: Pick the two best.** Once you have a master list of frames, you can select at least two that will launch you into the solution brainstorming mode, which is essentially another round of the "why," "what-if" and "how" questions, this time focused on answers. From there, you know what to do!

## Fixation

Psychologist Karl Duncker in his 1939 book *On Problem Solving* coined the term "functional fixedness" to explain the difficulty people have in looking at objects and situations in ways different than they commonly do or have in the past. Various other labels for functional fixedness include paradigms, blind spots, mindset, bias, brain lock and mental models.

Fixation can wreak havoc in individuals, organizations and even entire industries. Organizational theorist Ian Mitroff attributes General Motors' dramatic loss of market share in the 1980s at the hands of import car companies to a decades-old, multilevel version of Fixation that went something like this: Styling and status are more important than quality, foreign cars are no threat and workers don't make a difference. General Motors only became aware of their faulty thinking when it was far too late.

All day long, unbeknownst to us — and for the most part uncontrolled by us — our brains record every single experience, sending sensory information in the form of electrical impulses to our cerebral cortex, the "grey

matter" that houses the brain's higher functions. Each new experience is automatically stored as data in our brain. The process is additive and cumulative, and generally goes unedited. Different patterns combine to make memories and perceptions, and those connections are reinforced over time, becoming mental models — mindsets, biases and paradigms. As soon as our brain recognizes a piece of information as being part of a pre-existing pattern, our FAST thinking overrides our SLOW, and we get fixed on our solution, essentially screening out other possibilities.

### The Fix: Inversion

The cure for Fixation is called Inversion, because it involves flipping your thinking around in order see things through a new, fresh and unique lens, in turn sparking new neural connections in your brain, effectively rewiring it. The Inversion method is called "Opposite World." Opposite World is about inverting the normal conditions, defining features or key characteristics of whatever challenge you're tackling. There are three basic steps.

**Step 1: List the defining attributes.** Let's take a common example, that of the traditional circus, first used by Stanford's Tina Seelig in teaching her entrepreneurship class how to address what she called "problem blindness" in her 2009 book, *What I Wish I Knew When I Was 20.* The traditional circus has a number of classic elements: clowns, barkers, multiple tents, carnival music, "star" attractions, animals, cheap tickets, kid oriented.

**Step 2. For each element, list the extreme opposite or reverse.** In our circus example,

- Clowns — no clowns,
- Barkers — no barkers,
- Multiple tents — one tent,
- Carnival music — sophisticated music,
- "Star" attractions — ensemble cast,
- Animals — no animals,
- Cheap tickets — expensive tickets,
- Kid oriented — adult oriented.

You probably just experienced a bit of the Fixation flaw, if you thought of Cirque du Soleil.

Part of the point here is to illustrate the power of Inversion, an illustration which necessitates a backwards glance at something we consider nontraditional, even disruptive: Airbnb is the inverse of a traditional hotel or bed-and-breakfast in that it does not own property; Uber is the inverse of a traditional cab or limousine service in that it does not have a fleet; Tesla cars are the inverse of cars with combustible engines, at least to some degree, in that they do not use gasoline for fuel. By taking the polar or extreme opposite view of the current or traditional way of thinking about a given concept, you can easily forge new avenues worth exploring creatively, which brings up the final step.

**Step 3: Framestorm/brainstorm, using the opposites as your starting point.** Look at your opposites list. While it may not reveal a solution, each opposite provides a starting point to now use your framestorming chops and ask Why (not)? What if? How (might we)? Those questions in turn will spark new trains of creative thought. When you're done, you may be surprised at just how off-road you've gone with your thinking.

## Overthinking

General George Patton once said, "No plan escapes first contact with the enemy." Ex–heavyweight boxing champ Mike Tyson updated Patton's sentiment by saying, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

The question is, where did our love of planning come from? Part of the answer comes from our evolutionary addiction to resources: The more we have, the more we feel safe, secure, in control, shielded from risk and thus able to perform better. But in reality, just the opposite is often true — the more we attempt to control and regulate apparent risk, the more exposed and at risk we often are. That's because the more protected we think we are, the less vigilant we become.

Another part of the answer centers on our need to be certain and correct, a need easily traced to how we learn and how we are educated. Consider first the natural learning that occurs long before we ever enter a classroom. By all accounts, it is our most intensive learning period. It features failure upon failure: learning to smile, hold our head up, roll over, grab things, sit up, crawl, walk, talk . . . everything is an experiment, nothing happens right the first time, and what we now call failure was not at that time thought of much less labeled as failure but rather a continuous cycle of learning and progressing and improving — the very nature of growing.

Once in the classroom, our fearless learning through testing was replaced by a new kind of learning. Our teachers now asked the questions, and we had to answer correctly. The need to be certain and correct grew. In a complete reversal of toddler learning, we faced a new kind of test, one that came after the lesson. There was a right and wrong answer involved with this kind of test, and a grade called "F," for failure. Along with grades on

tests came fear. As the demands of homework assignments, quizzes and tests grew, so grew the need to plan our time in order to avoid failure.

The good news is that the working world now realizes the errors of our institutions and is racing to rekindle the childlike ethos of curiosity and experimentation with which we entered the world, eager to embrace what perhaps Charles Kettering said best: "Virtually nothing comes out right the first time. Failures, repeated failures, are finger posts on the road to achievement. The only time you don't want to fail is the last time you try something. One fails toward success." All we really have to do is get back in touch with how we made our way in the world those first few formative years.

### The Fix: Prototesting

Prototesting is a mash-up of prototyping and testing. A prototype is defined as an early model of a potential solution that can take many forms, from purely conceptual, like a strategy, to completely physical, like a product. Broadly speaking, though, a prototype in any form is at its core simply a set of educated guesses about the future. And the fancy word for an educated guess is hypothesis. And the purpose of a hypothesis is to guide a test, an experiment. Creating a prototype is play; testing it is purposeful play. Two powerful tools will help you raise your Prototesting game.

**Surfacing Assumptions: What Must Be True?** If we want to survive Patton's "first contact with the enemy" and avoid Tyson's getting "punched in the mouth," we must address the assumptions inherent in our potential solutions. The best technique to surface an assumption and alchemically turn it into an advantage amounts to a single but powerful question: *What must be true?*

For example, determining whether a prototype strategy represents a good set of choices may require asking what must be true about the industry structure, market segmentation, distribution channels, cost structures and competitive reaction. A prototype product or service offering may require asking what must be true about what users truly value. Once you develop a list of answers to the question of what must be true for your concept to be a good choice, you will have a fairly robust set of conditions for success. This list is your portfolio of educated guesses about the future, your hypotheses.

**Testing Assumptions: Experimental Design.** The following test design is so simple it needs no further explanation; simply plug in your most worrisome assumption from the what-must-be-true exercise, and you're good to go. Here are the test design parts:

- **Conditions:** Which of our what-must-be-true assumptions are we most worried might not be true? Why is it so worrisome?
- **Hypothesis:** What must we learn? What is our testable belief about future value creation?
- **Experiment:** How will we test our hypothesis? What is the target metric that will be our standard of proof that helps determine pass/fail?

What is so attractive about Prototesting is that it calls up the kind of learning that creates new and valid knowledge, in which it is the test that produces the lesson. And the Overthinking flaw fades away.

## PART II: MEDIOCRE

# Satisficing

Satisficing is a real word, part satisfying and part sufficing, coined by the late economics Nobel laureate Herbert Simon his 1956 book *Models of Man*. He used it to describe our natural inclination to settle for "good enough" when faced with a decision.

In general, we go with the first option that offers an acceptable payoff, choose the one that appears to get us "in the ballpark" quickest, but then stop looking for other ways, including the best way, to solve the problem. We rationalize that the optimal solution is too difficult, not worth the effort involved or simply unnecessary. Simon called this "bounded rationality."

In the vast majority of routine, everyday decisions, we'd be wise to satisfice. That's when "good enough" is, well, just that. But when you're trying to solve a difficult problem in which a suboptimal solution could put you at risk is not one of those times.

As people grappling with various thought challenges engage in Satisficing behavior, they ignore the very constraints that can paradoxically open up new and different ways of looking at things. They mistakenly pose the question, "What should we do?" before asking, "What is possible?" They want a solution, but they don't have the patience to pursue the optimal one, favoring implementation over incubation. They would much prefer to throw some resources at the problem and move on, or tweak a previous solution and fit it to the current situation. They fail to look more holistically at the challenge, to search, scan and see the bigger picture. The result is that elegant solutions completely elude them.

### The Fix: Synthesis

An easy way to think about Synthesis is "both-and" thinking, versus "either-or." Here are two ways to synthesize.

**Double Down.** Here, you have two solutions, one of which has many benefits with one huge drawback and the other of which has one huge benefit but many drawbacks. Taking a cue from Blackjack players who double down on a hot hand may be a way to synthesize a third option. Roger Martin and Jennifer Riel state that, "The trick is to find the conditions under which the first model can produce the benefits of the second."

They give the example of Walmart, facing a huge drawback in the form of a massive erosion of their global reputation if they did not change both their stance on environmental sustainability as well as carbon footprint. Doing so would be expensive, which for a low-cost provider strategy is a big drawback, but would do wonders for the company's reputation. Walmart effectively doubled down by extending their general strategy of placing pressure on suppliers to reduce costs. In this case they placed pressure on their suppliers to adopt more environmentally friendly strategies, refusing to purchase goods from suppliers who did not meet certain standards for water, waste and carbon.

**Decomposition.** When you have two equally attractive solutions that you wish you could fully implement simultaneously but can't because they are in direct conflict and require significant trade-offs, break the larger context down into component parts, so that you can apply each solution in whole to those components.

When Target was in its early years, its senior executives realized they faced a dilemma: It had to contend on one hand with Walmart, far and away the low-cost retail leader. Seeing Kmart relegated to also-ran status, Target knew it couldn't win the game of everyday items offered at rock-bottom prices. On the other hand, it faced successful, highly differentiated department store retailers, such as Nordstrom and Macy's, strong brands that would be nearly impossible to steal significant share from, much less unseat.

In order to compete effectively, Target adopted a strategy of decomposition. It decided that groceries and everyday commodities — a box of Tide, a package of Bounty — would be sold at prices equivalent to Walmart's. However, when it came to apparel and other higher-margin items, Target chose to partner with well-known designers and celebrity homemakers looking for broader audiences. These offers had no direct substitutes at either Walmart or higher-end retailers, and Target was able to create the illusion of being a discounter in one part of the store and a unique retailer in another. It broke the problem down and essentially created two stores under one roof, becoming a discounter-plus-retailer, convincing people that they could get fashionable things along with the halo of everyday low prices from the store within a store. Target grew exponentially, carving out a unique playing field on which it could win.

As with all Synthesizing, the goal of decomposition is to avoid satisficing compromises and "either-or" trade-offs in order to create more value through "both-and" thinking.

## Downgrading

Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can or can't, you're right." In that single line he captured the sum and substance of Downgrading. By Downgrading we somehow fool ourselves into believing we can declare victory ... through a pre-emptive surrender!

The legendary Jack Welch faced this very issue during his tenure as CEO of General Electric. Welch was known for his winner's mindset, demanding that all GE lines of business maintain no less than second place in market share, and preferably first. But his lieutenants began gaming the goal by revising how they defined their respective markets, shrinking the market small enough that they could declare themselves number one or two in the space. Welch caught on, though, and reset the constraint so that no business could hold more than a 10 percent share, believing that if people defined their market to be much larger than their share of it, they would be more aggressive in pursuing opportunities to win the top spot.

When we view a problem as unsolvable or a goal as unattainable, we go through four phases. The first thing we do is try harder. No surprise there. Next, if our efforts don't yield the results we want, we get angry. Again, no surprise. Third, we resign, mentally distancing ourselves from the goal, and we get depressed. Finally, our commitment dissolves completely, and we become open to committing to a new goal.

### The Fix: Jumpstarting

Jumpstarting is a three-gear battery recharger, with three effective methods to avoid Downgrading and eventual disengagement.

**Can-If Cascading.** The concept is quite simple: Force yourself to replace "can't because" with a "can-if" statement. If you're on the Mars Pathfinder team, for example, "We can't land a rover on Mars for $150 million, because

landing modules cost too much" might become "We can land a rover on Mars if we figure out a way to land without a landing module." You then keep going, using either another "can if" or, if a single "can if" does the trick, a Framestorming "what if" or "how." You never know, you might come up with the elegant solution the Pathfinder team did: Use air bags like those found in automobiles to bounce the rover to a stop on Mars.

**Why-How Laddering.** From neuroscience we know that both a "why" and a "how" must be present and connected to keep us engaged in the pursuit of a challenge. The first is about purpose; the second is about process. And since we know that focusing on both why and how isn't possible, we need a practical method to call one or the other up when we begin to stall and contemplate Downgrading. Seemingly impossible challenges seem impossible because there is no clear how, and the entire point of such a challenge is the creative search for a solution. So we can be fairly confident that we are in for a difficult struggle with the how at some point.

That's where Why-How Laddering comes in. If the "how" isn't yielding the desired progress, we can ladder up to asking ourselves the "why." If the "why" isn't as clear as it could be, we can ladder down to a lower-level "how" until we find something we can accomplish to get a quick win and restart our progress toward the "why."

**Fresh Starts.** According to a study by Katherine Milkman, people are more likely to set a new goal corresponding with or immediately following an event such as a birthday or the start of a week, month, season or year, suggesting that temporal landmarks or timestamps might make it easier to engage in aspirational behavior. Milkman proposes that these landmarks create new "mental accounting periods" that psychologically distance our present self from its past imperfections, propelling us to behave in line with their renewed self. Second, temporal landmarks interrupt attention to day-to-day details, causing us to take a big-picture view of our situation and focus more on the broader challenge we're chasing.

But you do not need to wait for the new year, your next birthday or even Monday morning. The Energy Project CEO Tony Schwartz talks about the power of pulsing: working in 90-minute cycles, effectively achieving the Fresh Start effect several times a day. The science shows that after working hard for more than 90 minutes, our brains begin to slow down to conserve energy. We become more reactive and less capable of thinking clearly and reflectively, or seeing the big picture. It doesn't matter much what you do as long as you change your space every 90 minutes or so. You'll be surprised at the re-energizing effect this has on you.

## PART III: MINDLESS

# Not Invented Here (NIH)

NIH is defined as a strong resistance to, or automatic rejection of, concepts — knowledge, ideas, solutions — produced somewhere else, somewhere external to the individual or team, often resulting in an unnecessary reinvention of the wheel. The pairing of these two aspects, external idea origination and immediate internal devaluation, is the defining characteristic of NIH.

NIH becomes more prevalent as we develop subject matter expertise, which is a form of power. Psychologists maintain that deep but narrow bands of knowledge, aka subject matter expertise, provide us a bounded personal and social domain closely integrated with our self-image. As a result, we perceive anything that may breach that domain as a potential threat to our status, position or power base. If we're the expert, we should be the one with all the great ideas, or so the thinking goes. Irrational as it may be, if someone else gets an idea or conjures up a solution that lies within our domain of expertise, we somehow get a sense of diminished capacity: "I should have thought of that." Fear then creeps in if we feel as though others may perceive us to be somehow less of an expert, especially if those others happen to be bosses, employers, or clients. That's when we double down on defensive maneuvers like NIH to protect our status, position or power base.

### The Fix: Proudly Found Elsewhere (PFE)

The two salient features of a PFE strategy are an outside-in flow of ideas and an inside-out connection with sources of new (to you) ideas. The following tools are among the best ways to achieve both.

**Open Hackathons: Bringing the Outside In.** Hackathons have moved well beyond the technology-only focus that "hack" conjures up, to become a valid method of bringing a diverse and passionate group of people — designers, storytellers, marketers, coders, entrepreneurs — together over a short time to solve real-world problems and produce a basket of strong ideas. Innovation is a contact sport, and having dozens of talented individuals rub shoulders and put their heads together is bound to produce something profound.

**Knowledge Work: Reaching Out to Connect.** The goal of creating a knowledge network is to become more productive and commercially valuable by exploring and exploiting the talents of others and bringing their ideas into your own repertoire through a more permeable boundary than you might have right now. This will help squelch any NIH-type tendencies you may entertain. A high-quality connection is one that you reference and connect with constantly. The information, knowledge and guidance you receive is excellent and enables you to be faster, better and smarter. Your relationship to individuals is characterized by high levels of dialogue, responsiveness and collaboration.

## Self-Censoring

Self-censoring, the deadliest flaw, is a special form of Fixation that borders on mental masochism: We field or create a great idea; we recognize it as such but deny or kill it anyway.

The causes of Self-Censoring are both biological and social, share the same origins and invoke the same brain functions as Fixation and look a lot like NIH. There is a nuanced difference, though, and it is wrapped in the wisdom of the old idiom "once burned, twice shy." One touch of a red-hot stove is usually all we need to avoid that kind of discomfort in the future. The same is true as we experience the emotional sensation of stress from our first instances of social rejection or ridicule. We quickly learn to fear and thus automatically avoid potentially stressful situations of all kinds.

As mindfulness author Ellen Langer defines it, "When you're mindless, the past is over-determining the present. You're trapped in categories created in the past. You're trapped in a rigid perspective, oblivious to alternative perspectives."

### The Fix: Self-Distancing

The Self-Censoring fix rests on a version of mindfulness that emphasizes a higher-order attention and noticing moment-to-moment changes around you. It is called Self-Distancing for several reasons. First, the kind of heightened in-the-moment noticing at the core of this mindfulness brings to mind a classic concept well over a century-and-a-half old — The Impartial Spectator — first introduced by Scottish philosopher Adam Smith as a central figure in his 1759 book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments.* Smith wrote that we all have access to "the person within" by invoking "the impartial and well-informed spectator," which he defined as the ability to observe our behavior as an objective onlooker does, while remaining fully aware of our thoughts, emotions and circumstances.

Second, the modern term psychologists use for Smith's Impartial Spectator is in fact self-distancing, coined by researchers Ethan Kross and Ozlem Ayduk. In one study, they invoked stress and anxiety in one of the most powerful ways known to turn a challenge into a threat: public speaking in front of judges without sufficient time to prepare. In this case, college students had only five minutes to prepare and could not use notes. One group was told to use first-person pronouns to work through their stress; for example, "I shouldn't be so nervous" and "I will be fine." The other group was told to use their name or a third-person pronoun; for example, "Matt, don't be nervous" or "You'll do great." Not only did the judges find the latter group's performances to be more confident and persuasive, but the participants themselves reported far less shame and rumination than the first-person group. According to Kross, when you think of yourself as another person, it allows you to give yourself more objective, helpful feedback.

Experiencing Self-Distancing is not unlike the feeling you might get when you travel to a distant and unfamiliar place. As visitors we are de facto spectators: naturally mindful, fully present, noticing details the locals now take for granted. We are very much the outsiders, watching ourselves as we stumble and fumble local customs, chuckling at our folly rather than stressing over how stupid we are, as we surely would as natives to the land. And all the while we stay fully aware and alert to everything happening around us. We are in it but not of it, so we are able to view ourselves in a more detached, rational and objective way.

By becoming more attentive to the moment and seeing the situation from the perspective of an objective outsider, mindlessness yields to mindful thinking, a non-negotiable requirement for winning the brain game.

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# 38-26 The Outward Mindset

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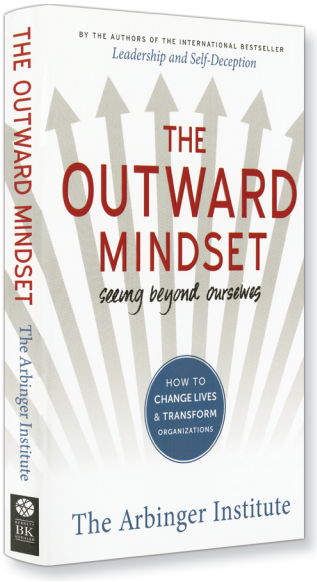
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Career & Self-Development

# The Outward Mindset

## Seeing Beyond Ourselves




by The Arbinger Institute

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Our mindset is the lens through which we see our work, our relationships and our entire world. Unknowingly, too many of us operate from an inward mindset — a narrow-minded focus on self-centered goals and objectives. When faced with personal ineffectiveness or lagging organizational performance, most of us instinctively look for quick-fix behavioral band-aids, not recognizing the underlying mindset at the heart of our most persistent challenges.

When individuals and organizations make the change to the outward mindset, incredible things start to happen. The outward mindset is focused on the objectives and results of the organization as a whole. It seeks to be helpful, responsible and make a real impact. It helps individuals see how they might be creating obstacles in the work of others, and helps them change the way they are working and relating to their team members in a way that creates real, sustainable results.

Through true stories and simple yet profound guidance and tools, *The Outward Mindset* enables individuals and organizations to make the one change that most dramatically improves performance, sparks collaboration and accelerates innovation — a shift to an outward mindset.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to recognize the two mindsets that drive people and organizations.
- How and why we prevent ourselves from having an outward mindset.
- The three key elements of an outward mindset and strategies for adopting them.
- Why adopting an outward mindset creates a competitive advantage for organizations.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE OUTWARD MINDSET**

**by The Arbinger Institute**

**The author:** The Arbinger Institute delivers training, consulting, coaching and digital tools to help individuals and organizations change mindset, transform culture, accelerate collaboration and innovation, resolve conflict and sustainably improve results. As a result of its 35-year track record with clients, Arbinger is now recognized as a world leader in the areas of mindset change, leadership, team building, conflict resolution, crisis management and culture change.

*The Outward Mindset: Seeing Beyond Ourselves; How to Change Lives and Transform Organizations* by The Arbinger Institute. Copyright © 2016 by Arbinger Properties, LLC. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Berrett-Koehler. 192 pages, $16.95, ISBN 978-1-6265-6715-3. To purchase this book go to Amazon.com.

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## Introduction

Think of the following people: the three people in your life whom you most like; the two people who've had the most positive influence on you; your best boss; the person who inspires you to do your best; your three favorite co-workers; the acquaintance you most respect.

As you think about these people, consider why you like them, respond well to them, work hard for them and revere them. Many of the people you are thinking about likely have this in common: You feel seen by them. Something about the way they see and engage with you makes you feel as if you matter. You feel this way when you are with them because to them, you do matter. This characteristic you admire in others is a way of seeing that is called an outward mindset.

People often use the term "mindset" to refer to a core belief about oneself. However, the biggest lever for change is not a change in self-belief but a fundamental change in the way one sees and regards one's connections with and obligations to others. Understanding the difference between a self-focused inward mindset and an others-inclusive outward mindset will help you become more outward in your work, your leadership and your life. It will guide you in building more innovative and collaborative teams and organizations. And it will help you see why you like many of the people you do and what you can do to become more like them.

Developing an outward mindset is a matter of learning to see beyond ourselves. "Leaders fail," says Paul Hubbard, CEO of a healthcare company, "by coming in saying, 'Here's the vision. Now you go execute what I see.' Although leaders should provide a mission or context and point toward what is possible, what humble, good leaders also do is to help people see. When people see, they are able to exercise all their human agency and initiative. When they do that, they own their work. When people are free to execute what they see, rather than simply to enact the instructions of the leader, they can change course in the moment to respond to ever-changing, situation-specific needs. That kind of nimbleness and responsiveness is something you can't manage, force or orchestrate."

Our journey begins with a foundational idea: Mindset drives and shapes all that we do — how we engage with others and how we behave in every moment and situation.

## PART I: SOMETHING NEW

## What Shapes Behavior

Countless books on personal improvement and organizational transformation recount the behaviors and actions of people who have achieved remarkable results with the promise that, by replicating their behaviors, you can achieve similar outcomes. This formulaic approach to improvement takes as its starting point the simple idea that behaviors drive results.

The idea that behaviors drive results seems almost self-evident. But how many of us have tried to replicate a behavioral formula — adopting the same leadership practices or mimicking the same interpersonal approaches of those who have achieved enviable results — only to throw up our hands in frustration? "Well, that didn't work!"

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There are two core problems with a purely behavioral approach for improving performance:

- The behaviors people choose to engage in (that they sense are right and helpful given their situation) will depend on how they see their situation and those with whom they interact. So while behaviors drive results, behaviors themselves are informed and shaped by one's mindset.
- In whatever a person does, his or her mindset comes through, and others respond to this combination of behavior and mindset. This means that the effectiveness of an individual's behaviors will depend to some significant degree on that individual's mindset.

Change efforts built upon the incomplete behavioral-model approach, where a person or organization tries to improve performance by focusing only on behavior change, will fail much more often in comparison to efforts that focus on changing both behavior and mindset. Studies conducted by McKinsey & Company corroborate this, showing that organizations that "identify and address pervasive mindsets at the outset are four times more likely to succeed in organizational-change efforts than are companies that overlook this stage."

When you sufficiently improve the mindset — either of an individual or of an organization — you no longer have to specify everything each team member is supposed to do (the way those who operate from a behavioral model often assume). As the mindset changes, so does the behavior, without having to prescribe the change. And where certain behaviors still need to be stipulated, the suggestions won't be systematically resisted. For these reasons, mindset change facilitates sustainable behavior change.

Moreover, as the mindset changes, people begin thinking and acting in ways that hadn't been imagined before. Let's begin to explore the mindset that makes this possible.

## Two Mindsets

Incentive structures, company metrics, career goals and personal egos all conspire to keep people focused on themselves and their own perceived needs and challenges, usually to the detriment of the team and the enterprise. In short, organizations and their people get inwardly focused, and as a result, they get stuck. They consider only those options that would advance their own agendas. This way of operating is called an inward mindset.

With an outward mindset, people are able to consider and behave in ways that further the collective results that they are committed to achieve. These two mindsets — an inward mindset on the one hand and an outward mindset on the other — form two ends of a continuum. Consider, for example, an organization in which every person operates with an inward mindset and where the practices, policies and processes continually invite the same. No organization is completely this way, but consider this extreme case as the left end of the mindset continuum. Then consider an organization composed of people, processes, and practices that are entirely outward. Again, no single organization operates with a completely outward mindset, but consider that possibility as the extreme right end of the continuum.

The objective is to move individuals and organizations further to the right on the mindset continuum. Why? Because accountability, collaboration, innovation, leadership, culture and value to customers all improve as organizations increasingly apply an outward mindset in their strategies, structures, systems, processes and day-to-day work.

### Seeing Truthfully

With an outward mindset, you are alive to and interested in others' needs, objectives and challenges; you see others as people. With an inward mindset, on the other hand, you become self-focused and see others not as people with their own needs, objectives and challenges but as objects to help you with yours. Those that can help you, you see as vehicles. Those that make things more difficult for you, you see as obstacles. Those whose help wouldn't matter become irrelevant.

Don't confuse introspection with an inward mindset. One can introspect in a self-centered way, which would indicate an inward mindset. However, a person also can introspect about one's connections with others, which is the very essence of outwardness. Sometimes it is helpful to look inside to see how one is connected with what is outside.

Seeing people as people rather than as objects enables better thinking because such thinking is done in response to the truth: Others really are people and not objects. This truth, once seen, enables change even where change seems most unlikely. Rok Zorko, vice president of product development for the very successful app-development company, Outfit7, said, "It is an eye-opener to realize that you are not to treat people as objects but to treat them as people. Once you have this knowledge, you can never unthink it."

## PART II: EXPLORING THE OUTWARD MINDSET

# Getting Out of Our Own Way

For all the advantages that an outward mindset seems to offer, why would people ever be inward? It is tempting to blame difficult circumstances or challenging people. However, what keeps people from an outward mindset is themselves. We get in our own way.

You might find yourself in circumstances that make this claim sound naive. Your boss may be difficult to work for. You might be on the brink of financial ruin or feel as if your career has hit a dead end. In response to these or other difficulties, perhaps you have felt compelled toward an inward mindset.

Let's consider how this happens. Let's say that you work with someone named Lori. Suppose that one day you come across a piece of information that will be very helpful to you in your work. Suppose as well that from your understanding of Lori's needs and objectives, you realize that the information would be very helpful to Lori. If you have an outward mindset, knowing that the organization's success depends on your colleague's success as well as your own, you will feel an obligation to help your colleague succeed. Recognizing that Lori would be helped by the information, you will have the desire to share it with her.

But what if you were to choose not to share the information? What if Lori once did something that made a situation harder for you? As you begin to entertain the possibility of not sharing the information with her, do you think that you might remember that time when she didn't help you? What if she has some annoying habits? Maybe you don't know Lori very well. Not knowing her would give you a lot of room to imagine what she must really be like. What picture of Lori would make it easier for you to feel justified for not sharing the information? Lori as hardworking or lazy? Trustworthy or unreliable? Helpful or uncooperative?

With an inward mindset, you see Lori in distorted ways — ways that help you feel justified for deciding not to help her. You will zero in on anything in her or in the situation that will give you this apparent justification. "She doesn't help me," you might say to yourself. "And she's really an annoying person. You can't trust her either; no one who is really trustworthy has such shifty eyes. Besides, if she worked harder, she would've discovered the information herself. I shouldn't reward slothfulness. No, that wouldn't be good for the company. It would really be a mistake if I shared this with her." Your self-talk and how you are now feeling toward Lori will justify the way you are choosing to live.

Are there people in your life, either at work or at home, whose needs, objectives and burdens you resist seeing? How about people that you don't resist — people with whom you are open, curious, interested, aware? As you compare these relationships, what differences do you notice in how you feel and act? Can you spot any blame in what you tell yourself about others or any self-justifying narratives that you've come to believe about yourself?

The most troubling areas of our lives will be those in which we resist what the humanity of others invites us to see. This is a hopeful truth. It means that we can be rid of the distorted ways of seeing that strain our connections with others. We can stop resisting.

### The Lure of Inwardness

Within organizations, every person who is burning time and energy seeking justification is doing so at the expense of the contribution he or she could be making to the overall results of the company. The energy-draining, time-wasting, silo-creating effect of this justification seeking is one of the most debilitating of organizational problems. Entire organizations can fall prey to the lure of inwardness with spectacularly damaging results.

An inward-mindset style can easily be mistaken for an outward mindset. This style omits the needs, objectives and challenges of others. Even though people or organizations operating with this style of inwardness feel as if they are doing things for others and not for themselves, they aren't paying attention to the needs, objectives and challenges of those they are supposedly doing things for. They don't experience themselves as being egocentric. They feel as if they do good things for others all the time and actually experience themselves as being outwardly facing.

What is the cost of an inward mindset? When people focus on themselves rather than on their impact, lots of activity and effort get wasted on the wrong things. The absence of collaboration results in low levels of innovation. And employees disengage due to the boredom inherent with inward-mindset thinking and working.

# The Outward-Mindset Solution

A person conceiving her work with an outward mindset is alive to and interested in the needs, objectives and challenges of each of the persons toward whom she has responsibility — toward her customers, direct

reports, peers and manager. Her objectives and behaviors take these people's needs, objectives and challenges into account. Her focus is outward on something much larger than herself — on her essential contribution to the overall goals of the organization. And thinking of her role in this way requires her to focus on doing her work in a way that helps others to do theirs.

The power of this outward-mindset approach can be seen in the results of an innovative debt-collection agency that has built its entire mission and strategy in terms of the outward mindset. The company is CFS2, headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Bill Bartmann, founder and CEO of CFS2, has known his own hard times. Having been hounded by debt collectors himself, he wanted to build a debt-collection company that worked differently — which is to say, outwardly.

Bill and his company focus on treating those who are in debt with dignity and respect. They operate from the premise that their clients owe them money precisely because they don't have enough money to pay them. The typical approach to debt collection — an inward-mindset approach — is to browbeat those who owe money until you squeeze whatever you can out of them. An outward-mindset approach, on the other hand, begins with thinking about these people and what they are up against. Those who take this approach are alive to and interested in the challenges these people are facing, and their mission is to help them with those challenges.

With this approach, Bill Bartmann and his people began by figuring out how they could help their clients make money. Bill asked his entire workforce to begin brainstorming and experimenting to see how they could best help their clients get jobs. At first, they tried giving their clients advice and suggestions about what to do. But this didn't seem to help much. One of Bill's employees offered this observation: "They can't do the heavy lifting themselves — they're so beat down they have no get-up-and-go left."

So the employees of CFS2 began writing résumés for their clients. They began looking for job opportunities for them, helping them fill out applications and scheduling job interviews. They ran mock interviews to prepare them for the real thing. And they even began calling their clients on the mornings of their appointments to get them out of bed early enough to arrive at the job interview on time!

From there they began helping in other ways. Any headache in their clients' lives became an opportunity to help. CFS2 has identified a myriad of organizations that exist to help people in need with these and many other services, and Bill's team brings in these organizations to help meet the needs of their clients. And they do all this for free. In fact, Bill rewards his employees not for how much debt they collect but for how many free services they can provide to their clients!

From an inward-mindset perspective, this all seems crazy. But the results speak for themselves. After just three years in the industry, CFS2's rate of collection was two times that of any firm in the industry.

We see in the CFS2 story how an outward-mindset approach can mobilize an entire company to work on behalf of its customers — not just to provide a product or service but to enthusiastically innovate to meet the customers' needs and help them achieve their own objectives. Inward-mindset people and organizations do things. Outward-mindset people and organizations help others to be able to do things.

Now let's explore a proven methodology to move from an inward mindset to an outward mindset.

## PART III: BECOMING MORE OUTWARD

### The Outward-Mindset Pattern

Those who work with an outward mindset see the needs, objectives and challenges of others; adjust their efforts to be more helpful to others; and measure and hold themselves accountable for the impact of their work on others. Engaging in these three steps is a practical approach to implementing and sustaining an outward-mindset way of working. You can remember the pattern with the simple acronym SAM — see others, adjust efforts, measure impact.

Alan Mulally was hired as president and CEO at Ford in September 2006. Bleeding at the rate of $17 billion per year, Ford put all its remaining chips on Alan Mulally. As Mulally soon discovered, no one at Ford felt responsible for the problems of the company.

Mulally led through a mechanism of weekly meetings, including the Business Plan Review, or BPR. Mulally trained his executive team to come to the BPR prepared with charts that showed performance against the company plan for each area of responsibility. He had them color-code their charts: Anything that was on plan was to be coded green, anything at risk of going off plan was to be coded yellow, and anything off plan was to be coded red.

Mulally also pointed to 10 BPR rules: people first; everyone is included; compelling vision; clear performance goals; one plan; facts and data; propose a plan, "find-a-way"

attitude; respect, listen, help and appreciate each other; emotional resilience … trust the process; have fun … enjoy the journey and each other.

As the executives presented, each and every chart was coded green. Why? Because you couldn't be wrong at Ford and keep your position. "The company was underperforming, sure," the executives would privately admit, "but I'm not."

The next week, just before the new Ford Edge was about to ship out of Oakville, Ontario, Canada, a test driver reported a problem on one of the test vehicles: The tailgate had an actuator problem. Mark Fields, who led Ford's operations in the Americas, had a decision to make.

Telling the truth, exposing challenges in your area of operations, usually resulted in losing your job. Fields felt like a dead man. If he shipped and the vehicles were faulty, he was a goner. But he was sure that the same fate awaited him if he came to the meeting and, in a final blaze of glory, told everyone that the Edge had a problem.

He thought it over and finally decided that since he was dead anyway, he was going to call it like it was. He prepared his chart. In red. Everyone around the table knew what Mark Fields knew. He was as good as gone.

Everyone except one, and that person started clapping. "Mark," Mulally smiled as he clapped, "that is great visibility." Then he turned to the rest of the group and asked the question that was the beginning of their education in the outward mindset: "Who can help Mark with that?" At that invitation, a number of Fields' colleagues jumped in with offers. One said that he had seen that issue on another vehicle and would get that information to Fields immediately. Another offered to quickly get a group of his top-flight engineers to Oakville to help on any redesign that might need to happen. And so on.

When he showed up the following week with his Edge chart still red, but moving to yellow, and Mulally still smiling at him, the others began to realize that Mulally was for real. "You aren't red," Mulally insisted. "The issue you're working on is red." And he wanted them to help each other with the challenges they each faced, something they could do only if they came forward with their challenges. The week after that, the charts around the room had so much red that the meeting looked like a crime scene.

You may know the rest of the story. Working this way together and spreading this helpful, self-accountable approach throughout the company, Ford was able to pull itself out of a deep ditch — to such a degree that it was able to get in front of the financial crisis of 2007–08 as the only American automobile manufacturer that didn't have to take federal moneys to survive. Alan Mulally retired from Ford in the spring of 2014. His replacement at Ford was Mark Fields.

### The Three Elements

Think about the Ford turnaround story in relation to the three elements of the outward-mindset pattern. Regarding the first step — seeing the needs, objectives and challenges of others (and the organization as a whole) — the BPR process itself gave the members of Mulally's team visibility both into their own contribution to the whole and into the needs, objectives, challenges and activities of their colleagues. Because Mulally's mindset was outward in the way he worked with his team and conducted these meetings, that forum offered the Ford team an opportunity to see their own roles in relation to others.

The second step of the outward-mindset pattern is adjusting one's work to become more helpful to others. This step naturally follows the first. Once the team could see the challenges faced around the table, Mulally invited them to step up and help. "Who can help Mark with that?" was more than a question. It was a statement about how Mulally wanted his people to take responsibility not just for their own part in the overall project but also for their impact on their colleagues' ability to successfully fulfill their responsibilities.

Lastly, they gathered together each week to see if the help they were providing was making any difference in their co-workers' ability to get results. This is the third step in the outward-mindset pattern: measuring impact. Mulally's process gave the Ford team at least a once-a-week way of assessing whether the adjustments being made by those around the room were actually helping. Each week they had the opportunity to assess their impact on one another and the company's overall results and make necessary adjustments. The turnaround at Ford depended on the team's engaging in each step of the outward-mindset pattern: See others, adjust efforts and measure impact.

## Don't Wait on Others

While the goal in shifting mindsets is to get everyone turned toward each other, accomplishing this goal is possible only if people are prepared to turn their mindsets toward others with no expectation that others will change their mindsets in return. This capability overcomes the biggest impediment to mindset change: the natural, inward-mindset inclination to wait for others to change before doing anything different oneself. This is the natural

trap in organizations. Executives want employees to change, and employees wait on their leaders. Everyone waits. So nothing happens.

Ironically, the most important move in mindset work is to make the move one is waiting for the other to make. Sometimes people are afraid to make this move because they think that others may take advantage of them if they do. But people misunderstand if they think that working with an outward mindset when others refuse to do the same makes a person blind to reality or soft on bad behavior. It does neither.

In fact, what obscures vision and exposes people to more risk is not an outward mindset, which stays fully alive to and aware of others, but an inward one, which turns its attention away from others while simultaneously provoking resistance. People who work in dangerous, high-risk situations know this most of all — people like the Navy SEALs and SWAT team members. They know that their lives and missions depend on their ability to remain fully aware of the complexities of their situations and to do so in a way that doesn't stir up escalated resistance. The outward mindset doesn't make them soft; it makes them smart.

Remember, the principle to apply is, "As far as I am concerned, the problem is me. I am the place to start. Others' responses will depend mostly on what they see in me. The most important move is for *me* to make the most important move."

## PART IV: MULTIPLYING THE MINDSET CHANGE

# Mobilize Around a Collective Goal

In organizations that have successfully built outward-mindset cultures, one factor is constant: The leaders involved their organizations in pursuing a collective result — that is, a result that at once involved everyone in something much bigger than himself or herself and required that everyone join together with others in order for their efforts to succeed.

Every organization already exists as a collective, but very often, people in organizations mostly identify around their separate, individual roles. They don't have an understanding of how their own roles are essential to the overall collective result of the organization.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself as you utilize the outward-mindset-at-work framework for redefining your role in this way:

- **Toward your manager.** Do I have a clear understanding of my manager's objectives? What can I do to learn about them? What do I need to do to make sure that I am holding myself accountable for my contribution to my manager's results?
- **Toward your customers.** Who are my customers, and what objectives do they have that I could help them with? How will I measure whether they are, in fact, helped by my efforts?
- **Toward your peers.** Which of my peers are affected by my work? Do I know whether I am helping or hindering them in their ability to accomplish their objectives?
- **Toward your direct reports.** Are my direct reports growing in their abilities? Have I worked with them to set a collective result for the entire team, and do they understand how they contribute to that result? Are they holding themselves accountable for that impact in each of the directions of their work? What can I do to help them to do this?

Wherever you are located in your organization, you can begin to rethink your work so that you see yourself in the context of achieving your own essential part of a collective result.

# Allow People to Be Fully Responsible

Without realizing it, too many leaders assume that the role of leadership is to control. They espouse Plato's "division of labor," which, according to social thinker Hannah Arendt, has influenced government and military structures for thousands of years. With the advent of the industrial revolution, she argues, corporate action, like the action of monarchies and armies, proceeded in two phases: planning and execution. Accordingly, in most organizations you find a class-divided lot: the minds and the bodies, the brains and the backs, the knowers and the doers, the manipulators and the manipulated.

Organizations that perpetuate this leader/led distinction tend to be riddled with justification and blame. Those who are tasked with doing can always blame poor performance on uninformed or unrealistic plans, while those who do the planning can always blame failures on poor execution. Leaders will cry for greater accountability, but the way most organizations are set up breeds a constant lack of accountability.

With an outward mindset, leaders position people to be fully responsible. This means that they empower their

people with the responsibility both to execute *and* to plan their work. A distinguishing characteristic of organizations that operate with an outward mindset is the extent to which people in those organizations are allowed and encouraged to engage their whole brains in the planning as well as the doing of their work. Whole brains means all of their faculties, including their wills and their hearts. People operating with an outward mindset exercise, as it were, their whole selves.

## Turn Systems Outward

An important aspect of leading successful mindset change is a willingness to reconsider the objectives, systems, policies and processes of an organization. Systems and processes that are designed to manage objects rather than empower people have widespread negative consequences. Efforts to rethink those systems and processes from an outward-mindset perspective can deliver huge benefits.

Leaders of organizations that operate with an inward mindset may feel confused by what they see in organizations that operate with an outward mindset. It will seem risky to manage those they see and treat as objects with systems and processes that are designed to empower people.

This is one of the reasons why an outward-mindset approach becomes such a competitive advantage. Those who are unwilling to adopt an outward mindset won't be able to successfully replicate outward-mindset systems, processes and approaches, while organizations that turn systems and processes outward become positioned to achieve and sustain higher levels of performance. The outward-mindset reporting practices at Ford positioned the company to be able to get in front of the financial crisis in ways that others couldn't.

Hiring and onboarding practices, sales and marketing processes, budgeting practices, incentive structures, performance evaluation and management systems, and every other organizational system, structure and process can be conceived and deployed in inward-mindset or outward-mindset ways. Organizations that are serious about operating with an outward mindset turn these systems and processes outward to invite and reinforce outward-mindset working.

## The Road Ahead

Sometimes having an outward mindset is rather easy. We may be among people who care about each other, and it may seem utterly natural and easy to respond to them with an outward mindset. In such cases, we feel so cared for and considered by those whose mindsets are outward toward us that we feel no need or desire to be defensive toward them. Almost effortlessly we find ourselves naturally showing consideration in return. An outward mindset in one person invites the same in others.

Unfortunately, the same principle works as well in reverse. When we interact with someone who is operating with an inward mindset, we may feel that he is failing to consider our views or opinions, and we can see that as an invitation to take offense or withdraw. If we do, we will give back to this person exactly what he is giving to us, and we will become embroiled in an inward-mindset struggle. Although an inward mindset in one person does not cause others to respond with an inward mindset, it does invite others to respond in kind. The challenge is how to respond with an outward mindset when those we work or live with invite the opposite.

Consider this central question: What can I do to be more helpful at work? What can I do to be more helpful to those I know and to those I don't? What can I do? And will I see myself and others in ways that will enable me to do what I can do? An indication of an outward mindset is the willingness of a person to honestly ask these questions in each area of his or her life, coupled with an excitement to begin acting on the answers despite challenges.

So what will you do as you consider the people you work with? Whatever you do, you can do it with either an inward mindset or an outward mindset. Which way you do it will determine to a large degree your results.

Start with mindset. Apply the outward-mindset pattern: see others, adjust efforts and measure impact. Don't wait for others to change. Mobilize yourself and your team or organization to achieve a collective goal. Allow people to be fully responsible. Finally, rethink systems and processes to turn them outward.


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# 38-27 #Now

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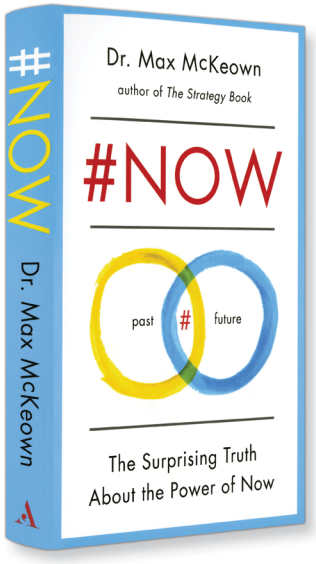
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Career & Self-Development

# #NOW

## The Surprising Truth About the Power of Now




by Dr. Max McKeown

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you ever feel stressed? Of course you do. One way we cope is to lower expectations, but we miss what may make us stronger. Dr. Max McKeown offers valuable insights into an alternative.

You can choose to nurture a Nowist mindset, and by seeking joy in the flow of life, you will discover your natural power to take action and keep moving forward. We live in the present but carry the anxieties of the past and concerns of the future with us at all times. Yet, you can only directly think, do or change anything at the point of now. Realizing this, you can learn to transform your life with every moment. *#NOW* helps you to embrace the fullness of everyday life.

It encourages you to move beyond surviving, or coping, to joyfully and effortlessly live in harmony with the demands of your work-life balance. Instead of passively hiding or becoming overwhelmed, you can actively leap into the best that life has to offer.

Discover the power of your #NOW that enables you to take action, make decisions fast and effectively, and enjoy the moment while creating a successful and happy future.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why impulsiveness can be highly functional and advantageous.
- Why Nowists love uncertainty and don't regret missed opportunities.
- Understand the deep relationship among action, movement and joy in the Nowist mindset.
- Recognize and adopt goals that allow you to think and live as a Nowist.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: #NOW

**by Dr. Max McKeown**

**The author:** Dr. Max McKeown is a strategic coach with Fortune 100 companies and a popular keynote speaker at conferences worldwide. He is the author of *The Strategy Book*, *The Innovation Book*, *Adaptability* and four other books. Dr. McKeown conducts research with Warwick Business School and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

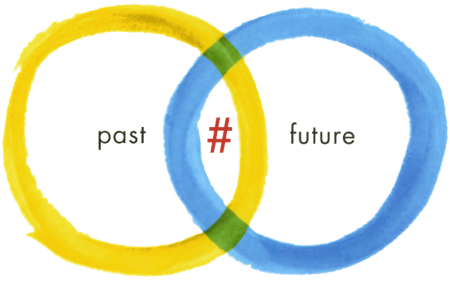
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## Introduction

All we've got is #Now. Life, composed of a billion moments, from our first to our last thoughts. Some voices tell us to slow down, yet our human nature urges us all to move forward. Some people resist this. For most people, most of the time, it is better to lean towards action rather than inaction.

Nowists act on their belief that they will be happier and healthier if they keep moving. That they will achieve more and experience more if they move forward than if they stand still. The virtue of impatience is often of greater practical use than the vice of self-denying, motion-delaying, joy-draining, now-numbing patience.

**#NOW**




The circles on the cover of *#Now* represent time and our perception of time, with the present at the intersection of past and future. The # represents Now. It is here the point at which life is experienced and action can be taken or not taken. It is here that everything you do is done. And it is when everything you will ever make happen first happens.

Your #Now can be happy and connected. Or unhappy, disconnected and overwhelmed. Nowists run when they could walk, jump when they could sit, and dance when they could sit at the edge. They regret inaction, so simply act. In contrast, the Thenist state is where our time is spent comparing ourselves with others, regretting what could have been, complaining about what is and fearing what might never happen. If we're too careful, we can end up with a thousand different action plans that block taking any action and leave us worrying rather than loving life.

Let's discuss the kind of behaviors that effectively harness the power and joy of #Now.

## PART I: NURTURING YOUR NOWNESS

## Your Need for Speed

In the last couple of decades of the 20th century, with the Soviet Union collapsing, the Internet getting started, and hip-hop going worldwide, two curious scientists ran some experiments that produced some very surprising implications for the 21st century. The first of these was Scott J. Dickman, a doctoral student working in the Brain, Cognition and Action Laboratory at the University of Michigan.

One month in 1985, Dickman carried out a series of experiments. In one, each person sat down at a table with a deck of 36 cards in front of them. The cards, which were about the size of a smartphone, were each emblazoned with a large letter made up of smaller letters. On the command 'Ready, set, go!' the participants completed three variations of the task: sorting the cards into piles based on the large letter, the small letters or a mixture of both. The groups were asked to sort the cards as quickly and accurately as possible. Dickman expected the experiment to show that highly impulsive people would find it more difficult to complete the tasks, because that

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

was the traditional view of both society and psychology. Impulsivity was seen as dysfunctional.

To his great surprise, people with high impulsivity scored as highly on the card-sorting tests as people with low impulsivity. Dickman ran another set of experiments to try and figure out what was really going on. Once again, the high impulsives did just as well as the low impulsives.

The breakthrough came when Dickman asked an insightful question. "Could it be," he said, "that there are two separate traits?" The kind that pushes people to decide quickly in a way that is likely to lead to bad consequences. And the kind that allows people to decide quickly with good results. "It would be an awful waste of talent and potential if people assumed that slow thinking is always better thinking."

### Two Kinds of Behavior

One of the greatest living psychologists, Arie Kruglanski, turned his attention to the difference between two kinds of guiding behavior. Imagine, he asked, two people driving together to the supermarket. One wants to find the perfect parking spot, even if this means delaying the moment when they can start shopping. The other wants to park in the first available place, even at the price of a longer walk from their parking space to the store.

The first person is guided by what Kruglanski called *assessment*. When people think like this, he wondered, maybe they focus on figuring out the perfect choice rather than getting anything done. Their companion is guided by what Kruglanski called *locomotion*. When people think like this, he mused, perhaps they just want to get on with doing, rather than worry about getting the decision absolutely right.

Results of further research showed that high locomotors tended to be committed to action; that they can stay focused on a task and are energetic, conscientious and goal-oriented. By contrast, high assessors had a tendency to worry too much — about doing the wrong thing, any kind of ambiguity, what other people think and how they measure up to other people. Locomotors moved. Assessors worried.

People high on assessment were anxious to prove that they were good at what they did, while locomotors enjoyed becoming better at what they were doing. The future was something positive for people in locomotion mode, it made them happy because it pushed them on to greater efforts in the day. But for people in assessment mode, the future is just one more thing to worry about.

When you're in assessment mode, you assume that coming up with more alternatives is a good thing: because surely thinking more has to be smarter than thinking less? Unfortunately, if you waste time coming up with a range of unnecessary options, then you just end up having even less time to do the job. Your head is full of half-finished options that leave you feeling like you've done some work, but you don't have a sense of what to do next. Instead of a clear path to action, you've got a circular path of inaction. It's painful, slow — and *avoidable.*

## Keep Your #Now Moving

The good news is that we can all become a little more Nowist. Simply remembering a time when you enjoyed making good things happen is enough to get you into a Nowist mindset.

Everything a Nowist sees, everything around them — ideas and objects, people and situations — tends to be understood in terms of how it can help keep them moving forward. They are often better at seeing opportunities for action than other people. They are better at linking sequences of opportunities for action than other people. And they are particularly good at moving from seeing opportunities for action to actually using those opportunities to move forward.

When they see opportunities for action, they are primed by the opportunity to take action. Seeing a pair of running shoes makes them want to start running, and they are much more likely to go with the flow than walk past with passive regret. They are looking for movement and the payoff of change, so are likely to move towards whatever is most likely to make that happen. They are taking advantage of our natural need for momentum.

There are three joys of #Now, which highlight one of the most successful and natural parts of momentum. By seeing joy in the doing of a thing, in the having done the thing and in opportunities for doing more things, you are allowing momentum to drive you forwards to more successes. The mere act of doing creates more opportunities for doing and leads to greater joy. This may sound simple, but without this approach the opposite is just as easy to fall into — the paralysis of inaction caused by over-assessment can mean that the best that can be experienced is the absence of disappointment.

### The Certain Uncertainty of Joy

Nowists are more likely to experience joy because they embrace the uncertainty of existence. Uncertainty suggests potential, and the prospect of proving self-potential against the odds or against criticism, and it is this that can be

alluring and inspiring. Nowists want change, and they want new. They want to try to succeed at new tasks that tell them something new about themselves, and keep alive that feeling of forward motion and self-enlightenment.

Think of billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk. As a 12-year-old he sold computer software he had written for $500 to a magazine; as a 22-year-old he sold his stake in his first startup for $22 million; and as a 30-year-old he sold his share in PayPal for $165 million. Musk then immediately invested it all in a seemingly insane three-streamed plan to make solar power the dominant source of energy, convert the whole world to battery-driven cars and colonize the moon. The point is less that Musk has succeeded in the past and more that he was motivated each time to gamble his winnings on new ventures where final payback was uncertain. For Musk, it was not a gamble but an embrace of the uncertain.

### Got To Be Starting Something

Like sprinters who anticipate the start of a race, a key element behind a Nowist's ability to enjoy action is their ability to get started. And get started now. In a Nowist mindset you are looking for whatever gets you moving: reasons to move; reasons to start; reasons to change; reasons to keep going; ways of keeping on, keeping on.

To make it easier to start, Nowists are better able to make the future feel like now. And because it is easier to be motivated to start when the deadline is closer, they use Nowist mind tricks to make the task deadline seem like part of the present.

The desire to start immediately, despite the possibility of inefficiency, is a tendency that's been labeled precrastination. You can see this pattern in the approach of the world's very best rock climbers. They look ahead while others are looking down. They are seeing the route ahead, not just as individual holds or the top and bottom but, instead, as combinations of holds and problems. They are looking ahead for the crux of the particular climb — so that they can be preparing while ascending.

A team of psychologists found that the winners of international speed-climbing competitions climb faster on the simple parts of the climb and start moving more slowly just before reaching the crux. They look ahead to save strength for the leap. And that's smart because there is often a leap required, a part of the challenge that cannot be overcome unless you move fast and fluidly.

### The Regret Minimization Strategy

Jeff Bezos famously stated that he started Amazon.com as part of his regret minimization strategy. He said that he thought about being 80 years old and looking back on his life. He concluded that he would never regret having created an Internet startup even if it failed but that he would regret having not tried to make his idea work.

The action-oriented Nowist is also the regret-minimizing Nowist. It is why they seek to avoid the regret of inaction, looking back and wondering what might have happened if they had acted. It is also why they find it easier to sidestep letting the one that got away stopping them from enjoying the next opportunity. This second kind of response can really slow people down because there are so many opportunities that appear to have been missed. And for people in a Thenist mindset, the pain of missing out once tends to drag focus away from all the opportunities that are available, so you lose out more than once.

Several different experiments confirm that people generally devalue new opportunities because they compare them to the missed opportunity. It happened whether people missed out on a special offer at a health gym or a bargain price for a luxury guided tour of a foreign city. They couldn't see past what had been lost.

## Because Effortless Is Not Lazy

Nowists prefer effortless decisions. There is nothing lazy in their preference for effortless decisions, nor are they demonstrating childish or immature reasoning. Their effortless decisions rely on what some view as more advanced cognitive systems — neural networks that develop throughout and beyond childhood.

There are a few principles that guide a preference for effortless thinking. The first is understanding that the pains taken are not always worth the effort: Near enough can be good enough. If you know that you need about two slices of pizza per person and that each pizza can provide eight slices, about five pizzas is a decent approximation for a party of 20 people. Going with five pizzas because you had five pizzas last time for pretty much the same crew is even faster.

Imagine the pain of calculating anything much more accurately — you could have a supercomputer with the best mathematical modelers in the world and still struggle to find the perfect quantity of pizzas to order. How many people are likely to drop out? What will they have eaten before they arrive? Who will be dieting? Even if you could somehow calculate the perfect number of pizzas to order, that figure could change at any moment — it is vulnerable to fluctuating with every bite one of your guests takes.

### Hell Is Back-Seat Drivers

Sartre says that "hell is other people," or, more accurately, "hell is the others." By this he is referring to the pain of being judged by the distorted, negative views of others. This includes what we think the "others" think, but also the negative, distorted views of ourselves by our own others — our past, future and present selves. The back-seat driver is a whole series of self-related, time-related thoughts that can make now hellish.

This kind of backseat driving can overwhelm our better judgment so that we are busy arguing with our various selves rather than calmly moving forward. In a recent study this was also shown to be the case with novice drivers, who made decisions too slowly to keep up with the road conditions and then lurched into action, leading to more accidents and deaths. Instead it was the experienced drivers who made faster decisions — calmly and quickly anticipating and reacting; keeping in time with the flow of the surrounding traffic. Just as experienced Nowists keep up with the speed and flow of life.

### Trusting Your Inner Nowist

Nowists tend to make split-second decisions with good outcomes, in part because of their willingness to trust their overall sense of what needs to be done in a situation. They delegate authority to their preconscious, which is able to focus attention on the level of detail needed to make a decision — and find an action that fits the situation.

To do this they clear their minds of the irrelevant — anything that gets in the way of clearly seeing what needs to be done next, and then get on with it. Negative emotions related to mistakes, whether they occurred long ago or in the past few seconds — and even if they played a part in causing the situation you now face — are better left behind or downplayed. So if you get action-oriented Nowists to try almost anything, they will handle mistakes better than other people, especially when everyone involved really wants to succeed.

But there is something else that Nowists believe about making mistakes. Not only do they instinctively move past distracting or passive negativity, they also take with them useful lessons from the experience of making a mistake. And, unlike many people, Nowists know that taking action is often the best way of helping you to decide both what you can do next and what you want to do next. This is counterintuitive to some people, who want to decide what they want to try without trying anything.

Nowists take advantage of action as a kind of mental shortcut. First, by making a choice — to do something — they learn what actions lead to what outcomes, and gain practical skills in the art of making something happen: It's an education in cause and effect. And they develop the habit of moving from choice to decision, and come to understand how it feels — both the good and the bad.

Second, Nowists learn more about their own preferences in terms both of the action and the outcome. You can link the action with a consequence and the outcome to a preference. You go to a party and have a good time, so you remember that going to a party is something you enjoy. Or you taste squid and have an allergic reaction, so you remember that squid is something that could kill you. The result is a valuable store of patterns for later decisions.

## PART II: THE THREE STREAMS OF #NOW

## There's Only One Way to Find Out

Just as every atom contains massive energy, so each moment of #Now contains power. First, your personal power, your energy and self-belief to keep moving. Your ability to slip smoothly past the obstacles and things slowing you down, by using the flux of life to propel you perpetually forward. Second, your power to influence others to get more done. Your ability to attract help and supporters, to attract friends, partners, backers, a fan club; to get more done than you could ever do alone.

And third, the fundamental power of moving, the power of (automatic) momentum to make things happen. The cumulative, multiplicative, holistic power of #Now, as you keep rolling forward in powerful spirals of joyful action and growth.

An initial step is to realize and recognize the powerful difference between goals and anti-goals. Goals are the things you want. Things that are desirable and worth seeking out — they may be based on a wish or a dream, but they are best when they are actively motivational. Anti-goals are the things you do not want. They are undesirable, to be avoided — ought-nots, fears, nightmares, unattractive or, worse, demotivational in a way that drains you of energy.

One kind of anti-goal avoidance is said to involve self-control. There's a famous experiment where people used up limited self-control energy to eat what they presumably viewed as distinctly non-yummy raw radishes. After using up their energy, they found it harder to successfully resist chocolate — the anti-goal on offer.

But just focusing on resisting the chocolate is a waste of energy. All the time you're looking hungrily over at the

chocolate, or any other desirable anti-goal, the best you can hope for is a neutral result. You have not eaten, partaken, given in, but you are now behind because energy has been used for no specific goal benefit. Not eating chocolate does not equal fitness or health. Not doing something cannot bring the joy of doing something. To keep resisting is exhausting, and the best-case scenario is un-living.

It is much more rewarding to actively seek out the goal — the action — that will make it easy to avoid the anti-goal. So, for instance, exercise makes it easier to resist high-fat food. First, if you go for a run, then it's unlikely that there will be a refrigerator-microwave combo in sight or in mind. And second, the running often diminishes your interest in the anti-goal. You're less interested in the dopamine released by eating when you're getting high on the endorphins produced by exercise instead.

### Getting Stronger, Extending Your #Now

Nowists know that to feel strong at any particular moment is easier if you get stronger before each successive moment. This getting stronger can be about your personal power, your ability to get things done.

But it can also be the kind of know-how-to-get-help-and-supporters that expands your strength to include other people's energy and knowledge. Even behind what seem the most individual pursuits, those who enjoy the most success, and enjoy their success the most, are often those who attract and benefit from a network of fans and supporters.

It's easier to smoothly roll forward with the space and power that can come from supporters — those who give you the psychological room to see clearly; experts — those with knowledge that you lack; and veterans — those who have already experienced what you are going through, or can help you anticipate what may happen next. In this way, you can adjust your movement without either crashing or losing momentum.

### Get Moving, Start Enjoying

If you are stuck or overwhelmed, the smart thing is to get unstuck and start rolling forward. And by far the easiest, most powerful way to do this is to prime yourself to start rolling forward when stuck.

When people are asked to write a letter full of positive memories and emotions to a loved one and then are asked how much they value the goal of maintaining that relationship, they say it is hugely important and worth real, long-term investment. But something surprising happens when people are asked to spend the same amount of effort writing a letter full of negative memories and emotions to a loved one — they say that the goal of maintaining the relationship is less important to them.

So what is happening? Somehow the mood energy from the activity changes the way they see their goal. If the work towards a goal is experienced as enjoyable, your appetite and energy for moving forward is increased rather than decreased.

Moving will make you feel more powerful, which in turn will encourage you to take more action — which if successful will make you feel even more powerful. This first action–power spiral can extend in a number of ways. One of these is that if you are seen to move powerfully and purposefully, you are more likely to gain influence. This influence may be thought of as a form of gravity and is also likely to move the actions of others. You may acquire resources, from your own work, and attract the support of others who can help you to keep moving further and faster.

## Finding Joy in Your Now

Once you master the basic leap into action, you can apply it to new situations and goals. Like anything else it's a progression, with one technique or fundamental skill opening up new possibilities. The difference for people with a Nowist's mindset is that they actively seek out new moves and new combinations of those moves. They don't waste their lives wishing that they had, or regretting that they hadn't, or fearing that they might fail or be criticized. Falling is moving, and moving is more interesting than experiencing nothing new.

In the 1940s, many different people, often surfers looking for a thrill when the surf wasn't up, started attaching rollerskates to boards. They called their new activity sidewalk surfing; the world would call it skateboarding. This was all pretty one-dimensional: standing on a skateboard, using one foot to propel yourself forward and avoiding obstacles. Opposition came from naysayers who worried about what might go wrong and how much fun the kids seemed to be having, but the skateboarders kept moving and eventually developed two-dimensional tricks.

Frank Nasworthy was just a student in California who noticed the skateboarders rolling past, and happened to have seen polyurethane wheels in a factory owned by a family friend. He quickly fixed the wheels onto a standard frame and gave the upgrade to some boarders who found that they could jump in new, previously impossible, ways. The new wheels meant that jumping didn't make the

board slide out from under you. Frank sold 300,000 in a year, and boarders shifted tricks into three dimensions.

There were the Z-Boys, a legendary team of skateboarders who were among the first to start skateboarding in swimming pools, empty because of a drought. Skating the vertical walls as if they were waves, jumping high above the edge of the pool, their "vert" style caught on, winning competitions and fans worldwide.

One can learn much about Nowists by studying the perpetual need to move that led to sidewalk surfing, the joy in spontaneous adventure that led to the dramatic vertical jumps of the Z-Boys, the everyday backyard experimentation that led to the "Ollie" and the millions who have followed all the original pioneers.

They did it for fun. And they did it for freedom. The exhilarating, empowering energy that confirms that you have the power to take the risk and just go for it, which is part of the reason that Nowists get stronger and feel right; rather than getting stuck wanting to be right or look right, they want that inner joy.

In a Nowist mindset it seems better to enjoy the moment while doing something that you value than to do something just to impress other people. And this leads to some curious, surprising moments of clarity and enlightenment: If work can be enjoyed, then it doesn't need to be avoided. And if enjoyment is included as part of your valued goals, then joy is not a distraction.

### Expecting to Make Good Things Happen

It is good to expect good things to happen. This kind of classic optimism has been shown to open people up to more positive interpretations of events and make them more likely to hope for positive experiences in the future.

Athletes who expect good things to happen are more likely to experience enjoyment in movement for its own sake. They are more likely to enjoy being carried away in the motion and speed of their sport, because they are not interrupting their enjoyment with negative thoughts.

And, again, this is a good thing, yet the difference is that an athlete with a Nowist mindset enjoys the movement and expects to make more good things happen. They are looking for ways to fill the future with more of the change and movement that turns them on, and they also tend to turn the pursuit of what they want into part of the fun challenge. They view what happens as something they can influence, and even more crucially for the Nowist this positive sense of influence means that they make changes in the only place and time that change can happen, the present.

So, instead of getting stuck regretting the past, fearing the future or being paralyzed by trying to find the perfect plan, successful happy people actively change the future by taking action today. They don't spend time figuring out the one most important thing. Instead, they instinctively do the next positive thing. They keep moving. They look while leaping and leap while looking. They don't get hung up on getting everything right, but on making a start and making things happen.

## Three Streams of #Now

Let's look at how Nowists use, live with and think about time. People propelled by their joy in something are able to see the future clearly enough to connect their actions in the present to the future. They build streams of action that connect them to their passion.

The ways our lives develop, especially in our modern world, mean that it is not possible to think about doing just one thing. Nowists go further; they embrace the fact that there are always so many things to do and enjoy. It is the ability to move between them that can increase our success, both in how we work and our happiness.

A powerful start is to work with three streams of #Now — with the kind of things that matter most to you in each stream. It doesn't have to be three, but the number has been deliberately chosen to be adapted to our natural limits of working memory.

There are three streams and up to three active goals or actions in each stream. They will be flexible, because you won't always remember them and because priorities and circumstances change, but they provide a guide to keeping what you value in mind as you move forward. You might choose, for example, learning as a stream, or friends and fun.

The power in such a Nowist approach to time and tasks is not that you always remember everything perfectly. Instead, the power comes from the improved outcomes that follow from viewing life as multiple streams of action. You will still need to plan out actions to achieve goals, but you'll be more likely to plan for goals that contribute to what really matters to you.

Seeing life as being about creatively connecting streams of action makes it easier to absorb the energy of unwelcome shocks or less dramatic setbacks. So that when you can't succeed the way you'd originally intended, you are able to slip into one of your other streams of action, or replace one method or means to an end with something quite different. And because you were already looking for better alternatives, you can find them.

Consider Kurt Yaeger. The Californian was already a professional BMX rider, a part-time actor and was studying as a masters student when his accident happened. He was forced to swerve to avoid a car and crashed his motorbike into a metal pole. The collision broke his back and pelvis and damaged his left leg so badly that surgeons had to amputate it below the knee.

In the aftermath he considered killing himself. But he remembers saying to himself that "it was time to stand up and get better." So he stood up and got better. It took 30 surgeries over four months to get out of the hospital. It took another year to rebuild his motorbike and perform his first wheelie. Then another couple of months to get back on a BMX.

And, in a very Nowist way, he was able to jump between multiple action streams to keep moving forward. He tried sticking his prosthetic foot onto his bike's pedal with tape, velcro and eventually succeeded with clipless magnetic pedals that he invented in collaboration with his wider network. He became the world's top-ranked Adaptive BMXer. Online videos of him performing stunts one-footed attracted journalists. Their articles led to a music video for a UK band, Rudimental; hit movies followed, as did parts in big TV series. And he became an entrepreneur, turning his one-off magnetic pedal solution into a business.

Before his leg was amputated, he moved between multiple streams of action. After his loss, his past experiences helped. He knew how to get up from a painful fall, and he knew how to grab hold of opportunities.

## PART III: THE #NOWIST TOOLKIT

## Nowist Teams and Culture

The truth is that Nowists will tend to judge organizations not on structure but on whether that organization gives them the opportunity to keep taking effortless action. They'll prefer a fairly traditional hierarchy when it allows them to move quickly, or a no-rules, no-leaders environment when that works best for speed.

So, if you are an employer and want to attract Nowists and benefit from their ability to look while leaping, the best way is to ask yourself how well your company facilitates movement and pushing limits.

A firm like Valve Corporation, the creator of ground-breaking video games, believes in a different way of working. In principle, anyone can work on any project they want. And new projects can be created by anyone who can get other people to work on their project. They even have desks with wheels so that they can roll towards other people to form new teams. Spontaneous order in action — and all without the waste of fixed management structures and rules.

## Breathing Deeply, Moving Forward

Do you ever feel stressed? Of course you do. By seeking joy in the flow of life, you will discover your natural power to take action and keep moving forward. It's good to reach out for stress first-aid when you're feeling overwhelmed. But there are alternatives to relatively passive ways of dealing with the pressures of life and work.

Martin Gibala and his colleagues found that even one minute of intense exercise can be as effective as much longer exercise sessions. Their surprising research showed people getting pretty much the same benefit from 60-second bursts of intense movement as they did from longer, less intense exercise.

Another way of moving more is to just stand up rather than sitting down. There are standing-up desks that allow all the same access to paper and equipment, and these have been made available by some employers. Yoga also reduces stress and is linked with decreased blood pressure and heart rate.

Your life is what still happens when you're busy trying to become unbusy. Life is the thing that happens all at once while you try to find that one thing to focus upon. Life is priorities, plural — not priority, singular. Nowists tend to dive into streams of the unplanned and planned. Rather than feeling time-poor, they feel experience-rich. The surprise, the shock, the extent, the never-again and the ordinary or extraordinary.

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# 38BS08 Primary Greatness

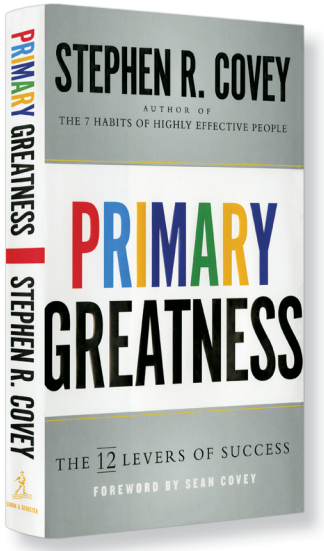
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# Primary Greatness

## The 12 Levers of Success




by Stephen R. Covey

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

From Stephen R. Covey — the late, legendary author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* — a new set of rules for achieving a happy and fulfilling life of primary greatness.

Many of us are hurting. We have chronic problems, dissatisfactions and disappointments. The idea of living a "great life" seems a distant dream. Too often, however, we have the wrong idea of what a great life is.

Stephen R. Covey believed there were only two ways to live: a life of primary greatness or a life of secondary greatness. Through his classic books and seminars, he taught that the intrinsic rewards of primary greatness — integrity, responsibility and meaningful contribution — far outweigh the superficial rewards of secondary greatness — money, popularity and the self-absorbed, pleasure-ridden life that some people consider "success."

In *Primary Greatness,* a posthumous work, Covey lays out the 12 levers of success that will lead to a life of primary greatness: Integrity, Contribution, Priority, Sacrifice, Service, Responsibility, Loyalty, Reciprocity, Diversity, Learning, Teaching and Renewal. For the first time, Covey defines each of these 12 qualities and how they provide the leverage to make your daily life truly "great."

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The key differences between primary and secondary greatness.
- Why principles ultimately govern values.
- The four human endowments that help us align ourselves to principles.
- The most important features of the 12 key principles, or levers.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **PRIMARY GREATNESS**

**by Stephen R. Covey**

**The author:** Stephen R. Covey (1932-2012) was an internationally respected leadership authority, family expert, teacher, organizational consultant and author who dedicated his life to teaching principle-centered living and leadership to build both families and organizations. Dr. Covey was the author of several acclaimed books, including the international best-seller *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,* which was named the #1 Most Influential Business Book of the 20th century and one of the top-10 most influential management books ever.

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## Introduction

Primary greatness is the kind of success that comes from contribution. By contrast, the trappings of success — position, popularity, public image — are secondary greatness. Primary greatness is on the inside. It's about character. Secondary greatness is on the outside.

A successful life is about primary greatness — a life of duty, honor, integrity, perseverance, self-sacrifice and service, regardless of material rewards or circumstances. These are natural, universal, unbreakable principles. They are the same for everyone everywhere and for all time.

If you want to go directly north, you align your nose to the needle on the compass. Any deviation, and you're no longer headed toward true north; that's just reality. The principles that govern reality are the same principles that govern success.

The principles that govern reality are inarguable. They are beyond our control. Thus, we're more likely to succeed in life if we align ourselves to those principles and stop trying to ignore them. That means examining our character and motives. If we want success in life, we might have to realign our character and motives to different principles. We might have to work on a character flaw, such as procrastination or envy or selfishness. In any case, we have to confront who we really are inside and align our lives to principles that govern success.

Principles are like levers. It might be impossible to move a boulder by yourself; but if you use a lever, it can be relatively easy. And the longer and stronger the lever, the easier it gets. Principles like integrity, service and priority have great leverage. Only by consistently applying these levers can you hope to dislodge the biggest obstacles to your success — lapses of character such as selfishness, victimism and "fatal distractions" from true priorities.

Dr. Covey describes how to make that important journey from an obsession with secondary greatness to a focus on primary greatness. He then describes 12 of the highest-leverage principles successful people live by, giving guidance as to how to internalize those principles: Integrity, Contribution, Priority, Personal Sacrifice, Service, Responsibility, Loyalty, Reciprocity, Diversity, Continuous Learning, Renewal and Teaching to Learn.

Dr. Covey's 12 levers are based on his own deep research and long experience working with thousands of people around the globe. These 12 levers are not the sum total of the principles of success — there are many others — but they are the indispensable principles. The 12 levers take us from seeming successful to being successful, from deep-down insecurity to the inner confidence people feel when they anchor their lives in natural principles. Primary greatness is the natural consequence of pushing on these levers.

## The Secret Life

We all live three lives: public, private and secret. The secret life is where your heart is, where your real motives are — the ultimate desires of your life. It is also the source of primary greatness. If you have the courage to explore your secret life, you can honestly question your deepest motivations. Are you prepared to rescript those motivations — to realign your life to the core principles of true success? The secret life is the key to primary greatness.

In our public life, we are seen and heard by colleagues, associates and others within our circle. In our private life,

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we interact more intimately with spouses, family members and close friends. The secret life is part of the other two. The secret life is the mainspring that motivates the other two lives.

The unique endowment of self-awareness — the key to the secret life — is where you can stand apart from yourself and observe yourself. Courage is required to explore your secret life because you must first withdraw from the social mirror — the reflection of ourselves that society feeds back to us but may have little to do with our inner selves. We get used to the view of ourselves in the social mirror.

The most critical junctures in life take place when you visit your secret life and ask, "What do I think? What do I believe is right? What should my motives be?" One of the exciting fruits of the secret life is the ability to consciously choose your own motives. Until you choose your own motives, you really can't choose to live your own life. Everything flows out of motives and motivation — they are the root of our deepest desires. The question is, which motives will we put first in our lives?

People who regularly explore their secret life and examine their motives are better able to see into the heart of others, practice empathy, empower them and affirm their worth and identity.

### Self-Affirmation

A key to having a healthy secret life is self-affirmation. Among the most important bits of communication are messages of affirmation you give yourself and others. A good self-affirmation has five characteristics:

- It's personal, meaning it is written in the first person.
- It's positive rather than negative, meaning that it affirms what is good and right.
- It's present tense, meaning you are doing it now or have the potential for doing it.
- It's visual, meaning you can see it clearly in your mind's eye.
- It's emotional, meaning you have strong feelings attached to it.

## Character: The Source of Primary Greatness

Character, what you are, is ultimately more important than competence, what you can do. Primary greatness is, at its base, a matter of character. Both are important, but character is foundational. All else builds on this cornerstone. Even the very best structure, system, style and skills can't compensate completely for deficiencies in character.

Emotional maturity is foundational to all decisions and all relationships. Emotional maturity is the ability to express your feelings and convictions with courage, balanced with consideration for the feelings and convictions of others. Balancing courage with consideration is a good way to achieve improved results and better relationships. Without this balance, you tend to get one at the expense of the other.

Even though people may be technically well educated, if they don't grow in emotional maturity, eventually their skills may be their undoing. Skills don't trump character, yet the training and education of most people is designed to build competence, not character.

How can we meet the equally important need for ongoing character development? You could do this through a 360-degree stakeholder information system, which gives people solid, scientific, systematic feedback on their performance in both dimensions.

A 360-degree survey gets information about a person from all stakeholders: employees, customers, supervisors and co-workers. Then the person will say, "Gosh, I have low marks for team building and interdependency, even though I'm producing the numbers. What can I do?" Now they recognize where they need to work on character development. They can then organize resources to draw on: their families, their friends, professional association, church and support groups.

How can we reprogram ourselves? Well, often we must first be humbled, either by circumstances, such as not getting desired results and losing our assets, or by crises, not getting the meaning or fulfillment we desire, or failing to maintain good relationships with our colleagues, spouses and kids. We are then more willing to accept the fact that universal principles like respect, empathy, honesty and trust ultimately govern. We are then more willing to accept responsibility for who and what we are. We are then more willing to develop and live by a solid sense of mission, which does much to produce integrity. Ultimately, what we are (character) is the most critical component of success.

With the strong foundation of character in place, we can add all the colorful elements of personality. If you don't have the character roots, you might pretend to play the part, but when push comes to shove, you'll be uprooted. Such uprooting is among our most difficult learning experiences but also among the most powerful and useful ones as we recommit to live lives of integrity.

## How to Align Yourself to Principles

The key to primary greatness is to be centered on principles. Building character and quality of life is a function of aligning our beliefs and behaviors with universal principles. These principles are impersonal, external, factual, objective and self-evident. They operate regardless of our awareness of them or our obedience or disobedience to them.

If you and your people have spent time working on your value system, usually those values will reflect true principles. However, sometimes distortions are introduced from the wider culture (from the media, for example) or a subculture (like an obsession with a musical group) or from a magnetic force (like a powerful emotional event or magnetic personality, such as a powerful boss who has a big ego and a deep agenda in a certain direction), and those distortions can totally throw off your sense of direction and your moral bearings. When those distortions happen, you get uprooted. You become a double-minded person, a person who is unstable, and you experience a deep inner sense of vertigo.

Another question relates to the age-old argument of relative versus absolute truth. People ask, "How can you suggest there is such a thing as true north, when it's all relative anyway?" Here's a three-word test of truth:

1. **Universal**. If there are no universal principles, there is no true north, nothing you can depend on. You can forget about the character ethic; just create an image that sells well in the social and economic marketplace. You end up with business and political systems that operate independent of natural laws like integrity and honesty.
2. **Timeless.** True north is a symbol for bedrock principles — principles that don't change over time. To the degree you move away from the laws of nature and toward what is timely and trendy, your judgment is adversely affected.
3. **Self-evident**. A true principle is self-evident, as in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident." That is, you may try to argue against them, but it's futile. If you try to argue against a principle and find it to be a foolish argument, you know you have a natural law.

If your current lifestyle is not in alignment with natural principles, then you may want to trade a values-based map for a principle-centered compass. When you recognize that principles ultimately govern, you might willingly subordinate your values to them and align your roles, goals, plans and behaviors with them.

How do we align our lives with true-north realities that govern quality of life?

### Four Human Endowments

As human beings, we have four unique endowments — self-awareness, conscience, independent will and creative imagination — that not only separate us from the animal world but also help us distinguish between reality and illusion and align our lives with the laws that govern quality of life.

**Self-awareness** enables us to examine our paradigms — the lenses through which we see the world — to think about our thoughts, to become aware of our social scripting and to enlarge the separation between stimulus and response. Self-aware, we can take responsibility for reprogramming or rescripting ourselves out of secondary greatness and toward primary greatness.

**Conscience** puts us in touch with something within us even deeper than our thoughts and something outside of us more reliable than our values. Conscience is universal. No matter what people's religions, cultures or backgrounds are, their mission statements all deal with the same basic human needs: to live (physical and financial well-being), to love (social well-being), to learn (mental well-being) and to leave a legacy (spiritual well-being).

**Independent** will is our capacity to act — the power to transcend our paradigms, to swim upstream, to rewrite our scripts, to act based on principles rather than reacting based on emotions, moods or circumstances.

**Creative imagination** empowers us to create beyond our present reality. It enables us to write Personal Mission Statements, set goals, plan meetings or visualize ourselves living with fidelity to principles even in the most challenging circumstances. We can imagine any scenario we want for the future. Memory is limited. It's finite; it deals with the past. Imagination is infinite; it deals with the present and the future, with potentiality, with vision and mission and goals, with anything that is not now but can be.

Here are four ways to nurture your unique endowments:

- Nurture self-awareness by keeping a personal journal.
- Educate your conscience by learning, listening and responding.
- Nurture independent will by making and keeping promises.
- Develop creative imagination through visualization.

## The 12 Levers of Success

### The Lever of Integrity

Total integrity is the first lever of primary greatness. People who have lost integrity live and work in a world of seeming to be something they are not. Living a false life is a heavy burden on your conscience and on the people who rely on you. Total integrity lifts that burden from your life. Those who have primary greatness are people for whom total integrity is deeply inscribed in their character.

How do you arrive at integrity? Integrity is the child of two primary character traits: humility and courage. Humility means realizing that, over time, principles ultimately govern. A humble person doesn't say, "I am in control," or "I am in charge of my destiny." That theme, so common in much of the success literature in recent decades, is a product of the social value system. And our social values may not be based on rock-solid principles but on the shifting sands of ego or opinion. Humility is, in a sense, the mother of all virtues, because all of them come through that spirit of submission to pragmatic reality.

The father of all virtues is courage, because when put to the test, courage defines our commitment to those virtues. Eventually, every value is tested. Whether we will align our values, our lives and our habits with those principles is the big question. In other words, will we really live by our principles? We may be humble, but are we courageous? Will we, in fact, swim upstream against very powerful social values or against our own individual tendencies?

When you have both humility and courage, you naturally develop integrity. Integrity means that your life is integrated around principles and that your security comes from within, not from without.

### The Lever of Contribution

Primary greatness is achieved by those who have a mission, a purpose to serve that is higher than themselves, a lasting contribution to make. Many of us are tempted to take the easy way through life, never asking much of ourselves, and never ask the liberating questions, "What does the world need from me? How can I contribute to the lives of others?"

As we move toward the global economy and the new rules that govern the workplace, we'll see more competition from high-quality and low-cost producers, and this competition will exceed anything we have known in the past, particularly as we see the emergence of Asian, South American, Indian, Chinese and Middle Eastern economies. People will need to reconsider their own purposes and redesign themselves to accommodate the new reality. There are three things in particular:

- They need a sense of what true north is to them. They must define a personal mission based on a vision that contributes to the organization and a value system that is principle-centered, that will not change.
- They must be willing to bear risk. They must be willing to take three kinds of risk: in the way they speak, in the way they listen and in the way they act.
- They must make and keep a commitment to lifelong learning.

In addition, to achieve the line of sight between what the world needs and what you offer, you need to answer three questions: What does the world need? What am I good at? How can I best do what I like to do and meet real needs where I now work? In effect, you must become an artistic leader and follower.

### The Lever of Priority

Shifting from secondary to primary greatness means that things we too often put first in our lives should actually be last. Some things are just plain more important than others; in fact, some things are so important — your life, your health, your family — that others are trivial by comparison. If your days are filled with "fatal distractions" such as trivial work tasks, gaming and endless entertainment, you need to press on the lever of true priorities.

What are the first things in your life? One good way to answer that question is by asking others, "What is unique about me? What are my unique gifts? What is it I can do that no one else can do?" Your unique talents and capabilities determine the important work you have to do in life. The tragedy is that our unique contribution is often never made because the important first things in our lives are choked out by other urgent things. Thus, some important works are never started or finished.

The path to personal effectiveness is a balancing process. Think through this process very carefully. "What are your responsibilities in life? Who are the people you care about?" The answers become the basis for thinking through your roles. Your goals are then set by asking, "What is the important future state for each relationship or responsibility?"

For many people, the dominant metaphor of life is still the clock. We value the clock for its speed and efficiency. The clock has its place and efficiency has its place, but only after you've achieved effectiveness. The symbol of effectiveness is the compass, because it provides direction — purpose, vision, perspective and balance.

To move from a clock mindset to a compass mindset, you focus on priorities instead of schedules. The clock can tell you when a meeting is going to be held, but it won't tell you if the meeting is worth going to. Follow this time-management credo: "I will not be governed by the efficiency of the clock; I will be governed by the compass of my conscience."

## The Lever of Sacrifice

Primary greatness depends on the principle that we are better together than alone, that no one person can do it all and that no one ever made a worthwhile contribution all alone. To sacrifice means to revere. You can't bond with an entity — a family, a team, a company — you can only bond with people. That bonding occurs when a sacrifice reveres what otherwise might be disregarded. As we treat one another with more love, kindness, courtesy, humility, patience and forgiveness, we encourage the same in return.

The same principle applies to any relationship, even in business. Partnering is a key to primary greatness. Unless we are willing to work together, to sacrifice our pride of ownership of our ideas or our image, we will not meet the ever-growing demands of the marketplace. The old levels of service will not meet future demands. It's going to take a new level of empowerment, which will come through partnering.

- We need to partner up and down the channels with suppliers, distributors and customers; we need strong partnerships with all stakeholders.
- We need to partner with firms across functions. This is rarely done, because of powerful misaligned structures and systems that foster internal competition and comparison.
- We need to partner across lines of business. We gain synergy when we communicate across lines of business, not just across functions.

## The Lever of Service

The principle of service is highly personal — it's a giving of the self. The personal touch matters with 90 percent of people, and it empowers the rest. Selfishness is the source of our heaviest burdens in life, while serving others — lightening the burdens of others — is the very essence of primary greatness. Secondary greatness has nothing to do with service.

Why is this principle so important? Why does it open hearts and minds and doors? It's because the deepest hunger of the human soul is to be recognized, valued, appreciated and understood. When you acknowledge the presence of others and adapt your presentation in an effort to reach them, in effect you say to them, "You matter. You're a person of worth. You have intrinsic merit, and I'm not comparing you with anyone. You are precious. And if you allow me into your mind to leave a message, I know that I'm on sacred ground."

How do you get this concern for the individual customer? Three ways: hire it, train it or cultivate it in the culture. You might hire it and train it, but the most powerful way to cultivate the service ethic is to develop strong social norms in the culture itself. When people begin to see that this is how we treat each other, you will then have a sustainable competitive advantage. The cultivation of the spirit of servant leadership will teach everyone to be kind, respectful and caring, even though some people aren't naturally that way.

## The Lever of Responsibility

Taking responsibility is essential to primary greatness. It's easy to take responsibility for the good things in our lives, but the real test comes when things aren't going well. Those who practice primary greatness know that their quality of life depends on their own choices, not on the choices of others or even their circumstances.

People often are offended — or they offend others — and then neither party has the humility to take full responsibility for their part. Instead, they rationalize and justify themselves. They look for evidence to support their perception of the other person, which only aggravates the original problem. Ultimately, they put each other into a mental-emotional prison.

You can't come out of that prison until you pay the uttermost farthing. A farthing was a tiny English coin equaling one fourth of a penny. Paying the uttermost farthing means paying the price that's required. It means a humble and complete acknowledgment of your responsibility for the problem, even though others might be partly responsible as well. If you take full responsibility for your part in it — and acknowledge it and apologize out of deep sincerity and concession of spirit — the other person will sense the utter sincerity of what you say. Of course, your behavior must then comport with that expression, so that others can see your integrity.

To pay the uttermost farthing, you might say, "I was wrong." "I embarrassed you in front of your friends." Or "I cut you off in that meeting, when you had made this tremendous preparation. And I'm not only going to apologize to you but also to the other people who were in that meeting, because they could see the way I dealt with you, and it offended them as well." You make no effort to

justify, explain, defend or blame in any way — you make every effort to pay the uttermost farthing in order to get out of prison. Only by making a complete and specific acknowledgement of your own failings or mistakes do you pay the uttermost farthing.

### The Lever of Loyalty

People with primary greatness are loyal, not unquestioningly loyal, but they show the kind of loyalty that refuses to stereotype, castigate or label others in their absence. Too many of us carry the burden of disrespect for others, of conceit or even contempt for the imperfections of the people around us. We unload a tremendous weight from ourselves if we can cast off unrealistic expectations of others and stay loyal to them as human beings.

The ultimate test of primary greatness is to be loyal to people who are absent. When other people are not with you, they're in the dark; they don't know what you're saying about them or whether you're loyal to them. And that's when you show your true character. That doesn't mean you can't be critical, but you're constructively critical and loyal to the point that you would not be ashamed if they happened to overhear the conversation or if word were to get back to them, as it often does. You don't just sit on the sideline cutting, labeling and stereotyping people and then look for evidence to support your disdain for them.

When you defend the integrity of a person who is absent, what does that say to those who are present? It says that you would do the same thing for them. Sure, it takes courage to speak up at the time. It's much easier to say nothing. But I believe that if we have a chance to defend others or to speak up for our cherished beliefs and values, we need to do it.

### The Lever of Reciprocity

Primary greatness is based on the principle of reciprocity — that what you give comes back to you. The concept of fairness is deeply ingrained in every culture. Those who believe in secondary greatness want to tip the scales of every human interaction in their favor — their motto is "WIFM": What's in it for me? By contrast, those who live by the principle of reciprocity know there is no win in life if others do not win too.

How can we ensure that the most important relationships in our lives are reciprocal?

- Look first to yourself. Be honest with yourself first.
- Create intimacy. The more you bond, the more you care.
- Share knowledge and information.
- Include all stakeholder relationships.
- Care about those on the front lines.
- Choose mercy over "measure for measure."

Recognize that others need love and understanding and mercy just as you do. These simple principles, consistently applied, ensure the kind of bonding that leads to primary greatness.

### The Lever of Diversity

Sameness holds you down and drains your energy. Primary greatness seeks out diversity. Nothing kills success faster than being incapacitated by limited data and narrow thinking. Without diversity, there is no synergy, and without synergy, nothing new happens.

The natural tendency is to surround ourselves with people like us instead of creating a complementary team. Cloning yourself produces negative energy, because it inhibits other people's talents and gifts. On the other hand, building a complementary team — which has one goal but many different roles, perceptions, methods and approaches — enables the full expression of talents and releases positive energy.

Why is the tendency to clone so prevalent and so strong? It is because cloning gives leaders a false sense of security. When you have people thinking like you, doing like you, speaking like you, referring to you, quoting you, dressing like you and grooming like you, then you feel that you're being validated as a leader. You feel that you have value because other people value being like you. However, they're telling you what you want to hear, not what you need to know. So you may get some artificial harmony, conformity or uniformity, but you won't have much creativity, synergy, unity or security. Cloning comes from insecurity and from being centered on public opinion.

The new ideal is the complementary team where unity is achieved by those who have different talents — who have one vision and purpose but many roles, perceptions, capacities and duties. Unless you have a transcendent purpose and a shared value system, differences become negative and counterproductive — not positive and synergistic — simply because there isn't unity on the fundamentals. If there's unity on the fundamentals, you can tolerate differences in other areas and still have positive synergy.

### The Lever of Learning

Secondary greatness isn't very interested in learning, but primary greatness demands it. In business, a person who isn't constantly upgrading his or her skills and knowledge

becomes untrustworthy in time. Beyond this, learning is what we call a primary good, valuable for its own sake. The love of learning and the search for wisdom help make life worthwhile. We all have a moral obligation to the people who are important in our lives, as well as to ourselves, to learn and progress without ceasing.

We often talk of the need for continuing education in the context of work, but we rarely speak of it as a governing principle of life. In fact, continuous learning will save your life because, without it, you slip quickly into irrelevance.

A business can only do so much; the rest is up to the individual. As individuals, we ought to take into account the needs of the organization in our personal- and professional-development programs; otherwise, we may be developing for the wrong reason or at the wrong time. Our personal development should be relevant to the economy, to the industry, to the company and to our current assignment.

Among the many job-related learning options available to most people are research skills of analysis and synthesis, a personal reading program, review of classic literature and personal universities, such as TED talks or massive open online courses.

## The Lever of Renewal

You can't achieve primary greatness by neglecting yourself — your health, your mind, your emotional and spiritual life. Each of these vital areas of your life needs constant, even daily, renewal. Pushing the lever a little bit every day can offset a slow or even catastrophic downward decline in your personal energy and even save your life.

Act on four assumptions dealing with the four parts of human nature: physical, mental, social and spiritual. The ultimate personal synergy comes when we renew ourselves in all four dimensions regularly, on both personal and professional levels.

**Physical assumption:** Imagine you have already had one heart attack (personal) or one business failure (professional). Work on the assumption that you should live carefully, wisely, with a good exercise and nutrition program, so that you can have many, many more fulfilling years of life.

**Mental assumption:** Imagine that your knowledge (personal) and skills (professional) will be obsolete in three years. If you make this assumption — and it is accurate, by the way — you will get into serious systematic study and reading.

**Social assumption:** Imagine that everything you say about other people will be heard by them, both at home (personal) and at work (professional). You might still be critical, but your criticism will be far more responsible and constructive when you feel as if they are listening to what you say.

**Spiritual assumption:** Imagine that you will soon have a one-on-one accounting with the people you love and who love you (personal) and with your boss and team members (professional). In this personal interview, you will give an accounting of your stewardship: how well you are maintaining your physical health and fitness; what you have learned and how well you have employed knowledge and skills; how true and loyal you are to other people, especially behind their backs; and how well you are developing the spiritual side of your nature.

## The Lever of Teaching

What's the best way to internalize the levers of primary greatness you've just learned about? It's simple: Teach them to others. As you do, your understanding of the levers will deepen. Others will look to you to exemplify those principles. You'll become an authority on primary greatness.

There are four big advantages in applying this principle: you simply learn better when you teach; when you teach something you feel good about, you increase the likelihood of living by it; when you teach what you learn, you promote bonding in the relationship; and when you teach something you learn, it lubricates the change and growth process for yourself.

Remember, we are teaching something all the time, because we are constantly radiating who and what we are.

The end of a life filled with primary greatness is wisdom — a perspective that embraces principles, continuous growth and an integrated wholeness. It is a perspective that brings peace to the inner person and prosperity to the world. It is a perspective that brings security because the principles upon which we live our lives are solid, enduring and will never change.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Primary Greatness*, you'll also like:

1. ***The 8th Habit* by Stephen R. Covey**. Leadership guru Stephen R. Covey writes that accessing a higher level of human genius and motivation requires a sea change in thinking: a new mindset and skill set.

2. ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey**. Stephen R. Covey reveals principles that give us the security to adapt to change and the wisdom and power to take advantage of the opportunities that change creates.

3. ***Great Work, Great Career* by Jennifer Colosimo, Stephen R. Covey**. Do you have a good career? How do you create a great career? Stephen R. Covey and change-consultant Jennifer Colosimo offer answers.

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# 38CS01A The Power of Presence

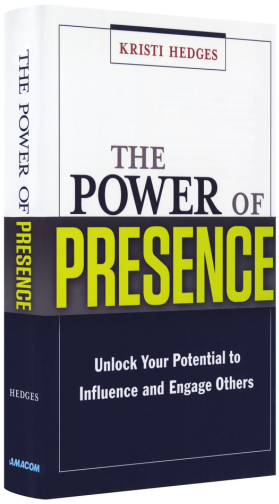
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Career & Self-Development

# The Power of Presence

## Unlock Your Potential to Influence and Engage Others




by Kristi Hedges

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Hands-down, executive presence is the corporate "it" factor. It's directly linked to your ability to get noticed, forge trusting relationships and get others on board with your vision.

But few people realize their true presence potential. Think of the otherwise competent team leader who doesn't command respect in executive meetings, or the overextended boss who never seems to know what's really going on with his employees or how to motivate them.

The good news is that limitations such as these are not set in stone. In fact, they're completely surmountable with the strategies and exercises in *The Power of Presence,* a highly readable and deeply insightful book that cuts to the heart of presence — what it is exactly and how to get more of it.

*The Power of Presence* shows everyone how to improve their presence. Author Kristi Hedges has witnessed even the highest-level people struggle to connect and communicate, often tangled by nerves and confused about how others perceive them. Her experiences have helped her develop the unique I-Presence™ model, which is equal parts communication aptitude, mental attitude and authentic style.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to use the I-Presence model to be clear and confident in any situation.
- Ways to forge strong relationships and build trust with others.
- How to inspire and motivate others to create solid followers.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE POWER OF PRESENCE**

**by Kristi Hedges**

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## Introduction

What is it about some people who can get others to follow with ease? What qualities do they possess that engender trust? How can presence be learned if one's own skills aren't enough? The I-Presence model is the secret sauce of executive presence. It is equal parts communication aptitude, mental attitude and authentic style. It combines a supportive inner mindset with the outer skills needed to create the natural, confident, consistent leadership presence we all seek. It consists of three pillars. I-Presence is at once intentional, individual and inspirational.

**Intentional.** Your beliefs shape every aspect of your presence, from body language to the actions you choose to undertake. Therefore, it is critical to get your head around what type of presence you want to demonstrate, the values you want to convey and how that matches up (or doesn't) with how others currently perceive you.

**Individual.** We connect with individuals, not with the hierarchical concept of a leader or manager. Whether with employees, customers, investors or the marketplace at large, these connections drive business, loyalty and career success. And counter to what you may believe, building these connections doesn't involve having all the right answers or working harder than everyone else.

**Inspirational.** What tools are in your toolkit when you want to inspire others? What's the best way to address a group and get people excited? What do powerful communicators do that's different?

You need to focus on and leverage your greatest potential as a leader — your own presence.

## PART I: INTENTIONAL: UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING YOUR PRESENCE OF MIND

## What Are You Thinking?

The first pillar of the I-Presence model is being intentional. Having an intentional presence is defined as understanding how you want to be perceived and subsequently communicating in a manner so that you will be perceived in the way you want. It means aligning your thoughts with your words and actions. And it requires a keen understanding of your true, authentic self as well as your impact on others.

There are different kinds of intentions. Some are broad and relatively stable, such as when you declare, "I want to be a visionary leader." Others are situational, such as, "In this strategy session, I must be the catalyst for change." Taking the time to have the discussion with yourself about what you want to accomplish with your presence may seem more like pop psychology/self-help than hard core executive training, but guess again. Taking the time to figure out what you want your presence to convey is a critical and powerful first step. That is the image of yourself you want to keep in mind — it's your mental aim.

As you develop your mental aim, you also need to determine what conversation is currently in your head and how it may need to change. Even when you aren't paying attention, your internal conversation is always happening. Do any of these negative thoughts sound familiar?

- I can't speak in public.
- I'm not a people person.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Andrew Clancy**, Executive Editor; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Kylie O'Connor** Graphic Designer; **Andy Ghillyer**, Contributing Editor

- I'll appear self-promoting.
- I'm an introvert and can't network well.
- I'm just not good in these situations.
- I don't have what it takes to play the office-politics game.

If this is where you are placing your mental focus, you can bet it's showing up in your presence, and maybe even screaming. The intentions that we hold in our head, either positive or negative, create mental shortcuts that become a veritable path of least resistance. The more we think something, the easier it is for our mind to process it. That's why it's critical to be fully aware of any negative thoughts blocking your progress. Knowing what our limiting thoughts are, and replacing them intentionally, is the only way to create a different possibility. Eventually, the possibility becomes the new and improved shortcut.

## Your Actions Are Speaking So Loudly I Can Hardly Hear What You're Saying

Our actions prove (or disprove) what we say about ourselves. They are signals for receivers to decode so they can learn what we're all about. Actions can either underline or undermine our executive presence. If you want to be seen as trusted and credible, then your actions must be in alignment with your intentions, both stated and unstated. It's the only way to be received with clarity.

In terms of how people perceive and interpret you, two types of action are of equal importance:

- Micro-Actions (your body language, facial expressions and tone of voice).
- Macro-Actions (how you spend your time, what you do and your consistency).

Body language is most often promoted as the key to effective communication in our personal and professional lives, but paying too much attention to how you stand, talk, gesture or present can erode authenticity — and for many people, confidence as well. Because body language is a vehicle to get your message across, it should be in alignment with your message while feeling natural to you. Focusing on the use of tricks to convey something you aren't feeling distracts you and undermines your intentional presence.

Your macro-actions include where you show up or don't, what you produce or deliver, how consistent you are and whether you keep your promises. All eyes go to our actions because they are the backbone of presence. We trust actions more than anything — they speak louder than words, after all. But what happens is that real life steps in, and we get busy. And that leads to a lot of unintentional actions. We take shortcuts. We put out fires. We let things slide and hope that no one will notice. Or we try to do everything and spread ourselves way too thin.

Managing your presence means committing to managing your actions as carefully as your words. For most people, it means you have to make choices about the actions you want to emphasize. The best place to start is by choosing the actions that make up your core values or, in other words, your personal-presence brand. Actions are the communications we trust most. Your work on presence won't get off the ground unless you begin to notice, and then to understand, and then finally to change your micro- and macro-actions.

## Stopping the Negativity Loop

Nearly everyone struggles with nervousness, anxiety and insecurity in high-pressure situations where we care deeply about the outcome. It happens to even the most successful and dynamic communicators. Negative thoughts can build momentum into a downward spiral that drags your thoughts, feelings and actions down with it, with each thought reinforcing another until you have a full-blown negativity loop.

Negativity loops destroy intention. They are akin to a heavyweight pro fighting a lightweight amateur. You can win only if you take away the big guy's strength. You do that by disputing the negativity and turning it into optimism. Recognize those stressed-out thoughts for what they are: catastrophizing with little or no root in reality.

## Presence as Perception

Presence is part communicating in alignment with your intention and part being received with clarity. You can't figure out how you are doing with the latter without some form of feedback, formal or otherwise. Finding out the effect you have on others gives you a helpful framework for focusing on your own presence.

Getting feedback is necessary. Pursue it, digest it and internalize it. Most important, keep in your mind the entire time that there's no right way to have a strong presence. One size does not fit all. Much of how we experience others is filtered through our own experiences and completely biased. One person may gravitate toward the strong way you open a meeting, while you will seem overly brash to someone else because

you remind him of a dictatorial co-worker. You are viewed through others' subjectivity.

Conducting a presence audit can be a simple but remarkably valuable process that only involves four steps:

**1. Pick the Right People.** Select five people you know and trust to be part of your feedback circle. Choose people who are accustomed to seeing you in the kinds of situations where you are looking for feedback. While its it important that you trust the people and find them credible, make sure you don't just choose people that you like. Steer clear of those who will avoid conflict or tend to soft-pedal.

**2. Ask for Participation.** Without question, this is the hardest part, so you have to frame your request correctly. You want the people in your feedback circle to know that you are sincere, that you won't hold a grudge and that you are seeking feedback for your own personal development. Explain that it's not about what any one person says but what themes emerge from the group. This can help ease the burden for the people participating and allow them to speak more freely.

**3. Ask Two Simple Yet Powerful Questions.**

a. What's the general perception of me?

b. What could I do differently that would have the greatest impact on my success?

**4. Manage Your Own Reaction.** You'll get information that's as good as your ability to receive it. People will be looking to see what effect their feedback has on you in real time. Even though you are the one soliciting the feedback, every cell in your body will want to explain and defend yourself. Pay attention to your own presence during this feedback process, and really listen. Don't interrupt. Don't offer explanations or make excuses. If you ask questions, they should be only to clarify. Then smile and express sincere gratitude for the gift you've just been given.

In cultivating executive presence, intention is your aim. It creates the basis from which everything else follows. By practicing intentionality, your presence will benefit immensely, even if you do nothing else. But if you want to build the kind of compelling presence that draws others to you, then you need not just intention but connection.

## PART II: INDIVIDUAL: FORGING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

# Go Ahead, Trip Over Your Own Perfectionism

The second part of I-Presence is about individual connections — how we bring people closer to us, invite them in and build trust. If intention is your aim, then individual connections are your target. In the workplace, strong connections make us more productive employees, better co-workers and motivating leaders. For leaders, and in particular those new to leadership positions, it's a frustrating experience to learn that your title only gets you obedience (if you're lucky). Winning over hearts and minds requires a nuanced approach of making yourself someone others want to trust and follow.

Whether you are a leader or not, without connection you will lack presence. You may have the perfect oratory skills, deliver impeccable work and have the focus of a laser, but if you aren't someone that others relate to on a human level, you will at best be admired but never fully trusted.

### Balancing Competency and Vulnerability

Too much competency can be intimidating. Too much vulnerability can be read as weakness and ineffectiveness. But when we show our power alongside our humanity, others will connect to us. It's the combination that creates great presence. Consider what qualities make for a great boss or colleague. The answers are always the same: Most of what makes a leader or colleague memorable to us is the connection piece. "All business" is never how we describe the people who have meant the most to us. The competency piece is simply the price of admission. You felt a connection, and chances are you worked harder for them.

### You're the Only One Who Believes You Can Be Perfect Anyway

Hand in hand with the "all business" persona is the perfectionist. Perfectionism may get you admiration or even flat-out respect. But it will never get you the connection that renders it possible for someone to come into your office and tell you something you really need to know, despite the fact that it's difficult to say.

The funny thing about perfectionism is that while we may endeavor to embrace it in ourselves, no one else buys it. They can see right through it. They know when your confidence is actually just boasting, or how that catch in your throat reveals insecurity, or how your ever-present right answers don't always turn out so right in the end. Perfectionism creates the opposite of connection. One person's perfectionism causes guardedness in others. It sabotages openness, which is precisely the quality that gives us tremendous comfort in our leaders and colleagues.

## Trust: The Ultimate Gatekeeper

Trust is foundational to presence. You need other people to feel comfortable enough about your motives and credibility to invest in you as a person. The more trust, the larger the investment. And if you are deemed untrustworthy, you'll have the opposite of investment — distance, suspicion and even sabotage.

Trust is complicated because it's partly fact-based and partly emotional. We also have different trust standards for the workplace than we do in our personal lives. We tolerate more gray area around trust at work because we don't always expect as much from people in the workplace. It's assumed that leaders may act in their own self-interest or that ambitious colleagues will use others to get ahead. And getting a handle on our own general trustworthiness is tougher still.

Coming from a place of trust is a conscious decision. In every interaction, we can choose who we want to be and whether we will lead through our values or tuck them away in our back pockets. In the toughest of situations we can be distracted into thinking that a Right Way prevails over our way because that's what worked for someone else, or because we're unsure of ourselves or perhaps because well-meaning advisors recommended it. But if you know what you value, you can usually find a path to effectiveness that supports whom you want to be.

## A Note to Emailphiles, CrackBerry Addicts and TurboTexters

Presence is a full-contact sport. With each layer of information, we understand more of the other person. Writing gives us baseline information, verbal intonation a layer more and finally body language provides a giant leap in understanding. Nuanced messages are communicated far more effectively in person.

### Management by Email

Managers know that they need to be in front of their teams to deliver their vision, rally the troops and tackle uncertainty — in other words, the big stuff. But emails and texts tend to be a convenient default in the day-to-day realm of getting work done. Most managers will say that they use email in the interest of saving time. It's easier to delegate projects through email than by catching people on the phone or in their office between meetings. But when assigning work, the most important aspect is to be clear about your expectations. This generally requires a give-and-take about content, resources and deadlines. If that process is absent, you are likely to run into a lot of time-consuming inefficiencies.

Any communication that could be interpreted as bad news should never be sent via email. First of all, for the recipient, getting a negative email feels rotten. You're missing valuable context. You can't ask questions or present your side. It shreds your productivity. When you get such an email, you don't read it and get back to work. You stew on it. Send it to your spouse. Update your resume. In the absence of important cues from the sender that would make the communications productive, there's usually nothing to act on. If the manager's goal is to correct behavior or direct attention to a problem, a negative email accomplishes very little of that.

Employees frequently complain about the volume of emails from their managers. It's not that they don't expect emails. It's simply that they want to get some work done in between reading so many emails. Check your sent box and see if you're emailing the same people more than three times per day. If you are, then you may be managing by email. Try to consolidate your correspondence so that your team feels less barraged. Or try an old trick: Just get up and walk down the hall.

### 24/7 Emails

Constant emailing is mainly an issue for the manager to address. If you want your team to be burned out and resentful, 24/7 emails are the way to go. Otherwise, give people the courtesy of having a life. And if you are on the receiving end, holding off on your response until the normal workday (assuming it's not truly urgent) or waiting 24 hours on the weekend is perfectly acceptable and gently establishes boundaries.

The final pillar of I-Presence is about being inspirational — using our presence to influence others. It's the quality most people generally associate with executive presence.

# PART III: INSPIRATIONAL: COMMUNICATING TO BUILD AND MOTIVATE FOLLOWERSHIP

## Inspiring Change From the Brain Down

Being inspirational means that you are a change agent. As corporate hierarchies have flattened and the demand for creative, conceptual work has risen, old models of

communication no longer work so well. You cannot say, "Do this because I'm your boss and I say so" and expect other people to automatically act or think differently. We need our teams and co-workers to take our ideas, internalize solutions and personally buy into them. We want to invite them into our way of thinking, not grab them by the neck to get there. When you inspire others, you are altering their thoughts, perspectives or actions. They are different as a result of your exchange.

### Change Starts with You

When it comes to inspiring change, there are two audiences you need to consider: yourself and everyone else. First think about how to change yourself. This first step of embracing and managing change in yourself is critical and, at times, the hardest to undertake. Second, consider how your ideas create change in others. What makes people either readily accept or flat-out reject your message?

There are universal human responses to change. Understanding them enables you to frame your own communications to be heard with optimal clarity. Here's the easy part: Turns out that what makes it difficult for you to change is the same thing that makes it difficult for your audience to change. No one is trying to be intractable. You can blame it on the brain.

### Your Brain Prefers Life in a Worn, Comfortable Recliner

The brain strives for efficiency. Therefore, reinforcing our current mental maps, which are essentially our thoughts and perceptions, feels good to us. When we see information that confirms our existing perceptions, the grooves between point A and point B on our maps become better established. Energy is saved. When we see data that disproves our exiting perceptions, our thoughts spend more time in our prefrontal cortex as we compare and contrast against existing mental maps. Loads more energy gets used.

Our brain is built to resist change because doing so enhances efficiency and saves energy. We are optimized to seek out information that confirms what we already believe to be true, and to avoid information that goes against our existing belief system. This is critical information to have about yourself as you encounter new ideas.

### Five Steps to Optimize Your Brain for Change

So where does that leave someone who wants to turn insights into action? We know that creating a new mental map is key, but to sustain a new mental map — to wear the newly established grooves down so that they become a default path — we have to keep the focus on what we are trying to accomplish with frequency, intensity and deliberation:

**1. Make Room for Reflection Time.** Being reflective involves taking a cerebral step back. It's not about forcing our full mental heft on the problem at hand. It's about creating space to allow thoughts to come to us (and old mental maps to be dug out of our gray matter).

**2. Focus on Solutions, Not Problems.** Attention shapes our mental maps. By pivoting our attention we can begin to develop new modes of thinking and doing. When we are trying to create change, we have a far better chance of succeeding if we make a concerted effort to focus on solutions. (Of course we need to understand the basics of the problem, so we don't repeat it, but beyond that, the future is in the solution.)

**3. Strike While the Aha! Moments Are Hot.** It feels great when we get that release of adrenaline from newly formed connections. We are primed to take action in that moment, but the clock is ticking on our excitement. You'll have far greater success with change if you can capture that moment and act quickly, or at least create a path to action. The easiest action to take is to write down your ideas. Sketch out your thoughts in the moment, so you can recall them when the adrenaline rush is over and your brain is flooded with other thoughts.

**4. Just Do It (At Least in a Small Way).** Change is a process. If our brains sense some degree of certainty, then we are more likely to be open to change and allow it to happen. Incremental change allows us to gain some confidence and perspective and then try the next goal. It's much more comfortable for people to envision a tangible, discrete step than to jump to a faraway place they've never seen before.

**5. Find Your Flow.** In his seminal work that created an eponymous business term, *Flow*, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi laid out his research findings on what creates intrinsic joy in our work and in our lives. Flow happens in those moments when we feel "in the zone," when we are immersed in an activity, lose track of time and bring our full skills to bear.

## From Vision to Visionary

Vision is one of those barely tangible characteristics of executive presence that has great resonance. While we spot it immediately when it's there — often by calling someone strategic or forward-looking — we are not sure what's missing when it's absent.

As an employee, you know which leaders have vision. They run the teams everyone wants to work on. They are the CEOs people drop everything to follow. They create a reality that we clamor to be a part of. They personalize our work effort. Alternatively, visionless leaders are in danger of cultivating teams with a feeling of purposelessness, of being disconnected from the whole. Typically, people on such teams are biding time until something better comes along.

In the workplace, a vision helps the leader and everyone else figure out what's important. A vision provides context amidst chaos. We need data plus context to make decisions that are useful, relevant and aligned with the organization's overall goals. Becoming the messenger or carrier of that vision, as the visionary, requires that you be aspirational (endorsing and encouraging potential) and personal while also articulating a vision that is shared and active (woven into the nuances of everyone's working life).

## Declarations Create Possibilities

Your presence is conveyed by the way you communicate in total. Part of that is through the words you choose. In essence, inspiring through language is about painting a picture of what the future could be. It includes the use of declarations, just as Steve Jobs demonstrated when he first took the stage at Macworld in 2007 and declared, "We're going to make history together today." Inspirational language steps us into a bigger game. After all, it's tough to inspire by playing small.

Declarations create and clarify vision for others and ourselves. They help to define that all-important sense of purpose around our work. They offer a promise of something more, of greatness. They are made individually and shared. They inspire followership. Declarations are compelling, ambitious, strong, direct and enticingly risky. They show confidence in oneself and in the power of the collective. They force us to push ourselves and play on a bigger stage. They provide a rallying point that brings a group together.

## Strategic Shock Value and Other Ways to Create Shining Moments

While many leaders bristle at being in the spotlight, people expect it. It's not about personal ego but about accepting the role and learning to play on a bigger stage. Part of being inspiring is simply being interesting. Having a point of view on a wide range of industry issues, telling relatable stories and making bold statements allow you to use the leadership stage to bring more attention to your company.

### There's Bad Interesting and Good Interesting

It's hard to define exactly what makes a person inspiring or interesting. To a certain degree, good interesting is in the eye of the beholder. There's no magic to it. It's about authentic presence: being intentional, presenting our real selves, sharing stories, exposing vulnerability or showing empathy. Being good interesting means staying in alignment with our executive presence intention and bringing our full selves to our communications. It's about accepting the spotlight and using it to a greater and positive advantage.

On the flip side, as hard as good interesting is to define, it's remarkably easy to identify bad interesting: being outrageous for attention, misrepresenting yourself, taking the credit from deserving peers, grandstanding for personal gain or always having to have the last and loudest word.

### Shining Moments in the Daily Grind

To bring the concept of the good interesting down to the practical level, look for opportunities to pivot the daily grind into opportunities to shine:

**Networking Events.** Turn your purpose around. Instead of asking someone for something, focus on those who may benefit from your advice or your experience. When you bring down your self-orientation, you not only boost trust, but you also set yourself apart from the majority of the people attending the event.

**Internal Meetings.** Most often reviled as a colossal waste of productive time, these meetings present an opportunity for you to convey your presence by acknowledging the elephant in the room and committing to minimizing the waste of everyone's time and establishing ground rules to make the meeting fun, creative and productive.

**Speaking Engagements.** Whether you dread them or tolerate them as a necessary evil, speaking engagements are typically thrown together at the very last minute with the intention of being professional but by no means controversial. Pivoting this perspective presents these engagements as shining moments — opportunities to inform, inspire and entertain.

**Press Interviews.** Restrictive corporate communications policies typically limit the frequency of such interviews, but when they do happen, the standard operating procedure is to stick to the key points and tow the company line. But reporters are people too, and being appreciative of their objectives and endeavoring to be as

engaging as possible will separate you from the herd and earn you more opportunities to build your presence in future interviews.

**Sales and Client Meetings.** Most of the time, these meetings are content driven and focused on getting the audience to like/respect/pay us. Demonstrating credibility is paramount. PowerPoint is the weapon of choice. The audience probably has their guard up in anticipation of being sold or over-promised. Turning this into a shining moment by focusing on building trust above all else increases your presence, your likeability and your credibility. You'll also come across as refreshingly different, interesting and memorable.

## Bringing It All Together: Presence in a Pinch

The three "Is" of the I-Presence Model — intentional, individual and inspirational — follow a specific path from inward to outward. That's exactly how presence works. It starts with you, builds through your connection to others, and ultimately catalyzes through your communications. Each piece is important on its own, and it is the combination that catapults leaders to a new level.

Since being intentional implies thorough preparation before a big meeting, presentation or important conversation, here is a distillation of the core principles of the I-Presence Model that form a Prep Guide:

**Prepare with Intention.** Whether you have 30 minutes or 30 days to prepare, always start with intention. Everything flows from it. You may think this is the easiest part to skip when you are pressed for time. But it's actually the most critical.

**Align Your Physicality to Your Intention.** Hopefully you've rehearsed and have a strong sense of how you want to appear when you take the stage (literally or otherwise). Remember the three-part body check: face, gestures and posture.

**Find the Connection Points.** Connection is about finding the humanity in others. If you want to strengthen your presence, consider how to foster trust and empathy. For many of us, this requires attention and deliberation.

**Use Language to Inspire.** Setting a compelling vision through language is a key part of managing change. Even the best vision is meaningless if it can't be communicated and received clearly.

Remember, as you head into that all-important meeting, you already have every ounce of presence you need in various parts of your life. All you are doing is integrating them to present your best self — your strongest presence — more purposefully and frequently. Don't try to be perfect. It's not about using every best practice you've ever learned or reshaping your personality. Set an intention, go with what's authentic for you and wow them.

## Afterword

While presence itself is open to interpretation, here are a few pieces of advice that will help you on your path to strengthening it.

Pay attention. The simple act of noticing your own behavior and that of others, in a deeper way, will create an ongoing focal point on presence. When someone inspires you (or fails to), take a moment to understand why.

Maintain a sense of humor. Learn from your mistakes, and learn to laugh at them, too. Remember, things are rarely as bad (or as good) as you think they are.

Be brave. It's hard to extend yourself by trying new behaviors, especially when failure can mean public embarrassment. Summon the courage to be uncomfortable. You won't get anywhere by playing it safe. Put yourself out there.

Go easy on yourself. No one is perfect, and yes, that includes you. You'll notice 90 percent more of your mess-ups than anyone else will. Smile, and keep going.

Don't get hung up on doing the right anything. What works for one person can bomb for someone else. Presence is your personal essence; it's a unique composite of behaviors. You'll encounter many people who will tell you that you must do it their way. Keep an open mind. But if it feels foreign to you after trying it a few times, skip it.

When all else fails, walk tall, keep your head up and look people in the eye.


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# 38CS03D Maximum Influence

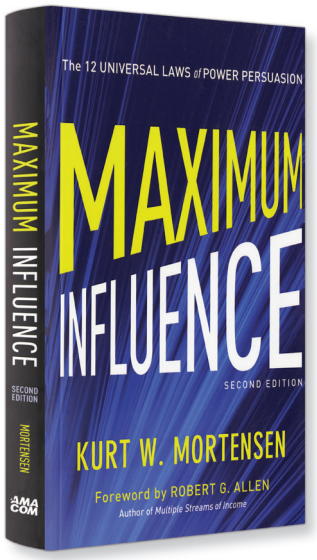
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Career & Self-Development

# Maximum Influence

## The 12 Universal Laws of Power Persuasion




by Kurt W. Mortensen

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Salespeople, consultants, managers, executives, entrepreneurs — everyone depends on influence to achieve success and prosperity. And everyone can develop their skills with *Maximum Influence*, the most authoritative and effective arsenal of persuasion tactics ever assembled.

Updated with the latest findings from behavioral science, new case studies and cutting-edge techniques, *Maximum Influence* uncovers secrets of the master influencers, including the Law of Dissonance, the Law of Contrast, the Law of Expectations — and nine other proven principles that consciously and unconsciously propel people to act. It's the ultimate guide to getting what you want, anytime you want it.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The 12 Laws of Persuasion and how they can be applied for Maximum Influence.
- Four steps to use the Law of Dissonance to get your foot in the door.
- Learn how to use praise to release positive energy in all business and personal dealings.
- How to use the Law of Association to take advantage of association triggers to evoke positive feelings.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **MAXIMUM INFLUENCE**

**by Kurt W. Mortensen**

**The author:** Kurt W. Mortensen is a leading authority on persuasion, negotiation and influence. Kurt shows how easy it is to apply influence in every situation and how valuable influence can be in increasing income. He offers his speaking, training and consulting programs nationwide, helping thousands achieve unprecedented success in business and personal endeavors. He is the author of *Persuasion IQ* and *The Laws of Charisma*.

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## The Power of Persuasion

Has this happened to you? You are talking to a potential client, a prospect or a manager of another department. In your mind what you are proposing is a no-brainer, and it will take only a few minutes to influence the other person to do what you want done. The more you talk, the more they resist. What happened? Why weren't you able to persuade them?

Or even worse, have you ever met someone who did not seem very smart but was making ten times more money than you? Didn't seem that bright, but could persuade anyone to do anything? What do they have that you don't have? They have mastered the *power of persuasion*.

### Persuasion: The Engine to your Success

The power of persuasion is of extraordinary and critical importance in today's business world. Nearly every human encounter includes an attempt to gain influence or persuade others to our way of thinking. Some people define persuasion as being forceful, manipulative, or pushy. Such an assumption is dead wrong. Tactics like these might get instant results and maintain influence for the short term, but Maximum Influence is about getting short-term compliance while maintaining the long-term relationship. Lasting influence isn't derived from calculated maneuvers, deliverate tactics or intimidation. Rather, proper implementation of the latest persuasion strategies will allow you to influence with integrity. People will naturally and automatically trust you, have confidence in you, and want to be persuaded by you.

The art of persuasion must be customized to every group or individual, to every situation or event.

Getting people to do what you want is not an accident or coincidence. You must use techniques based on the proven Laws of Persuasion to achieve such results.

Professional negotiators, sales professionals and upper management around the world use these 12 laws. They are the same principles that help thousands of people gain control of their lives and their financial futures. Mastery of all the 12 laws is crucial for Maximum Influence. You will learn to act instead of being acted on, speak and be heard, lead and be followed. Master the implementation and timing of these laws, and you will become a Power Persuader.

## The Law of Connectivity

We have all had the experience of feeling an instant connection or bond with someone after just a few seconds of being in their presence. This is the Law of Connectivity.

The Law of Connectivity states that the more someone feels connected to, similar to, liked by or attracted to you, the more persuasive you become. Connectivity involves four main factors:

- **Attraction.** The Halo Effect. Attraction operates by making one of your positive characteristics affect other people's overall perception of you. As a result of what is called the Halo Effect, people automatically associate traits of kindness, trust and intelligence with attractiveness.
- **Similarity.** Similar is Familiar. Similarity theory states that familiar objects are more liked than less familiar ones. The same holds true with people: We like people who are similar to us. The theory seems to hold true whether the commonality is in the area of opinions, personality traits, background or lifestyle.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Andrew Clancy**, Executive Editor; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Eileen Spatz**, Contributing Editor

• **People Skills.** Winning Instant Acceptance. The ability to connect and work well with people tops the list for common skills and habits of highly successful people. Studies show that 91 percent of those surveyed assert that people skills are important in business. People skills are crucial because they have a huge impact on our success.

• **Rapport.** The Instant Connection. Rapport is the secret ingredient that makes us feel a harmonious link with someone else. It is equivalent to being on the same wavelength with the other person. Rapport is the key that makes mutual trust materialize.

## The Law of Involvement

When you can get others involved, get them to participate; they are easier to persuade. The Law of Involvement suggests that the more you engage someone's five senses, involve them mentally and physically and create the right atmosphere for persuasion, the more effective and persuasive you'll be.

As a persuader, you need to move your audience one step closer to taking action. As a Power Persuader, your goal is to decrease the distance someone has to go to reach your objective.

### Increasing Participation

You can create involvement through increased participation. The more individuals take an active role and get involved, the more open to persuasion they become. You will have more success involving your prospects in the solution if you give them the option of participating.

Feeling that it was their choice and their solution, your prospects will take ownership: They have persuaded themselves. It becomes their own problem and their own solution. By nature, people will support what they help create.

### Creating the Right Atmosphere

Another way to boost participation is with atmosphere. Atmosphere is really just a state of mind that you can create.

Atmosphere can also include the tension in the air. Are customers rushing or relaxed? What type of climate are you trying to create? Do you want a quick, fast decision, or do you want your customers to feel comfortable enough to stay for a while?

### Using the Art of Questioning

Of all the tools in your persuasion toolbox, questioning is probably the one that Power Persuaders use the most. Questions are used in the persuasion process to create mental involvement, to guide the conversation and to find out what your prospect needs.

One questioning technique is the use of leading questions. Leading questions not only alter the way we interpret facts, but they also influence what we remember. When you are probing for information, ask open-ended questions. Responding to a question that can be answered with a simple yes or not is just too easy. For example, instead of saying, "Do you wish you had decided differently?," ask, "How did you feel after you made that decision?"

### Engaging the Senses

Our five senses help us create generalizations about our world. You should engage as many senses as possible when trying to persuade an audience. When we learn, 75 percent comes to us visually, 13 percent comes through hearing and 12 percent comes through smell, taste and touch.

Keep in mind that we gravitate toward three dominant senses: sight, hearing and feeling, and most people tend to favor one of these perceptions over the others. As a Power Persuader, you need to identify and use your prospect's dominant perspective of the world.

## The Law of Esteem

The Law of Esteem identifies that all humans need and want praise, recognition and acceptance. Acceptance and praise are two of our deepest cravings; we can never get enough. William James once said, "The deepest principle of human nature is the craving to be appreciated." Human beings have a psychological need to be respected and accepted.

Compliments have the power to change behavior because they make the recipient feel needed and valued. The individual now has a reputation to live up to or an opportunity to prove the validity of the compliment. To use the Law of Esteem effectively, you must clearly understand the relationship between an inflated ego and a healthy self-esteem.

### Self-esteem

People who possess self-esteem are strong and secure; that is, they can admit when they are wrong. They are not unraveled by criticism. Their self-confidence permeates into all aspects of their lives: their jobs, their education, their relationships and their income.

Unfortunately, several studies show that Americans overall do not enjoy high self-esteem. Two out of three Americans suffer from varying levels of low self-esteem. The short list of symptoms attributable to low self-esteem includes

- The inability to trust others;
- Aggressive behavior;
- Gossiping;
- Defensiveness.

Esteem is definitely among the very top of the list of all the human needs. When you're in a persuasive situation and not sure what to do, helping your prospect feel important is a fail-proof place to start.

### The Leverage of Praise

Sincere praise and compliments can have a powerful effect on people. Praise boosts one's self-esteem. When you genuinely give praise, it releases energy in the other person. When you receive sincere compliments or praise, you smile, your spirits soar and you have a new aura. When our own esteem is low or our ego is bruised, we tend not to praise others.

Always be sincere in giving praise to others. Even the most cunning flatterer is ultimately detected and discovered. Complimenting someone sincerely for something small is better than complimenting someone insincerely for something big.

## The Law of Obligation

The key to obligation is knowing that the results might not be instant but that the sense of reciprocity will put you higher on the list for a presentation or consideration for future business. Obligation has been used as a persuasive technique since the beginning of time.

The Law of Obligation, also known as pre-giving or reciprocity, states that when others do something for us, we feel a strong need, or urge, to return the favor. Returning the favor rids us of the obligation created by the first good deed. The adage "one good turn deserves another" is a part of social conditioning in every culture.

People often trigger feelings of indebtedness and obligation in others by carrying out an uninvited favor.

The drive to alleviate feelings of obligation is so powerful that it can make us bend toward people we don't even know. Accepting gifts or favors without attempting to return them is universally viewed as selfish, greedy and heartless. It is often strictly due to this internal and external pressure that people conform to the rule of reciprocity.

### Give a Gift, Expect a Gift in Return

Before a negotiation starts, offer some sort of gift. Note, however, that offering the gift before and not during the negotiation is of prime importance, or your token will come across as bribery. Your gift will almost always be accepted, even if only out of social custom and courtesy. Whether your recipient likes or wants your gift or not, the psychological need to reciprocate will take root, increasing the likelihood that your request will be met affirmatively.

The Law of Obligation is a very simple law to implement. Ask yourself what you can do, give or say that would create that indebtedness in your prospect's mind.

## The Law of Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological discomfort that happens when someone's actions or decisions are not congruent with their values, beliefs or past commitments. Creating dissonance will increase your ability to persuade. When someone senses you are going to try to persuade them, say, to buy something — even though they need it, want it, like it and can afford it — they will resist you. Dissonance will help people persuade themselves.

The Law of Dissonance states that people will naturally act in a manner that is consistent with their cognitions and commitments. Basically that means when people behave in a manner that is inconsistent with these cognitions, they find themselves in a state of discomfort. To eliminate or reduce that tension, we will do everything possible to adjust our beliefs, even if it means doing something we don't want to do.

### The Human Brain

Neuroscientists have made significant progress on how the brain processes information. Our brain can be very biased, especially in politics. As a persuader, you need to help people feel dissonance about where they are now and where they want or need to go. Just paint the picture for them, and let them feel the internal pressure. They have a problem, and as a persuader you are there to help them solve it.

Dissonance is a powerful tool in helping others make and keep commitments. Most people try to follow through when they promise to do something, especially if it is in writing. This is why corporations sponsor writing contests about social issues or their products. They really don't care about your writing style. They're really looking for consumer endorsement. You increase persuasion by using commitments through your presentation.

### Getting Your Foot in the Door

One aspect of the Law of Dissonance is the urge to remain consistent with our answers and our commitments. This technique of capitalizing on such a principle has been called by several names, including foot-in-the-door (FITD), self-perception theory or the sequential request. The principle is a means of using a person's self-perception to motivate her to take a desired action.

### Four Steps to Using the Law of Dissonance

**Step 1: Find their Cognition.** What are your prospect's beliefs about, past experiences with and attitude about you, your product or service?

**Step 2: Get a Commitment.** Commitments from your prospects should be public, affirmative and voluntary.

**Step 3: Create Dissonance.** Once you have the commitment, you can create dissonance. You create that dissonance by showing your prospects that they have not kept their commitment.

**Step 4: Offer a Solution.** Whenever you create dissonance, you always need to offer a way out by showing or explaining how your product or service can reduce the dissonance your prospect feels.

## The Law of Verbal Packaging

Over 60 percent of your day is spent in verbal communication, in which you could be persuading, explaining, influencing, motivating or instructing. You can create movement, excitement and vision with the words you use. As Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the wrong word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." The bottom line is that the words you use attract or repel your prospects.

Properly used and packaged, language is a powerful instrument that can be fine-tuned to your advantage. The proper use of verbal packaging makes you adaptable, easier to understand and more persuasive.

### Word Choice in Marketing

Word choice in marketing and advertising is absolutely critical. Even in copywriting, every word matters. When you write copy, an email or a letter, every word can attract or distract the reader. Use words that capture their curiosity, grab their attention and trigger emotions.

Skilled advertisers can get us to absorb their message unconsciously. They might even package an identical product with different words and phrases to reach a wider segment of the public.

Simple is better than complex. Because we are unable to recapture or replay our spoken words, we hope that they will be correctly interpreted the first time they are heard or read. When you are in a persuasive situation, use simple, direct and concise language, rather than fretting about how eloquent you are sounding.

### Vocal Techniques: Keep People Attentive and Listening

Voice plays a critical role in influence. How we say the words we choose is just as important as the words themselves. Our voice is a powerful instrument that can motivate the troops or lull them to sleep. There is a huge difference between presenting and persuading, informing and influencing, and communicating and convincing. Your voice is a complete arsenal of persuasive techniques in and of itself.

You can change your rate of speech, the volume, pitch, inflections, emphasis and even the pauses that you use. You can keep your audience's attention, increase their energy and render them absolutely spellbound because of the power of your voice. It must be interesting and easy to listen to in order to help, rather than hinder, your ability to persuade.

## The Law of Association

To maintain order in the world, our brains link objects, gestures and symbols with our feelings, memories and life experiences. We mentally associate ourselves with such things as sights, sounds, colors, music and symbols. These associations create quick subconscious triggers, and the feelings you generate can help or hurt your ability to persuade.

Power Persuaders take advantage of association triggers to evoke positive feelings and thoughts that correspond with the message they are trying to convey. In this sense, you, as a persuader, can actually arouse a certain feeling in your audience by finding the right association key to unlock their door.

### Anchors: Capture the Feeling

Anchoring is a technique that captures the feelings, memories and emotions of certain events, places or things. The psychology lies in the use of elements from a previous situation to replay the emotions and feelings of that experience. An anchor can be anything that brings up a thought or feeling and reminds you of something you

have previously experienced. It will usually reproduce the exact prior emotion or feeling.

An anchor can be produced either externally or internally. Anchors don't have to be conditioned over a period of several years to be established. They can be learned in a single event. The three primary sets of anchors include smells, music and symbols.

### Affiliation: Create the Link

Another aspect of the Law of Association is the use of affiliation. Persuaders want you to affiliate their company with positive images, feelings and attitudes. The idea is to link something positive in the environment with the message. For example, a good game of golf, a weekend at the beach, NFL tickets or an exotic cruise would all typically build positive associations and feelings in your prospects.

Three affiliation techniques are the most often used: advertising, images and color. Each has a unique role in affiliation. Advertisers and marketers use affiliation to evoke valuable associations in the minds of their prospects. They know that babies and puppy dogs automatically carry great associations of warmth and comfort in the minds of their audience.

## The Law of Balance

The Law of Balance states that logic and emotion must be blended and balanced. Emotions will trigger action, whereas logic will justify the agreement. The proper fusion of emotion and logic will speak to both the conscious and subconscious parts of the mind and increase your ability to persuade.

Power Persuaders know that each audience and individual has a different balance of logic and emotion. Analytical personalities need more logic than emotion. Amiable personalities require more emotion and less logic. A Power Persuader will create a proper balance between logic and emotion to create the perfect persuasive situation and message.

### Logic: What Stirs an Audience?

We generally think we make decisions based on facts, but truly this is not the case. It has been found that, when people agree with a message, they tend to perceive it as being logical or rational. The truth is that our decision-making process relies on a mixture of emotion and its partner, logic. However, we cannot rely entirely on emotion until our logical side has been engaged.

Spend whatever time you need to fully research the types of evidence you want to use to strengthen your arguments. You already know that using the right evidence from the right sources greatly increases the credibility of your message. The more confidence the prospect has in a speaker, the less thinking and processing they will do about the message.

### Emotion: Winning People's Hearts

Whereas logic is the language of the conscious mind, emotion is the language of the subconscious mind. We know that emotions are reactions to perceived and imagined stimuli; they are based on one's own personal experiences, not on logic. Emotions often outweigh our logic.

When you are persuading someone, emotions provide the springboard for a successful execution of your argument. In fact, I would even say emotions are the energy and very fuel of the persuasion process. Logic is important, but emotion helps you catapult an otherwise dull or flat exchange to the next level.

### Mood and Happiness

There is evidence across the board that mood is a major factor in persuasion. Even simple mood-boosting methods like eating a sweet snack or listening or pleasant music have been shown to make people easier to persuade. Consumers who are in a good mood will be more aware of positive qualities in products or experiences they encounter.

## The Law of Expectations

The Law of Expectations uses expectations to influence reality and create results. Individuals tend to make decisions based on how others expect them to behave or perform. As a result, people fulfill those expectations, whether they are positive or negative. When we know others expect something from us, we will try to satisfy them in order to gain respect, trust and likability.

By adding the Law of Expectations to your persuasive toolbox, you can change your audience's expectations of you — and their expectation to buy your product, service or idea — and you will be infinitely more persuasive.

### Assumptions: Expect with Confidence

Are the assumptions and expectations you have about yourself (or others) liberating or victimizing? There are countless examples of so-called self-fulfilling prophecies — or the Law of Expectations at work in everyday life. Did you ever notice how people who think they're going to be fired suddenly experience a drop in the quality and enthusiasm of their work? What happens next? They get fired!

The expectations we create for others often become reality. This effect can have interesting consequences when applied in the real world. Honestly assess how you think you make others feel when they're around you. How you treat someone and what you expect from them will open or close the doors to persuasion and influence.

### Goal Setting: Creating Personal Expectations

Many people don't like the idea of goal setting; in fact, just the mere mention of the words makes them cringe. However, goal setting works. Goals must have the power to stretch and inspire, and they must be realistic in the mind of the person being persuaded. Research shows that goals dictate future performance. Conscious goals influence our overall performance.

It is a general rule of thumb that greater or more difficult goals actually increase performance. The reason is that lofty goals set a higher expectation, and, as explained, expectations strongly influence behavior. For goal setting to work effectively, individuals or the members of a group have to be able to visualize and see themselves achieving their goal and be committed to its success. The goal cannot be so hard, so complex or so overwhelming that it does not seem realistic.

## The Law of Contrast

The Law of Contrast states that value will always trump price. Your goal is to have the value exceed the price or the benefit to exceed the prospect's time commitment. The Law of Contrast explains how we are affected when we are introduced to two different alternatives or options in succession. As a Power Persuader, you can use this contrast to navigate your audience toward the object of your persuasion.

Contrast is used for negotiations and is all about human perception. The human mind has to find a benchmark or comparison to make judgments, especially when we are talking about unfamiliar situations or new products. People need to make comparisons with their past experience and knowledge. The brain will always attempt to contrast your product or service.

### Door-in-the-Face (DITF)

Door-in-the-face (DITF) is one of the most common techniques for implementing the Law of Contrast. Basically, an initially large and almost unreasonable request is made, likely to be declined — hence the door is slammed in your face when the prospect rejects the proposal. Then, a second smaller and more reasonable request is made. People accept the second request more readily than if they'd been asked for more the first time because the contrast between the two requests makes the second one seem so much better.

The person you are persuading will then feel obligated to agree with your smaller request. DITF is so effective because society and the Law of Obligation tells us that each concession must be responded to with a concession. When you give them a concession, they will be more inclined to give you a concession.

## The Law of Social Validation

The Law of Social Validation recognizes and builds on our innate desire to be part of the group or part of the majority and that we tend to change our perceptions, opinions and behaviors in ways that are consistent with group norms. Even if we don't admit it, or maybe even realize it, we care about what others think. We seek to find out what others are doing as a way of validating our own actions. Social validation compels us to change our behaviors, our attitudes and our actions, even when what we observe doesn't really match our true desire or thoughts.

The Law of Social Validation is always happening, everywhere: publicly passing the donation plate to help with a community project, doing the wave at sporting events, going to popular dance clubs when you don't enjoy the surroundings, and so many other examples of going along with the crowd.

The more a brand is advertised, the more popular and familiar it is perceived to be. We as consumers somehow infer that something is popular simply because it is advertised. Many salespeople find great success in telling clients that a product is their best-selling or most popular because social validation increases their credibility of the product. When customers feel that something is a hot trend, they spend more money to acquire it, even if there is no proof other than the salesperson's word.

### Making Social Validation Work

The power of social validation can be used to your benefit in any persuasive situation. When your product or service is socially validated, people are likely to use it or switch to it. People are always looking around and comparing themselves to see whether they line up with everyone else. If they feel a discrepancy between where they are and where everyone else is, they will most likely conform to the group standard.

## The Law of Scarcity

The Law of Scarcity states that the more scarce an item becomes, the more the item increases in value, and the greater the urge is to own it. Scarcity drives people to action, making us act quickly for fear of missing out on an opportunity. The law plays a large role in the persuasion process. Opportunities are always more valuable and exciting when they are scarce and less available.

Whenever choice is limited or threatened, we humans need to get a piece of the limited commodity, making us want it and crave it all the more. Scarcity increases the value of any product or service.

### How to Use the Law of Scarcity

Scarcity helps us make decisions. Most of us fear making a decision, so we naturally put it off to allow ourselves time to think and ponder. As a persuader, however, be aware that when your prospects put off the decision, chances are they won't ever make one. Creating scarcity helps your prospects make their decision.

When you want to increase the impact of your scarcity and adapt it to different personalities, make sure you buffer your scarcity with some type of reward. For example, "This offer ends today (scarcity), but when you re-enroll today, I will give you an extra six months of support (reward)."

## The Inside Secrets of Maximum Influence

To be an effective persuader, you cannot use the same techniques for all people all the time. You have to customize your message to fit the demographics, interests and values of your audience. Prepare yourself by knowing as much about your audience as possible. Feeling competent and prepared increases your motivation, reduces fear and enhances your ability to influence. Just remember the three Ds:

- **Discover** what your prospects want and need to hear.
- **Design** and structure a powerful persuasive presentation.
- **Deliver** the message with passion, compassion and purpose.

As a Power Persuader, you must be able to create and motivate change. Understanding human nature is knowing that most people will resist change and burrow into their comfort zones. However, change is the only thing that can lift us up from where we currently lie.

### Your Listening Skills: Crack the Code

Dale Carnegie asserted many years ago that listening is one of the most crucial human relations skills. Listening is how we find out people's code, preferences, desires and needs. Of all the skills one can master, listening is probably the one that will pay you back the most.

Follow these proven keys for effective listening:

1. Give them your undivided attention.
2. Look them directly in the face while they are talking.
3. Show sincere interest in them.
4. Keep the conversation going by asking questions.
5. Use silence to encourage them to talk.
6. Pause before replying or continuing.

### Creating Your Call to Action

The call to action is the most important part of your presentation. This is where your audience understands exactly what you want them to do. Throughout your presentation, you should have gently led them to the same conclusion that you are now giving them.

You should create your call to action before creating the rest of the presentation. Your entire presentation should be built around the call to action but should be no more than 5 percent of your total presentation.

### Preparation Is the Key to Influence

Pre-persuasion is everything. Prepare your mind, know your audience, know their code and structure a winning persuasive argument accordingly. Know who, what, when, where and why about your message and your audience. Power Persuaders know that information and structure are the seeds for perfect persuasion.


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# 38CS03E The Time Trap

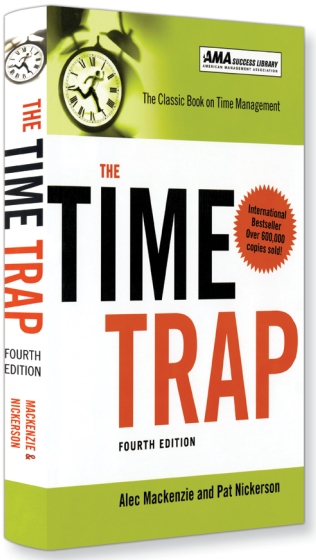
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# The Time Trap

## The Classic Book on Time Management




by Alec Mackenzie and Pat Nickerson

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Suffering from information overload? Being asked to do too much? Can't say no? If you're finding your days clogged with endless activities and responsibilities and your work life spinning out of control, it's time to employ some practical, realistic solutions to the age-old problem of "too much to do and too little time."

Considered to be the classic book on time management, *The Time Trap* gives you powerful methods for both maximizing efficiency and getting the most satisfaction out of your workday.

Based on decades of research and interviews with businesspeople around the world — and extensively revised to include technology-based solutions to the challenges we all face in the virtual world — *The Time Trap* is loaded with smart tactics and priceless time management tools. Let this proven guide boost your personal productivity and professional success when time is *not* on your side.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Ways to avoid so-called "time savers" that don't really work.
- Tips to set realistic goals and make commitments you can keep.
- How to accurately estimate the amount of time needed on new tasks.
- A method to pinpoint and combat your most tenacious time-wasters.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE TIME TRAP**

**by Alec Mackenzie and Pat Nickerson**

**The author:** Alec Mackenzie was an internationally known speaker, consultant and expert on time management. Pat Nickerson, President of EBI Inc., San Diego, is the author of *Managing Multiple Bosses*. Her seminars on time and priority management have attracted 180,000 managers and professionals — business, government and military — worldwide.

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## PART I: TIME MANAGEMENT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Your goal in pursuing better time management is to reach the end of any challenging day and ask yourself,

- How many minutes or hours was I able to focus, undistracted? (If you were able to beat the average manager's eight minutes of peace and concentration, celebrate!)
- How often did I insist that validity trump apparent urgency? (If your answer makes you proud, celebrate!)
- What proportion of my work added value for those I am here to serve? (If your answer pleases you, celebrate!)
- Was I able to negotiate realistic expectations (quantity, quality and time) in order to validate some tasks? (If yes, then celebrate!)
- How often, today, did my decisions fit my sense of ethics? (Celebrate!)
- Did I work hard, meet a lot of my goals and have some fun, too? (Celebrate!)

Getting to this point means leveraging a comprehensive set of ideas and tools to curtail distractions, adjust expectations (yours and other people's) and find satisfaction in doing work you can validate and celebrate. Unfortunately, we are prone to several traps that our traditions have taught us to accept.

## Time Traps We've Been Taught

Information, exploding from worldwide sources, keeps expanding exponentially every day. When you can't keep up with the inflow, software makers and service providers step in to oblige — hiking your personal storage capacity or holding your info-burden on their own servers until you tap it or delete it. But to start managing your business overload, you need to tailor your own criteria for opening and retrieving information. What you need is a personal set of criteria, a system well planned to cut through the clutter, ready to retrieve only the data you need at any moment. You need stringent filtering rules tailored to your needs.

### Pressure Puts Off Planning

Cleaning up your personal information system takes planning and decision-making — and both of those take time because no one else can do it for you. But you're not alone if you find the prospect daunting and other matters more pressing. Can you relate to the following scenarios?

- You're frustrated when an important job is still not ready at deadline — but you're too exhausted to start hunting for missing data.
- When time-driven projects come up, such as year-end reports, you steel yourself for the long night and weekend hours ahead and then reach the finish line, afraid that your hasty findings may prove flawed.
- Senior requesters tell you, "Drop everything, and do this." But you know they'll return shortly for that "everything" you were told to drop.

Even if you are a time-aware professional — even if you list your priorities in writing and struggle to maintain them — you can still get sidetracked by two powerful habits, always painted as virtues: responsiveness and randomness:

### Responsiveness and Randomness: Double Trouble

As a caring professional, you may well have been taught to welcome any of the following:

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Andrew Clancy**, Executive Editor; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Andy Ghillyer**, Contributing Editor

- Walk-in workers with legitimate problems. *(The problem is legitimate; the timing may not be.)*
- Unscheduled meetings about other people's priorities *(The solution may lie with them, not with you.)*
- Email demands, all tagged "urgent." *(You and your team need defensive email protocols.)*
- Lengthy phone calls from "the lonely" or disengaged *(You must redirect without appearing brusque.)*
- A crisis unfolding despite your early warnings. *(Politeness forbids saying or thinking, "I told you so.")*

You may shoulder the odious problem yourself, for the sake of peace. You'll earn little or no gratitude, and the upshot is clear: The interrupters will deepen their dependency. They'll be back — and you'll rue your role as rescuer.

### Cool Your Itch to Respond

When you resist the urge to mend other people's problems, you give them a chance to extricate themselves on their own. You dampen their appetite for cheap help and let them expend some effort of their own. Especially for the experienced workers who may report to you, your practice of counting to ten may contribute handsomely to *their* development.

### Time Management: The Oddest Assumption of All

Do you really manage your hours on earth? Your time is one asset you'd like to consider yours alone, and yet, you can't keep it. You can give it as a gift to your loved ones. You can donate it to worthy causes as a volunteer, and you can lease it out to your employers for an agreed sum. But you can't bank it. It cannot be accelerated or slowed. It must be spent the instant it is received and at one fixed rate: 60 seconds per minute, 60 minutes per hour. We cannot choose whether to use it, only how.

## How to Connect Goals, Objectives and Priorities

Goals … Objectives … Priorities. In casual conversation, business people often use the terms interchangeably. This is a mistake with serious consequences. Though the terms are certainly related, they flow in a strict cascading hierarchy, from goals to objectives to priorities. If you attempt to prioritize your daily tasks without a clear picture of the goals and objectives that are driving them, you can invest a lot of time and effort to produce a result that falls short, because the goal never became clear — to you or anyone else.

### The Cascade From Goals to Objectives to Priorities

Here's how the process is meant to operate in business:

**Stage 1: Goals.** Owners or investors and senior managers commit the research, the funds and the impetus to enter a new market, launch a new product or offer a new service. They draw up strategic plans that focus on the end point (the goals), citing the advantages or gains that this enterprise offers. They set out the concepts and parameters, add financial and political support, and lay out the goals for management in ways to motivate eager sign-up.

**Stage 2: Objectives.** Next, division and department heads draw up plans detailing all the diverse elements to be managed — design, engineering, finance, manufacturing, marketing, sales, service and administration. They lay out the programs and processes involved, plan for coordinated results and deploy the startup teams, doling out the budgets and setting up precise deliverables and time lines.

**Stage 3: Priorities.** Now, the actual performers in each department learn about the goals and objectives set by those above them. They accept their assignments and organize the practical task groupings to accomplish them. They make specific plans and schedules to fit this new work into their existing workloads.

In fact, priority setting is not about scheduling — not yet. It's not about when to do the new tasks — it's about whether these tasks should be allowed to compete with standing obligations. Priority setting aims to make goal accomplishment feasible — on both old and new goals.

## How to Set Priorities and Hold Them

Today, you are asked to reset your priorities, not daily but hourly or at the "speed of change." Hundreds of messages can clog your email, voicemail and smartphone. Mergers, acquisitions and reorganizations can leave your head spinning. On some days, managers or customers can paint even the most absurd demands as valid, urgent and non-negotiable. Often, if the requester has enough clout, you accede to the demand and add a few more hours to your unpaid overtime.

A decade ago, most people reported to one boss, so they knew whom to consult about conflicting priorities. Today, you're just as likely to report to several bosses. If your business is built upon matrix management and project management, you may perform different roles in different groups: You may supervise one team, serve on a second and act as internal consultant or SME on a third.

Furthermore, your "virtual" colleagues and clients may access you directly across continents and culture, so your clock never stops.

Hence, you face fuzzier lines of authority and thinner support than ever. As for setting and holding to priorities, you are on your own! You need a good system that suits your style.

### Minimum Requirements for Prioritizing

There is no one best way. But you can build your system on three firm elements:

1. Build your logic on Vilfredo Pareto's Law, the "80/20" law that proposes that 80 percent of your results will come from only 20 percent of your tasks.
2. Defend your logic with performance criteria.
3. Start each day with a written plan: three bullets, right in front of you, on your task screen or on a sticky note at eye level.

Once you embrace Pareto's Law, you can seriously oppose the common dictates that say "do it now!" or "handle a piece of paper only once!" Sure, those rules sound good, but they only make sense if all incoming tasks had equally high impacts. Pareto is right, so only 20 percent of your tasks deserve attention at the best times on your schedule. Further, of the 80 percent of items clamoring for your attention, only 60 percent may deserve your attention soon — somewhere in the middle 60 percent of your day. And the lowest 20 percent may not merit your attention ever!

Hence, your new rule should be, Don't DO it now —VALIDATE it now!

### The Process of Validating Work

Compare new demands against those in your current load. If an issue can really compete in importance and validity, then slot it in and get it done — not "now" — but in a slot that will assure delivery by its deadline. If it's only a mid-value item, then give it a slot on your schedule that cannot intrude on any slot dedicated to your top 20 percent. Or delay giving it any slot at all — instead, post it in a "holding space" for slotting later.

### Standard Lead Time Tool: One Cure for Deadline Dementia

Many smart departments publish a list of common tasks they perform, along with realistic time estimates. They post these on a shared site and encourage requesters to take a look before submitting requests with optimistic deadlines imposed.

When you accept an assignment, ask the requester for an estimate of the time necessary to complete the task. Always do that before accepting a deadline as reasonable. (Mostly, requesters don't have a clue about work time estimates, but ask!) If common sense will let you do an "eyeball" estimate, go ahead. If not, offer to evaluate the job and come back later with an estimate.

Only after you have made a thoughtful estimate can you agree on a reasonable deadline. Next time you start to evaluate a job, don't look at the clock or the calendar. Instead, consider the discrete tasks involved, and decide where on a time line they will fall.

### Show Risks: Offer Options

If you're the one delivering the final product, never opt out of a discussion on conflicting assignments. Instead, take three tactful steps:

1. Show the risks involved if you attempt clearing both tasks at speed.
2. Show options that make practical sense, with roughly matched trade-offs (pain levels) for either side.
3. State your own preferred solution and the reasons for it.

Then, with a clear conscience, you can accept their joint mandate and perform your best effort. By electing to negotiate, you give both parties the right to examine risks and options and to accept the honest advice of the one who must deliver the goods: you!

## How to Tame the Time Log

Time seems to evaporate when you're very busy. If you can discover where your time actually goes, you can capture more value from it and control the leaks that rob you by stealth.

### How Logging Got a Bad Name

The simplest tool for getting control is a time log. But too many users and authors, by misreading the correct uses of logging, have given it a bad name. What do they fear?

- Boredom: Yes, time logging would be tedious if you kept it up for long. But you won't!
- Inaccuracy: People forget to make entries, then try plugging items from memory…then abandon the job. But, it's not crucial to write in every entry. In our system, you enter only those distractions that conflict directly with your top priorities.
- Guilt: People are shocked when they see their time losses; they berate themselves without mercy. But you can take up logging with the conviction that you're not a machine. While you'll never manage time perfectly, your brief, selective logging exercise will help you to protect your top priorities. That's the whole point.

### Selectivity: The Most Vital Secret

If you try to log everything you do all day, you'll not only suffer boredom, you'll get nothing else done. But that's not what we have in mind. Instead, focus your log on a short list of your top three priorities. Then record "changes of direction," noting only the items that intruded into time slots reserved for priorities. On that basis, your simple time log can be designed like this:

1. Start with a simple two-column layout.
2. In the left-hand column — let's call it your "Red Zone" — you list only your top-priority tasks with their allotted time slots.
3. You hope the right-hand column will remain blank. Here, you log only those incidents that you allow to divert you from Red Zone tasks.

### Analyze Your Log to Maintain Momentum

To get maximum value from your logging exercise, ask yourself 10 important questions. Do it while studying your completed chart. In fact, keep asking yourself these questions long after you have stopped logging. They'll help you discover insights and maintain your improved habits:

1. Did you start on your number one goal at the time you intended?
   a. Did anything distract you from starting?
   b. How could you have avoided that distraction?
   c. Once distracted, how long did it take you to recover?
2. What was your longest period, totally uninterrupted on priorities?
3. What was your most productive period? Why?
4. Least productive? Why?
5. To what extent did you achieve your main goals? Were your time estimates adequate? Should you adjust for the future?
6. Did you keep any task that could have been delegated?
7. Concerning interruptions:
   a. Were any interruptions actually more valid than the scheduled task? If yes — and if they'll repeat, then add them to your priority list.
   b. What categories of interruptions were heaviest? Phone? Walk-in? Crises? Self-imposed escapes?
   c. Did you needlessly interrupt anyone else?
8. Contacts:
   a. Were your planned contacts aimed at advancing priorities?
   b. Did they take longer than planned? Was your data ready?
   c. Did you get the right person? Was that person ready?
9. Paperwork and email:
   a. Did you spend time checking your email during time slots intended for priorities?
   b. Did you lose time on paper because of clutter, poor filing, missing data?
10. Monitoring:
    a. Did you have an adequate tracker for monitoring progress, especially on elements of your priority tasks?
    b. Did you use or provide a simple template for reporting progress by any teammates assigned to the task?

Keep your Red Zone log for three days; analyze what it tells you about your current habits, and gain some benefits from your own deeper insights. Then, select just a few permissive habits for removal or remodeling. Give yourself credit for your good habits to assure rapid response and recovery. Reinforce and rejoice!

## PART II: THE NEW TIME TRAPS AND ESCAPES

# Inadequate Planning

How much of your day do you spend juggling the demands of bosses, team members and customers? As your workload keeps expanding, do you find less and less time for planning? Do you reach many a day's end drained by activity but with little to show for it?

There's no more important activity for a serious time manager than a written daily plan. To be sure your plan will stick, you must commit it to writing. Only with your written or visual plan can you stay in control of your day.

Without a written plan, your friendly optimism can overrule your common sense. You take on too much; you put yourself in the middle of power struggles; you allow random interruptions; and you slow to a dead end. Your written plan will help you get your top 20 percent done; it will guide you in judging incoming priorities and will bolster your visceral strength to resist drift.

### Three Barriers to Maintaining Priorities

There are three barriers shared by many managers and technologists who try priority-setting for a brief period and then abandon it:

1. **Confusion of time management rules with priority setting rules.** Time management is tactical — it determines when to do a task that has already

been validated. Priority management is strategic — it determines whether to do a task at all.

2. **Unclear criteria for setting priorities.** Yours may differ, depending on your business or industry, but they must still meet objective, measurable standards or rules for defining where in the queue a task will go.
3. **Fear of negotiating when priorities are threatened.** Once armed with objective standards, you, as the performer or SME, must use your data to highlight risks and negotiate priorities.

## Inability to Say No

As an astute professional, you've learned that the word "no" may insult the ear of a boss, colleague or customer. A flat "no" can damage relationships and stunt your career, exposing you to labels like rude, uncooperative, egotistical, even insubordinate. Yet, you must set some limits, some boundaries, or be forced to accept tasks whose technical or ethical risks are plain as day.

Consider this five-part approach that should get "no" across, firmly but gently:

1. When — for whatever reason — you must decline a request, don't say "no" outright. The moment requesters feel denied or resisted, they stop listening and start building counter-arguments.
2. Open, instead, with a response like, "I see a risk to you." Or, possibly, "I see a risk to our customer/to the public," whatever is true. This way, you raise your requesters' curiosity, not their defenses.
3. Let requesters see the risks graphically. If you are in the same room together, start sketching the risks on a scratch pad. This puts their focus on the page, not on your face. Sometimes, the requester will want to retrieve that sketch if they must make the case, later, with their own higher-ups.
4. Avoid mentioning any problem or inconvenience to yourself or your team. Your requester will expect you to manage your risks — and muffle your pain — in private.
5. Finally, be prepared to illustrate workable options for every risk you list.

## Poor Communication

Despite its challenges, we take for granted that communication is simply a natural activity, a skill or gift we are born with. Through a lifetime of encounters, we ascend to more and more convoluted conflicts in conference rooms, classrooms or courtrooms — communicating every waking hour.

### Five Reasons Why Casual Communication Is Never Casual

1. The words we use have different meanings in different contexts, on paper and even more so in person.
2. The channels we use can carry subliminal meanings: An email of congratulations feels chillier than a greeting card or a handwritten note.
3. The distance between cultures and continents should oblige us to cultivate those nuances we'd sense so easily if we were face to face. A silence on the phone can rattle our nerves, but a face-to-face silence can speak volumes when we can see and read the facial expressions and body language the other person is conveying.
4. The timing and context — ours and the other person's — may contrast greatly during an encounter. If either party feels distracted, tired, suspicious or threatened — for reasons unrelated to the current message — those feelings can bleed into the exchange, distorting or blocking the message.
5. The quantity or volume of data may baffle us too. How much detail should we include in a message? Will basic coverage insult readers' intelligence? Will advanced coverage assume background that may be missing for too many receivers?

## Poorly Run Meetings

We must improve meetings, not abolish them. Human beings exhibit a built-in need to assemble, especially in times of trouble or triumph. So face it: Meetings are here to stay. Virtual or actual — in times of trouble or opportunity, we can make meetings quick, constructive, comforting and compelling.

### Don't Call Meetings Just Because You Can

Here are five ways to make meetings bearable:

1. Call a meeting only on topics requiring two-way communication.
2. Call a meeting only when the topic cannot be covered in a memo.
3. Hold team meetings on a reliable schedule — but without a set length. This gives every member a chance to suggest items of concern for your pre-agenda. Teams work better when they know they

can rely on airing an issue of concern to several team members.

4. Keep meetings short. If you only need 20 minutes, that's all you take.
5. Prepare well. Today's teams are smart and easily bored.

Some suggestions for keeping good order:

- List agenda items in order of impact: If time runs out, damage is minimal.
- Members will not interrupt presenters; instead they reserve questions for a question period that can be slotted after each agenda item or held to a timed Q&A session at the end of the meeting.
- Members will not interrupt one another in mid-sentence or will raise hands to be heard next.
- No "been there, done that" reactions. Don't criticize: Offer a better idea.

## Information Overload and the Paper Chase

Information fuels your enterprise. In a typical year, you may scan industrial and market research, news outlets, learned journals and your corporate intranet — to scan millions, indeed billions of words in dozens of languages. Access is easy; selection is tougher; validation and deployment of the data, even more challenging. So, to gain control, you face two tasks:

1. You must tap information sources efficiently, for precisely the information you need and no more.
2. You must control the paper chase that still rages around you, 30 years after the pundits predicted you'd be paperless.

### First Challenge: How to Gain the Information You Need

For a systematic assessment of what you'll need for any task, your team must think through your data requirements early. You could ask yourselves,

- What information will we need? At what stages of a project?
- Where will the information originate? Which department? Person?
- What deadlines are critical?
- What could go wrong?
- What steps could we take to buffer errors or delays?
- What alternative sources could we tap? When? At what cost?

### The Second Big Challenge: Manage the Information You Gather

Your ability to apply the information you gather will depend on building a logical storage and retrieval system (probably electronic) and on improving your personal organization skills to avoid drowning in paper. Here are a few warning signs:

- Fat file folders clutter the top of your credenza.
- Several tasks are flagged on your electronic organizer, still untouched since yesterday.
- Scribbled scraps of paper — reminders of hallway conversations — lie half buried in clutter.
- Last month's professional journals lie unopened as this month's issues arrive.
- Your coffee goes cold while you dig through your briefcase for a missing flash drive.
- People kid you, kindly or otherwise, about your rumpled desk until an important task, buried in clutter, slips past your notice. Then it ceases to be a joking matter.

## Confused Responsibility and Authority

Sudden change — the one constant in business — brings with it an immediate and dangerous condition: confused responsibility and authority. At the most basic level, they can be distinguished this way: Responsibility denotes a duty or obligation, whereas authority denotes the power to take action. If you impose responsibility on a team member, you must also grant matching authority to complete the task for which he or she is now responsible.

### Five Clarifying Practices

To clarify responsibility and authority on any job being assigned, the boss must provide and the appointee must insist on the following:

1. An accurate job title that clarifies the appointee's level of authority.
2. A written job description agreed to by boss and assignee.
3. An organizational chart that shows who reports to whom and how members and teams interact.
4. A written change announcement to all whose cooperation will be needed.
5. A set of simple metrics to drive regular performance evaluations, to be conducted at intervals frequently enough to allow continuous improvement.

## Attempting Too Much

Have you reached a point where people take your superior service for granted? Do you make everyone happy but yourself? Do you allow important priorities to get buried by convincing yourself that "it all has to get done, anyway"? Keep your eyes open for the day when the overdrive that began as a virtue can morph into a vise drawn ever tighter around your time and your life.

### Four Hazardous Habits of Mind

Four common confessions from perfectionist, workaholic overachievers include,

1. "I needed to keep excelling, even under pressure, to keep up my sense of self-worth, but others were clearly indifferent about the results. They tell me I'm overdoing it, even to this day."
2. "I'm reluctant to delegate, either through lack of faith in others, inadequate practice in delegating or discomfort about my earlier, failed attempts to let go."
3. "Almost daily, I overschedule myself, with unrealistic notions on how much can be done in a day."
4. "Perfectionism drives me to lavish attention on minor details and to keep reworking everything. If my name is on it, it has to be perfect or I can't release it."

### Execute Four Escapes

What can you do to change your mindset and behaviors?

1. You must dump the myth that you work better under pressure. People don't work better under pressure; they just work faster. And that can lead to errors, discovered too late.
2. Don't assume that "it all has to get done" — at least not by you. Discriminate between high- and low-priority tasks. Then, assign and teach a low-priority task to a delegate. Allow for learning and refinement time. Realize that the consequences can't be too high if the priority is actually low.
3. With your team, build a standard lead-time menu showing commonly repeated tasks so requesters learn to make reasonable demands. Post the menu on a shared website. Teammates and requesters will consult it before bothering you.
4. Finally, save your perfectionism for those tasks that warrant it. Make a conscious decision about how good a result must be. Build your quality standards for vital tasks, and then set up your computer to flag any variables from that acceptable range. Your computer will keep an eye on things.

## PART III: PARTING ADVICE

## Where Do We Go From Here?

Perhaps your time logs showed you the truth about where your time has been going. Now, you need an action plan to confirm and consolidate your resolutions about upgrading time management.

Many people, when first introduced to time management, pounce on a specific idea or two — and off they go to reform their practices without a thought about the overall patterns of their lives or the ripple effects of one time management trap on another.

### Expect the Tug of Old Habits

On their own, few people can analyze the causes of their difficulties with time management or understand the invisible habits that cause the problems. Instead, they jump at quick and easy solutions, then wonder why the cure didn't take. In a few weeks, the old ways are back.

Long-term success demands a coordinated approach, one in which you recognize your persistent patterns of behavior and form a systematic plan, sketched out and posted where you can see it. Then, it must be followed, daily, to get you past disappointments.

So don't limit yourself to exploring a few "whats." Instead, work to understand the "whys" — the habits of your lifetime. Then, you'll find it easier to adopt behaviors that conserve time for the people and the passions you value at work and at home.

You are in charge of your time, but your time-based decisions will impact others. Let people know what you're doing. Enlist their help, and return the favor by sharing the time-saving techniques you learn. Lead by example. Few business development ideas are more team-friendly than good time management.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Time Trap*, you'll also like:

1. ***Time Traps* by Todd Duncan**. Sales expert Duncan explains why you should abandon time management and instead adopt task management.

2. ***The 5 Choices* by Adam Merrill, Leena Rinne and Kory Kogon**. Be empowered to make more selective, high-impact choices about where to invest your valuable time, attention and energy.

3. ***Extreme Productivity* by Robert C. Pozen**. Pozen provides proven antidotes to productivity-draining activities such as meetings, email and an unbalanced workload.

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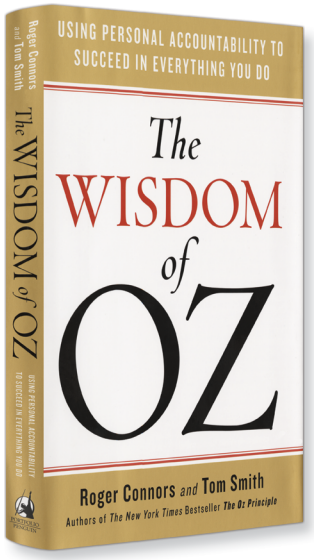
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# The Wisdom of Oz

## Using Personal Accountability to Succeed in Everything You Do




by Roger Connors and Tom Smith

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What are your dreams? What do you want? This book will help you get whatever you consider worthwhile in life. Simply put, when you unleash the power of personal accountability, it will energize you in life-altering ways, giving you a concrete boost that enhances your ability to think, to withstand adversity, to generate confidence, and to increase your own natural emotional, mental, and intellectual strength.

In *The Wisdom of Oz,* Roger Connors and Tom Smith present the practical and powerful principles of personal accountability in simple, down-to-earth terms that you can apply. Connors and Smith demonstrate that by taking personal ownership of your goals and accepting responsibility for your performance, you also take control of your success.

You will discover that while no one will ever wave a wizard's wand and magically solve all your problems, there is a way to experience the near magical impact of personal accountability.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why accountability is a personal choice to achieve desired results.
- The difference between Above The Line thinking and Below The Line thinking and the impact it can have on achieving your goals.
- The four Steps To Accountability: See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It.
- The simple questions you need to answer to See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It.
- Suggestions to help you think outside the box when trying to Solve It.
- How to use positive accountability to overcome circumstances.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE WISDOM OF OZ**

**by Roger Connors and Tom Smith**

**The authors:** Roger Connors and Tom Smith are co-founders of Partners In Leadership, the Accountability Training and Culture Change Company, with thousands of clients all around the world. Their principles of personal accountability are presented in simple, down-to-earth terms that can be applied in all aspects of life. They are also co-authors of the *New York Times* best-selling books *The Oz Principle, How Did That Happen?* and *Change the Culture, Change the Game.*

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## If I Only Had A...

Most of us have seen the iconic 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz* so many times that we know the story and songs by heart. Why do Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion touch us? Like all great entertainment, the story resonates. It hits home. We see ourselves in the characters and wish we possessed the power, the brains, the heart, and the courage to make our own dreams come true.

Think about what you want. What you really want. *If I only had a ...* Is it a promotion or raise? Finding a new job? Overcoming a persistent challenge or obstacle? We call the worthwhile things we want in life results. But they don't come easily.

### Get Off the Couch!

On March 22, 2012, 35 days before the country's presidential elections, the Malian army stormed the presidential palace, overthrowing the western African country's 20-year-old democracy. "It was a tragic moment when the coup happened," says Yeah Samake, mayor of a small town located approximately 40 miles from the chaos. "I came into my living room and completely collapsed on the couch. [Then] my wife came and kicked me. I couldn't believe it. I told her, 'I am looking for sympathy here. Why are you kicking me?' She only said, 'Get out there and go do something.'"

Whether you get off the couch on your own or require a little nudge from somewhere else, the point is to get out there and go do something. Mayor Samake's wife's kick gave him the resolve to get off the couch, get in the car, and drive through five rebel checkpoints into the heart of chaos.

Impressed by his courage, the rebel leader, Captain Amadou Sanogo, invited Mayor Samake to speak to the Malian people on national television. Samake later did just that, denouncing the coup and demanding that power be restored to the people. Yeah Samake went on to become the democratic voice of his nation and made a real difference in the reinstatement of Mali's democratic presidential elections.

**Only you can unleash the positive power of personal accountability to overcome the obstacles you face and achieve the results you want.**

We call this The Wisdom of Oz. Understanding this "big idea" will help you tap into this power of personal accountability. Getting off the couch, dealing with your circumstances, and going after the result lie at the core of The Wisdom of Oz.

### There Are No Wizards!

In *The Wizard of Oz,* we meet Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion, who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in circumstances beyond their control.

All of these timeless characters initially felt victimized by their shortcomings and circumstances. They believed they could not possibly change things on their own, so they set off on the yellow brick road to the Land of Oz in hopes of finding some all-powerful Wizard who would solve all of life's problems for them.

You remember the story. Arriving in the Emerald City after a treacherous journey, Toto, Dorothy's adorable little dog, pulls back the curtain to reveal a truly powerless Wizard, one who pulls levers and blows smoke but can do nothing for them.

Each of these characters eventually rose above their circumstances, their fear, their errant beliefs and shortcomings, to achieve their desired results. Getting what they wanted had nothing to do with the powerless Wizard and everything to do with their own powerful inner commitment to achieve their desired results. They

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Executive Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Eileen Spatz**, Contributing Editor

conquered their challenges and fears and got what they wanted by working together, doing their best, and finding the power within.

### Making the Choice

Greater accountability is a *choice,* perhaps the most powerful choice you can ever make. Choosing accountability will empower you to overcome obstacles and succeed in everything you do. This is how you put the Oz Principles to work: by recognizing that you can't change yesterday but you can choose to take charge of what happens today.

Think about a major result you want for yourself, or an obstacle blocking your progress. Write it down; carry it in your purse or wallet; tape it on a bathroom mirror. The more concrete and simple your goal, the better. Pick one thing, some specific goal, then apply what you are about to learn and watch it work.

## You Can't Go the Way You Came

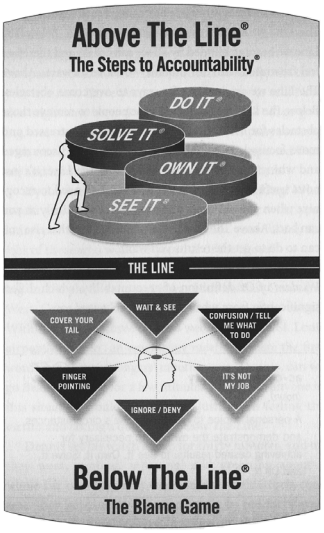
The solution to most of life's problems and opportunities is a strong dose of personal accountability. Tragically, however, people typically view accountability as somethign that happens to them when things go wrong. Does the mere mention of the word "accountability" trigger your natural fight-or-flight instinct to run for cover in order to avoid the fallout you just know is coming? This negative and uninspiring view of accountability is reinforced in this common dictionary definition:

*Accountability (noun): Subject to having to report, explain, or justify; being answerable, responsible.*

With a definition like this, no wonder people have problems accepting accountability. Passing the buck, dodging the bullet, running for cover — that's the natural human reaction when it comes to the old textbook notion of accountability. Facing this kind of accountability, people just naturally resort to the avoidance strategies we human beings use to get off the hook, whether or not we were really ever on a hook at all.

You unleash the real power of personal accountability when accountability becomes something you do to yourself voluntarily to ensure success, not something you're forced to do to account for failure.

The secret sauce is the Steps To Accountability. In the illustration you will notice a line separating Above The Line thinking from Below The Line thinking. Above The Line is where you take personal accountability to overcome the obstacles and achieve the results you want to achieve. Here you take the steps to See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It. The Steps To Accountability can have a magical effect on how you think and act.




Below The Line is where we can all get stuck in the blame game, focused on excuses rather than results. Above The Line we are looking for ways to overcome obstacles. Below The Line we are looking for people to remove those obstacles for us.

With the Steps To Accountability in mind, here's The Wisdom of Oz definition of accountability, which differs significantly from what you're probably used to:

*Accountability (noun): A personal choice to rise above one's circumstances and demonstrate the ownership necessary for achieving desired results: to See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It.*

### Life is Always Better Above The Line

It's important to realize that the Steps To Accountability only work if you become personally accountable for how you *think* and *act*. The goal is to consistently think Above The Line.

You are only human if you're thinking about all the other people in your life who you believe block your ability to get what you want: All those who are Below The Line in their own lives and how they rub off on you. If you're thinking this, we simply ask, who is the most important person in your life who needs to be Above The Line? Obvious answer: you! As Socrates once said, "Let him that would move the world first move himself."

What makes some people crumble under hardship or adversity and stay "on the bench" while others soar above their circumstances? Taking control of your circumstances, rather than have your circumstances control you. That's the essence of what it means to move Above The Line.

Dorothy easily could have stayed in Munchkinland, where she was instantly adored. But being queen of the

Munchkins wasn't what she wanted for herself. Wanting a better you is a good thing.

## Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!

Nothing much good happens Below The Line. Problems don't get solved, goals aren't attained, and dreams die. Sure, you can get some sympathy; you may even get off the hook, at least temporarily. But real results? Forget it.

The lesson we should all learn is that all the "blame-storming" in the world will never move you closer to the success you want. Finding convenient reasons to shift responsibility or blame is never healthy and never brings better results.

Now, this doesn't mean there aren't legitimate victims, because there are. Those who have been injured or suffered great tragedy have every right to remain victims as long as they like. No one would deprive them of those feelings. Yet all victims must ultimately decide how long they will stay stuck in their suffering. In the end it is still a choice, though sometimes a difficult one.

### What It Means to Be Below The Line

So what does it mean to be Below The Line? It simply means to have a mindset that allows you to stay stuck, a victim of your circumstances. To reside Below The Line means you have stopped trying to overcome the obstacles and have decided that the solution lies beyond you, out of your control, that someone else will need to solve the problem for you.

The gravitational tug from Below The Line is ever constant because the obstacles and challenges keeping us from what we want are real and often very hard to solve. Because they are real issues, they legitimize the idea that we are stuck: *Surely, everyone can see that I am justified in feeling this way.*

### Time for *You* to Rise Above The Line

This is what The Wisdom of Oz is all about: guiding you through a concrete, step-by-step process of shedding victimhood and becoming a results-driven, accountable, and vibrant person. So how do you leave the victim cycle? Just how do you shed Below The Line thinking and behavior? You keep what you want firmly in mind and choose to rise Above The Line by learning to consistently See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It — the four Steps To Accountability. Although it isn't easy, it is possible when you're armed with a working knowledge of these four Above The Line steps — steps you are now prepared to learn how to use.

## The Cowardly Lion: Mustering the Courage to See It

Seeing the world as it really is takes courage. How do you work up the courage to admit your reality may not actually be *the* reality? As with everything related to accountability, it all starts with making a personal choice.

It is human nature to "lock in" on what you are familiar with and "block out" everything else. This lock-in/block-out reflex produces blind spots that limit your ability to solve problems, improve relationships, overcome obstacles, and get the results you want.

When it comes to our ability to See It, we all have blind spots that give us a distorted view of reality, allowing us to see only part of the picture — that part of the picture we are already familiar with.

It is nearly impossible to take accountability and successfully navigate the See It step when you don't have a full view of what you're really facing. So that means you have to look smart and hard, so you can See It. The more you improve your ability to See It, the more successful will be your journey Above The Line.

### The "See It" Question

Recognizing the need to See It is one thing. Actually Seeing It is another, because people want what they want and want it now. This wanting can be blinding. What is the key to moving from Below The Line to Above The Line? Surprisingly, asking and answering one simple question:

**What is the reality I most need to acknowledge?**

Over the many years we've spent working with people who are trying to master the See It step, we've discovered that the very best way to overcome the blind spots is through feedback, gained primarily in conversations with people who can help you see the whole picture. If you are a husband and want to know how you are doing in your marriage, ask your wife. If you want to know how things are going at work, ask your boss and coworkers. Simply ask, "What feedback do you have for me?"

After asking for the feedback, you then need to do the hard part and actually listen to what they're saying, no matter how painful. Humility, gratitude, openness, honesty, patience with self, and a desire for better results are your best friends when it comes to getting feedback.

### What Happens When You Don't See It

The ability to muster the courage to See It and examine your blind spots will not only help you avoid life's big problems but also help you with the little everyday troubles. The See It step is the first step Above The Line, and it must be taken with courage, resolve, and determination in order to grasp the full reality of what you are facing.

If the Cowardly Lion chose to summon the courage to leave the shadows and seclusion of the forest to march up the yellow brick road, so can you. We promise you, the view is much better up Above The Line, where life is a lot more fun and rewarding for those whose eyes are wide open.

## The Tin Man: Finding the Heart to Own It

Remember how the Tin Man blamed his heartless predicament on his creator, claiming to be hollow inside because the tinsmith "forgot" to give him a heart? Did the tinsmith really forget, or did he just figure it was the Tin Man's job to develop heart himself?

As with everything related to accountability, true ownership does not come from outside — it comes from within. No one can make you Own It. There is no magic wand.

Why do we care more for the things we "own" than for the things we "rent?" Perhaps it's because we don't have as much invested when we simply rent or borrow; there's not as much at stake. When you rent, you can walk away without losing anything. At the core of it, owners are just more invested than renters; they are "all in."

When it comes to achieving the result you want, are you a renter or an owner? Are you approaching what you want with the high level of commitment, interest, and investment that only an owner can possess? Or are you going through the motions, only half committing to the goal, leaving yourself an easy exit in case things don't go the way you hoped?

We would go so far as to say that the ability to Own It is a key characteristic that often separates people who are highly successful from those who aren't. When you Own It, you set yourself apart from the crowd.

### The "Own It" Question

The question you should ask yourself to make sure you Own It is:

**How am I contributing to the problem and/or solution?**

If it's a problem you're trying to solve, your ability to Own It will pave the way for the next step Above The Line. If it is a challenge you are taking on, then an Own It mentality will fill you with the drive to get there.

Making your desired results a reality requires you to own both the problem and the solution. People most often fail to own their circumstances because they cannot bring themselves to accept the other side of the story — what we call the *accountable side*. When you focus only on what happens to you, as opposed to what you did or didn't do, you block out this other side of the story.

To Own It you must find the heart to see both sides of the story, linking what you have done, or failed to do, with your current circumstances.

Making all the right connections in the Own It step sets you firmly on your own path of living in a world Above The Line. The power already lies with you to overcome obstacles and get the result you want. You empower yourself when you take the Own It step.

## The Scarecrow: Obtaining the Wisdom to Solve It

After meeting the Wizard, it didn't take Dorothy and her friends long to realize he could not help them. They come to know what you already know: Solving It is about you creating your own way to move forward, your own way to overcome the obstacles you face in order to get what you want in life.

Typically, someone makes it to the Solve It step because they sincerely want to achieve some challenging goal or solve a sticky problem. This takes belief. It takes tenacity. The great news is that by following the Steps To Accountability, you will get there.

When you take the Solve It step, prepare to go the distance. What you're after is likely not going to be easy. Pursuing a major goal takes resolve, persistence, and a huge amount of passion to find solutions to overcome obstacles and make it happen.

The Solve It state of mind is a creative, "as if my life depended upon it" kind of thinking, a thinking that brings solutions for challenges and obstacles that we often believe are outside our control. Creative solutions come when you put everything on the line. So when you take the Solve It step, although your life may not actually be at risk, your happiness is.

### The "Solve It" Question

When taking the Solve It step, you should ask:

**What else can I do?**

Repeatedly asking "What else can I do?" forces you to drill down through any obstacles to find solutions, solutions that are often buried deep in the rich soil of innovation and creativity, solutions that almost always lurk below the surface of your easygoing, everyday, even routine way of thinking.

Taking the Solve It step is not for the faint of heart. It is hard work but will yield rich rewards.

Successful people don't always win, but they do spring back up when they fall. Your Solve It ideas won't always work. Solve It thinking means to keep trying, keep moving. We like the way football coach Vince Lombardi put it:

"The greatest accomplishment is not in never falling but in rising again after you fall."

### How to Solve It

Here are some suggestions about how to think outside the box, suggestions that will help you deal creatively with any obstacles you meet during the Solve It step:

- **Brainstorm with the right people.** Try to find someone who has achieved a similar goal or solved a similar problem. Write ideas down, and loosen up your thinking.
- **Keep asking, "What else can I do?"** Allow your mind time to think about it.
- **Think differently.** Interview people and ask, "What would you do?"
- **Do your homework.** Utilize the Internet and the library. Find out what others did and how it worked for them.
- **Test your assumptions.** Ask how you can get outside the box. Fight for new ways of thinking.

Every successful journey Above The Line begins by asking a single question: "What else can I do to achieve the result I want?"

## Dorothy: Exercising the Means to Do It

As you may recall, in *The Wizard of Oz* Dorothy eventually discovered that all she had to do was click her heels three times and focus on what she most wanted by saying, "There's no place like home." From the moment she touched down in Oz, her ability to exercise the means to Do It by enlisting the help of her friends, listening to the advice of those she came to trust, showing resourcefulness in solving her problems, and being patient with staying the course so that she could make it back home — all moved her beyond angry apple trees, poisoned poppies, flying monkeys, and wicked witches. She knew what she wanted to accomplish and kept after it. When it comes to the Do It step and achieving what you want: Trying is just not in the equation. It's all about doing.

### Walking in Circles

Have you ever felt that after setting off on a journey to accomplish your goal or to solve a pesky problem, you were wandering in endless circles, unable to make any real progress? Even when you're ready to Do It and focus on the direction you want to go, the littlest things can veer you quickly and surprisingly off course.

When you set off to Do It, how can you keep from walking in circles — that is, going through the motions but making no real progress? First, you must have a clear path. It may not be a yellow-brick-road kind of clear, but you should lay out a clear plan with the steps you will take to accomplish whatever it is you want to accomplish. Second, you need determination to do the things you said you would do.

One more caution: You must be prepared to be tested in your resolve to succeed as you take the Do It step. Every good thing you want to accomplish — solving a problem or achieving a goal — comes with its own challenges, and you will certainly come across some of these on your journey:

- Your faith in your ability to Do It will be tested.
- Your desire to get it done will be challenged, your resolve stretched.
- Your ability to stay Above The Line will be tried.
- Your willpower to overcome obstacles will be drained by a desire to take the easy way out or slip back into the comfort of bad habits.

Here's what we have learned when it comes to these soul stretchers: *You've got to want it more than you don't want it*. Success only comes when you hit that tipping point and you want it *more* than you don't want it. That's when real movement occurs.

### The "Do It" Question

The following all-important Do It question should help you concentrate on what you need to do to get what you're after. At this stage of the Steps To Accountability, ask yourself:

**What am I accountable to do and by when?**

By asking this question, you remove any potential for confusion and you create a concrete plan of action — a plan that includes all the things you are going to do and the dates and times by which you are going to do them. Be sure to break down your plan into small, achievable pieces. Pace yourself, but always include a "by when" date and time in your plan. You should feel accountablefor your, "by when," and do everything in your power to follow through by the time you set.

Finally, if you want to increase the probability of doing it, tell someone about it. Make your plans and deadlines visible; put yourself out there. There is power in sharing your plans.

### The Gravitational Pull Below The Line

When you are working to Do It, there is a gravitational force constantly tugging on you, trying to drag you down Below The Line. This force gets bigger and stronger as the challenges get larger and tougher.

But those reasons become excuses as soon as you start using them to stop trying to solve the problem. Let's talk

for a minute about two of those forces constantly tugging you Below The Line:

- **First: Other people.** The people around us and the views they have been conditioned to hold can either help us or hurt us when it comes to reaching for our dreams. Ask yourself if the people you spend time with are good for you? Are you good for them? Are you beating up on one another with no idea why?
- **Second: Health.** Serious health issues strike people and can totally immobilize them. Day-to-day health challenges that plague most of us come with a choice: Let it pull you down, or rise above it all.

### Doing What You Say You Will Do

There is no doubt that Dorothy really wanted to get back to Kansas, but getting home took more than desire. She had a plan and knew what she and her new friends needed to do and when they needed to do it. This kind of focused action comes from committing yourself at whatever cost, discovering your own unique means for Doing It, and then Doing It until it's done. Imagine if Dorothy had stopped before bringing the witch's broom back to the Wizard. She had come so far, but all her effort would have meant nothing had she and her friends not finished the job.

Doing It is more than just working harder. It's more than just fighting like crazy against any obstacle. It's organizing what you're going to do. It's working smart. Building a plan, following a path, bringing a logical flow into your actions.

Doing It means wrapping your arms completely around what you need to do and when you need to Do It and then doing what you say you will do to make it happen.

## You've Always Had the Power ...

At the end of *The Wizard of Oz* we learn that Dorothy always had the power to go back to Kansas — she just didn't know it. Not even the good witch Glinda's magical power could whisk Dorothy home; she had to discover this power inside herself — the power to control her circumstances and not let her circumstances control her. The same applies to all of us. And when that discovery happens, the sky's the limit for what we can achieve.

People who make the personal choice to take control of their lives and overcome all the traps, tricks, and troubles that we all face are the people who succeed. The results of doing so can be miraculous — for your own life and the countless lives you go on to touch.

By now you should have learned more about the power of personal accountability than you ever knew before, maybe even more than you've ever wanted to know. We hope you are ready to unleash this very real power in your life by making a choice and acting on it.

Your choices — *acts of selecting from two or more possibilities* — will either move you Above The Line, where you take charge of making it happen, fulfilling your aspirations, or solving that problem you face, or drop you Below The Line, where you risk wallowing in the blame game while getting trapped in the victim cycle.

But you can't be in two places at one time. That may seem obvious, but it is human nature to straddle the line, to sit on the fence, to wait and see. In the end, you have to choose one or the other.

### The Air is Better Above The Line

Just like a breath of fresh air, accountability allows a person to think more clearly about everything. Given our ongoing 30-year experience studying the impact of personal accountability in people's lives, and with millions of people as our "laboratory," we have come to realize that accountable, Above The Line people enjoy quite a few benefits. They

- Are empowered to see things as they really are;
- Find solutions that most others don't;
- Learn and grow from negative experiences when others would get stuck;
- Avoid having problems in the first place;
- Enjoy better, stronger, more fulfilling relationships;
- Experience less of the stress and depression that always comes with victimization;
- Have more inner confidence that they can Do It.

You get the point: Greater accountability brings all kinds of personal payoffs.

### Put It to the Test

While inaction is the assassin of accountability, taking the right actions will accelerate your journey to results. And those actions are the Steps To Accountability: to See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It. This means asking yourself the right questions to help you achieve your goal, solve the problem, or finally experience the performance breakthrough you've been looking for.

After you identify exactly what you want, it is time to apply the accountability questions to it. Each of these questions is specifically designed to help you effectively move Above The Line:

1. **See It: "What is the reality I most need to acknowledge?"** This question is key to figuring out what is really going on. Here are other questions you can ask yourself to expand your ability to See It:
   - What is not working?
   - What are the "hard things" I need to hear?
   - Who do I need to ask for feedback?
   - What am I pretending not to know?
2. **Own It: How am I contributing to the problem and/or solution?** The answer to this question will help you see why you are where you are and what you can do about it. Some additional questions you can ask yourself:
   - What role have I played in my current circumstances?
   - Am I trying to be in two places at one time?
   - Am I totally committed to moving forward?
   - What feedback would I give someone else in this same situation?
3. **Solve It: Your answers to the powerful Solve It question, "What else can I/we do?" will reveal new ways to move forward and see real progress.** Consider these additional questions:
   - If everything depended upon me, what else would I do?
   - What can I control that I have assumed is outside of my control?
   - If I were to do things differently, what would I do?
   - If my life depended upon it, what else would I do?
4. **Do It: What am I accountable to do and by when?** This final Above The Line question will help you lock in a specific plan to move forward. Additional questions you can ask yourself:
   - What realistic deadlines can I give myself?
   - Have I broken down the plan into simple, actionable steps?
   - Who can I tell my plan and report my progress to?
   - What adjustments would make my plan even more realistic?

Don't be discouraged if it takes some time to make the progress you want to make. Be patient with your plans, and remain consistent in your efforts to Do It. They will pay off.

## A Word of Warning

**Practice Before You Preach:** Just remember, it is not "Practice what you preach," it is "Practice before you preach." In our experience, when you do this, other people will see the positive changes in you and wonder what's in your water — what you've been doing. As you work with others and share what you've learned, you will help them escape their bad Below The Line habits while improving your own ability to remember these principles and make them part of your daily life.

**Manage Your Stress:** In your quest to live Above The Line and accomplish your goals, fix your problems, or set new records, you may be driven to overachieve in one way or another. That can get stressful. We all need to manage our stress.

Bottom line: Enough sleep, regular exercise, and healthy eating can work more wonders than all the medications in the world. Be sure to pay attention to the basics. They matter.

Even though we've spent nearly 30 years eating, drinking, living, and sleeping accountability, we would be the first to tell you not to go overboard in your own journey toward greater accountability.

### Keep Stepping!

The Wisdom of Oz is about discovering the power of taking personal accountability for the things you want to do and the problems you want to solve. It's about taking the Steps To Accountability to See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It and being filled with the knowledge and desire to stay Above The Line. It's about overcoming your circumstances and not being overcome by them.

It's worth repeating. The Wisdom of Oz is, above all, simply this: **Only you can unleash the positive power of personal accountability to overcome the obstacles you face and achieve the results you want.**

### MORE SV CONTENT ON ACCOUNTABILITY

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**Summary: *Accountability* by Greg Bustin.** Business and leadership consultant Greg Bustin introduces the Seven Pillars of Accountability: character, unity, learning, tracking, urgency, reputation and evolution, and shows how each pillar is a crucial part of effective leadership.

**Webinar: *Using Personal Accountability to Succeed in Everything You Do* by Roger Connors.** Roger Connors presents the practical and powerful principles of personal accountability in simple, down-to-earth terms that you will help you strengthen relationships, improve friendships, increase value on the job, or achieve whatever it is you most desire.

· Book 42 of 269 ·

# 39-04 Writing Without Bullshit

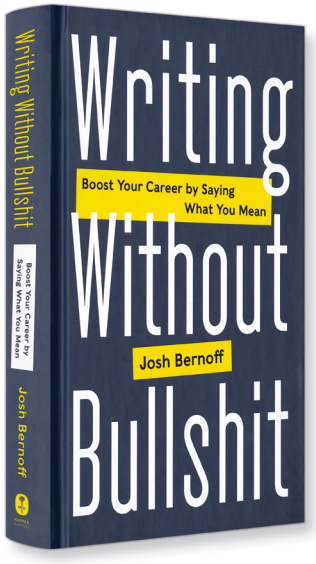
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# Writing Without Bullshit

## Boost Your Career by Saying What You Mean




by Josh Bernoff

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Writing Without Bullshit* is the first comprehensive guide to writing for today's world: a noisy environment where everyone reads what you write on a screen. The average news story now gets only 36 seconds of attention. Unless you change how you write, your emails, reports and web copy don't stand a chance.

In this practical and witty book, you'll learn to front-load your writing with pithy titles, subject lines and opening sentences. You'll acquire the courage and skill to purge weak and meaningless jargon and wimpy passive voice. And you'll get used to writing directly to the reader to make every word count.

At the center of it all is the Iron Imperative: *Treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own*. Embrace that, and your customers, your boss and your colleagues will recognize the power and boldness of your thinking.

Transcend the fear that makes your writing weak. Plan and execute writing projects with confidence. Manage edits and reviews flawlessly. And master every modern format, from emails and social media to reports and press releases.

Stop writing to fit in. Start writing to stand out. Boost your career by writing without bullshit.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Techniques that will help you adhere to the Iron Imperative.
- Why fear generates bad writing habits and how to get over it.
- Specific needs and expectations of business readers.
- To plan longer projects and embrace collaborative writing.
- To write and promote intelligently for online audiences.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **WRITING WITHOUT BULLSHIT**

**by Josh Bernoff**

**The author:** For 20 years, Josh Bernoff was a principal analyst and senior vice president of idea development at Forrester Research, the elite technology research company. He has written software documentation, online help files, press releases, newsletters, magazine articles, web copy, over a hundred research reports and four books. His first book, *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*, written with Charlene Li, was a *BusinessWeek* best-seller. *Writing Without Bullshit: Boost Your Career By Saying What You Mean* by Josh Bernoff. Copyright © 2016 by Josh Bernoff. Summarized by arrangement with HarperBusiness, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. 304 pages, $23.99, ISBN: 978-0-06247-715-6. To purchase this book go to www.amazon.com.

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## Change Your Perspective

### Transcend Bullshit

The tide of bullshit is rising. Your email inbox is full of irrelevant, poorly written crap. Your boss talks in jargon and clichés. The websites you read are impenetrable and incomprehensible.

Bullshit is a burden on all of us, keeping us from getting useful work done. Technology has made it breathtakingly easy for anybody to create content and distribute it to thousands of people. Unfortunately, nobody told those creators what it takes to create good content, so we're stuck wading through a deluge of drivel.

You know this is a problem. It's also an opportunity.

One principle powers everything else you're about to read. It's called the Iron Imperative: *Treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own*. That couldn't be simpler. And yet everything that's wrong with the way businesspeople write today stems from ignoring this principle.

Bullshit is communication that wastes the reader's time by failing to communicate clearly and accurately. The biggest problem is lack of clarity. Jargon, overuse of qualifying words like "very" and "deeply," confusing passive sentences, poorly organized thinking and just general rambling on: That's bullshit. Those are constructions that hide meaning rather than reveal it.

Your objective in learning to write without bullshit is awareness of your own habits and why they exist. With that awareness and some tips on ways to do better, you can improve. The goal is not perfection; no writing is perfect. The goal is to understand what it takes to be better and to create content that stands out from the ordinary bullshit-laden writing that surrounds us all at work.

Learning to write this way will feel like learning yoga or skiing. You'll learn new ways to do things that will feel a little weird. You're going to have to unlearn some of what you learned about writing, which will slow you down at first.

But very soon after, you'll begin to internalize these techniques. You'll be able to write shorter and faster. As you put this new, bold content out into the world, people will notice you. They will thank you for your clarity and directness. You will both feel and reflect integrity. And you might even get some of your work done a little quicker.

### Seize Your Opportunity

A miasma of word pollution pervades our everyday business lives. One simple sentence explains how we got here: We spend all day long reading on screens, and what we read is unedited text created by poorly trained writers.

Reading on a screen is hard — especially when it's a five-inch smartphone screen. But increasingly, computer and phone screens are what we read all day. What is this doing to the way we read?

Josh Schwartz, chief data scientist at Chartbeat, says the average reader spends no more than 36 seconds on the average news story. When the company tested the comprehension of people who'd read a news story, they found that only 37 percent could answer a question about a detail at the end of the article, a result that's only slightly better than guessing. The issue here is how reading on-screen impairs concentration.

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Also, content is very different from what the previous generation of office workers consumed. Most of what you read comes directly from the fingertips of the person who wrote it to your eyeballs, with no editorial process. Not just editing for grammar — no one is editing for content, either. With no editors, clarity and accuracy are hit or miss, and bullshit is inevitable.

Finally, writing that succeeds in the cluttered read-on-screen environment of today needs to follow a different set of rules. In high school, you follow a rubric called the five-paragraph essay. But this training won't teach you to think very deeply or make your point in a way that sticks.

Learn to clear away the crap, regain your integrity and say what you mean. You could learn to uphold the Iron Imperative and treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own. Your readers will notice. And against a gray background of unmitigated bullshit, your bold writing will stand out.

What you need is courage and a clear set of instructions.

## Change What You Write

### Move Beyond Fear

Business writers write for one reason: to get things done.

Practical writing may sound more straightforward, but in reality, it's not, because of the fear factor. In business, fear generates bad writing habits. Feeling fear in the workplace is normal; there are risks in everything you write. You fear taking a stand, being held responsible, being wrong. Each of us would prefer to write with integrity rather than out of fear. We want to get a reputation for telling the truth, not hiding it.

But while integrity is in our hearts, fear poisons what we write. Fear destroys clarity and muddies up our writing. You cannot change how you write until you acknowledge it. The trick is to write boldly even though you are afraid. Let's start with the most important thing you can do to communicate better: Write shorter.

### Write Short

Use fewer words. Of all the ways to communicate boldly and powerfully in a noisy world, this is the most effective. Get to the point quickly, deliver your message and let readers get on with the rest of their day. Remember the Iron Imperative: Treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own.

In the WOBS Writing Survey, business writers were asked what problems frequently made the material they read less effective. They cited one problem more than any other: 65 percent agreed that the material they read was frequently too long.

Your ideal should be tight writing. Eliminate everything you don't need. The tighter you write, the more persuasive you will be. Don't just trim the fat. Lop off the stuff you liked but that isn't helping enough.

Here are a few tricks for you, listed in the order you should use them, starting with broad advice and going down to the line-editing level:

**Edit everything.** No one writes tight prose on the first draft.

**Aim for a word count.** Your emails should be under 250 words. Your blog posts should be under 750. Learn the feel of a 100-, 300-, 500- or 1,000-word hunk of prose.

**Say what you really mean.** Sometimes you have to draft a whole piece to understand what you really mean. That's okay, as long as you go back and get rid of the parts that no longer apply.

**Start boldly.** Introductory text is wasteful — scrap it. Your first 50 words should intrigue the reader.

**Organize relentlessly.** Have you hit the same point in several paragraphs or sections? Pull them together and eliminate the redundancy. Reorganize prose around the main points.

**Prune sections and arguments.** If you've got five sections, could you make do with three or four? Could you cut a whole paragraph without weakening the argument?

**Use bullets or tables.** Lists written out in prose (e.g., "Firstly," "Secondly," or "On the one hand," "Alternatively") take up extra space. Where possible, convert to a bulleted list.

**Use graphics.** A simple diagram is often easier to comprehend than a lump of prose.

**Trim connective tissue.** Look for long sentences and break them into shorter ones. This makes prose easier to digest.

**Delete weasel words and qualifiers.** Every "very," "considerable" or "on the other hand" not only weakens your prose, it makes it longer.

### Front-Load Your Writing

"Front-loading" your writing is putting the conclusion up front. To master this way of thinking, you must invert what you learned in school about reasoning and writing. You learned to start with a warm-up, then

reason deductively, starting from first principles and reaching a conclusion.

Business readers have no time for warm-ups and lack the patience for extended reasoning unless they know the payoff up front. So start with bold statements and conclusions. Then follow with the reasoning that got you there. That way, readers who don't read the whole document will still benefit from reading your conclusion.

Here are some good examples of subject lines for emails to colleagues:

- July sales exceed quotas by 20 percent.
- We must respond quickly to competitor's new features.
- Change in benefits requires your attention.

Here are some terrible subject lines:

- Some things that are on my mind right now.
- Three ideas about our product.
- Time to get ready for a big change.

The first three subject lines promise content. The second three could be anything; recipients might open them but might not.

Likewise, documents should hook people with the title and opening. For blog posts, write titles that intrigue both people and Google.

## Purge Passive Voice

Passive voice makes your writing muddy. It has its uses, but you're using it far too often. Everyone does.

In a passive voice sentence, the subject of the sentence is not the actor performing the action. The sentence starts instead with the noun that the action is done to. The missing actor at the start of the sentence obscures the meaning. For example, in the sentence "Attention must be paid to the state of our nation," who is supposed to pay attention? That's the missing actor. Grammatically, passive voice sentences include some form of the verb "to be" (" is," "was," "ought to be," "have been," "should be" or "can be," for example) plus a past participle.

Every passive voice sentence sets up uneasiness in readers' minds. They wonder what unseen force is responsible for the actions they're reading about, because the passive hides the "who" in sentences. The more passive voice, the more uneasy people get. This uneasiness wastes readers' time, and that violates the Iron Imperative.

Passive voice is everywhere, but it's especially common when people want "something to be done." They write a report saying what needs to happen but hide who has to do the work. If you try to act on a recommendation like this, you immediately get stuck. You can't figure out who's supposed to do what.

Here's a sentence from a report that some folks at the University of Massachusetts wrote to analyze the cost and challenges of mounting the Olympic Games in Boston, with the passive constructions highlighted in bold. "[These are] issues that **will need to be closely monitored** in order to ensure the public sector **is protected** from extensive financial commitments." Who is supposed to monitor the issues? Who is protecting the public sector? Somebody in government, but they're not saying who.

While many passives are just lazy writing, fear is also a causative factor. You either don't want to say who's responsible for something or don't want readers to blame you. Writing these sentences in active voice is an act of courage and one your readers will respect.

To rewrite passive sentences, check that verb. Ask yourself who is monitoring or protecting. When you've answered the question, rewrite the sentence with that person or entity as the subject. Rewriting passive voice makes you think harder about what you're saying. It may require research to prove an unsupported statement. You may need to rethink the sentence altogether.

## Replace Jargon

Jargon is extremely useful. It makes writers seem like sophisticated insiders. Unfortunately, it makes life much harder for readers. Remember the Iron Imperative — that you must treat the reader's time as more valuable than your own? Jargon accomplishes the opposite: It clearly communicates that you think you are more important than the reader.

The problem is that when you write in jargon, you effectively divide the world into two groups. One is the insider group — the people who, along with you, know what these special words mean. The other, much larger, group is the world outside your bubble. That other group likely includes most of your customers and many of your employees. The more jargon you use, the more you are alienating large groups of people who should be reading and understanding what you write. You make them feel ignorant because they are ignorant; they don't know your secret code. Some of them will work hard to figure it out, but most will just give up on you and whatever you're trying to get across.

The first thing to change is your attitude. Do you think that writing in direct, informal language makes you seem too simplistic? The opposite is true. Once you realize this,

you can give yourself permission to rewrite whatever you're working on in plain language. That means looking at what you've written and asking, "Can a broad audience actually understand this?" If not, rewrite it using words and concepts anyone can understand.

Or why not skip the rewriting step and just write clearly in the first place? Here's the trick. Before you start, clearly visualize your audience. Is it a small-business person — maybe the owner of a hair salon? Is it an engineer who writes in Java? Is it all the customer service reps in your department? If you imagine average readers — not the smartest ones you know — and think of explaining whatever you're trying to get across to them, you'll be in the right mindset.

Then write a few simple, direct statements that, taken together, get across what you're trying to say. If you're communicating to the customer service reps, it might look like this: "A new software release of our product is going out this weekend. New releases typically generate a lot of calls. You need to familiarize yourself with the details of the update before you come in on Monday. It's going to be stressful, but I'm counting on you to balance efficiency and politeness. Please let me know if you're receiving calls or emails that indicate a more pervasive problem."

### Reveal Structure

Prose sucks. Every paragraph that your reader reads, they're potentially losing interest. The more paragraphs, the greater the chance they won't make it to the end of what you've written.

Unless it's short, a piece of writing made of paragraphs looks uniform and therefore intimidating, especially on a narrow screen like a smartphone. Anything that's worth reading and is more than 300 words long has a structure of some kind. Reveal that structure, and you've given the reader some signposts. They see what's coming and that it looks interesting. That's why you need to mix up your text with headings, bullets, lists, tables, graphics, quotes and links.

What you write always has a beginning, middle and end. Break things up into chunks, then use headings to make those chunks easy to see. Within the chunks, use lists to create even more structure.

If you're trying to get across a complex idea and the words won't flow — or if there are just too many words — draw a picture. Brainstorm it on the whiteboard. Pull in somebody who's graphically talented if you want. But your graphical ideas don't need to be complex. Simple Venn diagrams, flow charts or boxes with arrows can often do the job. Regardless of how you use graphics, remember three key things:

- Graphics and text are parallel ways of representing meaning. The text and the graphics in a document should work together.
- Keep it simple.
- Graphics escape their containers and roam the web freely. No matter what you do, people will clip and share your graphics.

A table stands out from the text like a graphic but enables you to present structured content neatly, like a list. Tables deliver a lot of information in a small space. Just don't get carried away and try to stuff all your data into a single table.

Two more tools you can use are quotes and links. Even within paragraphs, words in quotes stand out. In documents, blog posts, and even emails, quoted material pulled out of the text draws your attention. Links let you reference anything online within any type of writing — an email, a web page or a PDF document. Using links is second nature for bloggers, and it should be for you, too.

To get to the next stage, you must go further. You must change not just what you write but how you write it.

## Change How You Write

### Be Paranoid Early

Now you've got a bunch of new habits to get into as you type anything, whether it's an email or a blog post. Those rules are sufficient for tasks where the first draft plus a little polish is the final draft, but not for a big project.

Let's walk through your process for writing projects. You've got a big report due four weeks from now — a piece of writing thousands of words long with lots of effort behind it. For many writers, what comes next is less than ideal, a process called the three Ps:

**Procrastinate:** You can't start writing yet — you need to interview a few people, pull some data and sit down and do some web research. Since you can't get started and the deadline is four weeks off, you do other pressing things on your schedule — things that have nothing to do with this project.

**Panic:** You realize that the amount of time left is barely enough for you to get the writing done. You're writing but with lots of interruptions to get the missing pieces

in place. The end result comes together a few days before the deadline.

**Pray:** There's always somebody who has to approve it before you're done: your boss, the finance guy, the copy editor. So you send them the complete (but not finished) draft to review and tell them to turn it around in a day and a half. Concurrently with their reviews, you're fixing flaws you've already noticed, and as a result, lots of the review comments come back pointing out errors you just fixed or requesting changes in sentences you've deleted. You hope against hope that nobody finds something that will blow the whole thing up — and if they do, you find yourself arguing that it's better to live with the flaws than start over again. Is it any wonder this process generates bullshit?

The key to writing an effective document in a business setting is to know what you're trying to accomplish at each stage and to put in equal effort at each stage, not to do everything at the end. So let's revisit the three stages again, this time with a clearer understanding of what you're aiming for at each stage.

**Stage 1. Prepare (Be paranoid early):** It takes a professional to be paranoid at the start of the writing process. Being paranoid early means not just worrying about what might go wrong but also acting to prevent it. While late paranoia generates anxiety, early paranoia is productive. Do you have a clear audience and objectives? Do you have enough content? Have you taken the most creative approach? What is your structure?

**Stage 2. Draft (Find your flow):** By completing your research and planning ahead of time, you put yourself in a position to write well. Your objective in this stage is to complete a draft. A complete draft is not a finished product — it is a complete piece of writing with flaws. In a four-week process, writing the first draft should take about three days.

**Stage 3. Revise (Manage reviews effectively):** Drafting is not an end goal. It is simply the step that allows you to get to the Revise stage. Revising is not a monolithic process either. Depending on how important your draft is, you'll need different levels of edits, each of which will get you closer to your goal: a bullshit-free finished document.

## Think First

Business writing exists for one purpose: to create a change in the reader. If the reader is no different after reading, then you have wasted the reader's time and violated the Iron Imperative.

Before you start writing, you must think clearly about the elements of the change you are hoping to make.

Use the acronym ROAM to help you keep track of the change you want to make in your readers. ROAM reflects the four elements of that change: Readers, Objective, Action and iMpression.

**Readers:** Who is the audience? Before writing anything, visualize your readers. When you write "you," whom are you thinking of? Different audiences require different tone and different content.

**Objective:** How will you change the reader? Do you want them to feel favorably about a political party? To learn the steps to change an oil filter? To support your project? To feel joy? What will they know after reading that they did not know before? Each element of your writing should guide the reader toward the objective. Cut anything that doesn't serve the objective.

**Action:** What do you want the reader to do? Once your readers are done reading, what will they do next? Objective and action are related but not identical. The objective describes the change that you want to create in the reader, while the action is what the reader actually does: voting for the candidate, changing the oil filter, budgeting for the project, sharing the joyful writing with others.

**iMpression: What will the reader think of you?** Objectives and actions may be fleeting, but impressions last. The impression is the metamessage. The readers' impression determines the future of your mutual relationship. Do you want readers to think of you as smart? trustworthy? witty? If you don't know the impression you hope to create, how will you know what style to write in?

Whether you're writing an email, a tweet or a white paper, when you have that moment where you say "What am I doing here?" deploy ROAM. It will tell you what to do — and what not to.

## Collaborate Without Tears

The best thing about writing in a business setting is that there are so many people to help. The problem with writing in a business setting is that there are so many people to meddle.

Here's what you need to know: It's your document. You're writing it, and your name is probably going to go on it. Here's how to write with other people, without losing the soul of what you write.

The first thing to understand is everybody's role in the process.

**Editors and project managers** work throughout the process. An editor makes writing better. Editors stand in

for the reader. They tell you what they think the reader needs, or won't understand, in what you've written. If they've got any talent, they also suggest how to fix things.

The other job that some editors do is to manage the whole writing process, interacting with your other reviewers and coordinating the feedback you get. But sometimes that's someone else's job: a project manager or traffic person who keeps track of everything, manages the flow of drafts and comments, and hammers on deadlines.

**Researchers and contributors** help during the research phase. Researchers do a lot of the legwork for you and can find the data, facts and content you need to beef up a piece of writing. These are often bright entry-level staffers. Turn them loose with clear instructions on what you need, and they'll find great content for you. You may also get help from other specialized contributors. For example, as you develop content ideas, you'll have ideas for graphics — pull in a designer or illustrator to work with you just as you're starting your draft.

**Advisory reviewers** comment on your drafts. Your organization probably includes experts who can help you in many ways — with ideas, with structure or with content knowledge, for example. Make sure your editor — your primary reviewer — knows who you're working with. And be clear with reviewers about expectations. Tell these folks the specific kind of help you want from them.

**Gatekeeping reviewers** get the last look. Gatekeepers are folks whose edits you're not allowed to ignore. Legal and regulatory reviews fall into this category. Sometimes your boss does, too. People fear gatekeepers, but they are there for a reason: to keep you from screwing up.

**Copy editors and fact-checkers** keep you safe at the end. When you think you're done with a document, you turn it over to the copy editor. The copy editor's job is to look for grammar and usage errors. But just as with any other reviewer, don't assume you must do everything the copy editor says — it's still your document. This endpoint is also when you check facts and quotes. Most organizations can no longer afford separate fact-checkers, but if you have one, they'll check to make sure you're not lying about the population of Sri Lanka or what the senior senator from Missouri said.

## Embrace Edits

"I love criticism . . ." . . . said no one, ever.

How can you learn to love hearing about your flaws? Writers are proud. Criticism hurts. Well, it turns out there's a trick to it.

The first part of the trick has to do with how you feel about writing. While you are writing, you must believe you are creating something wonderful. You believe you are creative, witty and smart. Your passion to reveal the truth, without bullshit, drives you to create something good.

Once you are done writing, you must discard this frame of mind. What you have created is just words on a page. Words don't love you, so why should you love them? Your job now is not to create but to reveal truth. You can rearrange, cut or change anything that better reveals that truth. You should feel no more emotion about this than you would when pruning a shrub. You're making it better, and "it" is no longer a part of you.

This is where the second part of the trick comes in. It has to do with edits. You must not look at each suggestion and say, "Should I do this, or should I not?" That's too binary. Worse, it means that you are judging yourself against others' thinking — are they smarter than you, or are you smarter?

Instead, you should think, "What has this suggested edit revealed about what could be better here?" This way, you remain in charge, and you remain smart. You decide what flaws the edit has revealed, even if the reviewer did not see them. You decide in what way to fix things. It might be the way the reviewer suggested, or it might be some other way. You seek a higher truth, a more profound way to communicate without bullshit.

If you struggle to deal with edits, keep this key principle in mind: Editors and reviewers exist to reveal what you cannot see, not to tell you what to do. When you are seeking and addressing feedback, follow these five steps:

**Be clear about your vision.** Analyze your Readers, Objective, Action and iMpression. Reflect on your target sentence as you decide how to revise.

**Choose editors to match what you need.** There are five levels of edits, from spitballing big conceptual ideas to correcting nitpicky details: idea development, structural edit, paragraph or line edit, copyedit and fact check, proofread.

**Expose your flaws.** Tell reviewers what you are worried about. Is the structure right? What should I cut? Have I gone too far or not far enough? What's missing? Is it "bury the lead" or "bury the lede"? Whatever you're insecure or doubtful about, let the editor know.

**Use edits to gain insights.** The purpose of the editor is not to tell you what to do. You're the writer, and you have the vision. Their job is to show you what you cannot see.

**Apply the insights to your rewrite.** For each suggested edit or piece of advice, regardless of how big or how small, you should take one of three actions: Accept the edit,

and do what the editor says; learn from what the editor suggests, and use that knowledge to make the writing better; reject the edit but because you have a good reason.

## Change What You Produce

### Email Thoughtfully

Emailing on automatic pilot is easy. You write a subject line, type what occurs to you, add as many people as you can think of to the "To:" line and then hit Send. It's the quickest thing you can write.

A hastily composed email often becomes "the puzzler." You know, the email that recipients read and say, "Why did I get this? What am I supposed to do about it?" The busy person puts it aside and then forgets about it, which means the sender needs to follow up. That wastes time. Or the recipient asks for clarification and copies everyone else, which wastes even more people's time.

Rethink emails. The first instinct you need to change is that email is the solution to all problems. Get up and talk to people. Call them on the phone. If it's an issue that would benefit from dialogue, email is not the best way to solve it.

If you do decide to send an email, recognize that there are two types of emails: those that are important to you and the recipient and those that are not. Important emails include emails you send to groups of customers or employees as well as those that you send to one person to generate action. Important emails are important enough to plan and execute thoughtfully. Here's a quick checklist on what to include:

- A subject line that's clear about what you need.
- A microwave greeting, like "I'm a colleague of Alan's in our finance department."
- A one-sentence summary. Your first substantive sentence should tell the whole story.
- The facts, on one topic only, structured for browsing.
- The call to action with a deadline.
- Thank you and goodbye.

### Promote Intelligently

Promotion is a worthwhile activity — you have to tell people what your company is doing and why it's good. But press releases and other marketing-focused content, such as marketing web pages, are out of touch with the readers we're trying to reach and with the way we consume content now.

What is a press release doing now? Here's a ROAM analysis:

**Readers:** Anyone who can spread the word. The target is no longer just journalists and analysts; it's anyone from mommy bloggers to nontraditional content sources like Upworthy and BuzzFeed — basically, anyone who can spread a story.

**Objective:** Positive sentiment. Get readers to believe the product is worthwhile and the company is good.

**Action:** Spread the word. Generating news stories used to be the ideal action. That's still useful, but now the release can get people to share information on social media as well.

**iMpression:** The PR person is valuable. In the past as a PR person, you didn't care — you annoyed 998 people to get to the two who mattered. Now you're creating a relationship.

When you remove the jargon, the fluffy quotes and the superlatives, what are you left with? Facts. Now let's add something back in: the direct voice of the company. It could be the CEO, CMO or head of PR.

Put the news in the title, and explain what you did and why it is important. Use as many facts as possible. Write it in an easily accessible fashion to maximize spread. You can spread it through the usual PR distribution channels. But you can also post it for your company's friends on Facebook and Twitter. If those friends read it and understand it, they will actually share it. And you'll get the attention you deserve.

Your organization will make great strides if clarity becomes a core value. Together we can help the world to understand the value of writing without bullshit. And then, perhaps, we'll all be able to get a little more work done.

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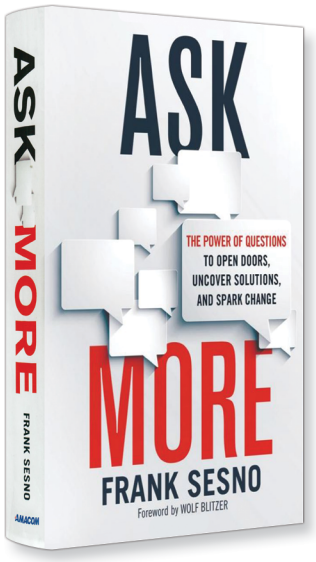
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# Ask More

## The Power of Questions to Open Doors, Uncover Solutions and Spark Change




by Frank Sesno

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What hidden skill links successful people in all walks of life? What helps them make informed decisions, inspire creativity and forge stronger connections? The answer is surprisingly simple: They know how to ask the right questions at the right times.

Questions help us break down barriers, pinpoint solutions and explore new ways of doing things. Yet, most of us assert more than we ask. We talk more than we listen. Imagine how much more effective we would be if we flipped the equation.

*Ask More* puts questions at the center of every conversation. Author Frank Sesno, an Emmy Award-winning journalist, has spent decades questioning global leaders and everyday people alike. He draws on his formidable interviewing skills to break down the art of inquiry into 11 categories of questions, each designed for a different purpose.

In an age of instant answers, fly-by facts and relentless clickbait, Sesno makes a passionate appeal to observe carefully, listen intently and ask more. He reveals a process of inquiry that can change your life — and might even change the world.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How strategic questions can define a mission and forecast success — or failure.
- To use diagnostic questions to get to the heart of a problem.
- When to use confrontational questions to hold people accountable.
- Why mission questions help nonprofits fundraise more successfully.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **ASK MORE**

**by Frank Sesno**

**The author:** Frank Sesno is a former CNN anchor, White House correspondent and Washington bureau chief and is now the director of the School of Media and Public Affairs at The George Washington University. He has interviewed leaders from around the world, including five U.S. presidents, and is the creator of Planet Forward, an innovative storytelling platform seeking solutions to some of the world's toughest challenges.

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## Why Ask?

Smart questions make smarter people. Questions — asked the right way, under the right circumstances — can help you achieve both short-term and lifelong goals. They can open doors to discovery and success, bring you closer to a loved one and even uncover answers to the universe's most enduring mysteries. Insightful questions help you connect with a stranger, impress a job interviewer or entertain at your next dinner party, and they can be the keys to a happier, more productive and fulfilling life.

Technology has revealed endless horizons, but it has also created a quick-hit, search-engine culture where a fast answer can obscure deeper inquiry. The polarization of politics, amplified by social media, has fractured civic discourse and infused it with invective instead of dialogue. Television interviewers are given less time and focus more on controversy and the horse race than on explanation and substance. Sincere questions too often play second fiddle to certainty, ideology and outrage. But what if we asked more and asserted less? What would we discover?

Humans are built to be curious, that much is in our DNA. Our questions reflect who we are, where we go and how we connect. They help us learn, and they help us lead because effective questioning marshals support and enlists others to join. After all, asking people to solve a problem or come up with a new idea turns the responsibility over to them. It says, "You're smart, you're valuable, you know what you're doing — what would *you* do about this problem?"

## Something's Not Right: Diagnostic Questions

*Diagnostic questioning* identifies a problem then burrows down to its roots, especially when those roots are not instantly obvious.

Your tooth is killing you. You go to the dentist. She asks where it hurts, when it hurts. When you chew? When you drink? She taps, pokes and applies cold water until you leap out of the chair. Oh sorry, did that hurt? "Yes," you grunt, through the junkyard that litters your palate. She says the problem is this *other* tooth. You're feeling "referred pain." An X-ray confirms it. A filling fixes it.

Diagnostic questions progress systematically to describe the problem and identify it.

**Connect symptoms and specifics.** Start with big, broad, what's-the-problem questions and then narrow down, zero in. Get past the generic to identify the symptoms and describe related observations in detail.

**Ask for the bad.** Don't duck the issues or avert your eyes. Ask direct questions in search of direct answers. It may get ugly, but if you want to fix a problem, you have to acknowledge it to deal with it.

**Study history.** Look back. Ask about similar experiences, events and patterns. They provide a baseline. Look for similarities to other situations.

**Ask again.** The mere existence of a problem means there is something unknown or unanticipated. To be sure you're on solid ground, ask several times and several sources. Confirm and corroborate.

**Challenge the expert.** We rely on experts to diagnose our diseases. But that doesn't mean they're right or that they're off the hook in explaining what's going on. Before

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Michael Casp**, Contributing Editor

you accept a diagnosis, ask what it is, what it means and where it's coming from. And reserve the right to get another opinion.

## The General's Charge: Strategic Questions

Strategic questions ask about the bigger challenge and the long-term goal — about stakes, opportunities, costs, consequences and alternatives — as you focus on the big picture.

"Strategy, by definition, is about making complex decisions under uncertainty, with substantive, long-term consequences," Freek Vermeulen, an associate professor of strategy and entrepreneurship at the London Business School, wrote in the *Harvard Business Review.* Vermeulen crafted an elegantly simple description of a word that almost everyone overuses and poorly understands. But by asking strategic questions, you can define and articulate your long-term goals.

Colin Powell was a key player in America's two wars against Iraq. The questions he asked — and did not ask — stand as examples of how strategic questioning can shape decision-making at a time of crisis.

Powell posed strategic questions before the First Iraq War, looking at the big picture, challenging assumptions and defining success. Only if the answers to all were positive, he believed, could the president confidently launch a full-scale invasion to liberate Kuwait.

Powell's questions intended to define success produced clear answers and finite, achievable goals with a realistic exit strategy. The result was Operation Desert Storm. The mission was a success, and the ground war lasted just 100 hours. Colin Powell's star was never higher.

Colin Powell experienced the dark side of decision-making when he and others didn't ask enough tough questions leading up to the Second Iraq War. The really tough strategic questions that should have been asked were unwelcome.

*Have the risks and costs been fully and frankly analyzed?*
*Have the consequences of our actions been fully considered?*
*Do we have a clear and attainable objective?*

As secretary of state, Powell didn't push back hard enough. The power players — the vice president, the secretary of defense and others — drove the decisions. They didn't ask the right questions either. The U.S. mission in Iraq turned into a costly open-ended commitment riddled with unintended consequences and terrible casualties resulting in an ugly and inconclusive outcome.

### Challenge Yourself

Strategic questions are vital at any major crossroads. They are deceptively simple questions that illuminate complex decisions characterized by great risk or uncertainty. They call for answers about purpose and the big picture.

You might decide that the answers need to be unanimous and affirmative. Or you might be comfortable with a more ambiguous response. Strategic questions prompt you to examine the terrain broadly, to estimate the situation from which you can proceed with a better sense of capability and destination.

## From the Inside Out: Empathy Questions

*Empathy questions* explore what makes people tick, think, fear, and feel. They focus unselfishly and spring from genuine interest. The simple act of asking, of listening without comment or judgment and letting a silence linger or a free form thought to coalesce, invites a person to reflect or think out loud. It might even prompt a revelation.

Empathetic questioning helps you connect with others. Use this line of questioning when a colleague needs to talk through an argument at home or politics at the office, or when you want to reach out to someone who comes from a different place, background or perspective.

Helen Riess is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. She studies empathy and teaches doctors how to incorporate it into their work with patients. Riess tells doctors to start with a broad question to establish an empathetic relationship. "How are you doing today?"

Riess tells her doctors that they have to do more than just ask. They have to listen closely and sincerely. They have to hear more than words. They must listen to voice tone and inflection and watch for reactions and body language. She coaches them to maintain eye contact and scan the other person's face to see if they seem relaxed, anxious, frightened, or stressed. If they hear strong emotion, they should respond to it directly and ask compassionately. "What are you most concerned about?"

Riess believes it is the questioner's responsibility to take in fully what the patient is communicating. This affects outcomes; patients who don't experience empathy are less likely to trust their doctors, and they're less likely to

adhere to the treatments that are recommended. A systematic review showed that low empathy and communication in patient-doctor relationships actually lead to worse health outcomes.

You don't need a degree to be a disciplined listener and an empathetic questioner. You just need to know who you are talking to and be able to imagine what the world looks like through their eyes.

## The Gentle Interrogator: Bridging Questions

*Bridging questions* are intended to encourage people to talk when they don't want to. They coax information, glean detail and assess intent and capability.

The principles behind bridging questions support a specific and clear outcome: getting a closed person to open up. The objective is to lower a person's defenses and move his or her brain out of red-alert territory. Questions should be framed to generate conversation, however halting, as a means of establishing trust and building a dynamic that will coax information from the most reticent personalities.

A psychological theory developed by Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman posits that there are two "systems" in which the human brain operates. *System One* is a sort of low gear; it goes anywhere and allows us to make decisions easily and come up with ready answers. Consider it your brain's autopilot. It goes on when your surroundings and reference points are familiar.

*System Two* triggers the brain's overdrive and makes it spin faster, work harder and use more oxygen. System Two is a response to the unfamiliar, the complex, the difficult or frightening. A brain in System Two is on alert with its guard up.

The goal is to put your subjects' brains in System One, into low gear, as much as possible. Start with questions the interviewee is comfortable addressing even if the questions are not relevant to the issue at hand.

As you're building rapport, ask "how" questions. "How" questions ask for explanation and background. They encourage stories. The human brain is wired for stories. It's how we learn and how we remember.

As the subject is speaking, listen hard for "entry points" to turn the conversation to the story you want to hear. You can recognize an entry point by actively listening for an observation or a complaint that resonates with the story you're after. A flash of anger or expression of regret can be an entry point. Use them to your advantage.

To keep subjects talking, on track and in System One, use periodic "micro-affirmations." When you hear something relevant, signal interest by leaning forward, offering a slight nod or a barely audible "uh-huh." These micro-affirmations reinforce without interrupting or distracting. They signal that you are engaged and sympathetic.

Use questions without question marks. Phrases like, "Tell me more," "Explain that to me," "Go on," "That's remarkable" or "Fascinating," serve as open-ended invitations for a subject to pause, reflect and provide more detail. They convey interest and, when stated in the right tone and accompanied by open body language, offer affirmation and validation, which are important to reduce barriers and generate cognitive ease. Questions without question marks can feel less threatening and less like an interrogation.

Angry, alienated people might believe they see and understand things that others do not. By saying, "A lot of people agree with you," you offer a measure of validation without an endorsement of the point of view. You "normalize" the conversation, creating the appearance that you understand.

## For the Record: Confrontational Questions

Confrontation and accountability questions put issues on the table and demand answers for the record. They air a grievance, level an accusation and reinforce the rules of acceptable behavior.

Confrontational questioning often requires assertive interruption or repetition to make it as difficult as possible for your adversary to change the subject, dodge the question or run out the clock.

When you adopt a true adversarial approach, you raise the stakes. Confrontational questioning must be approached from a position of strength. Questions can be used as weapons. If you're going to confront someone in power, there has to be an element of aggression. You must have the courage of your convictions and realize it isn't a popularity contest.

### An Audience Helps

If you have the basics — solid information, a clear objective to your questioning and enough spine and moral indignation to stand up to authority — you can have an impact, especially if you understand your platform and

know your audience. Invoking community is one of the surest ways to give more heft to your case and more edge to your questions.

Whether at a town hall or a staff meeting, confronting a powerful person is not easy. But having a community on your side creates an alliance. Your questions become the group's questions, which are harder to dismiss as the ranting of a malcontent and easier to amplify because of the implied voices ready to join you. If you've done your homework, are prepared to stand up to the pressure of the encounter and have crafted your questions so that you succinctly express the problem and the challenge, you can take the high ground and demand answers.

### No Way Out

You should prepare for an evasive or confrontational response. Effective confrontational questioners have to be fast and uncompromising listeners. It's what good lawyers do in a courtroom and good interviewers do in front of a camera. They pick up on a voice tone and swoop in on hesitation. They shut down attempts to filibuster or self-aggrandize. They keep the laser aimed at the core issue they're after.

With accountability questioning, you want precision. You want to pin someone down. Often, questions that elicit one-word answers can be the most effective crow-bars to the truth. Yes-no questions:

*You were late yesterday. Is that correct?*
*Did you call when you knew you were going to be late?*
*Did you think about the consequences of being late?*

Lawyers like yes-no questions because they establish the record and draw precise boundaries. They put on the record a definitive response to a specific action or moment and give the questioner almost complete control over the witness and the testimony.

Confrontational questions entail risk because they put relationships and reputations on the line. If you're wrong, or if you sound ill-informed or like a bully, the questions will boomerang and hit you and not the person you are trying to hold to account.

## Imagine This: Creativity Questions

Creative questioning asks people to close their eyes and imagine. It welcomes crazy ideas, shrugs off the obvious and seeks alternatives.

### Travel in Time

The president of Middlebury College was in the early stages of crafting a 10-year strategic plan. At the fall retreat, a facilitator started with a question that invited participants to think creatively about the college's future by going there.

"It is 10 years from now," he said, "and the latest college rankings have just come out. This school is at the top of the list. What are we doing?"

He put the future in present tense. His question was a time machine. Once inside the machine, the obstacles that often interfere with big ideas — practical considerations like cost, resources, staffing and economics — fell away. Participants listed qualities that earned them the top spot. There was a new science center, a new library, more students who brought more diversity, more faculty and more funding. The future was clear!

Then, they worked backward to determine how to make it happen, from program design to funding. Today, the college has accomplished many of the goals set out in that exercise. The school is in the top ranks of liberal arts colleges. Imagined reality became actual reality.

### Imagined Reality

A publisher convened an off-site retreat with his top editors. He began with an exercise. Crunch time had arrived, and each magazine had to cut its budget by 50 percent. He asked:

*What do you cut?*
*What do you do?*
*Where do you start?*

The teams went to work prioritizing and calculating, cutting staff and expenses. Though this was just an exercise, everyone played along and took it seriously.

Then came the twist. In a surprise move, the publisher gave his editors their money back. Every penny. But, he told them to use the budget they'd cut just a few minutes earlier as their new baseline. They could invest the money they had "saved" in any way they wanted.

*What will you build?*
*How will you invest?*

Their answers helped transform the company's five newsstand magazines and led to more National Magazine Awards than any of their rivals. The net profit for the company doubled in two years.

## The Solvable Problem: Mission Questions

*Mission questions* help you draw people into a genuine conversation about shared goals and what everyone can bring to the task. They help you convey your priorities. Mission questions require you to talk less and listen more.

### The Value Proposition

Karen Osborne, founder of the Osborne Group, a fundraising consultancy, developed a set of questions to help her identify what people care about and where and why they give. Osborne's *discovery questions* generate a conversation. They ask what people care about and the motivations behind their passions. If they are now in a position to do something more about a problem they're passionate about, what will they do?

Osborne's "rapport building" questions define principles and goals and connect past actions with future aspirations. They establish a conversation and build a relationship.

*What are the guiding principles that have helped you in life?*
*What do you hope to accomplish with your philanthropy?*
*What values do you consistently support?*

Osborne asks her questions to get answers, but she also asks to be sure the other person is doing the talking. As research shows: People forget what they heard, but they remember almost everything they say.

Your questions prompt people to answer and to engage. That's a critical step, Osborne says, if people are going to embrace a cause for which they're going to provide significant financial support. Osborne insists that engagement is the key to philanthropy. The more that people are involved in an initiative, the more they give to it.

### Change the World

Once you have established the mission and concluded that your goals coincide, you can start thinking about the next step: actually doing something.

Rick Leach, founder of the World Food Program USA, rallies support, raises money, and finds partners in business and government to support efforts to get desperately needed food to victims of drought, poverty, war and natural disaster. To attract people to social movements, he believes, you must engage their curiosity and connect passion with mission. He focuses on turning commitment into concrete action. "It's earnestly asking questions and learning to more fully hone the need in search of the opportunity to address the need," he said. His template for partnerships is built on four questions.

*How do we define the problem?*
*What are the strategies to solving the problem?*
*What's the goal?*
*How can we all play a role in achieving the goal?*

When the 2015 Ebola crisis hit, food and nutrition quickly became a big problem, as whole areas of some countries shut down. Business stopped. Leach turned to his longtime sponsor, United Parcel Service, Inc. (UPS), knowing its capacity in logistics. Leach asked if UPS would help distribute food, medical supplies, generators, and equipment. UPS agreed. The company provided invaluable logistical support to assemble material, equipment and relief supplies and fly them into West Africa. World Food Program distributed food to more than 3 million people in the year and a half after the Ebola outbreak.

This approach to mobilizing people and defining roles can be applied at virtually any level — whether you are trying to change the world or the town where you live. Get good people together and use Leach's questions to define the challenge, consider strategies and set roles.

## Into the Unknown: Scientific Questions

Scientific questioning drives a process that revolves around data, experimentation and observable fact. The discipline this line of questioning imposes makes for better inquiry and better decisions across the board.

There's a line of inquiry characterized by the slow question, the one that doesn't yield an immediate answer and dares you to embrace uncertainty. The slow question is expressed through the inquisitive lens of science. The method builds logically from the ground up.

**Observe a problem, frame a question.** Take what you see or know to be objectively and measurably true from the real world and ask a question. What's going on here? What's causing this?

**Offer an explanation.** Based on your observations, your experiences, and the facts and data that exist, put together a clear hypothesis that could explain the situation.

**Put your hypothesis to the test.** Experiment and measure over time. Try to prove yourself wrong. What else could explain this situation? What did you miss? What

could be wrong with your approach and your data? If your hypothesis holds up, you are making progress.

**Share.** If you think you're onto something, shop it around and show it to other knowledgeable people. Let them review it. Do they see something that you didn't Do they have a problem with your data or your methods. If not, you might just have a theory you can act on.

The methodical, logical approach to scientific investigation provides a blueprint for inquiry that rewards reality, not emotion, one step at a time.

In most cases, we are rewarded for decisiveness and quick answers. The person at the meeting who speaks up with authority and offers to "fix the problem" is often the one who is praised and promoted. When we propose an idea, we don't say to the boss or the shareholders, "I think I'm onto something here, but I'm doing my best to prove it wrong." We're expected to defend our point, not openly invite others to attack it.

The discipline of scientific questioning, however, moves us toward a more methodical form of inquiry that invites more data and better measurement into the questions we ask and the answers we get. As data becomes more accessible, we can expect more science and more metrics in the decision and questioning process.

## The Edison Test: Interview Questions

The first rule of the job interview: Don't wing it. Preparation pays. Know what you're talking about and to whom. Know as much as possible about the job. Have a list of questions on a pad and in your head. You are not sitting down for a random chat. You are trying to learn as much about the other person as you can to establish whether this position is a good fit for both of you.

If you're the applicant, you can anticipate that most every interview will ask you touchstone questions.

*Why are you interested in this position?*
*What do you think you can do for us?*
*What makes you qualified and unique?*
*Why should we hire you?*

Prepare a series of responses for each question. Organize your thoughts in bullet points, two or three distinct characteristics for each response, so you can talk about several traits without getting lost or long-winded. Practice your answers. You want to be clear, concise and prepared to address the question — or a variation of it — directly and confidently. Think of some examples or short stories that highlight relevant experience or set you apart.

Keep in mind that your tone will convey as much about you as the words you use, so strike a balance in how you present yourself. Talk about your successes without bragging, express confidence without sounding cocky and acknowledge your shortcomings without sounding insecure. Be prepared to speak about your character and personality by citing a tough decision or a dilemma you faced and how you worked your way through it. Know what questions you want to ask. The questions that you, the candidate, will ask are nearly as important as your answers to the interviewer's questions. You need to project informed curiosity about the position, the enterprise, the competitive landscape, and the measures of success.

Try practicing by recording your answers on your smartphone. Practice will allow you to fine tune your answers so you project confidence and fluency.

If you're the interviewer, you have to ask precisely and persistently to get beyond the resume and practiced responses. If you're filling a management position, ask about how your applicant deals with people, motivates success and handles setbacks. You are asking questions that call for tangible answers that shed light on your applicant's talent, experience and personality. You want to get a sense of what will motivate her and keep her productive. You ask about situations or experiences that illuminate intangible characteristics, such as how the person deals with adversity or thinks creatively. You want insight into the other person's work ethic and professional expectations, goals and ambitions.

*What's the most successful project you've run?*
*What is it about this job that interests you most?*
*How does this job connect with your larger professional aspirations?*

If red flags have come up through reference checks, ask about those, too: "What would your detractors say about you?" You want honesty and realism. Self-awareness is essential to being a successful leader.

## The Inspired Host: Entertaining Questions

Entertaining questions allow you to engage your audience and keep the conversation interesting and lively

so everyone plays. You can be commanding or charming, funny or unpredictable, but the objective always revolves around creating an experience that your guests will enjoy and remember. Use questions the same way a chef uses spices: subtly but deliberately to bring out the flavors of the meal. So what are the basic ingredients?

**Know your audience.** Who are you talking to? What have they done? Where have they been, and what do they care about? Pick questions that intrigue and interest everyone.

**Think creatively and choose deliberately.** Draw from a menu of topics and questions to create a flow and distinctive moments. You want a combination of topics that will engage different people on different levels.

**Set a mood, and set a rhythm.** Funny or serious? Provocative or reflective? Set the mood through signals, prompts words, and timing.

**Engage emotion.** You trigger emotions through the subjects you pick and the questions you ask. Serious or snide? Funny or flippant? It's your call.

Start with an exchange that is spontaneous and a little unexpected. You can often break the ice, get a smile and set a tone that is more relaxed and will lead to a more genuine experience.

### You're On!

Good hosts are always on, always listening and always interested in their guests and the conversation around them.

If you're the host, prepare accordingly. Adopt a strategy that creates the event you want. If you want a fun, free-flowing evening, roll out some questions that tap into the easy currents of daily life. Make them open-ended and friendly questions. Ask about the new restaurant, the local football team or the newest Leonardo DiCaprio movie.

By applying a little "conversation leadership" to get people interacting, you can create an environment that is inclusive, interesting and dynamic. A few well-placed questions will jump-start a conversation. The more you ask, the more you get.

## Lessons for Life: Legacy Questions

Legacy questions ask what we've accomplished or changed and inquire about the lives we've touched. They are questions about meaning, spirituality, lessons learned, gratitude, regrets, people and purpose.

Legacy questions open the door for reflection and resolution. They seek context. They can be existential or spiritual. Legacy questions ask about meaning and gratitude, mistakes and adversity.

A properly told life story can capture life's impact and its meaning. But not all stories have happy endings, and not all lives end with clarity or resolution. A question can prompt a reply brimming with guilt or sadness. Anger and sorrow are not uncommon emotions at the end of life.

Some burdens may seem insurmountable: feelings of acute failure, a sense of a wasted life. End-of-life expert Ken Doka believes every life has meaning, though sometimes it takes hard work and persistent questioning to find it. He asks:

*How do you put your mistakes in context?*
*What lessons would you share?*
*What high points in life would you point to?*

We do not need to wait for the deathbed moment to ask about the meaning in our lives. Legacy questions travel with us. If we have the courage to ask them, they help us get our bearings and write our story. If we listen closely to our answers, we gain perspective.

## I'm Glad I Asked

Questions are our way to connect with other human beings. Inquiry, not imitation, is the sincerest form of flattery. Ask a good question, and you convey interest. Slow down, listen closely and ask more and you engage at a deeper level. You show that you care. You generate trust. You empathize, and you bridge differences. You become a better friend, colleague, innovator, citizen, leader or family member. You shape the future.

You can't ask for more than that.


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# 39-20 The Spark and the Grind

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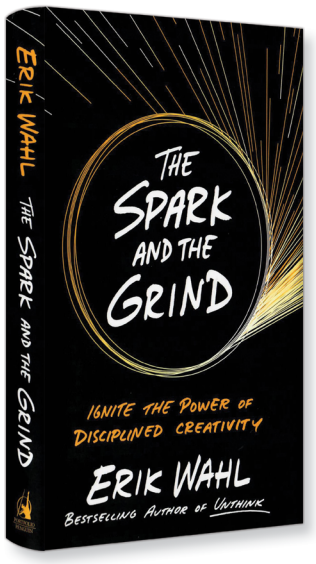
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Career & Self-Development

# The Spark and the Grind

## Ignite the Power of Disciplined Creativity




by Erik Wahl

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We've been conditioned to think about creative genius as a dichotomy: dreamers versus doers, the spark of inspiration versus the grind of hard work. But what if we're wrong? What if it's the spark *and* the grind?

Erik Wahl, a visual artist, speaker and entrepreneur, helps us unite the yin and the yang of creativity — the dynamic new ideas with the dogged effort. He shows why we won't get far if we rely on the spark without the grind or the grind without the spark. What the world really needs are the creators who can hold the two in balance to further innovation.

Wahl offers surprising insights and practical advice about how to fan the sparks and make the grind more productive. He deftly synthesizes the wisdom of other artists, philosophers, scientists and business visionaries throughout history, and adds the secrets of his own practice.

If you want to ensure constant creativity in your life and produce your most innovative work — this is your guide.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To discover the creativity within yourself, as well as how to harness and cultivate that creative spark into something tangible.
- To trust the unpredictable nature of the creative process, and then develop a disciplined routine that will strengthen your creative drive.
- To embrace the unfamiliar, take risks and find comfort in being an amateur knowing that the unknown can only fuel those creative sparks.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE SPARK AND THE GRIND**

**by Erik Wahl**

**The author:** Erik Wahl is an artist, author and entrepreneur. He is internationally recognized as a thought-provoking graffiti artist and one of the most sought-after speakers on the corporate lecture circuit.

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## Creativity Is a Complicated Friend

What is it about creativity that draws us in? If we grasp it, understand it, embody it, we believe it can give us a new start. A first step. A cutting edge. A breath of fresh air. A breakthrough. Originality. Freedom.

Our desire for creativity is one of the most, if not *the* most, transcendent desires of our lives. That's because our desire for creativity is ultimately a longing for more meaning, and more meaning breathes more life into our days. When our creations are an unobstructed outflow of our purest thoughts, beliefs and convictions, our doing is in step with our being.

Whether or not you've experienced the spoils of creativity in your own life, we have all observed that a tight bond with creativity forges a freedom and opportunity quite unlike anything else. Whether or not we understand it, we often desire it in the areas of our lives that matter the most. We especially desire it in the areas where we sense we are either underperforming or off track.

Creativity is a scorching-hot commodity. We are paying for it in historically large sums. And yet, the investment isn't paying off as we'd expect.

On the corporate level, efforts to court creativity translate to serious money. Total spending "increased 5.1% to $680 billion" in 2015, according to "2015 Global Innovation 1000," a report produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers's consulting team, Strategy&, which details how much the top 1,000 public companies spend on innovation each year. And yet, after conducting 10,000 analyses, the same study found no statistical relationship between increased innovation spending and sales growth, gross profit growth, operating margins, net profit growth and total shareholder returns.

Clearly, there is a tangible difference between treating creativity like a health supplement and treating it like the ecosystem in which your company breathes and operates.

Our relationship with creativity becomes more complicated as we get older. As a child, it was effortless. You have changed. Creativity has changed. Life is different now. You did, in fact, grow apart. Traditional schooling and typical corporate protocol have taught you that creativity isn't as important as finding the correct answer or following the correct strategy. As a result, your relationship with creativity takes real work today. And that's where the relationships stalls — even ends — for many of us.

The common practical response to this realization is that you will work at being more creative *only when you need to.* A more cynical response to realizing that connecting with creativity is hard is the proclamation that being creative on a regular basis is unrealistic and, frankly, takes a certain kind of quirkiness that doesn't play in all settings. The truth, however, is that you can rekindle that relationship. You just have to understand how to do it as an adult because the way it works has changed.

Here's the good news: You can learn to trust creativity again, on a daily basis. As a result, you can learn to churn out more vibrant, imaginative results from your efforts. Trusting and utilizing creativity as an adult involves simultaneously embracing two concepts that, in your mind right now, probably sit on two different planets. And yet, these concepts are two sides of the same coin we call creativity.

### The Spark

The "spark" is what we traditionally think of as the start of creativity — an initial illumination. It denotes the most basic understanding, the first step of creative production.

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It's what we first hope for when we're looking for that creative edge, that game-changing idea, that fresh catalyst for progress. Generating creativity takes personal effort to make the initial spark — whether it is an idea, strategy or product — that you hope will ignite your relationship or company or campaign.

### The Grind

The grind is the work of creativity. This is the first truth you have to understand about creative endeavors: The more you grind at any given endeavor, the more you learn about the process, about the outcomes and about yourself. The grind is the disciplined process required to become a master at something.

### The Spark Without the Grind

Ongoing, original creativity requires the spark and the grind: the initial flicker of hope and the work to stoke it into something that changes the game. It's always both and never just one.

The final measure of creativity, innovation or revolution is neither ideas nor dreams. It's whether those sparks grow into something that matters. People who chase the spark but don't embrace the grind are into igniting big ideas but not fanning them into a meaningful blaze. These are Igniters. Others may call them "idea people" and "visionaries," and they are wholly necessary in our world; but left alone, the ideas they ignite would remain underdeveloped.

### The Grind Without the Spark

The grind without the spark is what we feel when we refer to work as a grind. It is work for the sake of working, spinning your wheels, continual effort without meaningful progress. In other words, what makes the grind more grindlike is an absence of sparks, an absence of freshness or originality. Those who embrace the grind but not the spark are called Grinders.

To be more creative more often — to be the maker you were born to be — you must learn to chase the spark and embrace the grind not at the expense of each other but in concert with one another. This dualistic approach is what separates those who create constantly from those who struggle to create even when it matters most.

## Trust the Process

Creativity improves everything, from how you think to how you love to how you work, but not until you understand that being diligent is not enough nor is having great ideas. Finding a way to embody both is the only way to tap the full potential of your creative power.

While great creators possess proficient ability in both activities, it is most accurate to say that they intuitively know when to step back and swim with the sparks and when to lean in and grind out a single idea. This back and forth happens so fluidly that the best creators never think, *Now it's time to pause and think,* or *Now it's time to lean in and work*. While they grind out a single idea, they remain aware that more promising ideas might appear or a more promising path might evolve from the original idea. While considering a host of ideas, they remain primed to jump after a brilliant one and work it out.

Great creators embrace a discipline of thinking and a discipline of doing. In embracing both disciplines, these once voluntary and independent patterns become involuntary and interdependent. The disciplines evolve from something that feels like a regimen to something that feels like a lifestyle. From activities that feel like burdens to activities that feel like nourishment.

In any creative venture, whether you're crafting a new product, writing your autobiography or launching a company, there are seasons of both clarity and confusion. A hard charger has a tendency to push through the confusing moments with laser focus on the prize — the finished product or the goal that has already taken some tangible form in your mind, in a document or on a whiteboard. Grinders rarely charge after something that doesn't have at least some clarity up front, an initial spark of insight, intuition or understanding. They are driven by achievement, by not only the elation of finishing or checking another item off the list but also by the rewards of that achievement — whether they are economic, emotional or hierarchical. True Grinders rarely grind mindlessly, but their laser focus can blind them to more creative possibilities.

Grinders are driven to finish a journey; Igniters are driven to explore. Igniters don't mind the uncertainty of the unknown. They don't need a lane or a finish line — at least not right away — and it's this comfort with an undefined destination that often sparks the most original creations. While the Grinder worships the end goal, the Igniter worships the early magic. While Igniters have an uncanny ability to embrace the early mystery of the creative process, they often balk the moment the starry night gives way to the dawn, which is when the real work begins.

The Igniter who's unwilling to grind beyond the wonder — at times, even see beyond it — often ends up with doughy, half-baked ideas. He possesses the plasticity and divergence to discover good ideas anywhere but lacks the fervor to craft those discoveries into something tangible let alone viable.

This is the risk in being only an Igniter: You eventually come to enjoy the sight of yourself in a beret or beanie so much that you aren't eager to swap it for a hard hat. It's the gratification of a Hemingway lifestyle without the discipline to park your ass in front of a keyboard each day and write a thousand words.

A single spark is needed to start a fire. But don't celebrate too soon. Producing something is important. But know it's only the beginning. Keep grinding — keep stoking — and keep watching for the swelling of the spark into something else, something hotter. The first spark is never the brightest one inside you.

Most great creators know that not all sparks should stay alive, but they know that the ones that are viable must evolve or expand. Igniters need to learn to keep working to develop an idea. Grinders need to unlearn their tendency to forget the fire for the prized ember.

To be more creative more often, you have to become a traveler who sets out in a direction to discover and evolve, not merely confirm. That's the creative process — trust it. The more you grind into it and through it, the more you learn to trust the sparks that arise as you go. They don't come one detached spark after another as if from some random universe. The truth is that the rising sparks are really growing from the initial spark as it swells into a bigger and hotter flame.

Valuing ideas over hard work often leads to a lack of creations. Valuing hard work over ideas often leads to anemic creations. The secret to trusting the creative process lies in embracing the duality of creativity: That it is both a fresh idea and a fierce drive. It's not one or the other but both at the same time. Applying this to your day-to-day requires an ability to know which is needed during the course of creation. While you might automatically assume that ideation is the beginning of the creative process, this isn't always the case.

Sometimes, it's better to begin grinding the task at hand and let the sparks that fly reveal a bigger idea of a better path. Either way, there is no script for creativity. Sometimes, the idea fuels the work. Sometimes, the work fuels the idea. Your job is to begin, and then remain open to toggling between the sparking and grinding according to what is needed most — either more originality or more progress. Knowing when to toggle is largely based on your ability to remain fully present during the process. When you are present, you remain open to the learning possibilities in and around you.

Trusting the creative process is like committing to an expedition in an uncharted land, where beginning knowledge is limited and progress is governed by discoveries made, not distance covered. Your most important tools are observation and resourcefulness.

To be constantly creative, you must be both an Igniter and a Grinder, and you must understand when one role takes precedence over the other without losing the other altogether. How? Practice. Your trust will grow as your creative prowess does.

The sum of trusting a fluid creative process is that you set out to shape and become rather than to solidify or confirm. This small difference is so impactful because it immediately changes your expectations.

Grinders transition away from expectations that are governed by the success and failure of individual products or pursuits. Igniters transition away from unrealistic expectations that never materialize beyond the surface of whiteboards and notebooks. Both Grinders and Igniters transition into expectations that are governed by constant effort, education and growth.

## Attach Yourself to the Work

Creation can be inspired by the originality of others, including the natural world. But constant creation requires you to travel beyond restylized mimicry. To be a constant creator, you can never let what makes you original and distinct be snuffed out.

The single greatest benefit in being a constant creator is that the process doesn't just improve what you create, it improves who you are. There is a transcendent need in every one of us to reach our full potential.

When you attach yourself to everything you do, you manifest pieces of your being into your everyday living. Some of these creations are practice — warm-ups for a bigger manifestation. All creations are lessons that create momentum if we're willing to capture it. A few of them will ignite into flames that spread and come to mean more to you than the feeling that you are well balanced.

Passion and purpose are just unproven notions until they are lived out in the creative muscles you use every day. When this happens, your life begins to make sense because

what is inside you is integrated into what comes from you to the outside world.

Your greatest creative impetus is the attachment of who you are to what you do. Detachment doesn't automatically spell failure. It just makes the grind much more grindlike; you become driven by destinations rather than destiny.

Detachment forces you to be driven by singular goals rather than by growth, and to be roused by an ever-fleeting endgame. In this state, your work is more difficult to weave together into one inspiring tapestry.

On the other hand, when who you are is attached to what you do, striving for excellence excites you instead of burdening you. Your drive to see an endeavor through is fueled by passion and purpose instead of mere duty or obligation. There's a tangible difference. Detachment is the short path to frustration, burnout and boredom. Attachment is the short path to discovery, growth and fulfillment.

Your creations are meant to shape you into better, more advanced versions of yourself. We tend to downplay our own originality especially when it comes to offering it to the world in a tangible form. But if we all thought the same thoughts and carried out the same acts in a similar manner, there would be no innovation, progress would be predictable at best and we'd eventually be bored out of our minds.

Attaching yourself to your work is not about capturing a glowing mission and vision statement. While it's not a bad place to begin, the real attachment happens when you begin living out those ideas, when you begin actively loving the thing you've fallen in love with.

When your grind is void of personal purpose, it produces sparks that lack deep meaning and significance. Left unaddressed for too long, this sort of grinding eventually turns to concession.

Don't aim for balance. Don't buy into detachment. Take courage and aim for integration — the folding of all you are into what you do.

## Keep Your Day Job

One of the most important choices you will make in life is to explore where you are right now in the job you currently possess, within the relationships you currently have, at the places you regularly visit. Within your current context lies more creative opportunities than you probably ever realized. There are no dead-end streets for the truly creative.

Being a constant creator begins by unlocking what is in your heart, right here, right now. You might have been playing that role for such a long time that it seems absurd to think you could actually do something different, something truly creative and heartfelt. But, there is no question that you can. As this change occurs inside you, it changes the appearance of the world around you. Yes, this is true even for a job you consider far from your heart.

The infusion of your whole self into any environment in which you find yourself will change how you see that environment.

There are four reasons why your current roles are the best place to begin grinding new sparks:

**Reason one:** Your current roles are your reality. Whether you're an Igniter or a Grinder, embrace your current reality because, frankly, it's the only reality you have. Many realities throughout history needed to change. This sort of change never happens from a detached stance. It always happens when creators dive headfirst and heartfirst into their current realities and dirty their hands.

**Reason two:** Your current roles are the most prime real estate available to you for introducing creative solutions. Many of history's greatest artists were simply common people who immersed themselves in their current roles and realities. They remained where they were, sought to fully understand their contexts and then infected them with groundbreaking ideas and creations. You have a body of submerged knowledge right now that can offer you creative insights about the roles and realities before you. Use it to capture the sparks that arise from your current grind.

**Reason three:** Your current roles give you the needed support to take creative risks. When you grind where you are, you do more than ignite legitimate sparks; you also provide a financial and emotional foundation from which you can pursue less certain creative ventures that might not pay right away or maybe not ever — except through a greater measure of fulfillment, camaraderie or purpose. The more connected you are to the world through a day job, the more creative freedom you will have, the more creative material you will have to draw from and the better understanding you will acquire about your intended audience.

**Reason four:** When you simultaneously grind your current roles and your creative frontiers, you cultivate a symbiotic relationship that fuels both your day job and your creative potential. Time has a lot to do with this. When you have fewer hours to grind your wilder sparks, your mind is forced to be more focused. Your good habits at work tend to carry over into other responsibilities and activities, including your currently unpaid creations. Draw

no lines. Start where you are, doing what you do. Wake up each day and go to create.

## Embrace a Routine

Creatives are generally thought of as eccentric people — odd birds whose capricious lives ebb and flow with their latest whims. The idea that great creatives embrace a strict discipline seems antonymic to their characters. But, there's no doubt that constant creators have learned that strategic discipline is more essential than their vices and foibles will ever be.

To be disciplined as a creator, you need a mindful routine that allows for fast progress and simultaneous flexibility to explore without an immediate deadline.

This is a creativity conundrum: We need to be efficient and use our energy wisely, but in order to make progress, we also need to explore, ideate and create. Routine is the glue that holds them together.

To be creative, there has to be a constant willingness to let go — of assumptions, of current knowledge, of safety nets — and Igniters have a natural inclination to do this. But there must also be structure if you want to make any real strides in your creative efforts, enough to force you to take action and produce something, anything, on a daily basis.

You might have a flood of ideas every day, but with no structure to get them moving, your ideas end up bobbing in an ever-expanding puddle.

Conversely, creativity within the right structure is like a river with banks. Ideas move faster in the current of your work, and yet there is still room for them to deepen and even accelerate as needed by narrowing the banks.

It's one thing to embrace structure to get an idea in your head into a tangible form. It's an entirely different thing to take that tangible creation and mold it into something that is distinctive and memorable. Many creators get the product finished and then move on to the next product. That can be a mistake. Often, the initial product still contains some embers that just need a little more stoking to ignite a bigger flame.

When your creative urge begins to diminish, when you no longer have the space to wander both mentally and physically, you've taken your routine too far, spread it too broadly. Back off and build in some more margin.

There is no creative routine worth embracing that is simultaneously light on risk and heavy on reward. The creative process is risk and reward at once and all at once. Embracing a routine that ushers us into this lifestyle each day is a small price to pay, honestly. It may hurt at first, but the more you do it, the less risky, rote and unreasonable it will feel even when your actual odds of failing haven't changed. Fighting this fight is one of the most worthwhile battles in your life.

Set about today to establish a routine, a rhythm, that allows you to maximize as much creative juice as possible every day, in every context you find yourself, with the tools you possess and those you are still learning.

This is the real effect of discipline: You embrace whatever routine sets you up for constant creative progress, and the rewards come to you. And you can come to expect them.

Allow your routine to become part of who you are, part of your lifestyle. When you experience its rewards, even only a few times, you will be ready to lean in further. In other words, you will comprehend what constant creators have known for centuries.

## Defamiliarize the Ordinary

Despite all the planning and forecasting involved in running your life, constant creativity hinges on your ability to regularly enter unfamiliar space and cultivate your creative instinct. Fields never turn green without regular storms; but they also never grow without a break in the clouds allowing sunlight to shine through. The natural world is a constant reminder that progress never occurs without some change to the familiar.

The key is to ignite that lack of familiarity yourself. Don't avoid it. And don't wait for it to come.

Sparks arise when you discover nuances you hadn't seen before and connections you'd never made. The fact is, original breakthroughs rarely occur in familiar locations. This includes the space in our own minds where we carry our preconceived notions about the people and places around us and where current knowledge resides. So, the trick is to remove yourself from your familiar places or else discover what is unfamiliar about where you already are — even if it's as simple as taking a different way to work, or going to lunch with someone you barely know.

The path of your current knowledge, your current know-how, your current understanding is never enough if you want to remain on the creative frontiers. You must peer down the path of the unknown and unfamiliar if you want to continue generating sparks.

When we start with no knowledge, suddenly, discovery is our primary resource. It is far easier to reach this conclusion about yourself — that your knowledge is limited or truly nil — when you begin to comprehend the vastness of opportunities and miracles around you every day.

The goal of all creations is to remove complexity and move toward simplicity. To do this, though, you have to enter into the complexity, the uncertainty, the unfamiliar. Your brain has what you know from past experience locked in. It's in the bank, so to speak. But the sparks that come from that reservoir are ever diminishing unless you add fresh data to it every day — unless you mix the familiar with the unfamiliar.

A lack of creativity is fundamentally a lack of curiosity. It is a lack of desire and latent drive to seek new answers. That drive is in you. But with it in neutral or turned off entirely, you easily cling to a binary view of the world.

Stay open to whatever comes with the uncertainty. Breathe it in. Digest it. Fold it into your perspective and understanding. Let everything begin to teach you.

When you make a habit out of defamiliarizing the ordinary, your life comes alive as the beautiful mystery, adventure and frontier of possibility that it truly is — that it always has been. Along this frontier rise the sparks of your greatest creations, both big and small.

## Stay Foolish

Sparks come from action — even the awkward, bumbling action of doing something completely new. Being an amateur creator is not conceding that you'll never become a pro. Nor is it conceding that mediocre creations are the goal. It's conceding that to become a pro, and remain a pro, you have to remain willing to become a fool in love, again and again.

Constant creators hold tight to one constant when all is falling apart and when all is thriving: foolishness. This is different from embracing the mind of a beginner who is willing to learn from anything. Foolishness is in the doing. It's an ability to embrace ideas, opportunities and paths that we know are impractical and will break us down. Being foolish is doing what the majority would call stupid, senseless or a waste of time.

Constant creators remain in a state of constant wonder. Not merely the kind of surreal wonder that can get stuck in fantasy if we're not careful, but the kind of wonder that worries less about the "whats" and is more inclined to explore the "what-ifs." And not just mentally explore. Physically explore.

When you're starting something totally new, you're taking a leap of faith. You have to believe, and you have to make other people believe even when you're nowhere near ready.

The bright future of anything — career, company, industry, relationship — relies on those who are willing to keep creating whether or not they've done it before and despite a lack of knowledge or resources. Stupidity and feelings of insufficiency can be fuel for innovation — often the most natural fuel you possess — if you let them be.

Like a child learning to draw, just draw. Don't try to be inspired. Don't trace or connect the dots. Just create something. And then do it again. If you do it consistently enough, inspiration and discovery are guaranteed to occur. Get yourself used to acting forward, not merely thinking forward. And don't mind acting the fool.

If there is an obstacle to engaging in foolish activity, it's fear. If you are truly acting on a spark that requires you to play the amateur, you will always fear something along the continuum from mild disappointment to complete disaster. However, the overlooked aspect of this sort of activity is that it is rarely a chore. Amateur spontaneity will stretch you, yes. But it is because you are stretched that this activity can be one of the most exhilarating and fulfilling things you do. You have to act through the fear.

We are delighted by the sparks that rise from this sort of foolishness. We are drawn to their mystery. These sparks are fueled by your own natural curiosity.

Your logic tells you that your days are easiest when you know what to expect. There's truth in that. But your spirit reminds you that your days are only inspiring when you learn and stretch and grow. There's transcendence in the fascination with our own curiosity.

There is always fear in playing the fool. You are never fit for what you don't yet know and can't yet do. That's why great creators don't attempt to think their way into acting spontaneously. They just act spontaneously.

There is a tendency to see creative foolishness as frivolous or even careless behavior. This is a flawed view; it assumes that you are happy with your current "everything." If you are, stay where you are and hold on to everything. Learn nothing new. Spark no hidden potential. If your everything isn't everything it's cracked up to be, let it go now, and then see what else you can learn and find.

The majority of your amateur experiences and foolish experiments, will teach you something right away and

illuminate an immediate application to a current venture. This application must be captured. You must become proficient at refining your creativity through reaction.

Constant creators work with a continuous sense of urgency to raise the bar in every facet of their lives. They resist hitting the cruise control when something is working. And they rarely rely on existing road maps to direct future paths because they know the best road map is an ever-increasing awareness.

If you can begin to see creativity through this lens — accelerated output, immediate impact — you will begin to see why acting the fool matters. You don't need brilliance to make creative progress. You just need enough foolish drive to move forward when you are neither qualified nor equipped. Opportunities come quicker and steadier when you forget your ego and just go.

Don't fear the fool in you. Let him lead you into creative frontiers every day.

## Fall in Love

When you learn to trust the creative process, attach yourself to your work, keep your day job, embrace a routine, defamiliarize the ordinary and stay foolish, creativity becomes a love affair. And when you're hooked, you're hooked for life.

When you fall in love with your unique brand of creativity, strange things happen. Details like time and space being to fade into meaninglessness.

A new creator will fall into the temptation of trying to orchestrate the perfect space and time to start creating, but that only impedes progress. He doesn't yet understand love.

When there's love, creators no longer wrestle with the "wheres" and "whens." The real matter at hand is the pursuit of the next creation, the next opportunity to display their love.

Clearly, this sort of love gets messy now and then. While there is a place for clean and tidy, the love affairs of some creators thrive in messy environments. The point isn't that messy means more creativity. Or that tidy does either. Messy or tidy is more a personality trait or preference than a principle. The point is that when you're in love with creativity, you don't worry about either. You take it as it comes each day.

When you don't know where to find creative inspiration, it's often because you're not listening to your heart. Creativity lives in your heart, and because that's true, you can ignite sparks and grind them anywhere.

The most profound element of this sort of love — of any true love — is that you always have each other. In good times, sparks and champagne spray the air. Life is artful, meaningful and a true manifestation of who you are. And in bad times — in loss, rejection, disappointment — creativity is still there reminding you that an upswing is just a spark away. When you have creativity, you have the ultimate bond.

In the end, creating is as human as breathing. You breathe in. You breathe out. This proves you are living. You absorb. You create. This proves you are alive.

You are a human being and a human becoming. Your creativity fashions the bridge between the two. Who you are is art. You are organic and meant to manifest the features of your becoming.

Your becoming is beautiful and lucid. It inspires and instructs. Your becoming is hideous and chaotic. It inflames and confounds. Thus, your life sings both magic and mystery, fulfillment and frustration. Thus, the products of your becoming are risky. Don't let risk confine you. Being without becoming is riskier still.

Let your senses craft substance, your mind craft meaning, your heart craft belief. Allow the combinations to originate emotion; let conviction be fashioned. Desire and despair. Satisfaction and discontent. Faith. Hope. Love.

Do it every day. Pursue it like a lover you can't live without.

In the end, what you truly love determines who you become. But knowing what you truly love is challenging to clarify … until you're in a difficult or desperate situation. Love is often theoretical until there is no longer time or energy for theories. That's when your lens is in clear focus. And it's then that you know where you stand with creativity.


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# 39-23 No Limits

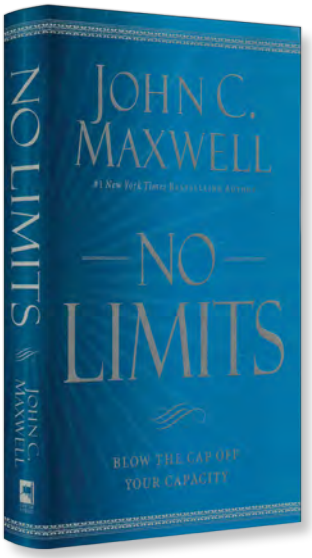
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# No Limits

## Blow the CAP Off Your Capacity




by John C. Maxwell

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We often treat the word "capacity" as if it were a natural low of limitation. Unfortunately, most of us are much more comfortable defining what we perceive as off-limits rather than what's really possible. Could it be that many of us have failed to expand our potential because we have allowed what we perceive as capacity to define us? What if our limits are not really our limits?

In *No Limits,* leadership expert John C. Maxwell identifies the abilities and choices that make up our capacity. Some are things we all already possess, such as energy, creativity and leadership. Others are things we must choose, such as attitude, character and intentionality. Maxwell examines each of these capacities and provides rich insight on self-awareness as well as clean and actionable advice on how you can increase your potential. He teaches you how to *identify, grow* and *apply* your critical capabilities. Once you've blown the "cap" off your capabilities, you'll find yourself more successful — and fulfilled — in your daily life.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To become aware of the possibilities that can increase your capacity and make you better by recognizing your value through self-awareness.
- How to identify and develop the capacities that are already within you and understand how each capacity works together to improve you and your life.
- To make smart choices that allow you to reach your fullest potential and become successful by building up your existing capacities.

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**The author:** John C. Maxwell, the #1 *New York Times* best-selling author, coach and speaker who has sold more than 26 million books, was identified as the number one leader in business by the American Management Association ® and the world's most influential leadership expert by *Business Insider* and *Inc.* magazine in 2014. His organizations (The John Maxwell Company, The John Maxwell Team, EQUIP and The John Maxwell Leadership Foundation) have trained millions of leaders touching every nation in the world. *No Limits: Blow the CAP Off Your Capacity* by John C. Maxwell, copyright © 2017 by John C. Maxwell, has been summarized with permission of the publisher, Center Street, a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc. 315 pages, $27.00, ISBN 978-1-4555-4828-6.

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# Awareness: Remove the Caps from Your Capacity

If you grow in your *awareness,* develop your *abilities* and make the right *choices,* you can reach your capacity. This is "The Capacity Challenge." If you are willing to accept this challenge and follow the processes outlined here, your life will change.

The Capacity Challenge begins with *awareness*. Becoming aware is the first big step you can take to blow the cap off your capacity. People will more readily reach their potential when they work on their strengths rather than working on their weaknesses.

It is important to remember these two thoughts as you prepare yourself for this challenge:

1. **Change doesn't always have to be drastic to be effective.** Change your focus from your weaknesses to your strengths. Be on the lookout for where you need to change your focus to become more aware of your potential.
2. **Change is necessary for you to reach your capacity.** Later in the challenge, you will be asked to work on some things that may not be natural strengths. You will find that difficult. Growth in skill areas, if they are not natural, is often slow and small. That's OK. Every little bit of positive change helps. It increases your capacity.

All of these changes, whether difficult or easy, are needed if you desire to increase your capacity and reach your potential.

## Your Capacity Isn't Set

Have you given much thought to your capacity? Most people think theirs is set. You hear one person identified as "high capacity" and another as "low capacity," and you just accept it. What's your capacity? Have you defined it as high, low or average? Do you think it's set? Maybe you haven't put a label on it, but you've probably settled into a level of achievement that you believe is what's possible for you. That's a problem.

Too many people hear the word "capacity" and assume it's a limitation. They assume their capacity is set — especially if they're beyond a certain age. People give up on the idea that their capacity or their potential can grow. All they do is try to manage whatever they think they've got.

Some caps are fixed. But most are not. We can't allow these unfixed caps to keep our lives from expanding. We can't let caps define our potential. We need to see beyond the caps and see our true capacity before we can blow off our caps and expand our capacity.

## You Can Become Aware of the Possibilities That Can Make You Better

All lasting growth requires awareness. Unfortunately, if you lack awareness, then you don't know that you are unaware. Self-awareness is a powerful skill. It allows you to test your limits. It empowers you to understand other people. It makes partnership with others stronger. It allows you to maximize your strengths and minimize your weakness. It opens the door to greater capacity.

Our perspective colors our view of the world, other people and life. But it's also true that who we are determines how we see ourselves. We naturally tend to see things as we have always seen them. If we want to

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increase our capacity, we must see differently. We need to be willing to look at ourselves and our world in new ways. We need to pay attention and look for what we need to know.

What stops people from reaching their capacity often isn't lack of desire. It's usually lack of awareness. There are factors that work against us and prevent us from developing great self-awareness, such as excuses, unresolved negative emotions, habitual self-distraction, absence of personal reflection and the unwillingness to pay the price to gain experience.

Most people who have developed self-awareness have had to battle one or more of these factors to get where they are. They've had to work very hard. It takes a desire to make self-awareness discoveries. It takes discipline to look at yourself and reflect on your experiences.

The next step forward to increasing your capacity involves removing the caps that are holding you back. Awareness changes everything. As soon as we become aware that some of our "limitations" are artificial, we can begin to overcome many of them. We can blow off these caps, which opens the way for growth.

Are you ready to take the capacity challenge? Maintaining the status quo is easier than accepting the challenge. If you wanted to, you could find plenty of reasons *not* to strive for your potential. But that shouldn't stop you.

### Recognize Your Value and Increase Your Capacity

You have great potential. Not only are you good enough, but you have the ability to get even better and achieve greater significance in your life. You need to be aware of the caps in your life and recognize which caps you can't remove and which ones you can.

We don't have any control over how our life begins, and there are also many things that happen to us in our lives that we cannot control. We suffer accidents or illnesses. We lose people we love. We discover that we don't have the talent or ability to fulfill a dream. These are called "life caps."

Part of the process of fulfilling your purpose is becoming aware of the things you can't change that limit you so you can direct your attention toward the things you can maximize to increase your capacity.

The first type of limitation comes from the caps that others put on us. You're not even aware of some of them. But you don't have to let their lack of belief define you.

Perhaps the caps that limit us most are the ones we put on ourselves. Too many people simply accept whatever environment they're born into. They think it's normal, and they start to believe they don't have any other choices in life. When that happens, they've created a self-imposed cap on their life.

Self-imposed caps don't just blow off in one moment. We expose ourselves to new ideas and successful people, and the caps begin to loosen. And when they get loose enough, then they come off. What caps do you need to loosen so that you can blow them off and start increasing your capacity? Are you limited by complacency?

## Ability: Develop the Capacities You Already Possess

We often talk about capacity in the singular. But what if we're thinking about capacity in the wrong way? Thinking of capacity as one thing is too limiting.

After awareness, the second step to changing our capacity is to recognize that we have many capacities. You have dozens, maybe even hundreds, of them. Each capacity is based on your talents and choices. There are seven capacities that rely more on talent than choices, though both are involved.

Everyone possesses these capacities, and every one of these capacities is significant to a person's success. By continually maximizing today's capacity in these areas, you will increase tomorrow's potential.

These seven capacities don't develop in isolation. They work together. It may be helpful to think about this idea in two ways. First, your capacities build in layers. This creates a great foundation that you can build your life upon. Second, they connect to one another. Each time you increase a capacity, it has the potential to synergize with another capacity and increase your potential. As you develop your seven core capacities, explore your options. Look for ways to expand your ability. You will be amazed by the compounding effect you will experience and the increased potential that will result.

### Energy Capacity — Your Ability to Push On Physically

There are many capacities that we can increase, but there's nothing we can do to expand time. That's why we need to focus on our energy. That's something we can influence. If we want to get more done and make a greater impact on the world, we need to increase our energy capacity.

How should you focus your energy? Here are three R's that can be used for prioritizing: *requirement* (what you have to do), *return* (what you do well), and *reward* (what

you love to do). Doing what rewards you almost always gives you energy. The same is true for doing what gives us a high return. However, for most people, fulfilling requirements is not energizing — unless your requirements line up with return and reward. If you have the power to align all three of those, you'll always be energized by your work.

It's vital to increase your energy as much as possible. It's also crucial to use the energy you have wisely. Use it when you need it, conserve it when you don't, and know the difference between the two.

How much have you thought about your energy capacity? Have you assumed that your energy capacity is fixed? That you can't change it? If so, you need to change your mindset. Start paying close attention to what increases or decreases your energy, and begin making adjustments to what you do. Tap into things that increase your energy capacity, and manage your energy for the things that matter most to you.

## Emotional Capacity — Your Ability to Manage Your Emotions

Emotional capacity is the ability to handle adversity, failure, criticism, change and pressure in a positive way. All of these things create stress in our lives. The inability to deal with stress or emotional pressure takes a lot out of people. They give up, break down or do unhealthy things to try to escape the pressure. However, emotionally strong people are able to manage their emotions and process through difficulties. That allows them to increase their capacity, and moves them closer to reaching their full potential.

The first, and maybe most important thing that emotionally strong people do is take an active approach to their emotions. Maybe you can't control your emotions completely, but you can change them through your actions.

All of us are hit in the gut by unwanted surprises, blindsided by negative relationships and knocked down by the blows we didn't see coming. There are times when we want to tell the world how unfair life is. But only by taking action can we pull ourselves out of the pits we find ourselves in. The faster we can recover from the shock of the emotion, process through it and move toward action, the quicker our recovery time will be, and the more emotionally strong we will become. The choice is always ours. We either continually work on mastering our emotions, or we will be continuously mastered by them.

## Thinking Capacity — Your Ability to Think Effectively

If you want to increase your overall success capacity, then you need to increase your thinking capacity. Most people do not recognize the value of good thinking. They have thoughts, but they let them go and don't do anything with them. However, when you value good thoughts, it makes all of your thinking more valuable. That is the starting point of increasing your thinking capacity.

Once an idea has been put on the table and improved by a key group of people, it's time to take the idea out and let more people see it. You learn a lot when you present an idea to people who don't know you or who won't automatically give you the benefit of the doubt. It's always easier to think an idea than to practice it. An idea always sounds better when it hasn't been challenged. But an unchallenged idea is rarely able to live in the real world.

Something powerful happens when a person moves from *believing* in an idea to *owning* an idea. Believing in an idea can be good, but it's very limiting. When you believe in an idea, it's like investing in an endeavor with someone else's money. You give it a try and hope it works. However, when you own an idea, it's like putting your own money into an investment. You do what it takes to make it work. The greater the investment, the more you feel that it *has to work*.

When you launch an idea, you need to be clear about what you want people to know and what you want people to do. The launch is the greatest test of any idea. The implementation demonstrates an idea's real value — or lack of value. When it works, it's powerful because everyone sees it.

Launching an idea is very rewarding. But the results come with the landing. When a thought lands and makes a positive difference, the temptation is to celebrate and move on. But if we do that without looking for a way to upgrade the thought, we've missed a great opportunity.

Growth requires your thoughts to be continually upgraded. If you want to increase your potential, maximize your capacity and be successful, then you need to develop your thinking. High thinking capacity and the ability to sustain your thinking will give you a higher return than being smart or working hard.

## People Capacity — Your Ability to Build Relationships

We are defined by our relationships. People can usually trace their successes and failures to the relationships in their lives. You cannot increase your people capacity unless you value people and care about them. If you don't like people, don't respect them and don't believe they have value, it stands as a barrier to your success with them. You can't secretly look down on others and build them up at the same time. However, if you value people, it

shows through. And it makes the development of positive relationships possible.

Put yourself in the position to meet and spend time with the right people. Use the Power of Proximity Principle, which is, "Get next to 10 people who can take you to the next level." Be intentional and show initiative by moving toward the relationships you desire in life. If you wait for the right people to meet you, you won't meet the right people.

People capacity really does make a huge difference in a person's life. And your people capacity will go to a new level once you realize how much you need the right people in your life. The more you value people, put yourself into their world, seek to add value to them and be their friend, the better your life will be.

### Creative Capacity — Your Ability to See Options and Find Answers

Is it true that some people are born highly creative? Of course. There are the rare few who create to create and are gifted to change the world in that regard. In fact, some argue that all of us are born creative, but most of us lose that creativity as we grow up. You can rekindle the creativity that's already in you, as well as cultivate new pathways of creativity.

Creativity is changing the question from "Is there an answer?" to "What is the answer?" Creativity always takes time, patience and experimentation. You just have to enter into the process believing there is an answer. Creativity is a mindset. You have to believe that answers and solutions are out there if you're willing to keep fighting to find them. Questions always spur creativity. Why? Because questions cause you to explore, to seek out.

Creativity is about connecting things. Focus on a particular idea and then look for ways to make connections to it. This is called "connection creativity." With an idea fixed in your mind, look for ways to connect it with experiences, people, quotes, stories, opportunities, questions — anything you can think of. If you want to increase your creativity, begin looking for connections.

Keeping our imaginations sharp is essential to creative thinking and problem solving. That requires practice. Unfortunately, as we get older, most people practice creative thinking less and less. Working with half-baked ideas forces us to use our imaginations and practice creative thinking.

If you desire to increase your creativity capacity, you can do it. You can train yourself to see possibilities. You can learn to find answers. You can become someone who always offers options. And you can work with others to become inventive and innovative. If you can harness that with productivity, you'll *really* be able to increase your capacity.

### Production Capacity — Your Ability to Accomplish Results

Production capacity can be increased dramatically and immediately if you are highly intentional about it. If you're willing to work at it, you can be successful. No one has ever had to work at *limiting* their capacity. That happens naturally. The world tries to talk us out of working hard. We convince ourselves that we can't get ahead. There are even people who will tell you that the system is rigged, that successful people have pushed you down and have gotten to the top by stepping on you.

Everything worthwhile in life — everything you want, everything you desire to achieve, everything you want to receive — is uphill. The problem is that most of us have uphill dreams but downhill habits. And that's why we have a cap on our production capacity. To increase production capacity, initiate many tries at one thing, not one try at many things.

Downhill is easy. It has no requirements. It doesn't take any effort. A downhill lifestyle is characterized by unintentionality, complacency, inconsistency and excuses. There is no big-picture vision for the future, only instant gratification.

Uphill is hard. Moving uphill requires intentionality, energy, determination, hard work and consistency. It requires you to keep an eye on the big picture, be determined, demonstrate character and put in the time. The right thing to do and the hard thing to do are usually the same thing. More and more people resist doing the right thing because it's hard, so they choose the easy thing. They go downhill instead of uphill.

When you want to accomplish something, you have to have a vision for what you're trying to do, but you also have to be willing to take action in the face of uncertainty. You need to tap into your thinking capacity to know what you're shooting for, but you also need to have a bias for action to be productive. You have to be willing to take a step, probably a small step.

That's the mindset you must have to become more productive. Whatever you have, or don't have, you're willing to start regardless of how little you know about how you're going to get where you want to go.

### Leadership Capacity — Your Ability to Lift and Lead Others

Communication is the language of leadership. Leadership is a two-way street. To find the people who want to

help you as a leader, you need to ask questions and actively listen. Questions open up doors and allow us to connect with others. They place value on the other person. And they give us a different perspective. Before we attempt to set things right as leaders, we need to see things right. The highest compliment you can give someone is to ask them their opinion.

However, none of that works if you don't listen. If questions unlock the door, listening keeps the door open. Questions start the conversation, but listening encourages it to continue. Questions + Listening = Quality Conversation. Quality Conversation = Quality Leadership.

If you're a task-oriented person, connecting may be something you have to work at to achieve. If you're a people person, building relationships may come naturally. But making the transition from relationship building to movement requires a *leadershift*. That "shift" is the transition from connecting with people to helping them make the changes necessary for the benefit of the team.

The greatest gift a leader can give their team members is a belief in them that lets them know they are valued. It's wonderful when the people value the leader, but it's more wonderful when the leader values the people.

How we as leaders see others determines how much we will invest in them. But how they see themselves determines how much they will invest in themselves. Value assessment determines investment. The value you place on yourself determines the level of your commitment to yourself and others. Self-worth is foundational to belief. The moment that your belief in yourself goes up, so can your commitment to help yourself. If the people on your team don't believe in themselves, as the leader, you need to try to help them find that belief. You need to encourage them. You need to speak positive words of affirmation.

## Choices: Do the Things That Maximize Your Capacity

The word "choice" implies that we have other options, and we do. How much capacity do you want in your life? You have the right and the power to choose. Choices add to the things we learn and the gifts we possess.

To maximize our capacity, we must choose to be intentional, focus on one area at a time and take action every day. You can maximize your capacity by making choices in 10 key areas.

These areas aren't skills or talents; they are life choices. The more you live them and learn to love them, the larger your capacity will be and the greater your success.

### Responsibility Capacity — Your Choice to Take Charge of Your Life

One of the reasons successful people are successful is that they see and seize opportunities. Often, we see them going through doors of opportunity, making the most of them, and we think to ourselves, *I wish I had that chance.* We see the results, but what we often don't see is the deep level of personal responsibility they had to take to make the most of the opportunity. Without increasing their responsibility capacity, they could not have increased their opportunity capacity.

The way you take control of the direction of your life is to take responsibility for yourself and for your everyday actions. People who do this see dramatic results. Can you control everything? No, of course not. But, you can choose to control the things that *are* within your control. First, acknowledge that you have the ability to choose. Then, identify which parts of your life you can control and which you can't. Once you begin taking charge and making choices, your life will begin to change.

### Character Capacity — Your Choices Based on Good Values

Values create the foundation of character, and character provides the foundation for success. The results of developing character are life changing. Good character is a choice you make every day. When you choose to do the right thing based on a positive value, your character expands. With each right choice, you develop the strength to make other right choices and more difficult right choices. In contrast, every time you choose to cut corners, compromise on your values or turn your back on what you know to be right, it shrinks your character. The smaller and weaker it gets, the more difficult it is to make another right choice.

Good character uses the same standard in every situation. If something is right, it's always right. If it's wrong, it's always wrong. People with good character are consistent. People who try to use multiple standards with different people and in different situations live fragmented lives.

When a person lives a fragmented life, others never know what to expect from that person. They don't know how the person will act in any given situation. Whenever you make a commitment to another person, you create hope. When you keep that commitment, you create trust.

Good character helps you follow through on that commitment and develop trust.

### Abundance Capacity — Your Choice to Believe There Is More Than Enough

Why are people who embrace abundance so readily able to say yes? It's because they possess high belief in many areas of life. They believe in themselves. They say, "There's more to me than what people see." Beliefs drive behavior. Lack of belief, which is a characteristic of scarcity, holds us back. We hesitate not because we are unable to do something but because we don't have confidence in ourselves.

Abundance people seize the moment because they see potential in it. They believe they can do more than they've done before. They believe they can perform at a higher level than they have before. They believe they can grow more — and keep growing. This belief not only keeps them going but it also allows them to be the first to take action.

Our perspective is not determined by what we see. It's determined by how we see, and that comes from who we are. Two people can be in the same situation and see things completely differently. While a scarcity person often looks at a situation and thinks, *There's no way!* an abundance person sees the same thing and thinks, *There's got to be a better way!*

The world is a better place as a result of people whose perspectives were shaped by abundance thinking. Change your perspective from one of scarcity to one of abundance, and you open the door to innovation and positive change not only for yourself but also for others.

### Discipline Capacity — Your Choice to Focus Now and Follow Through

We won't achieve great things accidentally. Never forget: Everything worthwhile is uphill. Achieving what you want takes time, effort, consistency, energy and commitment. Self-discipline is what makes those things possible and puts success within reach. And here's the good news: Self-discipline is something you can develop. You don't need to be born with it. It's a choice you make and keep on making.

Do you know what's important to you? If you haven't thought it through and written it out, it's very likely that any lack of self-discipline you're experiencing is coming from that. The single greatest way to increase your discipline capacity is to know what's important and have that as a touchstone for your life.

So much of what we do in life has no deadline. As a result, many things get put off. Create external deadlines to create an awareness of time. Discipline is like a muscle. The more we train it, the better we become at developing it.

### Intentionality Capacity — Your Choice to Deliberately Pursue Significance

Intentional living can be distilled into three characteristics. If you choose to embrace them, you can live with a much higher capacity for intentionality.

Be deliberate. We only get one shot at life, and whatever we fail to do will be left undone. Too many people think that good intentions are enough to make a difference. They're not. Good intentions are overrated. The smallest action always surpasses the greatest intentions.

Be consistent. Whatever we continually do in life compounds. If the things we do are negative, life gets worse for us. If what we do continually is positive, life gets better. If we practice intentionality, it compounds and life continues to get better.

Be willful. Living a life of intentionality is an act of will, and it's something you have to be determined to do daily. Most people don't lead their lives; they accept their lives. How much do you want to make a difference with your life? You can make a difference. Are you willing to fight for it?

Significance is all about adding value to others. If you do the following things every day, you will make a difference, and you will immediately feel the significance of your life: Add value to people, think of ways to add value to people, look for ways to add value to people, do things that add value to people and encourage others to add value to people.

### Attitude Capacity — Your Choice to Be Positive Regardless of Circumstances

Coaching and encouraging yourself is huge when it comes to choosing a positive attitude regardless of circumstances. It is the single best thing you can do to help yourself. There are some foundational things you can do to put yourself in a positive position most of the time. By doing these three things, you make it easier for yourself to bounce back from difficulties:

**Become humble:** It is much easier to face life's difficulties and respond positively when you display humility. Doing small things that may seem unimportant to us but that benefit others helps us cultivate humility. Doing them with love builds on that.

**Become teachable:** Teachability is wanting to learn from every experience and every person. It requires an appreciation for everything we experience and knowing that we can always learn something — if we have the right spirit.

**Become resilient:** To maintain a positive attitude, you need to be resilient and not let anything negative take hold of you. Time spent on being angry about the past means less time moving forward and doing what you desire to do.

Your attitude is one of the most pliable and resilient parts of you. Regardless of your age or circumstances, you can change if you're willing to.

### Risk Capacity — Your Choice to Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

When taking big risks, you can't depend on hype or wishful thinking because those things cannot withstand the heat of risk. You need to understand what you're dealing with, look at the worst-case scenarios and look reality dead in the eye.

Risk is rarely comfortable. It requires us to get out of our comfort zone. Yet, that's where we need to live when we're risking big. To take the steps forward in the face of risk, you have to deal with your emotions and doubts.

Everything rises and falls on leadership. That is never more true than during times of risk. The size of the leadership must be equal to the size of the risk. If you're going to attempt something difficult, you need good leadership. You need to either provide it yourself or find a partner who can help you lead. If you are preparing to take a big risk, it may require every leadership skill you possess to accomplish it. Don't take that lightly. Keep growing as a leader. The more you increase your leadership capacity, the more you increase your potential for risk capacity.

### Growth Capacity — Your Choice to Focus On How Far You Can Go

A person's capacity is limitless, and our desire should be to explore how far we can stretch it. Some of the most significant things in life take great time and effort. The joy of the journey toward them comes from the new discoveries we make along the way. Our new knowledge and discoveries become the motivation for us to continue the journey. It is only after we go a long distance that we can look back and realize what we didn't know. Soon we begin to realize that it is not the destination we're seeking. Rather, we desire the growth that we experience, and there is no finish line. At that time, we stop asking, "How long will it take?" and begin to wonder, "How far can I go?"

Failure is not your enemy. Failure can teach you valuable lessons. While failure is inevitable, learning is optional. Failure helps you develop resilience, or endurance with direction. You can use your failures to teach others. You have lost your fear of failure when you are not afraid to share those failures with other people.

### Partnership Capacity — Your Choice to Collaborate with Others

If you want to multiply your effectiveness, you need to work with others. To enjoy great partnerships, you need to be a great partner. If you want to partner up with others, then be the first to meet them where they are. Find common ground, and place their agenda at the top of your agenda. In essence, become a servant leader, and measure each day by the seeds you sow more than by the harvest you reap.

Adding value is the only way a partnership will work. Partnerships begin to disintegrate when one person starts receiving more than they are giving. The only way that we will be given an opportunity to partner with others tomorrow is to add value to them today. If you want to be a good partner and benefit by increasing your partnership capacity, you need to add value to your partners.

Trust is the foundation of any solid relationship. Trust can't be established quickly; it must be earned, proven and tested over time. Once it has been established, your partnerships benefit from a trust advantage, which makes them function more smoothly.

## Your Life with No Limits

If you are aware of yourself and your ability to improve, if you develop the abilities you already possess and if you make the everyday choices that help you improve, you will reach your capacity.

Your life need not have limits. As long as you're breathing, you can improve. You can make a greater difference. It's all within your reach. All you have to do is seize it.

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# 39-25 Lifestorming

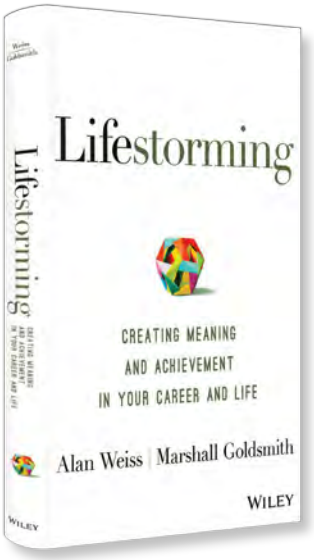
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# Lifestorming

## Creating Meaning and Achievement in Your Career and Life




by Alan Weiss and Marshall Goldsmith

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Lifestorming* is your practical guide to becoming the person you want to be. You will discover what it takes to redesign your life, friends, behaviors and beliefs in order to move closer to your goals.

While change is not easy, it is possible. You will discover a new way to think about your goals — why you chose them, how you can achieve them and (critically) how they can evolve over time to reflect your changing priorities.

*Lifestorming* will help you assess your current state in concrete terms and determine your ability to change and adapt. Then, you can purposefully identify the people, actions, habits and beliefs that either support your personal and professional growth or hold you back from reaching your goals. Outlined here are six building blocks of *character* that will help you to challenge your belief system, develop a leadership mindset and overcome the stumbling blocks that keep you from success. You'll map out an action plan and learn how to continually move forward at work, at home and in everyday life.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to set the course of a personal evolutionary journey while being aware of outside forces that can influence the journey along the way.
- To recognize when changes in your behaviors are needed and how to evolve them into aspiration-appropriate behaviors.
- To build character in a way that allows you to reach your full potential and create the future you desire and deserve.
- To understand that legacies are created day by day, and how your behaviors and decisions are building that legacy.

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## Setting Our Own Aspirations

Our natural human tendency is to think of ourselves as independent and authentic — authors of our own destinies. But that's a tall order and much tougher than it seems. Bombarded by external triggers and expectations, we can easily fall into roles and patterns established for us by other people.

We often unconsciously become programmed to believe we are someone and then proceed to live our lives trying to fill that role. However, it's often the wrong role — not right for us and sometimes even harmful.

A great many people follow their parents into a profession even when they don't feel any passion for it themselves. This pattern can also be influenced by siblings. Brothers and sisters are highly influenced by their sibs, and tend to play the same sports, become cheerleaders or join the band (and play the same instrument) — or do just the opposite to escape the comparisons. These are roles that have been established as successful, drawing praise from others and creating a precedent to follow or from which to flee.

Thus, unseen by the naked eye, we, without thinking about it, may do our best to become the people we were programmed to be rather than the people who, in our hearts, we want to be!

### An Evolutionary Journey

We're talking about taking an evolutionary journey through life. A journey without a "there." The evolving you is not a moving target but pursues a moving target. Be careful that your "there" is not created by someone else or some external force, such as Facebook. Your "there" can, and often should, be constantly moving as your experiences, successes and perspective change. Our bar may well become higher and higher as we journey through life.

An initial question becomes: To what extent is your journey one of internal control, and to what extent is it one of external control? Do social and normative pressures have a legitimate role in who you are to become?

*Control* is the power to influence. *Internal control* is the power that is believed by the performers to be theirs, within their purview. *External control* is the power that is believed by the performers to be wielded by others or by random events.

Many people arise each day simply awaiting what occurs without the intention of exerting themselves on the world. We see this in circumstances in which external direction has been removed advertently or inadvertently, and no one chooses to step forward into the vacuum. People mill about or drift away. Nothing productive occurs. This is much rarer among entrepreneurs, who realize (and are gratified) that they must make their own plans work and must achieve their own aspirations.

### The Impossible Dream

The fundamental work of changing our behavior for the better is ultimately our own responsibility. Today, we might cringe at the spinning wheel of social media, which is constantly gaining speed. We may feel as if we don't exist if we're not a part of this spinning wheel of information. The centrifugal force threatens to throw us off, so we cling with all our might trying to follow and be a part of a thousand issues for a second each. The inertia is bizarre: The more you get, the more you get! So, we



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become overwhelmed with examples, advice and claims that are never vetted, validated or verified.

Today, the phenomenon is multiplied a zillionfold with the unceasing, untiring, always increasing speed of the wheel of information that constantly spins in front of us. We don't *really* know what makes sense and what does not, what's real and what's a lie. If we are not careful, instead of becoming highly skeptical of most things, we tend to accept almost whatever is in front of us.

Our aspirations and goals are seldom purely our own. They are tainted or even created by the furious pace, noise and general uproar around us. Why else would people watch scripted "reality" shows of little consequence? We've lost our sense of perspective.

### Life's Detours

We know that the road of life is filled with unexpected twists and turns that can be terrific opportunities or harmful detours. It's easy to wander down interesting paths and alleys only to find that we don't know the way back. We end up in a career, a location or a relationship that is far from ideal — and struggle to get back.

**Family.** Families are our first and strongest influences. They can help us become the people we want to be, but they can also send us on detours even when they mean well. They model roles and behavior that we choose to adopt or reject later in life.

**Media.** Social media presents unprecedented opportunities. It's given birth to inspiring social movements and empowered individuals to do great things. But, it comes with huge challenges, too. Given the pervasiveness of our media culture, how do you make a smart decision about what dreams and aspirations are really best for you? It can be hard to find time to stop and think.

Our main institutions — family, media, religion, business and government — are in flux. While some of those changes are good, all of this volatility makes it hard for us to set aspirations and metrics for success. Without major institutions to guide us, where can we turn? The answer may be toward each other — to our friends.

## The Importance of New Friends

We tend to become the people who are our friends. It's never a good bet to expect people to change a habit if they are surrounded by people voluntarily and happily engaged in that same habit. The default position is pretty clear: We tend to hang with people who are like us and live near people like us.

### Breaking Out of the "Good Enough" Trap

Negative social pressure can play out in different ways when we try to change our behavior. This is referred to as the "good enough" trap: We look around at the situation and say, "There's no need for me to keep trying so hard when the people around me are perfectly happy with mediocrity." Four environments trigger "good enough" behavior:

1. We lack motivation: If we don't really believe that the goal is worthy or we believe that we lack the skill to do a task well, then we shouldn't take it on. Find something that you care about, and go after it with gusto.
2. We're working pro bono, volunteering or getting paid less than we think we should be: Doing substandard work only reflects badly on us in the long run.
3. We refuse to acknowledge our weaknesses: We tend to see our strengths as our real qualities and our shortcomings as aberrations that don't really define us. We grow when we take responsibility for the whole package — good, bad and in between.
4. We have compliance issues: No one likes to be told what to do, even (and sometimes especially) when the person telling us what to do is right. Saying we're good enough the way we are is a way to thumb our noses at authority.

Now, to be clear, "good enough" sometimes really is good enough. But, when it comes to our interactions with others — how we treat each other — "good enough" sets the bar too low. Not only that, the payoff for *not* settling is tremendous. Pouring all of our energy into behavioral change means that we start to change our environment rather than be changed by it. Our forward progress is exciting and contagious, as others start to make changes in their lives, too.

### The Best Relationships Grow with Us

Maintaining old friendships is a wonderful thing. Keeping in touch with the people who knew us as children adds dimension to our lives and softens the passage of time. However, we don't recommend having *solely* childhood friends. The new (and newer) people in our lives reflect our changing selves, and they are a valuable part of our personal growth.

While it's often quite difficult to retain friendships in a peripatetic world, social media makes it a simple task. We

are contained within a peer group in virtual perpetuity. That can be constricting if we forget that on social media, as in real life, we are free to engage with or avoid people as we see fit. The problem comes when we let these old associations constrain our sense of identity.

Another huge challenge of our media-dominated environment is the way it encourages us to vicariously lead the lives of other people. Scroll through your social media feed, and you'll probably see a number of people exploiting their lives for attention or profit. They invite you to live vicariously through their ever-unfolding personal dramas, but beware of subordinating your own life to theirs.

### Letting Go to Reach Out

You have to let go before you can reach out. Contrary to what most people believe, money and time are not resources; they are priorities. We all have time and money, but the key differentiator is where we invest them. That means we don't have to gather more resources but instead change our priorities as our conditions change.

It's generous to belong to organizations and associations and invest our time, help others and help good causes. However, even these have to be examined as candidates for change. Some people remain part of an organization and become officers and board members and never leave, which means instead of raising the standard of the organization, the organization slows them down. It's recommended that you consider moving on from — or at least review your membership status in — mastermind groups and similar mutual-help arrangements every two years.

We are close to many of our old friends, and we believe strongly in the value of loyalty. We also believe we should be honest in assessing our friendships. There is such a thing as a toxic relationship, whether it's professional, between friends or romantic. The closer you are to that person, the harder it is to disentangle yourself. In some cases, it really is for the best to leave that person behind and move on.

### Why We Halt the Journey

Our journey is sometimes halted, suspended, detoured or even abandoned. We may think there's someone in our way, but usually, we've created the obstacle in our minds.

Another obstacle is the rut we're in. Or we find someone else ahead of us moving slowly, and there's no way to pass unless we leave the track and create our own path around the obstacle, which requires strength, stamina and, most of all, intention. A third factor is procrastination (which is largely fear based).

The evolutionary journey from surviving to thriving requires a sort of global positioning system. You have to identify the next steps, recognize the next level and understand how to seal the doors behind you. We are often slowed because we're expecting people to keep up with us rather than finding friends who force us to speed up. We take our time because we're comfortable, having feathered a nest that we're not willing to leave.

## Behavioral Metamorphosis

Sometimes we don't know that we need to change. We are in denial, convincing ourselves that others need help, not us. We are a culture that is adept at rejecting help in the pursuit of change.

When change takes so long, we tend to miss the best opportunities or solutions. We don't obtain the travel plan we most desire, we miss the tickets for the big event, we find someone else has beaten us to market, or we spend more time on the issue than we really needed to. That's why abrupt change may make sense in some situations, but a metamorphosis might be right for others.

Metamorphosis is not a guarantee of a brighter and better future. The following are five questions to ask yourself to ensure that you methodically create a better future:

1. What behaviors do I seek to change?
2. What behavior will I substitute?
3. What assistance do I need to help with the change?
4. What metrics will tell me I'm making progress?
5. What will I do to sustain the change?

Change for its own sake makes little sense, for organizations or individuals. The key is to determine the salutary results that make the change worthwhile. In our journey of change, of lifestorming, we need to constantly examine our belief systems before we engage in arbitrary behavioral change. The best route to behavioral change is an appeal to rational self-interest by appealing to and/or changing one's belief system.

### Metabehavior

Our behaviors need to change on our journey, both for the long haul and in the short term. We need help with both. Acknowledging that need and obtaining that help are signs of health and internal control.

The shortest period of needed change is situational, in the moment, now. Our reactions here are often the

wrong default: We become angry and lash out, we blame ourselves and become despondent, or we are shocked and retreat from the situation. These behaviors are all dysfunctional. They exacerbate a deteriorating situation. They include many bad assumptions and attitudes, for example: "This person can help me but won't." "I have to radically change my plans and expectations." "I've been misled." "I've failed."

Situational change can be the most difficult because there often is no precedent for a given situation. It's usually a surprise and unanticipated, and it's very dependent on environment and the dispositions of the people involved. That's why situational change tends to be so different in the office versus at home. And so, a brief digression follows. To progress from rejection of change to positive acceptance of change to deliberate creation of change is a healthy evolutionary journey.

### Aspiration-Appropriate Behavior

Our aspirations shouldn't be static. They are a moving target, not something to be accomplished and done with. As we move through our evolutionary journey, our aspirations change. The options that pertain to most of us look like this:

1. Change is discretionary and deliberate.
2. Change is acceptable.
3. Change is resisted.

At the lowest level, we've feathered a nest and don't want to budge. Change is threatening, so we resist external influences. In business, and in organizational culture more broadly, change is a constant — especially now, at time when disruption and volatility are rapidly becoming the new normal.

We can't merely expect to retrain and reskill. We need to change our beliefs about accepting change. That leads us to level two. Here, we are receptive to change. The key to success here is an A+ attitude:

**Accept:** Accept the change without resistance or argument so long as it doesn't threaten your ability to perform and succeed.

**Adjust:** Make the required changes in your habits and activities.

**Adapt:** Now, your behaviors can change appropriately.

Once we've accepted that change happens, we can begin to think about how to bring about the changes we want. Thus, level three is about initiating change and exerting more internal control. When we talk about aspiration-appropriate behavior, we mean adjusting behavior to deal with the moving target of enhanced aspirations. And that means adjusting our belief systems to support those newly desirable behaviors.

## Believe It or Not

There is a belief that might be stated as, "Good work should speak for itself." Maybe, but not usually. When credit is due, if you don't claim it, someone else will. This isn't a question of bragging or selfishness but one of recognizing what you've accomplished.

A belief in positive self-promotion can actually be helpful in professional settings — when it prompts us to realize that we are always selling our ideas. Not only that, it is our responsibility to sell them, not others' responsibility to buy.

### Challenging and Evaluating Your Belief System

One important aspect of examining our beliefs is understanding our own *identities*. We often perceive our "real" selves as inferior to the people others see and with whom they interact. We think we have to play a role to gain social acceptance.

Instead of living our real values, we adopt the values we think we're supposed to have. When we hear that charismatic people are successful, we try to seem charismatic (even if that's an awkward fit for our personality). Some of us try to hang onto our authenticity by describing ourselves how we *want* to be seen.

There's no harm in a little positive self-deception. But too much of it sends our lives off track. That's because it's difficult to be authentic if we identify with someone we haven't become and who is actually not visible to others.

Your belief system needs to be adjusted to what is so that you can make decisions and take actions in the present that reflect the real you and what you're actually doing — authentically.

Here's a quick test to challenge and evaluate your beliefs:

1. What are your basic beliefs about yourself, e.g., what you are great at, what you just can't do, how you respond and so forth?
2. What merits reconsideration and/or change?
3. What actions and behaviors should be modified, created or abandoned in light of those changes?

### The Creation of Attitudes for Growth

Attitudes are the connectors — the synapses — between beliefs and behavior, a self-comforting way of thinking

or feeling about someone or something that is typically reflected in a person's behavior. Attitudes can be paradoxical, widely shared and vary tremendously across cultures.

So what of your attitudes? If you change your beliefs, your attitudes should commensurately change, and your behaviors should follow suit. Attitudes for our own growth would include statements and observations such as these:

- I need to acquire my own developmental resources.
- There's nothing wrong with failure if I learn from it.
- I can take prudent risk without serious threat to the family.
- I must accept the inconvenience of travel away from home.
- I need to be honest and vulnerable to be coached properly.

The objective, periodic review of our attitudes is vital because they are the directors of how we act, the behaviors that manifest our belief system. Therefore, it's best to focus on the wisdom of our intentions before we actually demonstrate them.

### Beliefs Manifest in Behavior

Our behaviors can be influenced by a constructed reality, which is then reciprocally influenced by our behaviors. How is this possible? We behave consistently with our beliefs and attitudes, and those beliefs and attitudes can be heavily laden with assumptions. Individuals and organizations can make poor decisions based on invalid assumptions.

Beliefs form attitudes that are manifest in behavior. Investigate the assumptions you're making about the world around you, and don't simply believe what you're told. Observations can also be used to dispel assumptions.

When we constantly question our beliefs, rethink our attitudes and evaluate our behavior, we stay awake and aware on our journey through life.

## The Importance and Evolution of Character

A shift in your identity doesn't make you a phony. You are allowed to fill new roles and take on new responsibilities. Character evolves. Your circumstances change. Here are six elements of character:

1. Intelligence: the ability to apply critical thinking skills to problems and challenges.
2. Drive or assertiveness: the ability to identify the need for and create urgency.
3. Happiness: Seeking and achieving well-being on our own terms is an essential aspect of character.
4. Empathy: Part of a strong character and virtuous life is the ability to put yourself in others' shoes and understand how they feel.
5. Reciprocity and friendship: The ability to give as well as take, to contribute as much as benefit is a strong element of character.
6. Intimacy and trust: Strong character demands the ability to form loving bonds and allow for vulnerability.

To build character, you need to build these six elements. To evolve character, you need to evolve these elements:

1. Intelligence: Read widely and diversely, including fiction, history, biographies, science and philosophy.
2. Drive: Create short-term deadlines. Don't rely on others or wait for others; take control of your route to your goals.
3. Happiness: Convince yourself that failing is a learning experience and that failing is far better than never trying.
4. Empathy: Think about similar circumstances you've experienced as you listen to someone else.
5. Reciprocity: Identify how you would like to be treated if you were the other person (not necessarily as you've been treated in the past).
6. Intimacy: Be willing to talk about defeats and setbacks. Make an effort to stop being embarrassed by personal questions and expressions of personal feelings.

### Self-Assessment

Unless you have metrics for success, it's almost impossible to assess whether you're doing well. Here is an example of some questions you may ask yourself to serve as a self-assessment: To what extent are you sharing credit and accepting blame? Are you able to create common ground and goals for a variety of diverse viewpoints, bringing them together into a common purpose? Do you make tough decisions, or do you procrastinate or ask someone else to make them?

Character is vital as a gyroscope for our behaviors and worldview. The elements of character are clear and can be learned, mastered, improved upon and sustained as your journey progresses. Character determines ethical behavior in a world where ethics are the bedrock for capitalism and honest, effective market transactions. It provides consistency in even turbulent times and supports both formal and informal leadership.

Lifestorming is about the journey you've embarked on to prepare the future you desire and deserve — admittedly a moving target, but a target in any case — so that the world doesn't make you into something else entirely. And it can do that readily if you're not paying attention, taking charge and utilizing the internal control that is reciprocal with external influences. A strong character is all the help you'll need for yourself and for others.

## Critical Abandonment

When we talk about relationships to eliminate, we are talking about relationships that are consistently, poisonously negative and are extremely unlikely to change. It also represents relationships with groups that are bringing us down. If quitting them cold turkey is hard to do, realize that you can achieve just about the same effect by drastically restricting your time with them in frequency, duration and intensity.

While preserving old relationships sustains us, creating new relationships enables us to grow. We need people who can stretch us, provide new viewpoints, supply differing perspectives and challenge our beliefs. Creating new relationships can mean joining new clubs, taking up new pursuits, becoming more involved in the community, introducing yourself to others or identifying with whom you'd like to hang out.

### Adjustments and Accommodations

Many of us seek out new relationships or behaviors because we think they will make us happy in the future. But, realize that happiness is a choice, always attainable in the present. Let your new relationships and personal transformations add to and reinforce that happiness as opposed to trying to fill a well of sadness and disappointment.

Instead, aim for evolutionary reinvention. Your journey should be one of continually becoming a new, improved person in part by assertively and proactively creating your new world.

### Staying the Course

Change is exciting if you allow it to be, and controllable if you prepare for it. Avoiding a systems failure and providing for the retention of the valuable and abandonment of the obsolete is a guiding principle.

The new you is an ongoing phenomenon. Most of us experience success in some areas of life and find it elusive in others. To achieve our full potential, we should take time to grow in every aspect of our lives.

The evolutionary journey has to be holistic. An effective exercise is to ask ourselves what kind of people we wish to be in a year — as we proceed on our journey — and what's required to arrive there. But these can't be ambiguous goals. They should be specific and related to where we are today, improving on our current conditions.

This is how you stay the course on your evolutionary journey. You create specific goals and metrics understanding that the factors on the axes might change over time, your ratings may change, and/or your ultimate goal may become more challenging. That's a part of growth. *As we grow, the bar gets higher and higher.*

So, this is how you abandon what's not needed; gain traction, torque and speed; decide what to eliminate, accept, retain and create. This puts you on the right road and enables you to stay the course.

## The New You

Negative emotions and misplaced priorities can still sabotage our accomplishments and reverse our hard-won progress. We're especially vulnerable to these mistakes when we're in a new situation — a new job, a new relationship, or even a new state of awareness or understanding. If you know the potential pitfalls, you can avoid them.

Overcoming fear is much easier when you know the causes of your fear and can eliminate them or rationalize them. The ability to laugh at yourself is an important component — not so much when you've panicked underwater but certainly when you've missed the ball with everyone watching.

### Maintaining High Self-Worth

An important aspect of self-worth is believing in the worth of others. Thus, acceptance and forgiveness are the reciprocals of our apologies and recognitions of error that we noted earlier. Remember that it's the *intent* that's important. We need to honestly confront the motives of

the other person. If we extend grace and good will to other people, we will feel its reflected glow on ourselves.

### Gaining and Sustaining Leverage

Leverage is power. For most people, leverage means moving on down the road expeditiously with minimal effort and friction. Journeys don't have to be difficult, and when they are, it's usually because we've made them so by focusing on the unpleasant and unrewarding aspects. Leverage helps us move forward by focusing on the positive and rewarding aspects.

When we encounter difficulties at the outset of a new venture, we have two options. One is to express our discontent, confusion or uncertainties. Another, healthier reaction to difficulties in your journey is being resolute, facing problems head on and solving as many of them as you can.

The idea is not to avoid the ambiguous zone nor to be hesitant about what may reside therein but rather to boldly enter it knowing you have the skills and resources to effectively deal with whatever you find.

## Sustaining the Journey

One of the more important elements in sustaining your journey without sliding back is having a spirit of generosity, and being generous is about more than donating money. Many people are generous even as they themselves struggle. Conversely, some people remain ungenerous even after reaching high levels of success. While generosity is about more than just money, bear in mind that the idea of it is really based not so much on what you give but rather what you have left after you give.

The most precious gift is one of time and attention. Anyone can write a check. Time, after all, is a priority, not a resource. Since we know we have 24 hours every day no matter who we are or at what level of success we are, how we distribute our time is vital. We are telling the world (and others) what our priorities are.

Hence, donating our time is a huge act of generosity whether by volunteering, serving on committees, coaching or by whatever other means. It's easy to be generous by changing our priorities about how we spend our time.

### Evolution Through Exploration

Our journey demands exploration. The road that others used may not be your road. It's not a question of the road more traveled or less traveled but perhaps of building your own road where none has existed. This demands some prudent poking about, looking around the next corner, shining lights in the darkness and feeling our way. To explore, you can't merely *think* outside the box. You have to *be* outside the box.

Exploration involves risk, which for someone people draws them to it mightily. These risks emerge from fear of rejection and fear of damaging our egos — the fear of perceived failure. Yet, no journey is flawless. There will be risks that need to be accepted and undertaken.

### Legacy

This is your life, your dream and your chance to be happy. When you get old, it will be your legacy. Legacy is often thought of as something left behind or handed down by a predecessor. While that may be true and common, what's not so commonly understood is that legacies do not appear upon retirement, departure or death.

Legacies are created daily. Every day you're writing the story of your life. You can consciously create your legacy starting now. Too many people are unaware of this opportunity or ignore it at their peril. Think about it: If you are consciously thinking about *contribution* and what you provide for others, not just for your lifetime but for theirs, might that not color and influence your behaviors and decisions today?

The decisions and behaviors you choose to engage in every day are the woof and warp of your legacy. What are you doing now, today, to build your legacy while on your evolutionary journey? It will seldom be one grand gesture, and will more probably be a continuing series of positive actions that not only help you and help others but provide a lasting guide for others to use along their own journeys. Lifestorming is about taking on life and enjoying it immensely by contributing to it enormously.


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# 39-27 Get Better

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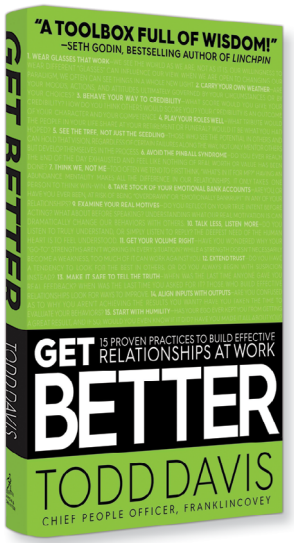
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# Get Better

## 15 Proven Practices to Build Effective Relationships at Work




by Todd Davis

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Get Better* is a practical guide for anyone looking to create a competitive advantage for any size and type of organization by building effective relationships from the performance improvement experts at FranklinCovey.

In *Get Better,* FranklinCovey's Chief People Officer, Todd Davis, explains that while an organization's greatest assets are its people, it's the relationships between those people that truly become the organization's ultimate competitive advantage.

Ideal for professional people at all levels of business, government and education from the front-line supervisor to the president and CEO, Davis describes the most common relationship pitfalls that negatively affect personal careers and organizational results. Davis identifies 15 proven practices that influential people at any level of an organization use to improve the quality of interactions with others and master the skills of effective relationships.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to change personal paradigms and behaviors to improve yourself and your relationships.
- How improving relationships will make you and your business more effective.
- Which practices and behaviors are key to enacting meaningful change.
- Foundational leadership traits that will help you achieve balance, avoid distractions and build stronger, more effective relationships in your work life and beyond.

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**Carry Your Own Weather**
**Behave Your Way to Credibility**
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**Align Inputs With Outputs**
**Start With Humility**

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **GET BETTER**

**by Todd Davis**

**The author:** Todd Davis has been with FranklinCovey for over 20 years, and currently serves as chief people officer and executive vice president and is responsible for FranklinCovey's global talent development. Davis has delivered numerous keynote addresses and speeches at top industry conferences and associations, annual corporate events and for FranklinCovey clients, many of which are *Fortune*® 100 and 500 companies. His topics include leadership, personal and interpersonal effectiveness, employee engagement, talent management, change management, and building winning cultures.

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## Introduction

At both the individual and organizational levels, relationships matter; nearly everything gets better when we focus on strengthening them. Effective relationships yield effective results. Nothing of significance happens without a focus on improving our interactions with one another.

There are numerous practices that affect relationships, but these 15 have the most significant impact.

*Practice 1:*

## Wear Glasses That Work

We view not only ourselves but those around us through a set of lenses; and like any lens, they either sharpen or distort reality. Simply choosing how we see ourselves and others has a cascading effect on what we think, feel and do. This concept is a foundational principle for making significant changes in our lives.

We do a great disservice to ourselves when we wear the limiting lenses that are so often a part of human nature. But the good news is that changing one's glasses is a choice, and we all have the power to do so.

Take a moment to evaluate the glasses you're currently wearing and if you should exchange them for ones that work better. List the reasons you think a relationship is not working. Underline which reasons are facts — things about which most people would agree. Any remaining items are likely opinions or paradigms you have about the person that may be incomplete.

*Practice 2:*

## Carry Your Own Weather

When we allow darkening clouds to dictate our mood, it's easy to feel like a victim and surrender to the belief that we're helplessly subject to the external world. And when others are the source of our dismay and helplessness, it's easy to cast blame and adopt a victim mindset and language.

At the foundation of carrying your own weather is the ability to pause between stimulus and response. The earliest humans learned "fight or flight" as a way of reacting to life-threatening situations. Our stresses now come in different, less life-threatening forms. Yet, external stimuli naturally cause us to react quickly and sometimes inappropriately.

Fortunately, we have more than just the reactive part of our brain to work with. As human beings, we share the unique trait of self-awareness — the ability to see and evaluate our own thoughts. It gives us the capability to pause, step back and see ourselves along with the paradigms we adopt and use. In effect, it gives us the freedom to proactively choose our response.

Carrying one's weather can express itself in many ways: from the simple choice to keep a pleasant or professional disposition to not allowing the events around us to spin the needle of our moral compass. But at the heart of it is always a choice, and that power can never be surrendered unless we allow it.

*Practice 3:*

## Behave Your Way to Credibility

There are three important elements to behaving with credibility.

**Demonstrate character and competence.** Without a high degree of character and competence, credibility can't flourish. Character isn't built on being infallible but by behaving in a way that proves to others you can be trusted even when no one is looking. Many people think strong character can make up for lack of

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competence, but you can lose credibility if you allow your competence to wane.

**Take the long-term view.** Credibility isn't earned overnight. Taking the long-term view means you are willing to pay the price to earn it — regardless of the time and effort involved. When it comes to building credibility, there's no escaping time. Transitory actions may build confidence in others, but trust only comes from seeing the consistency of such actions over time. If we don't take the long-term view, our credibility will suffer.

**Adapt to the situation at hand.** Building credibility often means adapting to new situations and people. The behaviors you've honed in one job context may undermine your credibility in a new role. This ability to observe and reorient oneself is often referred to as situational awareness.

Once you've damaged your reputation and credibility with someone, the way back can be difficult, and it certainly won't happen overnight. When it comes to relationships, people are not easily replaced. If you've damaged or lost credibility with someone, or if you need to build additional character and competence, begin the process of behaving your way back to credibility today.

*Practice 4:*

## Play Your Roles Well

To get better at playing your roles well, you need to first identify them, then determine the real contribution you want to make in each one. When you consider the roles you currently play at work and at home, pay attention to how many you take on. Unfortunately, we wildly overestimate our ability to effectively focus on several things at once. The only thing that comes from working on too many roles at the same time is mediocrity.

It's not about spending equal time in each role (most people will spend more hours at work each week than they will on a hobby or an important relationship), but it is about regularly keeping your most important roles top of mind and ensuring you have an overall balance in the long run. Realize that some roles stay with you for a lifetime (parent, partner, friend), and others may change over time (jobs, communities, volunteer positions, and so on). Quite often, our long-term roles turn out to be where we experience the most character and relationship growth.

When the roles we play slip out of congruence with who we are, then it's worth making a change. The number-one regret from those at the end of their lives is, "I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me."

On one end of the continuum is focusing on too many roles at once. On the other end is becoming too myopic — excelling in one role at the expense of others. It might be tempting to believe that work is always cast as the bad guy when it comes to prioritizing our roles. However, you absolutely can be contributing, engaged, and highly productive in your career as well as exceptional in your personal roles. It's a matter of prioritization. In the end, you have to sacrifice somewhere, and being mindful of balance is key.

*Practice 5:*

## See the Tree, Not Just the Seedling

When we look at a person's potential — whether it's a co-worker, direct report, friend, partner or child — it requires us to see past the "seed" and envision the mighty tree it can become. Seeing potential in others is a paradigm that recognizes growth as an organic principle. It doesn't happen overnight; it's a function of growth over time.

Seeing potential in others isn't just about *hoping* people will succeed. It's believing they have unlimited talents and abilities and opportunities for growth. It's also understanding that the road to success is paved with failures — that growing is an ongoing process that may take a lifetime. When we take the long-term view, we see that failure can be a moment of instruction and reflection and can serve to increase the likelihood of success. Seeing potential isn't about continually correcting performance or focusing on all the risks and mistakes that stand in the way of someone's potential. It may feel like we're being helpful by focusing on the negative to keep others from taking a spill, but we're not.

*Practice 6:*

## Avoid the Pinball Syndrome

When you give in to the allure of the urgent over the important, you fall prey to the pinball syndrome. Think of a pinball machine as a metaphor for all the urgent things that demand our attention throughout the day. And while we may not feel like we're playing a game, per se, when accomplishing such tasks, we might feel attracted to (or even seduced by) the rapid pace and focus that's required to get them done. Add a small endorphin rush as we check off the next item on our to-do list, and it's easy to see how the urgent can feel gratifying, even addictive at times. The challenge is that some of the urgencies might also be important, but the allure of the game gives everything equal weight. As a result, we can end up spending time and energy on the less important.

The nature of the pinball syndrome is to confuse urgency with importance. And because organizations often reward urgent behaviors (because by their very nature

they're easy to recognize), work can provide a powerful incentive to pull the plunger back and play round after round. Of course, urgencies will come up that require our attention. Many things are both urgent and important. Avoiding the pinball syndrome doesn't mean we should step away from the game altogether, but rather that we differentiate between when we must play and when we choose to play. Resisting the allure of the game isn't easy. It requires that we delay gratification and take the long-term view.

*Practice 7:*

## Think We, Not Me

There are three levels of maturity: dependence, independence and interdependence. Dependence comes with the mindset of "you." *You* are responsible for me, for my feelings and circumstances. It's *your* job to take care of me. Dependence represents the lowest level of personal maturity, where we can consign our happiness to others or adopt a victim mentality when things go wrong.

However, when we take on a new role or skill, there is a period of time during which it's expected that we'll be dependent on others to teach us as we learn that new skill.

Independence, the next level of maturity, comes with the mindset of "I." Independence sounds like, "*I* am the one who can do this," "*I* am responsible," and "*I* will decide what's best." When we think and act at this level, we move our focus from the people around us to our own strengths and capabilities. For many of us, we think independence is the pinnacle of maturity.

While independence is certainly more mature than dependence, there's something even more satisfying and transformational that happens when independent people choose to work together.

With interdependence, we adopt the mindset of "we." When we think and act interdependently, we make a choice to combine our talents and capabilities with those of others, creating something even greater as a result. Interdependence sounds like, "Together *we* can do it," "Together *we* can collaborate," and "Together *we* can figure this out."

Those who consistently model interdependence balance courage and consideration when working with others. In this context, *courage* is the willingness and ability to speak our thoughts respectfully, and *consideration* is our willingness and ability to seek and listen to others' thoughts and feelings with respect. While it's challenging to maintain a perfect balance of both in every situation, the real thing to look for is that you're not dramatically weighted toward one side or the other.

While great ideas and high courage can be critical to doing a job well, without consideration and respect, the only team you will find yourself on is a team of one. On the other hand, with high consideration but no courage, you may be well liked but will ultimately feel disrespected.

*Practice 8:*

## Take Stock of Your Emotional Bank Accounts

Most of us pay a good deal of attention to our financial bank accounts. The idea is fairly straightforward: we deposit funds in order to build up a reservoir from which our various future expenses are withdrawn. When it comes to our relationships, we engage in similar kinds of transactions, either making deposits or withdrawals in an *Emotional Bank Account (EBA)*. When the balance is high, so is the resulting level of trust. When the balance is low, relationships suffer. The goal of the EBA is to only make deposits and build trust with others. Keep in mind, it's usually the relationships we take for granted — the ones on autopilot — that are most in need of consistent and deliberate attention.

High trust, good will and full engagement are the ultimate outcome of the EBA. When you have a high EBA balance with someone, you feel safe with and energized by them. Every relationship we have has an associated balance in our respective EBAs.

The six best practices for building a strong EBA balance are:

- **Never build up deposits just to withdraw from them when it's useful.** Using the EBA as a means to an end may damage relationships beyond repair. Striving for a high balance in an EBA is a principle to live by, not a scorecard.
- **Know the other person's currency.** We all have individual forms of emotional currency we're willing to accept. What amounts to a deposit for one person can be meaningless or even a withdrawal for another.
- **Communicate your own currency.** Admittedly, it can be hard sometimes to uncover which currency matters most to people. We can help by simply communicating the currency we prefer.
- **Avoid counterfeit deposits.** Don't withhold compliments when they're due, but overdone flattery will never yield EBA deposits. There's a difference between a quid pro quo strategy and making an authentic deposit.
- **Make small, consistent deposits over time.** If you feel the satisfaction that comes from making deposits in the EBAs of others, you'll make more and more until it becomes a pattern of living for you. This stockpile of good can be invaluable when we go through the inevitable trials life presents.
- **Right wrongs.** Sincere apologies make deposits in the EBAs of others. It is the first step in righting

wrongs, but if mishandled or delayed, it can cause even greater withdrawals.

*Practice 9:*

## Examine Your Real Motives

Motives are the underlying reasons for the actions you take and the words you say. A healthy motive is any motive that uplifts the human condition in ourselves and others. An unhealthy motive is any motive that degrades the human condition in ourselves and others.

If we're not careful, our motives can end up being unhealthy: driven by fear, anger or sadness in one moment and in the next by an unfulfilled need for acceptance, power or safety. Too often we go on autopilot, allowing our motives to flow out of our daily routines without checking our underlying assumptions or questioning our choices. But if we examine our motives on a regular basis, we can begin to understand the difference between a motive driven by insecurity or other unmet needs and a motive that aligns with our deepest values and develops the type of character that contributes to effective relationships.

**Use the 5 Whys.** The 5 Whys approach is simple: ask "why" five times to get to the root cause of a problem.

This technique gets to our root intentions or our driving motives in any situation. While it can take less (or more) than five introspective "whys" to get to our motives, because those motives may be buried under years of habit and have been running on autopilot, it often takes asking why more than once. At first, the answers to the 5 Whys might feel obvious. But if you approach the exercise honestly and with humility, thinking through it will help you understand your true motive.

The intention of questioning your motives isn't to make you feel guilty about your motives or to shame you for attempting to fill your unmet needs. It is, however, intended to help you become more aware of any unhealthy motives so that you can choose to redirect them toward healthier, more abundant motives. When you recognize that your motives are driven by something other than to *uplift the human condition* in ourselves and others, be patient with the part of you that's trying to get what it needs. However, also recognize that another part of you can choose a different motive.

**Choose abundance.** Many of us are conditioned to believe that there's a finite amount of everything, that there's only so much reward, credit, recognition, benefits or even love. And because of that, the more *you* get means there's less for *me*. This belief creates a scarcity mindset, which produces an underlying motive of fear. With a fearful worldview, it's difficult to shift the focus off of ourselves and take the needs of others into consideration.

Instead of dwelling on what you don't have, begin to focus on what you do have. Take time to appreciate or express gratitude for what is there rather than complain about what isn't. Look for ways to share your abundance with others.

An abundance mindset is the primary foundation for establishing ongoing healthy motives. As you build this authentic, sincere and positive outlook, it will be a key contributor in positively influencing the people around you.

**Declare intent.** Intent is another word for motive. Declaring your motives, or intent, is one of the core behaviors that builds trust. While we judge ourselves largely on our intentions, others judge us by our behavior. Only you know your real motive. However, sometimes if we don't communicate it early on, we end up putting others in the position of assuming or guessing. You can easily put others at ease (and avoid a lot of misunderstanding) by declaring your intent as often and as soon as you can.

*Practice 10:*

## Talk Less, Listen More

Our propensity to talk more than we listen can get us into real trouble. In the rush to solve problems and get things done, there's a natural tendency for all of us to simply *tell*. And when we take it upon ourselves to do all the talking, we almost always pay a price.

**The downside of talking more and listening less.** Each time we feel misunderstood (not truly heard) by someone important to us, we can feel disrespected and hurt. We may even experience an unintentional breach of trust, as if an essential part of the relationship bond had been chipped away.

**The upside of talking less and listening more.** One of the most profound gifts you can give another human being is your sincere understanding. To do so requires clearing away your mental clutter, suspending (at least temporarily) your agenda and stopping long enough to focus and hear what someone is really saying. Being truly present provides a safe environment in which people can learn to listen to themselves, assess their own behavior, diagnose their own problems and come up with their own solutions.

Many of these reasons why we don't talk less and listen more can be summed up in a practice called *autobiographical listening,* in which we filter what others say through our own stories and experiences. When we do this, we draw

conclusions based on what *we* might do or feel in the same situation. Or worse, because we might be uncomfortable with the situation, we prescribe a solution that makes us feel better. We're often afraid that if we listen too closely, we may be influenced and not get our way. While it's natural to do so, jumping to conclusions or replying too soon with advice can make people feel like we are judging or evaluating them — certainly not listening to them.

When you engage in autobiographical listening, you end up deciding prematurely what people mean before they finish talking, which can create huge communication divides and make people dig in their heels even more, investing in their own point of view and being less open to looking at other alternatives.

Talking less and listening more is not the same as agreeing with people. You may ultimately disagree with what a person is saying or feeling, but while you're listening, you're not imposing your views on the person. You're not trying to figure out how to get him or her to see it your way. Instead, you're suspending your opinions long enough to really step into that individual's world and try to understand it from his or her point of view. This approach sounds simple, but it's one of the most difficult mindsets to master, especially if you're diametrically opposed to that person's point of view or emotionally involved. It takes an incredibly mature person to master this skill.

There are appropriate times to talk *more* and listen *less*. Often, it's necessary to give advice and provide clear answers and direction to get the job done. But there are times when it's also vital to do the opposite. When a person is highly emotional, when the Emotional Bank Account balance is low or you're not sure you fully understand, you'll almost always benefit from talking less.

*Practice 11:*

## Get Your Volume Right

Utilizing and nurturing our unique bundle of strengths is a fundamental part of who we are. Whether as talents we were born with or skills we developed over time, our strengths are often our go-to way for getting things done. They've become so ingrained in our behavior, we often don't think about how we're using them or the impact they're having on others.

Imagine that using your strengths is like a musician performing on stage. For the music to have the intended effect, it requires the right volume as well as the right venue.

We grow accustomed to using our go-to strengths at a certain level. Then, without even realizing it, we often rely on those strengths even more. We turn the knob bit by bit and, unknowingly, make it less likely that we'll achieve the results we really want. And worst of all, we run the risk of damaging relationships along the way.

No one dials up the volume of their strengths with the intention of a bad outcome. Yet, it happens. If the volume of our strengths is set too high, turning it down can often make our strengths more effective. This approach may seem counterintuitive. We're used to mantras, such as bear down, work harder and push through it! And while those all have their place, there's wisdom in knowing when to lighten up, take a step back, or just say no.

In keeping with the analogy of deploying your strengths like a musician on a stage, we should also consider the venue in which we're performing; that is, sometimes getting the volume right means choosing another go-to strength or recognizing that the venue or situation is calling for a different strength altogether — one that may not be as natural to you and may need to be developed.

An important part of getting the volume right isn't just about turning our strengths down when necessary but making sure we have the right strength applied at the right time and in the right situation.

*Practice 12:*

## Extend Trust

Simply put, when it comes to relationships, trust matters. In fact, it's essential. This practice is not only about trust being a belief in someone, it's also about putting that belief into action. Trust, to be fully realized, must be extended to others.

The majority of relationship snags are rarely caused by people trusting too much; they're caused by people trusting too little. Many factors contribute to people being distrustful of others, such as our family or our cultural and social conditioning. What we hear, read or watch can breed more fear than trust, and can work to shut down a natural, trusting heart. But the most common reason we mistrust is because of past negative experiences.

If someone has burned us in the past, it's easy to jump to the conclusion that no one should be trusted. It can negatively color our perceptions when we meet someone new, and if the propensity not to trust runs deep, it may justify our ongoing disassociation and mistrust of people and their motives. Of course, maintaining an element of caution is vital to living safely and securely. Living at either end of the trust continuum can make life difficult for ourselves and those around us.

So, how do you know whether or not you should extend trust? In general, the best approach is always to start with a high propensity to trust, then follow it up with three quick assessments. It's a combination of using both your head and

your heart. Assess the situation, assess the risk and assess the credibility of the person to whom you're extending trust.

If the risk is relatively low and the credibility of the person is high, by all means, extend trust. If the risk is high and the credibility is low, you may need to slow down the process, modify your plan and work with the person to increase his or her skills before you extend trust. In some cases, even when the credibility is solid, the risk may be too high to immediately extend trust.

*Practice 13:*

## Make It Safe to Tell the Truth

We all know how hard it is to give ourselves feedback, but it can be overwhelming, even paralyzing, to get it from someone else. If we see feedback as something useful that can support our process of getting better, perhaps we won't be so threatened by it. Knowing how to receive feedback and when to invite it in, or respectfully hear it but choose no action, requires careful self-examination.

Self-awareness is not just about examining ourselves. It's also about recognizing that we have blind spots and considering others' perspectives. Sometimes in our desire to protect ourselves, we defend, deflect or even ignore input from others that just might make our relationships significantly better. It may be tempting to avoid seeing our faults and blemishes, but without such insights, we're robbed of the chance to learn and grow.

If you recognize that you might *not* be making it safe for others to tell you the truth, here are four ways to make it safer:

**Assume good intent.** While you can't guarantee that everyone has your best interest in mind, you're far more likely to generate good will and build trust if you assume they do. Choose to believe that people are doing the best they can and that they sincerely want you to succeed. Remember, people who have mustered the courage to give you feedback often are feeling as vulnerable sharing it with you as you are receiving it. They are momentarily risking the security of the relationship.

**Ask for feedback.** Recognize that how we ask for feedback can shape the feedback itself and how others choose to give it. A surprise visit or request is not the ideal way in which to get someone to tell you what you may need to know and hear. A more effective approach — especially if it's the first time you've asked for feedback — is to let the person know beforehand that you'll be asking for feedback later. Vague questions like, "How did I do?" make it very difficult for people to respond with anything meaningful. Ask people to share specific things you could do to improve and to phrase it in terms of behavior or language you might use in the future.

**Evaluate the feedback.** We don't need to act on every piece of feedback that comes our way. It's critical to be clear about the values we stand for and have a long-term vision of who we want to become so that we are prepared to compare someone else's truth against what we feel and know is most true for us.

**Act on it.** It doesn't do any good to ask for feedback if you have no intention of acting on it. While we don't need to implement every piece of feedback, not acting on feedback — or not explaining why we aren't going to act on it — is worse than not asking for it in the first place. While people may start to feel safe when you ask them for feedback, they will *know* they are safe when they see you take their feedback seriously.

*Practice 14:*

## Align Inputs With Outputs

An input is what you put into a system to fuel a process, and an output is the result you obtain. Input, process, output. It's a useful framework for diagnosing why we get the results we get.

We can refer to outputs as *lag measures*, or the metrics by which we decide if something is successful. Lag measures show up at the end of a process; by the time they're visible, our ability to influence them has passed.

While it's human nature to get frustrated and focus on the lag measures when things aren't going right, it's best to turn our energy elsewhere. Instead of dwelling on the outputs, focus even more on the inputs, or what we call *lead measures*. Lead measures are the actions we take that add up to a lag measure.

While many inputs might contribute to the desired output, identifying the right inputs can make all the difference. Use the following steps to help align the right inputs with the results you desire.

1. **Describe your desired output in the situation or relationship.** You can't chart a course to a destination if you don't know where it is you want to go. Think of it like a GPS — the more exacting you can be with an address, the more specific it can be in prescribing the route to take.
2. **Describe your current reality.** In keeping with the GPS metaphor, we need both a starting point and an ending point to accurately chart a course. Spending time assessing your current reality also

helps you uncover potential inputs worth examining and possibly changing.

3. **Carefully examine your current inputs.** What things drive the current results you're experiencing? Inputs are not always intuitive. Consider carefully the paradigms you hold, your attitudes toward the people you work and live with, the behaviors you are modeling (or not modeling) and how others might evaluate you.
4. **Try a new and more effective input.** Seemingly complex problems can often be dramatically improved by finding the one or two inputs that matter.
5. **Analyze the result.** Everyone fails, but how we consider that failure can make all the difference. Be objective and thoughtful as you consider the results you're getting, and accept that with each trial and error comes an opportunity to get better.

While there are countless inputs that contribute to our relationships, the 15 practices described here are those that have proven to be foundational and of the highest leverage. Implementing even one can be pivotal in repairing a ruptured relationship, restoring trust or strengthening an already solid relationship. Identifying which of these practices you can use as high-leverage inputs holds the potential to improve even the most stubborn relationship pitfalls.

*Practice 15:*

## Start With Humility

Above all other character qualities, humility is foundational. Those who are humble have a secure sense of self; their validation doesn't come from something external but is based on their true nature. To be humble means to shed one's ego because the authentic self is much greater than looking good, needing to have all the answers or being recognized by one's peers. As a result, those who have cultivated humility as an attribute have far greater energy to devote to others. They go from being consumed with themselves (an inner focus) to looking for ways to contribute and help others (an outer focus). Humility is the key to building solid character and strong, meaningful connections.

Humility has the power to influence nearly every aspect of your personality. Consider self-control, a trait that is seemingly unrelated to humility. Can humility serve to increase willpower? Researchers conducted a study to answer that very question.

The results of the experiment led to a remarkable conclusion: people in a humble state of mind are better at self-control. The same set of researchers found that humility can also lead to greater physical stamina and an increased ability to persevere when the going gets tough. And if that's not enough, other researchers went on to find a link between humility and being able to hang on to self-esteem in times of failure as well as an increased ability to develop stronger social bonds.

As you can see, humility is far from weakness. It allows us to push aside pride, ego and selfishness while lifting nearly every other important virtue to greater heights.

### Humility in the Workplace

When talking about work, we rarely use the word humility. It's like people are afraid to talk about it, as if it were the enemy of what it takes to be noticed, promoted and to succeed. To be humble is to be willing to fail in the pursuit of a noble goal. Without failure, innovation stalls. Humility allows us to strip away our ego, to suppress the need to be visibly right at every turn and to take the longer view.

Although this section comes at the end, it's titled "Start With Humility" because every practice illustrated benefits from obtaining, cultivating and being mindful of this foundational attribute. And while starting with humility is key, revisiting and recalibrating your humility on a regular basis is equally important.

When things become difficult, our tendency as human beings is to find a way out, to head for the exit and move to another room. That might take the form of changing jobs, abandoning associations or even dissolving marriages and long-standing family ties. These endless "exit strategies" imply that we see external forces (other people and circumstances) as the source of our problems and the means of escape. Yet, we all have the ability to take the focus off the things outside of us (the room and those who occupy it) and move it inward. This internal focus or self-reflection starts with humility. It's the way we begin to get better and strengthen each and every relationship we have.


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# 39-30 Let the Story Do the Work

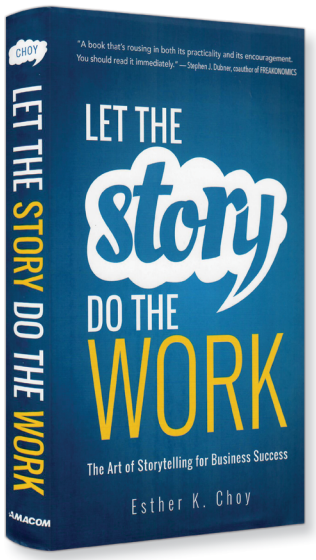
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# Let the Story Do the Work

## The Art of Storytelling for Business Success




by Esther K. Choy

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For millennia, people have used stories to simplify a complex world, make facts and events memorable and stir action. Today, storytelling has emerged as a strategic skill that every business leader must master.

Yet, few use storytelling to its full capacity. Stories work beyond telling how a company overcame competitors or the rags-to-riches background of a founder; these are classic plot devices, and they're frequently layered into corporate messages. But, stories can also operate more subtly. By adapting proven story structures and conventions, you can transform forgettable presentations into truly compelling ones and make lasting impressions with every interaction.

Whether you're trying to attract investors to a startup venture, get donors to commit to a nonprofit's mission, explain a merger to customers or stand out at a networking event, *Let the Story Do the Work* helps you weave storytelling techniques into your communication and strengthen your impact. Anyone can make a presentation and parade a list of credentials. But, nothing resonates and persuades as powerfully as a story.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To connect with audiences by determining their points of view and speaking to their concerns.
- How to cut through a thicket of data to explain what the numbers mean and why people should care.
- To blend simple visuals to amplify a presentation's persuasiveness.
- How to tell your story in a way that builds credibility and forges relationships.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **LET THE STORY DO THE WORK**

**by Esther K. Choy**

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## Introduction: Why Stories?

Think back to the most recent lecture or presentation you attended. How many facts do you remember from it? If you're like most people, you can't recall many. Chances are good, however, that you remember stories and anecdotes from the event. The average person today is inundated with facts and data, and we let most of this pass through our brains with minimal retention or reaction — unless something makes the information stand out in a meaningful way. That's where story comes in.

Most people aren't born master storytellers and never will become one. But that doesn't mean we can't tell great stories. Making even subtle changes in the way we communicate can create a disproportionate impact when we attempt to persuade. The classical approach to storytelling can elevate everyday business communication from autopilot exchanges to authentic, persuasive and action-prone conversations.

## PART I: ANATOMY OF A STORY

## Master the Key Elements of Storytelling

### Consider Your Story's Emotional Quality

Your story, no matter how well told, can't achieve its full, intended effect until you embed within it an emotional quality aligned with your purpose.

Emotion is not only necessary but plays a key role in our decision-making process. When we're faced with many similar-seeming options, "go with your gut" is valid advice as long as your emotion is well informed by some set of facts or experience.

### Know Your Audience Inside and Out

When most people are preparing to tell their stories, they tend to think only about what they will tell and how they will tell it. Too often they neglect to think about how their audiences will react to the stories as influenced by their own needs and preferences. Effective leaders have to understand their audiences' needs and constraints to decide how to communicate with them most effectively.

You can understand your audience better by breaking down what happens to them during any presentation or interaction into two levels: internal and external.

What happens to your audience *internally* involves what they feel and what they know.

Whether we intend it or not, our audiences will experience a specific emotion after listening to us. This emotion can affect how long, if at all, they will remember what you've just told them and what, if anything, they are willing to do about it.

You want your audience to come away from the interaction knowing something they didn't before. Unfortunately, we live in a data-overloaded world where most information is quickly commoditized, and information without sufficient context or stickiness is quickly forgotten. So, you have to be highly strategic about how you present the information you want your audience to retain.

The *external* factor has to do with what questions your audience asks and whether — and how — they act as a consequence of what you've presented to them.

A question means your audience wants to know more. Follow-up questions are the number one indicator that you have created real interest in your listeners.

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The goal of a story told in a business context is to inspire action, no matter how big or small. A good story will help inspire the desired action. The Key Elements of Storytelling

**The Three-Act Formula:** Story structure holds all the elements together. All stories share the same basic structure: the Three-Act Formula. In Act I, you are oriented to the time, place and setting of the story. You meet the main characters, and ideally you are intrigued by what is about to happen next because there is a hook at the end of the act.

Then, Act II represents the main journey of the story. Toward Act II's end, the protagonist typically meets the biggest challenge head on.

In Act III, we see how she overcomes it. As the challenge is resolved, the lead character and her situation also have changed, typically for the better.

**The Hook:** While there are innumerable potentially valid hooks, a more systematic way to create one — even when you don't feel particularly creative — is to follow the "3 C's": conflict, contrast and contradiction. A *conflict* is the clash of forces or needs going in opposite directions. A *contrast* typically involves the juxtaposition of two opposite qualities. A *contradiction* goes against the expectations of your audiences.

**Challenge and Change:** Challenges create interest, which in turn motivates sustained attention from the audience. Having a central challenge in your story also creates change in the main characters, in their situations or (ideally) both. If challenge is the nerve center of a story, then change is the soul of it. If everyone or everything remains the same at the story's end, then what's the point of the journey? Audiences innately want to know not just what happened in the story, but what's different at the end and why.

**A Clear Theme:** Recounting events or qualifications — no matter how impressive they might be — is not the same as telling a story. A story needs a theme, and chronology is not a sufficient one. In order for listeners to understand and appreciate the story theme, a storyteller must tell stories by weaving events and reflection together.

**Open or Closed End?** In general, we know that by intentionally leaving the end of the story open, we are inviting others to share their stories. But, there are situations in which your story will be more effective with a closed end, when you want to leave your audience with little doubt what they should think or feel. As a storyteller, it's easy to think that your message is so obvious that you don't have to say it. Don't make that mistake. Often, people don't "get it" because the takeaways were never clear.

Be thorough in your approach to endings. Whether you go with open or closed, consider the desired results you wish to see in your listeners. Are you trying to sway opinions? Or are you intending to create an exchange, a dialogue, to collect stories? Whatever the outcome might be, craft the end of your story accordingly and with care.

## The Five Basic Plots in Business Communication

What keeps us interested in stories often boils down to one word: plot. Plot is the sequence of events — and ideally twists, turns, and mysteries — in your story. When it comes to business stories, there are really only five basic plots. These five plots recur repeatedly because they speak to a universality of experience. They give us blueprints for what our narrative theme and sequence of events might look like. Of course, you do not have to limit yourself to these five plots forever. Knowing what they are, however, can jump-start your story crafting and give you a solid foundation from which to be more creative.

**Origin.** An origin story can instill a sense of identity and heritage, place an event or person in historical context or simply satisfy deep curiosity.

**Rags to Riches.** This plot is about someone who starts from a very low station in life, without much hope for improvement, but surprises everyone with a dramatic turnaround.

**Rebirth.** A rebirth story is about having a second chance. Stories of rebirth abound in the business world and tend to be crowd-pleasers, with beating-the-odds elements similar to those of rags-to-riches or underdog narratives.

**Overcoming the Monster.** The "monster" in this story can be any overt or covert entity or situation that threatens survival of some sort or thwarts someone from reaching an important goal. Fighting to survive is elemental to human nature. So, audiences of any type will root for the defeat of the monster, whether at the hands of an individual, group or organization, making this kind of story compelling in business and leadership stories.

**The Quest.** Protagonists in quest stories tend to be enjoying a good life at the outset. But, they are not content to sit at home. Instead, they know that somewhere, in a remote and possibly dangerous place, lies a prize of immeasurable value. Against his better judgement and his friends' and family's advice, the hero in this kind of story ventures out on a quest to claim the prize.

Each of these plots has a unique emotional quality. The origin story addresses the desire to connect the dots between the past and present in an inspiring way. Rags to riches evokes empathy and gets audiences cheering for the down-on-their-luck main characters. A rebirth story is about redemption, a second chance to reverse a bad situation and evoke optimism. Overcoming-the-monster stories can induce righteous anger and compel people to act to ward off a present or imminent threat. And a quest can provoke restlessness, the desire to achieve more than what life seems to promise. Though the primary emotional

qualities involved may be different, consistent across these five plots is the offer of hope.

## PART II: BRINGING STORIES TO LIFE

# Look Who's Listening

Telling a story with a strategic point of view is not about starting only from what you know. Rather, it is about first being clear with what you are trying to accomplish and then crafting your story from the point view that will be most persuasive to those you need to convince. You have to take yourself out of your own mindset, preferences and biases and put yourself into the shoes of your most important audience.

### AIA: Acknowledge, Inspire and Aspire

In crafting your story with a point of view that strongly resembles that of your audience, you can also follow the Three Act Formula in principle.

First, *acknowledge* your audience by telling stories from their point of view. Second, *inspire* them to feel good about your proposed changes, ideas, products or services. Third, use concrete details to get them to *aspire* to a different future, one with you and your solution as important parts of it.

Being truly fluent in more than one language means that you can switch back and forth between them with ease. The same is true with point of view. Yet, mastering point of view, just like learning multiple languages, takes time and concerted practice. The best exercise to make that happen is the Look Who's Listening approach.

**Step 1:** Describe your audience in as much detail as possible, then write the script you are using to persuade them, without necessarily thinking from their point of view. Sketch out the current state and desired state as you see them.

**Step 2:** List what you know and don't know about the impending change. Then, list what your audience does and does not know. Draw a Venn diagram of what you know and what your audience needs and wants to know.

**Step 3:** Restructure your message to fit your audience based on the AIA model.

# Telling Stories with Data

We are in a Data Boom period, with virtually every public and private domain enjoying unprecedented availability of information and data analysis tools. Using key storytelling elements will boost the impact of your message dramatically and prevent you and your audience from drowning in an ever-rising sea of information.

The challenge of making a presentation based on data is that the presenters want to display just how much data they've accumulated, increasing not only their own value and credibility but also the value and credibility of the information they are sharing. However, the audience is not impressed with a flood of data. They want to know what the data means and why they should care.

Poor understanding of audience composition and needs is why so many data-rich presentations fail to offer satisfying answers, insights or takeaways. As noted above, there's often a mismatch between what presenters deem worthy of sharing and what the audience wants to hear. Understanding which audience type you're dealing with is the first step to improving data-rich communications.

Data storytelling is a structured approach for communicating data insights more effectively to an audience using narrative elements and data visualizations. These narrative components are crucial for data-driven presentations because the human mind is built to process stories rather than cold, hard facts or logic alone.

### Let the Telling Begin — A Five-Step Process to Weave Data and Story

**Step 1: Practice Empathy.** Ask these three questions to put yourself in your audience's shoes:

1. What is the makeup of my audience? What do they need to know?
2. What should my audience remember after listening to my presentation even if they cannot recall anything else I tell them?
3. Outside of the current project, what are the most pressing challenges my audience faces?

The answers to these three questions will inform the structure and content of your communication.

**Step 2: Prove and Persuade.** Effective communication in a data-rich environment requires understanding the distinction between proving and persuading. *Proving* is mustering the strongest analytical processes and evidence to support your conclusion. *Persuading* is getting your target audience to agree with your point of view and take action accordingly. When crafting stories in data-heavy environments, you need to have content of both types.

**Step 3: Words Over Numbers.** This approach highlights the critical nature of numbers. An average person can only hold 7±2 numbers in his or her working memory. Because the space to store numbers is finite, we have to be very judicious about how many numbers we show our audiences.

**Step 4: Create Meaning.** In many cases, the ultimate decision-makers sit at a higher level in the organization and spend part of their precious time listening to

presenters like you, seeking analysis and insights as a foundation for their decisions. So, when you facilitate this process well, you are also creating meaning for them.

To create meaning for decision-makers, focus on the whys and the whats of the material you are presenting. If decision-makers are skeptical of your findings or curious to know more, they will ask how you arrived at your findings.

To structure your communication most effectively, you can use the Three-Act Formula.

In Act I, set the scene by diving directly into the answers your audience most likely wants: why they should care and what they should do about it.

By setting the scene and establishing the hook in Act I, you earn the right to present more on the hows in Act II. Resist the temptation to data-dump. Instead, show your audience the journey you took using the 3 R's: remind, recount and reframe. *Remind* them of the context of the project. *Recount* the process you used to arrive at the reasons they should care and what they should do. And *reframe* a point of view even if it represents the slightest change. We are hardwired for story because we love witnessing meaningful change.

In Act III, tie back to how it all began, why your audience should care and what they should do. In this act, elaborate the actions that will be needed in the short and long term. Then, be sure to leave time for questions.

**Step 5: Give Them What They Want, Tell Them What They Need.** When you are the one studying and analyzing big data you may recognize that the questions your superiors will ask may not be as relevant, timely or strategically important as they think they are. How, then, do you generate the most value from your analytics while managing up?

1. Tell the audience what they want to know first and then what they need to know.
2. Don't dive right into the numbers. Tell a story first and then use numbers to emphasize the message of the story.
3. Throughout the presentation, balance clarity and curiosity.

A good storyteller knows how to balance the provision of *clarity,* or giving the audience exactly what they want, and the arousal of *curiosity,* or prompting them to wonder about important areas that they may not realize are important. Too much clarity and audiences either stop listening because they think they have already heard everything they need to hear, or they turn on their inner critic, finding faults and flaws with the presentation. Unless you want to lose their attention or play constant defense, it's best to pique their curiosity by providing interesting but intentionally incomplete information.

## Making the Complex Clear

**Divide and Conquer.** Separate the mass of complex information you are conveying into categories that will help the audience feel less overwhelmed by the material.

**Compare the Unfamiliar to the Familiar.** When you "hitch" an unfamiliar idea to one that is more familiar to your audience, you are creating the sense that the unfamiliar idea is already part of their personal experience.

**Structure Is the Foundation.** Most effective stories share similar structures. A story needs to have an intriguing yet informative beginning, and engaging journey as the middle, and a logically and emotionally satisfying end. This is especially true when dealing with the complex or the unfamiliar.

Storytelling, of course, is not a magic bullet that provides a fairytale ending to every business interaction. But, using the ideas here can help simplify concepts, make helpful comparisons and persuade your audience through a powerful combination of logic, empathy and emotion.

## Combining the Power of Story and Simple Visuals

Although we have five senses, visual input takes up 40 percent of the brain's resources. That's why our visual fields can dominate other sensory inputs. In fact, so dominating is visual input that it can *influence what you hear.* This means that combining visual elements with what your audience hears will make your communications even more powerful.

That's where the concept of the StoryPicture comes in — a visual framework used to convey your story more effectively. Prompt your audience to participate by placing themselves or their experiences in your framework. Use their participation to further inform your communication.

The point is not to use your visuals to illustrate every single detail; rather, they are meant to translate complex and often amorphous concepts into simple pictures your audiences can understand and follow.

### The Six Types of StoryPicture

**Type 1: The Virtuous Cycle.** Use a virtuous cycle to illustrate how any given *system* works by showing the configuration and interaction of key components.

**Type 2: Venn Diagram.** These diagrams can quickly and clearly establish the nature of a *relationship* within or among people, qualities and behaviors and things.

**Type 3: The Graph.** Most graphs depict a *pattern, relationship, process, change* or some combination of these.

**Type 4: The Pie Chart.** The *weight and proportion* of a pie chart is crucial. Used in the right circumstance, pie charts can communicate your core message with great power.

**Type 5: The Formula.** A formula is a way of illustrating a *governing principle,* or a rule that applies to a relationship among several elements.

**Type 6: FEE (Freestyling for Everything Else).** This type covers any other StoryPicture that can be effective but doesn't fall neatly into the previous five categories.

### Make Your Own StoryPicture

Use the following steps to help decide which type of visual to use and how to draw it to best support your story.

**Step 1: List and select the most important elements.** Start by listing all important elements related to your story or concept. Once you think you've got a full list, start to prioritize. Try to narrow this list to about three to five of the most important ones.

**Step 2: Understand what binds key elements.** Once you prioritize the elements successfully, consider the primary binding agent associated with the elements you've chosen. Is it about a system, a relationship or a process? Is it weight and proportion? Governing principle? Or something else you're trying to illustrate?

This is the messy, creative part. The binding agent determines which StoryPicture will be the most effective. There's often no one right answer: Different binding agents may work for the same set of elements. Don't settle for a StoryPicture that doesn't work for you, as it most likely won't work for your audience either.

**Step 3: Develop a story for the StoryPicture.**

**Step 4: Test your story and gather feedback.**

**Step 5: Repeat and refine, refine and repeat.** Think of this as the polishing stage, in which you think hard about final touches to the StoryPicture, the story that accompanies it and how best to present them.

Practice telling and drawing and the timing between telling and drawing. The more you practice, counterintuitively, the more spontaneous your StoryPicture seems and the more effective it becomes.

## Collecting Stories from Everywhere

Mastering storytelling is a process similar to mastering writing. While it's inherently true that writers write, writers also have to read — a lot! In the same way, storytellers have to hear and collect many stories.

The idea is that the more stories you collect, the more adept you will be at understanding and speaking from different viewpoints and the better able you will be to use the point of view that yields you the most persuasive power with a given audience. As you can imagine, speaking from a point of view that matches that of your audience will ensure that your story resonates with them.

### Listen Aggressively

Acknowledgment is the invisible energizer that keeps us motivated in many settings and circumstances. Collecting stories will serve to acknowledge your audiences, letting them feel heard, understood and validated. One of the best ways to acknowledge individuals in any setting is to help them uncover their own stories and listen to them aggressively.

When it comes to mining our own stories, our "vision" tends to fail us. When we think about our own experiences, we generally lack the distance, perspective and objectivity to evaluate what story, if any, is worth telling. When you collect stories from others, your job is to see what they themselves can't or won't. In most cases, once you point it out and validate it, they can quickly start sharing meaningful stories.

It's best not to be overly concerned about impressing others. Instead, let your audience impress you. Let them share their experiences with you, and then show them how their experiences, even those they may not find particularly interesting, can be turned into great stories. They will be grateful because you're acknowledging them and helping them understand that they do indeed have great stories to tell.

It's important to listen with your whole body — except your mouth. Your gaze, in fact, tells more about what's on your mind than any other nonverbal cue. So, to listen aggressively, make sure you're looking at the other person most of the time when they are speaking. To avoid inadvertently staring them down, make sure to alternate your focus between the speaker and nearby empty space. Looking into empty space can also be seen as a sign of thinking deeply, which is not a bad thing for a listener (as long as you're thinking about what's being said).

Asking clarifying questions demonstrates that you care about the story and want to understand it fully. Paraphrasing can provide additional evidence. If you can say the same thing in your own words, then you and your audience have proof that you've grasped what they're saying. In many situations, especially emotion-laden ones, there's nothing more validating than hearing your thoughts, experiences and feelings expressed in someone else's voice. Just remember to do this sparingly.

### Don't Interject With Your Own Story

When you care about the story you're hearing, it may be natural for your own stories to come to mind. But, try to resist the temptation to interject. The spotlight should remain on the audience, not you. The only exception is if

you believe that sharing your story can help your audience gain further clarity or insight or potentially encourage them to share more openly. Aim for about three parts listening for every one part speaking. Respect the silence, and often the story will follow.

## PART III: STORIES IN ACTION

# Using Your Own Story to Build Credibility and Connection

In business settings, hearing, "Tell me about yourself," is inevitable, and your answer to it matters. Offering a compelling answer will set the right tone with your audience, establish trust and credibility and increase your persuasiveness.

This is where likability comes in. Not only do we tend to like those whom we perceive as being like us but we're also more likely to form a stronger connection with them and find their ideas persuasive. Because of this, the "tell me about yourself" question is actually a great opportunity for you to present ways in which you might be like the person asking the question. You won't always hit common ground, but a strategically crafted answer is more likely to resonate than not.

To make a story compelling, it's vital to demonstrate that you have surmounted significant hurdles or solved tricky problems on the road to success. A story with no obstacles isn't much of a story: "I had a problem, and I figured it out easily. The end." Boring!

In your "tell me about yourself" story, a well-crafted hook turns the audience members into active listeners because they want to hear the story and figure out its message. A good Act I hook will make your audience anxious to find out what happens in Act II.

While all three acts are critical, Act III has a lot of work to do. Your listener needs to understand why you are telling this story. Act III is not just a resolution of your story, it puts your story in context and illustrates for your listeners the value that you bring to their situations.

When you're starting to write your story, don't handcuff yourself to the order of Act I, then II, then III. Just fill in whatever parts come to you first. The most important thing is to get started, whether you feel inspired or not.

If you already know what the takeaway is, start with the end. Knowing the takeaway will be hugely helpful when it's time to trim story details, a task most people, even experienced storytellers, find challenging.

Remember: Crafting your story is a process, not a destination. So, follow the process that works for you.

### Test Your Story

Once you have crafted your story, give it a test drive before you take it out on the road. Tell your story to a friend or colleague, and ask them the following questions:

**What info do you recall from my story?** There's no way to find out except going to the sources directly and finding out what has stuck with them and what hasn't.

**How does my story make you feel?** The emotion evoked will probably have a much longer-lasting impact on your audience than anything you've actually said.

**After listening to my story, what questions do you have for me?** This is the target at which we should all aim: inspiring the right questions in our audience. Shaping your story to the point where your audience begins to have questions is a sure sign that you're on the right track.

# Successful Networking Starts With a Good Story Hook

Many people dislike the idea of networking — and not just the introverts among us. Much of the problem with networking interactions is rooted in how they start.

When asked, "What do you do?" the vast majority of us answer in a very straightforward way. We may respond with our job title, something about our function or our industry. Prompted further, we may force ourselves to launch into our elevator pitch. Sure, this back-and-forth seems harmless enough, and it adheres very well to our social norms. In fact, the responses involved are exactly what people expect to hear. And that's a big problem.

When people get what they expect from this kind of social interaction, they also stop thinking and imagining: trying to understand the job you mentioned, imagining what it might look like and so on. And when they stop thinking and imagining, they stop engaging.

Give fellow networking event participants a gift: the opportunity to use their imaginations. Networking could be much less painful. In fact, it could actually become an enjoyable and productive experience.

People enjoy a story that allows them to figure out the message. By planting a hook in the conversation as early as possible, you can transform your audience from passive listeners to active investigators focused on figuring out what it is you do instead of having data dumped on them.

Networking conversations follow a reliable pattern. If you know this, and you can capture your audience's attention by planting a hook, you can pre-craft a much more interactive conversation that motivates audiences to try to figure out what you do — using their imaginations — even as you share information with them. Lively dialogue

beats a one-way monologue. A pre-crafted conversation is basically the script of a dialogue you create by anticipating how your listeners will respond to your hooks and pauses.

Recall that we have defined a hook as a contrast, conflict or contradiction. One way to plant a hook is to contradict your audience's expectations with your answer. Inherent in the question, "What do you do?" is the expectation that it will lead to information about what you do for a living. A contradictory answer will make your audience wonder and prompt them to seek clarification. There is some risk to this approach, but the benefits of intriguing people will outweigh that cost in most interactions. Understand that different audiences have different expectations. For some audiences, you don't have to move far from the norm to be considered strange or weird. With others, you have to try really hard to distinguish yourself because they may be unconventional to begin with. It's part of your job to understand your audience and to adapt your approach accordingly. Sometimes, a conventional approach is the safest bet.

Having the discipline to stop talking is as important as speaking. Give your audience the space they need to react and respond. Your second response to your audience should offer some level of clarification by expanding on the first one, but you don't need to provide the conventional information people expect just yet. You want to prompt even more questions. Make your audience wonder what your professional world looks like and want to know why you are qualified to do what you do.

Write down your own first response to "What do you do?" Be sure to include a hook. Then, write a few possible follow-up questions you might be asked and an appropriate second-level hook. Write the secondary follow-up questions and possible responses. The third response would be the crux of what you do. The first hook is usually the hardest to create. Here are three principles to help you create your hook:

- **Create a vivid image.** A criminal defense lawyer might say, "I stand between people and prisons."
- **Use a concrete object and/or action-oriented verb.** A financial planner might say, "I build financial roadmaps."
- **Pair words or ideas that usually don't go together.** A life coach might say, "I'm a habit destroyer."

Definitely flex your creative muscles as you work on this. But remember: an answer that sounds too strange will elicit a negative reaction and send your listener to the nearest exit. You have to find that happy medium so that people are intrigued by your first response, may get some inkling of what you do and want to learn more.

Storytelling takes on nuances depending on the goal of your story. The following four categories could help you clarify the goal of your story based on the nature of your career, and you can use that knowledge in conjunction with the three principles discussed above.

**Common "old" careers.** These are conventional occupations with a long history, such as accountant, doctor or teacher. If your career falls in this quadrant, the goal of your story is to communicate the core of the value you offer by telling a benefit story. Reorienting your response around the benefit you offer to your audience is a great way to intrigue them. This is especially true in this category because people tend to think they know exactly what you do once they hear your profession.

**Common new careers.** Careers that have arrived on the scene more recently include consultants, IT professionals and web designers. The goal of your story here is usually to create a metaphor that allows the listener to understand what you do by comparing it to something more easily understood.

**Rare "old" careers.** Rare careers that have been around for a long time include acupuncturist, magician and matchmaker. While these fields are sufficiently interesting in their own right, your goal if you happen to work in one of them is to demystify and modernize what you do so your audience can understand how it applies to people's lives in the present day.

**Rare new careers.** Other rare professions that are newer include fashion model, speechwriter and voice actor. If your career fits into this quadrant, your goal is to inform and educate your listener about a field that may be unknown to her or him, at least beyond a superficial level. Most careers in this quadrant are intriguing enough that the listener is eager to hear more.

The main idea is to understand the uniform pattern of networking conversations and find a more creative, intriguing way to present your profession using a hook that encourages the audience to learn more. Give yourself some space to experiment, think about what's most interesting about what you do and pre-craft the conversation. Ultimately, your audiences will guide you to craft your best story.


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# 39BS08 Executive Presence

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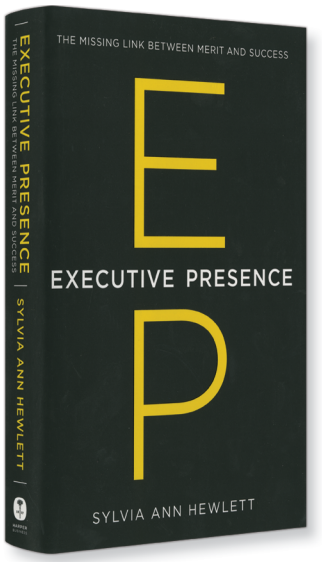
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Career & Self-Improvement

# Executive Presence

## The Missing Link Between Merit and Success




by Sylvia Ann Hewlett

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you exude confidence and credibility? Can you command a room? Sylvia Ann Hewlett, one of the world's most influential business thinkers, cracks the code of Executive Presence (EP) for men and women intent on winning the next plum assignment and doing something extraordinary with their lives.

You might have the qualifications to be considered for your dream job, but you won't get far unless you can signal that you're "leadership material" and that you "have what it takes." Professionals are judged on presence as well as on performance. Using a wealth of hard data, Hewlett reveals EP to be a dynamic mix of three things: how you act (gravitas), how you speak (communication) and how you look (appearance).

*Executive Presence* is immensely practical. Hewlett teases out tactics that can help you raise your game and close the gap between merit and success. She offers the unvarnished advice you won't get from supportive friends and tackles head-on such touchy subjects as too-tight clothing and too-shrill voices. She shows how the standards for EP vary for men, women, multicultural and LGBT employees, and she shares how to get meaningful feedback from politically correct bosses intent on avoiding the real issues.

With hard facts and vivid examples, Hewlett shows you how to ace EP and fully realize your unique potential — no matter who you are, no matter where you work.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why gravitas is the core characteristic of executive presence.
- The six key elements of communicating with executive presence.
- How to balance authenticity with conformity in the business world, no matter who you are.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **EXECUTIVE PRESENCE**

**by Sylvia Ann Hewlett**

**The author:** Sylvia Ann Hewlett is the founding president of the Center for Talent Innovation, a Manhattan-based think tank where she chairs a task force of 82 multinational companies focused on fully realizing the new streams of labor in the global marketplace. Her book *Forget a Mentor: Find a Sponsor* was named one of the ten best business books of 2013 and won the Axiom Book Award.

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## What Is Executive Presence?

President Obama has it. So does Facebook's chief operating officer, Sherl Sandberg. It's embodied by people as varied as Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, the late British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, celebrated Burmese parliamentarian Aung San Suu Kyi and actress Angelina Jolie. Nelson Mandela exuded it.

*It* is executive presence — and no man or woman attains a top job, lands an extraordinary deal or develops a significant following without this heady combination of confidence, poise and authenticity that convinces the rest of us we're in the presence of someone who's the real deal. It's an amalgam of qualities that telegraphs that you are in charge or deserve to be.

Executive presence is not a measure of performance: whether, indeed, you hit the numbers, attain the ratings or actually have a transformative idea. Rather, it's a measure of image: whether you signal to others that you have what it takes, that you're star material. If you're able to crack the EP code, you'll be first in line for the next plum assignment and be given a chance of doing something extraordinary with your life.

EP rests on three pillars:

- How you act (gravitas)
- How you speak (communication)
- How you look (appearance)

While the specifics vary depending on context (what works on Wall Street doesn't necessarily work in Silicon Valley), these three pillars of EP are universal. They are also somewhat interactive. If your communication skills ensure you can "command a room," your gravitas grows exponentially.

One thing to note at the start is that these pillars are not equally important — not by a long shot. Gravitas is the core characteristic. Signaling that "you know your stuff cold," that you can go "six questions deep" in your domains of knowledge, is more salient than either communication or appearance.

How do people know you have gravitas? You *communicate* the authority of a leader — through your speaking skills and ability to command a room. When it comes to communication, eye contact matters enormously. Being able to look your coworkers in the eye when making a presentation, or being able to make eye contact with an audience when making a speech, has a transformative effect — on your ability to connect, to inspire, to create buy-in. It means you need to lose your glasses, your notes and your PowerPoint and just wing it. This is not easy. It requires a huge commitment of time since you need to prepare and practice so thoroughly that the arc of your remarks becomes part of your muscle memory. There are no shortcuts.

While cracking the EP code can be onerous and sometimes eats into your soul, this work and these struggles allow you to flower and flourish. It turns out that becoming a leader and doing something amazing with your life hinge on what makes you different, not on what makes you the same as everyone else.

## Gravitas

We all know a real leader when we see one. He or she projects an aura of calm and competence that instills faith

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **C. Bobenchik**, Contributing Editor

even in — *especially* in — the white-hot center of a crisis. He or she reveals integrity and demonstrates courage by uttering truths when they are inconvenient or most unwelcome. And he or she demonstrates courage and emotional intelligence that secures followership even in the wake of news that would seemingly destroy it.

These qualities connote gravitas, that weightiness or heft that marks you as worth following into the fire. Gravitas is the very essence of EP. Without it, you simply won't be perceived as a leader, no matter what your title or level of authority, no matter how well you dress or speak. Gravitas is what signals to the world you're made of the right stuff and can be entrusted with serious responsibility. But what is it, really? How do you come by it, and how might you telegraph it?

### Top Aspects of Gravitas

Research reveals gravitas to consist of six key behaviors and traits:

- **Confidence and "grace under fire."** You've got to reach inside yourself to that place where you believe, you absolutely *know,* you're eminently qualified to do the job at hand. Most of us are like teabags, to borrow from Eleanor Roosevelt's shrewd words: We don't know how strong we are until we're in hot water.
- **Decisiveness and "showing teeth."** Making difficult decisions is what we look to leaders to do. It is not so much about rendering the right decision but about rendering a decision at a time when no one else dares, that confers gravitas, because it telegraphs that you have the courage as well as the confidence to impose a direction and take responsibility for it. Real leaders listen, gather critical information, weigh the options carefully, look for a timely opening (typically when everyone else is writhing in indecision) and *then* demand action.
- **Integrity and "speaking truth to power."** Speaking truth to power is a potent affirmation of leaderlike courage. The higher you go in an organization, the more impressive you are when you demonstrate you have the spine to share your convictions. Make sure, however, that when you challenge authority, you're coming from a core of unshakable values. Anything less, and your actions will be perceived as insubordination and/or arrogance — the opposite of gravitas.
- **Emotional intelligence.** While decisiveness and toughness in a leader signal conviction, courage and resolve, when untempered by empathy or compassion these same characteristics come off as egotism, arrogance and insensitivity. Emotional intelligence is important for building trust because demonstrating it shows you have not only self-awareness but also situational awareness. Standout leaders who can be trusted to pick up on all relevant cues win the trust of followers to steer them through an uncertain future.
- **Reputation and standing/"pedigree."** Before you enter a room or open your mouth, your reputation speaks for you — never more so than today, when word of your latest blunder or scandal races at lightning speed around the globe in 140 characters or less. Managing your personal brand is almost a job unto itself, lest it be managed for you by people who don't hold your best interests at heart. You've got to be proactive in asserting who you are, what you stand for and how you'd like to be perceived.
- **Vision/charisma.** To communicate gravitas, it's critical you telegraph vision.

Gravitas alone won't secure you the corner office, of course: You've got to have the skill sets, the experience and the innate talent to qualify for the job. But if you have that depth of experience and those vital skills, gravitas is all that's between you and that top job. It can't be faked, but it can be cultivated.

Gravitas is that *je ne sais quoi* quality that some people have that makes other people judge them born leaders. But born leaders are made, oftentimes through their own systematic efforts. They live intentionally, guided by a set of values or a vision for their lives that compels them to seize every chance to put their convictions into practice. We gravitate to them because they telegraph that they know where they're going — a rare and intoxicating certainty that most of us lack. That is the real font of their gravitas.

## Communication

Most of us tend to think of communication skills in terms of formal presentation skills. But when are you not onstage? No matter your job title or how junior or senior you are, you are always presenting. Whether it's a quick email to your boss, a casual comment you make to colleagues in the hallway or a pitch you prepare for clients, you're conveying who you are and what authority is your due. Your communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal, are what ultimately win you the attention and mindshare of colleagues, clients and friends.

Communication is not so much *what* you say but rather *how* you say it. This you can condition and control. The tone and timbre of your voice; your choice and use of words; your inflection, articulation and delivery; and even

your body language determine what and how much your listeners take in — and what overall impression of you they will form and retain as a result. Other people's perceptions of you are very much yours to shape.

**Superior Speaking Skills.** Below are verbal cues that can be adjusted. The painful part is that you'll probably need to be told you've got a problem before you can begin to address it. Ask for feedback. A sponsor or mentor should give you a good sense of what you need to work on. Then get to work — because a lot is at stake.

- **Accent.** Sounding provincial can "destabilize your authority," says top attorney Kent Gardiner. A British accent, on the other hand, does wonders for your gravitas, according to focus groups.
- **Grammar.** Sounding uneducated undermines your gravitas and marks you as an outsider to the inner circle. And yet it's the rare person who will risk correcting your word usage, as such correction calls attention to chasms of socioeconomic class, education and ethnicity.
- **Timbre and pitch.** Not only does the sound of your voice matter twice as much as what you're talking about, but a voice in the lower-frequency range will encourage others to see you as successful, sociable and smart. A high-pitched voice, particularly for women, is a career-stunting attribute.

**Command a Room.** If you aspire to lead, you must mesmerize your audience. How do you grab and keep an audience?

- **Establish connection.** You've got all of five seconds to "touch an audience," or get them to invest in your message. It's all about making yourself human: not oversharing, not indulging in self-revelation but unveiling just enough of your inner core that your listeners feel connected to you and start pulling for you.
- **Deliver your words as a musician delivers notes.** Phrasing, inflection and pace are what distinguish you as a person worth listening to. As in music, it's important to deliver your words conscious of your narrative arc, lifting and dropping your cadence to emphasize key passages or points, paying particular attention to how you end a phrase, so that your listener senses closure and consequently hangs on to the last word and retains it before making room for the next.
- **Use narrative.** Stories, not bullet points, are what grab and hold an audience. Ronald Reagan, an actor by training, earned the sobriquet "the Great Communicator" because he was a colorful storyteller and natural entertainer, not because he wielded facts like a policy wonk.
- **Be succinct.** "Executive presence is not necessarily about being formal or abundant in your communication but rather straightforward and brief," says Kerrie Peraino, head of international HR for American Express. Get to the point, and people will give you their attention.

**Assertiveness.** Being forceful and assertive is a core executive trait for both men and women. But for women, it's a decidedly more difficult trait to embody, as assertiveness in a woman often makes her unlikable. The executives I interviewed uniformly suggest you resist the urge to charge in and make known your demands. The best strategy for women may be what Linda Huber of Moody's describes as "leading from behind." In a room full of men, women often feel impelled to assert themselves by launching the first salvo. But far more effective, says Huber, an army officer who at age 21 had 45 soldiers in her command, is holding off until others have fired off their best shot.

**Ability to Read a Room.** Sensing the mood, absorbing the cultural cues and adjusting your language, content and presentation style accordingly are vital to your success as a communicator, and succeeding as a communicator is vital to your executive presence.

Being oblivious to the needs of your audience will undermine perceptions of your authority. Here's why: First, it intimates you're a closed circuit, someone who can't or won't take in new information. Second, it implies you don't care about your audience, destroying any chance of connection, which is after all the foundation of any communication. Finally, and most damning, it implies you're simply not nimble enough to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

**Humor and Banter.** Not everyone can pull off a funny story at the lectern, but everyone can learn to banter at the water cooler. Many of our focus group participants affirmed the importance of mastering the art of small talk. "It's the conversation before the meeting that establishes whether or not you're worth listening to in the meeting," one senior executive pointed out — a skill she refers to as "mastering the banter." It shows, she explained, that you're part of the larger conversation, someone who's "one of the tribe."

**Body Language and Posture.** Never underestimate the communicative power of body language. Since people will be "reading you" the moment they lay eyes on you, take care to enter a room or take the stage with aplomb. Is your head up, your gaze focused straight ahead? Shoulders back but relaxed? Do you stride or shuffle? And do you

look happy at this opportunity to engage? Or do you look like you're nursing an ulcer?

## Appearance

As we wrestle with the thorny — and annoying — issue of looks, three things are uppermost in our minds: What marks us for success? What exactly are bosses and colleagues looking for these days? And how much does this superficial stuff matter anyhow?

Qualitative data found that appearance was typically the *filter* through which gravitas and communication skills were evaluated. That explains why high-performing junior employees oftentimes get knocked out of contention for key roles and promotions: they simply don't look the part. In other words, get this appearance thing wrong, and you're struck off the list.

Over the long haul, the way you look may not be nearly as important as what you say or how you act, but it's incredibly important in the short run. Cracking the appearance code opens doors and puts you in play. So what are senior leaders looking for? What are their top picks?

**Being Polished and Groomed.** It turns out that the intrinsic stuff (body type, height) is not what matters most; rather, it's what you do with what you've got. Research conducted at Harvard Medical School found that judgments about a woman's attractiveness were heavily conditioned by how much makeup she was wearing — the more the better. When you make an effort to look polished, you signal to others that you see them as worth your time and investment, and you're even prepared to tolerate mild discomfort.

Casual clothes may be the right choice for your organizational culture, but in their fit and brand and style, they should telegraph that you take your work and those whom you engage in it very seriously.

Have professionals tend to your hair and nails regularly. Invest in well-cut attire that compliments your body type. Accessorize, but don't billboard your bling. Your appearance should focus your audience on your professional competencies, not distract from them.

**Physically Attractive, Fit, Slim.** There's a plethora of research proving the point that intrinsically attractive people get a speed pass over life's bumpier transitions: They get hired more often, earn more and even fare better in court than unattractive people. With regard to your physical attractiveness, what you do with your God-given gifts counts more than your intrinsic beauty in establishing your credibility as an up-and-comer.

The most important thing you can do is signal fitness and wellness. It's not how much you weigh but how resilient you seem that enhances or detracts from your executive presence — because leadership is demanding. We tend not to entrust our toughest jobs to people who look like they might keel over from a heart attack.

Pay more attention to how well (as in healthy) you look and how well you look after yourself. Whether you're a size 16 or 6, get enough exercise to ensure your muscles are toned and your lung power will see you up stairs without wheezing.

**Simple, Stylish Clothes that Position You for Your Next Job.** The journey begins by dressing for the job you *want,* not the job you have. Complement a sophisticated look with a signature style piece or accent. For men this may be a pair of colorful socks, a playful tie, vintage cuff links, distinctive shoes or a bold watch. Women have arguably more options. Remember that your signature look encompasses not just you but also the physical space you occupy.

**Being Tall.** Shortness in a male leader was and is so easily conflated with major shortcomings. Shortness can create a presumption of weakness. What to do if you're among the height-challenged? In this regard women have one killer app to help them compensate: high heels. And they use them.

For men, there's not much to be done that doesn't risk exacerbating the image problem. The best way to make height a nonissue is to take a page out of New York mayor Michael Bloomberg's playbook. Bloomberg's amour, Diana Taylor, is not only a good four inches taller but also inclined to appear by his side in showstopper heels. He reportedly "doesn't care" about their height difference. A man secure enough to be photographed at the shoulder height of his girlfriend is a man no one will see as weak.

**Being Youthful and Vigorous.** Looking youthful boosts the EP of both men and women because, like slimness and fitness, it implies you've got the vitality to lead the charge and not succumb to setback. If you cannot impress everyone with your obvious vitality, then at least make sure you minimize signs of age and downplay any infirmity.

The crucial point to keep in mind is that appearance is the medium for your message, and, as such, it should neither distract nor detract from what you stand for and what you want to say. Ask your superiors for feedback on your attire, hairstyle and grooming. Provide assurance that you will receive their observations and suggestions not as fault-finding but rather as constructive guidance. While

it may be painful to hear what you're doing wrong, consider how much more painful it is to learn about your blunders later, from someone else, when it's too late to reverse first impressions.

## Feedback Failures

Think for a minute: When's the last time someone at work gave you honest, critical feedback on some aspect of your EP? For that matter, when's the last time you gave someone at work a critical and specific EP pointer?

Unvarnished, concrete feedback on your appearance, communication skills and gravitas is hard to come by. It's especially hard if you're female, though your chances improve slightly with a same-sex boss.

Women often don't get EP feedback from their male superiors. Senior men just can't afford to have their motives misconstrued. It takes only the perception that something unprofessional has transpired to bring down the mighty. As every male who's been subjected to sexual-harassment training might conclude, developing female talent by giving women individualized feedback just isn't worth the added risk of bumping against the third rail of office politics.

For similar reasons, people of color don't get the feedback they need to develop their EP: Fearing discomfort as well as discrimination litigation, senior executives said they would sooner pass over multicultural professionals lacking executive presence than have an honest conversation about their shortcomings. In particular, people of color don't get unvarnished feedback about hair, clothing and body weight.

### Difficult Conversations – But Extraordinarily Important

Some kinds of feedback are intrinsically difficult to give no matter who is on the receiving end. But dispensing good critical feedback across all three EP pillars is a core leadership competency, one that should be developed and evaluated along with other managerial skills.

Great feedback is (1) timely, meaning it's delivered either right before or right after you've blundered; (2) specific to one discrete behavior, as opposed to a global condemnation; and (3) prescriptive, or explicit about what actions need to be taken by you.

Feedback is bad when it sets up a very narrow band of acceptability. Women, for example, are told they're either too angry or too nice, overly passive or way too aggressive, too young or too old. Feedback is bad, too, when it's vague. Given the ubiquity of bad feedback in the workplace, it comes as no surprise that the majority of respondents say they haven't been able to act on the feedback they've been given.

Improving feedback will require a two-pronged approach. First, you as a rising star must learn to become better at eliciting, receiving and acting on criticism. And second, you as a leader must become better at giving criticism while still modeling how to receive it.

### Tactics: How to Get the EP Feedback You Need

- **Recognize you need it.** Says one communications exec, "everybody says they welcome feedback but then persists in thinking they're perfect." She adds, "People I know, probably the smartest people in my group, won't be going anywhere because they don't have EP. And they don't have EP because they don't accept that they need to acquire it."
- **Develop a thicker skin.** Debora Spar, President of Barnard College, says, "I think we're raising both women and men to be overly sensitive to criticism, so that when they finally get out in the real world and they don't get a 5.0 on a performance review, they fall apart. It's so important, early in life, to get that lesson and toughen up."
- **Routinely ask for specific, timely, prescriptive feedback.** If you make a blanket request, as in "How am I doing?," you may get a blanket answer (" Just fine!"). Better to laser in on a recent encounter that required considerable EP — a meeting with a high-powered client or leader in the firm — and request that a superior assess you on your body language, speech and delivery, attire, command of the room and so on.
- **Create a circle of peers with whom you can share feedback.** One ad executive explains, "I always find the time to reach out to people on my team and build these relationships," she says. "I will make sure I'm there to support them when they need my feedback, because at some point I'm going to need theirs."
- **Cultivate a sponsor.** Sponsors are not mentors. Sponsors are powerful leaders who see potential in you and, provided you give them 110 percent, will go out on a limb to make things happen for you. Because sponsors have a vested interest in how you turn out (your reputation now being linked with their own), they will give you the kind of feedback that mentors can't or won't.
- **Demonstrate you will act on the feedback you've been given.** Unless you show superiors that

you are willing to course-correct, they might conclude you're not worth the time and energy it takes to impart difficult feedback in the first place.

Good feedback on executive presence is hard to come by — it's difficult to give, difficult to elicit and difficult to receive. The issue is even more sensitive for women, people of color and LGBT employees. The good news is that improving the feedback loop is a central part of EP workshops and training sessions that have been developed by the Center for Talent Innovation over the last two years.

## Walking the Tightrope

Carolyn Buck Luce, a leader who has negotiated narrow bands of acceptability for decades, says, "If you don't fit the stereotype of a leader, you're not likely to be seen as becoming one." If you're not straight, not white or not male, that is, and you aspire to leadership, you're likely to find yourself up against the impossible expectation that you be someone you're intrinsically not. This expectation is communicated via feedback that's inherently contradictory or paradoxical and that so many on the path to leadership have had to parse before they can proceed.

The majority of women being considered as potential "leadership material" hover in that layer just below top management, what's known as the marzipan layer because it's so rich with talent — and so sticky. We find that, at the door to the C-suite, they hesitate to cross the threshold — fearful, we suspect, of having to walk the tightrope between feminine and authoritative and between effective and likable. Men simply aren't forced to choose, since by dint of being male they're already perceived as leadership material.

Across all three pillars of executive presence — gravitas, communication and appearance — women continue to walk a tightrope. While women are as likely as men to believe that appearance plays a small part in a leader's executive presence, women are much more likely to be pilloried on the basis of it, whatever they do. Women who speak confidently about their accomplishments are identified as "tooting your own horn."

The trickiest EP terrain a woman must navigate concerns her gravitas, where the forceful-but-unlikable chasm yawns the widest. A woman who shows teeth, for example, risks being perceived as a bitch or noncooperative ("not a team player").

### How To Win Greater Latitude: Insights and Strategies

**When you Show Teeth, Show That You Have the Best Interests of the Team at Heart.** Assert your difference of opinion, but take the "I" out of your argument. Too often, says Intel's Rosalind Hudnell, women and people of color set themselves up to be branded as "not a team player" by framing their argument in terms of what's bugging them personally. "Don't make it about yourself, because that only underscores your status as the outsider," says Hudnell. "You'll be far more effective if, before taking a stand, you consider, 'How will this idea be heard by those in power?'"

**Hit the Mark by Taking More Careful Aim.** Too often, says Alliance Bernstein's Lori Massad, women take a broad-spectrum approach to communication: instead of listening to others' views, they blurt out their own first; instead of waiting for an opening that might maximize receptivity, they stream consciousness. Better to be a sniper, says Massad: Pick your target, pick your moment and fire your best shot.

**Build a Personal Brand that Grants you Lots of Latitude to be You — and be Relentless in Projecting it.** A consciously built and confidently maintained brand that positions you outside the box goes a long way in ensuring that others won't dare box you in.

**Show You Care.** For women in particular, winning more latitude in the public's eye depends on showcasing activities that demonstrate you care about the disenfranchised. This works wonders on the likeability front. Kirsten Gillibrand, Hillary Clinton's replacement as the junior Senator from New York State, has become a voice against sexual assaults in the military; Elizabeth Warren, in her run-up to winning a Massachusetts U.S. senatorial seat, recorded a contribution for the "It Gets Better" video campaign to help bullied LGBT teenagers.

Feedback can be helpful in pointing out which paths to take — and which pitfalls to avoid — but at a certain point, many people feel constrained by parameters that narrow the choices between comfort and conformity. Yet walking that fine line is the ultimate test of executive presence.

## Authenticity vs. Conformity

The old metaphor "bleached-out professionals" refers to individuals who, in order to be perceived as professionals in their work environments, had effectively scrubbed themselves of all ethnic, religious, racial, socioeconomic

and educational identifiers. While EP for some was a set of unwritten rules that no one had bothered to share with them, for others it was a terrain they felt they couldn't navigate without sacrificing core aspects of their identity.

The results of our national survey brought this conflict into sharper focus. Forty-one percent of professionals of color said they had felt the need to compromise their authenticity in order to conform to EP standards at their company. White respondents also conceded they felt the need to conform, of course, but people of color were significantly more likely than whites to feel this tension. Among people of color, respondents of Asian decent were afflicted the most — particularly Asian men. Across the board, a majority of professionals of color (56 percent) told us they felt held to a stricter code of EP than their Caucasian peers. Overwhelmingly, the EP code they feel impelled to fit into is that embodied by white men.

The experience of minority professionals parallels that of another group: LGBT professionals who feel obliged to pass for straight at work. Nearly half of gay professionals surveyed said they remained closeted at work for fear of being ostracized by their colleagues and penalized professionally by their superiors. That expenditure of remaining "off the gaydar" costs them both personally and professionally.

No matter who we are and where we work, the workplace imposes norms around appearance, communication and gravitas that we'd be fools to ignore if our intent is to thrive and not just survive.

The difficulty, of course, is that only *you* can determine what constitutes a compromise to your authenticity, as opposed to just a compromise.

### Tactics

Below is strategic and tactical advice from professionals of color who've been down this same road.

- **Know Your "Non-Negotiables" and Walk Away.** Some cultures simply don't deserve your compliance.
- **Never Try to Be Someone You're Not.**
- **Play the Long Game.** Says Carolyn Buck Luce, "It's your responsibility to figure out how to align your talents and gifts to the culture so that, long-term, you achieve your goals. When you are the curator of your authenticity, you can invest intentionally — and then it's a win-win for you and your company."
- **Perceive Slights as Opportunities to Address Ignorance.** One senior executive says, "If you're overly sensitive to the possibility of intentional slights and withdraw as a result, you freeze yourself rather than move forward."

It is precisely your difference that your superiors need to burnish their brand, build their team, extend their innovative capabilities and ultimately succeed as leaders. It is your insight into end users like yourself that gives them a competitive edge in the relentless competition to innovate. In this brave new world, the organization absolutely needs you to bring your whole self to work.

So don't downplay your difference. Commit to owning it.

## Conclusion

Ordinary mortals can crack the EP code. These skills are eminently learnable. You don't have to be born an actor or be endowed with a James Earl Jones voice.

You don't have to be some kind of genius and ace all top picks across the three categories of gravitas, communication and appearance. No need for straight As. Work with your strengths, and try to nail three picks in each category.

Figure out what is negotiable — and what is not. In your drive to crack the EP code, don't compromise your authenticity to such an extent that it puts your soul in play. It will make you miserable and will also backfire, because in the end gravitas rests centrally on your true identity. Eventually your integrity and authenticity will win out.

Finally, commit to the work involved, and embrace your EP journey. It will be enormously empowering. Of course it will require a ton of energy. Learning how to command a room or read a client, figuring out how to use silence to punctuate a speech, finding the perfect skirt or suit to complement your body type — none of this is easy, and it will require hours of painstaking effort. But you can count on the results being transformative.

Cracking the EP code will close the gap between merit and success, between where you are right now and where you could be if you unleashed your full potential and allowed it to fly and soar.

And it will make you feel quite wonderful.

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# 39BS12 The Icarus Deception

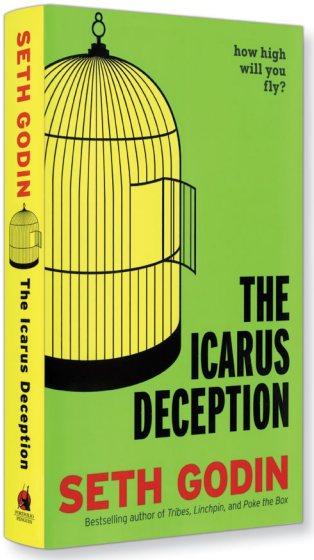
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# The Icarus Deception

## How High Will You Fly?




by Seth Godin

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The old rules: Play it safe. Stay in your comfort zone. Find an institution, a job, a set of rules to stick to. Keep your head down. Don't fly too close to the sun.

The new truth: It's better to be sorry than safe. You need to fly higher than ever.

In his bravest and most challenging book yet, Seth Godin shows how we can thrive in an economy that rewards art, not compliance. He explains why true innovators focus on trust, remarkability, leadership and stories that spread. And he makes a passionate argument for why you should be treating your work as art.

Art is not a gene or a specific talent. It's an attitude available to anyone who has a vision that others don't and the guts to do something about it. Steve Jobs was an artist. So were Henry Ford and Martin Luther King Jr.

To work like an artist means investing in the things that scale: creativity, emotional labor and grit. The path of the artist isn't for the faint of heart — but Godin shows why it's your only chance to stand up, stand out and make a difference.

The time to seize new ground and work without a map is now. So what are you going to do?

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How and why the industrial age is fading.
- The skills and attitude to help you succeed in the connected age
- Why the keep-your-head-down model does not work.
- How to use the new virtues of risk, danger, disobedience, bravery and standing out to carve out a successful niche in the new economy.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ICARUS DECEPTION**

**by Seth Godin**

**The author:** Seth Godin is the author of 14 international bestsellers, including *Purple Cow, The Dip, Tribes, Linchpin* and *Poke the Box.* He is also the founder and CEO of Squidoo.com and one of the most popular business bloggers in the world.

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## Introduction

They told you to get your resume in order, to punch your ticket, to fit in and to follow instructions.

They told you to swallow your pride, not to follow your dream.

They promised trinkets and prizes and possibly riches if you would just suck it up and be part of the system, if you would merely do what you were told and conform.

They sold you debt and self-storage and reality TV shows. They sold your daughters and sons, too.

All in exchange for what would happen later, when it was your turn.

It's your turn.

### You Are Not Your Career

Your ability to follow instructions is not the secret to your success.

You are hiding your best work, your best insight and your best self from us every day.

It's too bad that so much time has been wasted, but it would be unforgivable to wait any longer. You have the ability to contribute so much. We need you, now.

A revolution is here, our revolution, and it is shining a light on what we've known deep down for a long time — you are capable of making a difference, of being bold and of changing more than you are willing to admit. You are capable of making art.

### Catching the Wily Fox

Build an eight-foot-long wooden fence in the forest. Lay out some bait and then go away for a week. The fox is too crafty to be caught in a simple trap, and he will smell you and avoid the fence for days. But eventually, he'll come and eat the bait.

At the end of the week, build a second length of fence at a right angle to the first. Leave more bait. The fox will avoid the fence again for a few days, then take the bait.

At the end of the second week, build a third wall and a gate. Leave more bait. When you come back at the end of a month, the fox will be happily prancing in his safe enclosure, and all you will have to do is close the gate. The fox will be trapped.

This, of course, is what happened to us. The industrial age built the trap we're mired in, but it didn't build the trap all at once; that took centuries to perfect. And we were seduced. Seduced by the bait of decent pay and plenty of prizes. Seduced by the apparent security of the enclosure. And once the gate was shut, we were kept in by the threat of shame, the amplification of risk and society's reliance on more and shinier prizes.

For us, though, the situation is even more poignant than it is for the fox. As the industrial age has faded away and been replaced by the connection economy — the wide-open reality of our new economic revolution — the fence has been dismantled. It's gone.

But most of us have no idea that we're no longer fenced in. We've been so thoroughly brainwashed and intimidated and socialized that we stay huddled together, waiting for instructions, when we have the first, best and once-in-a-lifetime chance to do something extraordinary instead.

The Icarus Deception revolves around a simple assumption on my part: that you know how to be human and how to make art. We don't need to be taught to make art, but sometimes we need permission to do so. Following instructions is overrated.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **Corbin Collins**, Contributing Editor

## PART ZERO: ART, THE COMFORT ZONE AND THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

Why make art? Because you must. The new connected economy demands it and will reward you for nothing else. Because you can. Art is what it is to be human.

Just south of the Greek island of Samos lies the Icarian Sea. Legend has it that this is where Icarus died — a victim of his hubris.

His father, Daedalus, was a master craftsman. Banished to prison for sabotaging the work of King Minos (captor of the Minotaur), Daedalus fashioned a set of wings for himself and his son. After affixing the wings with wax, they set out to escape. Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too close to the sun. Icarus disobeyed and flew too high. The wax melted, and Icarus, the beloved son, lost his wings, tumbled into the sea and died.

The lesson of this myth: Don't disobey the king. Don't disobey your dad. Don't imagine that you're better than you are, and most of all, don't ever believe that you have the ability to do what a god might do.

The part of this myth you weren't told: In addition to telling Icarus not to fly too high, Daedalus instructed his son not to fly too low, too close to the sea, because the water would ruin the lift in his wings.

It's far more dangerous to fly too low than too high, because it feels safe to fly low. We settle for low expectations and small dreams and guarantee ourselves less than we are capable of. We're so obsessed with the risk of shining brightly that we've traded in everything that matters to avoid it.

### Your Comfort Zone (Versus Your Safety Zone)

Your entire life has been about coordinating your comfort zone and your safety zone. Like the fox, we've been trained to stay inside the fence, because inside the fence is where it's safe — until it's too late. Now that a revolution has hit, now that the economy is upside down and the rules have changed, we have to confront an obvious truth: The safety zone has changed, but your comfort zone has not. Those places that felt safe — the corner office, the famous college, the secure job — aren't. You're holding back, betting on a return to normal, but in the new normal, your resistance to change is no longer helpful. If you don't figure out how to realign your comfort zone with today's new safety zone, all the strategy in the world isn't going to help you.

The new safety zone is the place where art and innovation and destruction and rebirth happen. The new safety zone is the never-ending creation of ever-deeper personal connection.

### Art Is the New Safety Zone

Creating ideas that spread and connecting the disconnected are the two pillars of our new society, and both of them require the posture of the artist. The bad news is this: Artists are never invulnerable. This safety zone isn't as comfortable as the last one was.

Art is not a gene or a specific talent. Art is an attitude, culturally driven and available to anyone who chooses to adopt it. Art is the unique work of a human being, work that touches another. Seizing new ground, making connections between people or ideas, working without a map — these are works of art, and if you do them, you are an artist.

An artist is someone who uses bravery, insight, creativity and boldness to challenge the status quo.

The connection economy rewards the leader, the initiator and the rebel. The Internet is a connection machine, and anyone with a laptop or a smartphone is now connected to just about everyone else. Those connections are changing the world. Most of all, the connection economy has made competence not particularly valuable and has replaced it with an insatiable desire for things that are new, real and important.

## PART ONE: THE CONNECTION ECONOMY DEMANDS THAT WE CREATE ART

The industrial age, the one that established our schooling, our workday, our economy and our expectations, is dying. It's dying faster than most of us expected, and it's causing plenty of pain, indecision and fear as it goes.

The challenge is to take advantage of this brief moment in time, a time when connection is easier to find and cherish than it will ever be again.

Capitalism transformed the world. Everyone who trades benefits, and the retained capital buys machines and processes that improve productivity, so the benefits continue. Capitalism was refined and condensed and iterated until it became a monster. The industrialist insists on changing two things that have never been changed at a mammoth, worldwide scale before:

- **Change the culture.** The industrialist is big enough and powerful enough and profitable enough that he can act like royalty. He doesn't issue decrees by royal fiat; he does it with advertising and lobbying and by offering a huge carrot to anyone who complies. He demanded a seat

at every table, but it was all okay because the productivity he created made us relatively wealthy.

The change in culture went further than most expected. Another change followed ...

• **Change our dreams.** The industrialist needs you to dream about security and the benefits of compliance. The industrialist works to sell you on a cycle of consumption. And the industrialist benefits from our dream of moving up the corporate ladder, his ladder. Industrialization is about eliminating the risk of failure, about maintaining the status quo and about cementing power.

The media are industrialized now. Organized religions have followed this model as well. So have big-time sports. The industrial model of command and control and the avoidance of failure now permeate every corner of the culture.

The Internet and the connection economy turn the economics of mass on its head. It's now cheaper and more efficient to make edgy, amazing products for the weird edge cases than it is to push yet another average product onto the already overloaded average people in the middle of the curve.

### The Assets That Matter

Successful organizations have realized that they are no longer in the business of coining slogans, running catchy ads and optimizing their supply chains to cut costs.

And freelancers and soloists have discovered that doing a good job for a fair price is no longer sufficient to guarantee success. Good work is easier to find than ever before.

What matters now:

• **Trust and permission.** We do business with and donate to those who have earned our attention. We engage with those people or businesses who delight or reassure or surprise in a positive way. All of those behaviors are acts of people, not machines.

• **Remarkability.** No one talks about the boring. We don't risk interactions in order to spread the word about something obvious or trite. The remarkable is almost always new and untested, fresh and risky.

• **Leadership.** Management is about generating yesterday's results. Leadership puts the leader on the line. No manual, no rulebook, no uberleader to point the finger at when things go wrong. Leaders are vulnerable, not controlling, and they are taking us to a new place, not to the place of cheap, fast, compliant safety.

• **Stories that spread.** In a world of abundant choice, the chooser has too many alternatives, and the scarce resources are attention and trust, not shelf space. After trust is earned and your work is seen, only a fraction of it is magical enough to be worth spreading. This magic is the work of the human artist.

• **Humanity.** The people you seek to lead, the people who are helping to define the next thing and the interesting frontier, these people want your humanity, not your discounts.

The industrial age was about scarcity. The connection economy embraces abundance. We have an abundance of choice, an abundance of connection, an abundance of knowledge.

The labor in the world of connection and art embraces the opportunity to do a little bit more, not less. Since emotional labor scales so dramatically, the ability to bring a little more to the table is the chance of a lifetime. Connection belongs to those who "get to" instead of "have to."

It's not art if the world (or at least a tiny portion of it) isn't transformed in some way. And it's not art if it's not generous. And most of all, it's not art if there's no risk. Art requires the artist to care, and to care enough to do something when he knows that it might not work.

## PART TWO: MYTHS, PROPAGANDA AND *KAMIWAZA*

Myths aren't about gods (real ones or imagined). They are about us. They are about humans acting human but doing it while wearing the cloaks of gods, of legendary figures. Myths highlight the very best of ourselves (and sometimes the worst). Myths are mirrors, paths to walk and bars to be exceeded.

Within a generation, the Homeric myths of bravery and guts were supplanted by the workaday unbrave myths of *Leave It to Beaver* and Archie Bunker. Sure, there were still superheroes in the comic books hidden under our beds, but these heroes were never meant to be us. Our parents bought us Batman Underoos and Superman T-shirts, but it was clearly stated: You can pretend to be a hero, but you are not one, and you will grow up to be an obedient member of society.

Hubris means that you have the voice to challenge authority and the guts to stand up and speak out. It's not surprising, then, that the only part of the Icarus story we're left with is the warning about hubris.

The hubris of art, though, is precisely what we need right now.

Propaganda is a set of stories about what someone in power would like you to be. Propaganda in the industrial age has created generations who believe that consistent

obedience to the powerful is part of who we are. Myths are about becoming more godlike and achieving our best. Propaganda celebrates those in power and urges us to willingly comply with their desires.

The goal needs to shift. The opportunity is not in being momentarily popular with the anonymous masses. It's in being missed when you're gone and in doing work that matters to the tribe you choose. The old system made you popular for fitting in. The new one gives you a chance to stand out.

### Prideful and Disobedient

Art requires both pride and disobedience. The pride of creation and the disobedience of disturbing the status quo.

Here are six daily habits for artists:

- Sit alone; sit quietly.
- Learn something new without any apparent practical benefit.
- Ask individuals for bold feedback; ignore what you hear from the crowd.
- Spend time encouraging other artists.
- Teach, with the intent of making change.
- Ship something that you created.

The industrialist asks, "How does this threaten me?" or perhaps "How can I use this to make gradual improvements in the systems I have?" Most of all, he asks, "Is it safe?"

The artist wonders, "How can I break this?" or "Where is there an opportunity for me to change everything and make an impact?" Most of all, the question is "Is it interesting?"

The Japanese term *kamiwaza,* like most great words for which we have no equivalent, is difficult to translate. The shortest version is "godlike." When we strip away self-doubt and artifice, when we embrace initiative and art, we are left with *kamiwaza*. The purity of doing it properly but without self-consciousness. We can't just commit to one act of *kamiwaza,* one bold emotional risk, and be done with it. We have to commit to a lifetime of them. It's a process, not an event.

When your art fails, make better art.

## PART THREE: GRIT AND ART AND THE WORK THAT'S WORTH DOING

Grit in a batch of spinach makes it inedible, of course. But worse, far worse, is grit on the assembly line. All industrial systems abhor grit, the unmeasurable little bits that gum up the works and make outcomes unpredictable.

Grit is our future. Our best and brightest future. Perhaps the only hope we've got left.

Someone with grit will grind down the opposition, stand up in the face of criticism and consistently do what's right for their art. Mostly, they mess up the machine.

The industrial age prizes control, leverages external motivation and uses approval as a weapon to enforce compliance. To make art, you need to remove these three external things: control, motivation and approval. Control, because external control is the factory; motivation, because if you rely on external motivation to be your best self, then you will have ceded responsibility and authority to someone else; and approval, because the crowd is always wrong. The crowd wants bread and circuses. You can do better than the crowd.

Psychologist Angela Duckworth and various other authors have outlined elements that combine to give someone that invasive attribute they call grit:

- **Perseverance.** Grit includes perseverance, but grit includes goals and a passion for those goals. Those with grit persevere because they believe they have no choice, not if they wish to be who they are.
- **Hardiness.** The person with grit understands that the grind is part of the work, that the grind is part of what makes the work interesting, a challenge, worth doing. If there were no grind, you'd need no grit.
- **Resilience.** Resilience demands flexibility — the willingness to change one thing in order to make up for something that's broken or failing.
- **Ambition.** Grit exists whether or not it leads to measurable external success. Grit is its own reward.
- **Commitment.** People with grit consciously set long-term goals that are difficult to attain and do not waiver from these difficult goals, regardless of the presence of feedback.
- **Flow.** Something extraordinary happens when we are swallowed up by our passion, focused beyond all reason, deep into something we care about.

The connection economy demands grit; it demands the art of imperfection because perfect is boring, not remarkable, and because defect-free often means interest-free.

The problem with blaming the system is that we know the system is broken. Blaming the system is soothing because it lets you off the hook. When the system is broken, we wonder why you were relying on the system in the first place.

## PART FOUR: SHAME, VULNERABILITY AND BEING NAKED

Kryptonite, of course, is to be avoided. Kryptonite, whatever your particular variety is, can kill you. It can pierce your armor and leave you helpless.

Organizational charts are filled with individual boxes connected by thin lines, each of us an interchangeable cog in a vast system of predictable behaviors. The industrialized, corporate, organized world likes it that way. Stay inside the fence!

This strategy feels right. Why open up to criticism, defeat and humiliation if you can protect yourself from it? It feels right only because we've been indoctrinated for a hundred and fifty years. It's not right.

Without kryptonite, Superman doesn't matter, as he is without weakness, invulnerable and boring.

Artists never stop looking for the disturbing truth behind the façade. When reality arrives, they won't be surprised, because they saw it coming. Sometimes they even encouraged it to come.

If not enough people doubt you, you're not making a difference. The cost of art is vulnerability. Taking responsibility and standing up and standing out make us easy targets.

Going forward might open the door to being thought a fool. Again and again we've been deceived, brainwashed into believing that perfection is more important than effort and sold on the idea that we have to settle for what's been offered.

### Art Is Vulnerability Without the Prospect of Shame

*Kamiwaza* involves removing artifice and defenses and poses from our work and boiling it down to the true essence, performing it in a way that eliminates hiding places and excuses. Which makes us extraordinarily vulnerable.

No cog in the industrial system chooses to do this. We risk being shamed for our arrogance. The industrialists amplified the shame of hubris to keep us in line. Fear of shame is a powerful tool to modify behavior, and those in power have been using it for years. They want to be able to change us by delivering shame, and we've been taught to listen to it, believe it and swallow it.

The only way to be successfully vulnerable is to separate the results of your art from your instinct to feel shamed. And that's possible, because while someone can attempt to shame you, shame must also be accepted to be effective. We can't make you feel shame without your participation.

### Accepting Shame (or Not)

Shame is the soul killer, the enemy of those who would have courage. The easiest way to avoid shame is to lie low. But lying low is now a recipe for ending up far outside your safety zone. The artist, then, combines courage with a fierce willingness to refuse to accept shame. Blame, sure. Shame, never. Where is the shame in using our best intent to make art for those we care about?

The watchword of the sane artist: Shun the nonbelievers. First you must pick yourself, and then you choose your audience. After you've created your art, whatever it is, it's done. What the audience does with it is out of your control. Your goal as an artist is to make art that moves the audience of your choice. Figure out who your art is for, get better at connecting with that audience and ignore the rest.

Artists lead, they don't chase.

The voice of resistance is a million years old. It understands that art is dangerous, because art makes you vulnerable, because art generates criticism, because your art is not for everyone. When the resistance shows up, I know that I'm winning. Not my fight against it, but my fight to make art.

The resistance is a symptom that you're on the right track. The resistance is not something to be avoided; it's something to seek out. That's the single most important sentence in this book. The artist seeks out the feeling of the resistance and then tries to maximize it. The artist's constant companion is the screaming lizard brain.

The mass marketers and the industrialists need everyone. You don't. You merely need to matter to a few. The dangerous addiction is to keep expanding the audience until we find people who hate our work.

## PART FIVE: TO MAKE ART, THINK LIKE AN ARTIST. TO CONNECT, BE HUMAN.

"Make good art" is Neil Gaiman's prescription for whatever ails you. If the job market isn't there, if your boss doesn't respect you, if the world doesn't get you — make good art.

If it's not working, then make better art. If you don't know how to make better art, learn. If the people around you are sabotaging your art, ignore them. Day by day, project by project, you can train yourself to ship. Ship small art. Then ship medium art. Then ship world-changing, scary, change-your-underwear art.

Author James Elkins writes of the three components necessary for someone to become an artist:

• **First, learn to see.** Students have to see the world as it is, without labels, without knowing the name of what is seen. Our preconceptions and our fear conspire to make it difficult to see the world as it is. Buddhists call it *prajna* — accepting reality as it occurs instead of interpreting it as part of our ongoing narrative. The trick is to accept what happens without stopping to interpret it according to your biases.

• **Second, learn to make.** Students are taught how to make. How to use hands or voice or body to take what they see and reflect it back to the world. Once you know how to make something, it changes how you see things. Learning how to make things turns you from a spectator into a participant. It gives you the guts to make more, to fail more often, to get better at making.

• **Third, embrace the blank slate.** Art must be done for the first time, not repeated, and that first stroke, those first words — this is the source of our fear. The blank slate is a requirement for original art. If you merely rehash what came before, then nothing remarkable has happened; no connection has been made. The hard part is taking a stand and doing it new. For the first time.

You can risk being wrong or you can be boring. The connection economy won't bother to notice the repetitive or the boring.

Make what you will make. Not in anticipation of or dependence on the applause of others, and not because you are totally entangled in the results. No, make it because you are committed to making it. Only when you make art that isn't for everyone do you have a chance to connect with someone. And when you connect to someone, amazingly, you increase the chances that you've made something that many will want.

The simple reason that creativity, leadership and brainstorming books and courses fail is that people don't want them to work. We've been brainwashed into becoming afraid of art. People hesitate to lead or to invent or to make art because they're afraid of what will happen if they do.

I will share two simple tactics that will expose your fear for what it is and let you look it straight in the eye:

• **Problem and Solution Cards.** At a recent event, I handed out stacks of beautiful hand-printed index cards. One side was labeled PROBLEM and the other said SOLUTION. I asked everyone to write down their real problem, their cherished roadblock, and swap cards with the person sitting next to them. I gave everyone five minutes to do their best and write down a solution on the back of the card. I cared about three things: How did it feel to write down the problem? How did it feel to know that the person sitting next to you was maybe, just maybe, going to write out a valid solution? If the person failed to solve your problem adequately, were you prepared to admit that the problem was unsolvable?

• **The Focus Group.** Find exactly three other artists — who work in different fields, who come from different backgrounds, who pursue different goals — and connect with one another about the process of your art. The object is to remind you of your commitment and to push you to make your art more original, personal and successful. When you know that you need to meet every two weeks and look a respected artist in the eye and tell her what you did (or didn't) make, it will raise your game.

In the idea-driven connection economy, the cost of experiments is lower than ever, the ability to coordinate is high and the impact of being right is huge.

Embrace the fact that your work (your best work) will bring you the joy of creation juxtaposed with the shouting of the lizard brain. Once you acknowledge that this pain is both a signal and a marker, you don't have to waste energy organizing your life to make the pain go away. Now you have the foundation for true freedom, because you are no longer limiting your passion and your art in search of an absence of fear.

Freedom isn't the ability to do whatever you want. It's the willingness to do whatever you want.

All important work is ridiculous until it makes an impact, and then it becomes art. Too ridiculous, though, and no impact is made. Not ridiculous — not important. See, then make, then reinvent on the blank slate. And repeat until you've accomplished the connection you seek. You don't make art after you become an artist. You become an artist by ceaselessly making art.

This is a lousy time to be an industrialist, a lousy time to hope for reliable, predictable demand. On the other hand, there's never been a better time to have something to say, to embrace change and to see the world differently. There's never been a better time to make connections instead of stuff. And most of all, there's never been a better time to make art.

## True-Life Stories of Real Artists

### "Look Like Jill"

Jill Greenberg took my picture when we were both teenagers. Sometime after that, she became one of the most important fine art photographers in the world.

We live in a society where just about everyone has a camera. And when everyone has a camera, just about everyone will take pictures. In that sort of marketplace, with that sort of competition, how is it possible to publish anything?

It's easy to describe but difficult to do: Jill relentlessly chose her own path. She began by embracing Photoshop, a tool that was shunned by all but a few photographers, who believed that all the work had to happen before the shot was taken, not after.

Then she sought out difficult topics. She took pictures of zombielike presidential candidates, angry bears and crying babies. And she did it without reserve. A quick look at Jill's portfolio shows that she consistently refuses to hold back. The pictures are all presented at the volume of 11.

Most of all, Jill's pictures look like Jill's pictures. No one hires her to take pictures that look like they were taken by someone else or that look like they were taken by anyone else. In fact, art directors on a budget often hire other photographers with the instruction to "look like Jill."

Most of the people with a camera don't have the guts to make the decisions that Jill did, and to stick it out for as long as Jill did, and to take as many pictures for no pay as Jill did. Jill sees what the rest of us don't, she makes art in a way that's unique and she has the guts to show us what she's made.

### The Thirty-Six-Billion-Dollar Art Project

Cynthia Carroll was recently made CEO of Anglo American, a multibillion-dollar mining company. It's responsible for finding most of the diamonds, platinum and other essential mined metals in the world. She was its first woman CEO, the first without a long history in mining and the first who wasn't from South Africa. The stakes couldn't be higher: This hundred-year-old company employs nearly 150,000 people worldwide.

The first significant act of her tenure was to fly to the notorious Rustenburg mine and go deep inside the "dark, hot, wet and steep" workplace, hundreds of feet underground, a place where, on average, 40 people a year die in workplace accidents.

Stunned by the enormity of what she saw, Carroll did something no mining CEO in a similar situation had ever done before. She voluntarily shut down the mine. Not in reaction to an uproar (there wasn't one). Not as a PR stunt. No, she shut down the largest and most profitable platinum mine in the world for nine weeks merely because she couldn't abide the danger. She created such an uproar that the CEO of the division quit.

Carroll went even further. She organized a productive working relationship among the unions, the government and the mining companies and engaged in a multiyear battle to redefine what got measured and how mining was done. The next year, as a direct result of one person's art project, fatalities at this mine dropped by half, and they continue to fall.

How do we know the story? Because Cynthia Carroll told us. She aired Anglo's laundry, shared the stats, explained the realities of what her options were and opened herself up to being criticized, ostracized and unloved.

No rule book, no paintbrush. This was high-stakes art, the willingness to work without a map and to forge new relationships.

## Don't Waste This Platform

As I'm writing this, I'm drinking tea (made with leaves shipped through a supply chain more than three thousand miles long) out of a glass bottle (smelted at a temperature unobtainable by humans not long ago), and I'm working on a computer that would have cost a million dollars 10 years ago, except you couldn't buy one at any price, and the computer is connected to the Internet via Wi-Fi (it's all a miracle).

We're living in a moment of time, the first moment of time, when a billion people are connected, when your work is judged (more than ever before) based on what you do rather than who you are, and when credentials, access to capital and raw power have been dwarfed by a simple question "Do I care about what you do?"

We built this world for you. Not so you would watch more online videos, keep up on your feeds, and LOL with your high school friends. We built it so you could do what you're capable of. Without apology and without excuse.

Go.

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# 40-02 Find the Fire

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# Find the Fire

## Ignite Your Inspiration and Make Work Exciting Again




by Scott Mautz

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Remember when you were eager to go to work? When the prospect of learning new things and making things happen got you out of bed in the morning?

That kind of inspiration is difficult to sustain, as evidenced by the overwhelming majority who drag through their days. What happened to make so many people so tired of their jobs?

*Find the Fire* locates the culprits, and they're not just subpar working environments or uninspiring bosses. In the majority of cases, what drags people down are self-defeating beliefs and thought processes. From fear and disconnectedness to loss of control and feelings of insignificance, nine recurring "Anti-Muses" sap our energy and optimism.

By taking control of the situation and self-administering antidotes, *Find the Fire* shows how to counter the forces that drain inspiration and create conditions where it thrives.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to overcome the common fears of failure, change and criticism, adopt an open mind, seek out new experiences and embolden yourself to take more risks.
- To build upon progress and create momentum, unleash creativity and produce work you're proud of, and reclaim a sense of control and power.
- How you can bolster your inner strength, persevere through challenges, lift your self-confidence and earn respect.
- How to dispel the feeling that nothing really matters and make an impact with your work.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **FIND THE FIRE**

**by Scott Mautz**

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## PART I: THE ANTI-MUSE

## The Forces that Drain Our Inspiration

With motivation, we take hold of an idea and run with it. With inspiration, an idea takes hold of us. The message here is don't wait around for your leaders. Research shows that over 70 percent of us have lost that feeling of inspiration. Don't wait around for your leaders to inspire you and keep you inspired. It's time to take the matter into your own hands. While inspiration can be elusive, it can, in fact, be *codified and coaxed*. You don't have to helplessly wait around for it to happen to you — you can create the conditions where inspiration is much more likely to occur. Find the fire.

### The First Spark

The first spark is struck in one of three ways: You choose to view your job in a new light; you decide, in your heart of hearts, that it's time to move on and find new work, but you first commit to understanding the triggers and warning signs of what keeps and drains your inspiration over time so that you can inform your search; and if you're lucky enough to be in a place where you feel inspired in your job, you then choose to elevate your awareness of why that's the case and how to keep it so.

### The Anatomy of Inspiration

Leading research on inspiration reveals three defining characteristics. Our inspiration can be *evoked,* can come from *within,* and either of these can *compel us to act*. Being compelled to act is, of course, the most critical. It's what we decide to do with the inspiration that matters. The problem with being inspired *by* is that by definition, it's *passive,* so the core elements of inspiration are inherently *passive, elusive* or *repressed*. The point is that this is hardly fodder for believing that sustained self-inspiration is right around the corner.

### The Anti-Muses

In Greek mythology, Zeus and Mnemosyne had nine daughters: nine Muses who each presided over different factions of art and science. According to legend, these daughters serve as the spirit or source that inspires an artist. What if there were powerful forces laboring to actually *kill* our inspiration? There are.

- *Fear:* Inspiration is doomed in the face of three fears in particular: the fear of failure, the fear of change and the fear of criticism.
- *Settling and Boredom:* This Anti-Muse exists, more than any other, by our own choice. Rejecting this force is about choosing to shift to a more open mindset and seek out new experiences.
- *Inundation:* This Anti-Muse is the mortal enemy of our ability to make progress work.
- *Loss of Control:* Research shows that when we feel we have control over what happens in our lives and can favorably influence outcomes, even in times of duress, we're much more likely to look within ourselves for inspiration.



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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Masiel Tejada**, Graphic Designer; **McCale Penven-Crew**, Contributing Editor

- *Dwindling Self-Belief:* Without a revitalization of our personal presence, we unwittingly shut ourselves out from passion and possibility until eventually the siren song of inspiration is doomed to fall on deaf ears.
- *Disconnectedness:* Research shows that we become uninspired when we become disconnected from those we are surrounded by each day at work. These human connections are deep wells of energy from which inspiration can take form.
- *Dearth of Creating:* Countless studies and raw common sense will tell you that creativity blossoms when the artist, musician, employee, etc. becomes inspired. The link between inspiration and creativity is irrefutable — the former spurs the latter.
- *Insignificance:* This materializes as a feeling that what we're spending our precious time on isn't making a difference on anything that matters to us, and that we don't really matter or simply don't measure up to others.
- *Lack of Evocation:* The longer you passively wait for inspiration to appear, the stronger its cumulative negative effect. More specifically, when inspiration isn't evoked, your belief that it will ever show up rapidly wanes.

## PART II: THE ANTIDOTE

# Fear (Relinquished)

Fear disrupts the preparedness of our mind for being inspired, blocks action, dissuades discovery and growth and engages our brain in the wrong conversation. Fear distorts reality. The good news here is you don't need to go so far as to put a face to your fear. You just need to face it down — and stop letting fear limit you. When we press past our fears and venture forth "unprotected," we discover. We see opportunities, not opposition.

### Fear of Failure

Imagine a funnel, wide at the top then narrowing to its thin spout at the bottom. We start out at the top of that funnel with big, wide-open thinking and a huge scope of possibility. As we grow more fearful of failure, the width of the funnel contracts until we find ourselves in a vastly constricted worldview — the narrow spout at the bottom. When we can employ the proper Frame of Mind, Frame of Reference and Frame of Action, we can reverse the inspiration-killing constriction caused by our fear of failure.

**Frame of Mind.** There are only three ways to actually fail: when we quit, don't improve or never try. Failure is an event, not a person. Never overgeneralize that these one-time events are harbingers of future, widespread failure. You need to believe that when you fail, it was for a reason. *You* don't suffer when you fail, your *ego* does. Your fear of failure shouldn't scare you; it's trying to tell you something's worth it. Failure is a key part of your portfolio. There is no truly successful person who doesn't have failure as part of their life portfolio.

**Frame of Reference.** As we spiral down the fear funnel, our point of reference narrows. We reverse this downward spiral when we anchor our frame of reference to something that provides a helpful, broadening perspective.

We are constantly comparing ourselves to others, but we're not even making fair comparisons. We tend to compare our own blooper real to everyone else's highlight reels. There is one comparison that is worthy: When we find that even massively successful people have failed along the way, and more than recovered, it's reassuring and inspiring.

Stop and remember the potential rewards in the risk/reward equation that you calculated before proceeding. Draw from the thought of achieving those rewards to give you bursts of vitality as you press forward. Stay focused on the process. Break down your ultimate goal into individual steps or tasks to keep your mind focused, and avoid obsessing over whether or not failure is imminent.

**Frame of Action.** Practice getting it wrong. One of people's greatest fears is public speaking; when someone is required to practice it, they will eventually become good at it and lose their fear altogether. You simply need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

While visualizing success is an important step toward overcoming a fear of failure, you must also take action. Build on small steps of progress and knowledge gained along the way, slowly but surely reducing the radius of the unknown. Expand your knowledge and level of clarity on what it really takes to succeed. Beat fear of the unknown by knowing more. Expand your knowledge and level of clarity on what it really takes to succeed. Our subconscious self reminds us all day long of our anxieties. The key here is to not let anxieties behind your fear of failure subtly spam your mind.

### Fear of Change

Our brains are wired to value longevity. Change threatens our sense of stability and robs us of our sense of

control. Turn resistance into resolution. Believe that you have competence for change. Insist to your doubting self that you have the competence to succeed on the other side of change. Think of change like a software upgrade. Change can yield You 2.0 — a better version of yourself.

Find an anchor. We hate change so much because it makes us feel like we've become untethered. You can abate your fear by remembering what the change *won't* change about you or the world around you. Bring order to the unruly change, and get clear on the case for change to help strengthen the case for change. Get yourself involved in the change, and focus on what you *can* control.

### Fear of Criticism

Critics believe the creators of the art really want feedback. They see themselves as reporters, boosters and skeptics, all *to create better art*.

Know that anything worth doing attracts admiration *and* criticism, but don't let that stop you. Avoiding criticism is what makes you weaker, not the criticism itself. Seek improvement, not approval. If you can't control the sting, keep it from swelling. You can rise above any words.

Decide who gets to criticize you. Not all criticizers are created equal, and some shouldn't even get a seat at the table. Let your elders inspire you. With fewer years ahead of them, reception of criticism is both fleeting and filed accordingly. Get the skeletons out of the closet. Share things you know you aren't good at and want to improve upon. Recall when criticism helped an outcome, and stay focused on the conclusion, not the criticism.

## Settling and Boredom (Rejected)

Studies show that *up to 40 percent* of time spent at work is wasted, unproductive time — a product of a lulled and bored workplace. You have the power to get yourself unstuck. Leading researchers on inspiration have pinpointed "openness to experiences" as the single factor that most correlates with facilitating feelings of inspiration.

### How to Embolden Yourself to Take More Risks

As we take risks and try new things, we expand our horizons and get exposed to more. Our fear of the unknown diminishes as a result, and we're more likely to try yet more new things.

Defining the rules of engagement in risk-taking up front and giving it some structure can greatly defuse inhibitions. If you're a manager of others, provide this framing. If you're an employee, ask for it. Start with a request to do some experimentation. Celebrate and share the results if the risk pans out, and if it doesn't, be downright enthusiastic about what's been learned.

To help stimulate an environment more conducive to risk-taking, form risk pools. The process of taking risks thus becomes less scary through shared experience and will ultimately produce more of the desired risk-taking behavior. Research indicates that we consistently overestimate the consequences of taking a risk while we discount the cost of status quo.

When we reconnect with the people who benefit from the products or services we administer, it gives us newfound inspiration to take risks on their behalf. Reconnecting with the end user can also uncover unmet or previously unarticulated needs that will require risk-taking to fulfill, thus providing further inspiration.

Think of risk-taking as a skill that must be built, no different from visioning or strategic thinking. Big expectations for results will naturally encourage risk-taking. Plan to succeed. Don't let your doubts and worries become self-perpetuating. The inspiration to take risks often comes from the birth of exciting new ideas.

### How to Get Learning and Growing Again

No one overtly chooses to stop learning and growing; it just kind of happens. Here are some powerful prompts to get you gung ho on learning and growth again:

- Seek conscious growth (becoming who you are) versus growth for its own sake.
- Dread obsolescence.
- Let your values vault you forward.
- Work *on* your life versus *in* your life.

To get growing going, discern between good and great, then go after the latter. Can you truly say that you really understand how your boss would define what great looks like? Many of us guess or simply don't ask.

Introduce new stimuli. If a stroll in the park or a little travel can produce cognitive benefits, imagine what introducing a portfolio of new stimuli could do.

### How to Make Your Own Opportunities

As it turns out, problems, frustrations and adversity are a gold mine of opportunity. A constant effort of looking for ways to one-up how well things are done today can lead to tremendous opportunity. While looking to one-up current practices, you can two-up what you ask

for. Periodically ask for stretch opportunities, assignments, resources and support that are so aggressive they require your boss's boss to approve.

Keep your eyes open for opportunities. Adopt the mindset of always adding value in your interactions with others. The more you expand your network of people you meet and serve, the more opportunities that will come your way.

## Inundation (Relieved)

You know the deal. We're inundated and exhausted. This reality stifles progress, our sense of mastery and our feelings of preparedness. What you may not be aware of, though, is how detrimental all of this is specifically to our ability to attract inspiration. We can become overwhelmed for many reasons. Likewise, many things can cause us to feel a lack of progress, mastery or preparedness. The most common contributions to all these aspects of inundation are that we aren't good at making choices or setting priorities.

### How to Make Choices and Set Priorities

Promise yourself you'll only work on what matters most, what will make the biggest impact on your core objectives. Be honest about the weight of the work you're about to take on — stop and ask yourself, how much work will it really take?

Write down the kinds of things you want to avoid or that you tend to get sucked into. Research is clear on the power of writing down your goals. The thing you should be taking on more of is the truly important; take on less of the distractingly urgent. A more fluid mindset is better, as it gives you permission to take on important new work but still forces accountability to counterbalance the total portfolio of work.

### How to Stop Procrastinating and Get S#@! Done

Don't get sucked into these three misconceptions:

- *"I work better under pressure."* Research simply doesn't support this assertion.
- *"My willpower will kick in."* Researchers found that personal restraint levels were continually overestimated, leading to poor choices.
- *"My self-imposed deadlines will keep me on track."* Group studies have shown that the one that did best on task completion rate was the one working with a series of interim deadlines. Research indicates setting such deadlines externally, such as with a boss or with friends, is the most effective way to encourage adherence to a deadline.

Ditch the distractions. Our brain will attempt to simulate big, hairy, productive work (after first avoiding it) by focusing instead on smaller, mindless tasks, thus giving the illusion that real work is being done. We remember uncompleted tasks better than we do completed tasks because uncompleted tasks nag at us. If we manage to start a task, we're much more likely to remember it and be driven to finish it.

### How to Stop Being a Perfectionist

The only love procrastination gets is from the perfectionist, who employs it as a go-to tactic to delay starting that which they cannot completely dominate at that moment. Tell yourself done is done.

Perfectionists are often unaware of the impact this corrosive behavior has on others. They're assuming that everyone else is harshly judging them, so to do so as well is just the way of the world. Appreciating all you've done, versus obsessing over what you haven't, can set you free. And when you see in others all that they've become, rather than just seeing what they still need to be, your relationships with those people will blossom.

The majority of the time, the odds are pretty good that no one is holding you to the same standard that you're holding yourself to. Perfectionism can be fed by catastrophizing, or massively overestimating the negative impact of miscues or imperfections.

Don't let the opportunity to experience a sense of inspiration be drowned out by feelings of being overwhelmed.

## Loss of Control (Reverted)

### How You Give Away Your Power

Whether or not we realize it, we take actions that directly give away our power. You sacrifice the power of bringing the authentic you to the table to please others and gain approval. How do you shift the emphasis from pleasing to empowering?

How you feel about yourself should flow dominantly from your own self-appreciation and self-acceptance. Stop trying to be everything for everybody. Remember that politicians never get 100 percent of the vote, and neither will you.

Feeling and acting like a victim when we're wronged is the next way we give away our power. It's easy to fall into victimhood and not realize it, so create a number of self-alerts to catch it early on. Those trapped in a victim mentality often have a core group of "rescuers" they turn to for sympathy. Redirect your first-responder unit by asking them not to feed your downtrodden behavior. Own your part of the story. Do right by not honing in on how you were wronged. Instead, think of all the ways you've been blessed in your life.

The last debilitating way in which we give away our power is when our inner monologue turns on us. The same damning belief, the same root cause, in one form or another, keeps surfacing over and over and over again: *"I'm not good enough."*

### How You Can Take Back a Sense of Power

Step back and figure out what you want, setting a path and setting concrete goals that matter. Expand your mind by holding the commitment to learn new things sacred. Be intentional, and take a pause to check in with yourself. Don't try to do it all alone; draw power from others who are willing to give it to you. You take back some control when you control how you react to feedback. Grow stronger and more in control through changes. Being proactive puts power back in your hands.

### How You Emit Power

People are drawn to your efforts to be a force for good. Counterintuitively enough, when you're willing to show your weakness, it's a sign of strength. A loss of control and the uninspiring feelings that go with it can go into overdrive in times of crisis.

Here are five crisis control lessons that come from some of America's worst crises. Start with the 5 C's: calm, candor, communication, concern and courage (lessons from 9/11 and the anthrax attacks of 2001). Get clear on reality (a lesson from the Cuban Missile Crisis). Create a unity of effort (a lesson from Hurricane Katrina). Set a North Star, and waypoints to get there (another lesson from Hurricane Katrina). Be visible up the chain and on the front line (a lesson from the BP oil spill).

## Dwindling Self-Belief (Revitalized)

When our inner strength dwindles, we can feel adrift and alone in what becomes a seemingly massive ocean.

### Self-Confidence

Maximum self-confidence matters. And yet the levels of self-confidence in the workplace are shockingly low. Self-confidence problems are often triggered by our perception of what others' conduct says about us. Remember that no one defines you but yourself. Our internal dialogue can either help or hurt us — don't let yours spiral downward.

Know that in the absence of confidence, courage takes over. There are always drops; it's how you pick up. Playing it safe all the time and not venturing out to try new things can give you the most temporary and false kind of confidence — one born out of simply avoiding failure. Don't lower others' expectations of you by doing it for them.

### Perseverance

There are several powerful truths to be keenly aware of as you face daunting challenges. Know that persevering builds your skill set for the future. Developing mental toughness is a science-backed key to success.

Know just how debilitating worrying is. Perseverance can be massively aided by perspective. When falling short, don't abandon ship. Personify your perseverance. Believe that you're right where you need to be.

Remember the difference between perseverance and persistence. We can persist in doing things that might not even be good for us.

Create a support network. Enroll people you care about in what you're trying to accomplish. Remember, you need self-discipline and self-compassion.

### Being Present in the Moment

A wandering mind is not a happy mind. Accept that multitasking is a myth. Make it a point to notice when your attention is drifting. It's so easy to zone out when you're tired. Go get a drink of water and clear your head.

Don't just passively take in information during a meeting. Notice what's in front of you — the people, the passions, the emotions, the energy and the intention of the information being transmitted.

When you're feeling self-confident, that you can persevere, that you're fully present and that you've earned the respect you deserve, your self-belief soars. It is then that you're most ready to receive the overtures of inspiration all around you.

## Disconnectedness (Reversed)

Making the choice to reestablish connections with those who count can be inspiring. When we do truly connect with our work compatriots, research clearly indicates that it can indeed make us more passionate about and inspired by our work.

Picture a sturdy, thick length of chain. Now imagine that each link in the chain represents the ideal behaviors for facilitating a strong sense of camaraderie within a group. You can instigate such behaviors and, in doing so, fully reconnect with and be inspired by your coworkers and your relationship with them.

To do so, it's helpful to consider three parts of the chain: the center link, the supporting links and the weak links. Camaraderie and connection with thy fellow worker starts with three centerpiece elements: (1) shared purpose, (2) trust and truth and (3) mutual respect.

There are many supporting links in the chain of camaraderie; the more links forged, the greater your chances of inviting inspiration back into your workdays. Create purposeful bonding experiences, shared experiences of substance, shared identity experiences, shared crucible moments and shared appreciation-enhancing experiences. Spread positive gossip. Invite their gifts in, and openly and subtly have their backs. Visibly backing one another up is one of the best ways to move camaraderie forward.

### Cultivate Healthy Debate

Separate the person from the point. Encourage animated, not heated, debate. Enroll early; it's harder for people to objectively listen to input when they're too far down the road on something. Ask that opinions be grounded, not unfounded. To help you keep an open mind, which is absolutely essential to healthy debate, remember General George Patton, who said, "If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking."

Commend, not condemn, the opposing point of view. Those who stand up and speak their mind should stand out and be on your mind. Remember their brave behavior and reward it. Criticism must always contain a new idea or suggestion for strengthening the original idea.

## Dearth of Creating (Reconstituted)

When we create, we become inspired, and when we're inspired, we create. It produces a powerful, virtuous cycle. Creativity can be reignited (and inspiration invited back in) by leveraging the right *Stimulus,* by employing the right *Techniques,* by altering your *Environment,* and by adopting the right *Mindset — STEM.*

### Stimulus

Creativity is contingent upon experiencing life. Seek out the assignments that others don't want. It's a good challenge, but more importantly, there's less pressure, the bar is lower and there is more breathing room to be creative. Go hunt for specific challenges to solve that interest you. Your inherent desire to solve those challenges will get your creative juices flowing. Find a pressing problem/opportunity or an intensely desired goal.

### Technique

Saying that no idea is a bad idea is wrong — there are plenty of bad ideas. The key is to identify them as such early on, kill them and iterate on the ideas with the most potential. Our best creativity can often come from that last effort, the one where you let your hair down and improvise on the fly.

Go on the hunt for relatively small things that you can make better. Borrow and be influenced. It's a loan that will pay interest. Creativity blossoms when we open our senses and look past what's in front of us. Disney "Imagineers" look at a painting, then answer these questions: What does it smell like in this picture? What do you see to the left of the picture? The right? What's the air temperature in this picture? The exercise helps train the brain to think creatively by "looking past the edges" and by using all of one's senses.

The second you start to put structure on innovation is when you lose innovation. Turn off your self-monitoring brain. Research supports the fact that creative people are able to block the instinct to judge their output when they're in the middle of being creative.

### Environment

Carve out the right space and time. If at all possible, the space should be removed from day-to-day distractions — in a location where you can drown out all the other noise that clogs the brain on a typical workday.

Form creative coalitions. Surround yourself with supporters. Surround yourself with people who are positive minded and receptive to your creative overtures. Rekindling anything is hard enough, so you want to add sparks, not a wet blanket.

### Mindset

Don't *talk* about building it, *build* it. It's also about do, don't ask. Just build it. Test. Learn. Iterate. Ask questions. One of the surest ways to spark creativity is to simply ask questions. That includes asking "What if?" before asking "How?" Be willing to do the hard work of creativity and innovation, and keep going when most others don't.

## Insignificance (Reformulated)

Imbuing your work with greater significance and meaning energizes you and attracts more such energy in the form of inspiration. Achieving an inspired state nets higher levels of meaning, which yields still more energy and inspiration. Ask yourself what you're uniquely suited to lead or what unique contribution you could make. One of the ways to do more work of significance is to lead changes that make an impact on a workplace's systems or the way work gets done. You don't have to take on the entire way your organization is organized. Just organize an effort to work on a system, *any* system, that begs for improvement instead of accepting the current system at face value.

### Help Solve a Circumstance

Think of the last time you were in a real pickle and someone went out of their way to help you out. You don't forget that. Fill an unmet need or do a deed that needs doing. Keep asking yourself, "what glaring need remains unmet?" "What deed needs doing?" and the opportunity for more significance will present itself to you as well.

Help move someone forward, and become an expert that others turn to. You can build your own platform of significance, too. Sharpen your expertise on a topic of passion and share it so well that others seek you out for the value you provide. It would be a fitting legacy. A worthy purpose. An inspiring mission possible. You should be intentional about identifying and articulating your legacy and purpose, too. Make a real difference in the lives of others by striving to inspire someone.

## Lack of Evocation (Rediscovered)

Research indicates that three conditions must be present for an outside force to evoke inspiration in us: it's disruptive (forces you to think about things differently), it's relevant (to core human motives) and it's attainable (feels like it can be accomplished).

### The Three Behaviors of Evocation

**Influencing the mood and mix.** You can elevate the mood of your environment by being positive, enthusiastic and optimistic, which will greatly increase the likelihood that you'll receive the same in return. Positive environments and mindsets make it more likely you'll be inspired by something.

**Studying the routine and the remarkable.** Study things routine in nature so you can be inspired by something, but inspiration can be uncovered in things we take for granted.

**How to morph your manager into a source of inspiration.** Realize this, too, shall pass. Know that no single situation, or person, defines you. Don't back down to a bad boss. And you can't shirk your responsibility for improving the relationship. Once you've categorized your boss as horrid, evil, *etc.*, you're more likely to dismiss their better points and unfairly categorize all of their messy points.

When you understand the why behind the behavior of a difficult boss, what to do about it becomes much more self-evident. Research shows that the most important factor for enabling bosses to ultimately inspire you is whether or not you've developed an emotional connection with them. Bring the attitude you want reciprocated, and learn how to give your boss feedback. You deserve a little external help in your endeavors to rekindle inspiration.

So there you have it — all the tools to reignite your own personal mission of becoming inspired at work once again. You'll soon arrive at Destination Inspiration. Let's make it a permanent stop, shall we?

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# 40-11 Your Best Year Ever

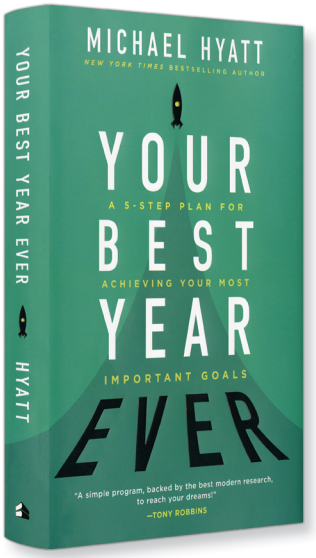
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Career & Self-Development

# Your Best Year Ever

## A 5-Step Plan for Achieving Your Most Important Goals




by Michael Hyatt

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We all want to live a life that matters. We all want to reach our full potential. But too often we find ourselves overwhelmed by the day-to-day. Our big goals get pushed to the back burner — and then, more often than not, they get forgotten.

*New York Times* best-selling author Michael Hyatt wants readers to know that it doesn't have to be this way. In fact, he thinks that this is the year readers can finally close the gap between reality and their dreams. In *Your Best Year Ever,* Hyatt shares a powerful, proven, research-driven system for setting and achieving goals.

Readers learn how to design their best year ever by discovering what's holding them back, how to overcome past setbacks, how to quit-proof their goals, the role of habits in personal achievement and more.

Anyone who is tired of not seeing progress in their personal, intellectual, business, relationship or financial goals will treasure the field-tested wisdom found in *Your Best Year Ever.*

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why your beliefs shape your reality — and how to change both.
- How both regret and gratitude lead to opportunity.
- To create great goals that will help you design your future.
- To master motivation and to build a supportive social circle.
- To break up your plan into actionable steps and to use Activation Triggers™ to stay on track.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **YOUR BEST YEAR EVER**

**by Michael Hyatt**

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## Your Best Is Yet to Come

Heather Kampf is a highly decorated runner with an impressive string of accomplishments, including three USA championships for the road mile. But what's most impressive was the time she won first place in the 600-meter final at the 2008 Big 10 Indoor Track Championship after falling flat on her face.

For the 600-meter dash, runners make three laps around a 200-meter course. As the third and final lap approached, Kampf was in second place and ready to take first. Then in a split second everything changed. "I was making a move to pass . . . and probably just didn't account for enough space for my long stride," she recalled. "I felt my heel get clipped once, and then on the second time I knew I was going down."

More than going down, Kampf went sprawling. She skidded along the ground, her face bouncing on the red track as her momentum tossed her legs up behind her. Spectators gasped. It was a hard fall that instantly knocked her to the rear of the pack with virtually no hope of catching up.

When it comes to achieving our goals, a lot of us feel like that. We start out strong and make huge strides, gathering momentum as we go. Then we get derailed or fall short of our hopes, not always — but often enough that most of us can point to a handful of setbacks or failures with disappointment and regret.

When Heather Kampf hit the ground, she could have stayed down. She could have easily become discouraged and admitted what everyone was already thinking — that her race was over.

But she didn't. She leapt up as fast as she fell down and began closing the distance. The crowd responded. "As I started to gain momentum, it was like a crescendo of noise and excitement," she remembered. To the amazement of the announcers and spectators, she passed one runner, then another, then finally her own teammate to take *first* place!

Kampf's story provides a powerful picture of what can happen when we stay in the game and keep pushing. Maybe you feel a few steps behind. Maybe you're at the rear of the pack and can't see how you might regain lost ground and reach your goals.

Whatever has happened in your past — good or bad — it is truly possible to make this your best year ever, even in those areas where you've suffered serious setbacks. Let's talk about how to make the next 12 months the most meaningful and significant you've experienced in your life so far.

## Step 1: Believe the Possibility

There's an old saying, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes." That's especially true when we're thinking of our personal histories. Why? The circumstances of our lives change week by week, year by year. But we're still us. And our habits of thinking tend to produce consistent results no matter what's going on in our work, our relationships or the world around us.

If our habits of thinking are beneficial, we tend to experience positive results, such as happiness, personal satisfaction, even material success. If our habits of thinking are counterproductive, however, we often experience

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the opposite: unhappiness, dissatisfaction and the nagging feeling that the deck is somehow stacked against us.

The good news is that you can change the rhyme scheme. Even if your habits of thinking are already serving you well, you can experience transformative personal improvement in all areas of your life by upgrading your beliefs. When we focus on belief improvement, often our circumstances follow suit.

## Your Beliefs Shape Your Reality

Our beliefs play a massive part in how we approach life. We tend to experience what we expect. Because our expectations shape what we believe is possible, they shape our perceptions and actions. That means they also shape the outcomes. And that means they shape our reality.

Most of us have a long history of not getting what we want out of life. To shield ourselves from future disappointment, we develop a cynical, self-protective attitude toward life. You know what this looks like. You say, "I need to apply for that new job." But then you think, "There's no way. I don't have enough experience or enough education." Suddenly, an idea that might take you to the next chapter of your story just withers and dies.

But what if you could change your sense of what's possible? Pilots once thought it was impossible to fly faster than 768 miles an hour (the speed of sound at sea level). But Chuck Yeager figured he could do it and officially broke the sound barrier on October 14, 1947. Planes have only advanced since then, and pilots regularly fly two, four, even six times the speed of sound.

The first key difference between an unmet goal and personal success is the belief that it can be achieved. Failure of imagination affects athletes, parents, leaders, managers, teachers and the rest of us to one degree or another. The good news is that it doesn't have to. Broadly speaking, there are two ways to look at life. One leads directly to this failure of imagination. But the other can revive and amplify our sense of possibility.

## Some Beliefs Hold You Back

To accomplish anything, we have to believe we're up to the challenge. That doesn't mean it will be easy or that we even know how we're going to accomplish it. Usually we don't know. It just means we believe we're capable; we have what it takes to prevail.

Why is that important? Because every goal has obstacles. When some people have trouble getting over those obstacles, they doubt they have what it takes. But others are confident they'll prevail if they just work harder or come at the problem from a different direction.

Researchers label the first group entity theorists. They think their abilities are set in stone. You've heard people say this: "I'm just no good at x, y or z." These are the scarcity thinkers.

Researchers call the second group incremental theorists. When they struggle with an obstacle, they just look for new approaches to the problem. They know there's a workaround or a solution if they just keep working at it. These are the abundance thinkers.

Scarcity thinkers are entitled and fearful; believe there will never be enough; are stingy with their knowledge, contacts and compassion; and are pessimistic about the future. Abundance thinkers are thankful and confident; believe there is always more where that came from; are happy to share their knowledge, contacts and compassion with others; and are optimistic about the future.

How do you know if you're falling into the trap of limiting beliefs? In his book *Making Habits, Breaking Habits,* Jeremy Dean mentions three dead giveaways: black-and-white thinking, personalizing (blaming ourselves for random negative occurrences) and catastrophizing (assuming the worst). To that list we can add a fourth: universalizing (assuming a bad experience is true across the board).

If we want to experience our best year ever, we have to begin by recognizing which of these two kinds of thinking dominates and intentionally move toward abundance. There's no reason to let limiting beliefs hold us back.

## You Can Upgrade Your Beliefs

You don't have to be hemmed in by limiting beliefs. You can exchange them for liberating truths. Here is a simple six-step process to help you do that.

**First, recognize the limiting belief.** Whatever the content of the belief, no matter how true it seems, it's important to recognize that it's just an opinion about reality — and there's a good shot it's wrong.

**Second, record the belief.** It might be something like, "I don't have enough experience," or "I don't have the right experience." It could be anything. By writing it down, you externalize it. Now you're free to evaluate it.

**Third, review the belief.** Start by evaluating whether the belief is empowering. Try to look at it objectively. Is it enabling you to accomplish the outcomes you want, or is it preventing you from doing so? Be honest.

**Fourth, reject or reframe the belief.** If a limiting belief is false, you can simply reject it. Reframing is a bit more involved. Many limiting beliefs have a kernel of truth in them. That's what makes them so convincing. But they're not the whole truth. If a limiting belief is true or

partly true, you don't have to settle for it. You can always recast the story.

**Fifth, revise the belief.** This is where it gets interesting. These are not simple affirmations, though those can be helpful and have their place, but reorienting your thinking around a new and liberating truth. If, for instance, you think, "I'm too old to be considered for that job opportunity," you might say, "I have more experience than other candidates."

**Sixth and finally, reorient yourself to the new belief.** Start living from the perspective of this new, liberating truth. You might not fully buy into it. That's fine. Try it on. It may feel awkward at first, like putting on a coat that's too big. But if you keep telling yourself the truth, it will eventually fit, and you'll get more comfortable with it. Every time the old belief crops up, reject or reframe it and restate the liberating truth. The trick is to start living as if it's true.

## Step 2: Complete the Past

After limiting beliefs, the next most common barrier we encounter is the past. We tow it around like a trailer full of broken furniture. We can't fully consider the future because we're too tied up in what's already happened. If this happens to you, it'll prevent you from experiencing your best year ever. Step 2 explains how to get the resolution you need.

### Thinking Backward Is a Must

Sometimes we live inside unhelpful stories we tell ourselves. Other times we nurse grievances to justify our current actions or feel unvalued because we were slighted or disregarded in some way. If we don't get resolution, we'll drag all our unfinished business into the future, and it will sabotage everything we're trying to build going forward.

The U.S. Army has a helpful backward-thinking method. It's called the After-Action Review. America's armed forces have been using it since 1981 to improve performance and get better at what they do. After an event, the goal is to understand what happened, why it happened and how they can improve.

**Stage 1: State what you wanted to happen.** This could be your list of goals from the prior year. Start by asking yourself how you saw the year going. What were your plans, your dreams, your concrete goals if you had any?

**Stage 2: Acknowledge what actually happened.** Some of your goals, perhaps many of them, remain unfulfilled. So ask yourself, "What disappointments or regrets did I experience this past year?" Because these memories can be painful, it's tempting to dismiss or ignore them. But as journalist Carina Chocano says, "The point of regret is not to try to change the past but to shed light on the present." What were two or three specific themes that kept recurring? These could be single words, phrases or even complete sentences.

**Stage 3: Learn from the experience.** What were the major life lessons you learned this past year? Distill the lessons from your experiences so you don't lose them and so they can serve as tools moving forward.

**Stage 4: Adjust your behavior.** If something in your beliefs and behaviors contributed to the gap between what you wanted to happen and what actually happened, something has to change. It's not enough to acknowledge the gap. It's not even enough to learn from the experience. If you don't change your beliefs and how you act on them, you're actually worse than when you started.

### Regret Reveals Opportunity

If you're still breathing, you're probably aware of at least one way you haven't measured up. After a little "backward thinking," that number can easily balloon to dozens, even hundreds. It can be a downer. But this is no tragedy. Some people are a little stunned to think regret has any value at all. Our culture tends to miss it. The pain can be real and intense.

University of Michigan psychologist Janet Landman identifies several benefits of regret. First, there's instruction. Regret is a form of information, and reflecting on our missteps is critical to avoiding those missteps in the future.

Next there's the motivation to change. As Landman says, "Regret may not only tell us that something is wrong, but it can also move us to do something about it."

Finally, there's integrity. Regret can work in us like a moral compass, signaling us when we've veered off the path. Instead of seeing our regrets as working against the chance to grow and improve, we can see them as actually pointing the way toward that growth and improvement we most desire.

### Gratitude Makes the Difference

Duke University's Mike Krzyzewski is one of the winningest coaches in college basketball. His players have won over a thousand games and five national championships. Here's his secret.

Before their 2015 tournament, Coach K and his players and coaches wrote the names of people who had helped them on a ball. The players took the ball everywhere.

"Players started carrying the ball around — to team meals, on the plane, at practices, in the locker room," said Coach K. "Some of the guys even slept with it — had it right there with them in their rooms."

After the team took the prize, everyone with a name on the ball received a note saying, "Thanks. You were with us every step of the way." The ball kept gratitude at the center of their game. And it gave the winning edge.

Gratitude is a game of contrasts. Our circumstances look a certain way; then something happens to improve them. Gratitude happens when we take notice of the distance between the two. Suddenly, we have something to be thankful for. That process teaches us something critical about life. While our circumstances might be bad, they can also be better.

Gratitude also reminds us we have agency. Because gratitude involves giving thanks for what others have done for us, this might seem counterintuitive. But that's an illusion. You know what they say about unopened gifts. If we didn't use our agency to receive and act on what others have done for us, we wouldn't have benefited.

Finally, gratitude expands our possible responses. Researchers Michael Tugade and Barbara Fredrickson tell us that positive emotions like gratitude "broaden one's thought-action repertoire, expanding the range of cognitions and behaviors that come to mind. These broadened mindsets, in turn, build an individual's physical, intellectual and social resources."

Whatever our past, if we can see it through the lens of gratitude we will discover that our present is full of more than we can possibly ask or imagine. Gratitude has the potential to amplify everything good in our lives. It's the best remedy for the affliction of scarcity thinking and the best way to cultivate a mindset of abundance.

## Step 3: Design Your Future

Great results don't just happen. You don't usually drift to a destination you would have chosen. Instead, you have to be intentional, force yourself to get clear on what you want and why it's important, and then pursue a plan of action that accomplishes your objective. Step 3 is designed to help you find the clarity you need so you can create the life you want.

And this is where it gets fun.

### Great Goals Check Seven Boxes

We can transform our resolutions, aspirations and dreams into powerful, compelling, written goals that check seven key boxes. Let's dive into the seven attributes of the SMARTER system:

**Specific:** The first attribute of SMARTER goals is that they're specific. Focus is power. Specific goals create a channel for our problem-solving skills, effort and more.

**Measurable:** When the goal is measurable, we know the criteria for success.

**Actionable:** Goals are fundamentally about what you're going to do. It's essential to get clear on the primary action when formulating your goals.

**Risky:** By focusing on what's supposedly realistic, we can inadvertently trigger our natural impulse to avoid loss and end up accomplishing less than we otherwise might have. We should set goals that stretch and challenge us.

**Time-keyed:** This could be a deadline, frequency or a time trigger.

**Exciting:** Only an exciting goal can access the internal motivation you need to stay the course and achieve your goal.

**Relevant:** Limit yourself to seven to 10 goals that align with your life, your values and your ambitions.

### Achievements and Habits Work Together

Both achievement and habit goals can help us design the future we want. Achievement goals are focused on one-time accomplishments. They might target paying off your credit cards, hitting a financial benchmark or finishing writing a novel. It's essential that achievement goals include deadlines.

Habit goals, on the other hand, involve regular, ongoing activity, such as a daily meditation practice, a monthly coffee date with a friend, or walking each day after lunch. There's no deadline because you're not trying to accomplish just one thing. You're trying to maintain a practice.

If you're looking to create seven to 10 goals, you should probably have a mix of both achievement and habit goals. The trick is to know when and how to use them. An achievement goal works for any project with a definable scope or limited time frame. Let's say you want to increase your income. You could set an achievement goal like this: "Increase sales commissions by 20 percent by the end of the fiscal year."

A habit goal works for desires without a definable scope or limited time frame. You can also use habit goals as a means to completing an achievement goal. Let's say you want to increase your revenue by 30 percent before year end. You could identify several next steps, or you could focus on simply installing a habit. To reach your achievement goal, you could set the following habit goal: "Make

five sales calls each week to qualified leads, beginning January 1, and do it for 52 weeks."

### Seriously, Risk Is Your Friend

Goal researchers have documented a strong, direct relationship between the difficulty of our goals and the likelihood we'll achieve them — not to mention greater motivation, creativity and satisfaction. For a goal to matter, it has to stretch us. That means it has to stand somewhere outside our Comfort Zone. If you know exactly how to attain the goal, it's probably not far enough.

Let's say you're the sales manager of a small manufacturing plant. You've been growing at 5 percent a year, and this year you're going to set your growth goal at 6 percent. Is that going to heighten performance, engage your creativity or up your enthusiasm? No way. Small goals just aren't very compelling. If we want to win, we need to get beyond our natural urge to play it safe, jump outside our comfort zones and set some risky goals.

Now imagine if that growth goal was more like 20 percent. Delivering that result will require more from you than you currently know how to manage. That's when growth happens.

Your best year ever lives somewhere beyond your Comfort Zone. How can you prepare for the negative emotions that are sure to hit you during the journey?

**First, acknowledge the value.** We move toward what we esteem. The first step is simply to confess that getting out of your Comfort Zone is a good thing.

**Second, lean into the experience.** Embrace the discomfort. You have to go through the realm of discomfort to get what you want in life.

**Third, notice your fear.** If you feel anxiety, trepidation or uncertainty, that's normal. But you don't have to be controlled by it. Yes, fear can signal danger. But it can also indicate you're on your way to a breakthrough.

**Fourth, don't overthink it.** All you really need is clarity for the next step. When you get it, take the next step in faith, believing you will be given the light you need to take the next one.

## Step 4: Find Your Why

Step 4 is about the importance of identifying and connecting with the motivations for each of your goals. This is important because inevitably you're going to find yourself in the messy middle. It's part of every big dream, every goal, every attempt to improve. Sometimes we think if we just plan better, we can avoid the pain and breeze through to the finish. But it almost never happens that way. The answer is leveraging your motivations. It will give you the drive and stamina to finish when the going gets tough and you want to quit.

### Your What Needs a Why

When we begin a project, there's all kinds of enthusiasm. We're energized by that surge of excitement that comes from novelty and our own creativity. But that surge is like starter fluid; it's not the fuel that will see us through the journey. If you want to go the distance, you've got to find a reason that speaks powerfully and personally to you.

So what are the whys attached to your goals? Record and prioritize your key motivations. Write key motivations as a series of bullets. List each one until you run out. Then, identify your top three. Go through the list and rank them. You want to identify your most compelling motivations so you have several convincing reasons readily available to keep pressing and accomplish your goal.

Next, connect with your key motivations. First of all, *intellectually.* It's important to have intellectual buy-in to the motivation. Maybe it's some research you've done, remarkable data or an argument you find intellectually compelling.

Second, you need to buy in *emotionally.* It's not only important to understand it. It's important to feel what's at stake. Anticipate what it would feel like to achieve that goal. Or, conversely, what it would feel like if you missed that goal. Ask yourself, "What's at stake both positively and negatively?"

### You Can Master Your Own Motivation

Next to finding your why, mastering your motivation is key for developing the necessary persistence to make it through the messy middle. Here are several ways to do so.

**Internalize the reward:** External motivators can work, but they're usually less effective in the long run, especially if we lose interest in the reward, get demotivated and slack off before we're even aware. Intrinsic rewards help us avoid that danger because we connect personally and emotionally with them. Think about challenging activities like exercising, writing or practicing a musical instrument. The joy comes from doing them.

**Be realistic about the commitment:** Researchers at University College London tracked people attempting to form different types of new habits. Instead of three or four weeks, they found it took an average of 66 days for new habits to become automatic — more than three times the popular duration. And some activities, they said, would be more like 250 days! Think of habits not as ends

unto themselves but as serving larger achievements. The habit essentially serves as the next step in reaching your achievement goal. It's easier to maintain the effort over time because your eye is on the bigger prize.

**Measure the gain:** Take a minute and look at the gain. See how far you've already come, and let your progress inspire your perseverance. This is another reason setting milestones is helpful. Not only do they help break up the big goal into manageable chunks, they give us something to measure — forward or backward. By measuring the gains we'll not only cultivate persistence, we'll also get a sense of our momentum.

### The Journey Is Better With Friends

After the surprise success of J.R.R. Tolkien's children's novel *The Hobbit,* in the fall of 1937 his publisher asked him to write a sequel. The public, he wrote, will be "clamouring to hear more from you about Hobbits!"

Tolkien had no plan for a follow-up at first. The issue might have ended there, but it didn't. Tolkien mentioned that he had written more about Middle Earth, the imaginary world in which *The Hobbit* transpires. He offered to let his publisher read the material, even though it was missing the star attraction.

For nearly two decades he'd hustled at uninteresting, sideline writing projects to make financial ends meet. But now, despite having no real plans for a sequel, he was imagining how he might pull it off. Here at last was his big chance to tell stories he loved and simultaneously improve his family's financial situation. Tolkien knew this was a life-changing opportunity.

So how did Tolkien overcome the distractions and discouragement to finish *The Lord of the Rings,* one of the top-selling books of the 20th century? The answer starts back at the beginning with Tolkien's friend, C.S. Lewis. At several critical moments, Lewis encouraged Tolkien to stick with the project when he had given up. "Only by his support and friendship did I ever struggle to the end of the labour," he said in 1954 as the first reviews began coming in. Tolkien had a mammoth goal, and he never would have seen it through without the help of his friend.

We have a very powerful myth in our culture, the myth of the self-made man or woman. But let's be honest: There's no such thing. Success requires help — and usually lots of it. It's impossible to discount the influence of our social circle.

Choose your circle wisely. The right peers serve as a support structure for our liberating truths. They help us retain our belief and commitment when we hit the messy middle. The main issue is the composition of the community and the beliefs it holds in common. If you surround yourself with scarcity thinkers, you'll struggle to stay motivated in pursuit of your goals.

If, on the other hand, you surround yourself with abundance thinkers, you'll gain access to encouragement, emotional and material support, solutions, insights and more.

Some examples of different groups that might work for you are online communities, running and exercise groups, masterminds (peer-to-peer coaching groups), coaching or mentoring circles, reading or study groups, accountability groups and close friendships. Intentional relationships make us more productive, creative and useful than we could ever be on our own.

## Step 5: Make It Happen

In Step 5 we're going to talk about making it happen. It's not enough to plan. It takes action to fully realize our goals.

### One Journey Is Many Steps

Setting the goal is only half the job. The other half is taking definitive action. Any goal is manageable one action at a time. But when we let the task grow and become daunting in our minds, it can leave us feeling indecisive, discouraged and even paralyzed with panic. What's the alternative?

**Do the easiest task first.** While we should set goals in the discomfort zone, the way to tackle a goal is to start with a task in the comfort zone. The first step on any project is usually the toughest. But when you start with the easy steps, you lower the threshold for taking action. This is how you trick your brain into starting. Second, getting some quick wins boosts your mood. Third, getting started and feeling good about your progress means it's easy to build momentum.

**Seek outside help.** For almost every goal we want to accomplish, someone else knows how to get there — or at least has a better hunch than you. It may be a friend, an accountability partner or a professional. You don't have to start from scratch.

**Commit to act.** You next need to schedule it and commit to act. If it doesn't get on your calendar or task list, it's probably not going to happen. You're never going to find time in the leftover hours of the day to accomplish your goals. You have to make it a priority and keep it like an appointment you would keep with anyone else.

## You Can Trigger Success

Activation Triggers™ are simple statements or actions that streamline the process of reaching our goals. By anticipating whatever contingencies or obstacles we might face, we can cue a desired response. Instead of relying on our decision making in the moment (when our mental and emotional resources might be at their lowest), Activation Triggers lock in our decisions in advance.

You can use Activation Triggers to reach your goals by following four phases.

**Phase 1: Brainstorm the best triggers.** So you've got a goal that meets the SMARTER standard. Now you want to identify the triggers that will work best for reaching the goal. Make sure your Activation Triggers are easier to achieve than your actual goals. That's the whole point. For example, you could program the lights in your office to turn off automatically at 6:00 p.m. so you follow through on your goal of quitting work by 6:00 p.m.

**Phase 2: Optimize your activation triggers.** A major part of the Activation Trigger process is thinking when you're at your strongest, rather than relying on your willpower when you're not. With that in mind, you can optimize your triggers to further promote success. As in the example above (programming the lights in the office), take the trigger out of your control as much as possible using elimination, automation and delegation.

**Phase 3: Anticipate obstacles and determine your response.** If you have a habit goal of leaving the office promptly at 6:00 p.m., the goal can easily be undermined by a phone call or someone dropping by at the last minute. The key is to decide in advance how you will handle each of these contingencies. For example, if you get a phone call after 5:45 p.m., then you can let it go to voicemail.

**Phase 4: Experiment until you nail it.** This is the key to success. You're going to experience setbacks — especially if you're normal. Don't give up on your goal, just change your approach. That means modifying your Activation Triggers until they're working right for you. Whatever your goal, the trick is to simply think through the contingencies and obstacles that will prevent you from achieving it.

## Visibility Is Essential

When it comes to experiencing our best year ever, we need the right mix of instruments. You already have two: (1) a simple procedure for breaking down goals into next actions and (2) a set of Activation Triggers. Now we need to add another: a regular goal review process. You can't just write goals and motivations. You have to review them and keep them top of mind.

Break goal review into three separate reviews: daily, weekly and quarterly. The **daily review** starts with a simple list of your goals, a goal summary. To gain the full benefit of the review, you should scan this list each day and look for relevant next actions. Limit your tasks to the Daily Big 3, so you never have more than three significant tasks to complete in any one day. Those three tasks are chosen specifically to help you achieve your goals.

The **weekly review** goes a bit deeper and takes a bit longer, about 20 minutes. There's a triple focus of the weekly review. The first part is to stay intellectually and emotionally connected to your motivations. The second part is a mini After-Action Review. Recap the past week. Review your progress. List your wins and your misses. Next, list the lessons you learned and what you would do differently or better. How will you adjust your behavior? Write that down, too. The third and final part of the weekly review is to get a sense of what needs to be accomplished for the upcoming week.

Quarterly goal-setting naturally leads to a deeper **quarterly review** every three months. You can treat it like a scaled-down version of the Best Year Ever process and walk the 5 Steps again. The main purpose of the quarterly review is to analyze your goals and decide if they're still relevant to your life, and then make any adjustments if not.

Now it's your turn. Your best year ever isn't a movie you can sit back and watch. It's a vision that needs to be built, starting now, or it won't come true.

This is your year; this is your moment. Don't defer your dreams. Once you've determined your next step, take it.


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# 48 Days: To the Work You Love

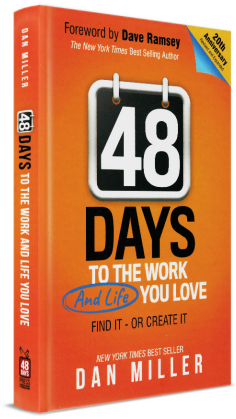
Dan Miller

Career &
Self- Development

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# 48 Days: To the Work You Love

## Find It - Or Create It




*by* **Dan Miller**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***48 Days: To the Work You Love***, Dan Miller shares his incredible process born out of his concern that people always seem to talk about new ideas and opportunities, yet never actually take the steps to change their lives. His process is designed to give readers 48 days to evaluate their current position, gain the advice of trusted loved ones, decide on the best options, create a plan, and act.

The book is designed to change mindsets about work and life, so that readers can see that it's possible to find or create a vocation and life that you love— one that combines your unique talents and abilities with your values, dreams, and passions to yield profitable and purposeful work you can be proud of. By the end, Miller has showed readers everything they need to continue their momentum and take the next step in their development and journey.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why the way we think about work is wrong, and how to fix it.
- How to find the right positions to apply for, maximize your resume, and get job offers at companies you'll love.
- Escape discontentment and create a life plan built around your unique values and desires.
- Become the boss you always wanted to have in order to take ownership and control over your own life.

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

## Introduction

This book outlines a new process of looking at what you are going to be when you grow up. What gifts do you have when it comes to your skills and abilities, personality traits, and values, dreams & passions? From these areas you will see clear patterns from which to make career and job decisions. These patterns create a compass, providing a sense of continuity in the midst of inevitable job changes and workplace unpredictability. Looking inward provides 85 percent of the process of finding proper direction; 15 percent is the application to career choices.

Work is not a curse, but one of the great benefits of living on earth. Finding the work you love is not just a self-serving goal, it's a path to helping fulfill our true calling.

The next 48 days can transform your life. It's an adequate time frame to assess where you are uniquely gifted, identify your strongest characteristics, get the advice of competent advisors, consider your options, choose the best path for meaningful and fulfilling work, create a plan of action, and act.

In this book, you get to decide if the main character is a victim of circumstances, unable to rise above the oppressive forces of his or her upbringing, or a hero who designs a life complete with work that matters, money far beyond personal needs, relationships that nurture the soul, and a legacy that lasts throughout history. You have the power to choose.

### Do I Have To Work?

It seems that more and more people believe that work is a tradeoff for enjoyment, that work is only done to produce a paycheck. Here's another common myth: that the more income a person makes, the higher their stress level. But the truth is that when work and passion are combined, the money flows much more easily. You may be making $10/hour and be stressed, or you may be making $120,000 a year and love what you're doing. The issue isn't how much money is being generated but rather whether the work is the right 'fit' for you.

Our early views of work tend to view it as something less than desirable and enjoyable. Do you work only because of the paycheck? Do you long to leave for something more enjoyable? Have you tried another path only to return to what is more familiar? Many people often get trapped in these patterns of returning to negative, abusive career situations. The emotions and self-esteem issues may be complicated and confusing, but the simple fact is that a job should not define who or what you are. Your calling is a much larger concept than what you do daily to create income. Work opportunities come and go—the direction of your life should remain constant.

## Who Would Hire Me?

Do the smartest people with the best degrees always get ahead? Is it luck that allows someone to get hired? Why do some folks get multiple job offers when others are convinced the economy is bad and no one is hiring?

Too many people today are looking for 'safety' and 'security.' With those as your primary goals, you are almost certain to miss the best opportunities. Those terms imply old and predictable—certainly not new, innovative, full of potential with open-ended income possibilities. Beware of safe and secure—they will trap you in the common, mediocre life.

An amazing number of people are bogged down in analyzing, learning, planning and organizing when what they really need to do is take action. That's what separates winners from losers—winners take action.

Every success is a result of simply doing something, sometimes before a whole lot of work and planning. Are you ready for change? The best way to deal with the challenge of change is to be prepared to act. Genius is the ability to clearly visualize the objective.

Feeling encouraged? Miserable in your job? Just lost your business? Give yourself a new beginning tomorrow. All beginnings are hopeful. And yes, companies are waiting to hire you—if you are a person they want on their team.

### Yes, I Do Have an "Education"

Our ideas about education are being rocked. Major companies are moving away from a focus on SATs, GPAs, brand name schools and credentials. Instead, they're looking at how does this person think, solve problems, lead, and handle failure. Companies like Google, Apple, IBM, Costco, Nordstrom, Hilton, Whole Foods, Penguin Random House, and more have recently announced they no longer require applicants to have a college degree. They look for candidates who have hands-on experience and a proven track record of producing results.

Let's stop depriving our children and ourselves of their best options. Let's stop pretending that a formal college education is the only way that people can become truly educated in a meaningful way. Some go to trade schools, others take on the family business, still other start businesses or travel

the world to learn and grow before choosing a career path. All of these are paths to real, empowering education—and none of them should have inherent value over any other.

## Creating a Life Plan

The following is a framework for moving toward the decisions that matter most regarding what we do in our work. There are three words that tend to be used interchangeably—and they should be. They are 'vocation,' 'career,' and 'job.'

A vocation incorporates calling, purpose, mission, and identity. It's that big picture that many people never track down and identify for themselves. Vocation is not so much pursuing a goal as it is listening for a voice. Before you can tell your life what you want from it, you must listen for that voice telling you who you are.

A career is not the vaunted ideal that many pretend it is. It's possible to go around and around in a career at high speed and never get anywhere you actually want to be. That is why in today's volatile work environment, even professionals with careers as physicians, attorneys, CPAs, dentists, and engineers may suddenly decide to jump off the expected track and choose something else.

A job is just, and nothing more—a job. It's not a critical definition of one's vocation or calling. A job choice can be part of your vocation and your career, but just because you have a job doesn't mean you've found either one.

Always ask yourself—are the job and career choices I'm making putting me on a path toward my vocation? If they're not, it's time to make a significant change in your life.

## Success is More Than a Job

Years of moving off track cannot be recaptured immediately, but we can redirect to maximize the value of our remaining time. We can work to transform our choices to be better in line with what we're most passionate about and most personally invested in—but we have to act now.

Each of us has an internal setting that determines just how much love, success, and creativity we'll allow ourselves. If we can identify that limit, then we can begin taking steps to raise it higher than we thought possible. This adaptation can make us uncomfortable at first, as we fight against the idea that we deserve and are capable of more than we thought. But ultimately, raising our upper limit helps us achieve our greatest dreams.

### The Cure for Divine Discontentment

Ralph Waldo Emerson talked about the concept of 'divine discontent,' the state of knowing that we're not really walking the perfect plan for our lives. When there is a mismatch of who we are and the work we are doing, we experience this divine discontent. Looking inward at your own uniqueness is a necessary starting point for finding proper career direction. Identifying your inner gifts and talents and using them effectively in your work are critical components of your personal well-being.

You can structure your work around goals and meaningful relationships, your unique personality, dreams, and passions. Look inward to give shape to the work that is fitting for you, and the application will appear. After all, it is often in the midst of change and challenges that we find our true direction.

We can work to transform our choices to be better in line with what we're most passionate about. . .

### Show Me Your Promo Materials

Let's face it—you have to have a resume. Most anyone you approach in your job search is going to want to see it. Even if they don't ask for it, you need the process of creating your resume. Even if you have a job you love, you should be constantly revising and improving your resume. The process of creating and refining a resume is one of clarifying your strongest areas of competence. In fact, the process of creating your resume may be more important than the result of that process. Don't think that having the perfect resume is the key to getting your dream job—it's not. At best, it's one effective tool in the process of being offered that dream job. Your personal presentation, responses to interview questions, your work history, your academic background and your online presence are all equally important to your success.

### Six Job Offers in 10 Days!

Jobs are changing, and methods of finding new opportu-

nities are changing as well. No longer can you pick up the Sunday paper, see that your local hardware store is hiring, go down on Monday morning and see your uncle Fred about your next job. The volatility, uncertainty, and transportability of knowledge-worker skills have put millions of people into the job search. Knowing that the average job lasts 2.2 years, even those who are currently employed are looking for the next position.

So what does that mean for you? It means that the most effective job-hunting method is to know your skills, research potential companies that use those skills, arrange to see the person who has the power to hire you, and request the interview. This method, faithfully followed, leads to a job for 86 out of every 100 job hunters who use it.

### Do They Like Me? Do I Like Them?

Most opportunities are obtained through the process of an interview, yet many job seekers fail to develop good interviewing skills. Too many people assume the interview is just a formality to follow up the great impression already made with the resume. But the interview is where the rubber meets the road. This is not a one-time experience, and it's not confined to getting a 'job.' The skills needed for interviewing well are the same skills required to promote your product or service with any work model you choose. Presenting yourself well is a learned art and should be studied, prepared for, and practiced.

Your ability to present well will translate into job satisfaction or success in your own business.

### Show Me the Money

You must totally believe that you are the best person for an opportunity, and that comes from being clear on your areas of competence and from having the confidence, enthusiasm, and boldness that can only come from having a clear focus. Then you're ready to present yourself in the best possible way, the way that's most likely to get you the salary or pay scale you deserve.

### Being the Boss You Always Wanted to Have...

What if the whole process of looking for one more job leaves you cold? You still have trouble seeing the right fit in a company and the prospect of once again being vulnerable to the politics of a company doesn't exactly light you up. Maybe it's been a while since you've had to do a job search, or maybe the thought of having a boss half your age is not very appealing. Don't be discouraged! That in itself is part of this process of clarifying what does fit you, and you can choose the work that fills you with excitement and passion every day.

You really can have work that makes you want to get up in the morning, work that makes you say, "This is why I was born!"

## Dream, Plan, and Act

Don't cheat the world—or yourself—out of the amazing contributions you have to offer. Don't end your life sharing the most common regret of those who know they're dying: "I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me. After considering the best options, you're ready to create your own 48-day plan. You can do this. You can achieve the success you are seeking. Take inventory, focus, create a plan, and act.



Dan Miller is the author of the bestselling *48 Days to the Work You Love* book, workbook, and audio program - now in its 20th Anniversary Edition. As a life coach, he has guided people through the anguish of unexpected change to the exhilaration of meaningful work and increased time and financial freedom. Dan has appeared on CBS's The Early Show and MSNBC's Hardball with Chris Matthews.

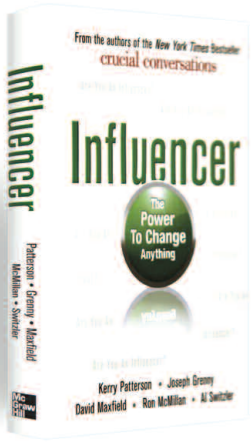
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## The Power to Change Anything

# INFLUENCER

by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you're like most people, you face several influence challenges that have you stumped. For instance, at work your best efforts to make quality part of the everyday culture have yielded no improvements. Or maybe at the personal level you're fighting a problem that has gone on for years.

Whether you're a CEO, a parent or merely a person who wants to make a difference, you probably wish you had more influence with the people in your life. Most of us stop trying to make change happen because we believe it is too difficult, if not impossible. Instead we develop complicated coping strategies when we should be learning the tools and techniques of the world's most influential people. Almost all the profound, pervasive and persistent problems we face in our lives, our companies and our world can be solved.

Over the past half century, a handful of behavioral science theorists and practitioners have discovered the power to change just about anything. From high-powered influencers from all walks of life, we can learn every step of the influence process — including robust strategies for making change inevitable. Through years of careful research and studied practice, the authors have developed powerful influence principles and strategies that can be replicated and that others can learn.

Not everyone will become influencers with a capital "I," but everyone can learn and apply the methods and strategies the world's best influencers use every day.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify a handful of high-leverage behaviors that lead to rapid and profound change.
- How to apply strategies for changing both thoughts and actions.
- How to marshall six sources of influence — such as finding strength in numbers, changing the environment and harnessing peer pressure — to make change inevitable.
- What steps you need to take in order to become an opinion leader.
- How to reward vital behaviors and not just good results.
- Why studying positive deviance can help you identify vital behaviors and how to do it.

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# You're an Influencer

There are a handful of brilliant social scientists routinely studied by influence masters, but the one cited as the scholar of scholars is the legendary father of social learning theory, Dr. Albert Bandura. Dr. Bandura generated a remarkable body of knowledge that led to rapid changes in behaviors that other theorists had dawdled over for years.

He demonstrated, for example, how powerfully our behavior is shaped by observing others. This came at a time when most psychologists believed that behavior was solely influenced by the direct rewards and punishments people experienced. He also taught us where not to waste our time. For instance, if you want others to change, you don't have to put a person on a couch for 10 years to learn about his or her critical childhood moments.

## *Study With the Best Scholars*

There is a growing body of knowledge as well as an impressive supply of real-life success stories that teach exactly how to change almost any human behavior. The influencers noted below demonstrate that, if you know what you're doing, you can indeed change remarkably resistant behaviors.

**Dr. Mimi Silbert** in San Francisco, Calif. is the founder of the Delancey Street Foundation. It consists of several dozen businesses, all headed by Silbert, and is part corporate conglomerate, part residential therapy. What's unique about the institution is the employee population, which consists of thieves, prostitutes, robbers and murderers. Dr. Silbert's typical new hires have had four felony convictions, they've been homeless for years, and most are lifetime drug addicts. Within hours of joining Delancey, they are working in either a restaurant, moving company, car repair shop or one of the many Delancey companies. Other than Silbert herself, these felons and addicts make up the entire population at Delancey. No therapists. No professional staff. Her remarkable influence strategy has profoundly changed the lives of 14,000 employees over the past 30 years. Of those who join Delancey, over 90 percent never go back to drugs or crime.

Since 1986, **Dr. Hopkins** and his team at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga. have focused on the eradication of the Guinea worm disease. The Guinea worm is one of the largest human parasites, and it has caused incalculable pain and suffering in millions of people. Hopkins knew that if 120 million people in 23,000 villages would change just a few vital behaviors for just one year, there would never be another case of the infection. But imagine the audacity of intending to influence such a scattered population in so many countries. And yet, this is exactly what Hopkins' team has done. They are overcoming enormous disadvantages and will have beaten the disease with nothing more than the ability to influence human thought and action.

## *What This Means to You*

There's good news in all of this. Since our ineffectiveness at influencing others stems from a simple inability rather than a character flaw or lack of motivation, the solution lies in continued learning. We can become powerful influencers. It also means that the changes we need to make won't be too intrusive. Instead, we need to expand our self-image by seeing ourselves as influencers; it's the one job that cuts across every domain of our life.

All this is important to know because if you want to

**The authors:** This award-winning team of authors — now joined by leading researcher David Maxfield — previously produced the two *New York Times* best sellers: *Crucial Conversations* (2002) and *Crucial Confrontations* (2005). **Kerry Patterson** has done doctoral work in organizational behavior at Stanford University. **Joseph Grenny** is an acclaimed keynote speaker and consultant. **David Maxfield** is a leading researcher who has done doctoral work in psychology at Stanford University. **Ron McMillan** co-founded the Covey Leadership Center, where he served as vice president of research and development. **Al Switzler** has directed training and management initiatives with dozens of Fortune 500 companies worldwide.

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change how people behave, you have to first change how they think. There is no one strategy for resolving profound, persistent and resistant problems. It takes an entire set of influence methods. ■

# Find Vital Behaviors

Before you can influence change, you have to decide what you're trying to change. Influence geniuses focus on behaviors. They're universally firm on this point. Enormous influence comes from focusing on just a few vital behaviors. Take care to ensure that you do not confuse outcomes with behaviors. In most failed influence strategies, you're likely to find at least one example of means/ends confusion, in which the focus is on achieving a specific end result instead of a focus on what actually needs to be done. Without a behavioral focus, often people will not choose to enact the right behaviors.

### *Study the Best*

How do legitimate researchers actually discover the handful of behaviors that typically lead to success? The science of identifying which actions lead to key outcomes — no matter the domain — has already been carefully developed by those who study "best practices." Researchers compared the best to the rest and then discovered the unique and powerful behaviors that led to success. They watched top performers at work, compared them with others who were decent but not quite as good and identified the sets of behaviors that set apart the best from the rest.

The real test of best-practice research comes when scholars take newly discovered vital behaviors and teach them to experimental groups. If they have indeed found the right behaviors, experimental subjects show far greater improvement in both the *vital behaviors* and the *desired outcome* than do control subjects. From this best-practice research we learn two important concepts:

• First, there is a process for discovering what successful people actually do. We know what to look for when examining others' claims that they've found vital behaviors. If the individuals who are offering up best practices haven't scientifically compared the best to the rest, found the differentiating behaviors, taught these behaviors to new subjects and then demonstrated changes in the outcomes they care about, they're not the people we want to learn from.

• Second, in many of the areas where you'd like to exert influence, the vital-behaviors research has already been done. If you search carefully, you'll find that good scholars have found the vital behaviors that solve most challenges affecting a large number of people.

### *Study Positive Deviance*

"Positive deviance" can be extremely helpful in discovering the handful of vital behaviors that will help solve the problem you're attacking. Look for people, times or places where you or others don't experience the same problems and try to determine the unique behaviors that make the difference.

- First, dive into the center of the actual community, family or organization you want to change.
- Second, discover and study settings where the targeted problem should exist but doesn't.
- Third, identify the unique behaviors of the group that succeeds.

In the case of the Guinea worm disease, researchers focused on the third methodology of identifying unique behaviors and flew into sub-Saharan Africa. Once there, researchers decided to study villages that should have the disease but didn't. They were particularly interested in villages that were immediate neighbors to locations that were rife with the Guinea worm disease.

It didn't take long to discover the vital behaviors. Researchers knew that behaviors related to the fetching and handling of water would be crucial, so they zeroed in on those successful behaviors, which could then later be taught to the worm-struck villages.

### *Test Your Results*

Finally, if you've conducted your own research and found what you think are high-leverage vital behaviors, test your ideas. Implement the proposed actions and see if they yield the results you want. Don't merely measure the presence or absence of the vital behaviors; also check to see whether the results you want are happening. To make it easy to both surface and test vital behaviors, conduct short-cycle-time experiments. Don't hypothesize forever or put massive studies into place. Instead, develop the habit of conducting rapid, low-risk mini experiments. ■

**For additional information on how researchers used positive deviance to study the Guinea worm, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Change the Way You Change Minds

Once you've identified the behaviors you want to change, you're ready to convince others to change their minds. But as you might suspect, convincing others to see the world differently isn't easy.

People will attempt to change their behavior if they believe it will be worth it, and they believe they can do

what is required. Instill these two views, and individuals will at least try to enact a new behavior or perhaps stop an old one. To change one or both of these views, most people rely on verbal persuasion. Talk is easy, and it works a great deal of the time. However, with persistent and resistant problems, talk has very likely failed in the past, and it's time to help individuals experience for themselves the benefits of the proposed behavior.

Dr. Bandura and his team found that if you want people to change their persistent and resistant view of the world, come up with innovative ways to create personal experiences. Second, when you can't take everyone on a field trip, create vicarious experiences.

The good news is that vicarious modeling is one of the most accessible influence tools that can be employed. For most of us, that means we'll make use of a well-told story.

### *Create Profound Vicarious Experiences*

Stories provide every person, no matter how limited his or her resources, with an influence tool that is both immediately accessible and enormously powerful. Poignant narratives help listeners transport themselves away from the content of what is being said and into the experience itself. Because stories create vivid images and provide concrete detail, they are:

- More understandable than terse lectures.
- More focused on the simple reality of an actual event.
- More often credible than simple statements of fact.

Finally, as listeners dive into the narrative and suspend disbelief, stories create an empathic reaction that feels just as real as enacting the behavior themselves.

### *Tell the Whole Story*

Don't make the mistake of shortcutting the story — stripping it of its compelling narrative and leaving out much of the meaning and all of the emotion. And make sure that the narrative you're employing contains a clear link between the current behaviors and existing (or possibly future) negative results. Also make sure that the story includes positive replacement behaviors that yield new and better results. Remember, stories need to deal with both "Will it be worth it?" and "Can I do it?" When it comes to changing behavior, nothing else matters. ■

## Make Change Inevitable

We now know enough about the forces that affect human behavior to place them into a coherent and workable model that can be used to organize our thinking, select a full set of influence strategies, combine them into a powerful plan and eventually make change inevitable.

### Model of the Six Sources of Influence

| | Motivation | Ability |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal** | Make the Undesirable Desirable | Surpass Your Limits |
| **Social** | Harness Peer Pressure | Find Strength in Numbers |
| **Structural** | Design Rewards and Demand Accountability | Change the Environment |

### *Master the Six Sources of Influence*

With this model, influence geniuses know exactly what forces to bring into play in order to overdetermine their chances of success.

**Source 1: Personal Motivation** — work on connecting vital behaviors to intrinsic motives

**Source 2: Personal Ability** — coach the specifics of each behavior through deliberate practice

**Source 3: Social Motivation** — draw on the enormous power of social influence to both motivate and enable the target behaviors

**Source 4: Social Ability** — people in a community will have to assist each other if they hope to succeed

**Source 5: Structural Motivation** — attach appropriate reward structures to motivate people to pick up the vital behaviors

**Source 6: Structural Ability** — ensure that systems, processes, reporting structures, visual cues and so forth support the vital behaviors. ■

## Make the Undesirable Desirable

If you can't find a way to change a person's intrinsic response to a behavior — if you can't make the right behaviors pleasurable and the wrong behaviors painful — you'll have to make up for the motivational shortfall by relying on external incentives or possibly even punishments.

Can you actually change how humans experience a behavior? Is it possible to change the meaning of a behavior itself from loathsome to gratifying, from pleasurable to disgusting, or from insulting to inspiring? If you ask gifted influencers, their unequivocal answer will be, *of course you can*. And you *must.* Specifically, there are two very powerful and ethical ways of helping

humans change their reaction to a previously neutral or noxious behavior: creating new experiences and creating new motives.

### *Create New Experiences*

Sometimes people loathe the very thought of a new behavior because they lack adequate information to judge it correctly. Get people to try it. The "try it, you'll like it" strategy can be further aided by the use of models. Many influence masters have found that vicarious experience can work in situations where they can't get people to try a vital behavior based on faith alone.

When dealing with activities that are rarely satisfying or unhealthy activities that are very satisfying, take the focus off the activity itself, and reconnect vital behavior to the person's sense of values. Don't be afraid to talk openly about the long-term values individuals are currently either supporting or violating.

### *Create New Motives*

Help individuals see their choices as moral quests or as personally defining moments, and that they must keep this perspective despite distractions and emotional stress. Help them to take their eyes off the demands of the moment and view the larger moral issues at hand by reframing reality in moral terms. Spotlight human consequences and rehumanize targets that people readily and easily abuse. Don't let people minimize or justify their behavior by transforming humans into statistics. If people can make their behavior part of a broader and more important moral mission, they can do almost anything.

When facing highly resistant people, don't try to gain control over them by wowing them with logic and argument. Instead, talk with them about what they want. Through a skillful use of open and nondirective questions, called motivational interviewing, examine what is most important to the person and what changes in their life might be required in order for them to live according to their values. When you listen and they talk, they discover on their own what they must do. ■

## Surpass Your Limits

Many of the profound and persistent problems we face stem more from a lack of skill (which in turn stems from a lack of deliberate practice) than from a genetic curse, a lack of courage or a character flaw. But we often underestimate the need to learn and actually *practice* the desired skill. For example, self-discipline, long viewed as a character trait, and elite performance, similarly linked to genetic gifts, stem from the ability to engage in guided practice of clearly defined skills. There is little evidence that people who achieve exceptional performance ever get there through any means other than carefully guided practice. Learn how to practice the right actions, and you can master everything from withstanding the temptations of unhealthy food to holding an awkward discussion with your boss.

### *Perfect Complex Skills*

Not all practice is good practice. For example, most professionals progress until they reach an "acceptable" level, and then they plateau. Beyond this level of mediocrity, further improvements are not correlated to years of work in the field.

So what creates improvement? According to psychologist Dr. Anders Ericsson, improvement is related not just to practice, but to a particular kind of practice — called *deliberate practice*. The techniques of deliberate practice are:

- **Demand full attention for brief intervals.** The ability to concentrate at a heightened level is usually the limiting factor to deliberate practice. Most people can maintain a heightened level of concentration for only an hour straight.
- **Provide immediate feedback against a clear standard.** The number of hours one spends practicing a skill is far less important than receiving clear and frequent feedback against a known standard.
- **Break mastery into mini-goals.** Concentrate on specific goals where the process is controllable.
- **Prepare for setbacks; build in resilience.** The practice regime should gradually introduce tasks that require increased effort and persistence. As learners overcome more difficult tasks and recover from intermittent defeats, they see that setbacks aren't permanent roadblocks, but signals that they need to keep learning.
- **Build emotional skills.** To regain emotional control over your genetically wired responses, take the focus off your instinctive objective by carefully attending to distraction activities. For example, as a strategy to help obsessive-compulsives cope with their tendencies, therapists teach them to wait 15 minutes before giving in to a maddening mental demand. ■

## Harness Peer Pressure

When seeking influence tools that have an impact on profound and persistent problems, no resource is more powerful and accessible than the persuasion of the people who make up our social networks. The ridicule and praise, acceptance and rejection, approval and disapproval of our fellow beings can do more to assist or destroy our change efforts than almost any other source.

### *The Power of One*

To harness the immense power of social support, sometimes you need to find only one respected individual who will fly in the face of history and model the new vital behaviors. When a respected individual attempts a vital behavior and succeeds, this one act alone can go further in motivating others to change than almost any other source of influence. But take note, the living examples of other humans exert power only to the extent that the person who is modeling the vital behaviors is truly respected.

### *Enlist Social Support*

When it comes to creating change, you no longer have to worry about influencing everyone at once. Your job is to find the opinion leaders who are the key to everyone else. Spend disproportionate time with them. Listen to their concerns. Build trust with them. Be open to their ideas. Rely on them to share your ideas, and you'll gain a source of influence unlike any other.

On a more personal note, if you're trying to change something within your own life, co-opt the power of those who have an influence on you. If you make a commitment and then share it with friends, you're far more likely to follow through than if you simply make your commitment to yourself. Better still, team up with someone who is attempting to make the same changes you are.

### *Make Undiscussables Discussable*

Sometimes change efforts call for changes in widely shared norms. In that case, almost everyone in a community has to talk openly about a proposed change in behavior before it can be safely embraced by anyone. This calls for public discourse. Detractors will often suggest that it's inappropriate to hold such an open discourse, and they may even go so far as to suggest that the topic is undiscussable. Ignore those who seek silence instead of healthy dialogue. Make it safe to talk about high-stakes and controversial topics.

### *Create a Village*

Some challenges are so profound that they won't vanish, even if everyone talks openly and new norms are formed. For instance, some personal changes are so significant that asking people to embrace many new behaviors requires that you shape them into entirely new people; this level of transformation calls for the work of an entire village.

When breaking away from habits that are continually reinforced by a person's existing social network, people must be plucked from their support structure and placed in a new network, one where virtually everyone in their new social circle supports and rewards the right behaviors while punishing the wrong ones. ■

**For additional information on the power of one, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Become an Opinion Leader

If you aspire to become an effective influencer, you should also aspire to become an opinion leader within your own work and family circle. Here's what it takes to become and remain an opinion leader. People, including children, pay attention to individuals who possess two important qualities:

- First, these people are viewed as knowledgeable about the issue at hand. They tend to stay connected to their area of expertise, often through a variety of sources.
- Second, opinion leaders are viewed as trustworthy. They have other people's best interest in mind. This means that they aren't seen as using their knowledge to manipulate or harm, but rather to help.

# Find Strength in Numbers

As the Beatles suggested, we're most likely to succeed when we have "a little help from our friends." These friends provide us with access to their brains, give us the strength of their hands and even allow us to make use of their many other personal resources. In effect they provide us with social capital. In fact, with a little help from our friends, we can produce a force greater than the sum of our individual efforts. But we can do this only when we know how to make use of social capital — the profound enabling power of an essential network of relationships.

So, when exactly should you build social capital to bring about challenging changes?

- When others are part of the problem
- When you can't succeed on your own
- When facing changing, turbulent, or novel times — calling for novel solutions.

### *Blind Spots*

Perhaps the most obvious condition that demands social support as a means of influencing vital behaviors comes with the need for feedback that can be offered only by a pair of outside eyes. When it comes to business and other settings, leaders rarely think of using real-time coaches. Some of today's companies provide their leaders with call-in advisers who discuss what happened yesterday when the leader faced a challenge and didn't do all that well. But few provide real-time coaching. This should change. ■

# Design Rewards and Demand Accountability

Stories of well-intended rewards that inadvertently backfire are legion. The primary cause of most of these debacles is that individuals attempt to influence behaviors by using rewards as their *first* motivational strategy. In a well-balanced change effort, rewards come *third*. Influence masters first ensure that vital behaviors connect to intrinsic satisfaction. Next, they line up social support. They double-check both of these areas before they finally choose extrinsic rewards to motivate behavior.

Making use of extrinsic rewards can be complicated. Not every reward has its desired effect. Sometimes extrinsic programs can completely backfire and serve as punishment. For example, reward ceremonies honor a select few top performers but leave others who are not recognized feeling discouraged.

### *Use Incentives Wisely*

Influence masters eventually use rewards and punishments, so the question is how to use incentives wisely.

Take care to ensure that the rewards come soon, are gratifying and are clearly tied to vital behaviors. When you do so, even small rewards can be used to help people overcome some of the most profound and persistent problems.

If you're doing it right, less is more. When it comes to offering extrinsic rewards, the rewards typically don't need to be very large — at least if you've laid the groundwork with the previous sources of motivation. The thought behind an incentive often carries symbolic significance and taps into a variety of social forces that carry a lot of weight.

### *Reward Vital Behaviors, Not Just Results*

Don't wait until people achieve phenomenal results, but instead reward small improvements in behavior. As simple as this sounds we're bad at it, especially at work. When polled, employees reveal that their No. 1 complaint is that they aren't recognized for their notable performances.

Each year a new survey publishes the fact that employees would appreciate more praise, and each year we apparently do nothing different. There seems to be a permanent divide between researchers and scholars who heartily argue that performance is best improved by rewarding incremental improvements, and the rest of the world where people wait for a profound achievement before working up any enthusiasm.

Influence by rewarding right results *and* right behaviors. If an employees' current performance level is unacceptable, and you can't wait for them to come up to standard, then either terminate them or move them to a task that they can complete. On the other hand, if an individual is excelling in some areas while lagging in others — but overall is up to snuff — then set performance goals in the lagging areas and don't be afraid to reward small improvements. This means that you shouldn't wait for big results but should reward improvement in vital behaviors along the way.

### *Watch for Divisive Incentives*

People are so often out of touch with the message they're sending that they inadvertently reward exactly the wrong behavior. Just watch coaches as they speak about the importance of teamwork and then celebrate individual accomplishment. Kids quickly learn that it's the score that counts, not the assist, and it turns many of them into selfish prima donnas. So when behaviors are out of whack, look closely at your rewards. Who knows? Your own incentive system may be causing the problem.

### *Punishment Sends a Message, and So Does Its Absence*

Sometimes you don't have the luxury of rewarding positive performance because the person never actually does the right thing. In fact, he or she does only the wrong thing — and often. In these cases, if you want to make use of extrinsic reinforcers, you're left with the prospect of punishing this person.

Punishment can create all sorts of serious and harmful emotional effects, particularly if it is only loosely administered. When it comes to punishment, you must be very careful.

Before punishing, place a shot across the bow — provide a clear warning to let people know exactly what negative things will happen to them should they continue down their current path, but don't actually administer discipline yet.

When all else fails, punish. The lack of punishment for routine infractions sends a loud message across an organization. If you aren't willing to punish people when they violate a core value (such as giving their best effort), that value will lose its moral force in the organization. On the other hand, punishing sends a powerful message about your values when you do hold employees accountable. ■

# Change the Environment

For the final source for increasing our ability ("Can I do it?"), we examine how nonhuman forces — the world of buildings, space, sound, sight and so forth — can be brought to bear in an influence strategy.

Consider the profound and yet mostly unnoticed effect of

*things* on entire communities. Realizing the physicality of a neighborhood can send out unspoken messages that encourage socially inappropriate behavior, George Kelling started a community movement that is largely credited for reducing felonies in New York City by as much as 75 percent.

Committed to lessening the effect *things* were having on the community, Kelling advised the New York Transit Authority to start paying attention to environmental cues that provided a fertile environment for criminal behavior. Kelling's crew began a systematic attack against graffiti, litter and vandalism. Over time, a combination of cleanup and prosecution for minor offenses began to make a difference. Surroundings improved, community pride increased and petty crimes declined. So did violent crime.

Environmental factors affect much of what we do, and yet we often fail to make good use of things as much as we should. There are two reasons for this:

• We often fail to notice their profound impact. More often than not, powerful elements in our environment, such as work procedures, job layouts, reporting structures, etc., remain invisible to us.

• Even when we do think about the impact the environment is having on us, we rarely know what to do about it.

### *Make the Invisible Visible*

Once you've identified environmental elements that are subtly driving your or others' behavior, take steps to make them more obvious. That is, you make the invisible visible.

Provide actual cues in the environment to remind people of the behaviors you're trying to influence.

For example, Dr. Leon Bender tried several methods to encourage doctors to wash their hands more thoroughly. He finally realized that he needed to make the invisible visible. At a routine meeting, he handed each doctor a Petri dish with a layer of agar, collected a culture of their hands, and sent the dishes to the lab for culturing and photographing. When the photos came back from the lab, the images were frightfully effective. When it came to changing physicians' behavior, photos created poignant vicarious experiences and visual cues that reminded them of the need to properly wash their hands.

### *Mind the Data Stream*

As in the hand-washing example, small cues in the environment can draw attention to critical data points and change how people think and eventually how they behave. Influence geniuses understand the importance of an accurate data stream and do their best to ensure that their strategies focus on vital behaviors by serving up visible, timely and accurate information that supports their goals.

One warning about data: There is such a thing as "too much of a good thing." Corporate leaders often undermine the influence of the data they so carefully gather by overdoing it. The incessant flow of reports, printouts and e-mails transforms into numbing and incoherent background noise. Influence masters never make this mistake. They understand that the only reason for gathering or publishing any data is to reinforce vital behaviors.

### *Make It Easy*

Rather than constantly finding ways to motivate people to continue with their boring, painful, dangerous or otherwise loathsome activities, find a way to change *things* in order to make the right behaviors easier to enact.

Making use of *things* to enable behavior works best when you can alter the physical world in a way that eliminates human choice entirely. You don't merely make good behavior desirable, you make it inevitable. This is where structure, process and procedures come into play. An example of this is the fast-food industry where employees can simply push picture buttons when taking an order. The process has all been routinized, and it's almost impossible to do the wrong thing. ■

**SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST**

**If you liked *Influencer*, you'll also like:**

1. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The corporate world is full of skilled executives, but few will ever reach the top and, according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.
2. ***The Age of Speed* by Vince Poscente.** In a time-starved era, you need to begin paying attention to authors like Poscente who give you the tools to get ahead of the rush once and for all.
3. ***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink.** Pink offers a fresh look at what it takes for businesspeople and organizations to move from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age.

## Become an Influencer

There is a growing body of knowledge as well as an impressive supply of real-life success stories that teach exactly how to change almost any human behavior. Scholarly works by Dr. Albert Bandura and others demonstrate that, if you know what you're doing, you can indeed change remarkably resistant behaviors.

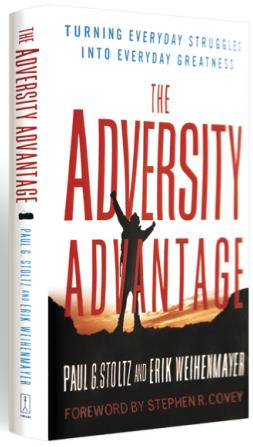
To become an effective influencer, it is important to address all six sources of influence when designing an influence strategy. Stop thinking of influence tools as a buffet and recognize them as a comprehensive approach to creating systematic, widespread and lasting change. Diagnose both motivational and ability sources of influence and then lock in the results by applying individual, social and structural forces to the solution. You now have a powerful six-source diagnostic tool at your fingertips. Use it liberally. ■

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SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®






by Paul G. Stoltz and Erik Weihenmayer

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### Turning Everyday Struggles Into Everyday Greatness

# THE ADVERSITY ADVANTAGE

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You might be thinking that any sensible person seeks less adversity, not more. Right? Here's the problem: While you can certainly have an enjoyable life, you cannot reach beyond pleasure to even the most basic level of greatness without a healthy dose of adversity — the very thing most people seek to diminish. Why? Because adversity alone has the unique power to inspire exceptional clarity, purge any vestiges of lethargy, refocus your priorities, hone your character and unleash your most potent forces.

Even minor setbacks provide fertile soil for elevating behavior. If you eliminate adversity, you miss out on life's deepest riches, highest gifts and most powerful lessons. The more adversity you escape, the less you become.

In *The Adversity Advantage*, authors Paul G. Stoltz and Erik Weihenmayer offer proven principles and practical tools that teach you how to use adversity as a force for superior achievement, resilience, agility, innovation, energy and happiness. These two adversity experts have married their dream-team combination of practical science and unmatched experience to develop seven guiding principles to teach you how to transform adversity into your most powerful advantage.

This summary will rewire your core response mechanisms to react optimally to anything that happens the moment it strikes. You will learn to move past avoiding or simply coping with adversity to harness its true power. This summary will also show you how to pinpoint and bolster your adversity strengths in order to bring out your best when you need it most — under pressure.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Where you fit on the Adversity Continuum.
- The key differences between regular strengths and adversity strengths.
- How to engage your CORE to meet everyday and major challenges.
- How to "pack light and pack right" in order to take advantage of the adversities that come your way.
- Why you must devise Signature Systems to help you meet your Summit Challenge.

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# Summit One: Take It On!

Adversity happens. It doesn't play favorites, and it comes in all shapes and sizes. And your natural response might be "Take it away!" rather than "Take it on!"

In enterprise, the greatest inventions and advances are often spawned from or through adversity. It was Apple Computer's dismal market share in personal computers that unleashed the industry-defining iPod. Likewise, it was concern over global warming, oil dependency and fuel costs that triggered the first hybrid automobiles. Worldwide, we see the greatest outpouring of kindness in the face of the worst disasters. Pain, fear, discomfort and injustice are far more powerful motivators than their opposites.

## *Adversity Defined and Scored*

Defining adversity is the first step. Adversity is *personal* and *relative*. It may be useful to categorize adversity into two areas: (1) *inner adversity* (internal, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual states that cause you hardship) and (2) *outer adversity* (things that occur outside you that cause difficulty).

How big is any particular adversity likely to be? The magnitude of adversity you experience is determined by (1) *impact*, its real or imagined, existing or potential severity and (2) *importance*, how much it matters to you.

Have you noticed that you respond to some adversities more effectively than to others? It turns out that taking on the small stuff can actually be tougher than taking on the big stuff. You are constructed, through the flight-fight response, to draw forth previously unknown powers when the big stuff hits.

We humans do not have a similar protective mechanism for bringing out our best in less dramatic conditions. The good news is that you can craft and install a new mechanism by mastering the first Summit and each of the remaining six.

## *The Adversity Continuum*

The Adversity Continuum is designed to help you gain utter clarity on how you interact with adversity. The Adversity Continuum depicts the range of our approaches to life's tough stuff. It is a steep climb that few complete. As with most mountains, the lower elevations are where you find the crowds. But the higher you go, the better life gets.

At the bottom of the continuum resides one of our most natural and instinctive responses to any adversity — *avoiding it*. And a classic avoidance mechanism is *denial*. While denial has its place and can buy you time, it prevents you from taking adversity on. As a result, the potential benefit that adversity might bring is delayed or even denied to you.

*Surviving* adversity can be downright arduous. It's not difficult to tell when you are in survival mode as opposed to avoidance mode. In general, avoidance only staves off the inevitable, whereas survival can bring relief. With avoidance you go around; with survival, you go through.

You've surely witnessed people applying all sorts of common strategies in an effort to *cope* with the adversity — or get by — in both constructive and destructive ways. Many people get stuck in coping mode because the per-

***(continued on page 3)***

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Erik Weihenmayer is the world's leading blind athlete and the only blind person in history to reach the Seven Summits, including Everest. Weihenmayer inspires millions of people each year through his climbing expeditions, nonprofit outreach and keynote presentations. He is author of *Touch the Top of the World* and subject of the award-winning documentary *Farther Than the Eye Can See*.

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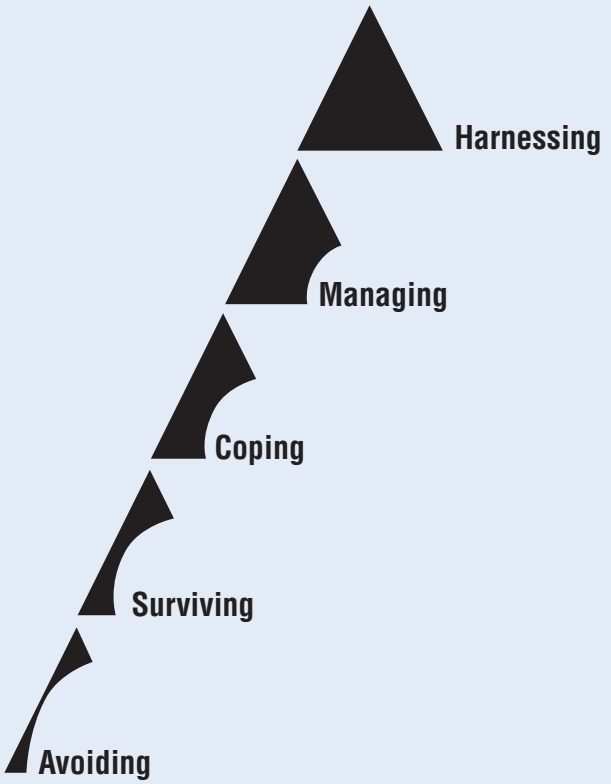
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## Summit One: Take It On!

*(continued from page 2)*

### The Adversity Continuum




ceived impact of the adversity is so great that it takes all they have just to stay even or prevent a downslide.

When you *manage* adversity, you are trying to minimize its downside and its potential impact on other facets of your life or organization. Managing adversity is like operating a moderately effective furnace. It's more productive than coping, surviving or avoiding, but it still has a price. When you work to affect your adversity in some positive way, you are managing it. Done right, proactively managing adversity can be an effective way to keep it in check.

It is only at the level of harnessing adversity that your "furnace" produces more energy than it uses. When you use adversity to elevate yourself and others, or for some tangible gain, that's harnessing adversity.

The truth is that most of us spend time moving between the levels of the continuum. The key is to minimize the time spent in the lower levels and maximize the time spent at the top.

Now that you understand the different levels of the continuum, you can answer these questions: In general, how do you relate to adversity? When it strikes, where on this continuum do you spend most of your time?

### *Your Adversity Assumption and the Adversity Inventory*

Most people's assumptions about adversity run along the lines of "less is more." Overall, "less adversity is better" drives much or our financial planning and many of our choices about how we live. What are your assumptions about adversity?

To get yourself started, write down your two predominant assumptions about adversity. What would the people who see you most and know you best guess your assumptions about adversity to be?

It takes a certain degree of courage to make an inventory of your adversities. But all worthy ascents begin with coming to grips with where you are, so you can move forward and up. To inventory your adversities, go through the following steps:

- **Step One: Categorize your life.** List all the categories of life that matter to you including family, work, friends, community, health, hobbies and others.
- **Step Two: Declare your aspirations.** List your top two or three aspirations for each category of your life. These are things that you have not yet accomplished but that you aspire to achieve in the short or long term.
- **Step Three: Prioritize your pain.** Thoughtfully consider and then list the top two or three adversities that are causing you the most pain or discomfort within each category. Your initial thought may not reveal the true source of pain. Think about the pain beneath the pain and enter *that* on your list.
- **Step Four: Pick your adversities.** Within each category, scrutinize the adversities you listed in Step Three and pick the one that, if you took it on, would unleash the greatest energy in your life.
- **Step Five: Pinpoint your Summit Challenge.** Let's rise above your aspirations to your overarching Summit Challenge. Step Five is to select from your list of aspirations the most compelling thing you've always wanted to do but have not yet done (or completed) for any reason.
- **Step Six: Select your Summit Adversity.** The next step is to select the one adversity that (1) you are sure to face as you take on your Summit Challenge, and (2) if harnessed, would offer the greatest potential energy or breakthrough. This is your Summit Adversity. This adversity may be the most daunting, most impossible or most worrisome.

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## Summit One: Take It On!

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• **Step Seven: Clear the trail.** You already know what your Summit Adversity is. In order to "clear the trail," use the following questions to hone your thinking: What are the primary reasons you have *not* optimized that adversity so far? What are your excuses? What are the excuses beneath the excuses? What's really at the heart of the matter?

### *Your Take It On Strategy*

When you turn into the storm, you are consciously deciding to grab the wheel and enter the weather and *not* wait for a wake-up call that forces you into action. Instead of turning away from your adversity, you turn into it and bring it on so you can devise your Take It On Strategy.

If you know that tough weather is coming, you can drive yourself nuts hoping that it doesn't hit or worrying about what happens when it does. Or you can gear up, turn into the onslaught and say, "Take it on!" The idea is to do so not just when you are forced but proactively, by choice, because this provides the energy you can harness, the lead you can turn to gold. ■

# Summit Two: Summon Your Strengths

In Summit One you learned how to use adversity as fuel. In Summit Two, it's not just about harnessing the strengths you have. It is also about developing new strengths that you can bring forth in times of adversity to accomplish what you set out to do.

Decide what you want to do, and clarify why you want to do it. Then bring forth and nurture the strengths required to make it happen. Most important, summon the right strengths when adversity strikes and you, as well as the people around you, will win.

### *Skills, Talents and Strengths*

Let's begin by clarifying three common terms — *skills, talents* and *strengths* — in ways that will ultimately help you turn your adversities to better advantage. For our purposes, we define *skills* as those things you're relatively good at, whether innate or learned. *Talents* are things that you have a natural ability to do well. *Strengths* are a different order of magnitude. Our dictionary defines strength as "an extremely valuable or useful ability, asset or quality." In other words, strengths are portable qualities that may encompass or be a result of several skills. Skills are therefore a subset of strengths. Strengths go deep.

*Will* is one part *determination*, one part *desire*, one part *decisiveness* and one part *effort*. To be strong-willed about something is to put your force of conviction and effort behind it — to want it, focus on it, decide it must be done and then do it.

Will combined with using and developing skills yields strengths. Here is a simple way to think of it: *Skill without will remains still. And will without skill yields nil.*

### *Adversity Strengths Versus Regular Strengths*

Once you think through the Strength Formula — what strengths you need to forge and summon to succeed with your Summit Challenge — you are ready to explore one of the most important issues you will face in any endeavor. This issue is who you are and what you bring out not when times are calm, but when the world is turbulent and adversity rules the day.

Adversity Strengths are what you summon when adversity strikes — those strengths that rise up and shine when you're under the gun or feeling the pressure, or when a situation goes south. These are the strengths that help you effectively take on each new challenge.

One way to turn adversity to your advantage is to close the gap between your Regular Strengths and your Adversity Strengths. Closing the gap between your Regular Strengths — the qualities you regularly demonstrate under calm, normal conditions — and Adversity Strengths is a powerful step toward turning adversity into an advantage, by helping you bring out more of your best, especially when things go wrong.

### *A-W-E*

If talent and smarts alone aren't the answer, how do you select a team that will win in the face of adversity? Go for A-W-E.

• **The A Factor: Adversity.** The A Factor has to do with how people perform and what strengths they bring forth while facing adversity. The A Factor is a gauge of how effective, consistent, trustworthy and dependable a person is when the pressure's on. You can put people into challenging situations, or take note when such situations happen to arise, and gauge their A Factor that way. Obviously, the more realistic the trial, the better the results.

You can put yourself and your team in a much stronger position when the next adversity hits, by (1) gaining utter clarity and being brutally honest about your own A Factor, (2) helping others to shed light on theirs, and (3) working on developing the Adversity Strengths you need.

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## Summit Two: Summon Your Strengths

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• **The W Factor: Why.** Practically every book about teams states the importance of having a group of individuals commit to a single, unifying cause. It's simple but very informative to ask a person, "*Why* do you want to be a part of this team?" Then come back again, "Yes, I understand, but *why*?" You will find that by your fourth or fifth *why*, you get at the real why, the why beneath the why. The intensity and content of the real why give you a gauge of where people score on the W factor.

What's the quickest and best way to get at the W Factor? *Ask*. Ask people why they want to do the thing they want to do. Then ask again, until you get the answer that rings truest.

• **The E Factor: Ego.** It turns out that the E Factor can play a big role when adversity strikes. Ego can be what fortifies you with the belief in yourself to dare to take risks, take on the daunting and the impossible, step up when others step back or even forge ahead through some pretty rough weather.

And ego can tie in closely to the W Factor, the why. In general, it takes a reasonable ego to even consider going after the higher whys. There are a few practical ways to get at the E Factor. The direct method is to ask people how good they think they are, overall or at certain skills; how well they rank in certain strengths; and how important they feel their roles are on their current teams. Then compare the answers against the perceptions of others who witness these people firsthand, particularly members of their teams.

This simple approach can lead to some vital insights. When it comes to harnessing life's tough stuff, the term *healthy ego* certainly applies. Look for the E Factor in anyone you bring onto your team. ■

# Summit Three: Engage Your CORE

Your CORE is derived from your Adversity Quotient (AQ), which is a measure of how you respond to adversity of all kinds, or — simply put — how you react to the world around you.

We've discovered, with mounting certainty, that when all other factors are held equal, high-AQ people rise to the top. They tend to outperform, outlast, outmaneuver and outdo their low-AQ counterparts in essentially any endeavor. And they tend to be energized by the same challenges that wear others down.

### *Inside AQ — Know Your CORE*

Your CORE — which resides in the center of your AQ — is the one thing you take with you into every battle. CORE is composed of *Control, Ownership, Reach* and *Endurance*.

• **Control:** The aspect of control that matters most is *influence*. The vital question is this: *When adversity strikes, to what extent do you perceive you can influence whatever happens next?* The lower one's AQ, the less control one perceives. Engage your CORE by asking, *"What facets of this situation or adversity can I potentially influence?"* — as opposed to those you may consider beyond your control. As powerful as Control is in determining your attitude toward adversity, it is when you take *Ownership* that the action unfolds.

• **Ownership:** Ownership is about the energizing tendency to do something, no matter how small, to make things better. Ownership is one of the indisputable fibers of everyday greatness. Question: *When should you do it?* Answer: *When you least feel like stepping up.* It gives you traction and Control. Engage your CORE by asking, *"What can I do to affect this situation or adversity immediately and positively?"* rather than worrying about who caused it or who is responsible for figuring out the ultimate solution.

• **Reach:** Reach influences the burden you carry in life. The better you become at containing difficulties, the lighter you feel. Engage your CORE to limit the scope, size and fallout of your adversities by asking, *"What can I do to minimize or contain the downside of this situation?"* and, *"What can I do to optimize the potential upside of this situation?"* The second question may sound forced or strange. But one of the most compelling discoveries in our AQ research is that the higher your AQ, the more possibilities you perceive and the more upside you see in even the most tragic situations.

• **Endurance:** When adversity strikes, Endurance involves asking, *How long do you predict it will last or endure?* People with higher AQs remain hopeful and optimistic. People with lower AQs tend to see setbacks as long-term, if not permanent. Engage your CORE by asking, *"How can I get through this as quickly as possible?"* Address Endurance head-on by using this question to dispel the assumption that a specific setback must drag on and on.

### *Building Your CORE*

Given the number of adversities that strike each day, you will have plenty of opportunities to practice build-

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## Summit Three: Engage Your CORE

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ing and strengthening your CORE. The most practical way to build your CORE is through heightened awareness, with feedback, ideally from multiple sources. One of the best ways is a 360-degree or panoramic perspective. This provides each individual with powerful and helpful feedback, shining a light upon one's blind spots so he or she can grow stronger.

"What's my CORE?" can become your instant pulse check when difficulties strike. So perhaps the simplest, but possibly the most profound, way to build your CORE is to pay keen attention to what thoughts, words, emotions and actions spark inside you the moment you face any kind of adversity.

### *Employ the CORE Strategy*

Begin with your Summit Challenge. Take out some blank paper, and write that challenge down so you can work through the CORE Strategy. The CORE Strategy generates a lot of ideas. But as you come up with ideas, don't discuss, scrutinize or judge them. Only *list* them. The scrutiny comes later. Next, write your answers to each of these questions.

### *C = Control*

- What is everything beyond our control? What things do most people consider as beyond our control?
- Of those things, which ones are absolutely beyond our *influence*?
- Of the things you (or we) could potentially influence in this situation, which two are most important?

### *O = Ownership*

- Where and how can we step up to make the most immediate positive difference in this situation?

### *R = Reach*

- What is the *worst* thing that could happen?
- If we allowed ourselves to think outrageously, what is the *best* thing that could happen?
- What things can we do to minimize the potential *downside* of this situation?
- What things can we do to maximize the potential *upside* of this situation?

### *E = Endurance*

- What do we *want* life to look like on the other side of this adversity?
- What else can we do to get there as quickly and completely as possible?

Understanding, building and engaging your CORE will equip you with the capacity to perform your own brand of alchemy. Your CORE determines how much you benefit, how soon you benefit, and how much you do or don't suffer unnecessarily in between, even in the most extreme circumstances. ■

## Summit Four: Pioneer Possibilities

In Summit Four you will learn to pioneer possibilities in your work and life. The first step you need to take to pioneer possibilities is to pick a worthy goal, such as your Summit Challenge. Once you or your organization has decided what to accomplish, the next question is how you are going to do it. Pioneering possibilities may mean that you need to invent new ways of doing something. These customized solutions are your Signature Systems.

What are the common characteristics of Signature Systems that you can replicate with your challenges and goals? Pioneers carry good PROPS:

1. **Portable.** Most Signature Systems can be taken from place to place.
2. **Replicable** or **Repeatable** or both. They can be readily rebuilt, reused or repeated.
3. **Original.** They tend to be clever and unique.
4. **Personal.** They fit and are adapted to you — your unique style and needs.
5. **Simple.** They require a minimum of steps, hassles and resources.

Most ingenious Signature Systems are as much a result of tenacity and relentlessness as they are of brilliance. The rough systems you and your team devise will take a lot of relentless work to become smooth, elegant, dependable and perfect. ■

## Summit Five: Pack Light, Pack Right

It's tough to climb a mountain if you pack too much or if you pack incorrectly. Likewise, it's tough to be agile and effective at harnessing numerous adversities each day if you're weighed down by all the competing priorities vying for your focus. When you're constantly drained by sheer weight, it's nearly impossible to move toward being great. In taking on Summit Five, you will both reassess and repack your *stuff, time, work* and *self*, shedding

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## Summit Five: Pack Light, Pack Right

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unnecessary burdens that may be sapping your strength or slowing you or your organization down. Summit Five will culminate with you completing your own Adversity Advantage Packing List, re-equipping yourself to optimize the three A's — *alchemy, agility* and *adversity*. In Summit Five you will also learn the defining difference between net worth and Life Worth — the enduring source of happiness.

### *Stuff*

Check your own packing — what you currently carry through life. How much of what you own and what you do is really critical? Ultimately, do the things you pack into your life weigh you down or lift you up?

Proper packing takes clarity and discipline, especially in the face of adversity. Most people are weighed down considerably by the wrong stuff. Packed wrong, more can be less. More stuff leads to more complexity, which leads to less time, less peace of mind and less capacity to take on more important challenges.

### *Time*

Time is about how you use your day and spend your life. People who harness adversity have a positive urgency coursing through their veins. Fueled by their latest challenge, they are anxious for the high-octane buzz the next worthy challenge delivers when they take it on, take it in, and convert it into life-enriching lessons and experiences.

How do you load up your time with Life Worth? Take on worthy pursuits, build in worthy challenges, and you will increase your overall Life Worth.

### *Work*

Work is an excellent opportunity to hone your newly acquired adversity skills. Most jobs entail adversity, but they are also a major potential source of Life Worth — an opportunity to demonstrate everyday greatness. Your approach may mirror and will probably influence the way you live your life outside work.

Done wrong, work can be a big drain on Life Worth and energy. Done right, work can be among the most enriching facets of your life. There are two main ways to pack your work life lighter and better. One is to infuse your current pursuit with Life Worth; the other is to pick a pursuit that is inherently rich in Life Worth.

### *Self*

Even if you pack your life light and right — with the stuff, obligations and work that enhance Life Worth, it is still you who has to take on the terrain. Agility, alchemy and adversity demand your best. You have to treat yourself like a world-class athlete so that you can give your best to everyone else. Life is short. Optimize your Life Worth. ■

### The Adversity Advantage Packing List

The point of this exercise is to focus on something you can do now and as an ongoing process to help you pack light and pack right. so you can optimize your three A's — agility, alchemy and adversity.

Packing light and right is not just about shedding unnecessary weight. Packing is also about strategically adding those things that are most climb-critical.

**Stuff:** As you think about everything you own, what item or items could you purchase or add that would improve your three A's?

**Time:** What is a new obligation or something you will add to your schedule to improve your three A's?

**Work:** What will you add to your work to make it richer in Life Worth?

**Self:** What will you add to your life to optimize your energy, your outlook and the three A's?

## Summit Six: Suffer Well

In business, suffering well means putting up with political backbiting, naysayers, long hours, rejection, uncertainty, constraints on resources, downturns and drudgery in the name of a higher cause or a worthy breakthrough. To suffer is to *endure something painful*. And, as with adversity, the more something matters to you, the more painful it may be. Suffering is also relative and is sometimes determined by duration.

The power of suffering is its ability to *strip* away superficialities, ego and distractions. Actually, STRIP is an acronym because, in short, the factors that make up suffering are:

- **Severity** — the magnitude of the pain.
- **Time** — how long you must endure the pain.
- **Relativity** — how severe your pain is when compared to those around you and your situation is compared to your own past or other hardships.
- **Importance** — how much the thing for which you are suffering matters.
- **Price** — how much you may or will lose as a result of the adversity.

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## Summit Six: Suffer Well

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Together these five factors determine whether or not you suffer and the degree to which you suffer.

### *The Suffer Well*

Because suffering is so personal, it's difficult and perhaps inappropriate to provide one universal manual for how to do it. But there is a tool — the Suffer Well — that can apply in almost any circumstance.

A drinking well is filled with fresh water. You dip your bucket as deeply as necessary to draw forth the water you need. Likewise, the Suffer Well is filled with vital questions that, when answered, will draw forth the knowledge you need to suffer well. You can dip into and draw forth any or all questions, in any sequence, depending on the nature and severity of your suffering.

- How am I going to elevate myself and others, starting now?
- Who is most affected by how I suffer?
- What is my CORE with regard to my suffering?
- Why do I want to suffer well?
- By when will I have said or done something that demonstrates my commitment to suffer well? ■

# Summit Seven: Deliver Greatness, Every Day

Everyday greatness is not a generic skill set. It is highly individualized, like personality. This means that you get to deliver everyday greatness in your own authentic way.

But it's important to point out that there is a fundamental difference between *epic greatness* — the "great people of history" whose biographies fill the library shelves — and *everyday greatness* — the kind of greatness that can be gleaned from scaling the seven summits. One is an occasional epic event; the other is much more accessible, more of an ongoing effort and an everyday opportunity.

Besides, the reality is that most people are not striving to be like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or Sojourner Truth — someone who rises up and does the right thing in the face of immense adversity, changing the course of human history in the process. But we still strive to have our lives matter.

The virtues of everyday greatness — resilience, magnanimity, compassion, fortitude, good will and integrity — are like charity. There are people who deliver them more readily and generously when life is good than they may when times are tough. This is true of many leaders who are far better at gelling their teams when they are on a roll than when they are slammed against the rocks. But with charity, what speaks more clearly about your character — giving when you have an endless vat to draw from, or giving when you have nothing to give? Likewise, what matters more — elevating others when your mood, the setting and the conditions are just right, or doing so in the heat of battle? If it were easy, we would call it *everyday normality*.

### *Witnessing Greatness Every Day*

So how do you deliver greatness every day? Consider the people you admire the most and how they deliver their own greatness, then consider the following questions:

- Who do you most admire in work? In life?
- What does he or she do or demonstrate that makes him or her great?
- How does that person take it on?
- How does that person summon his or her strengths?
- How does that person engage his or her CORE?
- What possibilities has this person pioneered?
- What tough choices does that person make to pack light or pack right?
- If you have seen that person suffer, does he or she suffer poorly or suffer well?

After you consider all this about the individual you admire, you can then apply these questions to yourself and determine how *you* go about delivering greatness.

Remember, your relationship with adversity is utterly foundational to all you aspire to be and do. No longer will you remain passive or helpless against adversity. You will prove, over and over, that bad things can spawn good. When life beats you down, you will use its forces to rise up, to elevate yourself and those around you. You will convert life's difficulties into pure, endless fuel for delivering your brand of greatness every day. ■

### SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**If you liked *The Adversity Advantage*, you'll also like:**

1. ***Words That Work* by Dr. Frank Luntz.** According to Dr. Luntz, to effectively obtain the power of communication, you must learn that it's not always what you say, but how you say it.
2. ***The Age of Speed* by Vince Poscente.** In a time-starved era, you need to stop listening to everyone who tells you to slow down and begin paying attention to the rush once and for all.
3. ***Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell.** Talent is often misunderstood and overrated. To combat this, Maxwell suggests that people build their strengths and become "talent-plus people."

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# Arete

Brian Johnson

Executive Book Summaries®

# Areté

## Activate Your Heroic Potential




*by* **Brian Johnson**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Areté (pronounced *ARE-uh-tay*) is an ancient Greek word that translates in English as 'virtue' or 'excellence,' but it has a deeper meaning. It's really something closer to 'expressing the best version of yourself moment to moment to moment' and it is absolutely achievable. And it can fundamentally and permanently change your life while fundamentally and permanently changing the world.

As we go about living our lives, there exists a state in which we are being our absolute best selves and a state in which we are *not*. The gap that exists between them is where opportunity lies. But we all have that voice inside our heads that creates stories and tells us reasons why we cannot create the life we *really* want. We can settle that voice down and close the gap between who we are capable of being and who we are actually being. We can show up as the *best* versions of ourselves, but to do so we must be heroic. In ***Areté: Activate Your Heroic Potential***, author Brian Johnson helps us operationalize the wisdom of *Areté* and activate our heroic potential.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The 7 objectives that activate your Heroic potential.
- How to optimize your Big 3.
- 3 forms of discipline to make Masterpiece Days.
- How to activate your superpower.

## Know the Ultimate Game

When there's a really big gap between who we are capable of being and who we are actually showing up as everyday, not only do we fail to reach our potential, it feels *really* bad. When we choose to do the things that help us show up as the best versions of ourselves, we feel a deep sense of joy. Learning how to do that consistently is the ultimate game we're all playing all day every day.

### How to Close the Gap

There is a very powerful practice we can engage in to close the gap and live with *Areté* as we activate our Heroic potential. Living with *Areté* so we can be Heroic is the way to win the ultimate game. But even when we know what we want and what we need to do to get it, a voice inside our heads tells us all the reasons why we shouldn't or can't. We call this voice Part X.

You must pay attention when that voice inside takes over your brain and tries to take you in the wrong direction. This is called Targeted Thinking.

Know what you want. Know what you need to do to get it. Tell Part X to settle down. And go do what you're here to do.

Close the gap. Give us all you've got. TODAY.

## The 7 Objectives

Knowing the game of life and what is limiting you is nice and warm and fuzzy, but it begs the question, "HOW are we going to activate your Heroic potential?" We put it into practice by integrating ancient wisdom, modern science, and practical tools into SEVEN objectives.

## Objective I: Know the Ultimate Game

Abraham Maslow is the guy who came up with the whole "Hierarchy of Needs" and taught us about the importance of actualizing our potential. This need to self-actualize, is at a certain stage of development, as important as our need to breathe. It's kinda like soul oxygen.

To the extent that you ARE NOT showing up as the best, most Heroic version of yourself and there is a GAP between who you are *capable* of being and who you are *actually* being, YOU WILL SUFFER. Period.

Maslow also told us that in any given moment, we have a choice. We can step forward into growth, or we can step back into safety. We can think of this as +1 or -1. Step forward or go back. Forward or back. +1 or -1.

How we feel at the end of the day is largely determined by those micro-moments of decision. You let enough of those -1 moments trickle into your life and you're going to want to crack a bottle of something when you get home.

Alternatively, sprinkle a ton of +1 into your day and you're feeling radiantly alive and in love with life. What happens when you aggregate and compound those micro-moments into days and weeks and months and years? That's when you are experiencing the joy of fulfilling your highest potential.

When we live with *Areté*, we're closing the gap between who we're *capable* of being and who we're *actually* being. And it feels REALLY REALLY REALLY good. It's almost as if we're high-fiving our inner soul, that best version of ourselves, and we experience a deep sense of joy. We've ALL experienced this.

Think back to a time when you made yourself proud. Feel the wisdom and discipline and courage and love with which you showed up to meet an important challenge. Now, look forward and imagine a life in which you show up as THAT version of yourself.

Empowering you to more and more consistently be that best, most Heroic version of yourself is what Areté is all about. THAT is the ultimate goal in mind.

The ultimate game of life is to flourish by living with virtue. If the ultimate game is won by putting our virtues in action, then we better get REALLY good at doing that, eh? To become virtue connoisseurs, we look to the cardinal virtues of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, and modern scientists, and boil them down to four Heroic cardinal virtues to APPLY this wisdom to our modern lives:

WISDOM + DISCIPLINE + LOVE + COURAGE.

These virtues guide our work in living with *Areté*. By the time we are done playing together, we will have the WISDOM to know the game we're playing and how to play it well, the DISCIPLINE to *actually* play that game well today, the LOVE to deeply and joyfully connect with others, and the COURAGE to be willing to act in the presence of fear.

Operationalizing *those* virtues is, ultimately, what it's all about.

The Heroic mantra isn't "OM." It's "OMMS." As in: "OBSTACLES MAKE ME STRONGER."

## Objective II: Forge Antifragile Confidence

Now that we know the ultimate game and the virtues required to play it well, it's time to forge some antifragile confidence. Let's define some key terms first, starting with: antifragile.

You can be *fragile* and break easily. You can be *resilient* and withstand more stress before breaking down and then bouncing back a little quicker than most. OR, you can be the OPPOSITE of fragile.

What would happen if, the MORE you got kicked around, the STRONGER you got? You'd be ANTIFRAGILE. When you face the inevitable "winds" of life, are you showing up like a candle and getting blown out by the first breeze OR are you showing up with a HEROIC FIRE such that those winds FUEL you? The Heroic mantra isn't "OM." It's "OMMS." As in: "OBSTACLES MAKE ME STRONGER."

Now, let's define *confidence*. The word literally means "with intense trust." We need to cultivate an intense trust in *ourselves* such that it DOESN'T MATTER what happens because we know that we are the type of people who can do what needs to get done whether we feel like it or not. We can not only handle whatever life throws at us, but we can get STRONGER as a result.

Enter: Antifragile Confidence.

To forge antifragile confidence, we need to understand the proper way to handle life's inevitable challenges. We need to learn how to eat them like energy bars. Let's explore three powerful ways to go about doing that.

### Bring it On

Most people hate feeling any level of discomfort so they pretty much do everything they can to avoid the pain of being outside their comfort zone. Now, that's great if being mediocre is your goal, but not so great if you're serious about living your greatest life and activating your Heroic potential.

Here's the deal.

Your infinite potential exists on the other side of your comfort zone. And what does it feel like when you exit your comfort zone? You feel fear. Doubt. Anxiety. Fill in the blank with the pain of your favorite sense of discomfort. So…to get to the other side, we need to REVERSE OUR DESIRE. Rather than try to *avoid* pain, we need to learn to love it.

We need to see those moments when our heart skips a beat and our palms start to sweat as the gifts that they are–tickets to our destiny. Which leads us to a simple tool.

The next time you feel even an *inkling* of fear or doubt, practice saying to yourself, "BRING IT ON!" Something magical happens when we do this Every. Single. Time. In fact, science shows that we fundamentally change on a PHYSIOLOGICAL level. By INVITING the challenges into our lives, we move from what researchers call a "threat response" to a "challenge response" and, when we do that, our entire bodies change.

### I'm Excited

Research shows that when you're nervous or stressed, it is far more effective to try to get excited than it is to try to calm down. Why is that? Because anxiety is what scientists call a "high-arousal state" while being calm is a "low-arousal state." It's almost impossible to shift from a high-arousal state of fear or anxiety *immediately* into a calm state. It's like cruising at eighty miles an hour and slamming on the brakes. Not a good idea.

*Much* wiser to take all that fear energy and simply reframe it as excitement–channeling it into a positive, constructive direction and, effectively, pressing go on the accelerator rather than stop. Simply saying *"I'm excited!"* is a surprisingly powerful way to make that happen.

### OMMS

Imagine being IMMUNE to obstacles such that they have no effect on you. In fact, let's take it one step further and remind ourselves that, when properly framed, obstacles *literally* make us stronger.

We want to see that truth IN THE MOMENT we are faced with unexpected challenges. That's where the Heroic mantra comes in to internalize this. *OMMS.* Obstacles Make Me Stronger. Chant it with a fierce determination in your soul and a smile on your face, knowing that you have what it takes to meet any and every challenge life throws at you. *OMMS. OMMS. OMMS.* All day. Every day.

## Objective III: Optimize Your Big 3

Sigmund Freud said that a good life is, essentially, all about two things: Work and Love. Only, if we have a hard time getting out of bed in the morning because of poor lifestyle choices, we're going to have a REALLY hard time giving our best to our Work *or* our Love.

Therefore we need to start with ENERGY and then focus on Work and Love and…VOILÀ, we have our Big 3: Energy, Work, and Love. Get those right and we're *at least* 80% there.

### Energy

To get Heroic levels of Energy we have to look into the little energy powerhouses within our bodies: mitochondria. Know this: the health of *those* little guys plays THE leading role in YOUR health and well-being. We'd die in seconds if our mitochondria stopped producing energy.

How do we take good care of our mitochondria? For now, start with a simple question: What's the #1 thing you *already* know you could be doing to dial in your Energy? And, perhaps even more importantly, what's the #1 thing you *could* STOP doing that would most powerfully boost your Energy?

Maybe it's eliminating alcohol, or sugar, or late-night binge-watching. Whatever those #1s are, it's time to get ourselves Heroically Energized so we can show up most powerfully in our Work and in our Love. TODAY.

### Work

Our target with Work is not Mediocre Work. We need to go ALL IN on creating conditions that will allow us to do Genius Work. We have an equation for that, which stems from Cal Newport's book *Deep Work*.

Cal teaches us that most people flit around from one Shallow Work task to another (email, Slack message, reactive this or that). Very few of us are unplugging from technology and locking ourselves in a bubble of focus where we can do some truly impactful Deep Work.

If we want to produce some GREAT work in a very efficient period of time we need to increase the intensity of our focus. Turn everything off. Give yourself a block of time to do nothing but Deep Work. Repeat that tomorrow. And then again. And again.

In the quest to bring our best, we are aiming to go one step further and do Genius Work. The FIRST and most important variable in our Genius Work Equation is ENERGY. When we get our ENERGY dialed in and consistently focus it like a *chainsaw* on what's truly most important Work-wise, we might astonish ourselves with Genius Work.

**Genius Work Produced = ENERGY x Time Spent x Intensity of Focus**

### Love

After getting our Energy optimized to Heroic levels so we can do Genius Work, we want to make sure we're prioritizing the next critical facet of our Big 3: LOVE.

It all starts with Love 0.0. Quite simply: We're going to have a hard time giving others the love we aren't giving ourselves. The fastest way to dial this in is to identify the #1 thing you do when you're at your best. Then make a 101% nonnegotiable commitment to yourself TO DO THAT every.single.day.

Love 1.0 is all about showing up powerfully for your friends and family. The fastest way to dial this in is by putting your phone away. Science says it's a distraction and will erode the depth of your connection. Focus on your loved ones, not your phone.

Love 2.0 is all about those micro-moments of positivity with various people throughout your day. Again, the #1 obstacle here is your phone. Exit your cocoon of self-absorption and be PRESENT.

Love 3.0 is what we call Heroic Love. This is when we move beyond mere compassion for others in the middle of challenging times to HAVING COURAGE TOGETHER. This is a fierce belief in the strength of others to meet their challenges combined with a willingness to act together in the presence of fear to conquer and grow from those challenges.

Love 8.0 is love for our work. We want to KNOW that, when we're doing it right, there's actually NO difference between our Work and our Love as our work IS an act of love. Bring meaning to your current role by seeing how you're making a difference in people's lives.

We must more and more consistently shout, "BRING IT ON!" as we choose to expand, expand, **expand!**

Love ∞.0 is the love of EVERYTHING. We quit arguing with reality and learn to not only accept it but LOVE it. As Nietzche told us, it's all about loving our fate.

## Objective IV: Make Today a Masterpiece

We know the game we're playing. We're forging antifragile confidence and we're optimizing Energy, Work, and Love. Now, it's time to seize the day as we systematically architect our Masterpiece Days.

This objective can be summarized in three simple words. **TODAY's THE DAY!!** If we want to make our LIVES a masterpiece, we need to make TODAY a masterpiece. Here's how.

### Masterpiece Day Checklists

You can (and should!!) use checklists for any complex thing you do that you want to make sure you consistently do well. Here's the short story on a good checklist: It's short. It's precise. And most importantly, it's SUPER PRACTICAL.

To create Masterpiece Days, figure out the few super-basic things you do to help you have great days. Create a checklist to make sure you do them. And make TODAY a masterpiece.

### Time Blocks

The basic idea here is to create a block of time in which you eliminate ALL distractions. Focus on whatever you decide is THE most important thing. Then make a habit of doing that Every. Single. Day.

### Your Prior Best

It's time to begin architecting a new protocol with the ambitious target of making your prior best your new baseline. Spend some time thinking about you at your best. On a piece of paper put "ME AT MY BEST" at the top. Draw a line right down the middle with "I DO THIS" on the left side and "I DON'T DO THIS" on the right.

Now, write down some of the things you DO when you're at your best and some of the things you DON'T do when you're at your best, with a focus on what you do and *don't* do Energy, Work, and Love wise. Do more of the "DO" stuff and less of the "DON'T" stuff. It's not *easy* to do that, but it really is that simple. This will help you make your prior best your new baseline.

The power of having clarity on the things that help us activate our Heroic potential and then DOING THOSE THINGS cannot be overstated, whether (Make that: ESPECIALLY) when we don't feel like it.

## Objective V: Master Yourself

To become the master of yourself, you need to develop THREE forms of discipline: reactive, structural, and expansive.

Something triggers you. Can you step between the stimulus and your habitual response with the DISCIPLINE to CHOOSE a better response? Fantastic. That's reactive discipline.

Structural discipline is all about the daily habits that keep us plugged in–that give our lives the "structure" we need to connect to and express the best version of ourselves. It is also the foundation of the protocol we want to make sure we're executing–ESPECIALLY when we don't feel like it.

Then we have expansive discipline. EVERY SINGLE MOMENT we have a choice. Will we step forward into growth or back into safety?

If we want to activate our Heroic potential and have a shot at experiencing all that we're capable of being we must more and more consistently shout, "BRING IT ON!" as we choose to expand, *expand,* **expand!** In short: We need to make that expansion a discipline.

How are YOU doing with your reactive, structural, and expansive discipline? What's awesome? What needs work? What's ONE thing you can do a little differently TODAY?

## Objective VI: Dominate the Fundamentals

Greatness is all about consistency on the fundamentals. Look at any great performer and that's what you'll see. Of course, a world-class artist, athlete, entrepreneur, and parent will have different fundamentals but the same rule applies in each case: mastery of the basic fundamentals.

What are YOUR fundamentals? We can think of fundamentals on two different levels: the universal and the specific.

We ALL share the need for mastery around the basic fundies: eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, focusing. If we don't have one of those universal fundamentals dialed in then there's simply no way we'll have a shot at activating our Heroic potential.

Then we have our specific fundamentals. These are unique to each of us and our particular crafts. Here are a few ways you can dominate YOUR fundamentals TODAY.

### Eating. Moving. Sleeping.

Your fundamentals are super simple. Eating. Sleeping. Moving. How are you doing? Where are you strong? What needs work? It's amazing how those simple questions elicit some powerful distinctions.

What's the #1 thing you KNOW you could be doing that would help you go to the next level if you started doing it consistently? What, *specifically*, will you do? That #1 thing might not seem like a big deal. But it is.

Your doctor gets nervous if your knee doesn't respond to a little tap. We should get nervous if our fundamentals aren't dialed in. Get clear on what's working and what needs work. And go dominate your fundamentals.

## Objective VII: Activate Your Superpower

Quick question for you: Who's your favorite hero? Who inspires YOU? What individuals–living or dead–embody the qualities you most admire?

What individuals showed up and lived in a way that deeply inspires YOU to show up and give us all you've got? As you think about that, know this…

All those heroes showed up in their own idiosyncratic way–Gandhi was frail and would go days without talking while Churchill was portly and rarely STOPPED talking. And those two guys didn't even *like* each other.

But…ALL of those heroes had ONE thing in common. The ONE thing ALL the great Heroes across all cultures throughout history have had in common is *Soul Force*.

It's every hero's superpower. It's that ineffable power you can *feel* in human beings living in integrity with their highest ideals. It's the force that can (literally) change the world.

And guess what…it's YOUR superpower as well. We just need to ACTIVATE IT. Not *someday*. TODAY. And then, very importantly, you need to REACTIVATE your *Soul Force* ALL DAY EVERY DAY.

THAT, my dear friend, is how we will fundamentally and permanently change your life while fundamentally and permanently changing the world together.

### The Soul Force Equation

All of our favorite Heroes had Soul Force. And, most importantly…YOU HAVE IT! We just need to ACTIVATE it–which is the ENTIRE point of ALL of our work together.

Here's the Soul Force equation that will help us figure out how to activate it:

**Soul Force = (Energy x Focus x WIN) Consistency**

If we want to activate our Heroic Soul Force superpowers, we need to do THREE things at the highest level possible.

First, we need to get our ENERGY to truly Heroic levels. Fact is, if we are dominating our fundamentals (Eating, Moving, Sleeping) and have a hard time getting out of bed because of poor lifestyle choices, we're going to have a REALLY hard time showing up at our best in any aspect of our lives.

Then, we need to FOCUS that Energy on what's *truly* most important right now–or, as we like to say, on "WIN"–which is short for "What's Important Now."

That's the first part of the Soul Force Equation.

**(Energy x Focus x WIN)**

Then we bring in the final, and BY FAR, the most important variable: CONSISTENCY.

KNOW THIS: If you can only get yourself to get your Energy Focused on What's Important Now *once in a while*, you will NEVER actualize your potential.

But…

If you can get yourself to show up CONSISTENTLY…
You can tap into your *infinite* superpowers.

The hope is that in these pages you have been inspired by AT LEAST ONE idea that can help you activate your Heroic potential. Operationalizing our virtues is HOW we can live with *Areté*. HEROES UNITE. It's time to change the world. One person at a time. Together. TODAY.




Brian Johnson is the Founder & CEO of Heroic Public Benefit Corporation and the author of ***Areté: Activate Your Heroic Potential***. He's 50% Philosopher + 50% CEO and 101% committed to helping create a world in which 51% of humanity is flourishing by the year 2051. As a Founder/CEO he's built and sold two social platforms. As a Philosopher/teacher, he's helped millions of people from around the world, trained 10,000+ Heroic Coaches from 100+ countries and created a protocol that science says changes lives. He lives in the country outside Austin, Texas, with his wife, Alexandra, and their two kids, Emerson and Eleanor. Learn more about Brian and Heroic at Heroic.us.

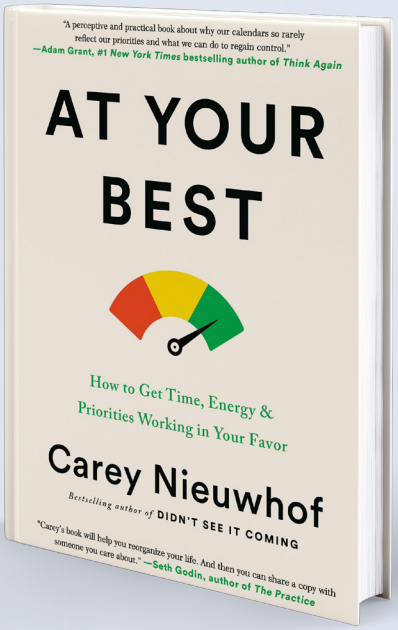
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# At Your Best

Carey Nieuwhof

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## At Your Best
By Carey Nieuwhof

Carey Nieuwhof is a bestselling author, speaker, former attorney, and he hosts one of today's most influential leadership podcasts. His podcast, blog, and online content for leaders are accessed over 1.5 million times each month. He speaks to leaders around the world about leadership, change, and personal growth. Carey and his wife, Toni, live north of Toronto.

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# A Cure to the Modern Pressure Problem

The modern world places demands on us that our family members just a few rungs up the tree could not have comprehended. When people from days gone by performed work, it was mostly manual in nature. Yes, it came with its share of pressures and stressors but the level of stress they lived under pales in comparison to that of present day "knowledge workers." Professionals of every stripe from accounting to teaching to litigating live under a near constant feeling of stress and worst of all, they can't quite put their finger on the source.

Renowned leadership blogger and podcaster Carey Nieuwhof believes that "you deserve to stop living at an unsustainable pace." In his latest, ***At Your Best: How to Get Time, Energy, and Priorities Working in Your Favor,*** he asks readers to imagine what it would be like to move away from the time pressures of modern life and instead, "learned how to live at your best, personally and professionally?" He wrote this book in an effort to help you find "a reasonable diagnosis" and "some welcome relief." He assumes that you are feeling guilty, too, for not being able to keep all of the balls in the air. He believes that "your problems stem from having too much, not too little. Too many demands. Too many opportunities. Too much information. Too many distractions. Too many choices. Too many people vying for attention. And way too much stuff on the calendar." This book offers you a cure to the modern pressure problem. Instead of offering ways to get out of stress or full on burnout, this book offers a way to avoid getting into it.

## Part 1: This Much Stress is Not Okay

Far too many of us are "overwhelmed and overcommitted and overworked" doing precisely what they set out to do. It's not that they didn't want this life they so carefully created. It's just that they didn't expect to feel so tired, lethargic, and dispassionate as a result. Stress leads to burnout and both have disastrous implications for your health and well being. The list of chronic ailments directly tied to stress is long. The list of diseases, equally as lengthy. As if that weren't enough, if your body undergoes chronic stress for too long without relief, you can drop dead of a heart attack or stroke. Game over. It's not okay in any way to live under this much stress.

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Nieuwhof points out the irony in modern humans, who are by every measure the most prosperous people the world has ever known, are living to survive instead of surviving to live. Think about some of the things that we hear regularly from people of all ages. "I just need to make it to summer vacation." "Let me survive final exams." "Really, my goal is to get to July, and then all will be good...I hope." Sound familiar?

We are all so overbooked and overextended that we are desperately seeking escape. Sometimes we kid ourselves into believing this stressful time of busyness is just a season. Nieuwhof explains, "If your busy season has no ending, it's not a season–it's your life." The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way. Nieuwhof changed what he was doing with his days and how he was doing it. The result was transformational for himself, his family, and his life.

## Part 2: Focus Your Time

Nieuwhof says that we have three primary assets that we can manage each day. Those are our time, energy, and priorities. The next part of the book focuses on how you can make time work for you instead of against you. The common advice for avoiding burnout is to gt enough sleep, exercise regularly, and maintain your important relationships. Nieuwhof admits this is sound enough advice but many of us follow it and still feel "perpetually overwhelmed." One reason is due to how we use our time.

Nieuwhof says, "Time off won't heal you when the problem is how you spend your time on." We take a few days off here or there or even a long sabbatical once a decade and magically expect our return to real life to be changed. That makes very little sense. "It's about as strategic as telling an alcoholic that he should stop drinking on Thursdays." If you want to experience a meaningful and lasting change in how you feel, you have to change the way you spend all of your time.

In order to focus your time, you have to make two critical mental shifts in how you view time all together. The first is that you must "tell the truth about time." Every person on this planet has the same 24 hours a day. Whether you are the most productive person or you sleep the entire time, it's the same allotment for us all. The excuse "I don't have time for that" is just that. An excuse. You have the time. You just need to take it. Instead, you have to start telling the truth about how you use your time.

Don't say you didn't have the time. Say you had it, but didn't take it. You could have done it, but you chose not to. You could have attended the meeting, but you opted to stay out of it. A key to making this benefit you without alienating everyone you know is to keep this dialogue internal. Slowly over time, you can start using time truth language at work, once you are well practiced and have experienced the shift in how you use time that comes along.

The second mental shift has to do with shifting your goals in relation to time. You have to "embrace passion and abandon balance." Nieuwhof asks you to completely let go of the idea of balance as a goal. This is liberating on a deep level. Most people who view themselves as successful in finding balance are in retreat mode. They are pulling back from their real goals and getting less and less.

Nieuwhof believes that most people who accomplish meaningful things do not seek balance. They seek passion. You have to choose passions carefully and then take the time to engage in them. "Balanced people don't change the world. Passionate people do." Whatever you decide to do, do it with fervor and a full embrace. No guilt, no remorse. "The key to living passionately is to focus your time on what is truly most important to you and to choose to do things wholeheartedly, with enthusiasm."

## Part 3: Leverage Your Energy

Too many of us are investing our energy in unintentional ways. It is true that we are all given 24 hours in a single day, we do not have equal energy spanning over that duration. In reality, most of us have between three and five hours of high productivity every day. That's it. We have to get intentional and thoughtful about the activities we organize during peak, medium, and low energy times of the day.

When we look at leveraging our energy, we have to identify the things that we are uniquely good at doing. These are gifts that we do easily and naturally. Couple those gifts with passion and you have the perfect recipe for making a big impact. The key to leveraging your energy is to identify those things you are good at and do those activities when you are at your peak energy level for the day.

You will get far more done in far less time when you leverage your energy in this way. How you organize your day becomes intentional, not accidental. "Most people let days happen to them, which results in disappointment, tension, unmet expectations, and important things left undone." Leverage your energy with your gifts and passion and you will make a much larger impact.

If your gifting-related activities are the highest priority and thus, performed when you are at your peak energy, you must determine your middle range and low range priorities. Meetings, schedule management, administrative work, and other noncritical, noncreative, lighter activities are typically best suited for these lower energy times of day. Your overall performance in these non critical capacities will be maintained but you won't squander the chance to do what you are best at doing when you are at your best by doing more menial tasks at peak energy times of the day.

## Part 4: Realize Your Priorities

You can set the best of intentions when your day begins but there are times, quite frequently for many of us, when your best intentions get blown up and your day gets totally hijacked. Team members need to pick your ear about a project. Emails keep pouring in and you can't seem to ignore them. Friends text you and you find yourself in long text conversation instead of doing the work you intended to do. It's an all too familiar scenario. In the real world, our priorities get hijacked by others who are trying to accomplish their own priorities. "Before you get mad at the

> In the real world, our priorities get hijacked by others who are trying to accomplish their own priorities. ”

world for this, just realize that's exactly what you do too."

A big part of this problem is that people have unparalleled access to us thanks to our phones. No matter where you go or what you are doing, that device can ping a notification with an associated request to get someone else's priority on your own agenda. When we react to these requests over and over again, we find ourselves wondering where our day went and why we didn't get anything done.

To get around this, you have to put a strategy in place. Make it a goal to "spend 80 percent of your time on 20 percent of activities and tasks that produce 80 percent of your results." Start by making a list of the top activities and tasks that are most important and yield the highest results in your day. Once those top activities are identified, they become a filter you can "use to sift through all the requests that come your way." If the request does not fit into one of your top activities, it should not make it into your calendar. It may not be "fancy or flashy" to spend 80 percent of your time on these things that move the needle the most, "but goodness, it's rewarding,"

There is one major hurdle that stands in your way. So many of us are people pleasers and we find it incredibly difficult to say no. But here's the problem. "Without a strategy for saying no, you default to yes, and your life vaporizes with other people's priorities being realized rather than yours." Saying no is hard because we are fearful of disappointing others or "coming off as a jerk." There is a way to soften the blow to yourself and say no in the nicest way possible, taken verbatim from the book:

1. Tell them you'd love to meet them.
2. Express empathy, showing you understand where they are coming from.
3. Be firm when you answer directly and with kindness that you cannot do it.
4. Redirect them to someone who can help.
5. Thank them to show your appreciation.

Be clear and do not leave false open. Don't say maybe or you will see. Say no, nicely.

## Part 5: Theory, Meet Real Life

In real life, we can succumb to saying yes or get our priorities mixed up or find ourselves stuck in a midenergy task during a high energy time of day. That's life and theories are sometimes tricky to fit into actual life. Nieuwhof recommends using strict control over your calendar so that you stop getting controlled by other people and distractions. If you intend to spend the weekend with your family but have not blocked that time out on your calendar, you are setting yourself up for getting sucked into something else that is lower priority.

"Decide how you'll spend your time before others decide it for you. If you don't decide ahead of time how to spend your time, others will, which is a ticket both to feeling overwhelmed and to ensuring you accomplish nothing that's important to you." If you want to spend time with your family every Saturday, you need to put that in your calendar. If you want to work out every afternoon at 4 pm, that needs to go on your calendar, too. This makes saying no much easier and it places your needs above those of others, right where they should be. You can do this easily and simply by creating repeating tasks in your calendar that will be automatically scheduled out as far in advance as you want.

You can live a life with drastically reduced stress and wildly increased productivity. You can organize your time and effort around your gifts and passions and make time for all of the things that matter to you most. But Nieuwhof has a warning that you should heed. Stress is a sort of modern day siren's song. We hate it but we actually kind of thrive on it. We are almost addicted to it. If we are not stressed, the assumption is that we are not ambitious or hardworking or achieving up to our potential. In our society, stress is seen as a badge of honor. It doesn't have to be that way.

When stress and overwhelm start creeping back in, you've got to recognize them as a signal to do something different. You do not have to be caught up in the swell. You can adapt, plan, and mitigate your way out of the stress cycle and put yourself back into a position of thriving. When you take control of your time, leverage your energy, and prioritize your activities you will truly be at your best.

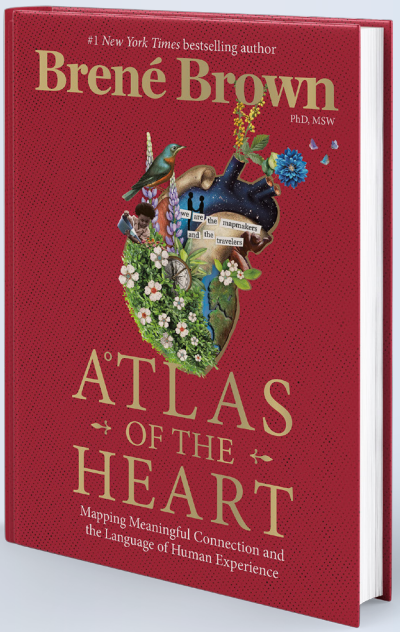
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# Atlas of the Heart

Brene Brown

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Atlas of the Heart

By Brené Brown

Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston, where she holds the Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair at the Graduate College of Social Work. She is also a visiting professor in management at The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business. Brown has spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy and is the author of six #1 New York Times bestsellers. She hosts the Unlocking Us and Dare to Lead podcasts, and her TEDx talk, "The Power of Vulnerability," is one of the top five most-viewed TED talks in the world. Her Netflix special, The Call to Courage, is the first filmed lecture by a researcher on the streaming service.

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# Mapping Meaningful Connection

You would be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn't have at least some knowledge of Brené Brown and her message. As one of the most successful and widely respected personal development thinkers and authors in the world, Brown has made a career out of sharing powerful insights that have the ability to change lives. Her TED talk on the power of vulnerability is one of the most viewed of all time, her Netflix special is the first filmed lecture by a researcher to be featured on the streaming service, and she's published six #1 bestsellers on the New York Times list. Now, Brown has set her sights on the power of human connection and how to create and sustain relationships in more meaningful ways, with ***Atlas of the Heart***.

Throughout this book's pages, Brown unpacks the ways that emotions, behaviors, thoughts, and experiences combine to influence the way we interact and connect with the people around us. And while she's not afraid to dive into some of the thorniest elements of human nature, she does so with her usual panache for subtlety, humor, and emotional depth that keeps the book from ever straying into emotional manipulation.

Meanwhile, Brown doesn't shy away from getting into the weeds— she covers 87 total emotions and universal human experiences, after all— and doing so with her usual brand of empathy combined with her signature talent for turning a phrase and dropping a memorable line that you'll want to write down on a post-it and stick to your mirror to read each morning.

## Places We Go When Things Are Uncertain or Too Much

Brown isn't one to ease readers in by starting with the pleasant and comfortable. She starts with some of the most difficult-to-process emotions a human being can experience— stress, anxiety, worry, dread, fear, and vulnerability, to name a few. Throughout this section, she provides powerful insights and anecdotes ranging from stories that her followers have shared to her own personal experience. One of the most impactful examples of this is when Brown shares stories of her early years working in food service, trying to manage the incredibly high-stress environment of the kitchen.

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She effectively highlights the differences between being stressed and overwhelmed, both in the frame of human connection. When you're stressed, you ask for help— like her experience as a waiter asking her fellow employees to help meet the needs of some of her tables and their orders. When you're overwhelmed, sometimes you must bow out completely for a time— like when Brown would tell the back staff that she was 'blown,' and they would instantly take over for ten minutes while she recovered.

Through anecdotes like these, Brown highlights the fact that allowing yourself to acknowledge our stress, dread, worry, and other negative emotions are far from signs of our being incapable— in fact, they require a great deal of strength. As she says in closing out this section and its final chapter, "Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage."

## Places We Go When We Compare

"Nothing that celebrates the humiliation or pain of another person builds lasting connection," Brown says, succinctly summing up much of what's wrong with our current culture that celebrates beating down others in order to make ourselves stronger. As a culture, we've been celebrating the humiliations and pains of others for a long time. Why? Because we think it will make us feel better about ourselves, and by celebrating others' pain we can feel, for a moment, that our pain isn't as significant. But as Brown artfully lays out in this section and its chapters on comparison, envy, jealousy, and resentment, this mindset will only ever lead to disconnection and lack of human engagement.

However, Brown says that not all comparisons are negative. When we experience admiration and reverence for people or institutions, we see them as something to aspire to, someone that can serve as a lighthouse to follow on the way to our goals. Brown keeps this pattern going in future sections, reminding us that every negative emotion has a positive mirror.

## Places We Go When Things Don't Go as Planned

This section is all about control. Brown effectively reframes some of the most common human experiences— feeling bored or disappointed, not having our expectations met, regret, discouragement, and frustration— as a response to having control taken from us.

Consider, for example, her introduction to the chapter on boredom: "Boredom is the uncomfortable state of wanting to engage in satisfying activity, but being unable to do it." Inherent in that definition of boredom is the lack of control. We want something we can't have. Brown then compellingly shows how many other negative emotions begin the same way— despite our best efforts, we end up disappointed. Someone fails to meet our expectations for them. We try our best but ultimately fail all the same.

But Brown goes on to show that these emotions aren't always negative. Once again, take a passage on boredom:

"If it weren't for boredom, you wouldn't be reading this book… Mundane activities can allow our minds to wander, daydream, and create."

## Places We Go When It's Beyond Us

The next section turns the idea of things happening beyond our expectations onto its positive edge, covering feelings of awe, wonder, curiosity, and surprise. This beautifully written series of chapters is a tribute to many of the experiences that make life worthwhile— the feeling of awe and wonder we feel when taking in beautiful art, natural landscapes, spiritual experiences, or thrilling ideas; the experience of curiosity as we begin to explore some of those ideas and yearn to find answers; the surprise we feel when something doesn't happen as expected and causes us to question what we thought we knew.

Brown acknowledges that even some of these feelings can initially leave us feeling a bit off balance, but they ultimately enrich our lives and set us up to form more meaningful connections with the people around us. After all, what are human beings but a collection of creatures experiencing wonder and curiosity together?

## Places We Go When Things Aren't What They Seem

In the introduction to this section of *Atlas*, Brown introduces the concept of feeling two competing emotions at the same time. "The problem starts when we don't have the skills or experience to tolerate the uncertainty and ambiguity and we give in to the cravings for neat, mutually exclusive categories," she says. "There's nothing more limiting than tapping out of tension and oversimplifying the thoughts and feelings that have the power to help us understand who we are and what we need."

This powerful message imbues the entirety of Atlas with a sense of subtlety that doesn't allow Brown's big ideas to get lost in the complexity of her message.

## Places We Go When We're Hurting

Now is the point in the book where Brown dives deep on some of the most painful emotions— anguish, hopelessness, despair, sadness, and grief. It's during this section that she shines most, with her experience in social work giving her a depth of understanding that many other 'self-help' writers simply can't match.

She brings together art, psychology, and the science of trauma to help readers understand where these deep-seated emotions spring from and how we can allow ourselves to fully feel them, rather than running from them, so that we can begin to heal through them. Brown even speaks powerfully about her own personal traumas, and the time when she felt true anguish. Still, she never stumbles into 'sadness porn' but instead uses real-life traumas to illustrate greater points about the role of pain and grief in life.

> ...while some people struggle with perfectionism, others struggle with guilt about the things they haven't been able to achieve."

## Places We Go with Others

Now, enough about pain and suffering. Brown's next section focuses on the beauty that comes from human connection. Diving into compassion and empathy, boundaries and comparative suffering, she discusses the many ways that human beings place themselves among those that are like them and not like them and the way it influences our understanding of ourselves.

It's when speaking on empathy that Brown delivers one of her most timely messages. "Empathy…is about understanding what someone is feeling, not feeling it for them. If someone is feeling lonely, empathy doesn't require us to feel lonely too, only to reach back into our own experience with loneliness so we can understand and connect." Affective empathy, feeling something along with the person who is struggling, is a slippery slope towards becoming overwhelmed and not being able to offer meaningful support.

## Places We Go When We Fall Short

Shame, guilt, humiliation, and embarrassment— these are some of the emotions covered in this section. But Brown also includes self-compassion and perfectionism, two potentially positive traits that can be turned on their heads to cause negative results if we're not careful.

This section is yet another reminder of what's made Brené Brown one of the leading voices in self-development— she understands that her message isn't being delivered to a series of identical readers or listeners. She recognizes that while some people struggle with perfectionism, others struggle with guilt about the things they haven't been able to achieve. In this section, she speaks to all of them in equal— and equally effective— measure.

## Places We Go When We Search for Connection

"Any discussion of belonging has to start with acknowledging that love and belonging are irreducible needs for all people," Brown says in this section. "In the absence of love and belonging, there is always suffering. Expanding on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, recent research shows that finding a sense of belonging in close social relationships and with our community is essential to well-being. What makes belonging essential for us is the fact that we are a social species. We can't survive without one another."

From connection and belonging to disconnection, insecurity, and loneliness, Brown covers the full spectrum of human emotion as it relates to how we interact with one another. In another of the book's most powerful quotes, she espouses the need for love in a world that seems to be lacking: "We need more real love. Gritty, dangerous, wild-eyed, justice-seeking love."

## Places We Go When the Heart is Open

While love and human connection have been discussed previously by this point in *Atlas*, this is when Brown focuses her attention on interpersonal relationships— not just the grander love for our fellow human beings and our planet as a whole. We won't dive into every one of her insights on the topic here, but suffice it to say that when Brené Brown speaks on love, it's worth listening— or in this case, reading.

## Places We Go When Life is Good, When We Feel Wronged, and We Self-Assess

The final three sections of Brown's book are combined here not because they don't all have their own powerful individual insights, but because by this point *Atlas* has covered many of the most central emotional drivers behind a human life and is now filling in the edges with additional vibrant colors. In these final sections, she focuses on the importance of celebrating our joys and successes, while also acknowledging the moments when we feel we've been treated unfairly and taking steps to rectify those injustices.

Finally, she ends with a section on assessing ourselves. Most compellingly, she redefines the often misunderstood relationship between pride and humility, arguing that both are equally positive and important traits— pride in what we've accomplished or attempted, humility as openness to new learning and new experience. In the end, readers are left with a guide for navigating the complex tides of self-image that can make or break a healthy, fulfilling life.

## Conclusion

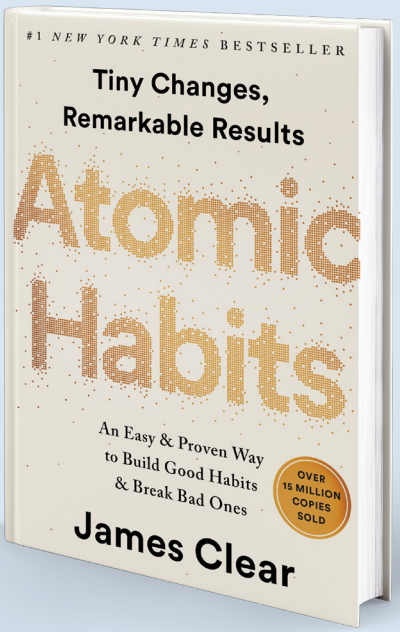
No surprises here— Brené Brown has done it again. With a book that's at once a deep dive on the inner workings of the human soul and also an easy-to-digest guidebook broken into manageable chunks, she's shown once more why she's one of the most beloved writers on the topic of the self, inward and outward compassion, and personal development. With her *Atlas of the Heart*, Brené Brown has given us all a map worth following.

· Book 59 of 269 ·

# Atomic Habits

James Clear

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Atomic Habits

**An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones**

*By James Clear*

James Clear is an author and speaker focused on habits, decision-making, and continuous improvement. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Entrepreneur*, and on CBS This Morning. His website receives millions of visitors each month, and hundreds of thousands subscribe to his popular email newsletter. He is a regular speaker at Fortune 500 Companies, and his work is used by teams in the NFL, NBA, and MLB. Through his online course, The Habits Academy, Clear has taught more than 10,000 leaders, managers, coaches, and teachers. The Habits Academy is the premier training platform for individuals and organizations that are interested in building better habits in life and work. Clear is an avid weightlifter and photographer. He lives with his wife in Columbus, Ohio. *jamesclear.com*

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*A Book Review by Soundview*

# The Power of Tiny Changes to Build Remarkable Results

How often have you started a new year with a plan to dramatically change yourself or your situation? There's a reason the purchase of gym memberships, exercise apparel, and planners spike at the beginning of the year—a faithful belief that if you can just implement (insert behavior to be changed here) for 21 days in a row, it will stick and you will be transformed. Unfortunately, of those who commit to a resolution on the first of the month, most fail by the 10th of that month.

In his latest book, *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*, author James Clear explains why that approach to self-development very rarely works. It's not your fault. The fact that you struggle to change your habits is not some character flaw that is unique to you—you have lots of company. The fault lies in the system you are using. "Bad habits repeat themselves not because you don't want to change but because you have the wrong system for change," Clear writes.

## The Fundamentals

While most people approach behavior change from the perspective of deficits that need to be fixed—lose weight, exercise more, eat healthier, quit smoking, control spending—Clear is a firm believer in a different approach. Behavior change is about the realization of *potential*. Establishing that alternative perspective also serves to manage expectations. Success isn't about quitting smoking overnight, losing 20 pounds in 30 days, or learning a new language in 45 days. It's about consistent, incremental, and most importantly, positive steps towards a measurable goal.

Much of the author's knowledge has been earned through personal experience. As he shares in the beginning of the book, a high school baseball injury that left him with "a broken nose, multiple skull fractures, and two shattered eye sockets," destroyed his dreams of a professional playing career and left him with a long journey back to full physical capabilities. It was that journey and the inherent need for patience and consistent repetition that led to his interest in human behavior and the potential of compounded incremental change.

## The Aggregation of Marginal Gains

The author's choice of the term *atomic* is deliberate. Atomic denotes something that is so small it is unnoticeable, but it is also a source of immense energy. For human behavior, small changes have the potential to be transformative or toxic. Eating an unhealthy meal once in a while is manageable if the rest of your diet is healthy, but if unhealthy food choices start to dominate your food intake, the damage to your body and your long-term health can be catastrophic.

If you flip that equation and look at small positive changes, the same rule applies. The British Cycling Federation (now known as British Cycling) proved this when they hired a new performance director, Dave Brailsford, in 2003 to transform a team that was known more for its mediocrity than its track record. The team had never won a Tour de France (cycling's biggest race), and with a record of only one gold Olympic medal since 1908, there was plenty of room for improvement.

Brailsford elected to play the long game that he referred to as "the aggregation of marginal gains." In practice, this meant breaking down everything about cycling into its smallest component and rebuilding it to its maximum potential. Some were obvious—better, more aerodynamic apparel and redesigned bicycle seats for better riding comfort—but some were so extreme as to bring Brailsford's sanity into question—hiring a surgeon to show the riders how to wash their hands correctly to reduce the chance of getting sick; researching the correct combination of pillow and mattress for each rider to ensure an optimal night's sleep; painting the inside of the team truck white to help them better spot any dust that might compromise the performance of the finely tuned bikes.

Such attention to every minute detail may seem like overkill, but consider this—between 2007 and 2017, British cyclists won 178 world championships, 66 Olympic or Paralympic gold medals, and five Tour de France victories. Mediocrity was now a distant memory.

## How to Build Better Habits

Central to *Atomic Habits* is Clear's four-step model of habits—cue, craving, response, and reward. Habits are built with these four steps, which recur in the same order, every time, with every habit in "an endless feedback loop that is running and active during every moment you are alive."

Repetitive mental programming makes us automatically fall into patterns of thinking and acting. An example of this from the book is

- The Cue: You wake up.
- The Craving: You want to feel alert.
- The Response: You drink a cup of coffee.
- The Reward: You satisfy your craving to feel alert. Drinking coffee becomes associated with waking up.

One way the author describes this cycle, known as the habit loop, is, "The cue triggers a craving, which motivates a response, which provides a reward, which satisfies the craving and ultimately becomes associated with the cue."

To offer a way to design good habits and break the bad ones, Clear shares the Four Laws of Behavior Change derived from these steps. They also reveal insights about human behavior.

## The 1st Law: Make It Obvious

Key to the first law, *make it obvious*, is to be aware of your habits. You've got to recognize them before you can change them. You also need to acknowledge the cues that trigger them, so that you can respond to them in a way that works best for you.

Another piece of this first law is to figure out the details for when and where you will perform a new habit, so you increase your chances that you'll actually do it. So, if you say to yourself that you are going to run two miles every day, you need a plan for what time and where you're going to run. As Clear says, "Give your habits a time and a space to live in the world. The goal is to make the time and location so obvious that, with enough repetition, you get an urge to do the right thing at the right time, even if you can't say why."

Environment plays a role here, too. Clear suggests that to make a habit a big part of your life, you should make the cue for it a big part of your environment. So for him, for example, he'd buy apples that would get forgotten in the crisper in his refrigerator and they'd go bad. He experienced the power of obvious cues when he put the apples in a bowl in the center of his kitchen counter where he could see them. By redesigning his environment in this way, he said he began eating a few apples a day, because now they were obvious instead of out of sight.

## The 2nd Law: Make It Attractive

The modern food industry has gotten really good at combining salt, sugar, and fat in products that we find irresistible. Clear points to the overeating that this evolution has perpetuated as an example of the second law: *make it attractive*.

Junk food is often craved and used as a reward, thereby exciting the brain and encouraging us to eat more. But for this and other habits, Clear points to the deeper science, as he often does in the book, this time to a neurotransmitter called dopamine.

Habits are a dopamine-driven feedback loop, he says. Behaviors that are highly habit-forming—taking drugs, eating junk food, playing video games, browsing social media—are all associated with higher levels of dopamine. So are basic behaviors like eating food, drinking water, having sex, and interacting socially.

The author's takeaway is, "dopamine is released not only when you *experience* pleasure but also when you *anticipate* it." In fact, the anticipation of that tropical vacation you may be planning could be better than the actual experience of it. The anticipation of a reward is really what motivates action in the first place. And dopamine increases as the craving builds. In this law, we are led to the realization that the more attractive an activity is,

> *You have to get a habit to stick even in a small way to feel successful.*

the more likely it is to become habit-forming. In other words, we're going to keep researching those amazing vacations.

Behaviors can also be attractive. As humans, we want to belong, and because of that our earliest habits are created by imitating those around us. "Behaviors are attractive when they help us fit in," Clear points out.

It is easy to relate to his own admission: "I find that I often imitate the behavior of those around me without realizing it. In conversation, I'll automatically assume the body posture of the other person. In college, I began to talk like my roommates. When traveling to other countries, I unconsciously imitate the local accent despite reminding myself to stop."

As Clear explains, your identity can also become linked to those around you, and growth and change are no longer an individual pursuit. Examples of group identifiers are "We are musicians." or "We are cyclists." After you achieve a goal, staying part of the group helps to embed an identity and sustain behaviors.

## The 3rd Law: Make It Easy

A takeaway of the third law is you don't need to map out every feature of a new habit; you just need to practice it. Clear tells us that every time you repeat an action, you activate a neural circuit associated with that habit. Repetition is critical to encoding a new habit. As a habit is solidified by repetition, the behavior becomes more automatic. And that's good because habits are easier if there is not a lot of friction.

The idea behind *make it easy* is not just to do easy things. The idea is to make a new habit as easy as possible in order to do things that pay off in the long run.

Clear encourages starting small by using The Two-Minute Rule to make your habits as easy as possible to start. Just about any habit can be trimmed down to a two-minute version, he points out. By way of example, Clear suggests if your new habit is to read before bed each night, begin by reading just one page. Or if your goal is to walk 10,000 steps every day, start by putting your walking shoes on.

Clear calls this creating a "gateway habit" that will lead you to more productivity in time. "The point is to master the habit of showing up." A habit must be established before it can be improved. Once you master the art of showing up in these first two minutes, you can build on it in increments so that it becomes a ritual of a bigger routine. This can ultimately lead to developing the intense focus that is required to do great things.

## The 4th Law: Make It Satisfying

The thing we learn from Clear about the fourth law, *make it satisfying*, is "pleasure teaches your brain that a behavior is worth remembering and repeating." He also warns that the cost of a good habit is in the present, but the cost of a bad habit is in the future.

When you are picturing who you want to be in life, it's easy to see long-term value. Most people know that delaying gratification is the wisest choice, but it's seldom the one they go for.

The questions Clear poses are, "Why would someone smoke if they know it increases the risk of lung cancer?" "Why would someone overeat when they know it increases their risk of obesity?" The answer relates to how the brain prioritizes rewards. Overeating is appetizing in the moment and is instantly gratifying.

The thing about a good habit is that the reward is the habit itself, but it doesn't feel worthwhile until you can see the benefits, which can take time. You have to get a habit to stick even in a small way, to feel successful. When you feel successful, it is like a signal that your habit has paid off and all that hard work was worth it.

"Mastery is the process of narrowing your focus to a tiny element of success, repeating it until you have internalized the skill, and then using this habit as the foundation to advance to the next frontier of your development. Each habit unlocks the next level of performance. It's an endless cycle."

Clear advocates using reinforcement—using an immediate reward to increase the rate of a behavior. But the short-term reward has to reinforce the identity you're trying to build, not conflict with it. So if your long-term vision of yourself is being a healthy person, your short-term reward should be aligned with that. Rather than rewarding yourself with a bowl of ice cream for exercising, maybe your reward is getting a massage. As Clear points out, "Incentives can start a habit. Identity sustains a habit."

In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear stands with us as we look honestly at ourselves and see what we like and what we don't like about how we behave. He provides tools and strategies to help us build systems to develop better habits. Ultimately, he gives us what we need to fit the identity that we wish for ourselves in the long term.

With his thorough research and deep thoughtfulness about how habits work for and against us, we have only to add our commitment to never stop making improvements and to sustain the belief that small habits don't add up; they compound. Readers will learn that tiny changes they choose to make in how they live *can* lead to remarkable results. *Atomic Habits* is hopeful, honest, and transformative.

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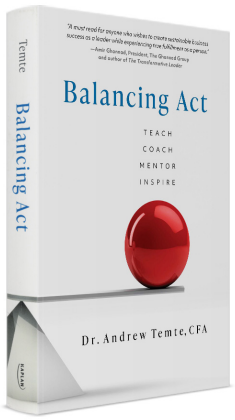
# Balancing Act

Andrew Temte

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Executive Book Summaries®

# Balancing Act

## Teach, Coach, Mentor, Inspire




*by* **Andrew Temte**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you've ever felt like your life is out of balance, you're not alone. Fortunately, Andrew Temte has created an insightful guide that's loaded with practical advice about how to bring balance back to your life— and help bring balance to your organizations, teams, and employees along the way. Being off-balance almost assuredly results in hurting the people you care for most, because it renders you unable to open yourself up to other points of view. You become prone to making assumptions and taking people for granted. Being off-balance means, almost by definition, that you have a fixed mindset around certain aspects of your life. It causes you to become unyielding in certain circumstances.

In ***Balancing Act***, Andrew Temte outlines the key to finding balance in our careers and in our lives through a series of powerful messages that will be beneficial to everyone from the most entry-level employee to the leading executive.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How developing a sense of balance between work, life, and the various aspects of ourselves can make us happier and more effective.
- How communicating and listening are essential for us to become contributing members of any team.
- How to teach, coach, mentor, and inspire in a way that transforms the lives and careers of the people around us.
- How to become more multidimensional— and find more multidimensional people to be employees.

Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® (ISSN 0747-2196), 225 Wilmington West Chester Pike, Suite 202, Chadds Ford, PA 19317 USA. • Copyright ©2021 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. • Subscriptions start at $99/year. To subscribe, visit summary.com. • September 2021 • Order #43SS09A Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

Success without balance is often more disastrous than failure with balance. When the unbalanced achieve victory, it often serves to further destructive habits. When the balanced suffer defeat, resilience and perseverance grow.

Being off-balance almost assuredly results in hurting the people you care for most, because it renders you unable to open yourself up to other points of view. You become prone to making assumptions and taking people for granted. Being off-balance means, almost by definition, that you have a fixed mindset around certain aspects of your life. It causes you to become unyielding in certain circumstances.Being an effective business leader requires balance, and that is something you can achieve through the principles in ***Balancing Act***.

### Leadership for the Next Generation

We're in the midst of a tectonic shift in what it means to be an effective leader. In the past, leaders were chosen because they demonstrated strong technical skills, were able to play and win at the game of workplace politics, or demonstrated supreme loyalty to the leaders and decision makers who came before them.

But in order to do their jobs effectively, leaders need to demonstrate balance: balance between strength and vulnerability, confidence and selflessness, passion and measure, single-mindedness and inclusivity, determination and curiosity, and leadership and followership.

### You Are Responsible for Your Own Wake

Like a boat on the water, leaders at all levels leave a wake as they interact with the organization— the higher up you are in the company, the bigger the wake you throw off. It's your responsibility to be aware of your wake and the impact it could have on individuals and teams, both within your immediate surroundings as well as further downstream.

## Teach, Coach, Mentor, and Inspire

Think of your roles as a manager or an influencer in a business. You are in a position of authority and are responsible for your team. Some of your key roles are to teach, coach, mentor, and inspire. Others are to assess talent and provide constructive feedback to your team members so that one day they can surpass you. As an influencer, you walk a fine line. You need to find a balance that allows you to judge without being judgmental. Sometimes you need to take control of a situation and be the smartest person in the room. It's much harder to help others develop and grow by allowing them to shine.

### The Light in Your Eyes

While poor leadership can quickly extinguish the light in a high-potential hire's eyes, providing a supportive working environment can help nurture the light and keep it shining brighter as time goes on. When you find an organization that offers that kind of supportive, nurturing, and balanced environment, leaving it becomes very difficult.

### Opportunity, Joy, and Purpose at Work

Unfortunately, many people expect that opportunity will be magically bestowed upon them. They've grown up in coddled, 'everyone gets a prize' schools and homes. They believe the business world owes them something for just showing up. But opportunity comes to those who are continuously learning, moving forward, and applying their talents in a constructive fashion. If one sits back and waits for an opportunity to knock, the wait will be long and frustrating. The ego must be balanced, because over the long term, opportunity aligns itself with authenticity.

### Disorder, Chaos, and Growth

Businesses are powered by humans. When a business is created, it is typically formed by a sole proprietor or a small team, and an essential initial condition is a deep sense of trust within the nucleus of the entity. The success or failure of the venture depends on it. Exceptional leaders understand the power of their words, identify and nurture human potential, model organizational purpose, and adopt a continuous improvement mindset to minimize organizational entropy.

### Education and Lifelong Learning

Throughout history, education has played the role of the 'great leveler.' Social structures and societies have been transformed through education. We have clear examples that when education and creativity are stifled or reserved for the elite, our progress as a species is limited. When educational access is limited, entire swatches of the population are left behind.

Those of us blessed with a path to continuous learning must embrace it, and watch as the benefits from that education only grow.

### Think Globally, Act Locally

As our world gets ever smaller through increasing digital interconnectedness and becomes more complex as humans work with and alongside machines of ever-greater capability, we must instill new competencies into the workforce of the future. This is a sentiment shared by the World Economic forum, UNESCO, the OECD, the Brookings Institution, the Pew Research Center, the Harvard Business Review, and many other institutions.

### The Reskilling Revolution Versus the Clay Layer

Resistance to change is a natural tendency that stems from a fear of loss of control and a desire for consistency, what could be referred to as the 'clay layer.' Both change and learning rely on consciously wading into uncharted territory and being purposefully uncomfortable. Hence, doing the hard work of adopting a lifelong learning attitude and being both agile and accepting of change run counter to our human nature.

### The Value of a Personal Continuous Improvement Journey

The beauty of a continuous improvement journey is that it can be truly eye-opening. Adopting a continuous improvement leadership stance helps us understand how we can be a little bit better tomorrow than we were today, and how we can ensure that our mistakes and failures are viewed as opportunities to learn and grow— not as barriers to future success. You'll be more open to new information, perspectives, and ideas; to being creative; and to exploring with curiosity and discovering new ways of disrupting old habits that may have persisted for years or even decades.

## Four Core Competencies of a Future-Ready Workforce

There are four core competencies that everyone needs in order to work effectively across departments, understand how their individual contributions fit into the bigger picture, and ultimately thrive in a future of increasingly advanced technology. These four competencies are financial acumen, data literacy, commercial acumen, and human skills.

### Financial Acumen

We need to apply more effort as a society and as educators to making math more approachable and relevant. Why? Because our businesses and institutions are populated by millions who lack the necessary numeracy skills to be effective in their jobs. They've been conditioned to think that math doesn't matter in the real world, when math is literally the language of business.

### Data Literacy

Whether you're a small business owner or running a Fortune 500 company, you're generating more data today, relative to your size, than ever before. As a leader and an individual contributor, your ability to be creative and drive your business forward is going to rely, in large part, on how you're leveraging the troves of data that your business generates.

That is why a base-level understanding of how data works, where it comes from, and what it can do is going to be an essential skill for employees and leaders of the future.

### Commercial Acumen

Many people within businesses, institutions, and governments don't understand how the products and services they're involved in creating make it to market. They struggle to move from an inward focus— what they do on a day-to-day basis— to a much more outward focus— how their product, service, or brand interacts with the outside world.

Understanding how the activities of the organization fit together within the broader marketplace can help individuals become better contributors, break down silos between departments, and rally employees around objectives that are bigger than their individual roles.

### Solving the Leadership Shortage

Teachers and mentors are critical in changing attitudes towards personal growth through education. The leadership shortage currently underway will become much less acute if we all do our part to promote the benefits of lifelong learning, balance education between technical and human skills, and begin leaning into the upcoming Reskilling Revolution.

## Effective Communication

You don't have to be a performer or actor to benefit from the value of effective storytelling. Honing your skill as a multimodality storyteller can pay real dividends. More importantly, you should always be considering how you're telling your corporate story and whether you're doing so in enough and varied ways. Like a muscle, storytelling must be exercised to be strengthened.

### Listen Up

The epidemic of disengagement that plagues businesses

of all shapes and sizes can almost always be traced back to some sort of failure of communication: failing to respond to important requests in a timely manner, failing to respond to critical feedback, failing to acknowledge those who deserve recognition, and/or failing to address a difficult subject.

### Responsiveness: The Neglected Leadership Trait

Failing to respond promptly to the people around you can significantly erode interpersonal and team trust. It breeds uncertainty, puts people on edge, and can throw your team off balance. Viewed through this lens, striking the right balance in responsiveness is of critical importance to team cohesion and how others view you as a leader.

## The Whole Self

Balance is hard to achieve and needs constant attention to maintain. Purposefully reflect on the concepts of work/life balance and become more multidimensional. Once you determine the path forward, start small. Test the waters. Take a class or talk to some experts about how they achieved their level of competency. Make the time to pursue your passion.

Meanwhile, hire multidimensional individuals who share their talents with others, as they will reward you with mental agility, persistence, and perseverance.

### Alignment

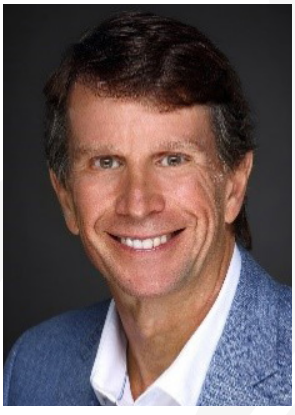
Most business leaders espouse the value of teamwork and collaboration across departments, product lines, and divisions. Most business leaders are also frequently disappointed by the lack of success in most collaboration efforts. The most common reasons for collaboration failure is the lack of standardization in process, procedure, and data, as well as misalignment of goals and incentives across teams.

### Leader Standard Work

Managers and leaders play an essential role in any value stream. Just like the definition of standard work for an individual or team applies to a specific process or activity along the value stream, leaders must adopt their own standard work to ensure they are providing accurate, reliable, and repeatable guidance to their teams. You can have the most well-defined set of processes and the most awesome value-stream map, but if leaders function in an ad hoc or random manner, optimal flow along the stream cannot be achieved. In other words, a leader who injects chaos into a system is likely doing more harm than good.

## Conclusion

We all live in a state of imbalance. Fortunately, our subconscious minds work continually to help us correct and adjust as we move forward in our daily lives, but we rarely make the time to consciously contemplate how we can return to center. Becoming more aware of the balancing acts we constantly play will help us to be better colleagues, leaders, friends, and family members. We must all work to find balance between strength and vulnerability, confidence and selflessness, passion and measure, single-mindedness and inclusivity, determination and curiosity, and leadership and followership.



As President and Global Head of Corporate Learning, **Dr. Andrew Temte,** CFA, spearheads Kaplan's efforts in helping employees remain relevant in the future world of work, as well as in helping companies continuously improve by attracting the right talent and upskilling/reskilling their workforce. A thought leader on issues related to professional education and workforce skilling, Dr. Temte has been published and cited in a number of media outlets. Dr. Temte earned his doctorate in finance from the University of Iowa with a concentration in international finance and investment theory. He holds the CFA designation and has over 14 years of university teaching experience in the areas of corporate finance, investments, and international finance.

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# Be Your Future Self Now

Benjamin Hardy

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Be Your Future Self Now

**The Science of Intentional Transformation**

By Benjamin Hardy

**Dr. Benjamin Hardy** is an organizational psychologist, author, and the world's leading expert on the application of the Future Self science. His books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies, and his blogs have been read by hundreds of millions. He and his wife, Lauren, are the parents of six kids. They live in Orlando, Florida.

## Who Is Your Future Self?

We live in a world of nonstop noise and action. Most people have more responsibilities than they can handle and more priorities than they can prioritize. We live like the proverbial hamster on a hamster wheel. Unfortunately for us, we fare no better than the hamster does in such a state. We grind our wheels and find ourselves no better off after hours and days and years of exertion because all we are ever looking at is what is right in front of us. Our goals are to make it through the day and to try not to drop too many balls in the meantime.

This state of being constantly stuck in the moment with very little insight to the future is a problem that Dr. Benjamin Hardy takes up in his book, ***Be Your Future Self Now***. Hardy's main premise is that in order to optimize our time and efforts to maximum benefit, we must stop working for and looking at who we are now and instead focus on who we want to be in the future. He believes that we should believe we are already our future, ideal selves, and this will help us get to that state. He quotes Neville Goddard as saying, "Assume the consciousness of being the one you want to be, and you will be saved from your present state."

Before walking through the steps needed in order to live in this more optimal state, Hardy compares this future looking view to the view that was prevalent in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. He claims that during this time, scientists and psychologists focused on determinism which is a belief that there is no real human agency. Our decisions are based on simple stimulus and response. In other words, our past determines our present and our future. The problem he finds with this view is that it could only possibly go so far as to explain people's problems, not solve them. He then makes the claim that, "Research now shows that a person's past does not drive or dictate their actions and behaviors. Rather, we are pulled forward by our future." It is this prospective, or this belief that everything we do is driven by our future, that he is concerned with.

Hardy goes on to discuss approach and avoidance behaviors. He states that 80% of people allow themselves to avoid while 20% of people are determined to approach. Both of these are motivators and can help us reach goals, but one is fear based whereas the other is not. The example he gives is of a person who works to avoid losing their house compared to a person who works to get a promotion. Both of these are based on a person's vision for the future, but only one is approach-motivated.

Another problem Hardy discusses is that most people are focused on short term goals. These goals can be something like distracting themselves on social media or paying the bills. He wants people to switch their short term goals to longer term, love-based goals. These goals, he believes, are the ones that will lead people to success and happiness.

Hardy believes that the way to make these changes is to focus on the future life a person wants. He states, "The quality of connection you have with your own Future Self determines the quality of your life and behaviors now." The best way to do this, he says, is to reverse-engineer decisions. A person should look at the end they want and then determine the steps they need to take to get there. Some of the decisions we make now hurt our Future Selves; others help them.

Much of the beginning of Hardy's book stems from Viktor Frankl and his work with logotherapy. Frankl was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. He snuck a manuscript of his book into the camp, but it was eventually destroyed. He was determined to live through the camp so that he could rewrite his book. This purpose, he believes, is what helped him stay alive. Frankl believed this is what all people need: a reason to survive. Likewise, Hardy believes we all need something to drive us; we all need to envision our Future Selves and what we want.

## Threats to the Future Self

There are threats to our Future Selves, however. Hardy mentions seven. The first is that without hope in the future, the present loses its meaning. What we do now does not have much meaning unless we connect it to the future. He says, "It is the future that dictates which decisions you opt for." Unless a person has hope and a clear purpose for their life, they manage to find excuses.

The second thread is holding a reactive narrative about one's past. He says that "how we handle pain and confusion largely dictates who our Future Self becomes." He says that people need to switch their mindset from believing that past experiences determine who they are to a mindset that believes that who they are is a product of their own choosing.

The third threat is a person's current environment. Being unaware of how our environment impacts us can negatively affect our goals. The people we meet, the books we read, and the media we consume all help determine who we will become. To overcome a person's current environment, they need to use their imagination and think beyond where they are. "Who you align yourself with," he says, "has massive repercussions."

Yet another threat is the myopic decisions that can come about when a person is disconnected from their Future Self. Hardy believes that we need to have very vivid pictures of our Future Selves if we are to create that future we desire. We need to have empathy for our Future Self if we want to become that person. Also, we need to see Our Future Self as a different person than who we are now because we will change.

Threats five and six focus on urgent battles and small goals and also not being in the arena at all. When we focus on small goals and only on what is most urgent we will ensure that we stay in the same place. "You get what you're looking for. You see what you're currently measuring. All the while, there are insane, life-changing opportunities sitting in front of your face right now." We need to look beyond the urgent. Likewise, we need to actually put ourselves out there, put ourselves out in the arena. Hardy believes that we will live a life of regret if we stay on the sidelines.

The final threat Hardy mentions is that success can be a catalyst for failure. This can partly be because what a person truly wants can be harder to determine once the massive progress slows down. He believes that people start to focus on lesser goals which keeps us from what we really want. He believes that success is hard to maintain if people lack clarity.

## Truths About the Future Self

Just as Hardy gave seven threats to the Future Self, he gives seven truths about the Future Self.

Hardy gives one of his main premises in his first truth: the future drives the present. Every action we take is for a purpose. He believes that our behavior becomes more intelligent once it is focused intentionally on desired ends. Many actions people take are reactive; the goal is to make them intentional.

His second truth is that a person's future self is different than they expect. People have a tendency to believe they will not change all that much in the future. Ironically, they believe this even when they recognize how much they have changed in the past. This is called both the end-of-history illusion and a fixed mindset. People need to understand that their current self is not permanent. If they focus on this, they can become more interested in growth for the future than in proving themselves in the present.

Hardy's third truth is that the Future Self is the Pied Piper. "Paying the piper is a phrase that means suffering the consequences of your own self-indulgent actions." Hardy explains that people have to pay the consequences for their actions. If a person chooses ease at the moment over their responsibilities, eventually their responsibilities will catch up with them. Hardy wants people to make investments in their future rather than incur costs. Investments, after all, compound over time.

The more vivid a vision a person has of their Future Self, the faster they will progress. This is the fourth truth. This requires measurable goals. He states that "effective progress comes with a combination of measurable metrics, a vivid vision of your Future Self, and clear mile markers." These will keep people on track. Without clarity, people will falter.

Failure is not a threat to the Future Self. Rather truth five states that "Failing as your Future Self is better than succeeding as your current self." By this, Hardy means that trying for what our Future Self wants moves us forward. If we fail, we learn from their mistakes. We have put themselves in the arena. To succeed as our current self is to not move forward at all. It is to stagnate.

> To succeed as our current self is to not move forward at all. It is to stagnate."

Truth six states that people achieve success by being true to their Future Self. Hardy defines the term, "shadow career" as a career people acquire that is different from their dream. They choose this shadow path because they have given up on themselves. Hardy is insistent that we cannot be successful unless what we achieve is something we actually want to achieve.

Finally, truth seven refers to God. Hardy says that our view of God impacts our Future Self. He mentions locus of control which determines how much a person believes they have control over their life. Someone with an external locus of control believes that most is out of their control. A person with an internal locus of control believes they can influence their outcomes. Our view on God can affect this.

## Steps to Take for Your Future Self

Hardy's final section of the book gives seven concrete steps a person can take in order to become their Future Self.

1. Step one calls for people to clarify their contextual purpose. Clarifying this purpose involves three steps: Connecting with your Future Self, Clarifying purposes through three priorities, and setting massive year long targets for these priorities. Hardy believes that if people have too many goals and priorities, they will not be able to follow any of them. He does not believe in small goals. He believes it is helpful for people to 10x their goals. By expanding them in such a way, they force themselves to think in new and creative ways.

2. Eliminating lesser goals. Hardy paraphrases author, Neil Gaiman, who said that he imagines his Future Self as a distant mountain. He constantly asks himself if decisions will move him closer or farther away from that mountain. We can often see how committed we are to our goals by looking at our behaviors because our behaviors will truthfully tell us what is most important to us. We must get away from our current habits if we are going to become our Future Selves.

3. "Elevate from Needing to Wanting to Knowing." Needing is the least optimal state, according to Hardy. Need implies lack. Want, while better than need, still implies lack. Knowing is better than both. It "is the acceptance that you already have what you want." There is a sense of acceptance with knowing. Gratitude can help because we feel gratitude after we have already received something. Hardy states that "gratitude elevates from wanting to knowing." All of this helps people act "from the goal rather than toward the goal."

4. "Ask for exactly what you want." Hardy believes deeply in the value of asking. He believes that often we won't ask for what we want because we are afraid that we will not get it. He believes we should ask God, experts, friends, and anybody. The key is asking.

5. "Automate and systemize your Future Self." This step will help people get where they want to go faster. Hardy breaks apart the difference between effectiveness which is doing the right things and efficiency which is "doing things right." There is not much point to being efficient when we are not effective. He believes one way to be effective is to get rid of what we do not need. Anything that is not one of our big three priorities is a distraction.

6. "Schedule your Future Self." We need to put the important tasks first, even before the urgent ones. A schedule should proactively reflect our priorities and should schedule first things first.

7. "Aggressively complete imperfect work." Hardy extols the virtue of finishing things. If people are always looking for perfection they will never submit the article or submit the resume. They will stifle themselves waiting for perfection. Rather people will do best by understanding when something is ready to submit and submitting it, even before perfection. We need to learn to accept good enough. He believes in what he calls aggressive completion.

Hardy believes that in order to become the people we want to be, we have to know who those people are. His book lays out struggles we face in this progress, but it also gives clear steps people can take to live their lives from the perspective of their Future Self. Illustrations throughout the book help advance the main points, and the book also provides links for a website with templates people can use. Through the symbiosis of all three elements, Hardy gives his reader a clear blueprint for success.

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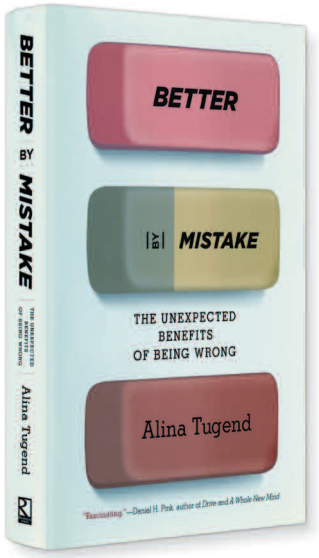
# Better By Mistake

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# Better by Mistake

## The Unexpected Benefits of Being Wrong




by Alina Tugend

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Journalist Alina Tugend examines the delicate tension between what we are told — we must make mistakes in order to learn — and the reality — we often get punished for them. In *Better by Mistake*, she shows us that mistakes are everywhere, and when we acknowledge and identify them correctly, we can improve not only ourselves but our families, our work and the world around us as well.

Through fascinating research, Tugend reveals how cultural attitudes about mistakes can affect us from the earliest stages in our lives and shape us into adults who steer clear of risks and challenges. She takes us behind the scenes into cutting-edge behavioral studies; invites us into the high-stakes world of health care and aviation, where mistakes can cost lives; and delves into the art and science behind learning how to craft a sincere apology and taking responsibility for mistakes.

Bold and dynamic, insightful and provocative, *Better by Mistake* turns our cultural wisdom on its head to illustrate the downside of striving for perfection and the rewards of acknowledging and accepting mistakes and embracing the imperfection in all of us.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The many definitions of a mistake and why it is more important to understand the differences between types of errors.
- Why human beings are resistant to mistakes and tend to play it safe.
- The way to create a culture that is more aware of mistakes.
- Why a zero-tolerance policy for mistakes can actually lead to a greater number of errors.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **BETTER BY MISTAKE**

**by Alina Tugend**

**The author:** Alina Tugend has written about education, environmentalism and consumer culture for numerous publications, including *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Atlantic*. She also writes the award-winning "ShortCuts" column for *The New York Times.*

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or www.alinatugend.com.

## Introduction

The fear of making mistakes is a cudgel that hangs over so many of us, preventing us from not only taking risks in our personal and professional lives, but even more important, from really accepting — not just giving lip service to — the truth that we all are human and imperfect. Of course, there are big mistakes and small ones and varying levels of consequence. A pilot error that crashes a plane full of people is not in the same league as a minor mistake in a law brief or forgetting to pick up your child from dance lessons. But for most of us, a mistake does not cost a life. I think almost everyone can relate to an anecdote told in a 1999 research paper by a British academic, Patricia Bryans, on what men and women learn from making mistakes at work.

A student of hers, "David," was a night-shift supervisor at a food-production factory. One night, when he was about to start production, he realized that he had mixed ten times too much of one ingredient. David was tempted to ignore and cover up his mistake and go ahead, knowing that the product would taste awful but look fine. Instead, he confessed, held up production, remixed the batch, and left work. The next day, his manager issued a formal written notice saying that if David made one more mistake, he could be fired. David naturally was very upset about this, and his attitude toward his job changed completely. "He now took every opportunity to sneer at what they 'preached' about quality. He started to look for another job. His eagerness to learn and improve was severely diminished. His major learning from that experience seemed to be that he should never have owned up to his mistake," Bryans wrote.

All too often, we come away with David's lesson about making a mistake: ignore it, blame someone else, rationalize it — do anything to avoid admitting it because you just might put yourself in a position of weakness.

Now if David constantly messed up the baking process, then his manager would be right in issuing a warning — and then firing him if need be. But if this was David's first mistake — or even second within a certain period of time — his manager could have discussed how the mistake happened to see if there was a systemic problem, and he could have acknowledged that, indeed, we're all human and mistakes *do* happen.

By delving deeply into why and how we react to errors, we can learn how to acknowledge mistakes without foisting the blame onto others or beating ourselves up. That allows us to be more open to the valuable lessons that mistakes can offer — and will ultimately improve our work and our relationships with our bosses, spouses, and children. ●

## (Mis)Understanding and (Re)Defining Mistakes

Defining a mistake, it seems, is almost as difficult as, well, defining happiness. When Bryans asked participants in a study to provide a definition of mistakes, they "largely agreed that the key issues were misjudgment and adverse consequences which were unplanned. For them, it was the scale of the consequences which differentiated mistakes from errors or slips."

Even then, a real mistake can vary widely. It can be an accounting error that costs millions of dollars, a newspaper article that cites incorrect information, or a teacher

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scolding the wrong people for misbehaving. But it can also be leaving a sponge in a patient during surgery, causing a fatal infection, or wrongly diagnosing an illness.

The intensive study of errors in high-risk fields offers great insights into what causes people to make mistakes and what works best to prevent them. Although the expertise may be different, human reaction and behavior, for the most part, translate across professions.

James Reason, a professor of psychology at the University of Manchester in England, defines an error as the failure of a planned sequence of mental or physical activities to achieve its intended outcome when these failures cannot be attributed to chance. A slip or lapse is when action does not go according to plan — when we step on the gas instead of the brake. A mistake, however, is when the plan itself is inadequate to achieve its objectives.

We usually judge the severity of the mistake by the outcome or, as Bryans says, the scale of the consequences. A mistake can occur with the best information and the best intentions or through carelessness or lack of knowledge. In January, most banks will receive checks with the previous year written on them. We know every year those errors are going to happen. This type of error is called "strong habit intrusion" and is the most common of all error types.

### Active Errors versus Latent Errors

A concept that is key to how we think about errors is that of differentiating between active and latent errors. An active error, for example, is the pilot crashing the plane. The latent error is a design malfunction causing the plane to roll unexpectedly, which the pilot couldn't control.

"If you want to understand human error," writes Sidney Dekker, author of *The Field Guide to Understanding Human Error*, "you have to assume that people were doing reasonable things given the complexities, dilemmas, trade-offs and uncertainty that surround them. Just finding and highlighting people's mistakes explain nothing. Saying what people did not do or what they should have done does not explain why they did what they did."

Dekker talks about the tendency to examine the mistake from outside the tunnel, where we can clearly see every twist and turn, every possible problem, and observe where every road leads. How different that is from being in the tunnel, where we have to make split-second decisions, perhaps based on faulty data and unclear directions, often while we are stressed or scared. Hindsight bias makes us assume that a bad outcome could only be preceded by a bad process. It causes us to oversimplify history relative to how people understood it at the time it was happening.

Most of us know the story of how Moses became angry at his followers for creating the golden calf to worship while he was busy getting the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai — and in his fury at his people's lack of faith, he smashed the tablets. The original tablets symbolized unattainable purity, Irving Greenberg, a Jewish scholar, says, and once Moses destroyed them, he and his followers had to work through heartbreak, reconciliation catharsis, and ultimately the creation of new tablets. This new set of tablets was "the product of hard-won repentances, built on realism, forgiveness and acceptance of others' limitations," Greenberg writes. "Out of our brokenness we become stronger than when we claimed to be whole."

We all — from Moses to us — must acknowledge that we can never be perfect, nor should we try to be. But defining mistakes and acknowledging them is only the beginning. It doesn't do us much good unless we also try to change our approach in ways that will benefit us and those around us. ●

## It Starts Early

Carol Dweck is a professor of psychology at Stanford University whose highly influential research has closely examined children's reactions to mistakes. She found the children commended for being smart are often less willing to take chances than those praised for making a greater effort. When we applaud children for their intelligence, she said, "we tell them that this is the name of the game: Look smart; don't risk making mistakes."

As a graduate student at Yale, Dweck started off studying animal motivation and learned helplessness: the animals sometimes didn't do what they were capable of doing because they had given up after numerous failures. Dweck wondered how this translated to humans — why do some children quit in the face of failure while others are motivated?

What Dweck's research showed is that whether or not we think we have the innate talent or skills to do something — as opposed to believing in general we can work and improve ourselves in most areas — has a significant effect on how we view mistakes. Those who see their abilities as fixed, as innate and inflexible, are "entity" believers in psychological parlance, or as Dweck terms it, they have "fixed mindsets." They fear mistakes because they think they are simply not smart or talented

enough to do the task required, and they learn to be defensive and foist blame on anything or anyone but themselves. Those who hold "incremental" beliefs, or in Dweck's language, "growth mindsets," see ability as a malleable quality and therefore believe that with enough effort they can overcome obstacles. They may not embrace mistakes, but they tend to see them as more of the process of learning than as a reflection of their intelligence or abilities.

Socioeconomic class, culture, and ethnicity all come into play when delving into how we respond to mistakes and our willingness to learn from them. It starts with not only the overt messages but also the covert messages our parents and other authority figures gave us. Do we tell our children that "it's okay to make mistakes" and then yell at them for spilling milk?

The key question is how much we believe we can do with what we were born with. If we believe our skills are pretty much set in concrete, we are going to avoid and dread mistakes, because what do they show us except that we've screwed up? If we believe that with more effort we can keep getting better and better, then we can view mistakes less harshly and as part of an overall process of growing and learning.

## "Fail Often, Fast and Cheap"

Chris Argyris, a professor emeritus at Harvard Business School, has spent decades writing about how employees in organizations learn from errors and is considered one of the great theorists in organizational learning. Argyris argues that most responses to errors fall into the category of single-loop learning — when a mistake is detected and corrected without questioning the underlying values of the system. The phrase is borrowed from electrical engineering: a thermostat is defined as a single-loop learner. The thermostat is programmed to detect states of "too cold" or "too hot" and to correct the situation by turning the heat on or off. Double-loop learning, on the other hand, means to question the underlying factors themselves and subject them to critical scrutiny — it turns the question back on the questioner and asks not only about objective facts but also about the reasons and motives behind those facts.

Not all mistakes are alike, and not all require examining and challenging the surrounding criteria. Imagine an office where workers constantly debated every error — making the wrong change, mistyping a law brief — rather than simply correcting the problem.

Sometimes, however, it may seem like single-loop learning is all that is necessary, but that just short-circuits the real learning process. Argyris gives the example of a CEO who found out that his company inhibited innovation in employees by subjecting every new idea to more than 275 checks and sign-offs. He promptly eliminated 200 of them, and the result was a higher innovation rate. It sounds like a successful case of identifying a problem and resolving it, but it is only a case of successful single-loop learning by ignoring a more fundamental problem of why the checks and sign-offs had been around for so long. A double-loop approach would require the CEO to ask employees who told him about the problem some tough questions, such as "What goes on in this company that prevents you from questioning these practices and getting them eliminated?"

### The Reasons We Play It Safe

In *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me)*, social scientists Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson write that all of us share the impulse to excuse what we do, to convince ourselves that we didn't act in a bad or irrational way, and to avoid taking responsibility for harming someone. Most companies — like most people — don't see themselves as promoting a work environment where mistakes are feared and avoided. They say they encourage risk taking and innovation, but in reality, they don't. All too often mistakes are treated as something shameful that should be flung aside as quickly as possible rather than as something to be examined and learned from. And because of this, companies — and employees — fail to uncover systemic problems that may be leading to the errors.

Paul J.H. Shoemaker and Robert E. Gunther broke down into four categories the reasons that they think most human beings are resistant to making mistakes and therefore play it safe:

- **We are overconfident.** We are often blind to the limits of our expertise.
- **We are risk-averse.** This is because "our personal and professional pride is tied up in being right."
- **We tend to favor data that confirm our beliefs.** The result is that we don't often see the alternatives.
- **We assume feedback is reliable.** In reality, it is often lacking or misleading.

In their book *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*, Warren Bennis and Burton Nanus advise that institutions reward admissions of mistakes as part of the organizational culture. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, is often quoted as saying, "How a company deals with mistakes suggests how well it will bring out the best

ideas and talents of its people."

While most people will do anything to avoid making a mistake, research has shown that some people actually respond better to certain types of training when they are encouraged to make gaffes rather than to avoid them. As Rutgers professor Stanley Gully states, failing to fail can restrict individuals from exploring alternatives, inhibit risk taking, and perhaps lead to complacency.

Carol Dweck argues that adulation of talent proved fatal for Enron. "Basically, it forced them into the fixed mindset. We know from our studies that people with the fixed mindset do not admit and correct their deficiencies."

The types of mistakes we make in the workplace may be of a different sort and have a different impact than those we make in other parts of our lives, but the tools we need to react to and learn from them in a positive manner are the same. Remember the words of Nike's founder, Phil Knight, who changed the sports shoe industry: "The problem in America is not that we are making too many mistakes but that we are making too few." ●

## It's Not Brain Surgery … *But What If It Is?*

Published by the Institute of Medicine, the *To Err Is Human* study immediately attracted enormous attention among both health professionals and the public. The study cited a staggering statistic: at least 44,000 people and as many as 98,000 people die each year in hospitals in the United States as a result of preventable medical errors. One of the report's authors compared that figure to three fully loaded jumbo jets crashing every other day.

The authors divided types of errors into four groups:

- **Diagnostic.** This includes error or delay in diagnosis.
- **Treatment.** This includes error in performing an operation, test, or procedure.
- **Preventative.** This includes failure to provide preventative treatment or inadequate monitoring.
- **Other.** This includes failure of communication, equipment failure, or other system failure.

The initial step, of course, was to examine why such errors occur. The report cited a number of reasons, including the decentralized and fragmented nature of the health care delivery system. Health care, the report stated, is a decade or more behind most other high-risk industries, like aviation, in paying attention to basic safety, and this is due partially to the lack of one designated government agency devoted to improving and monitoring safety.

A key point made in the report is that "the majority of medical errors do not result from individual recklessness or the actions of a particular group." More commonly errors are caused by faulty systems, processes, and conditions that lead people to make mistakes or fail to prevent them.

In trying to classify the severity of mistakes, we need to look not just at the mistake itself but also at the outcome and the reason it occurred. The concept of *Just Culture* represents an attempt to find the balance between only blaming the individual and never blaming the individual. An underlying idea in *Just Culture* is that we as a society are too focused on outcomes and not on choices and behavior.

### A Culture of Awareness

The way to create a culture more aware of errors, then, is not to institute an atmosphere where there is zero tolerance for mistakes. Rather, the idea should be to establish an environment where people feel safe to ask questions and experiment.

Although we strive to do the best we can, perfection is not an option. The cultural barriers to working through and learning from mistakes may be more ingrained in the medical field than in other professions, but the basics are true across the board. First of all, avoid scapegoating; the problem often isn't one of an incompetent worker but of a systemic failure.

We want, within reason, to accept the mistakes of others and have others accept ours. What we learn from the body of research that has grown out of addressing medical mistakes is that even in this most complex arena, such change is possible. ●

## Lessons from the Cockpit

The more I read about it, the more I realized how much has been discovered about why and how people make mistakes — and the best ways to try to prevent them — by studying aviation, and cockpit crews in particular. The research in this field provides the building blocks for understanding error prevention across all fields.

Robert Helmreich, professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Texas, is one of the pioneers in developing systems to make aviation safer. He became involved in pilot safety in 1979, after a "series of embar-

rassing aviation mistakes," Helmreich told me.

Helmreich approached flight safety in a novel way: rather than look solely at how people interacted with the technology, he and his people looked at the human factors that lead to error. These include poor communication, fatigue, stress, and overwork. The Human Factors Research Project worked on the assumption that preventing accidents is the goal, not discovering what went wrong after the fact.

As Malcolm Gladwell notes, "Plane crashes are much more likely to be the result of an accumulation of minor difficulties and seemingly trivial malfunctions." Once again, we look back at the idea of many latent errors leading up to the obvious active errors — and it's the latent ones we need to uncover and fix.

Many aviation experts, like Robert Sumwalt, who flew for US Airways for almost 25 years and is now a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, believes that virtually all accidents can be traced back to human error somewhere in the system. "In reality, we'll never get rid of error," he told me. What we have to do is figure out what mistakes people are likely to make and try to prevent them or build such a robust system that even if a mistake occurs, it won't be calamitous.

### Lowering the Risk When Mistakes Are Made

What has proved successful in aviation is a combination of training programs, observation, attitudinal surveys, and data collection. Part of the goal of crew resource management (CRM) is to get pilots to understand how stress, work overload, and fatigue can cause them to make mistakes. One of the changes that grew out of CRM was the institution of the preflight briefing. Another key change was that junior crew members are not only allowed but expected to speak up to the captain if there's a threat.

Research shows that highly effective cockpit crews use one-third of their communications to discuss threats and errors in their environment, regardless of their workload, while poorly performing teams spend about one-twentieth of their time doing the same. As data on accidents accumulated, it became increasingly obvious that most accidents were related to breakdowns in crew coordination, communications, and decision making. One important way to reduce those accidents was a shift toward a more open culture that allowed questioning and recognized human limitations.

In developing systems to avoid errors we can't just go on assumptions but need to closely observe and collect all sorts of information to truly understand how people involved think and operate. The first step in identifying why mistakes happen and attempting to prevent them is to pinpoint embedded beliefs — and the corresponding values, such as it's not manly to admit exhaustion — and then use hard data to show why such beliefs and values can be harmful. The next step is to find ways to solve those problems with a flexible and ever-evolving approach. ●

## Blaming You, Blaming Me

There is a general consensus that women agonize more and blame themselves more and that men get over their blunders faster and tend to point their fingers at others. But is there any research to back up the belief that men and women actually respond differently to their screwups?

Patricia Bryans, when working at Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University in England, researched management development, gender and emotion, and women in management and conducted one of the few studies directly looking at how men and women react to mistakes in the workplace. She found that "Women tend to internalize and personalize the experience of their mistakes, taking them 'to heart' and continuing to live with them long after the event. Rather than looking to find fault externally, women blamed themselves. For men, by contrast, feelings were more likely to be externalized, directed outwards through anger at others, blaming 'pressures' of the system or emphasizing the particularities of the context in which they were operating." Men were also less likely to retain strong emotions after making a mistake.

### Is a Woman's Expertise Blindly Disregarded?

What about how women are viewed by others? A 2004 study found that women are much less likely to be viewed as experts than men — even when they have the requisite knowledge. The researchers found that not only were women's opinions more often disregarded than men's, but women who had no particular know-how in the area were viewed more favorably than women with greater capability — because the women without expertise tended to go along with the status quo rather than challenge it.

Women tend to agonize more about their mistakes, at least in the workplace. Women, fearing their mistakes may be judged more harshly than men's, are far more reluctant to risk them. In addition, women may steer clear of the possibility of making mistakes because they tend to be more affected, more cast down by them than men. If something causes you pain, you'll do a lot to avoid it.

Simply understanding that someone of the opposite sex — be it a colleague or a spouse — has the tendency to react to mistakes differently can help us. Neither sex has a monopoly on the "right" way to cope with mistakes. We could each take something from the other's playbook. Women tend to be more emotionally devastated by errors they make and dwell on them far longer than men. If a great deal of energy is spent on beating oneself up, then there is not much left over to actually learn from mistakes. Being able to depersonalize mistakes helps us view them more objectively and learn whatever lessons can be learned from them. Men, on the other hand, tend to find others at fault and then leave the error hastily behind — or at least appear to. They aren't as shaken up by mistakes and thus can be more willing to take risks. But on the other hand, not much learning can take place if one doesn't realistically look at how the problem occurred and what can be done to prevent it in the future.

## You Say Mistake, I Say Lesson

It is easy to assume that our approach to mistakes — whatever that may be — is universal. But that's not true. Our response to errors grows out of deeply embedded cultural beliefs and values — beliefs and values we're often not even consciously aware of.

Most of the comparative work available relating in any way to errors and mistakes compared North American and Asian — primarily Japanese — cultures.

One of the main differences, broadly speaking, is that Japan is oriented toward the community and the group, while the United States is a highly individualistic society. Hazel Markus, professor of psychology at Stanford University, explained it to me this way: "You don't feel your performance is a function just of you and what's inside you. [In a Japanese school] the reality is interdependence of people — my behavior is a function of yours and yours of mine." Making a mistake, therefore, isn't a reflection of your lack of ability or intelligence but simply that you haven't learned something yet. "Often teachers asked for a show of hands from students who had obtained correct and incorrect answers to a problem, and the show of hands for incorrect answers was often substantial. Students who criticized their own thinking were warmly acknowledged, as were students who explained the thinking behind their mistakes, so that, as one teacher said, 'Everyone in the class can learn from the students who tried to solve the problem this way.' Mistakes became opportunities to help classmates rather than failures to be hidden."

### The Bay of Pigs

When Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson published *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by* Me*)* in 2007, they stated that the last American president to tell the country that he had made a terrible mistake — and to show that he had learned from it — was John F. Kennedy back in 1961. OK, granted, it was a doozy: he believed the claims and faulty intelligence of his top military advisers, who assured him that once America invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, the people would rise up in relief and gratitude and overthrow Castro. The invasion was a disaster, but Kennedy actually took on board the harsh lesson by reorganizing his intelligence system and no longer uncritically accepting the claims of his military advisers, a change that may have made all the difference in averting tragedy in the subsequent Cuban missile crisis. Kennedy told newspaper publishers, "This administration intends to be candid about its errors. For as a wise man once said, 'An error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.'" The final responsibility, Kennedy said, for the Bay of Pigs invasion was "mine and mine alone." Guess what? Kennedy's popularity soared.

James Stigler, a UCLA psychology professor who has written extensively on Asian and American teaching practices, says that "For Americans, errors tend to be interpreted as an indication of failure in learning the lesson. For Chinese and Japanese, they are an index of what still needs to be learned." There is a real fear in this country, he said, that if students are allowed to pursue the wrong path in figuring out a problem, they might, in fact, learn the subject matter incorrectly. So teachers tend not to leave a mistake uncorrected for even a short period of time. That is not true in Japan. Americans are motivated to achieve success, while Japanese are motivated to avoid failure. This is not to say that people from Japan don't want to feel good about themselves, but rather that in their culture, individual self-esteem is not necessarily the road to satisfaction. It is more about maintaining face.

### Re-Examining a Culture's Take On Mistakes

When we're small children, we tend to think that how we live is how everyone lives. When we discover differences, we have to slightly rearrange our way of thinking — not everybody is like us. So it is when we investigate other cultures and their attitudes about mistakes; we re-examine our own way of measuring our successes and failures. The Japanese emphasis on effort, for example, can remind us that making mistakes while

trying something new is to be commended, not disparaged, and that although it is difficult to always keep this in mind, we shouldn't revere results while diminishing the value of process. If we effortlessly accomplish our goals, we haven't really learned anything. Others outside our own literal and figurative boundaries can help us rethink our own assumptions and goals. ●

## I Want to Apologize

There's a *New Yorker* cartoon that shows a wife saying to her husband, "I don't want your apology — I want you to be sorry." That pretty much sums up a large part of the apology problem: saying you're sorry doesn't really mean you are.

For such a seemingly simple interaction, apologies are surprisingly complex. A proper apology has three elements: an acknowledgment of the fault or offense, regret for it, and responsibility for it — and, if possible, a way to fix the problem. Because we often don't separate these three aspects, we frequently get caught up in who is to blame and find it difficult to apologize when it shouldn't be.

When apologizing we should be thinking of communicating rather than expressing regret, because expression is one-sided — more like a monologue that aims to get something off your chest. Communicating should be a dialogue that works toward a resolution. And while a good apology is important, we all also get annoyed by over-apologizers — those who can't seem to stop saying they're sorry. On the other end of the spectrum are those who avoid apologizing at all costs, afraid it will imply weakness or won't resolve the problem anyhow, so what's the point?

### An Accountability Shortfall

The last part of the apology triumvirate, accountability, is the area where most people fall short. Accountability does not necessarily — although it often should — mean some kind of restitution or changed behavior. But we expect that when someone is genuinely sorry and expresses regret, that as much as possible he will look back at what went wrong and try to avoid doing it again.

Over the past few decades, research has shown that what we learned back in preschool also works in the corporate world: saying I'm sorry — and meaning it — makes the other person feel better. And therefore, she might be less likely to sue. Or take her business elsewhere. Real-life examples and academic research show that people are apt to overestimate the cost of apologies and underestimate the benefits. In a British study of malpractice patients, 37 percent said that they would never have gone to court in the first place had they been offered an explanation and an apology.

If we can't apologize properly for our mistakes or accept others' genuine apologies, then we haven't learned all we can from our mistakes. If we can't express contrition in a clear manner — acknowledgment of transgression; regret and responsibility for it; and hopefully a way to fix it — then that may be because we have failed to come to terms with how we, or others, erred. An apology isn't separate from the mistake; rather, it's an integral part of the lesson to be learned. A genuine expression of remorse and an offer of accountability aims not only to repair what went wrong in the past but to help build greater understanding and trust in the future. ●

## Conclusion

There are no simple fixes, but there are ways all of us can shift our thinking about mistakes. Starting with our children, we can emphasize effort and deemphasize results. We can appreciate that we — and they — can't be perfect, nor is it a goal we should aim for. We should strive to do our best, but if the prize is ever-elusive perfection, then fear of failure will too often overshadow the willingness to experiment, take risks and challenge ourselves.

The truth also is, sometimes a faux pas is just a faux pas and there is no great lesson or wonderful epiphany at the end. It might just be a blunder that messes up your workday. We all make our share of those mistakes, and that's OK also. But if we can all forgive ours and others' errors more often, if we can acknowledge that perfection is a myth and that human beings screw up on a regular basis — and we can either simply feel bad about it and find someone to accuse or learn from it — then we are on the right track. Make no mistake about it. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Better by Mistake*, you'll also like:

1. ***How Did That Happen?* by Roger Connors and Tom Smith.** This summary offers a proven way to eliminate the shocking effects of a lack of personal accountability in an organization.
2. ***Brain Rules* by John Medina.** This summary introduces 12 Brain Rules that cover what scientists know for sure about how our brains work and also offers ideas for how each rule might apply to our daily lives.
3. ***The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.** Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed.

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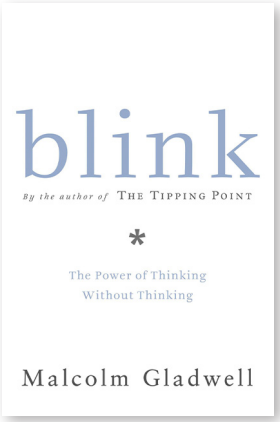
# Blink

Malcolm Gladwell

Executive Book Summaries®

# Blink

## The Power of Thinking Without Thinking




*by* **Malcolm Gladwell**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

***Blink*** reveals that great decision makers aren't those who process the most information or spend the most time deliberating, but those who have perfected the art of "thin-slicing"—filtering the very few factors that matter from an overwhelming number of variables.

In his landmark bestseller, *The Tipping Point*, author Malcolm Gladwell redefined how we understand the world around us. Now, in *Blink*, he revolutionizes the way we understand the world within by exploring the decisions made by experts in museums, sales, sports, the military and the high-speed world of the New York Mercantile Exchange. Drawing on cutting-edge neuroscience and psychology, and displaying all of the brilliance that made *The Tipping Point* a classic, *Blink* changes the way you understand every decision you make. Never again will you think about thinking the same way.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why some people follow their instincts and win, while others end up stumbling into error.
- How our brains work in the office, in the classroom and in the marketplace.
- Why some snap decisions have better results than those we agonize over.
- How some of the best decision makers utilize the theory of thin-slicing to their competitive advantage.
- How to read minds by watching facial movements.

## The Statue That Didn't Look Right

In September 1983, an art dealer by the name of Gianfranco Becchina approached the J. Paul Getty Museum in California. He had in his possession, he said, a marble statue dating from the 6th century B.C. It was what is known as a kouros—a sculpture of a nude male youth standing with his left leg forward and his arms at his sides. There are only about 200 kouroi in existence, and most have been recovered badly damaged or in fragments from grave sites or archeological digs. But this one was almost perfectly preserved. It stood close to 7 feet tall. It had a kind of light-colored glow that set it apart from other ancient works. It was an extraordinary find. Becchina's asking price was just under $10 million.

### Core Sample Findings

The Getty moved cautiously. It took the kouros on loan and began a thorough investigation. A geologist from the University of California named Stanley Margolis came to the museum and spent two days examining the surface of the statue with a high-resolution stereomicroscope. He then removed a core sample from just below the right knee and analyzed it using an electron microscope, electron microprobe, mass spectrometry, X-ray diffraction and X-ray fluorescence.

The statue was made of dolomite marble from the ancient Cape Vathy quarry on the island of Thasos, Margolis concluded, and the surface of the statue was covered in a thin layer of calcite—which was significant, Margolis told the Getty, because dolomite can turn into calcite only over the course of hundreds, if not thousands, of years. In other words, the statue was old. It wasn't some contemporary fake.

The Getty was satisfied. Fourteen months after its investigation of the kouros began, it agreed to buy the statue. In the fall of 1986, the statue went on display for the first time.

### A Problem

The kouros, however, had a problem. It didn't look right. The first to point this out was an Italian art historian named Federico Zeri, who served on the Getty's board of trustees. When he was taken down to the museum's restoration studio to see the kouros in December 1983, he found himself staring at the sculpture's fingernails. In a way he couldn't immediately articulate, they seemed wrong to him.

Evelyn Harrison, one of the world's foremost experts on Greek sculpture, was next. What did Harrison see?

She didn't know. In the very first moment of seeing the statue, all Harrison had was a hunch, an instinctive sense that something was amiss.

A few months later, Thomas Hoving, the former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, was taken down to the Getty's conservation studio to see the statue as well. Hoving always makes a note of the first word that goes through his head when he sees something new, and he'll never forget what that word was when he first saw the kouros. "It was 'fresh'—'fresh,'" Hoving recalls. And "fresh" was not the right reaction to have to a 2,000-year-old statue.

### Cold Feelings

When George Despinis, the head of the Acropolis Museum in Athens, took one look at the kouros he blanched. "Anyone who has ever seen a sculpture coming out of the ground," he said, "could tell that that thing has never been in the ground." And later, Georgios Dontas, head of the Archeological Society in Athens, saw the statue and immediately felt cold. "When I saw the kouros for the first time," he said, "I felt as though there was a glass between me and the work."

Further investigations revealed more questions about the statue's authenticity. Now, in the Getty catalog, there is a

### Thin-Slicing Defined

A critical part of rapid cognition is known as "thinslicing." Thin-slicing refers to the ability of our unconscious mind to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience. In the theory of thin slices, a little bit of knowledge goes a long way. Thin-slicing is part of what makes the unconscious so dazzling.

This is the way that our unconscious works: It is sifting through the situation in front of us, throwing out all that is irrelevant while we zero in on what really matters. The truth is that our unconscious is really good at this, to the point where thin-slicing often delivers a better answer than more deliberate and exhaustive ways of thinking. Thin-slicing is not an exotic gift. It is a central part of what it means to be human. We thin-slice whenever we meet a new person, have to make sense of something quickly or encounter a novel situation.

picture of the kouros, with the notation "About 530 B.C., or modern forgery."

When Federico Zeri, Evelyn Harrison, Thomas Hoving and Georgios Dontas—and many others—looked at the kouros and felt an "intuitive repulsion," they were absolutely right. In the first two seconds of looking—in a single glance—they were able to understand more about the essence of the statue than the team at the Getty was able to understand after 14 months.

This summary is about those first two seconds.

## The Locked Door: The Secret Life of Snap Decisions

Here is a critical fact about the thoughts and decisions that bubble up from our unconscious. Snap judgments are, first of all, enormously quick: They rely on the thinnest slices of experience. They are also unconscious. Snap judgments and rapid cognition take place behind a locked door. We are not very good at dealing with the fact of that locked door. It's one thing to acknowledge the enormous power of snap judgments and thin slices but quite another to place our trust in something so seemingly mysterious.

Our world requires that decisions be sourced and footnoted, and if we say *how* we feel, we must also be prepared to elaborate on *why* we feel that way. That approach is a mistake. If we are to learn to improve the quality of the decisions we make, we need to accept the mysterious nature of our snap judgments. We need to respect the fact that it is possible to know without knowing why we know and accept that—sometimes—we're better off that way.

## The Storytelling Problem

On a brisk spring evening not long ago, two dozen men and women gathered in the back room of a Manhattan bar to engage in a peculiar ritual known as speed-dating. At the beginning, they mingled awkwardly, clutching their drinks, and then the coordinator of the evening called the group to order.

Each man would have six minutes of conversation with

### Snap Decisions in Sports

Vic Braden, one of the world's top tennis coaches, has noticed something during his many years of working with some of the world's best athletes. He has asked many of these professionals questions about why and how they play the way they do, and invariably he comes away disappointed. "Out of all the research that we've done with top players, we haven't found a single player who is consistent in knowing and explaining exactly what he does," Braden says. "They give different answers at different times, or they have answers that simply are not meaningful." One of the things he does, for instance, is videotape top tennis players and then digitize their movements, breaking them down frame by frame on a computer so that he knows, say, precisely how many degrees Pete Sampras rotates his shoulder on a cross-court backhand.

#### *An Inability to Describe How We Behave*

One of Braden's digitized videotapes is of the tennis great Andre Agassi hitting a forehand. The image has been stripped down. Agassi has been reduced to a skeleton, so that as he moves to hit the ball, the movement of every joint in his body is clearly visible and measurable. The Agassi tape is a perfect illustration of our inability to describe how we behave in the moment. "Almost every pro in the world says that he uses his wrist to roll the racket over the ball when he hits a forehand," Braden says. "Why? What are they seeing? Look,"—and here Braden points to the screen—"see when he hits the ball? We can tell with digitized imaging whether a wrist turns an eighth of a degree. But players almost never move their wrist at all. Look how fixed it is. He doesn't move his wrist until long after the ball is hit. He thinks he's moving it at impact, but he's actually not moving it until long after impact. How can so many people be fooled?"

#### *Ted Williams' Blind Spot*

Braden found the same problem with the baseball player Ted Williams. Williams always said he could look the ball onto the bat, that he could track it right to the point where he made contact. But Braden knew from his work in tennis that that is impossible. In the final five feet of a tennis ball's flight toward a player, the ball is far too close and moving much too fast to be seen. The player, at that moment, is effectively blind. The same is true with baseball. "I met with Ted Williams once," Braden says. "I said, 'Gee, Ted. We just did a study that showed that human beings can't track the ball onto the bat. It's a threemillisecond event.' And he was honest. He said, 'Well, I guess it just ***seemed*** like I could do that.'"

each woman. The women would sit for the duration of the evening against the wall on the long, low couches that ringed the room, and the men would rotate from woman to woman, moving to the next woman whenever the coordinator rang a bell signaling that the six minutes were over. The daters were all given a badge, a number and a short form to complete, with the instruction that if they liked someone after six minutes, they should check the box next to his or her number. If the person whose box he or she checked also checked his or her box, both daters would be notified of the other's e-mail address within 24 hours.

### Everyone Is Smart

Speed-dating has become enormously popular around the world over the last few years, and it's not hard to understand why. It's the distillation of dating to a simple snap judgment. Everyone who sat down at one of those tables was trying to answer a very simple question: Do I want to see this person again? And to answer that, we don't need an entire evening. We really need only a few minutes. When it comes to thin-slicing potential dates, pretty much everyone is smart.

But suppose we were to alter the rules of speed-dating just slightly. What if we tried to look behind the locked door and made everyone explain his or her choices? We know, of course, that that can't be done: The machinery of our unconscious thinking is forever hidden. But what if we forced people to explain their first impressions and snap judgments *anyway*? That is what two professors from Columbia University have done, and they have discovered that if you make people explain themselves, something very strange and troubling happens. What once seemed like the most transparent and pure of thinslicing exercises turns into something quite confusing.

### Behind the Locked Door

The professors found that when they compare what speed-daters say they want in a preliminary questionnaire with what they are actually attracted to in the moment, those two things don't match. This can be confusing. A speed-dater has an idea about what she wants in a man, and that idea isn't wrong. It's just incomplete. The description that she starts with is her conscious ideal: what she believes she wants when she sits down and thinks about it. But what she cannot be as certain about are the criteria she uses to form her preferences in that first instant of meeting someone face to face. That information is behind the locked door.

We have, as human beings, a storytelling problem. We're a bit too quick to come up with explanations for things we really don't have an explanation for.

## The Dark Side of Thin-Slicing

What makes thin-slicing possible is our ability to very quickly get below the surface of a situation. But what happens if that rapid chain of thinking gets interrupted somehow? What if we reach a snap judgment without *ever* getting below the surface?

Part of what it means to take thin-slicing and first impressions seriously is accepting the fact that sometimes we can know more about someone or something in the blink of an eye than we can after months of study. But we also have to acknowledge and understand those circumstances when rapid cognition leads us astray.

### Taking Care of the Customer

Being a successful salesperson is a task that places extraordinary demands on the ability to thin-slice. Someone you've never met walks into your place of business. Some people are insecure. Some are nervous. Some know exactly what they want. Some have no idea. Some know a great deal about your product or service and will be offended by a salesperson who adopts a patronizing tone. Some are desperate for someone to take them by the hand and make sense of what seems to them like an overwhelming process. A salesperson, if he or she is to be successful, has to gather all of that information—figuring out, for example, the dynamic that exists between a husband and a wife, or a father and a daughter—process it and adjust his or her own behavior accordingly, and do all of that within the first few moments of the encounter.

Most salespeople see someone, and somehow they let the first impression they have about that person's appearance drown out every other piece of information they manage to gather in that first instant.

The best salespeople try to be more selective. They try to pick up on whether someone is confident or insecure, knowledgeable or naive, trusting or suspicious—but from that thin-slicing flurry the successful salesperson tries to edit out those impressions based solely on physical appearance.

But if those impressions are happening outside of awareness, how on earth do you fix it? The answer is that we are not helpless in the face of our first impressions. They may bubble up from the unconscious—from behind a locked door inside of our brain—but just because something is

outside of awareness doesn't mean it's outside of control.

Our first impressions are generated by our experiences and our environment, which means that we can change our first impressions—we can alter the way we thinslice—by changing the experiences that comprise those impressions.

## Harnessing Thin-Slicing

Taking rapid cognition seriously—acknowledging the incredible power, for good and ill, that first impressions play in our lives—requires that we take active steps to manage and control those impressions. We must confront the consequences of first impressions and snap judgments. Sometimes we are successful, sometimes we are not. The following examples provide us with critical lessons on how we can better understand and come to terms with the extraordinary power of thin-slicing.

### The Structure of Spontaneity

Once, out of curiosity, Paul Van Riper, a Marine who served in Vietnam, consultant Gary Klein and a group of about a dozen Marine Corps generals flew to the Mercantile Exchange in New York to visit the trading floor. Van Riper thought to himself, I've never seen this sort of pandemonium except in a military command post in war—we can learn something from this.

After the bell rang at the end of the day, the generals went onto the floor and played trading games. Then they took a group of traders from Wall Street across New York Harbor to the military base on Governor's Island and played war games on computers. The traders did brilliantly. The war games required them to make decisive, rapid-fire decisions under conditions of high pressure and with limited information, which is, of course, what they did all day at work. Van Riper then took the traders down to Quantico, put them in tanks, and took them on a live fire exercise. To Van Riper, it seemed clearer and clearer that these "overweight, unkempt, long-haired" guys and the Marine Corps brass were fundamentally engaged in the same business—the only difference being that one group bet on money and the other bet on lives.

### Traders and Generals

"I remember the first time the traders met the generals," Gary Klein says. "It was at the cocktail party, and I saw something that really startled me. You had all these Marines, these twoand three-star generals, and you know what a Marine Corps general is like. Some of them had never been to New York. Then there were all these traders, these brash, young New Yorkers in their 20s and 30s, and I looked at the room and there were groups of two and three, and there was not a single group that did not include members of both sides. They weren't just being polite. They were animatedly talking to each other. They were comparing notes and connecting. I said to myself, These guys are soul mates. They were treating each other with total respect."

Improvisation comedy is a wonderful example of the kind of thinking that this summary is about. It involves people making very sophisticated decisions on the spur of the moment, without the benefit of any kind of script or plot. What is so compelling and terrifying about improv is the fact that it appears utterly random and chaotic. It seems as though you have to get up onstage and make everything up, right there on the spot. But the truth is that improv isn't random and chaotic at all. Improv is an art form governed by a series of rules, and everybody attends lengthy rehearsals to practice abiding by those rules.

### Repetition and Structured Practice

The game of basketball provides an apt analogy. Basketball is an intricate, high-speed game filled with split-second, spontaneous decisions. But that spontaneity is possible only when everyone first engages in hours of highly repetitive and structured practice—perfecting his or her shooting, dribbling and passing, and running plays over and over again—and agrees to play a carefully defined role on the court.

This is the critical lesson of improv as well, and it is also a key to understanding the camaraderie between the New York traders and the Marine Corps generals: *spontaneity is not random*. How good people's decisions are under the fast-moving, high-stress conditions of rapid cognition is a function of their training, rules and rehearsal.

## Verbal Overshadowing

Allowing people to operate without having to explain themselves constantly enables rapid cognition. Here is a very simple example of this:

Picture, in your mind, the face of the waiter or waitress who served you the last time you ate at a restaurant, or the person who sat next to you on the bus today. Any stranger whom you've seen recently will do. Now, if you were asked to pick that person out of a police lineup, could you do it? You probably could.

### Unconscious Cognition

Recognizing someone's face is a classic example of unconscious cognition. We don't have to think about it. Faces just pop into our minds. But suppose you were asked to take a pen and paper and write down in as much detail as you can what your person looks like.

Describe her face. What color was her hair? What was she wearing? Was she wearing any jewelry? Believe it or not, you will now do much worse at picking that face out of a lineup. This is because the act of describing a face has the effect of impairing your otherwise effortless ability to subsequently recognize that face.

### The Brain's Two Hemispheres

The psychologist Jonathan W. Schooler, who pioneered research on this effect, calls it verbal overshadowing. Your brain has a part (the left hemisphere) that thinks in words, and a part (the right hemisphere) that thinks in pictures, and what happened when you described the face in words was that your actual visual memory was displaced. Your thinking was bumped from the right to the left hemisphere. When you were faced with the lineup the second time around, what you were drawing on was your memory of what you said the waitress looked like, not your memory of what you saw she looked like. And that's a problem because when it comes to faces, we are much better at visual recognition than we are at verbal description.

## Insight Puzzles

Dr. Schooler has shown that the implications of verbal overshadowing carry over to the way we solve much broader problems. Consider the following puzzle:

***A man and his son are in a serious car accident. The father is killed, and the son is rushed to the emergency room. Upon arrival, the attending doctor looks at the child and gasps, "This child is my son!" Who is the doctor?***

This is an insight puzzle. It's not like a math or a logic problem that can be worked out systematically with pencil and paper. The only way you can get the answer is if it comes to you suddenly in the blink of an eye. You need to make a leap beyond the automatic assumption that doctors are always men. They aren't always, of course. The doctor is the boy's mother!

### The Inverted Steel Pyramid

Here's another insight puzzle:

### Too Many Choices

Columbia University Professor Sheena Iyengar once conducted an experiment in which she set up a tasting booth with a variety of exotic gourmet jams at the upscale grocery store Draeger's in Menlo Park, Calif. Sometimes the booth had six different jams, and sometimes Iyengar had 24 different jams on display. She wanted to see whether the number of jam choices made any difference in the number of jams sold. Conventional economic wisdom, of course, says that the more choices consumers have, the more likely they are to buy, because it is easier for consumers to find the jam that perfectly fits their needs. But Iyengar found the opposite to be true.

Thirty percent of those who stopped by the six-choice booth ended up buying some jam, while only 3 percent of those who stopped by the bigger booth bought anything.

Why is that? Because buying jam is a snap decision. You say to yourself, instinctively, I want that one. And if you are given too many choices, if you are forced to consider much more than your unconscious is comfortable with, you get paralyzed. Snap judgments can be made in a snap because they are frugal, and if we want to protect our snap judgments, we have to take steps to protect that frugality.

***A giant inverted steel pyramid is perfectly balanced on its point. Any movement of the pyramid will cause it to topple over. Underneath the pyramid is a $100 bill. How do you remove the bill without disturbing the pyramid?***

Think about this problem for a few moments. Then, after a minute or so, write down, in as much detail as you can, everything you can remember about how you were trying to solve the problem—your strategy, your approach or any solutions you've thought of.

When Schooler did this experiment with a whole sheet of insight puzzles, he found that people who were asked to explain themselves ended up solving *30 percent* fewer problems than those who weren't.

In short, when you write down your thoughts, your chances of having the flash of insight you need in order to come up

with a solution are significantly impaired—just as describing the face of your waitress made you unable to pick her out of a police lineup. (The solution to the pyramid problem, by the way, is to destroy the bill in some way—tear it or burn it.)

### 'Paralysis Through Analysis'

With a logic problem, asking people to explain themselves doesn't impair their ability to come up with the answer. In some cases, in fact, it may help. But problems that require a flash of insight operate by different rules. "It's the same kind of paralysis through analysis you find in sports contexts," Schooler says. "When you start becoming reflective about the process, it undermines your ability. You lose the flow. There are certain kinds of fluid, intuitive, nonverbal kinds of experience that are vulnerable to this process."

As human beings, we are capable of extraordinary leaps of insight and instinct. We can hold a face in memory, and we can solve a puzzle in a flash. But what Schooler is saying is that all these abilities are incredibly fragile. Insight is not a light bulb that goes off inside our heads. It is a flickering candle that can easily be snuffed out.

### Balancing Deliberate and Instinctive Thinking

There are two important lessons here. The first is that truly successful decision making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking. Deliberate thinking is a wonderful tool when we have the luxury of time, the help of a computer and a clearly defined task, and the fruits of that type of analysis can set the stage for rapid cognition.

The second lesson is that in good decision making, frugality matters. Less is more. Overloading decision makers with information makes it harder, not easier. To be a successful decision maker, we have to edit.

### Recognizing Patterns

When we thin-slice, when we recognize patterns and make snap judgments, we do this process of editing unconsciously. When Thomas Hoving first saw the kouros, the thing his eyes were drawn to was how fresh it looked. Federico Zeri focused instinctively on the fingernails. In both cases, Hoving and Zeri brushed aside a thousand other considerations about the way the sculpture looked and zeroed in on a specific feature that told them everything they needed to know. We get in trouble when this process of editing is disrupted—when we can't edit, we don't know what to edit, or our environment doesn't let us edit.

## Market Research

Marketers have found that there is an inherent problem with trying to measure people's reactions. The Edsel, the Ford Motor Co.'s famous flop from the 1950s, failed because people thought it looked funny. The Edsel started out ugly, and it's still ugly.

By the same token, there are movies that people hate when they see them for the first time, and they still hate them two or three years later. A bad movie is always a bad movie.

### Ugly or Different?

The problem is that buried among the things we hate is a class of products that are in that category only because they are weird. They make us nervous. They are sufficiently different that it takes us some time to understand that we actually like them. Maybe the word "ugly" is just a proxy for "different." The problem with market research is that often it is simply too blunt an instrument to pick up this distinction between the bad and the merely different.

Market research isn't always wrong, of course. When testing products or ideas that are truly revolutionary, most companies understand that in these cases, the first impressions of their consumers need interpretation.

We like market research because it provides certainty—a score, a prediction; if someone asks us why we made the decision we did, we can point to a number. But the truth is that for the most important decisions, there can be no certainty. It is the new and different that is always most vulnerable to market research. It is hard for us to explain our feelings about unfamiliar things.

## Expert Testimony

The first impressions of experts, however, are *different*. This does not mean that experts like different things than the rest of us—although that is undeniable. When we become expert in something, our tastes grow more esoteric and complex.

Only experts are able to reliably account for their reactions. Our unconscious reactions come out of a locked room, and we can't look inside that room. But with experience, we become expert at using our behavior and our training to interpret—and decode—what lies behind our snap judgments and first impressions. It's much like what people do when they are in psychoanalysis: They spend years analyzing their unconscious with the help of a trained therapist

until they begin to get a sense of how their mind works. All experts do this, either formally or informally.

Whenever we have something that we are good at—something we care about—that experience and passion fundamentally change the nature of our first impressions. This does not mean that when we are outside our areas of passion and experience, our reactions are invariably wrong. It just means that they are shallow.

They are hard to explain and easily disrupted. They aren't grounded in real understanding.

## The Naked Face

Whenever we experience a basic emotion, that emotion is automatically expressed by the muscles of the face. That response may linger on the face for just a fraction of a second or be detectable only if electrical sensors are attached to the face. But it's always there. The face has, to a large extent, a mind of its own. This doesn't mean we have no control over our faces. We can use our voluntary muscular system to try to suppress those involuntary responses. But, often, some little part of that suppressed emotion—such as the sense that I'm really unhappy even if I deny it—leaks out.

### Facial Clues

We can all mind-read effortlessly and automatically because the clues we need to make sense of someone or some social situation are right there on the faces of those in front of us. There is enough accessible information on a face to make everyday mind reading possible. When someone tells us "I love you," we look immediately and directly at him or her because by looking at the face, we can *know*—or, at least, we can know a great deal more—about whether the sentiment is genuine. Do we see tenderness and pleasure? Or do we catch a fleeting microexpression of distress and unhappiness flickering across his or her face?

We make these kinds of complicated, lightning-fast calculations very well. We make them every day, and we make them without thinking. Mind reading allows us to adjust and update our perceptions of the intentions of others.

## Practice Makes Perfect

Our powers of thin-slicing and snap judgments are extraordinary. But even the giant computer in our unconscious needs a moment to do its work. The art experts who judged the Getty kouros needed to see the kouros before they could tell whether it was a fake. If they had merely glimpsed the statue through a car window at 60 miles per hour, they could only have made a wild guess at its authenticity.

Perhaps the most common—and the most important—forms of rapid cognition are the judgments we make and the impressions we form of other people. Every waking minute that we are in the presence of someone else, we come up with a constant stream of predictions and inferences about what that person is thinking and feeling.

### The Look of Love

When someone says, "I love you," we look into that person's eyes to judge his or her sincerity. When we meet someone new, we often pick up on his or her subtle signals, so that afterward, even though he or she may have talked in a normal and friendly manner, we may say, "I don't think he liked me," or "I don't think she's very happy." We easily separate into parts the complex distinctions in facial expressions. If you were to see a man grinning, for example, with his eyes twinkling, you'd say he was amused. But if you were to see him nod and smile exaggeratedly, with the corners of his lips tightened, you would take it that he had been teased and was responding sarcastically.

If a woman were to make eye contact with someone, give a small smile, and then look down and avert her gaze, you would think she was flirting. If she were to follow a remark with a quick smile and then nod or tilt her head sideways, you might conclude that she had just said something a little harsh and wanted to take the edge off it. You wouldn't need to hear anything she was saying in order to reach these conclusions. They would just come to you in a blink.

### Inferring Motivations and Intentions

This practice of inferring the motivations and intentions of others is classic thin-slicing. It is picking up on subtle, fleeting cues in order to read someone's mind—and there is almost no other impulse so basic and so automatic and at which, most of the time, we so effortlessly excel.

However, mind-reading failures happen to all of us. They lie at the root of countless arguments, disagreements, misunderstandings and hurt feelings. And yet, because these failures are so instantaneous and so mysterious, we don't really know how to understand them.

Mind-reading failures may sometimes fall into a kind of gray area, the middle ground between deliberate and ac-

cidental. They aren't always as obvious and spectacular as other breakdowns in rapid cognition. They are subtle and complex and surprisingly common.

### Unconscious Thinking

Our unconscious thinking is, in one critical respect, no different from our conscious thinking: In both, we are able to develop our rapid decision making with training and experience. Mind reading, as well, is an ability that improves with practice.



Malcolm Gladwell is a staff writer for the New Yorker. He was formerly a business and science reporter at the Washington Post. He was born in England, raised in Canada, and now lives in New York City.

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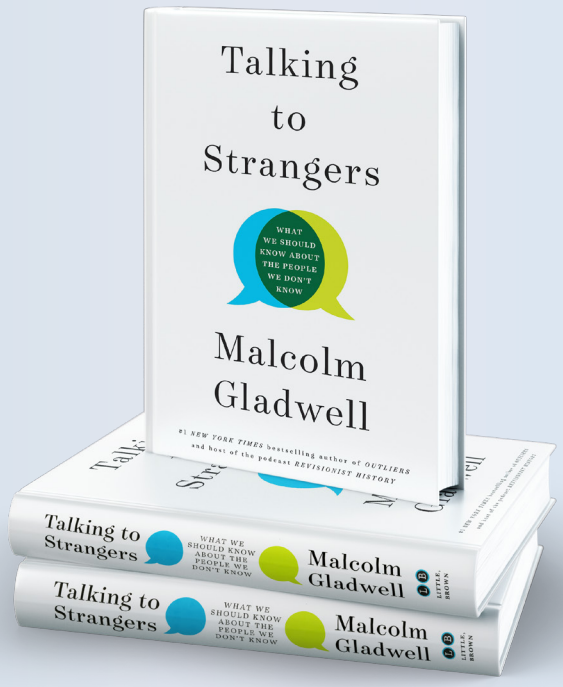
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# Book Snaps: Talking to Strangers

Malcolm Gladwell

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Talking to Strangers

**What We Should Know about the People We Don't Know** *by Malcolm Gladwell*

Malcolm Gladwell is the author of five *New York Times* bestsellers—*The Tipping Point, Blink, Outliers, What the Dog Saw,* and *David and Goliath.* He is also the co-founder of Pushkin Industries, an audio content company that produces the podcasts Revisionist History, which reconsiders things both overlooked and misunderstood, and Broken Record, where he, Rick Rubin, and Bruce Headlam interview musicians across a wide range of genres. Gladwell has been included in the TIME 100 Most Influential People list and touted as one of *Foreign Policy's* Top Global Thinkers. www.gladwellbooks.com

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# Why Snap Judgments About Strangers are Often Wrong

Billed as a "classic Gladwellian intellectual adventure," Malcolm Gladwell's sixth book begins with a benign reminiscence of his father having a delightful conversation with a stranger in the lobby of the Mercer Hotel in New York City. The recollection that their conversation was constantly interrupted by people "coming up to him to take pictures and have him sign little bits of paper," suggests a celebrity encounter of which Gladwell's father was blissfully unaware.

The gentle nature of this opening story stands in stark contrast to the introduction: ***Step Out of the Car!*** That is revisited in the final chapter of the book and is attributed with igniting the author's interest in why we are so inept at talking to people we don't know.

## Sandra Bland

The traffic stop that took place on the perimeter of the Prairie View A&M University campus in July 2015 should have been routine. The fact that it resulted in Sandra Bland's arrest and subsequent suicide in her cell three days later escalated the case to prominence (propelled by a viral dashcam video of the interaction) amid a national debate about aggressive and allegedly racist police practices. Gladwell is very clear in his pronouncement that this "traffic stop gone awry," resonated with him more than any other police case.

The media response to the case was disappointingly familiar, with one side focusing on the larger racism issue, and the other examining the lives and personalities of both parties in microscopic detail. The greater concern for the author was that, in short order, the novelty of the case would dissipate to be replaced by a new story and people would move on to other things. Gladwell's position was more intransigent: "I don't want to move on to other things."

His response is to take the reader on a journey through history, psychology, and even some pop culture, using a diverse mix of scandals and other media events to make the larger point that because we don't know how to talk to strangers, we often set ourselves up for misunderstanding and conflict. The term 'stranger'

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> **Gladwell challenges the notion that our faces are the billboards for our hearts by examining the deeply intuitive idea of transparency. . .”**

is never defined, as the author chooses instead to embrace an array of options, including someone we've never met, someone we've only talked to a couple of times, someone we may think we know pretty well, and someone we know only by reputation.

The author exemplifies the potential damage of such conflict between strangers through such cases as the conquistador Hernán Cortés meeting Montezuma II in Mexico in 1519, and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain meeting Adolf Hitler on the precipice of the Second World War. For Montezuma, cultural and language challenges led to his untimely death and the launch of an era of "catastrophic colonial expansion." For Chamberlain, the misunderstanding lay in the ease with which he was manipulated by Hitler. Politicians had witnessed Hitler's ascension on the strength of extremist Nazi rhetoric, but they remained eager to believe that he could be appeased because they were desperate to avoid another war. Chamberlain, relatively new in his role, was equally eager to believe Hitler's affirmations that he had no territorial ambitions beyond Germany's immediate borders. As such, he was primed to fall for Hitler's displays of sincerity and respect, including "the double handshake that he reserves for specially friendly demonstrations."

## Defaulting to Truth

Should Montezuma and Chamberlain simply be dismissed as naïve or gullible? Or is there something more substantive here that needs further examination? Gladwell clearly believes the latter, and his search for answers in this treatise begins with the work of a psychologist named Tim Levine whose work focuses on why we are so often deceived by strangers. The author guides us through a series of Levine's experiments in which college students are tempted by a proctor (on Levine's team) to grasp the opportunity to cheat on a test without fear of being caught. The resulting analysis affirms the universal human truth that people are more likely to assume that people are telling the truth—Levine's ***truth-default theory.***

Using Levine's research as a framework, the author moves on to examine three specific cases: Bernie Madoff, the investor responsible for the largest Ponzi scheme in history; Jerry Sandusky, the Penn State football coach convicted of sexual abuse, and Ana Montes, an apparently dedicated analyst at the United States Defense Agency who was discovered to be a spy for Cuba. Here again, the emphasis is not so much on strangers but on the ease with which miscommunication can be leveraged by those with a nefarious intent, prompting the default to truth response.

For the sexual abuse for which Sandusky was ultimately imprisoned, the fact that such conduct could go unpunished for so many years in the face of numerous doubts and suspicions about his conduct is indicative of just how powerful this default to truth can be. One area worthy of further examination would be just how many doubts are needed to overcome that default. For Ana Montes, her nickname of the "Queen of Cuba" within the intelligence community, was indicative of the high regard with which she was held. A rising star with impeccable credentials and an impressive track record, Montes had the perfect reputation for a default to truth. Any rumors or doubts were quickly discounted or dismissed outright without further investigation. Even in the face of irrefutable evidence, her superiors gave her the benefit of the doubt and five more years to spy for Cuba before her true role was finally revealed.

The author's approach to the Madoff case is unusual in that he chooses to focus not on the perpetrator but on Harry Markopolos, the independent fraud investigator who first raised concerns about Madoff with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Others had raised their suspicions about Madoff before, but in each case, while Madoff may have seemed strange or suspicious, no one entertained the possibility that his entire operation had been a scam from day one. They might not have believed that his stock- picking skills were based on an infallible "gut feel," but the alternative was so unbelievable that they settled for the answer given to them. By ***defaulting to truth***, they were placing their faith in the system to catch crooks or in their own abilities to sniff out those crooks. They were wrong on both counts.

Markopolos did not default to truth. He had arrived at the same conclusions that Madoff's consistent performance year after year didn't add up. Where he differed was that he was willing to consider the possibility that Madoff's entire operation was a scam. He didn't trust the system to expose Madoff, so he took it upon himself to do an extensive search on his own. His error, from the author's perspective, was his choice to present his findings to the SEC anonymously in a very cloak-and-dagger fashion, convinced that the revelations would anger high-powered financiers who could be expected to respond very forcefully. Gladwell's portrait of Markopolos sitting at home with a loaded 12-gauge shotgun, extra rounds, and a gas mask in anticipation of a raid by assassins "while the rest of us went calmly about our business," underscores a proposed trade-off that those who decline to default to truth may face.

## Transparency

Gladwell challenges the notion that our faces are the billboards for our hearts by examining the deeply intuitive idea of transparency first proposed by Charles Darwin. He begins by exploring why bail judges prefer to look at the people they are judging rather than processing decisions by email or even snail

“Not talking to strangers is clearly not an option, but not communicating effectively with those strangers is fraught with real dangers.”

mail. What is it they looking for? Do they really believe they can get a sense of the defendant by looking him or her straight in the eye? How well did that work for Chamberlain?

The author then takes a surprising detour from history and psychology by presenting the argument that the characters on the television show ***Friends*** expressed their emotions so transparently in their facial expressions that it allowed viewers to transcend even the most convoluted plot points. His conviction on this point is evident in the analysis of one specific episode—episode fifteen of season five, titled “The One with the Girl Who Hits Joey”—which he concludes to be so transparent that “you can probably follow along even if you turn off the sound.”

Using the Amanda Knox case—the American student studying in Perugia, Italy who was accused of murdering her roommate—Gladwell examines the darker side of transparency. In this instance, Knox’s facial expressions, dismissed by her defense team as “youthful American goofiness,” were interpreted as evidence of guilt. As an innocent person judged to be acting guilty, she spent almost four years in custody after being ***mis-matched.***

## Coupling

The retelling of the story of poet Sylvia Plath succumbing to her depression by turning on her gas oven and deliberately suffocating herself to death is a jarring read. The connection to strangers, the author goes on to explain, is the notion that the availability of the highly toxic “town gas” in London at the time, coupled or connected gas as a popular means of suicide. When British Gas later replaced the supply with cleaner and safer natural gas, suicide rates plummeted.

The broader point is well made. The “context in which the stranger is operating,” has a direct impact on our response. In other words, what is said can be as important as where and how it is said. Video evidence of Amanda Knox’s “goofiness” were presented out of context as damning evidence of her alleged heartlessness in killing her roommate without remorse. Bernie Madoff’s reclusive offices on the upper floors of the Lipstick Building in Midtown Manhattan, along with his “imperious manner,” gave him an aura of exclusivity that investors were only too willing to believe. Even as returns performed in direct contradiction to the broader markets, they were willing to suppress their natural skepticism and stick with him.

## Sandra Bland Revisited

After documenting Bland’s interaction with police officer Brian Encinia as the opening for this book, Gladwell returns to the case and examines Encinia’s actions through the prism of his police training—the so-called Kansas City approach to policing. This approach trains police officers to “suspect the worst of every car.” As such, they are actively suppressing any sense of defaulting to truth in believing that the people being stopped are guilty of nothing more than the traffic violation that prompted the stop in the first place. The disconnect, the author argues, is that the training should be situationally specific. If you’re policing in a known high-crime area or war zone, that approach may be appropriate for both officer and public safety. A traffic stop on the perimeter of a rural Texas university campus does not qualify as a war zone. Officer Encinia, by the author’s analysis, embraced the training to the point of indoctrination and was unable to make the distinction between a war zone and a rural campus. In this context, he was as primed to mis-read Sandra Bland’s responses as Neville Chamberlain was to take Hitler’s act on face value.

Gladwell concludes by acknowledging that his response to the Bland case has led him to a conundrum. Not talking to strangers is clearly not an option, but not communicating effectively with those strangers is fraught with real dangers. Whether it’s overzealous police officers, defaulting to truth, or mis-matching facial expressions, it’s clear that we’re not as good at this as we think we are. However, Gladwell argues, what we should not do when things go awry is automatically blame the stranger. “To assume the best of another is the trait that has created modern society,” he writes. “Those occasions when our trusting nature is violated are tragic. But the alternative—to abandon trust as a defense against predation and deception—is worse.”

Gladwell makes no apologies for his approach to this topic. The Sandra Bland case clearly struck a nerve and set him on a journey to investigate the broader issues at work in these types of exchanges—to “understand what really happened.” His ability to tackle large subjects and generate a few buzzwords in the process is already well-established as the terms tipping point and the quasi-metric 10,000-hour rule have joined the modern lexicon. Default to truth may rise from this work, but that term rightfully belongs to Tim Levine. The individual cases benefit from his traditional attention to detail and novelist pacing, but the meandering approach and lack of an overarching thesis may prove unpalatable for those readers who do not consider themselves true Gladwellian acolytes.

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# Brand With Purpose

Ivan Estrada

Innovation

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Brand With Purpose

## Find Your Passion, Stay True to Your Story, and Accelerate Your Career




*by* **Ivan Estrada**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Whether you're just launching a new venture, brand, start-up, or product, or you're stuck in a cycle of failed marketing campaigns or branding efforts, ***Brand with Purpose*** is your new go-to handbook for building a brand that has impact because it has something no other brand has— you.

In *Brand With Purpose,* author Ivan Estrada shares that the key to successful branding is finding your passion, staying true to your story, and determining what is the essence of you and your brand— then communicating that essence effectively to your target audience. Market research matters, but have you been doing you research? Through guided self-reflection, you'll be able to embrace your true self and build the career you've always dreamed of— whether as a solo entrepreneur, business leader, executive, or creative. In the end, you'll be rewarded with a brand that's about more than products or profits. You'll have a brand that's centered on purpose— and that's something timeless that leaves a legacy behind.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to find the essence of you and your brand.
- How to communicate your brand to your audience in a way that builds trust.
- How your experiences, challenges, and obstacles hold the key to creating a timeless brand.
- How to generate loyalty and influence for your brand in ways you never imagined.

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## Introduction

What is the concept "brand with purpose"? Having purpose is having an internal drive, sensing that fire inside, that oxygen that makes you feel truly alive. You can have "small purposes" that add up to a bigger drive. It takes some soul-searching and honesty to uncover pieces of you that may have been hidden. Knowing your purpose is knowing what you want to be remembered for.

This book will help you uncover your purpose to help you drive your journey of branding. Brand with purpose is having clarity in broadcasting the message and being seen for your gifts in a way that serves a greater good.

Not having purpose is more obvious: you feel lost, disconnected, you have a vague outlook on life, you don't feel connected to anything greater than yourself. Branding without purpose is broadcasting a message that doesn't feel authentic to you. We've all experienced this lack of purpose and had phases in my life where we had to redefine my purpose, because the old version of us needed a new journey. Let's take that journey together.

## What's Your Story?

We all have a story. It is helpful to look at your childhood strengths and experiences. See what has stayed with you as you traveled on your journey in entrepreneurship and branding. It is this story that gives you your authenticity and creates trust with your audience.

Your purpose can come from one moment or experience, and it can start with a smaller project that repeats and makes a bigger impact as you grow it. Your purpose can change over time, and it can stay local or go bigger. Examine your personal story and start something that shares your purpose with a community.

## Be Bold and Different

In order to have courage, you need to have fear. Courage is acting in the face of fear. A lot of us push away the fear, hoping it will disappear. You can never push it away. That is suppressing the fear, but it's still there.

Fears are so many, and you can end up collecting them—from fear of not being able to grow your business to fear of not finding that true love, of losing a loved one, of not being good enough, not being pretty enough, not being rich... and the list goes on. It's the collection of fears that holds you back from being your best self.

Don't hold yourself back. Dare to be bold, accept your fears for what they are, and be different when others are being the same. You'll be amazed at the opportunities that open up in front of you.

## Authenticity

If you are a solopreneur—someone who has set up and runs your own business—you can do two analyses of 1) your personality and 2) how you approach your business, and you will likely discover the two are the same. If you have a staff to support your business, you will consider the strengths and weaknesses of your team members in addition to your own (see chapter 7, "Building a Team, Expanding Your Brand").

You can do a SWOT analysis for yourself as an individual and also for your business to be aware of where you stand in your business environment. SWOT is an abbreviation for the internal aspects of Strengths and Weaknesses (S and W) and the external position of the business environment in terms of Opportunities and Threats (O and T). This analysis can help you discover new strategies based on your Strengths and Opportunities that will help you overcome your Weaknesses and Threats. This is a good exercise in which to involve your team members, friends, customers, and community members, so that you can get an in-depth view from all perspectives.

## Invest in Yourself

Do you have something symbolic that gives you strength and confidence? For some people, it might be a particular pair of shoes, a jacket, or a lucky charm.

Can you recall a story or moment where someone else believed in you? Maybe it was something someone said about your qualities or your brand?

Do you have rituals that make you feel more confident? For instance, doing a "power pose" for two minutes, as described in a TED Talk by Amy Cuddy, has helped job interviewees and test takers reduce their cortisol levels and feel more confident. Some people jump up and down or run to get the anxiety or stress energy out of their body. Other people do breathing exercises to get their body together and focus on being present. Can you do your ritual(s) before a

big presentation or meeting and see a difference?

Write down the answers to these questions to support you on the days you need a boost, a reminder to keep investing in yourself.

## Personalizing Video

What you do before you record, to be mentally prepared and have the right attitude when planning out your videos, is just as important as the actual recording. Confidence is key.

Whether it's the script content, the location, or the props, going into the filming process with passion will drive your project. Deep down, you have to know that what you're creating is going to be of value for someone, even if it's just one person. Being able to compel and excite even a single person should be enough to inspire you to make your ideas a reality. But it's not just about you, it's about what you're there to deliver to your audience. Once you change your headspace, setting up your personalized video branding will come with ease. It's all about taking a chance at the cost of failure. Being completely honest with yourself is what will lead you to growth as an entrepreneur. The true value will come from expressing your authentic self.

When people watch a video, they learn about your brand in two ways. First and foremost, the brand can be seen as the actual product or service that is being offered through the video. And second, the brand is who you are, and how well you are providing that product or service to the viewer. When people watch your videos, they will be looking at the personality, expertise, and energy you have in promoting and selling your brand. The product doesn't even really matter.

What is crucial to keep in mind is that your content is a way to show your audience who you are, and why they should trust you. The goal is to create an audience that looks at you as an expert in your line of business, even if you are still new. Through thoughtful, educational, and value adding content, you can create a group of loyal followers who will support you in your business.

## Social Media Influence

If you're an entrepreneur who is new to using social media for your business, start with searchable themes. Is it truly in line with your brand to post food photos even if food photos are popular?

You never know who is watching. Your intention behind social media is important. Some people don't click Like or comment on posts, but they are still paying attention, maybe without you knowing. Social media is a way for you to leverage time, maintain friendships, and to connect with more people than you could otherwise keep up with.

## Building a Team, Expanding Your Brand

As one person, you don't have all the skills you need to run a successful business. So you need to build a team, know what vendors or consultants to hire, and what staff you need.

First, if you haven't already taken some personality tests to get to know yourself better, it is important to identify your individual strengths and find where you need to fill gaps. In this chapter we have several types of assessments you can check out to see how they can help you know yourself and know what you need for your team. Second, you will want to have your prospective candidates or current colleagues take assessments so that you, as the leader, know how to manage your organization better.

## Finding Your Creativity: Be Inspired

"The key to being a successful creative person is to create. It takes a certain confidence level to sit down and put pen to paper, and face your fears... There are those voices that say maybe you shouldn't be doing this and stick to what you were doing. The main part of being creative is to defeat those voices. The most important thing: keep creating, keep developing your art, and keep learning about marketing."

—Austin Kleon, artist and author

What can you create every day? Some people like to try a new recipe or change up a recipe for something they already know how to bake. Some people like to keep a journal to write or sketch in. Make a commitment to be creative every day. What is that activity?

## Collaborations and Relationships

Arturo Villarreal grew up in a big family with a single mother in South Central LA. The family had financial challenges and he started working as a teen to help support the others. His loyalty and character as a teen earned him the respect of mentors, who took him far. In our interview, he

still credits the mentors who gave him opportunities and the training that laid the foundation for his company, Virtus. He also credits his team of employees and finds ways to develop his staff so they grow in their skills and stay invested in the company. He personally visits his client sites to make sure each project is going smoothly.

**Take care of your relationships.**

"You can have all the experience in the world, but if you forget to take care of your clients and the people who help make that happen, you have accomplished nothing."

Do you have a way of taking care of your relationships? If not, create a system to help you manage your clients and network. Think of ways to show you care. Do you need to mail a handwritten thank-you card or drop off a thoughtful gift?

## Networking and Philanthropy

Building a network is about the quality of connections. It's about the amount of time you spend with your colleagues. It's about creating a win-win scenario for each of the people in your sphere. It also comes down to chemistry and personality. At the end of the day, we do business with people we like, people with whom we have things in common.

Building a quality network has a compounding effect if it is done correctly. The crucial thing in building a network is not to forget about the people you met earlier. The follow-up and relationship building is key.

## Conclusion: How to Pivot

If you're afraid of a certain change that needs to happen with your career or business, let's do an inventory. Make a list of what is holding you back, your fears. Then write a list of what you will miss out on if you don't make that change. Look at your opportunities versus your fears.

Then find someone to help you take the next step towards your goals. If you don't know who that someone is, ask your network!

Take two pieces of blank paper. Draw a mind map of your current and previous brands and draw a mind map of your new brand five years from now. What similarities already exist? Are there qualities from your brand you would like to bring forward to your new brand? Are there qualities you want to highlight?

Who among your audience would transition to your new brand? How can you give them a call to action to join the audience of your new venture?

Visualize five years from now. How do you see your company growing? How will it need to pivot? What can you carry forward from your current branding, and what new audiences will you need to adapt to for that future company? How can you stay ahead of that growth and prepare for it now?



**Ivan Estrada** is an inspirational business leader and highly ranked real estate broker with extensive experience in the industries of real estate and finance. He is a top producer in the Los Angeles metro area, with a thriving team in residential and commercial properties. Ivan is part of a selected cohort of top entrepreneurs for the Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative. He is a sought-after public speaker on topics of branding and marketing, personal development, and real estate by organizations such as Inman, California Association of Realtors, and The Real Deal.

***Brand With Purpose: Find Your Passion, Stay True to Your Story, and Accelerate Your Career*** by Ivan Estrada. © 2022 by Ivan Estrada. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Page Two Books. 204 pages, ISBN 978-1774580417. Summary copyright © 2022 by Soundview Book Summaries ®

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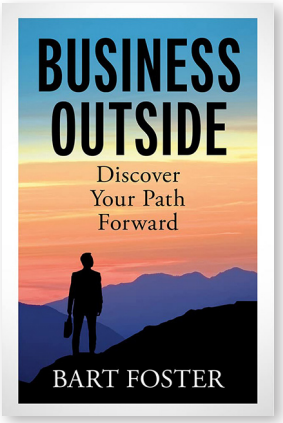
# BusinessOutside

Bart Foster

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# BusinessOutside

## Discover Your Path Forward




*by* **Bart Foster**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

As a business executive, how do you ensure you're showing up your very best every day? How do you present the real, genuine you at work? And how do you create a culture where your employees can authentically flourish? Bart Foster wrote his book, ***BusinessOutside: Discover Your Path Forward***, to answer all these questions and more.

In *BusinessOutside*, Bart Foster reveals a science-inspired philosophy that reimagines corporate culture by bringing business outdoors, allowing for increased creativity, meaningful connections, and psychological restoration. Through a self-assessment of your personal values and discovery of your Zones of Genius, Bart shows how to rise above societal and outdated corporate norms that hinder growth. You'll learn the benefits of a natural setting, why feeling personally fulfilled matters in your career, and proven practices that will put you on the path toward an authentic, intentional life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to increase creativity, connections, and psychological restoration.
- How to assess your personal values and discover your Zones of Genius.
- How to rise above societal and outdated corporate norms that hinder growth.
- The benefits of working in a natural setting and why feeling personally fulfilled matters in your career.
- Proven practices to put you on the path toward an authentic, intentional life.

## Introduction

Following a science-inspired philosophy, BusinessOutside principles are taught to help people feel psychologically restored. In BusinessOutside retreats, participants are invited to tap into their true, authentic selves in a natural setting. People leave healthier, more creative, inspired, and renewed by experiencing genuine connections. By using BusinessOutside methods, business leaders can create organizational cultures that nurture and empower their people, helping them discover their path forward.

If more companies were made aware of the ways that working outside can bolster productivity and promote happiness, more workers would feel empowered to get outdoors. But the culture needs to change first, and that starts with the leaders. As a leader in your business, you have an opportunity to lead the way outside and establish a tighter team with more authentic connections and relationships as you do.

## Challenging Conventional Wisdom

Challenging conventional wisdom starts with reassessing and asking two key questions:

1. What Problem Are You Trying to Solve?
2. Are You Willing to be Accountable for Your Actions?

A great way to motivate a team is to move fast and be more innovative through a technique called the Five Whys, which taps into the cause-and-effect relationships underlying a particular problem. To use this strategy, start with your problem and ask the question "why" approximately five times to drill into each answer and ultimately identify the root cause of the original problem.

It can cost nothing to be innovative, and it doesn't have to take a lot of time, either. Yes, you can move fast and break things at the same time. How will you challenge the status quo and think outside the box? How might moving beyond conventional wisdom change your business and your life?

## Establishing Deeper Level Connections

The art of building relationships before you need them is only step one; it's the most superficial aspect of relationship building. After this step, you must continue investing in each relationship to deepen the connection and build trust.

There are some simple strategies you can implement to go the extra mile and show people you are interested in getting to know them. These simple steps apply to building relationships in business and the rest of life as well:

- Learn names
- Ask the right questions
- Give handwritten notes
- Add a personal touch

Make a list of five people who inspire you and give you energy. Now determine what meaningful steps you can take to spend more time with these people. Write them down and take that first step. Start small, then build.

## Personal Values Statement

I'm willing to bet that at least one area of your life doesn't reflect your personal values at all. Maybe you value health, but you're not scheduling time to exercise. Maybe you value friendship or personal connection but rarely see the friends who mean the most to you. Perhaps you really value fun and laughter, yet your whole day feels like a grind, from the minute you get up to the minute you go to bed and you can't remember the last time you had a good belly laugh.

Of course, you want to feel personal fulfillment in your career, but if a core value is fun and you don't have that, look at how you can start incorporating more fun, play, and laughter into your life. You don't have to make a dramatic change. Simply determine what fun looks like for you and take a step toward alignment.

## Zone Of Genius

You might be talented in many ways, but there's certainly no reason to spend all your time doing things that don't bring you joy. To find your Zone of Genius, start by answering the following "genius questions:"

- What do I most love to do? (I love it so much I can do it for long stretches of time without getting tired or bored.)
- What work do I do that doesn't seem like work? (I can do it all day long without ever feeling tired or bored.)
- In my work, what produces the highest ratio of abundance and satisfaction to the amount of time spent? (Even if I do only ten seconds or a few minutes of it,

an idea or a deeper connection may spring forth that leads to huge value.)

- What is my unique ability? (There's a special skill I'm gifted with. This unique ability, fully realized and put to work, can provide enormous benefits to me and any organization I serve.)

Some of these questions are professionally oriented, but you can think about how they relate to all areas of your life, including volunteer work, hobbies, and parenting.

## Energy Management

The most critical resource we have as human beings is our energy. There are four types of energy:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental
- Spiritual

It's normal to experience ebbs and flows in energy throughout life, but in order to live an intentional life and be our best selves more of the time, we need to align our energy investments with our purpose.

## Expand Your Circle Of Comfort

How can you reframe possibilities before you? How can you see the next step as a way to move outside your circle of comfort rather than as risk-taking? Yes, risk might be involved, but at a deeper level you are being called to expand, to grow.

Create a Plan to Fail. It works like this: Write down everything that would happen if you were to fail, on one page. This is your worst-case scenario. It will help you gain the perspective you need. You might realize that what you're about to take on is not going to be fun, but you won't die. Everything will be okay. In a worst-case scenario, you can rebuild. Catastrophizing a situation without truly thinking through a worst-case scenario prevents us from taking action. It keeps us in our circle of comfort.

Nature, in all her wisdom, has a lot to teach us about moving outside our circle of comfort. Take, for example, the mother eagle that pushes her babies out of the nest to learn to fly. It seems cruel, but in reality, that push, as scary and risky as it seems, is exactly what baby eagles need to learn to soar. And as scary as pushing yourself out of your comfort zone may seem, it's exactly what you need to soar, too.

## Identifying Your Ideal Environment

When you encounter an opportunity, challenge, or difficult decision, think of a person in your life whom you admire and respect. Imagine if they were faced with the same issue. What would they do?

A variation of this for corporations is called "Brand Takeover." Imagine your company is faced with an opportunity or a threat. Now imagine your company was taken over by another larger company (e.g., Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Nordstrom, etc.). Your company now has all the resources and people of the bigger company. What would you do differently? How would you react? Seeing from this new vantage point can be the key to getting unstuck.

## Regret Minimization

Let's look at how to prioritize with intentionality by using frameworks like Regret Minimization and Hell Yes or No. Start by considering how long you have left for any given event. Next, you can begin to look at all of the individual experiences you have left based on the time you have. Every time you are faced with a big decision, you can ask yourself which course of action you will regret more: doing the thing or not doing it? If you are honest with your answer, you will know exactly what to do.

To live your best life, you want to minimize the times when you are the one who has to shift because of decisions rather than being the one who decides. However, when we can get to more "Hell Yes" moments in our lives, we will be happier and most productive. The point is to be sure you are performing tasks in your Zone of Genius as often as possible.

## Anchors And Rockets

In the previous chapters, you assessed your personal values and Zone of Genius on a scale of one to five, with how often you are living that particular value or are in your Zone of Genius, in the previous six months. One was "Never," and five was "Always." Review anything you ranked a three or lower, and then take some time to consider the anchors that might be keeping you at that number. What is holding you back?

## Accelerate The Inevitable

BusinessOutside is all about leaning into the inevitable, and you're invited to come along for the ride. It's incredibly empowering to help drive the future.

1. Think deeply about what is inevitable in your business and your industry
2. Think deeply about what is inevitable in your personal life
3. Write these down clearly and concisely
4. What would happen if you helped accelerate this change?

## Make It Happen

I ask clients the following questions to guide them through the process of reframing their own mindset:

- What are the consequences of your current way of thinking, feeling, and acting?
- What are the facts?
- What assumptions are you making that might not be true?
- What can you control?
- What do you really want, consistent with your deepest values and beliefs?
- What will inspire you to act in new ways?

You can use these same questions to begin telling your new story. Once you realize you have agency over your mindset and the power to shift limiting beliefs into empowering ones, you have the rocket fuel to arrive at a fulfilled life. You now have the tools to create a future reality that is different from the current life you are living. You have the power to grow, shift, and propel yourself to any destination you have ever imagined.

## Conclusion

While BusinessOutside principles and methods are applicable to all at any time, they are critical in our post-pandemic world. The future of work will be hybrid, and remote workforces will crave flexibility, but still need the connection that can only come through in-person interactions. The return of the corporate retreat is coming, but it won't be like the boondoggles of the past. It will be a place to reenergize and return to alignment in every way.

Now is the time to challenge the status quo, push boundaries, find creative ways to conduct business, and get yourself and your team outside. Now is the time to create a life you love. It's time to do BusinessOutside. It's time to rethink how we do business. And that starts by tapping into your unique skills, passions, and creativity, so that you can then empower your team to do the same. It starts by recognizing there's no "professional" you and "personal" you. There's just you.



Bart Foster Is the founder and CEO of BusinessOutside®, a facilitation and training company focused on engaging, inspiring, and empowering individuals and teams to get outside in nature and outside their comfort zones. Bart is an entrepreneur and seasoned global executive who began his career at Kellogg's and Novartis. After climbing the corporate ladder and building a successful healthcare start-up, Bart found his true calling as an advisor, speaker, and coach to executives throughout the world.

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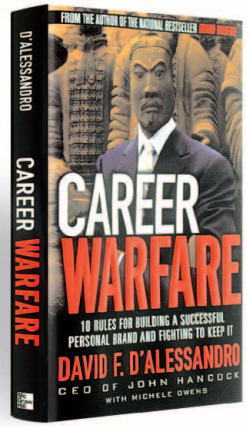
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# Career Warfare

David F. D'Alessandro

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER TECHNIQUES




By David F. D'Alessandro

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# 10 Rules for Building a Successful Personal Brand and Fighting to Keep It

# CAREER WARFARE

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*What really separates those who get ahead? Hard work and accomplishments will only get you so far. If you intend to compete at the levels where the competition gets really ferocious — where everybody is hard-working and accomplished — you need a much more subtle advantage. You need the kind of reputation or "personal brand" that convinces people to trust you with new opportunities.*

*It's not easy to build a great personal brand, however. You first have to understand that people will judge you based on the way you behave even in the most insignificant moments. Then you have to become conscious of the personal impression you are making every day. Next you have to be noticed — and noticed for the right qualities. Ultimately, a big career requires everything from the right kind of manners, to the right style of handling your detractors, to the right instincts about when to leave a job and when to stick with it.*

Career Warfare *offers the unwritten rules of organizational life, the real truths you need to know in order to build the kind of personal brand that shouts "headed for the top."*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ How to build a personal brand that reflects what you are really worth.
✓ How to work with your boss, no matter where he or she stands in the organization.
✓ Why what you know isn't enough — your social skills count, too.
✓ Why sometimes you have to acknowledge defeat and move on.
✓ Why you sometimes have to take a stand and make enemies.
✓ How to handle the isolation that comes with success and not let yourself lose touch with those who really matter — your customers and shareholders.
✓ How to handle a major crisis without losing your identity or business.
✓ How to take the calculated risks that will let you rise to the top and avoid mediocrity.

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# You Cost as Much as a Mercedes, So Act Like One

The greatest obstacle to building a good personal brand is self-absorption. Few of us escape seeing the places we work in terms of our own self-interest. But to build a personal brand that will help you succeed, you will have to turn self-absorption into a desire for self-respect and the respect of the people around you. You may still be a navel-gazing egotist, but at least you'll be an egotist who recognizes the value of other people's approval. In order to build a good reputation, you have to view your actions in the same way that the people judging you will view them.

## *Look Beyond Your Navel*

You can't build a good brand if you can't see yourself as others see you. Guard against excessive self-forgiveness. While you will tend to view your own less-than-heroic actions as no reflection on your basic goodness, others will have the opposite response — they believe you do what you do because of the kind of person you are.

Your behavior defines you — you are going to be judged by your external actions, not by your intentions.

## *Get Noticed*

The best way to establish a personal brand when you are new to an organization is by becoming uniquely useful. Be smart. Stake out your territory by finding something the organization is missing that you can provide. This may involve tackling less-than-glamorous tasks since the high-profile ones get plenty of volunteers. By doing what needs to be done rather than what you would ideally like to do, you set yourself apart. Do something humble but essential, and you'll get noticed by those in power.

When you are young, getting access to powerful people is the name of the game. If you gain access to power early, you will learn an enormous amount very quickly and put yourself in an entirely different category from your peers who communicate with these people only through a hierarchy.

## *Become a Product With the Right Features*

Getting the positive notice of powerful people is only the first step. You want them to help you move up. For that, you have to develop a brand that shouts, "Upward mobility."

How do you do that? Package yourself as an expensive product — because that's exactly what you are to your organization, your boss and your customers. You cost as much per year as a Mercedes. You'd better deliver the performance they expect from a luxury brand. When it comes to employees, certain things are not negotiable when it comes to being considered for higher office. To go far, you must develop a reputation for five key qualities:

- **Earning the organization money**
- **Telling the truth**
- **Being discreet**
- **Keeping your promises**
- **Making people want to work for you**

If you are missing any one of these qualities, you don't have the right kind of brand for a big career, and it is highly unlikely anyone will consider you executive office material.

Let's look at ways you can show you have the five key qualities. First, get yourself into a production or development job where you can be credited directly for beautifying the bottom line. Being a successful hunter can give you a huge advantage over your peers. If you're generating revenue for the company, the people

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**The author:** David F. D'Alessandro is Chairman and CEO of John Hancock Financial Services. Under D'Alessandro's leadership, John Hancock was nominated as one of the top 100 brands of the 20th century. D'Alessandro's previous book was the bestseller *Brand Warfare*.

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### You Cost as Much as a Mercedes, So Act Like One

*(continued from page 2)*

in charge will listen.

Second, be honest. Trust is the oil that greases the wheels of commerce. When you have a thriving business, the risks of dishonesty far outweigh any potential profit you might gain from it. Just consider how rapidly the market capitalization of WorldCom and Enron collapsed after their dishonest accounting practices came to light. A reputation for dishonesty is a career-ender.

Third, be discreet. If you aren't, no one with any power will trust you. Don't gossip and don't say anything in public or even in an e-mail (they have a tendency to become public, fast) that puts your company, employees or customers in a bad light. Do not write or record anything you wouldn't want subpoenaed or published.

Fourth, always deliver on time. If you overpromise and undeliver, you won't be trusted. On the other hand, showing you can do what other people cannot will propel you up the ladder. To elevate your personal brand, make bold promises and deliver.

Finally, you must be able to manage people effectively. Rise high enough, and you move from managing projects to managing people who manage projects. Eventually you will manage people across disciplines, at which point your ability to do things yourself is relatively meaningless. Your ability to get things done through others becomes what you're getting paid for.

How do you lead people? First, it's about the people, not the theory. They all need to be motivated differently. Second, know what you don't know. It's not your job to be an expert at everything, and you will never be effective if you insist on pretending that you are. Instead of teaching your subordinates to do their jobs, hire people with great skills who will teach you. Finally, treat subordinates fairly. ■

## Glamour Has Brand Value

Associate your brand with something glamorous and valuable, and you will become valuable, too. That's what the author did when he set out to establish his brand early in his career.

He convinced Mobil Travel Guides it needed a more aggressive campaign to call attention to its restaurant awards. Through press releases and food critic television slots, restaurants selected for the prize got tremendous publicity. Since these were arranged by the author, he quickly became a welcome sight at restaurants across New York City. He had no trouble getting reservations anywhere. Soon his bosses realized that getting into restaurants that were nearly impossible to get into required only a word from their junior associate.

Getting bosses and their out-of-town guests reservations at some of the world's best restaurants was quite an accomplishment for a junior associate, and wasn't quickly forgotten in a world where image counts for a lot.

If you have the opportunity, try to take advantage of what marketers call "the halo effect." Associate your brand with something glamorous and valuable, and by extension you will become valuable, too.

# Your Boss Is the Coauthor Of Your Brand

You have to pay your dues. You can expect your boss to take credit for your ideas, exploit your energy and siphon the positive attention your efforts attract. Early in your career, you will be making most of the money for the organization and expending most of the sweat while senior people reap most of the rewards. That's the way organizations work.

If you can't accept that reality, then you need to start your own organization. Otherwise, you simply cannot fight the power structure. It's dangerous to try to fight it because no one has more influence over your life than your boss. He or she determines how much money you make, what kind of experience you gain, how much authority you have, what the next step of your career will be and whether you'll be posted to Paris, France or Paris, Maine. To a great extent, your boss controls your personal brand.

Organizations are caste systems. Assistant vice presidents talk to assistant vice presidents. At whatever level your boss is, you can be sure he is talking about you to his peers. The caste system means that your accomplishments may win you one kind of reputation among your peers and subordinates and another in the boss empire. Your personal brand among the higher-ups is usually less dependent on objective evidence and more dependent on the subjective things your superior is saying about you. You must manage the relationship with your boss intelligently, no matter who he or she is.

### *Bosses Want Loyalty and Good Advice*

What do bosses want? More than anything, they want loyalty. That's because most bosses, deep down, are frightened. They want to make sure the people who report to them are not trying to do them in. The fastest method of suicide in organizational life is talking nega-

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## Your Boss Is the Coauthor of Your Brand

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tively about your boss to others. Hell really hath no fury like a boss scorned. Your boss will find a way to take you out.

Be especially wary of complaining about your boss to higher-ups. You will develop a reputation for disloyalty that senior executives will hold against you. This means that even if your boss is barely worthy of respect, you will have to give him a certain degree of loyalty.

Bosses also want good advice. This is a commodity that's hard to come by in organizational life. Bosses put subordinates into three categories — sycophants, contrarians and balanced players. Only the latter offer advice worth listening to.

Sycophants make up about 70 percent of the people in any organization. These are the people who agree with their bosses on everything. They don't want to be noticed, they want the kind of career that will reward them with a three percent pay increase every year, good benefits and a pension plan. Do not allow yourself to be thought of as someone who is afraid to speak your mind. It will brand you as mediocre.

You don't want to be branded a contrarian either. They make up about 10 percent of the workforce and disagree for the sake of disagreeing. The boss starts to cringe when a contrarian comes in the office because it is an unpleasant experience each and every time. Most contrarians are that way because they are the boss's intellectual superior and they cannot understand how their boss got this far.

Avoid the contrarian trap. Don't assume your intellect alone is enough to propel you to the top. It isn't — you need the right kind of character, too.

You should strive to be a balanced personality — the kind of person with the personal courage to tell the boss when he or she is right or wrong. Timing is important, too. Give advice before the decision is made, not after. Advice given too late looks like nothing more than a challenge to the boss' authority. ■

# Put Your Boss on the Couch

What you want from your boss is a good deal. In exchange for all you do for them, you want help building your brand. Not all bosses, however, will give you that help and it's not always easy to know who will and who won't. That's why you have to put your boss on the couch and play amateur shrink.

Many bosses fit into one of seven basic categories. Placing yours will tell you a lot about how supportive of your brand he or she will be.

### When To Say No

There may come a time when you have to challenge your boss's decision. When he or she wants to do something illegal, you simply have to resist, even if it costs you your job, Otherwise, it may cost you your career or even your liberty down the line.

If reasoning doesn't work, go sideways, go upward, blow the whistle, and call in the authorities. Just don't compromise your integrity for any boss.

- **The Little League Parent:** Many bosses treat you as if you are an errant son or daughter. Just remember, parents are self-sacrificing, bosses are not. Understand that what this boss does for you is not for love, but to further his or her own brand.
- **The Mentor:** Hope for one of these. A mentor will make sure your reputation rises in tandem with his or hers.
- **The Wastrel:** Sometimes you run into a boss you have to do everything for. If you do, tolerate his or her weakness and use the opportunity to build your own brand by taking on the assignments he or she can't or won't tackle.
- **The Pariah:** Try to keep your brand distinct from this boss. Defend yourself by proving your loyalty to the whole organization.
- **The One-Way User:** If your boss is one of these, you have to find a way to move on.
- **The Wimp:** Won't let you build your brand because he or she won't let you do anything.
- **The Know-It-All:** These bosses never listen. Avoid if possible.

### *The Power Balance*

There are four types of power you have against a boss who wants to stop you from building your brand:

**You can turn down passage on the Titanic.** During a job interview, you should be doing as much judging as the interviewer is doing. Bad bosses often give themselves away in interviews. Inquire about a potential boss's reputation before you take the job. Don't sign on if you think he or she is unlikely to enhance your brand.

**You can get out of Dodge.** Boss relationships are a Faustian bargain — you want experience and contacts, they want hard work and performance. The bargain is only meaningful so long as you are learning. Move on when you've learned what you can, or you risk being lulled into comfortable mediocrity.

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## Put Your Boss on the Couch

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**You can make friends in high places.** The boss's boss will notice your hard work, but don't whine or complain about your boss. If you do, you'll be branded as untrustworthy for violating the chain of command. Unless asked by a higher-up for input on your boss's less-than-stellar performance, don't raise the topic. Your best opportunity to shine may come during a crisis. If you are suffering under incompetent management, welcome upheaval. It will let you see who is really in charge — the people you need to win over on your way up.

**You can enjoy a dish best served cold.** Someday you may very well wind up in a position of power over the person who once abused his or her power over you. ■

# Learn Which One Is the Pickle Fork

Believe it or not, even in today's informal world, etiquette matters. Good manners are an essential tool of brand building. Without good manners, you will seem clueless about the world that successful professionals inhabit — definitely not a candidate for membership in the club. Whether it's fair or not, people interpret your cluelessness about how to behave as a sign that you are clueless about how to do your job, too. Good manners are a way of showing compassion and respect for your bosses, colleagues and subordinates.

The first rule for brand builders is, "Above all, avoid embarrassing yourself." Sometimes a single embarrassment can be enough to alter people's opinion of you forever. Go out of your way to not associate your personal brand with anything unethical, unsavory or just plain ugly.

## Don't Monitor the Bathroom

One lapse into embarrassment can derail a career. Consider the case of a senior vice president who created a water conservation program during a drought. Local government officials had recommended not watering lawns and fined people who wasted water. The vice president implemented his own conservation program and ordered employees to not flush every time they used the urinal. He actually issued a memo outlining when and how to flush. The drought passed, but he forever became known as the flush-control guy. Everyone understood that no matter what level he had attained in the corporation, his real level was that of bathroom monitor.

Personal habits in food and dress count. If you want success at a high level, it's important that you look and act it. Dress professionally. Dress appropriately. Make sure your clothes are the right size. It matters.

It's also important that your table manners indicate you are a worldly person, familiar with the rules of civilized life. Manners that demonstrate a lack of knowledge will hold you back. If you find yourself at working dinners with a dozen pieces of silver in front of you, take the time to learn which one is the pickle fork. It might not seem relevant to your personal brand, but it is.

Be careful about making snap judgments about people. Don't hurt your reputation by deciding too quickly who deserves your attention and who doesn't. It's dangerous to slight someone you don't know. Keep your prejudices, whatever they are, to yourself. Slowing down and observing people before you judge will keep you from developing a reputation as a horse's ass.

The most dangerous of all work occasions for your career are the ones that are supposed to be fun — the office parties, victory celebrations, conventions out of town and off-site meetings. You will be judged even in circumstances that seem like recreation. A lot of people, when offered any temptation — food, alcohol, sex or an opportunity to speak frankly — in a work related situation succumb so completely they destroy their reputations in the process. The office party is not a timeout.

So, not only should you not let your hair down at a social event sponsored by the office, but you should be twice as cautious about protecting your personal brand. Obey this one simple rule — don't drink. And don't hang around the boss.

The most dangerous event is the off-site meeting or retreat. The accommodations and the agendas don't matter, they are all snake pits for reputations. They are always driven by some executive's need to bring the organizational "family" together — a dysfunctional one. Someone always drinks too much and commits some form of self-immolation. Don't let it be you.

Don't bring a date to company events. Too much variety brands you, while bringing the same date may mean trouble when you split up. You will be judged most harshly if the person you are dating is someone you work with.

Marriage, on the other hand, is a public institution. How, why and whom you marry inevitably colors your professional brand. And those who marry and divorce repeatedly suffer. Don't let your spouse speak to your boss about your real or imagined grievances either. Doing so will give you a reputation for weakness you cannot possibly live down.

Treat your boss' spouse with great respect, but don't try to get too close. ■

# Kenny Rogers Is Right

If you intend to have a big career, pick your battles and avoid spending your time and energy in places where you will never move your brand forward. In "The Gambler," Kenny Rogers sang, "You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em." Kenny's right.

### *Nepotism Means 'Not You'*

The best brand attribute you can possibly have in business is the right name. Ford, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, to name a few. Consider that 60 percent of large public companies, according to the Family Firm Institute, are family-controlled. If you have the right last name and a limited amount of intrafamily competition, your chances of rising to the top are excellent.

The reality is that without the right name you may put in 30 years with a company only to find your ascension to CEO barred by a favored son. Dynastically inclined bosses may not care that you're the best qualified for the job. At a family run company, your brand will always be deficient — it will be the brand of a caretaker, a valued house servant, but never, ever the brand of a true leader.

Learn all you can at family run companies, but when the time is right for you to lead, find another sandbox.

### *If a Gang Controls the Turf, Set Up Shop Elsewhere*

Be careful about who runs the show, especially if the group looks less than diverse and you don't fit the mold. Unfortunately, discrimination is still alive and there are places where you will bang your head against the ceiling simply by virtue of who you are.

There are elements of your brand you cannot do anything about — such as having attended a community college instead of an Ivy League school, or you're a single mom, or born overseas. If you want to build a big career, you cannot afford to waste years in a place where the power structure is going to resist, no matter what your performance.

### *Don't Let the Hazing Go On Too Long*

The basic dynamic of established partnerships in law, consulting, accounting and architecture is that the old take advantage of the young. They hire the best and the brightest and force them to grind away 14 hours a day, six days a week for years, generating big bills for the firm's clients, at work well below their abilities under conditions that are demeaning — all on the off chance of making partner.

If you work in one of these industries, don't become so addicted to the place that you are irrational about your chances of making partner. Remember, partners aren't enthusiastic about adding partners — it dilutes their equity in the firm. They aren't going to share unless it's very likely that you will enlarge the pot with new business. If you can't, move on. If you don't make partner by your mid-thirties, you will be tainted and on the way out the door in favor of someone younger and cheaper. If you're passed over twice, move on.

### *Beware Entrepreneurs*

Entrepreneurial companies are dangerous. You can learn a lot from these cowboys, but don't stay too long. Entrepreneurs are difficult because:

- **Everything is personal and any show of independence is a betrayal.**
- **Entrepreneurs are insanely controlling.**
- **They don't like to share.**
- **They like to play Toy Soldier with their workers, buying the best and discarding them when bored.**

Do not allow yourself to be bound by gratitude or charisma to the point where your brand cannot grow. ■

# It's Always Show Time

It's not the big events that define you, but the patterns you establish over time. Little things matter even more as you rise. The pyramid narrows, there are fewer and fewer promotion shots and your superiors will be trying to distinguish between many qualified applicants.

Decisions from what to wear to how you treat an acquaintance on the train should be conscious. How you treat the receptionist can be seen as proof of your managerial abilities.

There are three kinds of meetings whose premises you should understand.

Staff meetings are particularly dangerous. Don't use them for anything except letting the boss know what's going on. Don't use them to argue for something you want from the boss. Don't attack peers. Staff meetings are designed to make the boss feel good, the proud patriarch or matriarch of a great team.

Watch your behavior at get-something-done meetings, too. Don't just cut off ideas, even those you know are useless. Tell the presenters you'll think about it. Let ideas flow, but make sure the group stays focused.

Then there are combat meetings — involving money or approval. At these, make sure you understand the players and the agenda. Be ready to admit victory or defeat when either is obvious and move on. Accept bad news gracefully. ■

# Make the Right Enemies

You cannot build an effective brand by never offending anyone. No matter how smart, hard-working or kind you are, you will make enemies. In organizational life, you never know how many enemies you really have, but it's always more than you think you have. Some will be your enemies simply by virtue of who you are — your sex, race, age or where you went to school.

You are especially likely to make enemies if you are ambitiously trying to build a personal brand by taking risks and accomplishing big things. The more successful you are, the more enemies you will have. Manage them by making your bosses' lives better and attaining the next office before the people who have it in for you can drag you down.

Your enemies will rarely confront you directly. Instead, they will try to hurt you without leaving fingerprints. They will often try to destroy your brand with gossip.

How do you know when an enemy is trying to do you in? The telltale signs include:

- **It's taking longer for your calls to be returned.**
- **People you used to get appointments to see easily now are often busy.**
- **People greet you with "How are you doing these days," code for seeing if you know your days are numbered.**
- **Many people are using the same metaphors about you.**
- **At parties, the boss's spouse barely glances at you.**
- **Other people are unusually concerned about your well-being.**

If this sounds familiar, find out what's going on and fight it energetically.

However, make sure that you distinguish between someone's willingness to disagree with you and disloyalty. Criticism is not a betrayal and deserves respect, not retaliation. An attempt to undermine your authority, on the other hand, deserves everything you can throw at it. If you can, make sure you fire traitors as an example to others. You have nothing to gain and everything to lose if you fail to make an example of someone who tries to undermine you.

Sometimes you have to take a stand even when your brand may take a hit. You may even have to provoke some giants. Don't be afraid to take on someone more powerful when those weaker than you need a champion. ■

# Don't Be Swallowed By The Bubble

Let's assume that you have done everything right when it comes to your personal brand. People trust you, want to work with you and respect you. You're rising in the ranks. Life is good. Now you're ready to handle the greatest danger yet — success.

Attention, praise, money and power can be isolating and unsettling. That's why so many successful people self-destruct. Becoming an executive is close to being royalty. As much as you may enjoy the flattery and perks, there are two problems with getting the royal treatment. First, it can be bad for your humanity. You get used to being "yes-sirred" and grow unused to being contradicted.

Second, it can be bad for your career. The more you're treated as exceptional, the more likely you are to believe the rules don't apply to you and the more likely you are to break the rules that are taken seriously by the rest of the universe. The implosions at Enron, Arthur Andersen, WorldCom, Tyco and Adelphia demonstrate that even pillars of the community succumb to the temptations of success.

Unless you are very careful, your achievements will nudge you into a kind of bubble that distorts your judgments. That can make you very, very arrogant and careless. It is almost impossible to avoid the bubble completely, but don't let it swallow you. Follow the six rules for keeping some perspective on your success:

- **Be skeptical of your own genius.**
- **Surround yourself with equally skeptical people.**
- **Keep friends who remind you of your humanity.**
- **Have some sympathy for your victims.**
- **Develop interests other than golf.**
- **Remember who feeds your family — your customers and shareholders.**

### *Build Goodwill Outside Your Kingdom*

Use your success to connect with the rest of the world. It's smart to win the approval of the community around you. One way to build goodwill is to treat the press respectfully. Cooperate with reporters, be generous with your time, and don't expect every story to be positive. Nonetheless, treating the press badly is a slow form of brand suicide.

Another goodwill builder is to create an organization the world admires. If you do, your shortcomings will be seen as the exception to the rule, not the rule itself.

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For Additional Information about how not to treat the press, go to: http://my.summary.com

## Don't Be Swallowed by the Bubble

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Finally, give back something significant, whether your money, your time or your influence in supporting good causes. Give because the world has made you prosperous and successful and you owe it a debt. Give where you can make a difference, locally and personally. If you do, you will build a goodwill reservoir you can tap. ■

For Additional Information about stockpiling goodwill, go to: http://my.summary.com

# The Higher You Fly, The More You Will Be Shot At

It doesn't take a crime or some extremely immoral act to generate negative news. Under the right circumstances, all it takes is the fact that you spend too much money on your hairdresser, you launched a product no one likes or you play racquetball on company time.

Everyone makes mistakes and everyone does well-intentioned things that look like mistakes. The more your profile has been heightened by success, the more likely any mistake you do make will get a broad airing. It's very simple. The higher you fly, the more interesting it is to shoot at you. Do people care if a White House intern is having an affair with a White House intern? No. But if the President is, now, that is interesting. And even more so if he lies about it.

Bill Clinton may be an extreme example of someone who seemed to enjoy flying high without a parachute, but there isn't any prominent person in any field whose brand has not been a target at some time. This includes university presidents, the heads of non-profits, movie stars, politicians and business leaders. It simply comes with the territory.

Prepare for bad news right now. Sooner or later, you will face unpleasant headlines. If you handle it well, you can turn what might be a year-long story into one that lasts a few weeks and inflicts no lasting injury on your brand. If you handle the attack brilliantly, you may even come out of your trial by fire with your brand enhanced.

The first tactic is to blunt bad news before it becomes a huge story. Explain bad news to the world. Forthrightness is disarming. And once the story breaks, behave in a forthright and reasonable manner. Explain yourself and move on. If you refuse and retreat to the bunker, the story changes focus from one mistake to every unfortunate thing you have ever done.

Don't even think of lying publicly or your brand will be finished. If you lie under scrutiny, you can no longer successfully refute anything, even the most outrageous story, because you will have no credibility. Remember, the truth may be bitter medicine for a brand, but a lie is toxic.

Whatever you do, don't go on a jihad. Don't blame your employees, your accountant, your students or your spouse. Don't blame a vast, un-named conspiracy. If you try to shift blame, you make a bad story worse. Finally, don't be your own lawyer. Get advice from people who can be realistic about what is happening to you. ■

# Make Sure You Stay A Contender

Somewhere between ages 25 and 65, most ambitious people go wrong. They start their careers ready to set the world on fire, yet at some point they make decisions that give them a personal brand that is notable only for its mediocrity. Even if you follow every rule in this summary, middle age and midcareer are dangerous. Your responsibilities are growing, you may have children, your parents are aging and you probably have a mortgage. All these things conspire against risk and change. To keep momentum going long after your colleagues' brands have settled into inertia:

- **Don't be generic, be Tylenol.** Be distinctive.
- **Get back on the horse.** It's foolish to throw in the towel after a setback or two.
- **Ask for opportunities and promotions.** It will remind your bosses that you are someone to keep in mind for big jobs.
- **Never sell your brand for short money.** Make sure assignments include interesting opportunities, not just a raise.
- **If lightning is about to strike, make sure you are standing in an open field.** Change will happen around you. You probably cannot control the events that lead to a promotion, but you can make sure that you are in a position to be the obvious choice.
- **Gamble shrewdly.** Promise to do something difficult and then deliver.
- **Create a brain trust.** Develop a circle of people whose advice you trust to help you bet wisely.
- **Tinker with success.** You are building your brand until the day you die, so expect to make adjustments.
- **Don't lie, cheat or steal.** Power won't protect you from disgrace.
- **Understand that the unexamined reputation is not worth having.** Be conscious every day of what you are building. This alone will set you apart from 99 percent of the people you will meet in your working life. You have to use your brand as a template for all your actions. Ultimately, if your brand is to mean anything, you have to live it to the very end. ■

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# Change On The Run

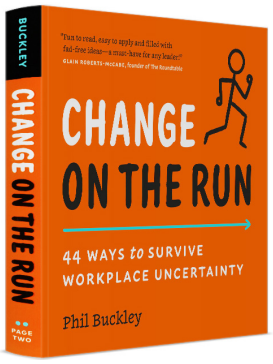
Phil Buckley

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# Change On The Run

## 44 Ways to Survive Workplace Uncertainty




*by* **Phil Buckley**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The only thing you can rely on in today's workplace is uncertainty. Between mergers and acquisitions, layoffs and team shuffles, pandemics and recessions, only the nimble survive. ***Change On The Run*** is your secret weapon to navigating it all.

Being successful in change is not about being perfect; it's about being fast and effective so you can move on to the next task or challenge. Written for the time-strapped manager, ***Change on the Run*** will help you line them up and knock them down. It's a laser-focused guide to navigating your way through disruption, without any time-consuming fluff or theory.

Change management expert Phil Buckley gives you tried-and-true survival strategies for responding to transitions and disruptions as quickly as possible. For each, Buckley applies his 80/20 rule—homing in on one action that will deliver 80 percent results in 20 percent of the time, with three key steps to achieving it.

Change is the norm in business. Let ***Change On The Run*** help you navigate it.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To assess your strengths and set personal goals.
- To develop a business case and a vision for change, as well as a plan for how to make it happen.
- To empathize with others, earn trust, and change your culture.
- To address resistance and make change stick.

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## Welcome From Your Coach!

Uncertainty is now a workplace norm, and quickly managing change is a must-have survival and success capability. The following 22 tips, sampled from the full set of 44, provide advice on key tasks that most people face during a change initiative, in a format that's easy to absorb.

It's direct and to the point because you don't have time for theory or fluff. Each task includes the one action that will give you the best outcomes when you are short of time.

Under stress, people will often try many things at the same time, hoping the choices they make will resolve the situation—the more the better. This approach gives you poor results and a reputation for not being your best.

A better approach is to focus your energy and resources on the one action that will give you 80 percent of the results you want with 20 percent of the time and effort.

The number of workplace changes and the speed with which they are emerging have never been higher or faster. Being successful in change is not about being perfect; it's about being effective and fast so you can move on to the next task or challenge. These strategies help you line them up and knock them down.

## Part One: Managing Me

### Assessing Your Strengths

Everyone goes through a personal transition when their company goes through a business transition—this is normal. Most cope with the stress by busying themselves with change-related tasks, and often become overwhelmed from having too much work to do in the too-little time available.

A better approach is to first take stock of what you do well. Reviewing actions you do well is a good start to creating your inventory of change skills. Examples of actions are planning, motivating people, and problem solving.

Your past performance reviews can reveal patterns of these types of actions and behaviors that have served you well. Your network is another source of feedback on strengths. Examine skills you've observed, skills your manager has observed, and skills your team members have observed.

Ask people for two inputs: what you do well and what your "watch-out" areas are. Most people will give you balanced views. Once you have completed your research, pick your best three strengths to leverage when completing your tasks, knowing they will assist you in any situation.

### Setting Your Personal Goals

An organizational change project provides real opportunities for personal growth because it's dynamic, complex, and involves people at all levels and areas of work. Without personal goals, you're more likely to focus on completing tasks with little thought to increasing your abilities.

One of the first things you should do after joining a project is to decide how you want the experience to benefit you: How will you grow? Three areas of development will give you the highest return: skills (what you do well), behaviors (how you act toward others), and relationships (a connection you share with someone).

Knowledge (what you know) is the fourth, but focus on the first three for now.

Skills, behaviors, and the ability to connect with others are types of leadership capability. Telling the story about how you achieved all three is part of your career leadership narrative. To create that narrative, write down a goal for each category and what success looks like for each. Then track your progress over the project.

### Optimizing Your Limited Time

Most people have fewer resources to fulfill their change role than they need, and so must choose which activities are most important. Of all the tasks you need to perform, prioritize spending time with leaders as they are making decisions. These moments will determine the success of your project and will define where your knowledge and experience are needed most.

Status meetings are crucial to the success of change initiatives because this is where leaders review progress, evaluate risks, and make decisions, including on the allocation of resources. If you know what's being decided at these meetings, you can influence what data is presented and what questions get asked.

The better briefed leaders are, the better they will be at making the right decisions.

What decisions are project leaders making that will impact the success of the change? Document each decision, the decision makers involved, the date of decision, and the information required.

Expect criticism. Try to make sure that your plans and recommendations are better researched than the ones from those who challenge them.

**Success tip**: If you don't have access to the leader, give the information to someone they rely on for guidance.

### Making Decisions

Your most important change activity is to help leaders make decisions. Showing them the implications of their options will lead to better and more supported choices.

Often, decisions must be made quickly, either because there is little time for discussion or something has gone wrong. Listing pros and cons is a fast way to review options in the context of your objectives. Identify three options, and note the pros and cons of each.

Choose the option that best moves you toward achieving your goals. Once you've identified the best option, share it with leaders, and implement it if you have their support. If not, make modifications until all leaders support it.

Sometimes, you'll need to pivot to another option if leaders reject your first pick. If this happens, try to build in some elements of your best option to increase the probability of its success.

William B. Given, Jr. says, "When possible make the decisions now, even if action is in the future. A reviewed decision usually is better than one reached at the last moment."

You might say, "Based on the information we have now, this is the best way to proceed."

### Addressing An Emergency

Too often, people panic during an emergency. The "fight, flight, or freeze" response kicks in, emotions flare up, and reactions intensify. With all this commotion, most people don't focus on addressing the crisis, assuming others will take the lead.

Emergencies are excellent opportunities to take charge and show what you're capable of.

Ask these questions:

- "What are the facts?" Speak to those closest to the situation to gather facts.
- "What can we do to avoid or stop the damage?" Discuss options, gain agreement, and then suggest who's best to activate the option you've agreed on.
- "What do I need to communicate to stakeholders?" Once you neutralize the situation, identify the steps needed to return to normal operations. After getting agreement, communicate the recovery plan to leaders and others. Afterward, review what worked and what didn't to guide how you'll respond to future situations.

**Pro tip**: When people are panicking, they respond best to their name. "Raj, what do we need to do?" solicits the best response.

### Responding to Criticism

It makes sense that people have different views on what needs to be done, because major change initiatives are generally built on assumptions and incomplete knowledge.

Expect criticism. Try to make sure that your plans and recommendations are better researched than the ones from those who challenge them. The best response to critics is to ask for facts that support their view. Responding with "Tell me more" or "That's interesting; based on what evidence?" will invite the person to share their rationale.

If the rationale is not strong, you can present your justification and move on. If their idea is right, acknowledge the new information and say you'll incorporate it into your work. In the long run, they've done you a favor.

Sometimes people make up information to support their concerns. Viewpoints can appear factual when said with authority and confidence. Asking critics to support their contentions with empirical evidence generally separates truth from fiction.

Don't say "You're wrong" or "That's not true."

**Success tip**: Anticipating criticisms and rehearsing your responses to them will avoid emotional responses when you're asked to defend your views.

### Identifying Your Lessons Learned

Learning occurs in the moment. Something worked or didn't work because of specific factors, and we often lose learnings we don't record quickly. This is especially true in the middle of projects because we tend to remember only beginnings and endings, leaving the key middle ground foggy.

Documenting the context and details of your observations immediately while they are fresh in your mind gives you the best learning. Keeping a daily log, either paper or electronic, will help when you create a project summary. The details you record will enhance the stories you tell about what you did and how you did it.

Follow this lessons-learned assessment:

- "What worked well that I would want to repeat?"
- "What didn't work well that I wouldn't?"
- "What surprised me?"

**Pro tip**: Recording quotes from what people say will increase the accuracy and credibility of your lessons learned.

## Part Two: Managing the Work

### Developing a Business Case for Change

Only 7 percent of employees completely understand their company's business goals and strategies and what they need to do to help achieve them.

A business case identifies the anticipated benefits of making a change and the investment required to implement it. Benefits include increased sales, profit and/or market share; decreased costs; greater customer service; and retention of talent. These gains need to be greater than the investment of resources required to secure them: money, time, skills, and leadership attention.

The best business cases demonstrate how the proposed change will activate strategies chosen by leaders to achieve their goals.

First, identify the published goals and strategies that the change can contribute to. Next, estimate the benefits and costs of your project as suggested by articles, case studies, etc. Finally, create a narrative that describes how the change will improve the organization.

Statistics by themselves do not make persuasive cases. Leaders and teams are more likely to support changes they can imagine. Painting pictures through stories and metaphors makes them tangible and relevant.

### Creating a Vision for the Change

Provide a compelling picture of a better future, a future that aligns with this leadership question: "What does the company aspire to become?"

Once this is set, it acts as a North Star to align goals, strategies, and the resources to achieve them. Effective visions paint a picture of a different, better, and compelling future that the organization and its employees will benefit from.

Ask these questions:

- "What will be different (reason to believe)?"
- "Why will it be better?"
- "What will intrigue people about the future (what's cool)?"

Presenting the business need for these desired outcomes is necessary because it justifies the changes required to achieve it. People also need to know how the changes will affect them. Without this information, they're likely to believe and fear worst-case scenarios and make faulty assumptions.

McKinsey & Company reports that success is 6.3 times likelier when senior leaders share aligned messages about the change effort.

Outlining people's roles (attending training sessions, testing a new process, etc.) in adopting the change is important when sharing the vision. Being clear about what they need to do for the change to be successful gives them a sense of purpose and reminds them that their contributions are important.

### Creating a Change Plan

A good change plan describes how people will be able to adopt the change. There are three sections of an effective change plan: communication, training, and engagement.

Communication describes how people will get information, e.g., through emails, town hall meetings, newsletters, etc. Training captures skill-building activities, including learning sessions, coaching, and process walkthroughs. Engagement includes feedback opportunities such as plan review meetings, interviews, and surveys.

For each section, outline what will happen in month one, month two, and month three.

Resist the temptation to make your plan long and complex. Many people believe a big plan is better, but the longer and more complex it is, the harder it is to communicate and implement. The best plans are easy to understand and follow. The worst response to a plan is, "I don't get it."

**Pro tip**: Creating a plan early, even if you don't have a lot of information, will set a path to follow and demonstrate that you are in control.

### Competing For Resources

Most organizations take on change agendas that are larger than the resources available to implement them. Leaders struggle to prioritize multiple change initiatives because they all provide benefits, and generally there are differing views on which ones will deliver the most value.

Securing adequate resources to implement your plan is one of the most important negotiations you'll have. Meet with each stakeholder to better understand the benefits they'll get from your change. Greater detail backed by credible endorsements will make them more tangible and perhaps more valuable when compared to other projects, securing the resources you need.

Ask, "Why should your project receive resources over others?" Build your case by outlining the stakeholders, benefits, examples, and quotes. The better you can describe the project benefits, the more valuable and more worthy of the resources required to attain them they become.

### Communicating Effectively

Communication is the most important form of support people receive when going through a work transition. It's also one of the biggest enablers of successful change because it aligns everyone on their understanding of what's changing, why it's necessary, how it will affect them and what they must do to adopt it.

Setting up a frequent and consistent communication schedule creates the expectation that people will receive regular updates from leaders and the project team. Communicating honestly in ways that your audience can relate to creates the perception that these messages are the best sources of information.

You must regularly communicate even when there is nothing new to share. If you don't, rumors and speculation fill the void, and such counter-narratives will seem credible, distract people, and increase anxiety.

What are your audience's communication preferences? Consider each group, how they are impacted, their hopes and fears, what needs to be communicated, and who the best communicator is.

**Success tip**: Test your messages with a few members of your audience to avoid (or at least be prepared for) adverse reactions.

### Measuring Progress

People give little thought to measurement at the beginning of a project because they're too absorbed in planning activities.

Spending time up front defining and gaining buy-in for measures will save you considerable heartache throughout the execution phase of your project. The two questions you need to answer are as follows:

- What information can you track that will accurately communicate what you've completed at each plan checkpoint?
- Who can provide context around this data? For example, you could track percentage completion of training and include a quote from the participants' leader, such as, "My team felt the training provided them with everything they need to operate the new system."

It's important to get agreement from leaders on what data will be tracked and by whom. The clearer they are about how success will be measured, the more supportive they'll be at progress reviews.

**Pro tip**: The only important measures are ones that leaders find of value.

### Presenting at a Leadership Review

The most successful leadership reviews are conversations, not presentations. Be sure to engage leaders throughout, encouraging them to share their experiences and voice concerns.

Start each review by stating what you want to accomplish, and invite participants to share their needs. This will focus the leaders on your goals before they review the content. The more you get leaders to participate, including discussing feedback, the more invested they'll be in the decisions made. Make a mental note of who is contributing and who is silent.

Don't end the meeting until everyone has said something, even if you need to go around the table for final comments. Sending a summary of agreements to leaders will confirm

that you haven't missed any key points, as well as convey that you're in control.

Say, "Thank you for your active sponsorship and guidance to ensure the project is a success."

**Pro tip:** Leaders respond best when you speak with them as your equals rather than as your superiors.

### Identifying Project Lessons Learned

Managing the closing of a change project is challenging because most leaders and project team members have mentally moved on to their next roles and challenges. A lessons-learned exercise at the end of a change project is essential for building change capability in your organization. It documents which activities worked and should be repeated by other project teams, and which didn't and shouldn't.

The best lessons-learned reviews include members of all stakeholder groups, including leaders, project team members, and those going through the change. Ask representatives of each group to write down three things that worked and three that didn't, and ask them to detail why. Themes will emerge that are best explained by verbatim quotes from the feedback providers.

Scheduling a leader review meeting at the beginning of the project creates an expectation of measurement and a commitment to learning. Booking this meeting into calendars months in advance will increase the likelihood it will happen.

Success tip: Give people examples of areas to assess, e.g., leader support, communication, training.

## Part Three: Managing Others

### Empathizing With Others

Change management often fails when there's little understanding of, or empathy for, the people who are changing. Without deep knowledge of the environment in which they work, "ivory tower" assumptions guide change planning and lead to generic and ineffective support programs.

You need to understand people's beliefs, perspectives, and concerns before you can effectively help them prepare for change. Spending time with people where they work will give you a good sense of their needs. They know their challenges better than you do, and they know what help they need to overcome them. Ask people about their concerns, and listen to how they phrase them. This gives you insight into how to support them best as they adopt the change and reduce their resistance to it.

**Pro tip**: The only way to know what it's like to be seasick is to get in the boat.

### Earning Trust

Trust is the foundation of effective collaboration. Without it, people spend their energy protecting themselves from harm. When meeting someone new or learning about a change, people's "fight, flight, or freeze" response is often triggered, causing them to either defend their territory or hide. Both responses add risk and slow you down.

The best way to gain trust is to trust first. Asking for help displays the vulnerability that's essential to transparent and respectful relationships built on honesty. You make a positive connection that can become a lasting bond. It's like asking for a favor. It makes you indebted to the person and demonstrates that you value their support.

The type of help you ask for could be as simple as requesting honest feedback or asking someone to participate in a meeting. The request is more important than the type of help. Offering to return the favor and then doing so establishes reciprocity that propels future trust-based interactions.

### Changing Your Culture

All big changes require some form of culture change. This means modifying how people think, interact, and behave. Your challenge is that these traits are deep rooted and difficult to alter.

Since a culture is ultimately defined by leaders' words, actions, and behaviors, leaders must change themselves to change the culture. Identifying the most important new behavior that will enable the change gives leaders and their teams a target to focus on. Think about what the behavior looks, sounds, and feels like. Also, identify the opposite behavior and what it looks, sounds, and feels like.

When leaders model this behavior, they signal to employees the need to work differently to adopt the change.

Note that 86 percent of leaders report that they model desired behavior change, but only 53 percent of the people who report to these leaders agree.

Profiling examples of leaders demonstrating new behaviors

Large change projects require people to work through uncertainty, and their ability to make progress with insufficient information or experience is a must.

speeds up adoption by the people who report to you or work with them.

Furthermore, stopping a contrary behavior quickens the transition toward the new one. For example, if collaboration across teams is the new behavior, calling out information hoarding and poor communication reinforces the commitment to change how people work together.

### Building Team Confidence

Large change projects require people to work through uncertainty, and their ability to make progress with insufficient information or experience is a must. Moving forward under these conditions requires confidence that the team is skilled and effective at removing barriers to success.

People are at their best when they are confident in their contributions to meaningful work. Constantly reinforcing your belief in the team (and yourself) will build their confidence to move through uncomfortable and risky territory. People will rise to their potential when you remind them of their abilities and past accomplishments.

Recalling the successful experiences of each team member creates a bridge between past successes and current requirements. Also, reminding people of the skills they used on past projects (and outcomes they achieved) will help convince them they can do it again. Highlighting problem-solving skills suggest they will be able to work through any challenge.

Say "I know your skills and experience will help overcome any challenges we face."

**Success tip**: When referencing someone, address them by name, e.g., "Mel, your communication expertise is essential for this project."

### Avoiding Team Burnout

Burnout is a stress-related state of emotional, physical, or mental exhaustion. It occurs when the demands of a job are greater than a person's ability to manage them. Triggers include long hours, impossible deadlines, little control of inputs, hostile conditions, and low rewards. In other words, project demands.

The impacts of burnout are devastating—extreme fatigue, loss of motivation, drops in performance, insomnia, feelings of resentment, and hopelessness and illness.

Fortunately, the conditions that lead to burnout are easy to spot: Unrealistic expectations and insufficient resources are visible to all. To minimize burnout, review resource plans for gaps throughout the project. If conditions change (time, resources, scope), communicate imbalances to leaders immediately. Highlighting the risk of failure is the best defense against unrealistic expectations that cause burnout.

**Pro tip**: Include in team ways of working the permission to declare signs of burnout. This provides a lifeline to those in need and a warning that work and resources are misaligned.

### Addressing Resistance

It's natural for some people to resist change. The organization is asking them to exchange strongly held beliefs and routines for untested and uncomfortable ones.

Resistance can take many forms—from indifference, to not adopting new processes, to sabotage—and you need to address all forms quickly, or your progress will stall. People resist new ways of working for many reasons, including fear of the unknown, loss of control, being overloaded, comfort with the present, disagreement with what's new, or lack of skills required to succeed.

Address fears head-on because everyone (including leadership) is afraid of some part of the change and, therefore, will resist.

The first step to minimizing resistance is to listen to people's concerns intently. Their explanations will uncover their fears. Once fears are identified, you can refute them by stating the facts (e.g., "No, we're not moving the head office"), or explain why the change is necessary and what support will be provided (e.g., "We must move the head office to save money that will be reinvested in new product development. We'll help you move").

**Pro tip**: Demonstrate that you understand people's concerns—e.g., nod your head, ask clarifying questions, restate the explanations. People resist more when they feel their concerns are ignored.

### Making Change Stick

It doesn't take long for people to revert to pre-change ways of working once the excitement of go-live fades and the project team disbands; the familiary and comfort of past routines and behaviors are a greater motivator than the benefits gained from change.

For many, consequences both good and bad are necessary to keep them on track. Be clear on what they are (e.g., good: leader praise, high performance rating; bad: leader feedback, low performance rating). Before launching the change, set expectations for everyong, including leaders.

Typically, people will test a leader's resolve to enforce change by keeping one or two old practices. They will take on even more of them if they aren't noticed or if there are no negative consequences. Before long, the continuity of new processes is lost.

People must see leaders follow through on consequences before they take them seriously. Without real consequences, they will revert back to old ways. Quickly issuing consequences, both good and bad, will confirm that leaders are serious about the change and the need to support it.

What consequences will leaders support for good and bad behavior? For example, good (reinforcing) consequences include the following:

- Manager or leader praise;
- Input into performance review;
- Recognition at town hall meeting;
- Profile in newsletter.

Bad (corrective) consequences include

- Manager or leader feedback;
- Input into performance review;
- Change of role;
- Exit.

**Success tip**: Be clear on the consequences of supporting and not supporting the change before go-live so there are no surprises.

Managing change is like most things in life: One action will give us 80 percent of the benefits in 20 percent of the time.

Let's put this truism into action!

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Disrupt You!: Master Personal Transformation, Seize Opportunity and Thrive in the Era of Endless Innovation*** by Jay Samit
- ***Change (the) Management: Why We as Leaders Must Change for the Change to Last*** by Al Comeaux



Phil Buckley is an award-winning author, coach, public speaker, and senior change management professional with over 32 large-scale change projects under his belt—including co-leading global change management for the $19.6 billion Kraft Foods acquisition of Cadbury. For the past 25 years, leaders and teams across the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. have relied on him to help them drive performance through change. He is also the author of ***Change with Confidence*** and host of the Change on the Run podcast.

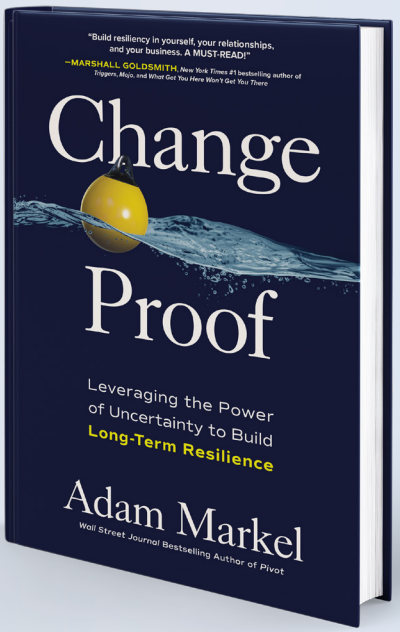
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# Change Proof

Adam Markel

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Change Proof

By Adam Markel

Adam Markel is a #1 Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Los Angeles Times and Publisher's Weekly bestselling author of *Pivot.* Adam is currently the CEO of More Love Media and host of The Conscious PIVOT podcast, where he shares his insights on pivoting and resilience in today's fast paced market and interviews experts, innovators and influencers in the areas of business and life.

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# How to Thrive On Uncertainty

In Adam Markel's previous book, *Pivot*, he mentions the importance of sticking things out at least 50 pages. "Because when you read 50 pages and move on, you're not just giving up on a book, you're giving up on yourself." He asks for readers to think about what else they could be giving up on after 50 pages of their own lives. However, the world around us looks different from the way it did back when *Pivot* was written. Now that we, as a collective, have gone through major changes in short periods of time and continue to experience changes, Markel has found that there is a new goal we should set ourselves before we consider quitting on anything: 100 pages.

Getting through at least 100 pages (of a book, of life, of family, work, etc) allows you to develop the skills and habits to not only stick through the changes, but become resilient to them. Enough resilience and you become change proof. No matter what change comes your way, you'll be able to pivot through it and leverage the change for your personal and/or professional benefit.

## The Suck & Lifeguard Lessons

Change is like the suck - a term used by beach lifeguards to describe the water that pulls people out with the tide and threatens to drown them. If there is one thing we have all learned, especially from the last couple of years, it's that change is going to happen. That is non negotiable. Change will come into our lives and sweep us away from what we know: the way we live, our relationships, our business and work - change will happen to all of it. But once you enter the suck of change, you have a choice to make: You can either choose to fight it off or you can choose to be resilient. Our entire lives, we're told to fight through the storm, fight through what's hard, fight through change. But if you fight through the suck, you're only going to use up the limited resources you have, exhaust yourself, and end up drowning it in. You can't fight change because change is going to happen.

Markel talks about one of his first jobs, as a lifeguard. At the time, he took on the job thinking it was going to be a great way to get tan and meet some girls. But it was also a job that taught him some hard lessons that he carries with him through today.

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One of those lessons happened when the lifeguard team lost a swimmer. With only a month of experience, Markel and his team mates dove into the water, more than 10 feet into the current, searching for the missing swimmer. They never found him. As they were all called back in, no one wanted to admit defeat. Their crew leader, Bob, pulled them aside. Everyone's head hung low, "he told us we had to learn something from this horrible experience. To make sure no one went down on our watch again…was if we had each other's backs." He followed his speech with "No one goes down on our watch."

The thing is, when we're faced with change, especially a tragedy, it has a tendency to shake our confidence. We feel stuck, unsure, out in our own sucks and flailing. Sometimes it even feels like failure. Sometimes, it really is failure. Bob saw that in this team and had to make sure they understood. "Just because something tragic happened, just because the unthinkable happened, we still had a job to do. If we were going to do it to the best of our ability, we had to choose to move forward together."

That's the key. You have to choose to move forward as a team. You have to face the failures, ride the suck, and become resilient to be change proof. And you have to rest. Rest is how you build muscle and build resilience.

## Pause, Ask, Choose

A large portion of Markel's book references what he called "the change-proof model." And that model is to pause, ask, and then choose. If you're swimming in a current that brings you into the suck, (experiencing change) then this is the one tool that can at least bring you back to shore. It's a natural impulse to want to fight what's happening. As Markel says, "The thing about the rip current is there's nothing you can do about it. Literally…. You do not, I promise you, have the swimming ability to fight the movement of the ocean."

The only thing to do is to pause. Stop fighting and have an awareness of what's happening and how much energy you're expending. Pausing gives you a moment to reflect, understand what you might have lost in the change, and learn from that experience as a team so you can move forward.

Pausing yourself pauses the struggle. This gives you the moment to do the next step, which is the ask. As Markel states, "This is where we find purpose. Or to be more specific, this is where you frame the meaning of what you're experiencing."

Regardless if we're stuck in the suck or going through a pandemic, no matter how bad it is, our resilience is about coming to terms with what the universe has given us. The question isn't about why it's happening to us. The question is "what are we going to do about it?"

The last step is to choose. Imagine you're out in the rip current. You've paused to reflect where you are and what's happening. You're letting the water take you where it will because there is no fighting it. You've asked yourself "what am I going to do about it?" and made the decision: You're going to move with the current rather than make it move you. So you choose to recover the energy you saved by pausing and swim parallel to the beach, all the way to safety.

This is what we must do in business and in life: choose to ritualize our recovery no matter what change happens to us so we can have a higher performance in the future.

## Resilient Bodies, Hearts, and Minds

So what does change and uncertainty mean for us? It's simple, really: change = uncertainty = stress

Plato says, "All learning is remembering." However, Markel suggests it's a little different. "All learning is pain." By that he means that there is no way to learn without experiencing some kind of suffering. Through the stress and pain and traumatic experiences, we learn how to pause, reflect, and choose to move with the change to change ourselves. From the rapid growth of technology to the rapid changes in the pandemic, the problem is it creates a lot of stress. However, we can choose to believe that stress isn't necessarily bad. Our response to stress can propel us to understand what needs to be done and how to move with it. It can drive us into new action, to pivot in a positive and creative approach to handle the stress with resilience.

Markel says, "Dennis Charney of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai New York and Steven Southwick at the Yale School of Medicine performed an analysis of resilience by talking to people who had experienced traumatic events." While several people suffered from PTSD, others had no symptoms of psychological distress. They found a few main factors that mark resilience. A sample of those factors are taken in verbatim below:

- Attention to health and good cardiovascular fitness
- Capacity to rapidly recover from stress
- A history of mastering challenges
- High coping self-efficacy - our belief in our own ability to succeed.
- Disciplined focus on skill development
- Cognitive flexibility
- Capacity to extract meaning from adverse situations
- Support (social and spiritual)

In other words, it's allowing the change to change you. Sometimes, it's easy to think we need to practice resilience. However, that is not the case. We're not practicing resilience. We can't. We have to perform it in order to become it.

As stated earlier, uncertainly equals stress. And to be resilient, we need to work through the stress. For our bodies, "exercise mimics the stress response. Active passivity. Calmly active and actively calm." Markel swims in the ocean to burn away the things that are no longer serving him and create new challenges that will. It makes him excited and nervous at the same time.

> We have the ability to train our minds to be comfortable with the things that make our thoughts uncomfortable."

He is putting himself in a situation that's outside of his control (the ocean, the rip current, the waves and possible suck) and doesn't turn his back on it. He looks into it. By putting his body under this kind of stress, he is actively creating resilience to face more situations outside of his control.

How about our minds? Are we able to create resilient thoughts? Yes. We have the ability to train our minds to be comfortable with the things that make our thoughts uncomfortable. The thing is, we cannot pause our thoughts. Even if you try to sit without them for thirty seconds, they still come. And as much as we'd sometimes like to go through electroshock rather than sit with our own thoughts, mental resilience has nothing to do with avoiding those thoughts altogether.

As a business leader, there will be times when you will need to calm yourself fast and effectively. That's where a ritual comes into play to pause and reflect:

- Inhale: breathe in
- Hold that breath for 10 complete seconds
- Exhale, breathe out

As you breathe in and out, imagine your emotions are pouring out of you and reaching other people. Imagine those same emotions radiating wonderfully to any part of your body. The practice of this kind of meditation daily helps to take the edge off your emotions and creates emotional flexibility. Spend time with yourself and your emotions. Learn to feel the wonderful ones to their highest points. Meditate daily and feel the difference on how you choose to allow your emotions to affect you.

Markel suggests as you do the breathing exercise to then ask yourself four questions:

- Do I like feeling this way?
- Do I want to let it go?
- Am I willing to let it go?
- When am I willing to let it go?

This way, you can take away some of the emotional power, even if it stays with you. Emotionally resilient people are actively calm and present. They know emotion has real weight. And emotionally resilient leaders know how to take away the power of the feelings that hinder them from moving forward.

People talk about having balance, that the balance of your mind body and soul is what will create happiness. However, it's not about the balance. Balance isn't the right word at all. You can't have equal weight in all areas of yourself. It just doesn't work that way. It's not about balance. It's about harmony. It's about all the pieces of yourself working together fluidly. So your mind can support your body. Your body can support your emotions and your emotions can drive your thoughts. When you are in harmony with all the pieces of yourself, you have more capability to not only choose to be resilient but actually become resilient, swim out of the suck of change, and pivot into a better future. You move with the change rather than fighting it.

## Change-Proof

As humans, we have the ability to imagine the future. As a leader in your business, you have the ability to imagine a future where your business grows, no matter who is in charge, if you lose that business, grow out of it, or sell it to someone else. Markel says, "No one can predict the future nor can anyone control it, but to be a change-proof person and leader, a healthy, thriving imagination is the tool that will help you survive any rip current you may face."

We no longer have the choice to be resilient. We have to be. Change is coming. It will forever come our way. We must choose to be change proof leaders so we don't end up in our own versions of the suck, drowning ourselves and those within our teams and business.

Being a change proof leader is the biggest and most complicated tool to have in your back pocket. Honing in on the change proof model is the practice we must perform in the face of any change: pause and reflect, ask yourself how to respond, and choose to recover your energy and move forward to the future.

Then we must create resilience in our minds, bodies, hearts and spirits. Use them as the vessel to be change-proof beings. Every day, we have a new opportunity to create whatever it is we have dreamed about. And moving with the changes that happen to us and around us rather than fighting against them is the path we need to take to get there.

Be a change proof human, a change proof leader, to create a change proof team that will build a change proof organization.

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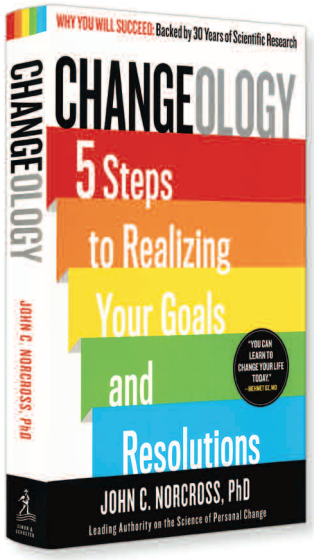
# Changeology

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# Changeology

## 5 Steps to Realizing Your Goals and Resolutions




by John C. Norcross, PhD

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Is there a scientific formula you can follow to change your life?

Change is hard. But not if you know the 5-step formula that works whether you're trying to stop smoking or start recycling. Dr. John C. Norcross, an internationally recognized expert, has studied how people make transformative, permanent changes in their lives. Over the past 30 years, he and his research team have helped thousands of people overcome dozens of behavioral ailments. Now his cutting-edge, scientific approach to personal improvement is being made available in this indispensable guide.

*Changeology* encompasses the entire change process, and you will be guided through all five steps of a proven system that you can use to change on your own or customize to your own life.

Unlike 95 percent of self-help books, the Changeology plan has a documented track record of success. Whether you want to quit overeating or drinking or end depression, debt and relationship distress, Dr. Norcross gives you the tools you need to change what you want within 90 days.

Whatever your goal or resolution, you can use *Changeology* to achieve a life filled with better health and greater happiness.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to define your goals and get started in a new direction.
- How to pump up your motivation and prepare for self-change.
- How to prevent relapses into old patterns.
- How to master the skills that will help you sustain change.
- How *Changeology* differs from other self-help methods.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **CHANGEOLOGY**

**by John C. Norcross, PhD**

**The author:** John C. Norcross, PhD, is professor of psychology and Distinguished University Fellow at the University of Scranton, adjunct professor of psychiatry at SUNY Upstate Medical College, and a board-certified clinical psychologist in part-time practice. He has authored more than 300 publications and edited or co-written 22 professional books. His reach and influence are truly international, as witnessed by invited presentations in 30 countries and translations of his books into dozens of languages. Dr. Norcross has consulted with many health care organizations, including the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) and leading pharmaceutical companies, to ensure the success of patients' behavioral change. *Changeology: 5 Steps to Realizing Your Goals and Resolutions* by John C. Norcross, PhD. Copyright © 2012 by John C. Norcross, PhD. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Simon and Schuster. 272 pages, $25.00, ISBN 978-1-4516-5761-6.

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## Introduction: Changeology What It Is and What It Can Do for You

Whether you're hoping to stop smoking or gambling, commit to exercising more, eliminate fast food and bike to work, or learn a new skill that will earn you a promotion, Changeology is a scientific program that can dramatically increase your chance of success.

Changeology personalizes your journey in two important ways: First, it guides you step by step and tells you exactly what to do and when to do it; and second, you'll be able to maximize the instructions with the help of an interactive website (www.changeology.com).

Behavioral research indicates that it takes 90 days to prepare for change, build a new behavior, become competent in the face of high risk triggers, and move past the likelihood of relapse. Brain research also suggests that it takes a few months of practicing a new behavior to create permanent change.

More than 75 percent of people maintain a goal for a week, but then they gradually slip back into the old behavior. However, research shows that almost all of the people who maintain a new behavior for three months make the change permanent; the probability of relapse after that is modest.

Our aim is to get you to your goal and keep you there; that will require a 90-day commitment on your part. It's time for you to become your own behavioral expert, your own changeologist. ●

# PART I: THE REAL SCIENCE OF CHANGE

## How Self-Changers Succeed: The Science

We have a love-hate relationship with the idea of changing our behavior. Change is desired and dreaded, venerated and vilified. No wonder we are so confused about it.

What sort of changes do we crave (and simultaneously resist)? Four clusters characterize the vast majority of people's ambitions:

- **Bad habits.** Specific actions that become stitched into daily life. Examples include excessive consumption of tobacco, food, alcohol and even money. These are behavioral excesses — too much of a good thing.
- **New goals.** You may desire to acquire or improve upon your skills, be it learning to run long distance, assert yourself or play the guitar. These are behavioral improvements — too little of what you seek.
- **Relationships.** You may be trying to enhance a romantic partnership, deepen your friendships, reverse troubles with your in-laws or maintain better relations with your co-workers.
- **Life satisfaction.** You make statements such as "I want to be a better person" or "I hope to deepen my spirituality." Or you set slightly more detailed goals such as wanting to be more generous, kinder and less selfish.

The process of change is amazingly similar across diverse goals and problems. People progress through the

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Corbin Collins**, Contributing Editor

identical stages — what I will call the 5 steps — for each of the 50-plus problems now researched. And they use the same fundamental strategies to speed their progress through those stages. The particular goals are different, but the journey to the goal is the same.

Let's take a look at each of the main stages of change so you can understand how we'll turn these into the five steps:

• **Contemplation.** This is the stage in which people are aware that a problem exists and are seriously thinking about overcoming it but have not yet made a commitment to take action. They are mulling it over, weighing the pros and cons. People can remain stuck in the contemplation stage for long periods.

• **Preparation.** Good intentions and small movements. Individuals are intending to take action in the next month and are taking "baby steps" toward change.

• **Action.** Individuals modify their behavior and environment in order to overcome their problems and reach their new goals. Action requires a considerable commitment of time and energy. You are in this stage if you have successfully changed in behavior for one day up to a couple of months.

• **Maintenance.** People work to prevent a relapse to their old ways and consolidate the gains attained during action. Stabilizing behavior change and avoiding relapse are the hallmarks of maintenance.

### The 5 Steps

Each stage reflects not only a period of time but also a set of tasks that must be completed if you are to move to the next stage, the next step.

Change, like any meaningful endeavor, proceeds sequentially through steps. The journey begins with the contemplation stage of specifying realistic goals, getting ready or getting *psyched*. The planning stage is all about *prepping*. How exactly will I do this thing? At some point you will jump from preparing and planning to *perspiring*, the work of implementing the new, desired behavior. Getting there is wonderful, but we need to keep you there, which entails *persevering* through slips and, finally, *persisting* over time.

To simplify the path, we'll refer to the 5 steps as:

• **Psych:** Get ready/contemplation

• **Prep:** Plan before leaping/preparation

• **Perspire:** Take action/action

• **Persevere:** Manage slips/maintenance

• **Persist:** Maintain change/maintenance

The 5 steps determine who successfully changes and who does not — regardless of other factors involved, including a strong desire to change. People can get derailed at any step. Some never get psyched enough to move to the next step; some get psyched but don't prepare; others prepare but don't execute; and still others burn out before they can persevere and persist.

Focus on goals where you're farther along in the 5 steps. Make any goals that seriously affect your health and wellness a priority. Concentrate on those goals for which you have the most energy and desire to change today. ●

## How You Will Succeed: The Keys

How does all this change fit into 90 days? Here's the general timeline across the 5 steps.

**TIMELINE FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME**

| **Step:** | 1. Psych | 2. Prep | 3. Perspire | 4. Persevere | 5. Persist |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stage:** | Contem-plation | Prepar-ation | Action | Mainten-ance | Mainten-ance |
| **90 Days:** | 1 to 7-14 | 7-14 to 21 | 7-14 to 60 | 60-90 | 75+ onward |

The first week or two is rightfully devoted to increasing your motivation, identifying resistance and psyching yourself up for the momentous change ahead. Another week or two is spent in preparation. Of course, these will be tailored to your situation. Adapt the timeline, but do commit to 90 days — a month getting ready and then two months staying at it and avoiding the relapse. That's what thousands of successful changers have taught us over the years.

### The Change Catalysts

In instigating behavior change, catalysts are research-supported strategies that get us to the next step. They include such activities as tracking your progress, committing to a goal, raising awareness about yourself and the problem, rewarding your improvement, securing support from other people, rearranging your physical environment and so on.

The key to success resides in matching your efforts to your step. It's technically called step (or stage) matching. Step matching involves following certain research-proven catalysts while you're in a particular step. Integrating the change catalysts and the steps systematically directs you to success.

Do the right thing but at the wrong time in your journey and failure ensues, a phenomenon called mismatching.

Many people subscribe to a series of self-defeating myths that undermine their efforts to change. Let's demolish them:

• **Myth No. 1: People can't change on their own.** More than three-quarters of people who change their behavioral problems have done so on their own, without professional treatment. People are changing on their own all the time without treatment.

• **Myth No. 2: Most goals and resolutions are trivial.** People fulfill impressive ambitions all the time, including losing weight, stopping smoking, improving relationships, achieving financial security and increasing exercise. These are not trivial.

• **Myth No. 3: Change requires only willpower.** Your willpower or commitment contributes to your success. However, it's only one ingredient in the recipe. Our research shows that resolvers who rely on willpower to the virtual exclusion of the other valuable catalysts actually fail at a higher rate than everyone else.

• **Myth No. 4: It's all in my genes.** Genes exert powerful influences, but they don't determine our destiny. The brain-behavior interaction goes both ways: Your behavior impacts your biology and influences the expression of those genes.

• **Myth No. 5: I can't change; I've tried before.** This myth comes wrapped up in a lot of emotion: resignation, anger, apathy, fear. The consequences of not trying again are grave and the real possibility of success using Changeology is so much higher.

You need to abandon the "I can't change" myth and wholeheartedly believe that you possess the power to grow in fundamental ways. ●

## PART II: BECOMING A CHANGEOLOGIST IN 90 DAYS

# Step 1: Psych: Getting Ready

**Weeks 1 and 2:** Outline your goal and define the new you. Start counting and measuring the behavior you will modify. Think about the consequences of your problem and imagine a new life without it. Harness the awareness and emotions that will propel you into action.

One of the colossal mistakes people make when trying to change is overestimating the value of motivation while underestimating learnable skills. Here you'll learn how to acquire both commitment and skills.

You need to choose and define your goals in a way that will enhance your probability of success. Here are five proven methods:

• **It's all about you.** Select a behavior you genuinely want to change. This needs to be about you. Make sure you're doing this for no one other than yourself.

• **It should be measurable.** We refer to this as operationalizing a goal in a way that you can measure by counting or graphing. Tracking your progress increases your progress.

• **It has to be real.** A guaranteed recipe for failure is to select an unrealistic, unattainable goal. Distinguish between realistic, short-term goals and long-term fantasies. Ensure that your general goal is real.

• **It has to be under your control.** You don't have the power to bring about world peace and end global warming. You can control many of your own behaviors that are under your thumb.

• **It should be positive.** Goals expressed positively typically prove more successful than goals expressed negatively. Even if you want to terminate a problem, specify your goal as a healthy alternative behavior. Psychologically, it's easier to build in a new behavior than to root out a problematic one.

### Step 1 Catalysts

Here are the four catalysts that embody your first step:

• **Tracking your progress.** Tracking the progress of your goal works for at least three reasons. First, it keeps your eye on the ball. Second, it provides useful feedback, alerting you when you veer off course and telling you to adjust. Third, it is highly rewarding. We incorporate tracking progress into every step. You can track your progress through a variety of methods, including a graph, a diary or journal, calendar notes, or a daily record on your computer or cellphone.

• **Raising your awareness.** This entails becoming more conscious of the causes of, consequences of and cures for your problems. It helps to ask yourself: What led to my particular problem, and what maintains it now? What are the consequences, both desirable and undesirable, of my current behavior? What are the cures, the paths to my goal? Seek out information from unbiased sources. Request feedback from loved ones about the costs and consequences of your problem. If you seek more in-depth information, get a professional opinion from a psychologist, physician, nutritionist or clergyperson.

• **Arousing emotions.** People rarely change because of logic or facts. People change when their emotions compel them to confront facts. Harness your emotions

and redirect them in support of your change. The key is to stir up emotions in ways that propel you forward. Think about a threat, a fear, that is related to what you want to change. Let that fear linger, and let the pain fuel you. Expose yourself to other people who are experiencing similar fear-based struggles. Focus on the painful long-term consequences instead of the short-term comfy rewards of the behavior.

• **Committing.** Committing entails more than the mysterious, ineffable "willpower." Committing actually encompasses a set of identifiable skills that you can develop and practice. Declare your goal or resolution by saying it to yourself and perhaps one other person: I am getting ready for change. Post your pros and cons for change and remind yourself of your dual motivations in the morning or at bedtime. Create one or two short reminders that encapsulate your commitment. Find a person or two, dead or alive, who manifests what you seek in commitment and to whom you can turn for inspiration.

It is never — repeat, never — a good idea to rush through Psych in order to get to the later steps. Rash action without genuine preparation and commitment is doomed. ●

## Step 2: Prep: Planning Before Leaping

**Weeks 2 and 3:** Build your commitment and then make your goal public. Pick your start day and identify people who will support you. Take a few small initial steps — and prepare for liftoff!

This step describes what you need to do before jumping completely into action. Most people get so antsy and eager that they jump before they are prepared. They sabotage themselves by a lack of preparation and planning.

### Defining Your Goals

Begin with your goal in mind. It's difficult to reach the destination when you don't even know where it is. Vague goals beget vague efforts. Based on the new science and proven methods of setting goals, we'll get **SMART:** express goals in specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-specific terms:

- **Specific:** Tell me exactly where you will be in 90 days using positive terms.
- **Measurable:** Give an unambiguous definition that can be read, repeated and measured by others.
- **Attainable:** Better to try to "lose and keep off 15 pounds in 90 days" than a health-compromising and nearly impossible 50 pounds.
- **Relevant:** To you, of course, but also in terms of your life priorities.
- **Time-specific:** Specify the time frame, which in this book is typically the next 90 days.

Identify what triggers the problem and what maintains it. What are the environmental, interpersonal and mood triggers for your smoking, poor parenting, low esteem, drinking or arguments? Your answers will expose key clues to your behavior pattern.

Consequences occur after the problem and are usually contingent on it. The short-term consequences of our behaviors can often be very rewarding — yummy, soothing, releasing, sedating and so on. But the long-term consequences can be painful and destructive; sadly, we tend far more to the immediate than the delayed consequences.

Here's how to sleuth out your triggers and consequences. On a daily basis, track four features of the behavior that you'd like to change:

1. Time of day
2. Triggers: both the situation (where you were, what you were doing, who you were with) and your feelings (sad, happy, stressed, relaxed, bored, lonely)
3. Behavior: the magnitude or amount of the problem behavior (the number of drinks, the amount of money, the number of arguments)
4. Consequences: the short-term results of the problem behavior as well as the longer-term impact on your feelings and others' reactions

Helping relationships or social support can be a vigorous predictor of behavioral success. We work better by working together. Identify people around you — family, friends, co-workers, schoolmates and neighbors — who will support your self-change. One or two solid people will do, but three or four might be ideal.

Consider their availability, shared interests and ability to support. You want the support of those most able to help, not simply those who are most convenient or close to you. You might want members of your team to be relatively new to your life, independent of your ordinary routine. Consider joining an online support group. Getting your change team in place early creates a small victory and improves your level of competence in this endeavor — your self-efficacy — before your start day.

### Committing

We know from studies that people's mere desire to change does not predict success, but their level of com-

mitment does. Here is how we use commitment as we prep in the second step:

- **Make narrow choices.** Simplify your path, prioritize your goals and decide which methods you will use to achieve them. In self-change, less can be more.
- **Rest.** Prepare for the major operation, whether you think of it as surgical or a war operation, by resting. Like a runner before the race, don't run the day before; save your willpower muscles for the event itself.
- **Say it loud and proud.** We're looking for a public commitment to your goal. It's time to share your resolution with others.
- **Remember your goal.** Remind yourself about your commitment. Post not only the goal but also the baby steps toward that goal.
- **Propel the virtuous cycle.** Start changing your behavior, and as a result your motivation will improve. Success fuels motivation; motivation fuels success. If you wait for inspiration, you're ignoring half of the virtuous cycle.
- **Take baby steps.** Prime the pump before leaping into action by taking small steps. You have already taken several baby steps. Small steps add up quickly.
- **Practice before you need it.** Identify the healthy alternative behavior and begin practicing it. Acquire some comfort and confidence in performing it before you leap into the fire.

### Finalizing the Action Plan

Select a start or "go" date. Research highlights the value of beginning within a week of completing your plan. Pick a start day with fewer than usual pressures. Don't forget to tell your team when you intend to start.

Start strong and fast. Begin when you, your change team and your skills are in full force so that you secure success at the outset.

What's the mantra, slogan or image that will inspire you? Now's the time to generate it — or him/her. Here's one of my favorites from Ralph Waldo Emerson: The world is all gates, all opportunities.

## Step 3: Perspire: Taking Action

**Weeks 2 to 8:** Walk the talk — take action! Develop healthy alternatives to the problem, and build new behaviors. Reward yourself for a job well done. Cultivate your environment and support team to keep moving forward.

Step 3 is all about the fury of action, and it takes place at least two weeks — and perhaps up to 30 days — into the 90 days of change. In this step, we're aiming to act, to stay forward, to lean into the winds of change. Successful action requires four catalyzing strategies: rewarding, countering, controlling your environment and helping relationships.

### Rewarding

Since time immemorial, rewards have been used to modify and strengthen certain behaviors. We will use rewarding to strengthen your goal behavior in a systematic, intentional way. A reward consists of any consequence that increases the frequency or strength of the target behavior.

It should come as no surprise that what rewards one person, say, chocolate or a movie, will be a punishment for another person. Personal preferences must come into play here. The secret is to identify what rewards can modify your behavior and to create a reinforcement plan that you'll stick with for a couple of months. For example, you can reinforce yourself for reaching target behaviors and reward each baby step. Deliver the reward immediately and every time. Decades of research have revealed that to achieve the best performance, you should give yourself the reinforcer immediately after the desired response. Use many rewards of many types for maximum effectiveness.

Minimize punishing yourself, both in your daily behavior and in your thoughts. Rewards are more effective in the long run. Use more carrot and less stick.

### Countering

Do the healthy opposite of the problem behavior. You must engage in a healthy opposite, not simply know that you should do it. The eight most common countering methods are:

- **Diversion.** Keeping busy, enjoying life, engaging in fun activities, and cultivating friends and hobbies.
- **Exercise.** A well-known and potent anti-anxiety remedy.
- **Relaxation.** Meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, prayer and massage.
- **Assertion.** Say no to unwelcome offers and yes to healthy needs.
- **Healthy thoughts.** One's interpretations of an event may be more important than the event itself. Our beliefs, not the activating event, largely establish our feelings.
- **Exposure.** Directly confront dreaded situations.
- **Imagery.** Visualize yourself succeeding and thriving. Successful resolvers visualize the rewards of success,

while unsuccessful resolvers visualize the penalties of failure.

- **Acceptance:** Uncontrollable problems are things we should accept, whereas controllable behaviors are those we can change.

### Controlling Your Environment

We routinely underestimate the power of our environment to shape our behavior. That's been the key lesson of social psychology in the past 50 years:

- **Think people, places and things.** You have the ability to modify your contact with people, places and things.
- **Sniff out the detractors and the facilitators.** Remind yourself what detracts from and what facilitates your change.
- **Select, but also create.** If you don't see the appropriate environmental options around you, create the environment you need.
- **Bring new things in.** Add things to your home and work environment that remind you to keep on track.
- **Take temptations out.** Avoid high-risk situations and people that rekindle a problem. Build literal barriers between temptations and yourself.

### Helping Relationships Again

Scores of research studies have demonstrated the impressive contributions of social support to your health and happiness. Helping relationships improve our health and buffer us against the ravages of life. Find an experienced coach if you don't have one on your team already.

The change team you've already assembled will now be called upon for support, assistance and an occasional challenge. Here's how to tailor your change team:

- **Listen and support.** Active listening and genuine support are the backbone of successful treatment. You can receive empathy and affirmation from all sorts of people.
- **Chat frequently.** Keep in regular contact with your change team — several times a week, at a minimum.
- **Express what you need.** Your change team cannot read your mind. Be specific.
- **Keep it positive.** Ask your friends to stay positive about your change. Remind them that sarcasm, guilt and embarrassment are not helpful forms of support.
- **Put me in, Coach.** Ask for tips or skills of the day. Experiment to find what works best for you.
- **Return the favor.** Ask your friends about their feelings, focus on their experiences and balance the conversation.
- **Buddy up.** Accept as many co-changers and training partners as your schedule can accommodate.
- **Race to the top.** Friendly competition can spur people to greater heights.
- **Enlarge the team.** Include online support groups, work friends, neighbors and others you did not identify in the Prep step.
- **Invite challenges.** You'll probably profit from the occasional loving correction.

Please help your team members help you. ●

## Step 4: Persevere: Managing Slips

**Weeks 8 to 12:** Learn to say no and develop a plan for getting back on track after a slip. Avoid high-risk triggers, resist the urge and keep a positive outlook. Slips need not become falls.

As you work to realize your goals and resolutions, expect to slip — probably multiple times. If you understand and prepare for mistakes, however, they don't need to ruin your self-change effort.

To persevere means to continue toward a goal in spite of discouragement or opposition. For our purposes, to persevere is to continue toward your goal despite your urges to stop, cravings to regress and slips on the road to success. To persevere the strategies entail:

- **Avoiding high-risk triggers.** A slip is typically preceded by a trigger, a high-risk situation that increases the chance that you'll return to your old ways. Triggers can be practically anything that has historically been associated with the problem. Identify your triggers. Ask yourself where, what, when and who.

- **Practicing saying no.** Practice in advance for probable high-risk situations. Envision yourself in a scenario where temptations reign supreme. Begin in your imagination by saying no confidently and immediately. "No thanks, I don't want to bicker." "No, I'm quitting." Then practice with a member of your change team before saying it in a real situation.

- **Resisting the initial urge.** Smokers will crave a puff, overspenders will feel the need to buy, overeaters will plead for just a bite.

- **Responding constructively after a slip.** It helps to understand relapse as a process, a systematic chain of psychological events. How you respond to the slip —

not the slip itself — determines which choice you will make.

• **Preparing for the next time you slip.** You'll want a plan that incorporates lessons learned and prepares you better. Identify what you were thinking, what you were doing, what you were feeling and whom you were with when you slipped. Turn those triggers around and do the healthy opposites.

Achieving your goal, resolution or transformation in 90 days is a big project. It requires more than one person. Now is the time to further mobilize the change team you created during the Prep step. Research shows that the amount of help you receive from important people in your life predicts success a month into action. In the long run, support becomes crucial. ●

## Step 5: Persist: Maintaining Change

**Week 12 and beyond:** Keep using the strategies that maintain the new you. Have backup plans for those inevitable slips. Remind yourself that you can do this! Sustain self-change over the long haul.

The previous step, Persevere, was about overcoming obstacles and lapses; this step, Persist, is about maintaining change over time. You need to master both in order to permanently establish your new behavior.

Persistence requires the mastery of a series of skills and a fundamental shift in thinking; lasting change is a marathon, not a 100-yard dash. And the challenge is to persist for not just 90 days but for a lifetime.

• **Maintaining new behavior.** Maintenance is more than preventing relapse. When you think of persisting with your change, think of it as moving forward, as continually improving, as giving yourself an ongoing gift. The cornerstone of persistence is that it doesn't feel like dreary work anymore, it feels like healthy fun.

• **Boosting your self-efficacy permanently:** Think of self-efficacy as a house, one that can be built by hard work and success or destroyed by the lack of same. Success begets more success; success also begets more self-efficacy, which enables you to persist for 90 days and beyond.

• **Understanding the spiral of change:** As you've learned, relapse is the rule rather than the exception. The vast majority of people will follow the model three to six times before they reach the promised land of Persist for good. Self-changers typically cycle through the steps several times. The spiral demonstrates that people do not revolve endlessly in circles, nor do they progress all the way back to where they began. The route to behavior change is not a straight, linear line; it's a spiral path upward.

• **Distinguish between self-changes that end and those that require a lifetime of perseverance.** Do self-changers terminate the problem, reach their goals and exit the path? You can terminate the problem and exit the spiral if three conditions are met during Persist: your temptation to regress or relapse across triggers is very low, your self-efficacy to maintain is high across situations, and you have established a healthy lifestyle that precludes the old problem behavior.

There is a tight link between celebrating your growth and perpetuating that growth. Whoop it up, feel rightfully proud, spread the cheer and encouragement. You can pay it forward to others and yourself. ●

## Epilogue: The Adaptation of Changeology

If there is one overarching theme here, it's that we can change. We can adapt to life even when we're not 100 percent confident in that change from the get-go. Self-change is possible, prevalent and learnable! Even for involuntary and societal transformations not of our own making.

I wholeheartedly believe that the changes we seek and societal levels must start with each one of us.

Confucius said, "To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right."

My ardent hope is that I have given you plenty of direction and skills to begin to make a tremendous difference in your life.

Be the change you wish to see in the world — and bring that self-change into the world. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Changeology*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.** Duhigg reveals the edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed.
2. ***The Upside of Irrationality* by Dan Ariely.** Focusing on our behaviors at work and in relationships, Ariely offers insights about what really motivates us and how unwise actions can become long-term habit.
3. ***Team Turnarounds* by Daniel Leidl and Joe Frontiera.** Frontiera and Leidl share how the fine art of the turnaround really works, from how to inspire the team to the actual tools for change.

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# Communicate with Mastery,

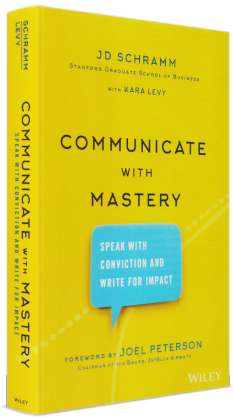
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# Communicate with Mastery

## How to Speak with Conviction and Write for Impact




*by* **JD Schramm, Ed.D. with Kara Levy**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Projects often fail not because of the vision but the articulation of that vision. In ***Communicate with Mastery,*** JD Schramm and Kara Levy show how to get the results you desire as a leader and communicator. The authors provide a treasure trove of frameworks and tools for leadership communication as developed and taught over the past decade at Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

Designed for the business leader on the go, ***Communicate with Mastery*** provides helpful approaches to vexing communication problems leaders face today in speaking and writing to various audiences. With the help of this book, you'll learn how to get the results you need, such as speaking with conviction and writing with impact; tailoring your communication to any goal, setting, or audience; scaling your leadership through effective coaching, and more.

Every time you write or speak, you need to make your words count. ***Communicate with Mastery*** shows you how.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The "secret sauce" for working toward communication mastery.
- To adopt the right communication mindset.
- Tips and strategies to tailor your communication expertly.
- The importance of coaching, both for yourself and others, for communication mastery.

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## Introduction

Mastery in communication is an unattainable aspiration. There is no such thing as a perfect email, talk, book, or presentation. Each aspect of leadership communication can always be improved. With each successive iteration, leaders will improve their ability to communicate, knowing that perfect never comes.There is, however, a five-fold secret sauce to empowering leaders:

1. **Individuality:** Communication development is an individual sport. No two leaders communicate in exactly the same way. Good communication development means doubling down on your strengths as well as adding extra tools to your communication toolbox.
2. **Relevance:** When leaders write or speak, they should choose topics that matter to them (to the extent possible). The more that passion, interest, or applicability drive the message, the better it will be.
3. **Iteration:** Continual iteration (with feedback) is the key to improvement. Practice means failing, succeeding, trying new approaches, soliciting and integrating feedback, and then repeating.
4. **Feedback:** Leaders learn on both sides of the microscope. It's as valuable to give feedback as to receive it—and both of these sides of the coin are a skill you can learn.
5. **Stakes:** When you increase the visibility and reach of a piece, you increase commitment to making it great. Raise the stakes to encourage the best from yourself.

The foundation of individuality, relevance, iteration, feedback, and stakes provide a remarkable container for leaders to travel from uncertainty, to competence, to expertise, to mastery. You, too, can travel the same continuum using the lessons and activities this book provides. But you cannot learn to swim by watching swim practice from the bleachers—you gotta get in the water.

### PART I: SPEAKING WITH CONVICTION AND WRITING FOR IMPACT

## Adopting a Communication Mindset

Consider your communication mindset as a platform—every time you deliver a message, whether it's verbal or non-verbal, written or spoken, you'll stand on your communication mindset as the basis for all you do. Your communication mindset will ask you to think strategically, analytically, and empathetically about your audience and what matters to them. It will ask you to clarify the work that your communication is meant to do.

And it will invite you to make choices about the words, channels, visuals, and multimedia assets that will comprise your message. It is not only a starting place but the foundation for all effective communication.

### Know Your AIM

Professors Lynn Russell and Mary Munter co-created the AIM model, which stands for audience, intent, and message.

**Audience**: **the starting point for all communication**. How can you get to know your readers before they open the email or pick up the pitch book? How can you learn about an audience before you are in front of them? LinkedIn and Google searches top the online examples; finding information about individuals, groups, or firms with whom you plan to communicate has never been easier. It's relatively simple to find company bio pages, recent conference presentations, or public blog sites. Further, if you can find somebody who has recently spoken to this group who's willing to share that experience, all the better.

Audience-centric communication provides the foundation for everything else. It's not simply the first part of the AIM model; it's the place all leaders must begin their work to inform, influence, or inspire others.

**Intent**: **your reason for communication**. Intent is both the intention in your mind as a speaker or writer and the action in the minds of the audience. It's not simply what you want the audience to think, say, or do. It's what they choose to do as a result of the communication. Set a single clear intent for every communication you have—something from the audience's viewpoint that the speaker intends to bring forward. For example, "embrace our company's technology," or "endorse my candidacy publicly."

**Message: delivering on your intent with words that matter**. If audience is the "who" and intent is the "why," message is the "how." So consider how you will structure and channel your message. The channel for your message is the medium you choose for your communication. If you need to scale your communication to a broad audience, maybe you'll choose to prepare a talk that can be filmed and shared on YouTube; or you might choose to write a blog post that you can publish broadly, such as on Medium or LinkedIn. Once you've chosen your channel, it's time to

Writing matters more than ever now in business, and yet it's one of the hardest things to get people to focus on.

get down to the business of structuring your message.

Consider using an outline to generate some structure. What are the main points you wish to make in your communication? What are the key reasons and examples you can offer in support of those points? Once you've assembled a robust scaffold for your communication, you're ready to write, speak, chat, text, parlay, meet, or communicate in whatever other channel you've selected. Let your information about your audience inform your tone and word choice.

## Speaking with Conviction

When it comes to speaking with conviction, the good news is that we're all starting at an advantage. Every one of us has spoken successfully, meaningfully, and authentically before, and every one of us has—at one time or another—felt fully convicted of our ideas and convinced others to feel the same. The magic happens when we can investigate this process enough that we're able to repeat it consistently and, particularly, in high-stakes moments.

Once we open our mouths, we're actually communicating in three important ways: verbal (what we say), vocal (how we say it), and visual (what they see).

**Verbal: what you say**. This is what most of us think of first when we're crafting a message. These are the words we use to make our ideas known. As you prepare your communication, be intentional about the first words you're going to say. Will you begin with the problem you're solving? The solution you're offering? How will you open to capture (and keep!) your audience's attention?

Then, be equally intentional about the final words you'll speak. What are the last words you'll leave with the audience to make them act, think, or feel differently? And finally, how will you transition between the different sections of your presentation so that there's a sense of cohesion?

**Vocal: how you say it**. Be intentional about how you use the instrument of your voice—how loud, how soft, how quickly you speak to create excitement, and how slowly you speak for impact. Without a doubt, the best way to assess your own vocal communication is to record yourself speaking. It's easy to make a quick audio or video recording of yourself on a smartphone or a computer. Try speaking about your ideas, your goals, your company, your projects, or your challenges. Then evaluate your vocal success against five important metrics: pace, volume, clarity, filler words, animation.

**Visual: what they see**. More than half of what we communicate is non-verbal—neither in what we say or how we say it but in what we are not saying: through our body language, our mannerisms, and the way we use the space and items around us. This includes your eye contact, your facial expressions, your gestures, the way you sit, stand, or move, or even the way you're dressed.

Focus on five core aspects of visual communication that all great presenters should master: eye contact, posture, gestures, physical movement, and speaking space. More important than any other element is sustained, direct eye contact with the people you are addressing. It's important that speakers arrive at a place where they can feel comfortable holding four to seven seconds of direct eye contact with the audience.

## Writing for Impact: Active, Brief, and Clear

Writing matters more than ever now in business, and yet it's one of the hardest things to get people to focus on. Why is that? In a world of quick communication, we often forget that one of the most powerful tools for scaling our leadership is the written word. The best writing represents you in a way that feels as authentic as a conversation and connects you to an audience beyond your immediate circle.

The building blocks of business writing are the ABCs. All business writing should be Active, Brief, and Clear.

**Active**. Adjust your writing to the active voice whenever and wherever possible. This usually requires two steps: First, we have to be able to identify the passive voice in our writing. Second, we have to replace the passive voice with something more energetic and engaging.

The active sentence puts the protagonist at the beginning of the sentence. For example, "Tim kicked the ball," rather than "The ball was kicked by Tim." It more immediately answers the question "Who did what?" Not only is that sentence more concise and engaging, but it gives credit to Tim. When we write in the passive voice, we downgrade the human element of our communication—and it's the human element to which our audiences most strongly connect.

**Brief**. The attention spans of our readers are likely not what we would hope them to be. At best, they are unpredictable. As a leader, each of us wants to be known as some-one whose message is clear, concise, and unambiguous, and it takes time to write that way. But if we invest the time, our readers won't have to. And it's far more likely that they will make it through our document, grasp our message, and remember it.

Try eliminating weak verbs like "is," "was," "were," "has," "have," and "had." Using a more powerful verb creates a more engaging sentence that requires fewer words. You might also try reducing a phrase to a single word. "Made a decision" could become "decided." "Came into the room" could be "arrived."

**Clear**. If you've succeeded in writing actively and briefly, your writing should now be clear. To make sure, think back to the AIM framework. Ask yourself, "After reading this document, will the audience take the action I want them to take? Is it clear what I'm asking them to do? Is there any thought, phrase, or sentence that will cause the reader to stumble?" If there's a point in an email where a reader has to re-read a paragraph for clarity, it's not the reader's failing—it's the writer's.

## PART II: TAILORING YOUR COMMUNICATION TO GOAL, SETTING, OR IDENTITY

## Tailoring Your Communication to Your Goal

Though you should always consider your intent when you're crafting a communication, sometimes you can build on that exercise by using specific media, formatting, language, or information ordering to meet specific goals. The more measurable and specific your goal, the better you'll be able to customize your communication to meet the needs of your audience. Here are some of the most frequent use cases.

### Pitching

Let's focus on the type of pitching that challenges entrepreneurs every day: pitching your business venture or collaboration. Entrepreneurs should start with content when creating an engaging, memorable pitch. Chris Lipp's ***The Startup Pitch*** offers a very simple four-part structure to an effective pitch:

1. **Problem**. As you begin by describing the problem, it's important to describe it clearly, making sure that your audience understands the pain of the problem. Why is this such an issue? What are the repercussions of this problem and why do they matter? Raise the stakes by noting any trends you see for this problem. Is it getting worse as the population ages? Do environmental, economic, or time-based factors increase its impact over time? If that's true, then you can make the point that the need for your solution will only increase over time. Be sure that your audience understands the immediacy of the problem before you move on to phase two: your solution.

2. **Solution**. Chris Lipp opens his conversation of solution by addressing the importance of your USP, or unique selling proposition. Why are you able to solve this issue in a way that others haven't been able to yet? What's going to set your startup apart from anyone else who's trying to work in that space? In other words: why you, why this, why now? Think of Steve Jobs introducing the iPod Nano: He didn't tell us it had 16GB of memory or that it was two inches wide by three inches deep. Instead, he said, "Imagine a thousand songs in your pocket."

3. **Market**. As you move your focus to market concerns, you'll want to talk about the initial target market you've identified as well as any expansions you anticipate beyond that initial market. Share an estimate of the market size. Here's where you demonstrate that you've done your research—not only about what the market is but what potential it holds. As you discuss the market, you'll want to effectively capture the advantages of serving this market of consumers that you're targeting.

4. **Business**. Last, you'll want to cover the details of the business itself. What is your go-to-market strategy? Specifically, you'll want to share when and how you're planning to bring this product or service to the market. It's important to share your model for earning revenue and to offer some clarity around when you think that revenue model will begin to be profitable for you.

Our personal identities are not just an accessory to our communication; they inform our unique perspectives, leadership styles, and goals.

## Tailoring Your Communication to Your Setting

Just as you'll think carefully about your specific audience before crafting your communication, you should also think carefully about the setting in which you'll operate. Your communication strategy will be very different if you are presenting on the TED stage than if you are leading a team meeting.

**Meetings**. Before you even send out the invitation for the meeting, think about who needs to be there. Is everyone essential? Next, choose the location and the medium for the meeting. If you can bring everyone together in one place, do that. Tone will be easier to read, flow will be faster, and you won't have to deal with the vagaries of technology. But if you can't do that, you can and should still have a clear agenda and intent for your meeting.

Once you're in the meeting, stick to the guidelines you've set for yourself. If you're leading the meeting, get there early. Start on time, and end on time. Make your deck easy for your audience to follow by guiding them directly to each slide. Use highlights or sticky notes to emphasize important sections.

You'll also want to think about how to balance the voices in the room. Too often, meetings become the domain of extroverts. Look for opportunities to include voices that aren't as forthcoming.

**Virtual meetings**. Virtual meetings come with their own unique set of challenges and opportunities. On the plus side, virtual meetings make last-minute communication possible, are a low-cost alternative to pricey travel, and can allow you to include leaders who would otherwise not be able to collaborate with you.

But technology, while always progressing, can sink you if you're having connection, audio, or video problems. People tend to be less interactive virtually, so it's harder to gauge the tone of the group and how they're feeling. Time zone differences can make virtual meetings hard to schedule. Suggest that your audio calls be conducted over video. This will give you the all-important advantage of some visual connection with your colleagues and make you feel more present.

If you can't create a video opportunity, add as much dynamism as you can into your experience of an audio call. Use a headset rather than speaker phone, and walk around your room. Gesture as you would in person. Focus on vocal variety, energy, and confidence. You'll need to compensate for the lack of these visual cues with your voice and your word choice.

**On stage (TED Talks, LOWKeynotes, and the like)**. Without question, TED has changed the game for what's expected of presentations. To succeed in an onstage setting, work first has to be done on the content, the idea itself. Only after the idea, the argument, the stories, and their supports are crystallized should you focus on delivery. Divide your lead time in half, and spend the first half on content, then the second half on delivery.

When it comes time for delivery, familiarize yourself with the space in which you'll be presenting. The stakes are higher for this sort of a presentation, so don't let your environment be the factor that derails you—particularly when you can do the work to make it familiar ahead of time.

## Tailoring Your Communication to Your Identity

Our personal identities are not just an accessory to our communication; they inform our unique perspectives, leadership styles, and goals. We may perceive elements of our identities that we don't think twice about when communicating as leaders, but often we will need to reconcile core elements of who we are with best practices for how to communicate the ideas that matter to us.

Our identities exist in constant conversation with our environments, so use these suggestions as a starting point for how to navigate your personal identity within the context where you lead.

**Leading in your second (or third, or fourth) language**. In our increasingly global world, many of us may find ourselves presenting, speaking, negotiating, writing, studying, or working in a language that is not our native tongue. When you are leading in a language that is not

your own, it's important to remember that except where it impedes clarity, your identity—your accent, your traditions, your values—are central to the leadership you offer.

Your accent tells part of your story. It informs the path you took to arrive at your current leadership moment. And it offers useful context to your peers. Claim your international identity and own it proudly.

The only reason you might want to approach your leadership differently than a native speaker is if others have difficulty understanding your ideas. Clarity is key—be sure you can be understood in the dominant language of the group. If you are writing, seek out a coach who can encourage you to clarify unwieldy word choices or awkward constructions.

**Leading as a woman**. All of us operate with a mix of strength and warmth. As we become more skilled on each of these axes, we gain admiration from our audience. This is often more of a continuum stretching from warmth at one end to strength at the other.

Women may wish to try to read their audience and engage with more warmth or more strength based on what the situation requires.

Professor Allison Kluger offers these tips to enable women to be more effective communicators. Here are a few:

- **Grasp the landscape**. This is something Allison suggests women seem to do intuitively better than men; consider this your superpower. Take note of the setting, players, and issues, and use your knowledge of the terrain to navigate the meeting.
- **Reduce the apologies**. Too often women apologize unnecessarily. Don't apologize as a way to start or end a conversation. Be accountable for your mistakes, but don't overcorrect.
- **Accept compliments**. Accept and respond to a compliment so that you can own your own power.
- **Use humor**. Often the warmest way to diffuse a tough situation is through humor. Allison suggests comments like, "John, that sounded really good when I said it 10 minutes ago" to remind people of your efforts.
- **Manage the interruptions**. Research shows that men are more likely to interrupt women than the other way around; prepare for that, preempt it when you can, and call it out gently and firmly when it still occurs.

## PART III: SCALING YOUR LEADERSHIP: THE COMMUNICATION COACHING PROCESS

You cannot improve your communication skills simply by reading a book. Communication mastery is about getting better and better at speaking and writing each time you communicate.

Without a coach, you may simply be reinforcing bad habits, creating even more to unlearn when you really need to step up as leader with a larger span of influence. First, let's focus on how to be coached, then how to coach others, and finally how to create a culture that embraces communication coaching.

### When Being Coached

Each coaching engagement differs, but one thing that all successful coaching relationships share is an active and engaged participant. Here are some ways to maximize your effective engagement with your communication coach so you can meet your goals effectively.

**Establishing your goals**. You've got to know what you want to accomplish before you engage a coach, even though you will likely have to refine those goals once you begin work with a coach. As you consider your coaching goals, remember to stay flexible.

Set a few specific goals you wish to achieve through coaching—perhaps three. Then you might begin to look for a coach with expertise aligned with those goals, but don't be too rigidly attached. Your goals may change once you begin working with a coach who has a different perspective on your challenges and knows more about how to approach them than you do.

**Selecting your coach**. In some metropolitan areas there may be a network like the International Association of Business Communicators, which may allow you to find suitable possibilities. You may also want to contact local colleges or universities to see whether they have adjunct faculty who do this work as well.

You might reference the directories of two well-regarded coach training and accreditation organizations, ICF (International Coach Federation) found at coachfederation.org, and IAC (International Association of Coaching).

The best way to find suitable coaches can be word of mouth. Ask colleagues if they have suggestions, or see

Remember that what is obvious to you may not be obvious to the people you are coaching.

whether your HR office maintains a list of approved vendors for coaching. If it doesn't feel too risky to you, put a note out on LinkedIn or your company's Slack channel.

**Adopting a coaching mindset**. When you're being coached on writing, speaking, or a combination of both, it's important to keep an open mind, to take risks, and to try the techniques your coach recommends before disregarding them. A talented coach may have you engage in activities or exercises focused on helping you develop, but they may not be directly tied to the final product you are working on. Trust your coach.

For the best results, you'll want to develop a relationship with a coach over a period of time. That period may be a few weeks or a few months or even a few years, depending on your bandwidth and on the scope of the skill you're building. This allows your coach to know your strengths and opportunity areas more intimately, and allows you to build increasing trust in your coach.

Reiteration will be central to your successful coaching engagement. It's the virtuous cycle of feedback and practice, feedback and practice that will allow a leader to get the greatest benefit from coaching.

Simply put: The more you put in, the more you'll get out. If you practice repeatedly, you'll be able to refine your technique, hone your muscle memory so that the effort is less difficult, and feel confident that you've done all you can to ensure your best performance.

## When Coaching Others

Let's explore some of the behaviors, attitudes, and tools that make a coach truly effective. To coach others effectively, you need to exhibit

- **Patience**. Remember that what is obvious to you may not be obvious to the people you are coaching. Not only are they gaining familiarity with a new skill, but they will likely be reconciling their previous way of communicating with a new approach. Be patient and meet the people you're coaching where they are.
- **A focus on process over product**. A good writing coach will invest in asking leading questions to help the writer recognize opportunities for change, rather than editing the document.
- **Flexibility and creativity**. While you should always have a confident vision of where the coaching engagement and each coaching session are headed, a great coach will demonstrate full willingness to scrap the plan and address the issues that are top of mind for the leader. If one technique doesn't appear to be a good fit, try another.
- **Focus on the person you're coaching, not on yourself.** You will be better at the skills you are offering to the leaders you work with, and it will be valuable to model their use for clarity. But then, step back. Let them practice. Let the work be theirs. Let the words be theirs. Empower them to use the new skill partly your way and partly their way so that it feels authentic, repeatable, and effective.
- **Empathy**. Your coaching relationship is just one small chapter in the leader's experience. It may bring up issues of identity, worthiness, purpose, or fear. Be as empathetic as you can in recognition that the coaching process is personal and that what is personal can be sensitive.

Slow down, listen, and let the leaders you're coaching engage in the material in the way they need. It's also helpful to define what a good coach is not. Ideally, as a coach you should not be an editor, a ghost writer, a content creator, a philosopher, or a psychologist (although you may have moments of dipping lightly into each of these areas occasionally, depending on your experience). You are there to guide leaders with new tools, new approaches, and new skills that they can use to communicate effectively.

Together you may decide that you have a particular finish line, but your focus should not be on completing the goal for the leaders as much as outfitting them to do the work themselves, with your guidance.

## Creating a Coaching Culture

No great coaching relationship can exist in a vacuum. As with any endeavor we undertake, we excel when we operate within a culture that's conducive to our success. So what kind of culture promotes coaching success? We can promote radical candor in our organizations, model and mirror the behaviors we hope others will try, and ensure that the right coaching is coming from (and to!) the right people.

**Everyone can coach (but not everyone should).** Even the smartest, most motivated leaders need dedicated practice, feedback, and iteration to approach mastery of a new skill. Maintaining a clear distinction between skills coaching and offering a performance review can go a long way toward creating a culture open to coaching.

As a leader, it's important to avoid saying, "May I offer you some coaching on this?" when you mean, "I need to give you feedback on your performance." Effective coaching must be divorced from performance evaluations, and should be offered in a non-threatening, risk-embracing setting. That's why, for the most part, leaders seek outside consultants or coaches to coach their teams.

**Embracing radical candor**. In Kim Scott's best-selling ***Radical Candor,*** she believes that there are two intersecting axes that provide the framework for effective feedback. We must both "care personally" and "challenge directly." Only when you are strong in both of these dimensions is radical candor possible. If you can interact with your team with both "caring directly" and "challenging personally" in mind, you can model the type of feedback they should offer to you and to each other. Kim Scott's book is one of the most important titles for leaders to read.

**Mirroring and modeling best practices**. As you consider the creation of your organization's coaching culture, think about your personal communication. What are you offering others, verbally or nonverbally, as a suggestion for how they might share their ideas and interact? The more you can embody the style that works best for you, the more passive coaching you will offer to your community.

The next step is in your hands. You can only reap the dividends of your reading if you take action. Commit to writing and speaking with greater mastery, but also inspire others on your team to do the same.

When it comes to leadership communication, it's not the presentation you give, the report you write, or the message your audiences receive that matters; what matters is the message they both recall and retell.

We can only approach mastery in communication; we cannot achieve it. With every email we write and every talk we deliver, we get incrementally better and better. That's what mastery is all about. Approach mastery in your own distinct way. Perfection is impossible, but growth is always attainable.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Impromptu: Leading in the Moment*** by Judith Humphrey
- ***Conversational Intelligence: How Great Leaders Build Trust and Get Extraordinary Results*** by Judith Glaser



JD Schramm founded and led the Mastery in Communication Initiative at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, where he's served as lecturer in Organizational Behavior since 2007. He has spoken at TED and TEDx events and has coached scores of others to do the same. His writing has appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Huffington Post*, and *HBR Online*. Kara Levy is an executive communication and leadership coach based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her collaborations in Silicon Valley range from household names like Facebook and Salesforce to unique startups just beginning to craft their company cultures.

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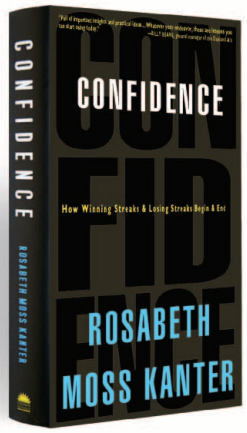
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# Confidence

Rosabeth Moss Kanter

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: LEADERSHIP




By Rosabeth Moss Kanter

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### How Winning Streaks and Losing Streaks Begin and End

# CONFIDENCE

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*One moment you're up, one moment you're down. Whether they are businesses, sports teams, or organizations, those on winning streaks seem to get all of the advantages — adulation, career opportunities, good deals, and the benefit of the doubt. It's easy to feel on top of the world as a winner, but once you face setbacks and a losing streak, life becomes a cycle of loss and failure.*

*Losing once does not make someone a loser, but what is the difference between losing all of the time and keeping the ability to win? It is a question of confidence, and the conscious sense of accountability, collaboration and inspiration that gives people control over their responses to their circumstances. Presidents, managers, coaches and even individuals have the power to choose how they deal with a loss, and whether they are going to allow it to be the beginning of a trend, or have the confidence to learn how to win next time. By studying winning and losing teams, companies and organizations, Harvard Business School Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter has found the keys to confidence and the way to find it when it is lost.*

*This summary presents the new theory and practice of success, and explains why success and failure are not mere episodes but self-perpetuating trajectories.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ The three cornerstones of confidence and how leaders can use them to perpetuate a winning team.

✓ Why winning streaks build and continue over time.

✓ How a winning streak comes to an end when panic takes the place of confidence.

✓ How the lack of confidence caused by losing streaks becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

✓ The difference between a loss at the beginning of a trend and a wake-up call for winners who are not trying as hard.

✓ The steps necessary to create a culture of confidence in any organization.

✓ How to use the cornerstones of confidence in your everyday life to be an optimistic winner.

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# CONFIDENCE

**by Rosabeth Moss Kanter**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## Winners and Losers

After one of the highest-performing decades in its 100-year history, Gillette, the global consumer products company, slipped badly in the mid-1990s. Poor business practices and overpromising to Wall Street resulted in 15 quarters of missed earnings estimates before a new leader turned the company around and restored accountability. Gillette once had confidence, then lost it, then got it back.

People, groups and companies can get swept up in fortunate and unfortunate cycles of wins and losses. Confidence is often what causes these swings to rise and fall. Confidence is the bridge between expectations and performance; between investments and results.

Positive cycles or winning streaks create positive momentum and increase confidence. People who believe they will win are more likely to put in the effort to ensure victory. Their halo effect makes it easier to attract the best talent and the investments to perpetuate victory. Losing cycles also feed on themselves, destroying confidence along the way. Losing has a repellent effect that makes it harder for a team to bond and to attract new talent, and easier to fall behind.

### *Arrogance and Despair*

Confidence is the balance between arrogance — the failure to see any flaws — and despair. It is human nature to seek patterns and trends even in random events. But in non-random activities, where effort and skill make a difference, success and failure become self-fulfilling prophesies.

Failure and success are trajectories, directions and pathways. Each decision and action is shaped by what happened last time. Once set in motion, streaks harden, and to turn a cycle from decline to success, leaders must restore confidence in the system. In business as in sports, winning on the playing field is heavily influenced by what happens off the field. ■

**For additional information on how confidence affects a team's outcome, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Winning Streaks

The positive momentum of success leads to a winning streak. Winning puts people in control of their circumstances and brings rewards that only perpetuate more winning.

Every winning streak begins when leaders create a foundation for confidence. Winning begets winning because it produces confidence at the following four levels:

**1. Self-confidence:** an emotional climate of high expectations.

**2. Confidence in another:** positive, supportive, team-oriented behavior.

**3. Confidence in the system:** organizational structures and routines reinforcing accountability, collaboration and innovation.

**4. External confidence:** a network to provide resources.

At each level, confidence both feeds winning and feeds off of it. This is how leading organizations such as General Electric, Toyota, Wal-Mart, Oxford, Harvard and the New York Yankees succeed year after year. What makes winning streaks even more dramatic is that winning is hard work. Losing is much easier.

### *A Mini-Virtuous Cycle*

People who believe in themselves are likely to try harder and longer, increasing their chances of success. They believe that their efforts will pay off in the future. These expectations translate into an investment of resources that improve performance in a mini-virtuous cycle. Leaders look more closely, invest more time, and give winners the benefit of the doubt.

Winning is contagious, and leaders can set an emo-

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**The author:** Rosabeth Moss Kanter is the Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor at Harvard Business School. She is the former editor of *Harvard Business Review* and is an adviser to corporations, governments, school systems, and community organizations, from IBM to the Girl Scouts. Her groundbreaking books include *The Change Masters* and *Evolve!*

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## Winning Streaks

*(continued from page 2)*

tional tone and shape expectations that produce initial wins. People naturally gravitate toward behaving in ways that support confidence. Accountability, collaboration and initiative are central to confidence, and they occur when winners work together comfortably.

External confidence is necessary for success. It includes money for investment, as well as the ability to recruit top talent. The whole context is enriched for winners. They get powerful networks, career opportunities, and better deals with those who want to be associated with them.

Winning streaks also feature leadership continuity. Losing teams or companies tend to churn their leaders, and everyone has to keep adjusting to new relationships. Continuity of people means deepening relationships, continuity of strategy, and the security to build on a plan rather than mindlessly follow a script.

### *Why Winning Streaks End*

Like everyone, winners make mistakes. One loss or fumble doesn't end a winning streak because winners usually receive the benefit of the doubt. Tough times can propel a team to get motivated again. But winning streaks do involve struggles that must be dealt with. The rules of sports and business encourage competition against unmitigated success. Teams become the ones to beat, so others try harder. New companies enter markets that appear lucrative.

Even so, it is not external forces that hurt winners; it is their own failure to maintain discipline and support systems. Paradoxically, winners get lazy and slack off the activities that made them winners in the first place. When things go wrong, they lose confidence and panic. During a game, anyone can be losing, but winners' confidence in their ability pulls them through. Panic distracts and prohibits good decision-making under pressure, while confidence calms and makes sure fumbles don't turn into losses.

### *Arrogance and Overconfidence*

Preparing for the worst-case scenario and practicing under the most difficult circumstances strengthen problem-solving and the ability to work through disasters. Confidence is based on reasonable expectations. When people become arrogant or overconfident, they miss some of the information associated with success and failure.

Being a success in the first place means surviving long enough to need maintenance and reinvestment. A winning streak requires renewal and rebuilding. Winners age naturally or reach their limits. Slowing momentum can start with removing just one element or ignoring one rule.

Winning ends when denial about threats and problems sets in. Winners can work through setbacks as long as they face problems head-on and their discipline remains in place. The antidote to denial is dialogue, which is made possible by confidence. Winners who reinforce accountability, collaboration and initiatives are better equipped to see mistakes and changes. They are willing to respond to trouble through self-examination and by assuming there is a solution rather than avoiding it. ■

### Connecticut Huskies' Investment Cycle

After 10 losing seasons out of 11, new coaches arrived for the University of Connecticut's Huskies women's basketball team in 1984. At that time, there was only one set of bleachers and only 50 people attended each game, but the university promised the new coaches the resources of a broad-based athletic program. As the team started winning, the school became more interested in investing resources to promote success. By the time the Huskies made it to the Final Four in 1991, they had a luxurious new basketball facility. By 1997, devoted Huskies fans made sure all games were sold out in advance. The team topped attendance records, was followed by seven full-time beat reporters, and generated $4 million in profit in 2001. In 2003, new donors paid up to $50,000 for four season tickets. Because of the Huskies, the WNBA decided to put a team in the area — its first team without a men's NBA team. The team got continually better over time because it received investment and confidence to fuel its improvement.

### Too Much Success at Chernobyl

In the lead-up to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, experienced reactor operators allegedly violated safety rules because they had done so before without incident. It made life easier to have one less process. The operators were well-respected, award-winning experts who became overconfident and ignored the safety rules as they started to act automatically rather than reflectively. They reinforced one another's conviction that everything was just fine. The resulting disaster wasn't due to a failure of individuals, but to the breakdown of a system that had been very successful in the past. Fundamental pieces of the support for high performance were neglected.

**For additional information on the sources of denial, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Losing Streaks

Losing streaks are escalating cycles of decline that erode confidence. Losing makes people feel out of control, and they give in to the temptations associated with defeat. Their powerlessness corrupts confidence, and then it gets weak.

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## Losing Streaks

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One of the biggest signs of losers is that they do not like to talk about being losers and they stop communicating. Whether they are individuals, teams or companies, people on a losing slide avoid dealing with the issue. No one wants to tell the world that he or she is responsible for starting a losing streak. Managers retreat to their own turf and defend it against change, not considering the effect on the organization. Secrecy and isolation accelerate the problem as people talk less and find scapegoats to blame for problems.

Next, people become mired in "learned helplessness" and believe nothing they do can really make a difference. They set less aggressive goals, find short-run solutions, and surrender to the timidity of mediocrity. They become trapped in "doom loops," self-perpetuation systems where responses to problems actually make the problems worse. Cutting costs might create a product no one wants, which reduces revenues, creating losses, making it impossible to borrow at reasonable rates, which increases expenses, and so on.

### *Habitual Losers*

Losing becomes a habit. Even winners can get dragged down when put in a losing situation, because the powerlessness of loss causes corruption and the system turns them into sore losers. When there are few coping mechanisms, people fall back on primitive self-protective behaviors that are the polar opposites of what it takes to win:

- **Communication decreases.** People avoid unpleasant conversations about problems.
- **Criticism and blame increase.** People do anything to avoid self-scrutiny.
- **Respect decreases.** People feel surrounded by mediocrity.
- **Isolation increases.** People don't want to be reminded of failure by others.
- **Focus turns inward.** People look out for their own interests.
- **Rifts widen and inequities grow.** People hoard assets, play favorites, and exhibit rivalries.
- **Initiative decreases.** People are paralyzed by anxiety.
- **Aspirations diminish.** People look for life satisfaction elsewhere.
- **Negativity spreads.** Contagious negativity reduces everyone's mood.

### *Why Losing Streaks Persist*

Whether one loss is a trend or a blip is not always clear, but once losses accumulate, they take on the weight of history. Past performance shifts expectations and turns into a self-fulfilling prophesy, as it did for the Panthers of Prairie View A&M University, a historically black college in Texas. The team had the longest unbroken losing streak in NCAA football history — 80 straight losses between 1989 and 1998. It had been 25 years since the team won more games than it lost, and the school's strong academics were overshadowed by the football team. Being treated like second-class citizens, deprived of its share of resources, and having no confidence are the conditions that set the team up to fail.

The Panthers were champions in the midcentury, but the civil rights movement in the 1960s changed the racial composition of college campuses — and their football teams. Good players were recruited to integrated colleges, and Prairie View didn't adapt. Its last winning season was in 1976, 6–5. At that point, the school was in trouble overall, and auxiliary reserves for athletics, dorm renovations, and student health were depleted. The team was kept alive by memories and support of alumni, but there was no investment in improvements. For a while, the team was coached by the golf coach, it had no scholarships, and the national media ridiculed it. It also found that other teams played harder against it to avoid the humiliation of losing to the Panthers. Referees gave the team's players more penalties assuming they couldn't possibly be winners.

### *A Platform for Confidence*

A new head coach was appointed in 1997 and gave the team a platform for confidence. With more scholarships, more staff, and less contact with the media, the Panthers played better and then won on Sept. 26, 1998. They had won one game, but still didn't have the patterns of winners. Even when a new coach arrived in 2000 and helped them wipe out bad habits, start winning, and get some respect, they retained the pathologies of losers, and a doom loop undermined their confidence. They lacked talent because they had weak and inconsistent leadership, because they lost, and because they had no resources. Finally, in 2000, the school started a capital campaign to infuse resources, but external confidence was still missing.

In 2003, C.L.Whittington took the head coaching job and instilled the team with school spirit. He put up pictures and trophies from the glory days, taught the team's players the school song, got them back in shape, enforced a dress code, and created more opportunities to bond. Players began to grow confidence and stop losing. But Whittington took it too far and began to bring back loser values. He rode them too hard, blamed everyone for problems, got into heated arguments, and was eventually fired.

Losing is not one act. It is a combination of economic, organizational, cultural and psychological factors that interact to make it more likely for people to respond in dysfunctional ways. That is why losing streaks are so hard to break. It was impossible for the Panthers to leap from loser to winner overnight, no matter how many people wanted it. Wins mixed with loser behaviors, such as disruption, churn, lurching, and lack of investment, do not overcome losing streaks. ■

# Turnarounds: The Art of Building Confidence

When it is time to make a turnaround, leadership matters most because confidence has eroded at all levels. Turnarounds are not for the faint of heart or impatient, and they have similar issues. These include:

- **Coming off a losing streak, the situation is always worse than anyone thinks.**
- **Promises of change have been made before to no avail.**
- **Those hailed as heroes when they arrive can become villains when they make unpopular decisions.**
- **If victory is too easy, it might be too temporary.**
- **Turnarounds run on several clocks that are not always in sync.**

There are three situations that trigger turnarounds: Some organizations are terminally ill; some turnarounds begin when a loss of external confidence finally compels change; and some turnarounds are simply an unanticipated byproduct of normal life events, such as succession. While each turnaround is different, they all start with the need to make unpopular decisions about a situation that's full ugliness has been denied. It's hard for that kind of clarity to come from inside the organization. New leaders are required because they are better able to disentangle system dynamics in which they are not caught up.

## *Rapid Leader Turnover*

But decline cycles are known for having rapid leader turnover. What is the difference between a leader who will stay and one who will soon be packing his or her bags? It is the confidence the leader shows in the people who must work to deliver winning performance. The turnaround leader's agenda is daunting, with endless problems, unpopular decisions, and skeptics to convert. These people often proceed unevenly and slowly. It takes minutes to destroy confidence, but forever to build it up. To satisfy people, it takes a combination of bold strokes and long marches to change culture.

There will be false negatives when actions with long-term objectives create apparent short-term losses. There are also false positives, early signs of recovery that bring so much relief that effort decreases. These false positives can provoke selfishness if they occur before spirit is restored. That is why early successes can sometimes be the most dangerous time in a turnaround. Stopping losses is not the same thing as gaining the confidence to create wins.

## *Face Facts*

The confidence to create wins starts with accountability. When people in losing streaks stop talking, practicing or trying, accountability is lost. James M. Kilts recognized that when he took over as CEO of Gillette in 2001. Gillette was a good-old-boy organization that valued seniority and corporate loyalty over competence. The company had star products, sometimes reaching 80 percent market share, but there was little focus on innovation by individuals. In the 1990s, the stars couldn't hide the underlying problems anymore, and it was easy for investors and employees to lose confidence. Gillette's downward spiral included stagnant sales with declining profits, market share, and stock price. The company slipped into a long cycle of decreasing communication, blame-shifting, and denial of responsibility for poor performance.

Before coming to Gillette, Kilts investigated the company. It was ending its 15th consecutive quarter in which it failed to hit earnings estimates. He could see that Gillette lacked accountability. He immediately set in motion a series of changes to restore responsibility and accountability. Two of his top goals were to provide straight talk about problems and expectations, and to have the courage to admit responsibility for problems.

## *Setting Expectations*

Kilts began the turnaround by explaining exactly what behavior he expected, including setting and achieving realistic targets, and not inflated targets to please Wall Street. He showed courage to break with the past by admitting errors after discovering the sales force was engaging in trade loading at the end of each quarter to make its unrealistic targets. When he asked salespeople why they engaged in this practice, they said executives told them to do it. Kilts admitted it was wrong and stood up to Wall Street by not issuing earnings advisories before the end of the quarter. Then people began to understand that he was serious.

Kilts stopped the trade loading, even when customers had budgeted for it and couldn't believe salespeople weren't going to reduce prices at the end of a quarter. It took nine months to stop the trade loading enough to convince salespeople to be confident to succeed without falling back on it.

For nine of the 10 quarters after Kilts' arrival, Gillette met or exceeded analyst forecasts. Market shares increased and quarterly financial targets were met. Innovation increased and confidence grew enough that when its rival Energizer bought Schick razors, Gillette was ready to deal with it.

The employees had confidence in Kilts because he named problems everyone knew were there, and put facts on the table for anyone to see.

## *Cultivating Collaboration*

After accountability, the next major cornerstone of confidence is collaboration. When people are isolated and avoiding or attacking each other, leaders cannot just

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For additional information on how Kilts turned around Gillette, go to: http://my.summary.com

## Turnarounds: The Art of Building Confidence

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tell them to "play nice." Seagate, the world's largest manufacturer of computer hard-disk drives needed to turn around a losing streak when the company slipped in the mid-1990s and 30 percent of its products required rework. No one was working together. Divisions worked as individual silos that focused on the best results for themselves, blamed others, and the senior staff members showed little respect for each other.

In 1998, Steve Luczo became Seagate's CEO. He and COO Bill Watkins decided on a new strategy and business model involving technology leadership, investment in innovation, and operating efficiencies. The problem was that the strategy would require companywide teamwork and mutual confidence that didn't exist.

### *Vision and Values*

First, they established a corporate management council to open a dialogue with senior management about vision and values. Once the council made a decision, members were expected to fully support it. Those who persisted in their dissent were phased out. Over 70 percent of management changed during the next two years.

In 1998, they started a new project to improve the number and quality of their disk drives. They had been producing 1,500 to 2,000 disk drives per line per day, and they chose a new goal of 20,000 drives per day, or one every 3.5 seconds. The leaders asked for it, but the workers said it couldn't be done because they had no confidence. But the engineers were told to stretch and not to worry if they made mistakes. Permission to fail created psychological safety and helped the team bond. An engineer found an innovative solution, and by 2003 they were producing 16,000 drives per day, giving Seagate a large advantage over competitors.

Seeing that collaboration could accomplish important tasks helped spread teamwork at Seagate, and cross-functional groups from many locations became a more common mode for solving problems. They created core teams that took leadership roles on projects, and were mainly responsible to one another. Membership on a core team gave people in the rank and file a way to shine and demonstrate leadership. A virtuous cycle developed where managers trusted people below; more work could be delegated; and there was more respect for the lower ranks, who developed more confidence and were willing to take on more responsibility.

### *Inspiring Initiative and Innovation*

The most damaging losing pathologies are passivity and learned helplessness. People surrounded by pessimism drag others down and find the worst in everything. A personal pep talk is not enough to overcome this pessimism; sometimes it takes a gigantic extravaganza.

### *BBC's Losing Streak*

By 2000, the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) needed a shake-up. The Web and declining audience were bringing it down, and there was little internal or external confidence. The BBC was being made to compete with independent external producers, but bureaucracy hampered creative efforts, and employees felt undervalued. External consultants reinforced another doom loop, sending the message that internal people weren't capable, and reinforcing passive resistance to top management, which induced them to hire more consultants.

Though there were still pockets of excellence, by 1999 the BBC was on a losing streak when Greg Dyke was appointed deputy director general. His first inspirational action was an internal TV broadcast to the whole organization promising more support for the BBC's programming and related services. In it, he said he planned to free up £200 million by reducing overhead and consultant fees.

### *'One BBC'*

In 2000, Dyke reorganized under a grand initiative — "One BBC" — to inspire his people. He enhanced self-confidence by showing them they were worth investment. He started at the top with the executive committee (familiarly known as the ExCo) helping executives unlearn defensiveness and become collaborators. Meetings were less formal and challenged people to express themselves. He created cards that said "CUT THE CRAP: MAKE IT HAPPEN" to shift losers' passivity to winners' initiative. With renewed confidence, ExCo executives hatched ideas and took back the new gospel of initiative to their own organizations.

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## BBC Just Makes It Happen

The following are some of the innovative ideas that came out of Greg Dyke's "One BBC" program:

✓ **Departures From Tradition.** A successful Scottish soap opera was produced locally rather than in London, the source of most programs in the past.

✓ **Innovations Through Collaboration.** Interactive features appeared on the BBC Web site through combined efforts of the news, sport, drama, children's program and "new media" divisions.

✓ **Fast, Decisive Actions.** Nightly TV news was moved to 10 p.m., which reversed a multiyear decline in viewership.

✓ **Surprising Successes.** A new trainee used funds intended for a training video to create a pilot for a comedy that ended up being the United Kingdom's top-rated comedy series, *The Office*.

### Turnarounds: The Art of Building Confidence

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"One BBC" generated tangible results by channeling £270 million into new broadcast programs. Ratings and audience satisfaction were up. By 2001, the executives were doing well, but there was still unhappiness in the ranks. Company leaders decided to be more ambitious and held a huge "Just Imagine" workshop with the top 350 managers, discussing ways to improve the company. The ideas were as small as changing the reimbursement process and as big as producing a BBC-wide orientation program for new hires.

People got bolder, their confidence grew, and the wins got bigger. Quality increased as collaboration between all of the divisions of BBC improved dramatically. BBC began involving more and more levels of management, and began implementing innovative ideas for systematic change. Confidence soared, and even when Dyke had to step down amid a national scandal in 2003, the employees were able to continue and inspire themselves. ■

**For additional information about Seagate's situation, go to:**
**http://my.summary.com**

## A Culture of Confidence

Turning around a company or sports team is one thing, but how do you inspire confidence in a whole country — especially one that has suffered under oppressive regimes and economic depression? In 1994, Nelson Mandela was the first democratically elected president of South Africa. Before the end of apartheid, the country was in a classic losing streak. This included suppression of information, tribal rivalries, isolation and self-protection, passivity and helplessness, and a negative climate that produced low expectations and envy toward those in better circumstances. The country had weak institutions for accountability, collaboration and initiative; misallocated or squandered resources; and had declining external investment.

After spending 27 years in prison, people might have expected Mandela to be vengeful, but after being elected, he worked hard to put his whole country on the right track. He had to balance between addressing the pain and suffering that millions had experienced, and fostering a spirit of reconciliation aimed at moving the country forward. Mandela had to shift the cycle of decline.

Citizens of the country lacked confidence in leaders to lead, and in their own ability to improve their circumstances. Mandela knew he couldn't fix everything, but he could start programs and institutions that would shift people's behavior. He took the following steps:

- Mandela **opened dialogue and banished denial** by supporting a free press and promoting an election designed to ensure widespread input. All people were given opportunities and encouragement to participate in creating the new constitution.
- He promoted **respect and accountability** by being inclusive of all South Africans, black and white, and shepherding the controversial Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- He promoted **collaboration** in his choice of colleagues. He favored inclusiveness of all races and highlighted the efforts of those around him. He emphasized that whites were fellow South Africans and urged them to stay in the country.
- He promoted **opportunity and enterprise** by making cuts and adjustments in the government's budget to satisfy outside investors. He phased in free compulsory education for all children, and required companies to draw up employee equity plans to phase in black employees and build a black middle class.

Mandela saw the long march ahead for his country, but all of his steps made things go in the right direction. There were doubters, but expatriates began returning, and foreign investment poured in. Mandela's confidence in himself and other people helps account for the remarkable and historically unique transitions he was able to make. ■

## Delivering Confidence: The Work of Leaders

Leaders certainly need self-confidence. It helps them persist through problems and triumph over troubles during unstable turnaround periods. But they must also have confidence in other people. If they only rely on themselves to rescue any situation, while focusing on other people's inadequacies, they undermine confidence and reinforce losing streaks.

When leaders believe in other people, confidence grows and winning becomes more attainable. Leaders multiply because everyone becomes less dependent on the commander in chief, and people at many levels take on leadership roles. Leaders establish the support structure to make further leadership possible. When people have confidence in one another, they are willing to lead and be led by the team.

Every leader must promote the three cornerstones of confidence. To ensure accountability, leaders must foster straight talk, communicate expectations clearly, and make information transparent and accessible. To make sure people feel connected, they must foster collaboration by structuring collaborative conversations, reinforcing respect and inclusion, and defining joint goals and definitions of success. And finally, to develop tools,

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## How Leaders Build Confidence in Others

✓ **Espouse high standards.** Give pep talks and messages that incite others to action by using positive expectations based on specific facts to justify their optimism.

✓ **Exemplify behavior.** Use the power of personal example to serve as a role model for their high standards.

✓ **Establish formal mechanisms.** Develop processes, routines and structures that embed winners' behavior in the culture and routine.

### Delivering Confidence: The Work of Leaders

*(continued from page 7)*

channels, rewards and permission for people to take initiative, leaders must open channels for new ideas, treat people as experts in their own work, and encourage small wins and grass-roots innovations.

Leaders connect people to tasks, to members of the team, and to the outside world. As winning streaks are associated with the growth of external networks of customers, fans, audiences, investors and public officials, it is important for turnarounds to restore external confidence by repairing and rebuilding stakeholder relationships. Kilts had to plug holes in Gillette's investor relations and trade relations. Mandela had to convince international businesses, foreign investors, and South Africans in exile that his country could shift to a winning cycle. ■

For additional information on how leaders make choices to define a culture of winning, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Winning Streaks, Losing Streaks and the Game of Life

How do these lessons about confidence help you in your everyday life? The secret to winning is not to lose twice in a row. Confidence brings the resilience to bounce back from defeat to victory. It does not guarantee that you will win every single time, but confidence makes people more likely to analyze problems and face them head-on, communicate and cooperate with those whose support they need, and take initiative to make adjustments or try innovations. People with confidence can count on themselves to shape events, and they know they will stay in the game no matter what.

The only good thing about losing is that it sounds an alarm bells and can shake people out of complacency. A setback represents a time to make a choice, to make a difference, or to slip into self-defeating behavior. The dividing line between winning streaks and losing streaks is the choice of behavior in response to setbacks. The choice to rally instead of getting discouraged is that of an optimist who assumes negative events are temporary glitches rather than a permanent state of affairs.

### *Internal Supports*

Successful people also have character, the internalized three cornerstones of confidence — accountability, collaboration and initiative — and the ability to support others. When the going gets tough, they draw on those internal supports. Character is shaped by values and the desire to achieve excellence in all pursuits, regardless of the outcome. They know that getting beaten by a better opponent is different than losing. As long as they are playing at the highest level, they will resume winning. Their standards are internal and they have the perseverance to stay in the game just a little longer. Winners define setbacks as detours, and they redouble their efforts to find a way around the obstacles.

One of the best things a winner can do when facing a loss is to think of others. Winners avoid the loser's temptation to shut down and withdraw. People must build their own mini-network, knowing that others can be remarkably generous.

### *The Long March*

Winners also avoid the loser's habit of assuming too much. Winners don't focus on the huge goal in the future; they work step-by-step to progress a little faster or a little smarter. They know they can't jump stages. Winning is a long march, and even when the problems seem overwhelming, winners focus on what they can control — being prepared, working hard, and accomplishing small wins that will improve the odds of achieving the next big success. ■

For additional information on how confidence can affect personal life, go to: http://my.summary.com

### Soundview Recommended Reading List

**If you liked *Confidence*, you'll also like:**

1. ***Evolve!*** **by Rosabeth Moss Kanter.** Kanter offers a call to arms for businesspeople, and helps them speed their movement into digital commerce.
2. ***Rosabeth Moss Kanter On the Frontiers of Management*** **by Rosabeth Moss Kanter.** Kanter helps businesspeople understand the areas of weakness in today's management styles, and the ways to improve.
3. ***When Giants Learn to Dance*** **by Rosabeth Moss Kanter.** Kanter warns business leaders to train now if they want to win the Olympics of world competition, and explains the three strategies leaders must practice.
4. ***World Class*** **by Rosabeth Moss Kanter.** Kanter shows business leaders how to use the three Cs — concepts, competence and connections — to prosper in the global economy.
5. ***The Change Masters*** **by Rosabeth Moss Kanter.** To help business leaders keep up with the pace of change, Kanter tells them how to create a business environment that encourages innovation, and how to ensure a company's survival in the midst of rapid change.

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# Connect First

Melanie A. Katzman, Ph.D.

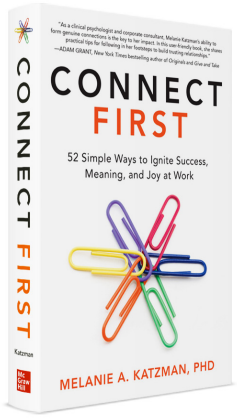
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# Connect First

## 52 Simple Ways to Ignite Success, Meaning, and Joy at Work

*by* **Melanie A. Katzman, Ph.D.**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Technology has enabled us to be more interconnected today than ever before. So why do so many of us feel isolated and undervalued at work? In these rapidly changing, challenging times, how do we develop the intuition, self-awareness, and interpersonal agility required to prosper?

Strong relationships are the bedrock of lasting success, meaning, and joy at work. In ***Connect First***, Dr. Melanie Katzman shows you an impactful approach to connect first as fellow humans, then as co-workers and colleagues, to forge the deep bonds that make a significant difference.

Katzman presents 52 actions, 19 of which are summarized here, that you can take immediately to create a deeply rewarding work life by connecting to yourself, your organization, and the world at large. These are the same life-changing techniques she uses with leaders and employees at the world's top companies to enhance productivity and foster fulfillment and joy at work—the hallmarks of true success. Let ***Connect First*** help you share in that success.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why emotions matter at work and how to use them as a source of energy.
- Key strategies to establish respect, use your senses, and be self-aware.
- To foster loyalty, harmony, and courage.
- To dream big so you can have a big impact.

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## Introduction

Corporate life assumes a convenient fiction: If we assign roles and responsibilities, create flowcharts and project plans, and delineate deadlines and deliverables, then somehow magically, coolly, and calmly, the work will get done.

Wrong! The truth is that organizations are run by people, and people run on emotions. Our feelings supply the energy to fuel our pursuit of profit and purpose. They are formidable and universal. They can't be ignored. Yet, to our great detriment, we have long pretended that emotions have no place in the office.

Achieving in business is often falsely equated with being rational, and efforts to be emotionally expressive can seem to make us too vulnerable. Yet, CEOs or fresh graduates, office workers or telecommuters—regardless of role, all seek security, cherish praise, and fear shame. We care, and we want to matter.

The future of work demands we recognize that emotions don't make us weak. Instead, they are our power tool, they're processed in the most primal, "animal" part of our brain, and they're critical to our existence.

Being "natural" at work just doesn't come naturally. Corporate titles and positions define us. We've lost the ability to really be ourselves. But it can be relearned.

### Connect First as Humans

What we need is a professional, practical way of establishing quality relationships by connecting first as fellow humans, and then as co-workers and collaborators. From this personal foundation, great teams are formed, and goals are realized.

Here is a guide to unleash personal capacity, increase organizational effectiveness, and, for those who dare, drive large-scale change. The ideas are divided into seven parts and take just a few moments to implement, yet have a lasting effect. Most of the suggestions cost nothing and don't take more than five minutes to implement.

Some of the recommendations may seem quite basic. That's precisely the point! Because too often we get the "basics" wrong, success, meaning, and joy are sucked out of the modern workplace. By attending to the simple but significant moments between people, you will secure your reputation and experience the beauty of how easily and quickly relationships can be improved.

## Part I: Establish Respect

Interpersonal niceties aren't superficial; they're essential. They are the quickest and easiest ways to connect first as people. Present yourself as the person people want to support because you won't take anyone's efforts for granted, no matter their position. Whether you are the CEO or the assistant, the manager or the associate, ignite joy by being your best and helping others do their best.

### Smile: Activate Immediate Connection

Smiling is a great example of a simple act that's powerful, controversial, and often omitted from our daily repertoire, potentially to our own detriment.

"Smile more" can seem like a command. Strangers demanding that you "Smile!" can feel patronizing, but that is not the intent here. Make an active choice to smile because it benefits you as well as the recipient of your warmth. Smiling is free and efficient. It asserts your intention to form a mutual, shared, equal connection.

A study from Penn State University found that people who smile appear to be more likeable, courteous, and even competent. Smile as you enter the building, walk the halls, or join a meeting room. Put your phone in your pocket and make eye (and smile) contact as you transition from place to place.

Find the balance that works for you. Smiling is effective, but being overly cheerful, especially for women, can undermine your authority.

### Call People By Their Names: Ignite Attention and Recognize Individuality

Hearing your own name is a neural ignition key, activating attention and engaging you in the interaction to follow. Names acknowledge existence, provide an identity, and are a passport to services and opportunities. Learning the names of people at work demonstrates respect and confirms that they have been noticed and are valued as people. If you want to connect first, start by calling people by their names!

To learn a name, to truly recognize who's around you, you must invest some intellectual capital. Get up from your desk now and walk for five minutes around the office. Do you know everyone's name? Now's a good time to ask. When introducing yourself, ask for the other person's name. Always. Make sure people know each other's names, whether in a meeting or walking a factory floor. When in doubt, make introductions.

At the start of a meeting, try welcoming everyone in, and then invite participants to join you in reflective silence.

There is no way to fake it. You either know a person's name or you don't. If you forget, apologize and ask to be reminded. You might want to describe when you met last: "I recall we had a lovely discussion about the sculpture in the lobby, but I'm afraid I don't remember your name."

### Got It? Then Say So! Help Co-Workers Manage Their Time

Do your part to stamp out undue worry and avoid the diminishment people experience when they feel ignored. When colleagues send completed projects, make requests, or share important announcements over email, reply with "Got it." This easy addition to your daily routine provides the psychological assurance that your colleagues have caught your attention—that you have received their message and they don't have to stress.

No one wants to send notes into the ether. "Got it" is a superfast point of personal connection indicating that there's a human on the other side of the electronic communication. Saying "Got it" shows respect for superiors, subordinates, and peers.

Respond with "Got it" as soon as you receive a request, special announcement, or finished project. Don't wait until you have read through lengthy documents or completed time-consuming tasks. First acknowledge receipt.

## Part II: Engage All of Your Senses

Knowledge is your competitive edge. What you don't know *can* hurt you. Hiding behind roles and computer screens won't cut it. To really excel, to deeply connect, you want office dynamics to unfold in Technicolor and surround sound. Invest a few minutes to shift your senses from automatic to manual and learn how to be *with* the people around you.

### See Everybody: Those on the Margins Often Have Greater Perspective

Attention is an unapologetic discriminator. To avert one's gaze from a fellow human being erases that person's existence. To lock eyes, even briefly, creates a connection, a validation that in this instant, we are here together.

Unfortunately, the privilege of being seen is not equally distributed in organizational life. Failing to acknowledge the presence of the people we work with reinforces a destructive hierarchy. In today's digitally connected world, many workers are out of sight, yet we recognize their contributions and value them as team members. But the flesh-and-blood janitors polishing your floor and cleaning your lavatory mirrors may remain invisible. They see you, but do you see them?

To connect first, open your eyes to all that surrounds you. As you enter and exit your building, take a second to catch the gaze of the people opening your door, sorting the mail, or cleaning the floor. Can you describe the design of their uniforms or recall what color their shirts were? Go back and reenter. Pretend you forgot something in the car.

Before you begin a meeting, scan the room. Have you made eye contact with everyone? Be intentional with your focus. Ask yourself if you would be proud if a secret camera in your retina played back what you have been watching.

### Silence: Be Quiet Together

Here's a surefire way to improve the quality of your meetings: Don't say anything for five minutes. Really. You can employ this technique to center colleagues at the start of a session or at the end of a meeting to ensure that you reach a productive conclusion. Studies show that inserting a few seconds of mental space between an event or stimulus and our response to it is the difference between an automatic aggressive reaction and a more considered and often collaborative solution.

At the start of a meeting, try welcoming everyone in, and then invite participants to join you in reflective silence. Say, "To get fully ready for today's discussion we will be doing something a bit different. We will be taking five minutes to be quiet together, to center ourselves as a group and make space for new ideas. Please put down your pens, mute your phones, and get comfortable in your seats. If you would like, you may close your eyes. Here's a chance to breathe together and release tension with each exhale. Let any thoughts that come into your mind go in one ear and out

the other. Practice focusing on your breathing."

Once the exercise is complete, invite any reactions. Don't be surprised if some people express discomfort. That's OK. Not everyone's a buyer at first. Remain confident that some colleagues will express a sense of connection, a release of anxiety, and a readiness to work.

### Eat Together: Food Is Bait for Conversation and Creates Connection

Breaking bread together is a time-honored tradition, demonstrating positive intentions to further a relationship. Carving out time to share a coffee, snack, or meal with co-workers is an obvious yet often missed chance to get information, expand networks, and resolve tensions.

Kevin Kniffin and his colleagues at Cornell's Food and Brand Lab have demonstrated the positive effect of eating as a unit. For example, cooperation among firefighters was almost twice as high among team members who ate with one another than among those who didn't. The behaviors underlying the firefighters' meal practices—collecting money, planning, talking, cleaning, and, of course, eating—all enhanced group performance on the job.

Encourage your co-workers to bring a beloved dish—perhaps a comfort food from their childhood (this is especially valuable when working with multicultural groups). Try being strategic with your invitations. Set aside a day each week to dine with someone at your company that you don't know well. Be aware of, but not constrained by, co-workers' food restrictions.

## Part III: Become Popular

In a rapidly changing world, the requisite skills for success are in constant flux; yet self-awareness (an appreciation of your impact on others) continues to predict career advancement. This part builds on the competencies discussed above by showing you how to be the person others want to connect with first. When you are the person people want to be with, opportunities multiply, and you are happier and more successful.

### Be Present: Showing Up Is Just the Start

We forget or don't even realize that those around us are often deeply impacted by our presence (or lack of it). It's a misconception that executive presence is about commanding a room. It's not about you being the star. Power results from your ability to tune in to the needs of the people around you.

It seems pretty obvious, but it's worth stating: Attending to others is impossible if you are not actually in the right place!

OK. You showed up. Now what? Here's a chance to implement the suggestions discussed above. Make eye contact, silence your internal chatter, listen deeply, and relax into the moment. Manage your mood, facial expressions, and body language to send the right signals. Be intentional with your attention. Identify colleagues and constituents who need face time.

Keep in mind that a Google Hangout or company hashtag does not replace in-person conversations.

### Be a Magnet: Become the Person People Want to Be With

When you are a magnet, your comrades are walking toward you at corporate gatherings. When teams are assembled and new opportunities explored, your name is at the top of the list. Impromptu office outings? You get an invite.

Being magnetic doesn't mean you are always extroverted, constantly lauded, or never alone. But it does mean that in your presence, people relax, feel safe, and know that you are on their side.

Magnetism isn't just a term of art. Our nervous systems transmit information through electromagnetic waves that are influenced by the people around us. This unconscious process opens the door to communal connection. We are drawn to people who provide a safe, reliable rhythm. Whether you own the company or answer the phones for the executives on the fourth floor, make biology work for you.

To ignite joy at work, radiate wonder, a readiness to engage, and a comfort with whatever the day brings, and observe how individuals (and their limbic systems) are drawn to you.

Prepare conversational gifts. Don't just race to the next meeting. Stop and think about your audience. How can you catalyze a quality discussion? What thought-provoking questions might you ask to ensure the conversation is keeping up with current events?

### Have a Point of View: Cultivate an Informed Perspective

Developing and continually refreshing an informed perspective makes you an organizational asset no matter where you sit in the hierarchy. When all you do is repeat what's already known, you run the risk of becoming an expendable corporate commodity—and a dull companion.

Dare to differentiate yourself: Expand your knowledge about topics that matter to your organization. Broaden your company's awareness about topics that should matter to them but aren't on their radar. Express an informed view about material that you are responsible for.

Stay curious. Use travel time to read blogs and listen to podcasts outside your field. Download or carry a book. Make it a point to read material from sources you don't agree with.

Talk directly to the people impacted by strategies and products you may be promoting, and bring those insights back to your team. Come to work prepared to teach people something new as a way of helping them feel smarter and more informed.

## Part IV: Grow Loyalty

Whether the office is a glass skyscraper or your parents' garage, you can't achieve your goals alone. Getting the most out of the people you work with takes more than just money. Tap into what makes your colleagues tick. When you're plowing through the to-do list, it's easy to forget about them—your co-workers; the recipients of your latest request who are missing their kids' soccer games, forgoing a date, or skipping sleep, just to help you hit another deadline.

The questions co-workers ask you may be about the project at hand, but the questions they ask themselves are, "Do I matter?" "Does my work matter?" At the heart of contagiously positive group cultures are people working because they care and feel cared for.

### Connect Jobs to the Larger Mission: There's Always a Why

We are not hardwired to pursue money. Money can't buy meaning, but work can offer it. Connecting our jobs to a higher purpose makes a meaningful difference in recruitment and productivity. McKinsey Co. reported that highly sought-after talent opted to work for companies with an inspiring mission. Bain Consultancy's study of 300 companies worldwide demonstrated it would take 2.25 satisfied employees to generate the same output as one inspired worker.

Connecting first as people, and then to the mission, is a renewable source of institutional energy. Construct positive identities. When introducing others, contextualize their jobs, illustrating the importance of their efforts in achieving larger objectives. Don't just say, "This is Meg, our night manager."

Try "Meet Meg. She's the reason why our hotel has the highest number of bookings from travelers arriving after 9 p.m."

Take a field trip. Are you raising money to provide glasses to impoverished communities? If so, set up a time to meet and hear about how the restored ability to see has enabled the women to make money as seamstresses—and buy fresh food for their families. Try to meet the kids and learn about the changes in their lives since their parents' eyesight improved.

Connecting first as people, and then to the mission, is a renewable source of institutional energy.

### Bank Social Collateral: Give Now to Succeed in the Future

Think more about what you can do for others than what you can get in return. It feels good and it's good for you. Many acts of great import to your peers take just a few moments. Making a well-placed introduction, pointing a colleague to pertinent research, or sharing an invitation to a relevant but lesser known professional conference all take about five minutes.

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. That's a key reason to connect first. To gain an audience for your ideas, first capture your co-workers' hearts.

Build a network of goodwill by paying it forward. Do a five-minute favor for anyone who asks. Yes, anyone. Try being generously attentive to those with whom you are in conflict. It may seem counterintuitive—it's hard and destabilizing but very effective. Our opponents are often the ones we watch most closely, so you are likely an expert in what they need. Rather than compete, reverse tactics: Offer to help.

### Generate Joy and Laughter: Energize Your Workplace

Do you want a bigger bonus, a boost in creative thinking, increased credibility, and greater opportunity? Humor at work is a serious business advantage. All things being equal,

89 percent of CEOs believe they'd rather hire someone with a good sense of humor. Managers displaying a good sense of humor are given more opportunities in organizations than those who take themselves too seriously.

Instilling joy and laughter at the office doesn't require a pocket full of jokes or a stream of one-liners. It's about relinquishing the relentless sense of urgency. Greater self-awareness is associated with occupational success. Be the first to joke about your idiosyncrasies. Be the source of levity, rather than the font of office tension.

You can't mandate humor, but you can model it. Start small. Share a joke or a funny passage, make a play on words, or create an unexpected acronym for the latest project. If you get a smile from one person today, that's success. Keep in mind that not every form of humor is appropriate. Work is no place for locker room and bathroom humor or political, sexist, malicious, religious, homophobic, and xenophobic jokes.

## Part V: Resolve Conflict

Deep connections are forged from, not in spite of, conflict. Your ability to work through differences allows you to engage a wider set of collaborators and learn more by experimenting with new ideas.

### Stand in Someone Else's Shoes: Experience Their Point of View

The resolution of any conflict comes down to the question, What really matters? The answer is seldom one you can ascertain alone. What was once crystal-clear blurs out of focus when you stand in someone else's shoes and see the view from that person's point. Standing in someone else's shoes helps you solve their problems, offers a new perspective on your challenges, and generates lasting goodwill.

Start a conference call by asking what everyone is seeing out their windows. This anchors you in their reality. Restrict the response to one sentence. It won't take long, and it literally "places" your remote team. The quick opening question humanizes the conversation that follows.

Did you just have the second tense phone call after five increasingly hostile email exchanges? Don't just sit there; do something. Ask the person you are sparring with if you can meet at a place that matters to them. It may be their office, the building site that's raising blood pressures, or the music shop that brings that person joy. No matter the choice, you will learn a great deal and connect more.

Ask open-ended questions, and be prepared for answers you didn't expect. Don't be afraid to ask for explanations of jargon, abbreviations, or words you don't understand.

### Apologize: Don't Justify or Explain Why

Openness about your mistakes sets the stage for others to share their errors. The gurus of regret concur on the recipe for an effective apology. It should demonstrate humility and, when possible, be delivered face to face. While email can be a tempting alternative, if you can't look a person in the eye, at least pick up the phone.

It's important to say the words "I'm sorry" or "I apologize" and to provide a clear, succinct indication of exactly what you're apologizing for. Endure the awkwardness. Incomplete or insincere efforts can backfire. Offer suggestions on how you will work to avoid the mistake in the future, propose ways to make amends, and then sit back and let the other person vent if needed.

Don't make excuses for yourself. Don't interrupt, argue, refute, or correct. Resist bringing up your own criticisms and complaints. Even when the offended party is largely at fault, apologize for your part in the incident, however small it may be. Once you've expressed your regret, put it behind you and move on. We are all fallible—no need to beat yourself up.

## Part VI: Fight Fear

Fear. It's pervasive. The organization is under pressure to innovate, and you dread being left behind. Downsizing? You might lose your job. Maybe there will be a merger or a new acquisition. The robots are coming. The company's computing platforms aren't competitive enough. You aren't keeping up with the systems.

You can't know what you don't know if you keep on talking to the same people. It's lonely at the top. And at the bottom. And in the middle. Survival in volatile, ambiguous environments requires agility and wisdom. Here's the moment to secure a place for new voices (from inside and outside of your organization) and create true partnerships through shared experience. No matter where you sit at the office, work is more fun when you are not afraid.

### Step Outside Your Comfort Zone: Being a Little Terrified Is Good for You

Resting in a place where stress is minimal, where you know what's coming next and can plan accordingly, may at first seem like a good plan, but the negative impacts are

> Be brave. Be messy. Luxuriate in the not knowing. At the root of innovation is the courage to ask a beautiful question.

insidious. You didn't sign up for the coding course when it was offered by the company because no one you knew was taking the class; you opted out of the entrepreneurs support group because you prefer playing video games with your brothers online; and you didn't take the time to get to know the new hires who have now been promoted over you. You've stagnated while everyone is moving on.

In an increasingly ambiguous and accelerated world, those who jump into the unknown, experiment, embarrass themselves, bruise their egos, and start again, position themselves for some of the biggest rewards. Being slightly on edge kicks your system into gear.

Try saying yes to three things you usually say no to, and then say no to three things you usually say yes to.

Create a personal mission statement about why you're stepping out of your comfort zone, such as "to build courage" or "to become more creative." Start a list on your phone, in a notebook, or on your office wall of ways you want to challenge yourself. Try putting a date beside each goal. If you have posted your list in your office, invite others to make suggestions or to join you.

### Be a Person First! Help Strangers Feel Less Strange

When it comes to small talk, your words may be forgotten, but how you make people feel will be remembered. Light chatter may seem trite, but it's the small talk that leads to the big talk. Studies show that tossing in a bit of interpersonal prattle builds bonds at the office, engenders a feeling of well-being, and creates a welcome break. The goal is not to become best friends; it's simply the enjoyment of sharing a topic of mutual interest—for a few minutes.

Management by walking around is the practice of wandering in an unstructured manner through the workplace to engage in unscripted, unplanned conversations. Promoted by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman in 1982, the timeliness of this technique is ever more apparent as co-workers are communicating and being managed electronically, even when they work in the same building. Rather than being distracting, the judicious unannounced visit builds rapport and can facilitate the exchange of productive ideas.

Be pro-social in your chatter. Spread positive news about others. Research areas of potential mutual interest before you meet someone for the first time. You may uncover a shared hobby or cause. Come prepared to ask about it. Take a minute before diving into a business discussion to find that common bond.

## Part VII: Have a Big Impact

Time to be joyfully courageous. Most of us want to make a difference but get overwhelmed when confronted with the enormity of the problems before us. This part provides the tools to broaden your definition of success, to work across generations, to consider how you want to leave a mark, to be significant.

### Explore the Unknown: The Future Depends on It

It takes courage to say, "I don't know" or "We don't know." When employees are paid to perform, competency is too often equated with having the answer—on demand. We fear that not knowing will make us appear weak. Even more anxiety-inducing, sometimes we don't know how to formulate the question. We just know something is wrong—or we anticipate it will be.

Be brave. Be messy. Luxuriate in the not knowing. At the root of innovation is the courage to ask a beautiful question. Sometimes it's as simple as, "Why isn't someone doing this?" or "What if I tried to do that?"

Run toward, not away, from the question without an obvious answer. As you read the latest memo or sit in yet another meeting, stop to ask, "What are we avoiding because we don't know?" Bring people together to explore, not solve the dilemma.

Don't get lost in the details of execution while you're still toying with concepts. Examine your question from a distance. What patterns can you recognize?

### Leverage Your Platform: Make a Difference

Organizations no longer choose between social impact or profit. Governments *and* businesses are being called on to shape society. And it's easier than ever to collaborate across geographic regions. Businesses will increasingly be judged not only by the value they bring to their shareholders but also by their positive impact on society.

Whether you are a CEO or the newest associate, consider how your position provides you a chance to make a big decision or perform small tasks that will alter the world around you (for the better). This is not necessarily about investing more money, it's about investing attentional capital.

It begins with a desire to act with intention and an inventorying of your nonmaterial assets, such as the ability to speak up, share access, and be generous with your relationships. Our choices can have inadvertent negative or purposely positive civic, environmental, and financial consequences.

Make sure your choices are aligned with the person you want to be and what you want to achieve. Whether your company is big or just getting started, include a "social cost" when evaluating your financial budgets. Make reading the news an active exercise. What's getting you excited or frustrated? How can you support people working for causes you care about?

### Dream Audaciously: Move Beyond Success to Significance

How big a life do you want to live? This is not a prompt to consider how many acres of land you will own or parties with celebrities you will attend. Dr. Aravind Srinivasan, head of the purpose-led and profitable Aravind Eye Hospitals in India, put it well: "Success is what happens to you. Significance is what happens through you. Success is what comes to you. Significance is what you give away to others."

Treat yourself to some space and silence. How do you want to be in the world? What do you want to be known for? Legacies are not the province of the rich. We all have a chance to leave our mark through small daily actions that do make a difference.

By being intentional in who we choose to look at, listen to, eat with, and invite in, we solve problems and shift mindsets. Our jobs can be the source of community and pride; they can provide a platform for personal growth and social change.

Entertain the dream. It will give you energy. Think big. You can always crop the picture to fit reality. Trust yourself and others. Don't be afraid to share your dream. Saying it out loud starts to make it real.

Success, meaning, and joy are minted at the office in the interactions among people, by people just like you. We all have the power to connect first and significantly impact the future of work.

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# Conscious

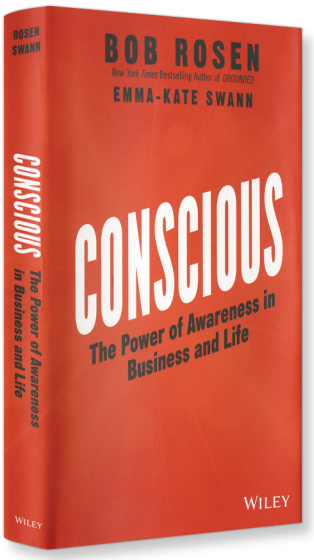
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# Conscious

## The Power of Awareness in Business and in Life




by Bob Rosen
and Emma-Kate Swann

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Our world is changing faster than our ability to adapt. Ambushed by speed, complexity and uncertainty, many of us are unprepared for this acceleration. We act on autopilot as new challenges confront us. We are too reactive to problems and miss out on opportunities. We get hijacked by conflicting values and polarizing relationships. We face uncertainty with fear and mistrust. Stress and burnout are pervasive as many of us do not perform up to our potential.

*Conscious* is our wake-up call — to be aware, awake and accountable. Nothing is more important than understanding ourselves, our relationships and our surroundings. Being conscious helps us think deeper, learn faster and collaborate better. Authors Bob Rosen and Emma-Kate Swann reveal that the more conscious we are, the faster we adapt and the higher performing we become. Being conscious is the new smart.

*Conscious* is your personal roadmap through transformation, helping you adapt and accelerate into the future. Why not be the one with your headlights on while others are driving in the dark?

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why being conscious is the new smart.
- To know yourself honestly and discover your innate wisdom.
- To combat tunnel vision and develop a "Google mind."
- To live your higher purpose and build a shared consciousness.
- The true meaning of legacy and how to act on it.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **CONSCIOUS**

**by Bob Rosen and Emma-Kate Swann**

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## Conscious Is the New Smart

### The Wild, Wireless World

As humans, we find ourselves living at a critical inflection point in our history. Everything is changing around us, from technology and demographics, to geopolitics and climate, to lifestyles and marriages, and the list goes on. Our challenge is that the world is changing faster than our ability to adapt.

Only you can embrace these changes and adapt into the future. Lifting your gaze outside yourself while looking inward to remove the roots of resistance is how you become more conscious. With just enough urgency, resilience and curiosity, you can activate your mind to adapt. This requires transforming yourself in an increasingly disruptive and accelerating world.

Let's look at the six main disruptors we experience every day:

1. **Speed:** The pace of life is escalating, and it doesn't appear to be slowing down any time soon. This forces us to see, think, feel and act faster.
2. **Uncertainty:** Stability is an illusion, and uncertainty is reality. We want to believe that we will find comfort in the predictable, but it doesn't exist.
3. **Complexity:** Complexity is part of the DNA of the modern world.
4. **Technology:** As a powerful disruptor, technology is both our liberator and our slayer.
5. **Competition:** How do we find purpose and meaning in a world of powerful competitive urges?
6. **Globalization:** How do we succeed individually while thriving as one global planet and society?

How you respond to these forces can be energizing and create unlimited opportunities, or they can be demoralizing and sabotage our best efforts.

### Conscious Is the New Smart

In an age of acceleration, being aware is your single most important asset. It helps you stay agile in a frenetic world. It keeps you curious as the world becomes more uncertain and complex. And it helps you stay authentic and generous as your relationships get bumpier.

Being aware occurs at three levels of introspection:

**Aware of yourself**. This refers to your own understanding about who you are — how you see, think and feel; what motivates your actions; and how you impact other people.

**Aware of others**. This refers to your insights about other people, what motivates them and makes them tick, and how their actions affect you and others.

**Aware of your environment**. This refers to your understanding of life's situations and circumstances — the organizational, community and societal forces that affect you every day.

We need a new approach to living and leading. Being conscious is the new smart. By knowing who you are and staying committed to developing yourself, you can develop the confidence and bearing to effectively navigate in uncertain times.

### The Path to Being Conscious

Conscious people stay awake and aware of their own personal power while accepting the uncertainty of life. By living in an evolved conscious state, you can travel into the unknown, keep the bigger picture in mind and recognize the natural impermanence of life.

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Here's the new road map to guide you through uncertainty and change — to help you adapt, transform and accelerate into the future; to prepare you for the changing times; to expand your potential and performance.

Research has found that the most successful people and leaders practice these four steps:

1. **Go deep — harnessing the power of introspection**. Learn how to get to know who you are, where you come from and why you act the way you do.
2. **Think big — getting curious and adaptive**. Explore how to deal with complexity and paradox.
3. **Get real — being honest and intentional**. Get real about your accelerators and hijackers. It is the best way to become more honest and intentional in leadership and life.
4. **Step up — acting boldly and responsibly**. Step up to your highest potential. Learn what a conscious leader looks like — how to champion your higher purpose, stretch people in constructive ways and be generous in your relationships.

## Go Deep to Discover Your Inner Self

The purpose of going deep is to take off your blinkers and eliminate what is holding you back. What's in it for you? Being more aware of yourself and others. Living up to your potential. Coping with the speed and uncertainty of change. Turning knowledge into wisdom.

A deeper mind enables us to be more broad-minded and less shackled by outdated assumptions about the world. Going deeper helps us access more positive emotions, by living with more hope, empathy, trust and generosity. It also helps us to make deeper connections with others and frees us to embrace new ideas and solve even bigger challenges.

### Who Is That Person in the Mirror?

When we look at ourselves in the mirror and reflect on who we are, some of us only see what we don't want to see: imperfections, insecurities and weaknesses. Others of us look into the glass and only see our idealized versions of ourselves: filled with wisdom, beauty and morality. Neither perspective takes you to the whole truth. For your whole story to emerge, you need to look deep into the mirror and become self-aware.

In the fast, disruptive world, it is too easy to lose our center and become vulnerable to the accelerations around us. If we don't know what is core within us, we are easily blown around by the winds of change. The key is to get centered, to get to know ourselves and to accept who we are trying to be.

To discover your real self, it's important to take a 360 approach to self-awareness: to look at yourself, others and your surroundings.

- Reflect on who you are and who you aspire to be — your values, passions and purpose.
- Seek feedback from family, friends and colleagues about how you are showing up in the world.
- Notice how your surroundings (challenges/opportunities/organization) are affecting you.

As we enter the cruel, crazy world, it doesn't take long, if we are lucky, to learn about what it will take to be successful to be our best selves. We immediately bump into three needs that are essential for getting ahead in life: our need for security, our need for acceptance and our need for control.

The need for security is about feeling safe and protected in the world. The need for acceptance is based on our desire to be loved and connected to others. The need for control is about shaping and influencing our own destiny.

If any of these three needs go unmet, they can be even more disruptive in our accelerated lives. There are two insights you can use to protect yourself. First, we often deny that we have unmet needs. We do this by distracting ourselves through negative behaviors like overeating, over-shopping, drug and alcohol addiction, staying busy, and the biggest addiction in the modern world — overworking.

Second, what we resist will persist. Many of us resist being present with the full gamut of our emotions. Acknowledging and accepting our feelings allows us to meet our unmet needs within ourselves.

### Discover Your Innate Wisdom

Part of being human is having innate capacity, an innate wisdom. We each have a natural intelligence, a genuine sense and sensibility, a fundamental sanity. Minds are naturally curious; hearts are naturally compassionate. What stands between us and our innate wisdom is the tough, cruel world we live and work in.

There is a wellspring of wisdom in each of us. And it's up to us to find and awaken it. How do you do this? You open your heart and you open your mind. An open heart fuels the fire: It enables us to be emotionally honest, compassionate and joyful. An open mind shines a light: It enables us to be self-aware and curious, practical and relevant. An open

mind and an open heart are both expressions of the better angels of our nature — principally, love.

There are four ways we express love:

1. **Love of purpose** — devoting ourselves to a greater purpose.
2. **Love of accomplishment** — having a desire to achieve.
3. **Love of others** — showing concern and care for those in your personal ecosystem.
4. **Love of yourself** — showing compassion for yourself.

Love is foundational, for sure. Yet in a bumpy, accelerating world, you must also build a strong sense of self to protect against the arrows on the streets. You must learn to exercise your inner resources: grit, self-control, willpower and self-compassion.

Our innate wisdom is based on a simple dilemma — live in love or live in fear. You choose each moment of every day. With an open mind and heart, you can be naturally authentic, joyful, forgiving and grateful.

### Discomfort Is the New Immunization

When you feel discomfort, don't shy away from the heat. Instead, walk intentionally across the hot coals. Like physical pain, discomfort serves a critical role for alerting you to what needs to be accepted, changed or avoided. You will be a more agile and resilient person if you make friends with the ups and downs of life.

You are far more capable of handling discomfort than you probably believe. Humans have a real capacity to transform discomfort into positive energy and momentum for change. The more conscious you are with your discomfort, the more seamless this immunization process will be. Most important, you have the power to learn from the bumps in your work and life and not be ruled by them.

An ancient Buddhist parable in the Sallatha Sutra explains that pain comes in two parts. The first arrow is the initial pain, such as a failure, rejection, loss or a simple backache. The second arrow is self-inflicted pain, caused by the story we tell ourselves about the situation.

The Buddha taught that there is no relief from the first arrow. It hurts and we must accept that. It's what we do with the second arrow that matters. Conscious people embrace discomfort by acknowledging it — by allowing negative emotions to arise, flow through you, like a wave rising and falling. If we accept the reality of the first arrow, we don't need to subject ourselves to the second arrow.

Pain is part of being human; suffering is self-imposed, and interferes with our ability to adapt to change. Conscious people accept that reality and avoid the suffering of the second arrow.

### Your Roots of Conscious Living

We all have the internal tools available to keep our feet on the ground while striving to achieve our potential. They are our roots for conscious living: how you live (physical), how you feel (emotional), how you think (intellectual), how you interact (social), how you perform (vocational) and how you see the world (spiritual). Our roots work together to nourish our mind and our heart. They help us thrive in the pressure cooker we often find ourselves in.

**Physical roots** include mind/body awareness — understanding how your body and mind work in tandem helps you manage health risks and rebound quickly from adversity, injury or illness; energy management; peak performance — practicing healthy habits every day boosts your ability to manage stress, enjoy work-life balance, tackle challenges head-on and optimize your health.

**Emotional roots** include self-awareness; positive emotions — demonstrating emotions like hope, compassion, joy, empathy, generosity, forgiveness and love is what sets the most effective people apart from their less successful counterparts; and resilience.

**Intellectual roots** include having deep curiosity; an adaptive mindset; and paradoxical thinking — evaluating ideas from all angles and considering seemingly contradictory concepts enables you to grasp complexity and make well-informed decisions.

**Social roots** include authenticity — being your true self in all situations and aligning your thoughts, words and actions; having mutually rewarding relationships; and nourishing communities.

**Vocational roots** include focusing on a meaningful calling; personal mastery — playing to your strengths and overcoming your weaknesses allows you to stretch yourself and perform your best; and having a drive to succeed.

**Spiritual roots** means living with a higher purpose; global connectedness; and generosity of spirit.

## Think Big to See a World of Possibilities

To think big will challenge you to look outside yourself to see the world clearly — to expand your mind, to inspire your curiosity and to tap into your creativity. To see the future as a world of possibility, you first need to overcome the pitfalls of being too narrow.

## A 280-Character Universe

Digital technology is the great human disruptor of our time. Unlimited global access to information allows anyone to learn just about anything, anywhere, at any time.

The trouble is more and better access to knowledge is no guarantee that we can make sense of it all. A plethora of information can make our mind feel as if it's in a constant state of hyperventilation. Our outer world is simply changing faster than the ability of our inner world to process it all. That is why the modern learner is overwhelmed, distracted and impatient.

Also, we have always tended to surround ourselves with like-minded people. Digital technology reflects this phenomenon. Left on its own, our technology encourages us to stay in our fishbowl. If you choose to live too narrowly, the machine can help you. If we mindlessly surf the Net, algorithms customized to our preferences perpetuate our unconscious biases. This dynamic contributes to polarizing people and reinforces the divisions among us.

Thinking big is the best way to navigate this ever-shrinking 280-character universe. But that is a conscious choice only you can make for yourself. You must become your own editor. The Internet is a big feedback loop that you can train to expand your horizon.

- Make a conscious decision to subscribe to both sides of an issue. Get Google Alerts for both sides of an argument.
- Read (and click on links) across disciplines, across industries, and include fiction.
- Pursue fresh ideas. Actively search for sources of information that will help you grow and develop.
- Ask others from different persuasions for alternative perspectives and suggestions.

## Leverage Your Personal Ecosystem

What's your #1 personal asset? Your skills? Your job? Your ambition? Your looks? Your mind? None of the above. Your greatest asset is your personal ecosystem. Who we know and how we connect to people in our personal ecosystems provide the strongest foundations and advantages in life and business.

To help you think big, you need to create a perpetual motion machine of ideas, energy and relationships to achieve your goals. You can only do this with a high-functioning personal ecosystem. Our sharing economy, powered by technology, is connecting people all over the world. Those who have personal power to make things happen — the networkers and collaborators — are the ones who will get ahead.

Think of yourself, your reputation, as a brand, like Coca-Cola, Land's End or Nike. We are all entrepreneurs, leading the brand of "You" — complete with our personal values and career aspirations, intellectual and emotional assets, and unique market differentiators. The key is to manage your career as if it were a startup business. Like entrepreneurs, we must invest in ourselves and take our product to market.

**Promote your personal brand, virtually and in person**. Communicate your passions, values and strengths. Don't be afraid to share your real self. Stay in touch and top of mind.

**Choose to share what you know**. Don't be shy or protective about giving information away. This helps others and builds trust. The more you share, the more people will share with you.

**Get connected**. Open your eyes. Your network is all around you. See each person as a gateway to new connections. Use technology to connect. But then meet in person to discuss shared life and business interests.

## Develop Your Google Mind

The need to learn faster, expand our minds and rewire our brains for growth is the personal and economic imperative for living in the 21st century. To apply a simplistic metaphor, we need to function more like a Swiss Army knife, rather than just a corkscrew or a carving utensil. Organizations are asking their people to work in expanding jobs, pushing them to learn outside of their proficiencies. More and more of these jobs require a combined set of skills, while the half-life of our knowledge and skills is shrinking quickly. The real challenge today is to stay relevant — to learn how to learn.

That's where the Google mind comes in. Curiosity, imagination and creativity are the core drivers to 21st-century learning. Just like Google's search engine, our mind needs to continuously refresh itself. With a Google mind, new insights are created, which expands our possibilities.

When you encounter something new, your brain tries to fit it into the world you already know. By adding more connections and associations, you expand your understanding. This, in turn, emboldens your creativity. Active curiosity strengthens your brain's wiring. The opposite is also true. If you do not stretch your brain, certain regions begin to atrophy. This is the principle behind the "use it or lose it" slogan.

Cultivate a beginner's mind. Reach back to your younger days, when you were most open and eager to learn. Remind yourself how you felt, the pleasure you experienced of learning something new, having an "Ah-ha" moment, or the excitement of sharing the moment with others. Keep those feelings top of mind. They will help you find motivation (when you're not feeling it) to get unstuck.

Activate the search engine of your mind. Tap into your curiosity by taking the time out of your busy days to be curious — stop and wonder for a minute, listen to a podcast, go searching on the web. Make curiosity part of your routine.

### "And" Is the New "Or"

A high-altitude mountaineer climbs the summit of Mount Everest carrying something that will surprise you. Aside from filling his pack with essentials like bottled oxygen, ice axes and high-calorie food, he carries a bottle full of little blue pills. That's right, Viagra. Mountaineers experience far fewer cases of frostbite or altitude sickness if they've taken Viagra before entering the "death zone" at the top of Everest.

The history of Viagra is a case study in unexpected discoveries and applications. Researchers were trying to solve the problem of poor oxygen transportation in the body that exacerbated cardiovascular diseases. In the process, they discovered Viagra. Without thinking big and exploring multiple uses, Viagra researchers would have produced a failed drug instead of one that is helping millions of people around the world.

A complex world requires a complex mind. Conscious people excel at "both/and" thinking. They broaden their perspective and create more choices by holding opposing ideas in their heads at the same time.

Approach challenges as paradoxes. Problems are to be solved; paradoxes are to be managed. In a complex world, we need to deal with paradoxes with a "more than one right answer" mindset.

Look for the "both/and" when making decisions. By getting the benefit of opposing viewpoints, you generally will arrive at a better decision.

## Get Real With Your Accelerators and Hijackers

To get real means to become honest and intentional in your life. It's about learning how to transform yourself and shaping the environment around you. If you can learn how to create the change you desire, you will thrive in a disruptive and accelerating world.

### Feed Your Accelerators

Accelerators drive us forward. They activate positive energy and support us to move across the gap. The more aware we are of our accelerators, the more we can use them to activate change.

What is needed to create real change in our lives and inside organizations is to raise awareness about what accelerates us forward. Examples could include our hope and optimism, confidence and generosity, or focus and practice.

Let's look at five common accelerators in more detail:

**Courage**. Courage is not the absence of fear. Rather, courage is moving forward in spite of your fear. Being courageous means practicing grit and persistence to face difficult situations with grace and dignity. Courage is not something you are born with. You need to practice being courageous so that it will be there for you when the going gets tough.

How would you show up and what would you be doing if you were more courageous? Who do you admire who demonstrated great courage? What could you emulate about them? How could practicing courage help you to thrive in uncertain times?

**Drive**. Drive is having and showing the motivation and commitment to achieve your goals in life. Drive is a go-to accelerator for leaders. Success comes from a combination of factors — from character and talent to ambition and practice. Drive is the common fuel that moves us forward.

**Practice**. Change requires focus, attention, repetition and practice — deliberate practice! All great performers — in sports, music, entertainment and, yes, leadership — practice intensely. Experts are made, not born.

The key is to focus. Our mind has a tendency to get distracted when bombarded with lots of external stimulation. Deliberate practice is about challenging yourself slightly above your competency level, repeating yourself and getting real time feedback.

**Resilience**. Resilience is being able to recover quickly from setbacks and adversities. You are much more resilient than you think. Resilience is like a muscle that must be exercised. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes.

Ask yourself, "When was the last time I fell down and got up?" "What did I say to myself?" "How do I consciously maintain my resilience in the moment?" "In a disruptive environment, what can help me get up more quickly?"

**Vulnerability**. In the eyes of others, you are more likeable, more trustworthy and more authentic when you

allow yourself to be vulnerable. Really. It sounds very counterintuitive, but being willing to accept and show your uncertainty or weaknesses is your strength.

Many people, especially men, run away from or work hard to hide their vulnerability by never showing their emotions, weaknesses or mistakes. But people are hungry to be with real people who expose themselves emotionally and show up as real human beings.

In what way will facing vulnerability bring you release, strength, truth and peace of mind? What weaknesses can you accept and share with others? How would doing this make you feel?

### Befriend Your Hijackers

In a disruptive and accelerating world, we are all vulnerable to being hijacked. Just about anything can kick us off center — disruptors and distractions, wanting to escape and ignoring reality, getting lost in our emotions and being blinded by our thoughts. Wherever we turn, our hijackers are lurking just under the surface.

Hijackers function a lot like Homer's sirens. We are easily lured by them and end up being tossed on the rocks. When we stop to look around, we notice our hijackers are controlling us versus us controlling them. We undermine our best selves and weaken our credibility and our leadership.

Let's look at five common hijackers:

**Self-criticism**. Are you hard on yourself? Do you criticize yourself and everything you do? Do you always look for ways you were responsible for a problem? These are common attributes of self-critical people. People who are hijacked by self-criticality have trouble expressing their full power in the world and push people away by their poor self-esteem.

Notice when you are self-critical. What triggers these thoughts? What other thoughts could you replace them with? Find the real reason for your self-criticism. What is it that you are afraid will happen? How realistic is that?

**Cynicism**. In a world of mistrust and "alternative facts," cynicism becomes a popular commodity. Doubting others and questioning people's motives becomes the norm. Everyday cynicism grinds you down and can sap your energy and joy. It is the primary indicator of burnout at work. What lies behind your cynicism? Is it your personality or a long history of disengagement? Might you be facing reduced resilience and/or burnout? What are you doing to nurture yourself?

**Being too controlling**. As the world gets more uncertain, the less control we have over it. Yet, in a strange way, the less control we have, the more we want to grasp for it. The more we grasp, the less control we actually have.

What is the difference for you between influencing and controlling? Where is the line? How do you distinguish between these? If you could dial this hijacker down, what would your actions look like?

**Aloofness**. People who are aloof create a feeling that they don't care about others, causing both separation and alienation. They generate feelings of contempt, and this makes others feel inadequate. Generally, this hijacker is driven by the fear of intimacy and human connection. Aloof people are distant and detached without even knowing it.

How might this hijacker constrain your career if you don't address it in our connected world? Who do you feel closest to at work? How did you make that happen? What can you take from this experience and apply to others?

**Hypercompetitiveness**. Healthy competition fuels our energy and accelerates performance. But when the need to win takes precedence over everything else, we can lose ourselves, our friends and our opportunities.

What effect does this hijacker have on your life and leadership? When it intrudes, how does it take over? How might you stop that? What will you do differently? And what will the payback of that be?

## Step Up to Your Highest Potential

Stepping up is about leadership and action. Many of us approach the world too cautiously, too timidly, too small. We fail to unleash our personal power, which is central to bold leadership. When we step up, we catapult ourselves into a much bigger version of ourselves.

Everyone today must be a transformational leader. Whether a web designer pushing the envelope on design, a sales manager finding new customers in unusual places, a government official streamlining bureaucracy, or a global executive bringing new solutions to Europe, we must all be champions of change.

### Live Your Higher Purpose

An irony of human life is that we all possess a higher purpose, yet many of us have no idea what it is. Our minds and bodies are intended for more than merely survival — they are vessels for deep social and emotional drives that give us meaning.

Ultimately, purpose is the connection between what we do and why we do it. Indeed, surveys show that three out of four executives report their principal driver in life is the

belief that their work has purpose and meaning. It's about being bold and stepping up. If we want to be conscious people, we really need to personify and champion our purpose. So, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I love doing and what am I passionate about?
- When do I feel most alive?
- What are my natural talents and skills?
- What do others say are my special abilities and qualities?
- What values am I most committed to and when do I feel best about myself?
- What would I change in the world if I could?

## Build a Shared Consciousness

What makes humans stand out is our capacity to be aware of our connections. True connectedness is based on shared consciousness — a belief that we need one another to excel and are stronger together than apart.

There are three essential behaviors needed to build shared consciousness: show up and be real, make and keep commitments, and make "we" your highest priority.

**Show up and be real**. Showing up involves the obvious: your physical presence, body language, tone of voice, what you say and do. It also means being mentally present and invested in others and what is going on around you. Being your real self means you share your thoughts and feelings, and you have the courage to expose yourself psychologically.

**Make and keep commitments**. People are hungry to be led by real people — leaders who are comfortable in their own skin. But it's the trust between people that holds everything together. Trust is the cornerstone for every great family, team and organization. Be credible, dependable, predictable and emotionally safe.

**Make "we" your highest priority**. Our accelerating world is quickly leaving the big "I" behind. Research on connections shows that people with larger and more diversified personal networks are higher performers; they get promoted earlier and are considered better leaders. They are successful because of their ability to energize people and attract high performers, raising the performance of the entire group.

Organizations of tomorrow will be concentric circles of interconnected relationships. Shared consciousness will be the glue that holds the community together.

## Leave a Legacy

Most people think of legacy as an altruistic celebration of self rather than what it could be, a positive contribution to the world.

We hope our life matters. It's only human to want to be remembered and recognized. Legacy evokes pride, joy, a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Our meaning comes from working toward something and giving something away. Only you can author your life and be your own human story.

Yet, we need to remember that we are building a legacy by every choice we make. Ours is not a legacy in waiting; it's a work in progress.

Conscious people see life in context and know what's important. They are leaving a legacy in every moment, every interaction, every day, to actively create a new and better world.

Very few of us get the chance to leave footprints on the moon or build a pyramid or create a company like Apple. Yet all of us can create a legacy that is just as meaningful. The real treasures we leave behind are when we take a new job, build a great team, mentor a colleague, care for an aging parent or volunteer in the community. It's the ethical choices we make, the artistic creations we produce, and the little acts we perform to protect the environment.

Conscious people deeply understand this. They know they can shape how the world sees them today and how they might be remembered tomorrow.

It's up to you to carve your legacy not in stone but in the hearts and minds of the people you have touched.


### MORE SV CONTENT ON LEADERSHIP

**Summary: *What Happens Now?* by Mark D. Nevins, John Hillen.** *What Happens Now?* shows leaders how to reinvent themselves in order to attain personal growth and organizational success by inspiring people, nurturing relationships, energizing teams, grooming successors and influencing stakeholders.

**Webinar: *How to Integrate Brand and Culture to Power Your Company* by Denise Lee Yohn.** In this Soundview Live webinar, Denise Lee Yohn provides a roadmap for increasing competitiveness, creating measurable value for customers and employees, and future-proofing their business.

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# Conscious

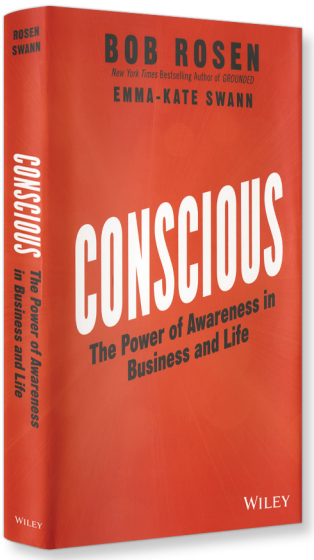
Bob Rosen and Emma-Kate Swann

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Leadership

# Conscious

## The Power of Awareness in Business and in Life




by Bob Rosen
and Emma-Kate Swann

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Our world is changing faster than our ability to adapt. Ambushed by speed, complexity and uncertainty, many of us are unprepared for this acceleration. We act on autopilot as new challenges confront us. We are too reactive to problems and miss out on opportunities. We get hijacked by conflicting values and polarizing relationships. We face uncertainty with fear and mistrust. Stress and burnout are pervasive as many of us do not perform up to our potential.

*Conscious* is our wake-up call — to be aware, awake and accountable. Nothing is more important than understanding ourselves, our relationships and our surroundings. Being conscious helps us think deeper, learn faster and collaborate better. Authors Bob Rosen and Emma-Kate Swann reveal that the more conscious we are, the faster we adapt and the higher performing we become. Being conscious is the new smart.

*Conscious* is your personal roadmap through transformation, helping you adapt and accelerate into the future. Why not be the one with your headlights on while others are driving in the dark?

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why being conscious is the new smart.
- To know yourself honestly and discover your innate wisdom.
- To combat tunnel vision and develop a "Google mind."
- To live your higher purpose and build a shared consciousness.
- The true meaning of legacy and how to act on it.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **CONSCIOUS**

**by Bob Rosen and Emma-Kate Swann**

**The authors:** Bob Rosen, PhD, is a trusted CEO adviser, organizational psychologist and best-selling author. He founded Healthy Companies International 30 years ago with the singular goal of helping executives achieve their leadership potential. Emma-Kate Swann is an organizational psychologist and executive coach and is vice president of leadership and transformation at Healthy Companies International. Her mission is to build communities of conscious leaders to maximize their performance and create sustainable, healthy organizational cultures.

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## Conscious Is the New Smart

### The Wild, Wireless World

As humans, we find ourselves living at a critical inflection point in our history. Everything is changing around us, from technology and demographics, to geopolitics and climate, to lifestyles and marriages, and the list goes on. Our challenge is that the world is changing faster than our ability to adapt.

Only you can embrace these changes and adapt into the future. Lifting your gaze outside yourself while looking inward to remove the roots of resistance is how you become more conscious. With just enough urgency, resilience and curiosity, you can activate your mind to adapt. This requires transforming yourself in an increasingly disruptive and accelerating world.

Let's look at the six main disruptors we experience every day:

1. **Speed:** The pace of life is escalating, and it doesn't appear to be slowing down any time soon. This forces us to see, think, feel and act faster.
2. **Uncertainty:** Stability is an illusion, and uncertainty is reality. We want to believe that we will find comfort in the predictable, but it doesn't exist.
3. **Complexity:** Complexity is part of the DNA of the modern world.
4. **Technology:** As a powerful disruptor, technology is both our liberator and our slayer.
5. **Competition:** How do we find purpose and meaning in a world of powerful competitive urges?
6. **Globalization:** How do we succeed individually while thriving as one global planet and society?

How you respond to these forces can be energizing and create unlimited opportunities, or they can be demoralizing and sabotage our best efforts.

### Conscious Is the New Smart

In an age of acceleration, being aware is your single most important asset. It helps you stay agile in a frenetic world. It keeps you curious as the world becomes more uncertain and complex. And it helps you stay authentic and generous as your relationships get bumpier.

Being aware occurs at three levels of introspection:

**Aware of yourself**. This refers to your own understanding about who you are — how you see, think and feel; what motivates your actions; and how you impact other people.

**Aware of others**. This refers to your insights about other people, what motivates them and makes them tick, and how their actions affect you and others.

**Aware of your environment**. This refers to your understanding of life's situations and circumstances — the organizational, community and societal forces that affect you every day.

We need a new approach to living and leading. Being conscious is the new smart. By knowing who you are and staying committed to developing yourself, you can develop the confidence and bearing to effectively navigate in uncertain times.

### The Path to Being Conscious

Conscious people stay awake and aware of their own personal power while accepting the uncertainty of life. By living in an evolved conscious state, you can travel into the unknown, keep the bigger picture in mind and recognize the natural impermanence of life.

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Here's the new road map to guide you through uncertainty and change — to help you adapt, transform and accelerate into the future; to prepare you for the changing times; to expand your potential and performance.

Research has found that the most successful people and leaders practice these four steps:

1. **Go deep — harnessing the power of introspection**. Learn how to get to know who you are, where you come from and why you act the way you do.
2. **Think big — getting curious and adaptive**. Explore how to deal with complexity and paradox.
3. **Get real — being honest and intentional**. Get real about your accelerators and hijackers. It is the best way to become more honest and intentional in leadership and life.
4. **Step up — acting boldly and responsibly**. Step up to your highest potential. Learn what a conscious leader looks like — how to champion your higher purpose, stretch people in constructive ways and be generous in your relationships.

## Go Deep to Discover Your Inner Self

The purpose of going deep is to take off your blinkers and eliminate what is holding you back. What's in it for you? Being more aware of yourself and others. Living up to your potential. Coping with the speed and uncertainty of change. Turning knowledge into wisdom.

A deeper mind enables us to be more broad-minded and less shackled by outdated assumptions about the world. Going deeper helps us access more positive emotions, by living with more hope, empathy, trust and generosity. It also helps us to make deeper connections with others and frees us to embrace new ideas and solve even bigger challenges.

### Who Is That Person in the Mirror?

When we look at ourselves in the mirror and reflect on who we are, some of us only see what we don't want to see: imperfections, insecurities and weaknesses. Others of us look into the glass and only see our idealized versions of ourselves: filled with wisdom, beauty and morality. Neither perspective takes you to the whole truth. For your whole story to emerge, you need to look deep into the mirror and become self-aware.

In the fast, disruptive world, it is too easy to lose our center and become vulnerable to the accelerations around us. If we don't know what is core within us, we are easily blown around by the winds of change. The key is to get centered, to get to know ourselves and to accept who we are trying to be.

To discover your real self, it's important to take a 360 approach to self-awareness: to look at yourself, others and your surroundings.

- Reflect on who you are and who you aspire to be — your values, passions and purpose.
- Seek feedback from family, friends and colleagues about how you are showing up in the world.
- Notice how your surroundings (challenges/opportunities/organization) are affecting you.

As we enter the cruel, crazy world, it doesn't take long, if we are lucky, to learn about what it will take to be successful to be our best selves. We immediately bump into three needs that are essential for getting ahead in life: our need for security, our need for acceptance and our need for control.

The need for security is about feeling safe and protected in the world. The need for acceptance is based on our desire to be loved and connected to others. The need for control is about shaping and influencing our own destiny.

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### Discover Your Innate Wisdom

Part of being human is having innate capacity, an innate wisdom. We each have a natural intelligence, a genuine sense and sensibility, a fundamental sanity. Minds are naturally curious; hearts are naturally compassionate. What stands between us and our innate wisdom is the tough, cruel world we live and work in.

There is a wellspring of wisdom in each of us. And it's up to us to find and awaken it. How do you do this? You open your heart and you open your mind. An open heart fuels the fire: It enables us to be emotionally honest, compassionate and joyful. An open mind shines a light: It enables us to be self-aware and curious, practical and relevant. An open

mind and an open heart are both expressions of the better angels of our nature — principally, love.

There are four ways we express love:

1. **Love of purpose** — devoting ourselves to a greater purpose.
2. **Love of accomplishment** — having a desire to achieve.
3. **Love of others** — showing concern and care for those in your personal ecosystem.
4. **Love of yourself** — showing compassion for yourself.

Love is foundational, for sure. Yet in a bumpy, accelerating world, you must also build a strong sense of self to protect against the arrows on the streets. You must learn to exercise your inner resources: grit, self-control, willpower and self-compassion.

Our innate wisdom is based on a simple dilemma — live in love or live in fear. You choose each moment of every day. With an open mind and heart, you can be naturally authentic, joyful, forgiving and grateful.

### Discomfort Is the New Immunization

When you feel discomfort, don't shy away from the heat. Instead, walk intentionally across the hot coals. Like physical pain, discomfort serves a critical role for alerting you to what needs to be accepted, changed or avoided. You will be a more agile and resilient person if you make friends with the ups and downs of life.

You are far more capable of handling discomfort than you probably believe. Humans have a real capacity to transform discomfort into positive energy and momentum for change. The more conscious you are with your discomfort, the more seamless this immunization process will be. Most important, you have the power to learn from the bumps in your work and life and not be ruled by them.

An ancient Buddhist parable in the Sallatha Sutra explains that pain comes in two parts. The first arrow is the initial pain, such as a failure, rejection, loss or a simple backache. The second arrow is self-inflicted pain, caused by the story we tell ourselves about the situation.

The Buddha taught that there is no relief from the first arrow. It hurts and we must accept that. It's what we do with the second arrow that matters. Conscious people embrace discomfort by acknowledging it — by allowing negative emotions to arise, flow through you, like a wave rising and falling. If we accept the reality of the first arrow, we don't need to subject ourselves to the second arrow.

Pain is part of being human; suffering is self-imposed, and interferes with our ability to adapt to change. Conscious people accept that reality and avoid the suffering of the second arrow.

### Your Roots of Conscious Living

We all have the internal tools available to keep our feet on the ground while striving to achieve our potential. They are our roots for conscious living: how you live (physical), how you feel (emotional), how you think (intellectual), how you interact (social), how you perform (vocational) and how you see the world (spiritual). Our roots work together to nourish our mind and our heart. They help us thrive in the pressure cooker we often find ourselves in.

**Physical roots** include mind/body awareness — understanding how your body and mind work in tandem helps you manage health risks and rebound quickly from adversity, injury or illness; energy management; peak performance — practicing healthy habits every day boosts your ability to manage stress, enjoy work-life balance, tackle challenges head-on and optimize your health.

**Emotional roots** include self-awareness; positive emotions — demonstrating emotions like hope, compassion, joy, empathy, generosity, forgiveness and love is what sets the most effective people apart from their less successful counterparts; and resilience.

**Intellectual roots** include having deep curiosity; an adaptive mindset; and paradoxical thinking — evaluating ideas from all angles and considering seemingly contradictory concepts enables you to grasp complexity and make well-informed decisions.

**Social roots** include authenticity — being your true self in all situations and aligning your thoughts, words and actions; having mutually rewarding relationships; and nourishing communities.

**Vocational roots** include focusing on a meaningful calling; personal mastery — playing to your strengths and overcoming your weaknesses allows you to stretch yourself and perform your best; and having a drive to succeed.

**Spiritual roots** means living with a higher purpose; global connectedness; and generosity of spirit.

## Think Big to See a World of Possibilities

To think big will challenge you to look outside yourself to see the world clearly — to expand your mind, to inspire your curiosity and to tap into your creativity. To see the future as a world of possibility, you first need to overcome the pitfalls of being too narrow.

## A 280-Character Universe

Digital technology is the great human disruptor of our time. Unlimited global access to information allows anyone to learn just about anything, anywhere, at any time.

The trouble is more and better access to knowledge is no guarantee that we can make sense of it all. A plethora of information can make our mind feel as if it's in a constant state of hyperventilation. Our outer world is simply changing faster than the ability of our inner world to process it all. That is why the modern learner is overwhelmed, distracted and impatient.

Also, we have always tended to surround ourselves with like-minded people. Digital technology reflects this phenomenon. Left on its own, our technology encourages us to stay in our fishbowl. If you choose to live too narrowly, the machine can help you. If we mindlessly surf the Net, algorithms customized to our preferences perpetuate our unconscious biases. This dynamic contributes to polarizing people and reinforces the divisions among us.

Thinking big is the best way to navigate this ever-shrinking 280-character universe. But that is a conscious choice only you can make for yourself. You must become your own editor. The Internet is a big feedback loop that you can train to expand your horizon.

- Make a conscious decision to subscribe to both sides of an issue. Get Google Alerts for both sides of an argument.
- Read (and click on links) across disciplines, across industries, and include fiction.
- Pursue fresh ideas. Actively search for sources of information that will help you grow and develop.
- Ask others from different persuasions for alternative perspectives and suggestions.

## Leverage Your Personal Ecosystem

What's your #1 personal asset? Your skills? Your job? Your ambition? Your looks? Your mind? None of the above. Your greatest asset is your personal ecosystem. Who we know and how we connect to people in our personal ecosystems provide the strongest foundations and advantages in life and business.

To help you think big, you need to create a perpetual motion machine of ideas, energy and relationships to achieve your goals. You can only do this with a high-functioning personal ecosystem. Our sharing economy, powered by technology, is connecting people all over the world. Those who have personal power to make things happen — the networkers and collaborators — are the ones who will get ahead.

Think of yourself, your reputation, as a brand, like Coca-Cola, Land's End or Nike. We are all entrepreneurs, leading the brand of "You" — complete with our personal values and career aspirations, intellectual and emotional assets, and unique market differentiators. The key is to manage your career as if it were a startup business. Like entrepreneurs, we must invest in ourselves and take our product to market.

**Promote your personal brand, virtually and in person**. Communicate your passions, values and strengths. Don't be afraid to share your real self. Stay in touch and top of mind.

**Choose to share what you know**. Don't be shy or protective about giving information away. This helps others and builds trust. The more you share, the more people will share with you.

**Get connected**. Open your eyes. Your network is all around you. See each person as a gateway to new connections. Use technology to connect. But then meet in person to discuss shared life and business interests.

## Develop Your Google Mind

The need to learn faster, expand our minds and rewire our brains for growth is the personal and economic imperative for living in the 21st century. To apply a simplistic metaphor, we need to function more like a Swiss Army knife, rather than just a corkscrew or a carving utensil. Organizations are asking their people to work in expanding jobs, pushing them to learn outside of their proficiencies. More and more of these jobs require a combined set of skills, while the half-life of our knowledge and skills is shrinking quickly. The real challenge today is to stay relevant — to learn how to learn.

That's where the Google mind comes in. Curiosity, imagination and creativity are the core drivers to 21st-century learning. Just like Google's search engine, our mind needs to continuously refresh itself. With a Google mind, new insights are created, which expands our possibilities.

When you encounter something new, your brain tries to fit it into the world you already know. By adding more connections and associations, you expand your understanding. This, in turn, emboldens your creativity. Active curiosity strengthens your brain's wiring. The opposite is also true. If you do not stretch your brain, certain regions begin to atrophy. This is the principle behind the "use it or lose it" slogan.

Cultivate a beginner's mind. Reach back to your younger days, when you were most open and eager to learn. Remind yourself how you felt, the pleasure you experienced of learning something new, having an "Ah-ha" moment, or the excitement of sharing the moment with others. Keep those feelings top of mind. They will help you find motivation (when you're not feeling it) to get unstuck.

Activate the search engine of your mind. Tap into your curiosity by taking the time out of your busy days to be curious — stop and wonder for a minute, listen to a podcast, go searching on the web. Make curiosity part of your routine.

### "And" Is the New "Or"

A high-altitude mountaineer climbs the summit of Mount Everest carrying something that will surprise you. Aside from filling his pack with essentials like bottled oxygen, ice axes and high-calorie food, he carries a bottle full of little blue pills. That's right, Viagra. Mountaineers experience far fewer cases of frostbite or altitude sickness if they've taken Viagra before entering the "death zone" at the top of Everest.

The history of Viagra is a case study in unexpected discoveries and applications. Researchers were trying to solve the problem of poor oxygen transportation in the body that exacerbated cardiovascular diseases. In the process, they discovered Viagra. Without thinking big and exploring multiple uses, Viagra researchers would have produced a failed drug instead of one that is helping millions of people around the world.

A complex world requires a complex mind. Conscious people excel at "both/and" thinking. They broaden their perspective and create more choices by holding opposing ideas in their heads at the same time.

Approach challenges as paradoxes. Problems are to be solved; paradoxes are to be managed. In a complex world, we need to deal with paradoxes with a "more than one right answer" mindset.

Look for the "both/and" when making decisions. By getting the benefit of opposing viewpoints, you generally will arrive at a better decision.

## Get Real With Your Accelerators and Hijackers

To get real means to become honest and intentional in your life. It's about learning how to transform yourself and shaping the environment around you. If you can learn how to create the change you desire, you will thrive in a disruptive and accelerating world.

### Feed Your Accelerators

Accelerators drive us forward. They activate positive energy and support us to move across the gap. The more aware we are of our accelerators, the more we can use them to activate change.

What is needed to create real change in our lives and inside organizations is to raise awareness about what accelerates us forward. Examples could include our hope and optimism, confidence and generosity, or focus and practice.

Let's look at five common accelerators in more detail:

**Courage**. Courage is not the absence of fear. Rather, courage is moving forward in spite of your fear. Being courageous means practicing grit and persistence to face difficult situations with grace and dignity. Courage is not something you are born with. You need to practice being courageous so that it will be there for you when the going gets tough.

How would you show up and what would you be doing if you were more courageous? Who do you admire who demonstrated great courage? What could you emulate about them? How could practicing courage help you to thrive in uncertain times?

**Drive**. Drive is having and showing the motivation and commitment to achieve your goals in life. Drive is a go-to accelerator for leaders. Success comes from a combination of factors — from character and talent to ambition and practice. Drive is the common fuel that moves us forward.

**Practice**. Change requires focus, attention, repetition and practice — deliberate practice! All great performers — in sports, music, entertainment and, yes, leadership — practice intensely. Experts are made, not born.

The key is to focus. Our mind has a tendency to get distracted when bombarded with lots of external stimulation. Deliberate practice is about challenging yourself slightly above your competency level, repeating yourself and getting real time feedback.

**Resilience**. Resilience is being able to recover quickly from setbacks and adversities. You are much more resilient than you think. Resilience is like a muscle that must be exercised. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes.

Ask yourself, "When was the last time I fell down and got up?" "What did I say to myself?" "How do I consciously maintain my resilience in the moment?" "In a disruptive environment, what can help me get up more quickly?"

**Vulnerability**. In the eyes of others, you are more likeable, more trustworthy and more authentic when you

allow yourself to be vulnerable. Really. It sounds very counterintuitive, but being willing to accept and show your uncertainty or weaknesses is your strength.

Many people, especially men, run away from or work hard to hide their vulnerability by never showing their emotions, weaknesses or mistakes. But people are hungry to be with real people who expose themselves emotionally and show up as real human beings.

In what way will facing vulnerability bring you release, strength, truth and peace of mind? What weaknesses can you accept and share with others? How would doing this make you feel?

### Befriend Your Hijackers

In a disruptive and accelerating world, we are all vulnerable to being hijacked. Just about anything can kick us off center — disruptors and distractions, wanting to escape and ignoring reality, getting lost in our emotions and being blinded by our thoughts. Wherever we turn, our hijackers are lurking just under the surface.

Hijackers function a lot like Homer's sirens. We are easily lured by them and end up being tossed on the rocks. When we stop to look around, we notice our hijackers are controlling us versus us controlling them. We undermine our best selves and weaken our credibility and our leadership.

Let's look at five common hijackers:

**Self-criticism**. Are you hard on yourself? Do you criticize yourself and everything you do? Do you always look for ways you were responsible for a problem? These are common attributes of self-critical people. People who are hijacked by self-criticality have trouble expressing their full power in the world and push people away by their poor self-esteem.

Notice when you are self-critical. What triggers these thoughts? What other thoughts could you replace them with? Find the real reason for your self-criticism. What is it that you are afraid will happen? How realistic is that?

**Cynicism**. In a world of mistrust and "alternative facts," cynicism becomes a popular commodity. Doubting others and questioning people's motives becomes the norm. Everyday cynicism grinds you down and can sap your energy and joy. It is the primary indicator of burnout at work. What lies behind your cynicism? Is it your personality or a long history of disengagement? Might you be facing reduced resilience and/or burnout? What are you doing to nurture yourself?

**Being too controlling**. As the world gets more uncertain, the less control we have over it. Yet, in a strange way, the less control we have, the more we want to grasp for it. The more we grasp, the less control we actually have.

What is the difference for you between influencing and controlling? Where is the line? How do you distinguish between these? If you could dial this hijacker down, what would your actions look like?

**Aloofness**. People who are aloof create a feeling that they don't care about others, causing both separation and alienation. They generate feelings of contempt, and this makes others feel inadequate. Generally, this hijacker is driven by the fear of intimacy and human connection. Aloof people are distant and detached without even knowing it.

How might this hijacker constrain your career if you don't address it in our connected world? Who do you feel closest to at work? How did you make that happen? What can you take from this experience and apply to others?

**Hypercompetitiveness**. Healthy competition fuels our energy and accelerates performance. But when the need to win takes precedence over everything else, we can lose ourselves, our friends and our opportunities.

What effect does this hijacker have on your life and leadership? When it intrudes, how does it take over? How might you stop that? What will you do differently? And what will the payback of that be?

## Step Up to Your Highest Potential

Stepping up is about leadership and action. Many of us approach the world too cautiously, too timidly, too small. We fail to unleash our personal power, which is central to bold leadership. When we step up, we catapult ourselves into a much bigger version of ourselves.

Everyone today must be a transformational leader. Whether a web designer pushing the envelope on design, a sales manager finding new customers in unusual places, a government official streamlining bureaucracy, or a global executive bringing new solutions to Europe, we must all be champions of change.

### Live Your Higher Purpose

An irony of human life is that we all possess a higher purpose, yet many of us have no idea what it is. Our minds and bodies are intended for more than merely survival — they are vessels for deep social and emotional drives that give us meaning.

Ultimately, purpose is the connection between what we do and why we do it. Indeed, surveys show that three out of four executives report their principal driver in life is the

belief that their work has purpose and meaning. It's about being bold and stepping up. If we want to be conscious people, we really need to personify and champion our purpose. So, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I love doing and what am I passionate about?
- When do I feel most alive?
- What are my natural talents and skills?
- What do others say are my special abilities and qualities?
- What values am I most committed to and when do I feel best about myself?
- What would I change in the world if I could?

## Build a Shared Consciousness

What makes humans stand out is our capacity to be aware of our connections. True connectedness is based on shared consciousness — a belief that we need one another to excel and are stronger together than apart.

There are three essential behaviors needed to build shared consciousness: show up and be real, make and keep commitments, and make "we" your highest priority.

**Show up and be real**. Showing up involves the obvious: your physical presence, body language, tone of voice, what you say and do. It also means being mentally present and invested in others and what is going on around you. Being your real self means you share your thoughts and feelings, and you have the courage to expose yourself psychologically.

**Make and keep commitments**. People are hungry to be led by real people — leaders who are comfortable in their own skin. But it's the trust between people that holds everything together. Trust is the cornerstone for every great family, team and organization. Be credible, dependable, predictable and emotionally safe.

**Make "we" your highest priority**. Our accelerating world is quickly leaving the big "I" behind. Research on connections shows that people with larger and more diversified personal networks are higher performers; they get promoted earlier and are considered better leaders. They are successful because of their ability to energize people and attract high performers, raising the performance of the entire group.

Organizations of tomorrow will be concentric circles of interconnected relationships. Shared consciousness will be the glue that holds the community together.

## Leave a Legacy

Most people think of legacy as an altruistic celebration of self rather than what it could be, a positive contribution to the world.

We hope our life matters. It's only human to want to be remembered and recognized. Legacy evokes pride, joy, a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Our meaning comes from working toward something and giving something away. Only you can author your life and be your own human story.

Yet, we need to remember that we are building a legacy by every choice we make. Ours is not a legacy in waiting; it's a work in progress.

Conscious people see life in context and know what's important. They are leaving a legacy in every moment, every interaction, every day, to actively create a new and better world.

Very few of us get the chance to leave footprints on the moon or build a pyramid or create a company like Apple. Yet all of us can create a legacy that is just as meaningful. The real treasures we leave behind are when we take a new job, build a great team, mentor a colleague, care for an aging parent or volunteer in the community. It's the ethical choices we make, the artistic creations we produce, and the little acts we perform to protect the environment.

Conscious people deeply understand this. They know they can shape how the world sees them today and how they might be remembered tomorrow.

It's up to you to carve your legacy not in stone but in the hearts and minds of the people you have touched.


### MORE SV CONTENT ON LEADERSHIP

**Summary: *What Happens Now?* by Mark D. Nevins, John Hillen.** *What Happens Now?* shows leaders how to reinvent themselves in order to attain personal growth and organizational success by inspiring people, nurturing relationships, energizing teams, grooming successors and influencing stakeholders.

**Webinar: *How to Integrate Brand and Culture to Power Your Company* by Denise Lee Yohn.** In this Soundview Live webinar, Denise Lee Yohn provides a roadmap for increasing competitiveness, creating measurable value for customers and employees, and future-proofing their business.

· Book 76 of 269 ·

# Conversational Intelligence

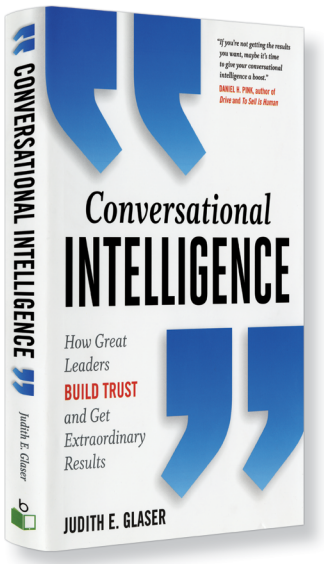
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# Conversational Intelligence

## How Great Leaders Build Trust and Get Extraordinary Results




by Judith E. Glaser

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The key to success in life and business is to become a master at Conversational Intelligence. It's not about how smart you are but how open you are to learn new and effective powerful conversational rituals that prime the brain for trust, partnership and mutual success. *Conversational Intelligence* translates the wealth of new insights coming out of neuroscience from across the globe and brings the science down to earth so people can understand and apply it in their everyday lives.

Author Judith Glaser presents a framework for knowing what kind of conversations trigger the lower, more primitive brain and what activates higher-level intelligences such as trust, integrity, empathy and good judgment. She helps us boost our Conversational Intelligence (C-IQ) to positively influence our neurochemistry, even in the moment; to express our inner thoughts and feelings to one another in ways that can strengthen relationships and success; and to influence the way we interpret reality, leading to extraordinary results.

*Conversational Intelligence* makes complex scientific material simple to understand and apply through a wealth of easy-to-use tools, examples, conversational rituals and practices for all levels of an organization. Glaser insists, "To get to the next level of greatness depends on the quality of our culture, which depends on the quality of our relationships, which depends on the quality of our conversations. Everything happens through conversations!"

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How different parts of the brain influence conversations.
- Tools and strategies for learning Conversational Intelligence and raising your C-IQ.
- How to create Level III conversations in your organization.
- The importance of trust for building conversations that lead to successful change.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **CONVERSATIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

**by Judith E. Glaser**

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## Introduction: Discovering a New Intelligence

Conversations are not what we think they are. We've grown up with a narrow view of conversations, thinking they are about talking, sharing information, telling people what to do, or telling others what's on our minds. We are now learning, through neurological and cognitive research, that a "conversation" goes deeper and is more robust than simple information sharing.

Conversations are dynamic, interactive and inclusive. They evolve and impact the way we connect, engage, interact and influence others, enabling us to shape reality, mindsets, events and outcomes in a collaborative way. Conversations have the power to move us from "power over" others to "power with" others, giving us the exquisite ability to get on the same page with our fellow humans and experience the same reality by bridging the reality gaps between "how you see things and how I see things."

Conversational Intelligence is what separates those who are successful from those who are not — in business, in relationships and even in marriages. By understanding how conversations trigger different parts of our brain and how they either catalyze or "freeze" our brains in protective patterns, you can develop the conversational skills that propel individuals, teams and organizations toward success. *Conversational Intelligence is learnable*, and it is necessary to build healthier, more resilient organizations in the face of change.

The most exciting work to learn is how to navigate the three levels of conversations: Level I — transactional (how to exchange data and information); Level II — positional (how to work with power and influence); and Level III — transformational (how to co-create the future for mutual success).

## PART I: CONVERSATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WHY WE NEED IT

## What We Can Learn from Our Worst Conversations

Conversations are multidimensional, not linear. What we *think,* what we *say*, what we *mean*, what others *hear*, and *how we feel about it afterward* are the key dimensions behind Conversational Intelligence. Though conversations are not simply "ask and tell" levels of discourse, we often treat them as though they are.

Conversations are the golden threads, albeit sometimes fragile ones, that keep us connected to others. And why is this important? Human beings have hardwired systems exquisitely designed to let us know where we stand with others; based on our quick read of a situation, our brains know whether we should operate in a protective mode or be open to sharing, discovery and influence.

At the moment we make contact with other people, biochemical reactions are triggered at every level of our bodies. Our heart responds in two ways — electrochemical and chemical. When we interact with others we have a biochemical or neurochemical response to the interaction, and we pick up electrical signals from others as well. As our bodies read a person's energy — which we pick up within 10 feet of the person — the process of connectivity begins.

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### The Push and Pull of Conversations

When we are out to win at all costs, we operate out of the part of the primitive brain called the amygdala. This part is hardwired with the well-developed instincts of fight, flight, freeze or appease that have evolved over millions of years. When we feel threatened, the amygdala activates the immediate impulses that ensure we survive. Our brains lock down, and we are no longer open to influence.

On the other side of the brain spectrum is the prefrontal cortex. This is the newest brain, and it enables us to build societies, have good judgment, be strategic, handle difficult conversations, and build and sustain trust. Yet when the amygdala picks up a threat, our conversations are subject to the lockdown, and we get more "stuck" in our point of view!

### Distrust Is the Road to Nowhere

No matter what we're doing in our professional lives, trust is the single most important element in the process I call "Creating WE," which is built on a level of trust that binds us together. Before we can interact openly with others we need to answer this question: Are you a friend or an enemy? This profound question is hardwired in us — it's been honed by evolution, and our lives have depended on answering the question correctly for millions of years.

Today, in business, our literal survival may not depend on toggling between friend or foe decisions from moment to moment, but our brains don't know that. To us, our livelihood may feel like a life-or-death issue. The moment we enter into a conversation, our brains map our "interaction patterns," and we read a great deal of information from the dynamics of the interaction. We know if the person is a "giver, taker or matcher." We know if we will be safe, if the person is friendly, or if she will harm us. We know whether we can trust him. All of this is hardwired into the way we process conversations, and this sensitivity can be called "vital instincts." They are the heartbeat behind our conversations.

## When We Lose Trust, We Lose Our Voice

Unfortunately, it's all too common for working relationships to sour over the issue of trust. Trust is not just the absence of distrust; the two take place in different parts of the brain. Distrust is signaled through the amygdala, and trust is signaled through the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is where we compare our expectations of what will happen (or what does happen) against reality. This is where we match our worldview with that of other people; where those views align, we feel the greatest trust.

While trust takes place in the prefrontal areas of the brain where we are assessing the credibility, intentions and predictability of a person's behavior in the future, distrust takes place in the lower brain, where we are assessing another person's threat level. When we engage with others and feel uncertainty about how to interpret the interaction, our orbitofrontal cortex (lower part) activates.

### The Power of One Word

The promising news is that if we learn to identify the signs of developing distrust before the amygdala is triggered, we can activate the higher-level brain functions in the executive brain, where empathy, judgment, and our more strategic social skills reside. By learning to read the signals sent by the amygdala and head them off, we become far more effective at embracing trust — and we become more conversationally intelligent. We can learn to sideline signals from the amygdala by

- Noticing how we react to threats — observing whether we go into "flight, fight, freeze or appease."
- Labeling our reaction as normal.
- Noticing if we always choose the same reaction to threat (flight, fight, freeze or appease) and noting how much the threat impacts us.
- Choosing an alternative way to react at the moment of contact (breathe in, breathe out; go into "discovery conversations"; share how you are feeling at the moment; stay calm and do nothing).
- Becoming more aware of our responses and realizing we can override our emotions and shift into other responses.
- Transforming fear into trust, which is the heart of Conversational Intelligence.

## Moving From Distrust to Trust

Life would be so simple if we had total control of what happens moment by moment in our lives. But the reality is life is full of unexpected events, and many trigger us at a deep and visceral level.

When we are confronted with a threatening situation — called an "amygdala hijack" — our brain floods with cortisol, a neurotransmitter that tells the brain to close down the executive functions, making them inaccessible even if the intention is there. But when we use our Conversational Intelligence skills, the hormone oxytocin

is released, among other neurotransmitters. Oxytocin is associated with bonding behaviors, and new research in neuroscience suggests that oxytocin may play a dominant role in the brain and the heart as a regulator of our need for social contact.

How can we activate oxytocin and trust even in the face of betrayal and distrust? One strategy is the TRUST Model, made up of five steps a leader can take to restore trust. Each step provides a way to signal our brains to move into higher levels of trust:

**Step 1 — Transparency:** Quell the amygdala by talking about the threats and fears that are standing in the way of building trust. Be open and communicate with others to share and quell threats. Open, candid and caring conversations send messages of trust.

**Step 2 — Relationship:** Extend the olive branch, even with people you see as foes. Connect and engage in building relationships. Extending trust sends messages of friendship that shift the energy toward appreciation.

**Step 3 — Understanding:** Invite people into the inner circle. Talk openly about needs and aspirations. Reframe and relabel uncomfortable conversations as opportunities to get to know what's on each other's minds. This moves us from states of distrust of others' intentions toward understanding and trusting each other.

**Step 4 — Shared Success:** Have conversations that focus on mutual success. Lower your attachment to being right, and shift the conversation from entrenchment to discovery. Weave deeper threads of trust into the relationship.

**Step 5 — Testing Assumptions and Telling the Truth:** Test perceptions and assumptions about reality. Focus on closing the gaps between what you expect and what you get with others. Step into each other's shoes, and see the world from the other person's perspectives — the highest level of trust that we humans are able to experience together.

## PART II: RAISING YOUR CONVERSATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

## Challenges of Navigating the Conversational Highway

Conversations are "rituals" we embed into our culture and our relationships and which give us a way to successfully structure our engagements with others. Conversational rituals can be I-centric, like persuading someone until she gives in or intimidating someone before a negotiation so he gives up more than he'd planned. Conversational rituals can also be WE-centric — like shaking hands to greet someone before a difficult conversation or making up after an argument.

While conversational rituals are designed to help us connect more fully with others, human beings have conversational blind spots. These are beliefs that get in the way of us connecting mind to mind with others, and where we have blind spots, we also have conflicts and breakdowns. Common conversational blind spots include assuming that others see what we see and think what we think; failing to realize that fear, trust and distrust changes how we see and interpret reality; and the inability to stand in each other's shoes when we are fearful and upset.

### Bridging Our Reality Gaps

Blind spots spring from reality gaps. To bridge the reality gap, a great conversational tool is the Conversational Dashboard. It enables you to recognize the quality of your interaction dynamics, the level of trust you and others are operating with, and the outcomes produced by each level of conversation. As you use the Conversational Dashboard, you can begin to eliminate Conversational Intelligence blind spots and engage in healthy conversations at Levels I, II and III.

**Level I: Transactional.** Conversations can be categorized as "Tell and Ask" interaction dynamics. People are exchanging information, updates and facts that help us align our realities or confirm we are on the same page. There is not a lot of trust.

**Level II: Positional.** Conversations are characterized by "Advocate and Inquire" interaction dynamics. I am advocating for what I want (not just telling you), and I am inquiring about your beliefs so I can influence you to my point of view. Trust is conditional.

**Level III: Transformational.** Conversations are marked by "Share and Discover" interaction dynamics. When I share first, my brain receives a cue that I will be vulnerable with you and that I will open up my inner thoughts, ideas and feelings. Others in the conversation receive the signal that you are willing to be influenced, that you care about them, and that they can trust you to experiment and innovate with them. As we share and discover, we become "mentors of the experiment," and we will be able to co-create with one another to achieve greater shared success — far beyond what we ever imagined.

## Bringing Conversations to Life

Too often, leaders become mired in one type of engagement, trying the same tactics again and again, hoping for different outcomes. I call getting stuck in Level I conversations the "Tell-Sell-Yell Syndrome." A leader

who realizes her team is not getting her message about the vision and mission of the company may "tell more," hoping that more information will make a difference. If telling more doesn't create the results she wants, the leader may "sell" her ideas to get people on board; when this doesn't work, she is inclined to "yell" to get results.

Yet employees don't want more "vision"; they want deeper engagement with leaders who can help them execute the vision. When those dynamics don't emerge, employees often go into protective behaviors, pulling back from engagement rather than stepping into it.

Just as we can become stuck at Level I, we can get stuck at Level II. In the case of Level II positional dynamics, we get neurochemically hooked on being right. This dynamic is about advocating and inquiring with the intention of influencing others to our point of view. We can actually get addicted to being right. When we are right (and others are wrong), our brain produces feel-good hormones. An addiction to being right causes many corporate cultures to become toxic. We see lots of "alpha dominance" and its corollary, people who are drummed into submission and lose their voice, then complain about it.

### Expanding What's Possible

Moving to Level III conversations allows us to release the power of true exchange with other human beings. To make sense of our reality, it is essential that we understand the value of *sharing and discovering*. When we shape the space for TRUST, we keep the doors open for deeper exploration and discovery to harvest a picture of shared success. To do this we need to shift into a Level III mindset: we must stay open and nonjudgmental, be willing to be influenced, and focus on listening with an open mind.

Organizations create transformation when they figure out how to move people forward from Level I or Level II into Level III transformational conversations.

## Priming for Level III Conversations

While intention is what someone wants to make happen or plans to accomplish, the impact involves the quality of the experience from the perspective of the receiver — and that impact may not correspond with what the communicator intended. When communicators monitor and align intention and impact successfully, people trust them more fully.

### Using Our Third Eye

When conversations trigger the primitive brain, we lose our executive functions. That means that the part of our brain that contains our ability to connect, empathize, judge courses of action, and come up with fresh ways of engaging with others is disconnected from our conversational ability. We no longer have access to that part of the brain, so we rely on the part that is active — our "fight, flight, freeze or appease" impulses.

The antidote for falling into permanent disconnection and distrust is to activate your Third Eye. Envision an eye in the middle of your forehead. This eye is where wisdom resides. This part of our forehead is where the executive brain also lives. The intention of this is to engage leaders in activating their prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that can reflect on what is happening from a neutral point of view, see other ways of viewing a situation, and choose alternatives that will serve their relationship better.

Trust lives in the prefrontal cortex, and engaging this part of our brain neutralizes threats and allows us to see alternatives in the moment, alternatives that have not been available before. Leaders who develop a Third Eye bring intention and impact together and adjust the conversation to create a more positive impact.

### Warm or Cold? The Choice is Yours

In preparation for important meetings, relationships, encounters and team sessions, there are things you can do to prime your brain for the best outcomes. Think of priming as a way of preparing the soil so you can establish a healthy garden. When you are with people with whom you have low levels of trust, you can raise the level neurochemically by shaking hands. When you reach out to shake hands, oxytocin is released, which triggers the brain to react, "This is a friend, not a foe."

Likewise, you can shift the outcome of a meeting by starting with a trust-building activity. Ask everyone in the room to identify the practices, or "rules," that would give this conversation and meeting the best outcome. Shape the space for trust and openness by sending the agenda ahead of time, rethinking the seating, and focusing on keeping conversations open, collaborative and non-oppositional.

## Conversational Agility: Reframing, Refocusing, Redirecting

At times, you may need to transform the conversational space so you and others can move forward together. This is when you draw upon transformative conversational skills such as reframing, refocusing and redirecting.

*Reframing* is a miraculous conversational tool for taking a difficult situation and turning it into an opportunity

for finding trust and common ground with someone. In reframing, you give the person you are talking with an opportunity to mentally take a break and think in a new way. *Refocusing* allows you to elevate people out of the place where they are stuck and point them toward another part of a larger topic where they can see connections they had not seen before. *Redirecting* helps a person move from a place of being stuck and emotionally bound to a place where she can see new opportunities.

### The Road Map for Conversational Agility

You can refocus your conversations to elevate the communication abilities of everyone involved, even when dealing with difficult subjects. I call this a Leadershift. Consider these five Leadershifts:

1. **Leadershift #1: From Fear to Transparency.** Making threats transparent and focusing on quelling fears shifts your neurochemistry. When fear emerges, have co-creating conversations with someone you trust. Ask the person to listen for opportunities to reduce the fear. Ask for help reframing the perceived threat and seeing it from a new perspective. Encourage conversations that promote transparency and trust.
2. **Leadershift #2: From Power to Relationship Building.** Refocus on relating to others. Reaching out to connect is vital to establishing trust. Decide on the core values that will guide your organization's actions and its agreements with and between leaders, employees, vendors and customers. Establish and practice rules of engagement that foster open, candid and caring conversations.
3. **Leadershift #3: From Uncertainty to Understanding.** To share views, perspectives and aspirations as a way of increasing understanding, listen to connect, not to reject. Ask for and listen to feedback from peers, employees, vendors, customers, competitors and others who may not agree with your perspectives and points of view. Ask "what if?" questions that open the doors to new ways of thinking without prejudging ideas that may be different from your own.
4. **Leadershift #4: From a Need to Be Right to Mapping Shared Success.** Step back from your position, and become curious about others' perspectives, knowledge and successes. This intentional shift releases dopamine, which creates curiosity in your brain. Initiate conversations about mutual success and what success looks like for each of us. Celebrate the successes large and small. Acknowledge the value of everyone on the team.
5. **Leadershift #5: From Groupthink to Group Cohesion and Partnering.** Step back from the conversation, and ask people to take time out to reflect on their decisions. Ask them to step aside from what they agreed upon to see if anything was left behind. This gives people permission to bring forward ideas that could benefit the whole group. This narrows the gaps and reframes them from "my idea" to "our idea."

## A Toolkit for Level III Conversations

The exercises in the Conversational Intelligence Toolkit are mental and conversational rituals that will help you deconstruct conversations and learn to reframe, refocus and redirect them. By using higher levels of conversational dynamics, you can move into higher levels of engagement as you learn to shape your interactions with others.

Often, we find ourselves in Level I transactional conversations in our day-to-day work. We update each other, pass along information necessary to do our jobs, and then move on to the next task. Our meetings can become transactional also, checking off to-do lists and not linking back with others until the next meeting. Later, we may discover that the takeaways we thought were shared by everyone were actually not aligned.

By bringing Level III conversational dynamics into our meetings, even in small ways, we can enhance each other's connectivity, insight, wisdom and shared view of success. We can also share our fears and concerns, sustaining a more transparent workplace so that we don't harbor fears and anxieties but rather harvest insights and wisdom.

### LEARN Exercise

With every meeting, major decision, conversation or even big organizational initiatives, you can enhance the levels of trust and decrease the levels of fear and distrust by doing an end-of-meeting activity. This activity gives everyone in the meeting a chance to exercise Level III dynamics and recalibrate their understanding of the meeting's content — it lets people share what they liked and didn't and create next steps that are meaningful for everyone.

Using the acronym LEARN, go around the room and ask people to speak to the letters of the word:

**L = Like:** What did you like most about this meeting?

**E = Excite:** What excited you the most?

**A = Anxiety:** What created the greatest anxiety?

**R = Reward:** What can we celebrate about the way we handled this meeting? Or, what do you now want to reframe, revision, redirect, restore, etc.?

**N = Need:** What are the next steps we need to take to stay on track?

This exercise also signals the amygdala to slow down and be quiet, and it allows people in the room to engage in the process of "coherence" or of getting in sync with others at the heart level. Heart-brain connection is very powerful and sends signals to the rest of the brain that all is well and we are okay with one another.

## PART III: GETTING TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF GREATNESS

## Leading with Trust: Laying the Foundation for Level III Interactions

Change is the nature of every successful company's journey. When the market shifts, successful companies need to be agile; they must be able to get in front of the curve and succeed time and again.

Change brings with it uncertainty, and uncertainty triggers fear. As leaders learn to reduce fear and increase trust within their organizations, they lay the foundations for higher-level conversations, where opportunities for greater innovation, collaboration and success are revealed. As leaders step into Level III, they bring people with them. They create a conversational space that allows people to share what's on their minds with candor and caring; they create conversational agility that nurtures people's ability to handle the unexpected; and they harvest wisdom and insights.

To help you elevate your culture to Level III interaction dynamics, start engaging in the seven vital conversations outlined below. Each one facilitates your ability to access Conversational Intelligence and to enhance your powerful ability to co-create with others.

**Co-creating Conversations:** Foster conversations — share and discover so people can understand how they can participate in creating a great culture and community. Shifting from exclusion to inclusion catalyzes Level III.

**Humanizing Conversations:** Set the tone for open and honest communication, helping people learn how to express what they are feeling and to move from being politically driven to being trusting, candid and caring. Shifting from judging to appreciating catalyzes Level III.

**Aspiring Conversations:** Help people to expand and embrace exciting and challenging possibilities. Shifting from limiting to expanding catalyzes Level III.

**Navigating Conversations:** Share information, exchange best practices, reduce the need to protect turf, and break down silos to pioneer new territories. Shifting from withholding to sharing catalyzes Level III.

**Generating Conversations:** Focus on innovative, creative, experimental and generative ways of leading rather than relying on well-worn grooves. Shifting from having all the answers to discovering the new catalyzes Level III.

**Expressing Conversations:** Teach people how to speak up, express their voice, challenge authority, and develop their ideas to contribute to the growth of the brand.

**Synchronizing Conversations:** Set the tone for an enterprise spirit, helping people move from a focus on "winning at all costs" attitude to a focus on contributing to their own growth in the context of enterprise growth. Shifting from compliance to celebration catalyzes Level III.

## Teaming Up Through Conversational Intelligence

Psychologist Bruce Tuckman's model for the developmental sequence of small groups has become the basis for almost all team and relationship development today. His model refers to four stages of team development: forming, storming, norming and performing. Team members progress through these four stages as they learn to become high-performing, collaborative colleagues.

**Forming:** Tuckman asserts that in the forming stage, teams come together to work on projects. In the background and in ways not always apparent, relationships are forming. Behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by others and to avoid controversy or conflict. Trust is unknown, and people have a combination of fear and expectation simultaneously.

**Storming:** In Tuckman's model, every group has a storming stage in which people compete for power and status, for the best ideas, and for position in the in-group. People have low levels of trust; they are often competing with one another. Fear of loss abounds, together with fears about who has power and how to fit in. At the moment of contact, our defensive routines move center stage, influencing the dynamics of the team and focusing the brain toward social protection. People withhold information to make sure they have power; they play their status cards to ensure they have importance; they bond with the right people to position for success; and they fight to be right so

they are perceived as winners in the face of uncertainty. In many cases the barriers to trust have become so high that teams and relationships never move past this stage.

**Norming:** If the team makes the move into the norming stage, they have realized that sharing power and information is necessary for the team to not only survive but thrive. They try to figure out what collaboration means, set rules of engagement, and create team norms. The norming stage can actually become a process for creating compliance rather than for freeing the team to co-create.

**Performing:** The last stage is performing. The goal is for everyone to feel interdependent and for all to work at their peak. To move teams through this process with less "storming" and higher "performing, building trust through Conversational Intelligence is the key.

Here are five ways that leaders can eliminate fear within a team using the TRUST Model: Be present, tell people where they stand, provide context in every communication, catalyze co-creating in conversations, and use honesty at all times. As we apply the wisdom of Conversational Intelligence, we enable people on a team to engage in Level III conversational dynamics and encourage them to speak their minds, leading the whole team to achieve innovative breakthroughs we never thought possible.

## Changing the Game Through Conversational Intelligence

When we are frightened by change, our brains fall back into protective behaviors. It's as though all our instinctual networks know how to ensure we are not harmed. When we learn to apply Conversational Intelligence practices and spend more time in Level III interaction dynamics and rituals, we actually *instruct our brains* how to master, navigate and drive change as a natural way of life.

Following are four conversational rituals and success strategies that will trigger the natural ability for change to evolve:

- **See Resistance in a New Light:** Resistance and skepticism are companions to change. Stop thinking of your job as managing resistance and instead accept resistance as a natural part of change. People need to challenge new ideas before they can accept them. For full ownership and accountability to take place, people need to be in the conversation about how to change rather than being asked to merely comply. When leaders reframe in this way, they see that conversations release new energy for change — which will propel their efforts forward faster.
- **Welcome and Facilitate Conversations:** Create forums where people can have open, candid conversations and learn what is going on and where they belong in the newly emerging order. Transparency and openness have a facilitative impact, transforming fears into constructive strategies for success.
- **Engage Head, Heart and Spirit:** People are emotional during times of change. Use storytelling — narrative that engages people's emotions and creativity — to make change happen. Storytelling triggers the head, heart and spirit and causes us to bond rather than fight.
- **Create the Space for Change:** Create conversational practices that enable you to work on co-creating the future. These conversations are not about a quick fix or a new policy. This is not about lecturing or tell-sell-yell but about practicing navigating with others in and out of scenarios from many perspectives. Such an approach lets us arrive at practices and rituals for how work gets done inside our culture that we all embrace. Create the conversational space to help people find their place in the change process.

Conversations connect us and bring us into communion with others. Without conversations, our ability to evolve, develop and innovate drastically diminishes. For this reason, mastering our moments of contact is the art of great leadership — it's the art of great negotiators, great leaders, great actors, great writers and great human beings.

Everyone can become a master of Conversational Intelligence. We don't need to be visionaries or to have the top seven attributes of great leaders. We don't need to be born on the right day or have someone give us a million dollars. We don't need to have attended Harvard or been born into a distinguished family. Conversational Intelligence teaches us to see differently — to listen differently — and to process what we are perceiving differently. When we do that, we act in the moment in ways that create energy, activate energy, and help guide energy toward more productive and more powerful ends with others.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Conversational Intelligence*, you'll also like:

1. ***Rainmaking Conversations* by John E. Doerr and Mike Schultz.** Doerr and Schultz offer a research-based, field-tested and practical selling approach that will help you master the art of the sales conversation.

2. ***Crucial Conversations* by Joseph Grenny, Al Switzler, Ron McMillan and Kerry Patterson.** Learn how to handle the conversations that occur when the stakes are high, emotions run strong and opinions vary.

3. ***Fierce Conversations* by Susan Scott.** Scott explains how to transform everyday conversations by employing effective ways to get the message across.

· Book 77 of 269 ·

# Crucial Conversations

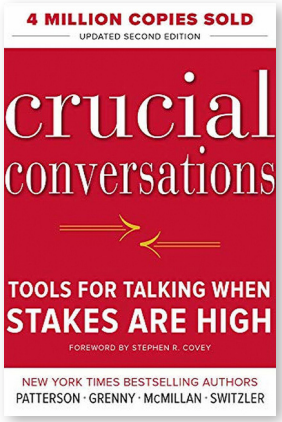
Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler

Executive Book Summaries®

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# Crucial Conversations

## Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High




*by* **Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Relationships are the priority of life, and conversations help us care for our relationships with talking and listening. The quality of your life comes out of the quality of your dialogues and conversations. ***Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*** by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler — the founders of VitalSmarts — helps you think about what you really want to say.

With structure and wit, this best-selling book provides readers with a way to improve on the most fundamental element of organizational learning and growth—honest, unencumbered dialogue between individuals. The authors address the No. 1 reason managers and executives get derailed and offer helpful guidance on how to operate in a fast-paced, results-oriented environment. They provide readers with the tools to handle life's most difficult and important conversations.

This summary describes how anyone can master the skills of crucial conversations at home, work and play. The skills it delivers offer new techniques for working together in ways that enable us to succeed.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Prepare for high-stakes situations with a proven technique.
- Transform anger and hurt feelings into powerful dialogue.
- Make it safe to talk about almost anything.
- The benefits of being persuasive, not abrasive.
- Learn how new techniques, skills and tools work together to enable successful crucial conversations.

## What's a Crucial Conversation?

A crucial conversation is a discussion between two or more people where stakes are high, opinions vary and emotions run strong.

The effects of conversations gone bad can be both devastating and far reaching. Research has shown that strong relationships, careers, organizations and communi-ties all draw from the same source of power — the abili-ty to talk openly about high-stakes, emotional, contro-versial topics.

### Masters of Crucial Conversations

Twenty-five years of research with 20,000 people and hundreds of organizations has taught experts that indi-viduals who are the most influential — who can get things done and *at the same time* build on relationships —are those who master their crucial conversations.

People who routinely hold crucial conversations and hold them well are able to express controversial and even risky opinions in a way that gets heard.Their bosses, peers and direct reports listen without becoming defen-sive or angry.

### Improve Your Organization and Health

In the *best* companies, everyone holds everyone else accountable — regardless of level or position.The path to high productivity passes not through a static system but through face-to-face conversations at all levels.

The ability to hold crucial conversations also has an impact on your personal health.The evidence is mount-ing every day.The negative feelings we hold in, the emo-tional pain we suffer and the constant battering we endure as we stumble our way through unhealthy conver-sations slowly eat away at our health. In some cases, the impact of failed conversations leads to minor problems. In others, it results in disaster. In all cases, failed conversations never make us happier, healthier or better off.

## Mastering Crucial Conversations

"Dialogue" is the free flow of meaning between two or more people. Each of us enters conversations with our own opinions, feelings, theories and experiences about the topic at hand.This unique combination of thoughts and feelings makes up our personal pool of meaning.This pool not only informs us but also propels our every action.

When two or more of us enter crucial conversations, by definition we don't share the same pool. Our opinions differ.

### Filling the Pool of Shared Meaning

People who are skilled at dialogue do their best to make it safe for everyone to add their meaning to the *shared* pool — even ideas that at first glance appear con-troversial, wrong or at odds with their own beliefs. Now, obviously, they don't agree with every idea; they simply do their best to ensure that all ideas find their way into the open.

As the Pool of Shared Meaning grows, it helps people in two ways. First, as individuals are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, they make better choices. In a very real sense, the Pool of Shared Meaning is a measure of a group's IQ.The larger the shared pool, the smarter the decisions. And even though many people may be involved in a choice, when people openly and freely share ideas, the increased time investment is more than offset by the quality of the decision.

On the other hand, we've all seen what happens when the shared pool is dangerously shallow.When people purposefully withhold meaning from one another, indi-vidually *smart* people can do collectively stupid things.

### Better Choices

Not only does a shared pool help individuals make better choices, but since the meaning is *shared*, people willingly act on whatever decisions they make. As people sit through an open discussion where ideas are shared, they take part in the free flow of meaning. Eventually they understand why the shared solution is the best solu-tion, and they're committed to act.

Conversely, when people aren't involved, when they sit back quietly during touchy conversations, they're rarely committed to the final decision. Since their ideas remain in their heads and their opinions never make it into the pool, they end up quietly criticizing and passively resisting. Worse still, when others force their ideas into the pool, people have a harder time accepting the information.

The time you spend upfront establishing a shared pool of meaning is more than paid for by faster, more com-mitted action later on.

## Start With Heart

How do you encourage the flow of meaning in the face of differing opinions and strong emotions? The truth is people *can* change. But it requires work. You can't sim-ply drink a

magic potion and walk away renewed. Instead, you'll need to take a long, hard look at yourself.

In fact, this is the first principle of dialogue: Start with Heart — that is, your own heart. If you can't get yourself right, you'll have a hard time getting dialogue right. When conversations become crucial, you'll resort to the forms of communication that you've grown up with —debate, silent treatment, manipulation and so on.

### Work on Me First

Although it's true that there are times when we are merely bystanders in life's never-ending stream of head-on collisions, rarely are we completely innocent. More often than not, we do something to contribute to the problems we're experiencing.

People who are best at dialogue understand this simple fact and turn it into the principle,"Work on me first." They realize that not only are they likely to benefit by improving their own approach, but also that they're the only person they can work on anyway. As much as others may need to change, or we may *want* them to change, the only person we can continually inspire, prod and shape — with any degree of success — is the person in the mirror.

There's a certain irony embedded in this fact. People who believe they need to start with themselves do just that. As they work on themselves, they also become the most skilled at dialogue. So here's the irony. It's the *most* talented, not the least talented, who are continually try-ing to improve their dialogue skills.

### Stay Focused

Skilled people Start with Heart.That is, they begin high-risk discussions with the right motives, and they stay focused no matter what happens.

They maintain focus in two ways. First, they're steely-eyed smart when it comes to knowing what they want. Despite constant invitations to slip away from their goals, they stick with them. Second, skilled people don't make Sucker's Choices (either/or choices). Unlike others who justify their unhealthy behavior by explaining that they had no choice but to fight or take flight, the dialogue-smart believe that dialogue, no matter the circumstances, is always an option.

### Refocus Your Brain

You're speaking with someone who completely dis-agrees with you on a hot issue. How does all this goal stuff apply?

As you begin the discussion, start by examin-ing your motives. Going in, ask yourself what you really want.

Also, as the conversation unfolds and you find yourself starting to, say, defer to the boss or give your spouse the cold shoulder, pay attention to what's happening to your objectives. Step away from the interaction and look at yourself — much like an outsider. Once you call into question the shifting desires of your heart, you can make conscious choices to change them.

### Return to Dialogue

Stop and ask yourself some questions that return you to dialogue:

- What do I really want for myself?
- What do I really want for others?
- What do I really want for the relationship?
- How would I behave if I really wanted these results?

## Learn to Look

As people begin to feel unsafe, they start down one of two unhealthy paths.They move either to silence (with-holding meaning from the pool) or to violence (trying to force meaning in the pool).

Silence almost always is done as a means of avoiding potential problems, and it always restricts the flow of meaning. The three most common forms of silence are masking, avoiding and withdrawing. *Masking* consists of understating or selectively showing our true opinion. Sarcasm, sugar-coating and couching are some of the more popular forms. *Avoiding* involves steering complete-ly away from sensitive subjects.We talk, but without addressing the real issues. *Withdrawing* means pulling out of a conversation altogether. We either exit the conversa-tion or exit the room.

Violence consists of any verbal strategy that attempts to convince, control or compel others to accept your point of view. Methods range from name-calling and mono-loguing to making threats.The three most common forms are controlling, labeling and attacking. *Controlling* consists of coercing others to your way of thinking.This includes cutting others off, overstating your facts, speak-ing in absolutes, changing subjects or using directive questions to control the conversation. *Labeling* is putting a label on people or ideas so they can be dismissed under a general stereotype or category. *Attacking* includes belit-tling and threatening.

### Look for Your Style Under Stress

When caught up in a crucial conversation, it's difficult to see exactly what's going on and why.When a discus-sion starts to become stressful, we often end up doing the exact opposite of what works.We turn to the less healthy components of our Style Under Stress.

To break from this insidious cycle, Learn to Look. Here's how:

- Learn to look at content and conditions.
- Look for when things become crucial.
- Learn to watch for safety problems.
- Look to see if others are moving toward silence or violence.
- Look for outbreaks of your Style Under Stress.

Most people toggle between holding back and becoming too forceful during stressful or crucial conversations. But typical behaviors can change. By identifying your Style Under Stress, you can make a special effort to avoid some of your silence or violence habits. Also, when you're in the middle of a crucial conversation, you can be more conscious of what to watch for.

## Make It Safe

When others move to silence or violence, step out of the conversation and Make It Safe.When safety is restored, go back to the issue at hand and continue the dialogue.The key is to step out of the content of the conversation. Don't stay stuck in what's being said.

Next, decide which condition of safety is at risk. Here are some questions you can ask about each condition of safety:

- Mutual Purpose. Do others believe you care about their goals in this conversation? Do they trust your motives?
- Mutual Respect. Do others believe you respect them?

### Apologize When Appropriate

When you've made a mistake that has hurt others (e.g., you didn't call your team to let them know that presen-tation plans were changed), start with an apology.When you've clearly violated respect, apologize. An apology is a statement that sincerely expresses your sorrow for your role in causing — or at least not preventing — pain or difficulty to others.

### Ask Questions to Keep the Brain Focused

When we present our brain with a demanding question, our body sends precious blood to the parts of our brain that help us think and away from the parts of our body that help us take flight or begin a fight. Asking questions about what we really want reminds us of our goal and juices up our brain in a way that helps us keep focused.

Clarify what you don't want, add it to what you do want and ask your brain to start searching for healthy options to bring you to dialogue.

### Contrast to Fix Misunderstanding

Sometimes people feel disrespected during crucial conversations even though we haven't done anything dis-respectful. An apology isn't appropriate in these circum-stances — it would be disingenuous to admit you were wrong when you weren't. How then can you rebuild Mutual Purpose or Mutual Respect in order to make it safe to get back to dialogue?

When others misunderstand either your purpose or your intent, step out of the argument and rebuild safely by using a skill called *Contrasting*.

Contrasting is a don't/do statement that:

- Addresses others' concerns that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose (the *don't* part).
- Confirms your respect or clarifies your real pur-pose (the *do* part).

### CRIB to Get to Mutual Purpose

When you are at cross-purposes, step out of the con-tent of the conflict. Stop focusing on who thinks what.

Then CRIB your way back to Mutual Purpose:

- **Commit to seek Mutual Purpose.** Make a unilateral public commitment to stay in the conversation until you come up with something that serves everyone.
- **Recognize the purpose behind the strategy.** Ask people why they want what they're pushing for. Separate what they're demanding from the purpose it serves.

- **Invent a Mutual Purpose.** If after clarifying everyone's purposes you are still at odds, see if you can invent a higher or longer-term purpose that is more motivating than the ones that keep you in conflict.
- **Brainstorm new strategies.** Search for a solution that serves everyone.

## Master My Stories

A Path to Action explains how emotions, thoughts and experiences lead to our actions.We observe, ***we tell a story*** and then we feel before we act. Since we and only we are telling the story, we can take back control of our own emotions by telling a different story.We now have a point of leverage or control. If we can find a way to control the stories we tell, by rethinking or retelling them, we can master our emotions and, therefore, master our crucial conversations.

If strong emotions are keeping you stuck in silence or violence, try the following tactics:

- **Notice your behavior.** If you find yourself moving aw~~a~~y from dialogue, ask yourself what you're really doing. "Am I in some form of silence or violence?"
- **Get in touch with your feelings.** Learn to accurately identify the emotions behind your story.Ask yourself, "What emotions are encouraging me to act this way?"
- **Analyze your stories.** Question your conclusions and look for other possible explanations behind your story. Ask,"What story is creating these emotions?"
- **Get back to the facts.** Abandon your absolute certainty by distinguishing between hard facts and your invented story. Ask yourself,"What evidence do I have to support this story?"
- **Watch for clever stories.** Victim,Villain and Helpless stories sit at the top of the list."Victim Stories" make us out to be innocent sufferers.When you tell a Victim Story, you ignore the role you played in the problem.With "Villain Stories," we overemphasize the other person's guilt.We automatically assume the worst possible motives while ignoring any possible good or neutral intentions a person might have. In "Helpless Stories," we make ourselves out to be powerless to do anything.These clever stories cause us problems.The dialogue-smart recognize that they're telling clever stories, stop and then do what it takes to tell a useful story. A useful story creates emotions that lead to healthy action— such as dialogue.

## STATE My Path

Once you've worked on yourself to create the right condition for dialogue, you can then draw on five dis-tinct skills that can help you talk about even the most sensitive topics.These five tools can be easily remem-bered with the acronym STATE.

When you have a tough message to share, or when you are so convinced of your own rightness that you may push too hard, remember to STATE your path:

- **Share your facts.** Start with the least controversial, most persuasive elements from your Path to Action.
- **Tell your story.** Explain what you're beginning to conclude.
- **Ask for others' paths.** Encourage others to share both their facts and their stories.
- **Talk tentatively.** State your story as a story — don't disguise it as a fact.
- **Encourage testing.** Make it safe for others to express differing or even opposing views.

### Catch Yourself

When we believe strongly in a concept or a cause, our emotions kick in and we start trying to force our way onto others. As our emotions kick in, our ideas no longer flow into the pool. Instead, our thoughts shoot out of our mouths like water out of a raging fire hydrant. And others become defensive.When this happens, when our emotions turn our ideas into a harsh and painful stream of thoughts, our honest passion kills the argument rather than supports it.

Catch yourself before you launch into a monologue. Realize that if you're starting to feel indignant or if you can't figure out why others don't buy in, you need to recognize that you're starting to enter dangerous territory.

Back off your harsh and conclusive language, not your belief. Hold on to your belief; merely soften your approach.

## Explore Others' Paths

To encourage the free flow of meaning and help oth-ers leave silence or violence behind, explore their Paths to Action. Start with an attitude of curiosity and patience. This helps restore safety.

### AMPP

To encourage others to share their paths, use four powerful

listening tools that can help make it safe for other people to speak frankly.These four skills are called power listening tools because they are best remembered with the acronym AMPP — ***Ask, Mirror, Paraphrase and Prime.*** Luckily, the tools work for both silence and vio-lence games.

Here's how:

- **Ask to get things rolling.** Start by simply expressing interest in the other person's views.
- **Mirror to confirm feelings.** Increase safety by respectfully acknowledging the emotions people appear to be feeling.
- **Paraphrase to acknowledge the story.** As others begin to share part of their story, restate what you've heard to show not just that you understand, but also that it's safe for them to share what they're thinking.
- **Prime when you're getting nowhere.** If others continue to hold back, prime.Take your best guess at what they may be thinking and feeling.

### Remember Your ABCs

It's now your turn to talk. But what if you disagree?Some of the other person's facts are wrong, and his or her stories are completely fouled up. Now what?

As you begin to share your views, remember:

- **Agree.** Agree when you do.
- **Build.** If others leave something out, agree where you do, then build.
- **Compare.** When you do differ significantly, don't suggest others are wrong. Compare your two views.

Don't turn differences into debates that lead to unhealthy relationships and bad results.

## Move to Action

Having more meaning in the pool, even jointly own-ing it, doesn't guarantee that we all agree on what we're going to do with the meaning. For example, when teams or families meet and generate a host of ideas, they often fail to convert the ideas into action for two reasons:

- They have unclear expectations about how decisions will be made.
- They do a poor job of acting on the decisions they do make.

### Decide How to Decide

Here are the four common ways of making decisions and some dos and don'ts:

- Command. Decisions are made without involving others. Don't pass out orders like candy. When you face a command decision, ask which elements are flexible. When handing down an order, explain the reason behind the demand.
- Consult. Input is gathered from the group and then a subset decides. Don't pretend to consult. If you've already made up your mind, don't go through the charade of involving people only to do what you wanted to do all along. Announce what you're doing. Report your decision.
- Vote. An agreed-upon percentage swings the decision. Weigh the consequences. Know when to vote. Don't cop out with a vote. Votes should never replace patient analysis and healthy dialogue.
- Consensus. Everyone comes to an agreement and then supports the final decision. Don't force consensus onto everything. Don't pretend that everyone gets his or her first choice. Decisions should be based on merit, not on who offers up the options. When an idea doesn't work out, own the failure together.

This can be dangerous. In fact, when people move from adding meaning to the pool to moving to action, it's a prime time for new challenges to arise.

### Dialogue Is Not Decision Making

The two riskiest times in crucial conversations tend to be at the beginning and at the end.The beginning is risky because you have to find a way to create safety or else things go awry.The end is dicey because if you aren't careful about how you clarify the conclusion and decisions flowing from your Pool of Shared Meaning, you can run into violated expectations later on.This can happen in two ways.

First, people may not understand how decisions are going to be made.

The second problem with decision making occurs when no

decision gets made. Decisions drag on forever.

Both of these problems are solved if, before making a decision, the people involved decide how to decide. Don't allow people to assume that dialogue is decision making. Dialogue is a process for getting all relevant meaning into a shared pool.That process, of course, involves everyone. However, simply because everyone is allowed to share their meaning — actually encouraged to share their meaning — doesn't mean they are then guar-anteed to take part in making all the decisions.To avoid violated expectations, separate dialogue from decision making. Make it clear how decisions will be made —who will be involved and why.

When you're in a position of authority, you decide which method of decision making you'll use.

When there is no clear line of authority, deciding how to decide can be quite difficult.When decision-making authority is unclear, use your best dialogue skills to get meaning into the pool. Jointly decide how to decide.

### The Four Methods of Decision Making

There are four common ways of making decisions: command, consult, vote and consensus.These four options represent increasing degrees of involvement. Increased involvement, of course, brings the benefit of increased commitment along with the curse of decreased decision-making efficiency. Savvy people choose the one that best suits their particular circumstances from among these four methods of decision making.

Determine ***who*** does ***what*** by ***when***. Make the deliver-ables crystal clear. Set a f***ollow-up*** time. Record the com-mitments and then follow up. Finally, hold people accountable to their promises.

## Putting It All Together

After watching people at home and at work, as well as interviewing them, researchers have learned that most people make progress not by focusing on specific skills— at least to start with — but instead by applying two of these main principles.

### Learn to Look and Make It Safe

The first lever for positive change is Learn to Look. That is, people who improve their dialogue skills contin-ually ask themselves whether they're in or out of dia-logue. This alone makes a huge difference. Even people who can't remember or never learned the skills of STATE or CRIB, etc., are able to benefit from this material by simply asking if they're falling into silence or violence.They may not know exactly how to fix the specific problem they're facing, but they do know that if they're not in dialogue, it can't be good. And then they try something to get back to dialogue. As it turns out, trying something is better than doing nothing.

So remember to ask the following important question: "Are we playing games or are we in dialogue?" It's a wonderful start.

Perhaps the most common way that the language of dialogue finds itself in everyday conversation is with the expression,"I think we've moved away from dialogue." This simple reminder helps people catch themselves early on, before the damage is severe.

The second lever for positive change is Make It Safe. Dialogue consists of the free flow of meaning and the No. 1 flow-stopper is a lack of safety.When you notice that you and others have moved away from dialogue, do something to make it safer. If you simply realize that your challenge is to make it safer, nine out of 10 times you'll intuitively do something that helps.

Sometimes you'll build safety by asking a question and showing interest in others' views. Apologies, smiles, even a request for a brief "time out" can help restore safety when things get dicey.The main idea is to make it safe. Do something to make others comfortable.

These two levers form the basis for recognizing, build-ing and maintaining dialogue.When the concept of dia-logue is introduced, these are the ideas most people can readily take in and apply to crucial conversations.

## Yeah, But

People can think of a dozen reasons why these skills don't apply to the situation they care about. In truth, these dialogue skills apply to just about any problem you can imagine. However, since some are more difficult than others, here are two tough cases.

**1. Sexual or Other Harassment.** "It's not like anyone's blatantly harassing me or anything, but I don't like the way I'm being treated. How can I bring it up with-out making enemies?" Someone is making comments or gestures that you find offensive.The person does it sel-dom enough and he or she is subtle enough that you're not sure if HR or your boss can even help.

**The Solution.** Tell the rest of the story. If you've tolerated the behavior for a long time before holding the conversation, own up to it.This may help you treat the individual like a reasonable, rational and decent person — even if some of his or her behavior doesn't fit this description.

When you feel a measure of respect for the other per-son, you're ready to begin. After establishing a Mutual Purpose for the exchange, STATE your path.

If you can be respectful and private but firm in this conversation, most problem behavior will stop. And remember, if the behavior is over the line, you shouldn't hesitate to contact HR to ensure that your rights and dignity are protected.

**2. Failure to Live Up to Agreements.** "Yeah, but my teammates are hypocrites.We get together and talk about all the ways we could improve, but then people don't do what they agreed to."The worst teams walk away from problems like these. In good teams, the boss eventually deals with problem behavior. In the best teams, every team member is part of the system of accountabili-ty. If team members see others violate a team agreement, they speak up immediately and directly. It's dangerous to wait for or expect the boss to do what good teammates should do themselves.

**The Solution.** If your teammate isn't doing what you think he or she should, it's up to you to speak up.

When teams try to rally around aggressive change or bold new initiatives, they need to be prepared to address the problem when a team member doesn't live up to the agreement. Success does not depend on perfect compli-ance with new expectations but on teammates who hold crucial conversations with one another when others appear to be reverting to old patterns.

## Change Your Life

High-risk discussions don't come with notices and reminders. More often than not, they come as unwel-come surprises.

Emotions don't help much either. And, of course, cru-cial conversations are defined by their emotional charac-ter-istics. Your ability to pull yourself out of the content of a discussion and focus on the process is inversely pro-portion-al to your level of emotion.The more you care about what's happening, the less likely you are to think about how you're conducting yourself.

Between surprise and emotion, it's hard to know which is the bigger enemy of change. Both make it hard to remember to act in new ways.

### Scripts

Scripts are another enemy of change. Scripts are pre-bundled phrases we use in common conversations; they form the very foundation of social habits and often make change almost impossible.

With a script, you know both sides of the conversation. The good news about scripts is that you don't have to give conversation much thought.The bad news is that the more scripted an interaction, the more difficult it is to pull yourself out of the routine and try something new.

### Transfer Tips

Researchers examined 48 front-line supervisors who were learning how to hold crucial conversations. As they watched the trainees back at work, it became clear to them that only a few of them transferred what they had learned in the classroom back to their work site.The bad news is that most of them didn't change an iota.The good news is that some of them did. In fact, they used the new skills precisely as instructed.

The supervisors who found a way to apply the new skills taught the researchers the following four principles for turning ideas into action:

- **First, master the content.** That means not only do you have to be able to recognize what works and why, but you also have to generate new scripts of your own.
- **Second, master the skills.** You must be able to enact these new scripts in a way that is consistent with the supporting principles. As it turns out, simply under-standing a concept isn't enough.While it's helpful, even necessary, to talk the talk, you have to be able to walk the walk.You have to be able to say the right words with the right tone and nonverbal actions.
- **Third, enhance your motive.** You must want to change.This means that you have to care enough about improving your crucial conversation skills to actually do something.You have to move from a passive sense that it would be a good idea to change to an active desire to seek opportunities. Ability without motive lies dormant and untapped.
- **Fourth, watch for cues.** To overcome surprise, emotion and scripts, you must recognize the call to

action. This is usually people's biggest obstacle to change. Old stimuli generate old responses. If a problem doesn't cue your new skills, you'll return to your old habits without even realizing you missed a chance to try something new.

### Pick a Conversation

Pick a relationship. Pick a conversation. Let others know that you're trying to do better, then give it a shot. When you blow it, admit it. Don't expect perfection; aim for progress. And when you succeed, celebrate your suc-cess. Take pleasure in knowing that you're improving and so are your relationships. Finally, when the chance arises, help others do the same. Help friends, loved ones and co-workers learn to master their own high-stakes discus-sions. Help strengthen organizations, solidify families, heal communities and shore up nations one person —one crucial conversation — at a time.



Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler are founders of VitalSmarts and leading authorities in organizational effectiveness and leadership. Their worldwide clients include 300 of the Fortune 500 companies. They are the co-authors of The Balancing Act: Mastering the Competing Demands of Leadership and Crucial Confrontations. They have also co-developed dozens of training programs.

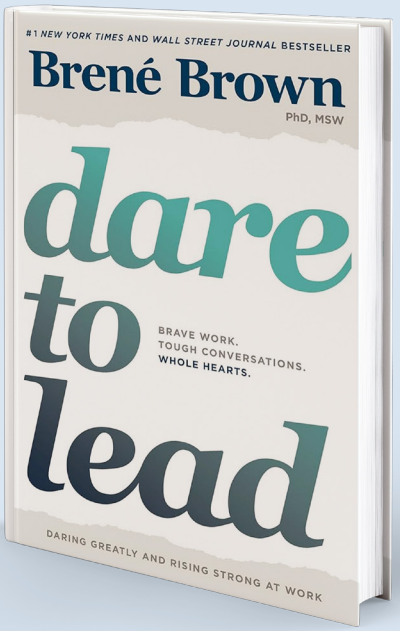
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# Dare to Lead

Brene Brown

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Dare to Lead

**Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts**

*By Brené Brown*

Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston, where she holds the Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair at the Graduate College of Social Work. She also holds the position of visiting professor in management at the University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business. Brené has spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy. She is the author of six #1 New York Times bestsellers and is the host of two award-winning podcasts, Unlocking Us and Dare to Lead. Brené's books have been translated into more than 30 languages.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Cultivating Braver, More Daring Leaders

In her note introducing ***Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts***, Brené Brown quotes Theodore Roosevelt as saying, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again…who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly." These words form the basis for much of what Brown discusses in her book, a book in which she aims to help leaders lead more effectively, more honestly, and in a more healthy manner. Much of her book is aimed at leaders of organizations, but the information and insights can be generalized to all people who lead in any capacity, in the home, in the workplace, or in nonprofits or volunteer organizations. In fact, she defines "a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential." Courage is central to Brown's idea of effective and healthy leadership.

## Daring Leadership

Brown discusses three key concepts of daring leadership. The first pertains to the importance of "rumbling with vulnerability." She understands that courage and fear are intimately connected. She believes that in moments when people feel vulnerable, they need "shared language, skills, tools, and daily practices" that can support them. She uses the term rumble throughout her book. For Brown, a rumble is a meeting or discussion whereby participants are committed to vulnerability, curiosity, and generosity. In a rumble, people must be adamantly committed to listening. For Brown, a person's leadership potential is limited by the extent to which they are willing to be vulnerable.

Second, Brown states that "self-awareness and self-love matter. Who we are is how we lead." All leaders experience fear. Fear is not the problem even though it is often the basis of many problematic behaviors. The real problem is the armor that people put on in order to deal with that fear. Brown's third concept

related to daring leadership states that "courage is contagious." People need to feel safe if they are going to show up without their armor, and it is the job of the leader to create that safe place. Daring leaders must "be connected to the people they lead." She is insistent that in today's contemptuous and adversarial culture, true leaders must hold themselves to a higher standard than that which is frequently seen in the public sphere.

## Vulnerability

Brown entitles the first section of her book, "Rumbling with Vulnerability," and she breaks this section into five subparts. Brown starts out this discussion by stating that if people are willing to put themselves out there into the world, they will inevitably fail at times. For her, vulnerability involves the willingness to go into arenas when a person cannot control how the situation will play out. She respects those willing to enter the arena. Brown does not see weakness in vulnerability; rather she believes that the decision to allow oneself to be vulnerable requires a tremendous amount of courage. Despite a desire to do so, people cannot protect themselves from being vulnerable. Some people, she claims, believe that they can protect themselves from vulnerability because they refuse to rely on other people. She insists that the science proves, however, that people are wired to need other people and community. Vulnerability is not something that can be engineered out of life.

Brown tells a story about her daughter who had her heart broken and confidence shattered when a friend shared a confidence of hers with others. Brown's daughter said she would never trust anybody in that manner again. The two talked, however, and discussed the concept of the marble jar. A marble jar is a metaphor. When people do something kind or that builds trust, they put a marble in the metaphorical jar. When they do something that breaks trust, they take one or many marbles out of the jar. Brown encourages her daughter to stick with the people who fill up the marble jar. Brown says, "trust is the stacking and layering of small moments and reciprocal vulnerability over time. Trust and vulnerability grow together, and to betray one is to destroy the other."

In tough conversations, Brown advocates for creating safe containers. People do this by asking others what is necessary for them to feel safe in the discussion. Another tool she advocates for using is the phrase "say more." She says that these two words can often help teams dig deeper and get to the heart of a situation. She also believes in clarity. To Brown, "clear is kind. Unclear is unkind," and she also encourages people to take breaks when necessary in conversations rather than trying to push through beyond what they are capable of in the moment.

Key to Brown's discussion in other books of hers is the topic of wholeheartedness which she defines as "engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness." She maintains that this concept requires integration of "our thinking, feelings, and behavior," and it requires people to put aside their armor. Some organizations see feelings like vulnerability as liabilities, and in such organizations, courage can never truly thrive. A person's ego wants to protect itself, but according to Brown, the ego is a small part of who a person is, much smaller than their heart. She then goes into a discussion of daring and armored leadership. In each situation, she gives an example of armored leadership such as perfectionism and then the alternative daring leadership trait, in this case, healthy striving. These sixteen different examples all demonstrate how attitudes and behaviors people use as armor can be turned into behaviors and attitudes that are more healthy and daring. Daring is beneficial for Brown.

## Shame and Empathy

Brown is a shame researcher, and she incorporates this research into this book on leadership. She claims that shame is a universal feeling that all people experience and usually fear speaking about. The problem is that shame becomes more powerful the more people refuse to speak about it. One time people feel shame in the workforce is when they are fired, and Brown insists that people ought to "give people a 'way out with dignity'" when firing them from an organization. Unfortunately, nefarious factors such as armor and a lack of vulnerability tend to get in the way of this in organizations permeated by shame, and terminations can strip people of their feelings of dignity.

Empathy can help people and organizations be resilient in the face of shame. "Empathy is not connecting to an experience, it's connecting to the emotions that underpin an experience." It requires people to try to see situations and the world the way other people do. It also requires an attitude of non judgment as well as the communication of one's understanding of another person's emotional state. Empathy looks different for different people, and so a person desiring to show empathy must be aware of the emotional cues of others. Empathy is not one size fits all. Brown then discusses numerous empathetic barriers including the use of sympathy, a horrified reaction, and the desire to instantly make the situation better on the part of the listener. These barriers inhibit empathy. People can build their shame resilience and their empathy by understanding shame's triggers, broadening their perspectives, and speaking about that which brings them shame.

## Defining Values

Brown then moves on to a discussion of values. She refers back to her opening Roosevelt quote and says, "in those moments when we start putting other voices in front of our own, we forget what made us go into the arena in the first place." She encourages people to develop clarity around their values because this clarity can help them in difficult rumbles. In order to live by one's values, these values first must be clarified, and she says that these values are not situation specific. In other words, our values are the same in the workplace and in the home. She gives a list of dozens of values, and she insists that her reader only select two of them. She believes these values should be "a definition of who we are in our lives." She then wants her reader to consider a few behaviors that are consistent with these values. She believes that a person can really only know another if they know their values. Organizations can take their values and turn them into operationalized behaviors that everyone is accountable to. People do not always find the benefit in discuss-

> . . . people in a group are more likely to act courageously if they have been trained on how to rise after falling."

ing values, but she believes this is because people do not take the necessary next step of turning them into behaviors.

## Trust

In her section on trust, Brown advances Charles Feltman's definition of trust: "choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions." At times, when people lack trust, they will discuss other people rather than discuss with other people. Trust is important because it "is the glue that holds teams and organizations together." Brown insists that trust should be discussed in reference to specific behaviors. To talk about trust, Brown uses the BRAVING inventory. This refers to

Boundaries

Reliability

Accountability

Vault (keeping private information private)

Integrity ("choosing courage over comfort")

Nonjudgmental

Generosity (believing the best interpretation of a person's intentions).

Brown encourages teams to consider behaviors that align with these BRAVING elements. For Brown, trust is not just something between people. She believes that individuals should work on trusting themselves as well. After all, a person will find it difficult to trust others if they do not trust themselves.

## Dealing with Setbacks

Brown's last section focuses on rising again after inevitable setbacks. One of the first considerations if a person wants to help another risk failing is to make sure the person is equipped "for hard landings." Brown's research has taught her that many organizations attempt to help people build resilience only after they have fallen. This is the wrong timing, she insists. She believes people need to be taught how to weather hard landings before they experience them. After all, people in a group are more likely to act courageously if they have been trained on how to rise after falling. Brown maintains that as parents practice lawnmower parenting by trying to rid their children of any challenges in life, the child is not given the opportunity to learn courage.

Brown advances her process of "Learning to Rise" which has three parts, "the reckoning, the rumble, and the revolution." During the reckoning, a person will be in tune with how they are feeling and recognize when something is off. The person ought to be curious about this feeling even if they cannot absolutely identify it. At this point, a person should be careful to not offload this emotion onto another person. Next, people go through the rumbling and should be aware that if they do not have enough data, they will be tempted to make up stories about what has happened. The brain likes patterns, and stories give the brain patterns. The problem is that these stories are not always accurate. Still, people should listen to the story they are telling themselves before they question the story to determine what it can tell them about their lack of information and understanding of both other people and of themselves. Wisdom can be found in the delta between the stories people create and the truth. Brown maintains that in today's world, revolution involves "taking off the armor and rumbling with vulnerability, living into our values, braving trust with open hearts, and learning to rise."

Brené Brown has written numerous books on issues such as shame and vulnerability. In *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*, she brings those insights to the world of leadership. This can involve leadership in the business sphere but also in families and smaller organizations. For Brown, leadership requires courage, and it requires the willingness to allow oneself to be vulnerable. Leaders must be willing to enter into difficult conversations and avoid putting on the different forms of armor she discusses throughout her book. Her book describes the principles she advocates for, and she frequently refers her reader to additional tools on her website to help put her concepts into practice. Her research is based off of work she and her team have done throughout the years, and she shares it in a way that can help leaders of all kinds enter leadership with more wholeheartedness.

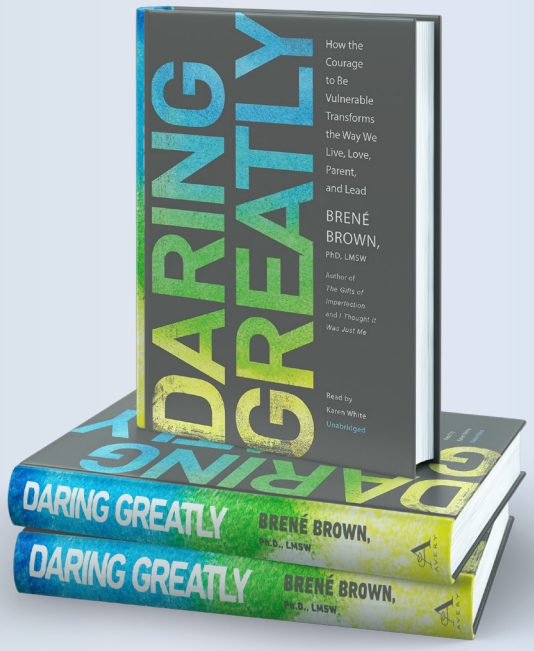
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# Daring Greatly

Brene Brown

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Daring Greatly

*by Brené Brown*

Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor with two decades of experience studying vulnerability, shame, empathy, and courage and how those emotions impact our social, professional, personal, and familial relationships. Her training program The Daring Way™ has coached everyone from executives to soldiers, parents to business teams. As of 2020, she is the author of five #1 *New York Times* bestsellers including *Daring Greatly* and *Dare to Lead*. Her TED Talk, The Power of Vulnerability, ranks in the top five most viewed TED talks in the world. In *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*, Brené shows readers how shame and our inability to be vulnerable stands in our way of achieving greatness at work and at home. *brenebrown.com*

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# What It Means to Dare Greatly Even When the Stakes Are High

Brené Brown borrowed the phrase "Daring Greatly" from a famous speech delivered by Teddy Roosevelt in 1910. In it he says that it is not the person on the outside passing judgement that counts. It is the person in the arena who "strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again." This person knows "there is no effort without error or shortcoming." This person spends everything in the worthwhile cause of "high achievement" and when failing, "at least fails while daring greatly…"

For Brené, this quote sums up what it means to be vulnerable, understand that both victory and defeat are equally important, and that being engaged and "all in" is everything. Daring Greatly requires courage and the willingness to engage, even when the stakes are high. We do it when we "dare to show up and let ourselves be seen." When we practice the courage to show up in this way, we foster relationships, make the most of our finite time, and leverage our gifts to make the "unique contributions that only we can make."

In 2010, Brené spent time with fifty Silicon Valley CEOs. She asked the then CEO of Serious Materials and *Inc.* magazine's 2009 Entrepreneur of the Year, Kevin Surace, a question before his talk on the topic of "disruptive innovation." The question she asked was, "What's the most significant barrier to creativity and innovation?" After thinking for a minute, Kevin responded, "I don't know if it has a name, but honestly, it's the fear of introducing an idea and being ridiculed, laughed at, or belittled. If you're willing to subject yourself to that experience, and can survive it, then it becomes the fear of failure or the fear of being wrong." He went on to say, "... Something related to fear keeps people from going for it." He then told Brené that he understood that she was a researcher but wasn't sure of her field. She responded, "I study that 'something related to fear'—I'm a shame-and-vulnerability researcher."

## Culture of 'Never Enough'

We live in a culture of scarcity. This "never enough" problem is the driver behind such thoughts as "never perfect enough,"

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"never successful enough," and "never certain enough." In our culture we seem to be hyper-aware of what we don't have instead of being keenly aware of what we do have. We constantly assess ourselves in comparison to others in terms of our lives, marriages, families, jobs, wealth, and more. We spend "inordinate amounts of time calculating how much we have, want, and don't have, and how much everyone else has, need and wants." This feeling of scarcity is pervasive in our society and it is shame based. Healing from it requires vulnerability.

## Vulnerability Is Not Weakness

The primary myth around vulnerability is that it is equal to weakness. Brené says that it is actually the opposite of weakness. She defines vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure." "There's no equation where taking risks, braving uncertainty, and opening ourselves up to emotional exposure equals weakness."

Most of us have spent our entire lives believing that vulnerability and weakness are synonyms. They are not, and to believe so is to risk sacrificing a meaningful and purposeful life.

Putting our ideas, work, creations, products, or thoughts out into the world with total uncertainty as to how they will be accepted is vulnerability. Vulnerability should not be confused with failure. If we refuse to embrace vulnerability for what it truly is and see it as weakness, we lose an "essential emotional part of our lives."

Opening up and being vulnerable allows us to "reignite our passion and purpose" in any endeavor, be it personal or professional. Showing up, daring to take a chance when failure is a possibility is not weakness. "Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness."

## Shame Resilience Is Key

Brené tells readers that we cannot be vulnerable without first getting past shame. She calls this work "shame resilience" and it is "key to embracing our vulnerability." Shame is the feeling that gets in the way when we become terrified of what other people may think of us. When we attach our self-worth to how our products, creations, or ideas are received by others, that is tied to shame. She says, "in simple terms, if they love it, you're worthy; if they don't, you're worthless."

When we attach our self-worth to the things we produce or create we become less inclined to share them at all or we edit them down to a less innovative or creative version that is safer. If we take the risk of putting the "juiciest" version of our work out there and it is met with scrutiny or rejection, we are utterly crushed. Our shame shuts us down and tells us that we never should have tried in the first place.

Shame resilience is a skillset. Learning and applying those skills allows us to overcome our shame, access our vulnerability, and reap the associated rewards. Strong shame resilience skills allow you to put your work out there without putting "your self-worth on the table." We all want people to admire, like, and respect our work, but when they don't, shame resilience allows us to categorize that shortcoming properly as what we do, not who we are. Without our self-worth on the line, we are able to take greater risks, receive and give constructive feedback, be more engaged in our work, and be more tenacious in achieving our goals.

One of the key skills in overcoming shame is becoming aware of and quieting what Brené called "shame tapes." These are the messages we play in our head when we struggle or work on something challenging. Our shame tapes tell us things like "no one cares about this topic" or "successful marketers don't struggle like this." If we "cultivate awareness about shame and name it and speak to it," we render it powerless and can get on with "the business of truly living."

## Mind the Gap

There is a space between where we are as leaders, parents, or educators and where we want to be. Paying attention to and crossing over that gap requires us to show up in "new and uncomfortable ways" that are aligned with our values.

In the business world, there is always a strong focus on strategy and culture and the relationship between the two. Brené defines strategy as "the game plan" that maps out where an organization, group, or team wants to go and how they are going to get there. A culture is "less about what we want to achieve and more about who we are." In order to develop strategies that transform, we have to take a hard, uncomfortable look at our cultural values. We have to look in that gap between our best intentions and "how we actually live, feel, behave, and think."

Disengagement is often the root issue keeping a community, organization, or team from stepping over the gap. When leaders do not practice what they preach, followers become disengaged. We feel lost and void of purpose. When the things we do and say and feel are "routinely in conflict with the expectation we set in our culture, disengagement is inevitable." The goal is not perfection. Mistakes are to be expected and to be accepted.

What we do when those mistakes happen is what makes the difference between minding the gap and falling into it. Connection and engagement are daring strategies that require us to pay attention to the space between where we are standing and where we want to end up. Implementing daring strategies helps us develop daring cultures that foster engagement and ultimately, "transform the way we parent, educate, and lead."

## Rehumanizing Education and Work Through Leadership

Brené defines a leader as "anyone who holds her- or himself accountable for finding potential in people and processes." The word leader does not refer to "a position, status, or number of direct reports." Parents, teachers, community volunteers, and CEOs are all leaders who can dare greatly.

In order for leaders to "reignite creativity, innovation, and

> If a leader does not know how to recognize and combat shame and fear, the entire organization can suffer horribly before outward signs are seen.

learning" they have to have tough conversations that bring awareness, language, and understanding to the topics of vulnerability and shame. These conversations "shine light in the dark corners" and once they are illuminated, going back to the way things were is virtually impossible. Leaders can and must "rehumanize education and work" to realize a vision.

"Engagement, innovation, creativity, productivity, and trust" are all susceptible to the crushing blows caused by shame and fear. If a leader does not know how to recognize and combat shame and fear, the entire organization can suffer horribly before any outward signs are seen.

Shame does damage quietly, behind the scenes, escaping the notice of almost everyone until it is too late. Casual observations, like walking around the office or school, rarely uncover a shame problem unless the problem is already "acute."

For example, if a manager scolds an employee in the hallway for all to witness, that is a sign of a long-standing and serious shame problem. "Blaming, gossiping, favoritism, name-calling, and harassment" are all symptoms of a shame-based culture. Most of the time, it isn't so obvious and requires the assessment of a leader who knows the less obvious signs that are problematic and suggestive of a shame problem.

Schools are breeding grounds for shame. In Brené's shame research, 85% of the men and women interviewed "could recall a school incident from their childhood that was so shaming, it changed how they thought of themselves as learners." Even in adulthood, some of the participants could recall in great detail a specific incident where they were told or made to feel that they were not good at a particular pursuit. Brené calls these creativity scars and they stay with us always, unless we banish them.

The workplace has similar shame-related struggles. Bullying, humiliation, threats, public reprimands, and belittling reward systems are all indications that a work culture is mired with shame. Leaders need to take immediate and direct action when a "shame infestation" is discovered.

Brené recommends four strategies to build shame-resilient schools and workplaces.

- Support leaders who "walk the walk." These leaders dare greatly, encourage and help facilitate open and truthful conversations about the difficult topic of shame, and work to cultivate a shame-free culture.
- Engage in a conscious effort to seek out where shame-based tactics are being employed within the organization. Assess how co-workers, leaders, and classmates interact with each other. Look in the dark corners and shine light on the shame that is hiding there.
- Managers and leaders should cultivate engagement by normalizing the discussion of and elimination of shame. Ask people to share their struggles and look for commonalities with how those struggles are dealt with or experienced.
- All employees should be trained on "the differences between shame and guilt" and on giving and receiving feedback that is shame-free and focused on growth and engagement.

We are living in a time of heavy uncertainty. There is a veritable laundry list of huge worries and big picture concerns that are impacting every one of us in ways seen and unseen. Brené's twelve years of research in the areas of shame and vulnerability are more relevant now than ever. *Daring Greatly* is a map that anyone can read to navigate these rocky waters. Educators, leaders, community groups, congregations, and parents stand to benefit from the advice uncovered in Brené's research-based writing.

She likens our business and personal lives to an arena. We can either sit in the stands, casting judgement on those who dare to duke it out, or we can enter the arena ourselves. Brené says of parenting, "Raising children who are hopeful and who have the courage to be vulnerable means stepping back and letting them experience disappointment, deal with conflict, learn how to assert themselves, and have the opportunity to fail. If we're always following our children into the arena, hushing the critics, and assuring their victory, they'll never learn that they have the ability to dare greatly on their own."

The message for all is clear. Getting into the game of life fully and wholeheartedly takes courage, strength, and a willingness to be vulnerable. If we wait for the "perfect time" or until we are "bulletproof" to dare greatly, we are at risk of missing out on all of the greatness available to us in life. Our imperfection and our fallibility make us human, not flawed.

*Daring Greatly* helps us realize that we have to show up and let the world see us, totally and completely.

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# Dark horse

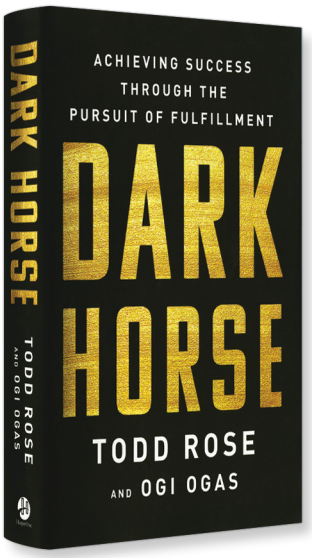
Todd Rose and Ogi Ogas

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# Dark Horse

## Achieving Success Through the Pursuit of Fulfillment




by Todd Rose and Ogi Ogas

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For generations, we've been stuck with a cookie-cutter mold for success that requires us to be the same as everyone else, only better. This "standard formula" works for some people but leaves most of us feeling disengaged and frustrated. As much as we might dislike the standard formula, it seems like there's no other practical path to financial security and a fulfilling life. But what if there is?

In the Dark Horse Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, best-selling author and acclaimed thought leader Todd Rose and neuroscientist Ogi Ogas studied women and men who achieved impressive success even though nobody saw them coming. Dark horses blaze their own trail to a life of happiness and prosperity.

Yet what is so remarkable is that hidden inside their seemingly one-of-a-kind journeys are practical principles for achieving success that work for anyone, no matter who you are or what you hope to achieve.

In *Dark Horse*, Rose and Ogas show how the four elements of the dark horse mindset empower you to consistently make the right choices that fit your unique interests, abilities, and circumstances and will guide you to a life of passion, purpose and achievement.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The exciting potential of the Age of Personalization.
- The four key elements of the dark horse mindset.
- Why talent is not truly rare and how to create opportunity for all.
- Inspiring stories of the dark horse mindset in action.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **DARK HORSE**

**by Todd Rose and Ogi Ogas**

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## Breaking the Mold

In 2005, using the 10-inch reflecting telescope at Farm Cove Observatory in Auckland, New Zealand, Jennie McCormick discovered an unknown planet in a solar system 15,000 light-years away. A few years later she pulled off another uncommon feat when she discovered a new asteroid, which she patriotically christened "New Zealand." She has co-authored more than 20 papers in academic journals, including the prestigious *Science*.

Yet one of Jennie's lesser known accomplishments might be her most impressive of all: She became an internationally respected astronomer without obtaining a college diploma of any kind. In fact, she never even graduated from high school.

At the age of 15, she dropped out of school and took a job cleaning out horse stables. Not long after, Jennie's mother left her. Compelled to make her way on her own, Jennie attempted to pass the high school equivalency exam. She was not successful. By the time she was 21, Jennie had become a single mother, supporting her infant son by serving chicken combo meals at a fast-food joint. Her future, to put it mildly, looked bleak.

Then came her turning point. One night in her mid-20s, Jennie was visiting relatives who lived on the edge of an extinct volcano caldera, far from city lights. A family member handed her a pair of binoculars and urged her to peer up at the Milky Way, saying it was a sight that could only be seen in the backcountry. "I can still see myself lying down in the wet grass and looking through the binoculars at the sky and just, Oh my God! Wow!," Jennie recounts. "All those stars, it was just awesome. I was hooked! I knew nothing about them at all, nothing, but after that I just had to know more."

Jennie's stellar epiphany motivated her to learn everything she could about astronomy. Though she had little knowledge of science and few educational resources, she patiently trained herself to make precise observations with increasingly larger telescopes. In 1999, after 11 years of independent study and practice, Jennie cobbled together a domed observatory on her patio out of cast-off equipment and rusty parts.

Five years later, she employed a sophisticated observational technique known as gravitational lensing — harnessing the gravity of intervening stars to bend and focus distant light — to behold an exoplanet with a mass three times that of Jupiter. She became the first amateur to discover a new planet since 1781, when William Herschel discovered Uranus.

There is a term for those, like Jennie, who triumph against the odds — for winners nobody saw coming. They are called dark horses.

### The Age of Personalization

We are entering a new epoch demanding a very different formula for success: the Age of Personalization. We now inhabit a world where Netflix recommends movies you might enjoy, and Amazon suggests books you might like to read. Physicians increasingly prescribe the cancer treatment that will work best for *you*, given your unique physiology, health and DNA, instead of prescribing the generic treatment that works best on average.

You can no longer expect to work for the same firm your whole career; instead, most of us will switch jobs 12 or more times before we retire.

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Philanthropic organizations are investing billions of dollars in personalized learning programs that can be adapted to each student's needs and abilities.

These epochal changes in the way we learn, work and live are all rooted in a single idea that animates the emerging Age of Personalization. Individuality matters.

Dark horses are not defined by their character. Nor are they defined by a particular motive, socioeconomic background or approach to training, study or practice. There is a common thread that binds them all together, however: Dark horses are *fulfilled*.

Dark horses provide a new definition of success suited for the Age of Personalization, one that recognizes that individuality truly matters: *Personalized success is living a life of fulfillment and excellence*.

The key to attaining fulfillment and excellence is a mindset that empowers you to fit your circumstances to your unique interests and abilities. This mindset can be rendered in plain English: *Harness your individuality in the pursuit of fulfillment to achieve excellence*.

## The Standardization Covenant

At the dawn of the Age of Standardization, American corporations became modern titans of industry by standardizing their products, including Exxon (originally Standard Oil, the first company to standardize kerosene), Kellogg's (originally Battle Creek Toasted Flakes Company, the first company to standardize breakfast cereal), and the Ford Motor Company ("Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black").

The goal of all standardization is to maximize the efficiency of a system of production. The prime mechanism by which standardization accomplishes this is through the elimination of individual variation.

Standardization establishes fixed processes that convert fixed inputs into identical outputs, without deviation or fluctuation. In other words, the standardization mindset is committed to the principle that *individuality is a problem*.

It certainly made good sense to apply the standardization mindset to the manufacture of products. If you have a headache, you want every pill in a bottle of aspirin to be the same as every other. If you are driving across the country, you want a gallon of gas to be the same whether you buy it in Maryland or Missouri.

### The Standardization of People

But our collective notion of success — and our individual ability to attain it — was utterly transformed once we decided to standardize human beings the same way we standardize aspirin.

First we standardized work. Then we standardized learning. Then we integrated our standardized workplace with our standardized educational system, establishing standardized careers. And once the full passage of our experience was standardized from our first day of kindergarten until the morning of our retirement, it marked the complete standardization of a human life.

The establishment of standardized career tracks to professional excellence inaugurated the Age of Standardization's definition of success: attaining wealth and status by climbing the institutional ladder.

According to the terms of this Standardization Covenant, society will bestow its rewards upon you as long as you abandon the individual pursuit of personal fulfillment for the standardized pursuit of professional excellence.

The chief commandment for achieving success within the Standardization Covenant can be summed up in eight simple words: *Be the same as everyone else, only better*. The flip side of this commandment also happens to constitute the covenant's fatal flaw: Our standardized institutions of opportunity were never designed for personal fulfillment.

### The Turning Point

The unquestioning obedience to a system of talent development that ignores personal fulfillment has profound consequences for all of us. Most notably, it compels you to experience a crisis of soul-searching doubt when you realize you are not living a life of authenticity. It compels you to experience a turning point.

Anyone who experiences their own turning point must make a momentous decision. You can continue to pretend that if you just work harder, you will finally break through to success . . . or you can break the covenant.

Though the precise twists and twirls of every dark horse journey are unique, the first step of the journey is always the same: the decision to prioritize fulfillment. When dark horses make that choice, they do not focus on the potential wealth to be had or how masterful they might one day become.

Instead, they recognize that an opportunity exists that fits their individuality — and they seize it. From that point forward, they make their decisions based upon who they are rather than who others tell them they should be. And by continuing to make decisions in this manner, dark horses inexorably develop excellence.

Whether you are considering marching down the straight path or blazing your own winding one, you can

move forward by considering the four elements of the dark horse mindset. Let's now turn to those.

## Know Your Micro-Motives

In the name of efficiency, institutions usually collapse the entire variety of human passion into a single featureless "generic motivation," a simple one-dimensional metric ranging from high to low. Generic motivation goes by many different names, including self-discipline, resolve, tenacity, perseverance, fire in the belly and grit. But in the final analysis, all these labels are merely shorthand for "Your individuality does not matter."

But the fact of the matter is that ignoring someone's personal motives is not a particularly effective way to motivate her. Many institutions have therefore shifted from one-dimensional generic motives to a small set of "universal motives" that they hope can be leveraged to motivate students to work hard and stay the course. This short list of universal motives — competition, interaction, hunger — are all still attempts at boosting motivation on average while ignoring everything important about the individual students themselves. Like generic motives, universal motives are institutional rather than personal, general rather than specific, top-down rather than bottom-up.

Dark horses demonstrate the stark contrast between frequently touted universal motives such as "the desire for competition" or "the desire to be creative" and the finely tuned specifics of your own cravings, predilections and fascinations. If you want to attain fulfillment, it's essential to know exactly what puts the wind in your sails — not what someone else thinks should get you going. That's why Know Your Micro-Motives is the first and most crucial element of the dark horse mindset.

### The Micro-Motives of Birding

Alvaro Jamarillo is driven to classify creatures that are mobile, colorful and elusive. Today, he is a professional birder. "I've always liked birds, but when I entered my Ph.D. program in biology, I was told to stay away from birds. Instead, I was assigned by my biology professor to study leaf-cutting ants in Ecuador," Alvaro recounts.

"I got to the jungle and realized I was not excited by the ants. I was spending all of my time trying not to look at all the tropical birds around me, and then I finally realized — I loved birds. I was getting more fulfillment out of looking at birds and talking about them with nonacademics than I was getting in my academic program."

Eventually, Alvaro followed what mattered most to him and dropped out of his doctoral program. He started his own successful company, Alvaro's Adventures, taking guests on birding tours around the world.

But micro-motives run deeper still. Fellow birder Ted Floyd — the editor of *Birding*, the flagship magazine of the American Birding Association — is highly motivated to identify birds auditorily, by hearing the songs they sing. His ability to mentally analyze the qualities of birdsong is so highly refined that he can sketch the audio waveform of any birdsong he hears; his sketches consistently match up with the actual waveforms recorded by sonogram equipment.

### The Game of Judgment

You can take advantage of an instinctive activity that you perform every day to grab hold of the micro-motives concealed inside you and hold them up to the light. It's called "the game of judgment."

Your micro-motives are composed of strong and abiding feelings rooted deep within your unconscious self. They include subtle preferences, frank desires and private longings. Your goal in playing the game of judgment is to use your instinctive reaction to others to zero in on these live emotional wires and attempt to trace them to their source.

There are three steps to the game of judgment. First, become aware of the moments when you are judging someone. It's human nature to react to others, whether it's a mail carrier, police officer, neighbor, store clerk or someone tweeting about politics.

Second, identify the feelings that emerge as you reflexively judge someone. How do you know when you are on the scent of a micro-motive? When you have a vivid reaction. It doesn't matter whether it's positive or negative, celebratory or condemnatory, as long as the feeling is pronounced.

And third, ask yourself why you are experiencing those feelings. Be honest with yourself.

The purpose of the game of judgment isn't to coolly assess the merits and deficiencies of other people. It's not about *them* at all. The goal is to use your intense emotional response to ferret out the hidden contours of your own desires.

If you are judging a park ranger, you might initially think, "Being outside and around nature all day would sure be great!" You might also realize, "Even though being outside would be great, it does seem like a lonely job. I don't think I could handle the daily isolation." Now you've identified

two potential micro-motives: the desire to be around nature and the desire for steady social engagement.

For dark horses, passion is multidimensional and dynamic — and, crucially, under your intentional control. Dark horses reveal that passion is not something to be followed but something you can engineer. The key to engineering passion does not lie in following the one motive that burns hottest inside you but, rather, in deliberately leveraging as many different motives as possible. The more distinct micro-motives you can identify and harness, the greater your engagement will be with your life.

## Know Your Choices

Choice puts your individuality into action. It is the means by which you convert passion into purpose.

We're living in a golden age of consumer choice. Yet, when it comes to making important choices about your life — when it comes to school and careers — things have hardly budged in more than a century. That's because the Standardization Covenant took meaningful choice away from you and placed it firmly in the hands of institutions.

Our standardized educational system does not allow you to choose the length of your courses, the method of instruction, the textbooks you read, the pace of learning or even which courses you take. Most professions — including all of the most lucrative ones, such as medicine, science, engineering and law — demand that you complete a fixed and compulsory set of educational milestones before they will even begin to consider hiring you.

The business world isn't much better. It isn't called a corporate ladder for nothing! Your only choice in most large companies is to move up — or move out.

### Picking Is Not Choosing

This is the most quietly effective way that standardization extinguishes your individuality — by depriving you of the opportunity to choose. Our standardized institutions replace *choosing* with *picking*.

Choosing is an *active* process. When you have the freedom to choose, you can create your own opportunities, including ones that nobody else might consider. Picking is a *passive* process. When you pick a proffered option, someone else has already made the real choices, and you are merely selecting a piece of candy from their proffered box of chocolates.

If you were a bird, what habitat would you choose to live in? The tropical rainforest of the Amazon Basin? The high altitudes of the Tibetan Plateau? The chilly lakes of Minnesota? With so many habitats available, choosing one might seem like an overwhelming burden. But if you were a bird, the choice wouldn't be difficult at all. You'd simply choose the habitat that *fit* the kind of bird you were.

If you are free to search for choices that fit your individuality, you might discover opportunities that nobody else would even notice. That's why the second element of the dark horse mindset is Know Your Choices.

### Fit Determines Risk

Just like everyone else, dark horses minimize their exposure to unnecessary gambles by carefully evaluating the riskiness of a choice before they make it. What sets them apart, however, is how they evaluate risk.

Within the standardization mindset, risk has a very precise definition: the odds of success. But in the dark horse mindset, risk is determined by fit. Dark horses evaluate how well their personal pattern of micro-motives matches up with the features of an opportunity. Thus, fit is a multidimensional interaction between the individual and the opportunity.

The more of your micro-motives that will be activated by a particular opportunity, the greater the passion you will engineer by choosing it — and the lower the riskiness of your choice. If there is good fit, the opportunity is low risk. If there is poor fit, the opportunity is high risk.

As long as you Know Your Micro-Motives — and have a realistic appraisal of the demands of an opportunity — then you will be a better judge than anyone else of the riskiness of a choice, because you will be a better judge of fit. Even when all your options are good ones — *especially* when your options are good ones — the dark horse mindset implores us to choose the one with the best fit, no matter how hazardous it may seem to others.

## Know Your Strategies

There is no best strategy for developing excellence. There's only a best strategy for you. That's why the third element of the dark horse mindset is Know Your Strategies.

In the dark horse mindset, a strategy is a method for *getting better*. Thus, every strategy involves improving yourself over time. Identifying the right strategy for you is the key to attaining excellence.

Standardized institutions are not designed to help you discern the best strategy for you. On the contrary, they anoint a single strategy for everyone to follow — a One Best Way. But just because you can't do it the One Best Way doesn't mean you can't do it.

Astronomy is a field that depends heavily on mathematics. Unfortunately for Jennie McCormick, she dropped out of high school before taking a class in basic trigonometry. Fortunately, Jennie possessed other strengths. For one, she is endlessly curious. She is comfortable asking for guidance and is not afraid of appearing uninformed.

After her stellar epiphany, Jennie began attending free public lectures about the moon and planets at the Auckland observatory. After these lectures, she introduced herself to the professional astronomers who worked at the observatory. They responded to her enthusiasm and disarming congeniality, and one of the astronomers lent her a small telescope that she could take home.

Jennie is also very comfortable with technology. She became proficient at wielding both the computer hardware and software used for contemporary astronomical observations, not by studying books or taking classes, but by jumping in and learning by doing. Jennie never shied away from asking someone for assistance with a new task. And she gradually became adept at programming the kind of custom software necessary to automate telescopes during nightlong observations.

### The Nature of Strengths

A strength is a fundamentally different kettle of fish than a motive. Your micro-motives comprise part of your core identity and are therefore potent and resistant to change. Our brains are designed to know — to experience — our motives very directly.

But unlike the steady beacon of motives, strengths are inaccessible, contextual and dynamic. In other words, strengths are fuzzy. Our brains are not designed to intuit our strengths. Almost everything we label as a personal strength is an artificial construct imposed on you from outside yourself rather than something that emerges naturally from within yourself.

Composing limericks, programming web apps and performing ballet *pas de chat* are culturally defined abilities that do not pre-exist within you; they are assembled — with sustained effort — through learning. Strengths are also contextual. Any personal quality can be either an aptitude or a handicap, depending on the situation.

Even if you exert a personal quality in a context where it's a strength today, it might not remain a strength tomorrow. That's because strengths are dynamic. They are highly malleable, improving with practice and deteriorating through neglect.

Since strengths are fundamentally different from motives, you should take a fundamentally different approach when choosing a strategy than when choosing an opportunity. In the standardization mindset, choosing strategies is a matter of staying the course. In the dark horse mindset, choosing strategies is a matter of trial and error.

### Expect Failure

Compared to life choices, which can be irrevocable and costly, strategies are trial balloons. The process of Know Your Strategies, in fact, will be the first time you should *expect* outright failure while wielding the dark horse mindset.

Failure is the only way you can unearth the hidden contours of your fuzzy strengths. Every attempted strategy is a personal experiment. Does this approach suit me? Is it helping me make progress? If so, what might that say about my strengths? If not, what does this failure suggest about what I might try next?

When you learn to Know Your Strategies, you can engineer your own achievement.

## Ignore the Destination

The fourth and final element of the dark horse mindset advises you to Ignore the Destination. Destinations are great for institutions. They're catastrophic for fulfillment.

It made complete sense to obsess about your career destination during the Age of Standardization, because early in life you needed to select the educational ladder that would lead you there. Should you aim for an MBA? A nursing degree? The New York bar exam? Under the covenant, your chosen form of standardized excellence became your destination.

Dark horses take a different perspective. When they consider excellence, they presume that individuality matters. The individuality of micro-motives. The individuality of choice. The individuality of fuzzy strengths giving rise to a lavish variety of personal strategies. Put all these together, and you get infinite winding paths leading to an infinite variety of excellence.

If you believe in fuzzy strengths and the variety of excellence, then you can see that there is simply no way of knowing ahead of time what kind of virtuosity you might be able to reach. And if you don't know where you might end up, then it doesn't make much sense to unwaveringly march toward a constant destination. If you commit yourself prematurely to a straight path, you may close off numerous winding paths leading to far more satisfying versions of success.

Under the dark horse mindset, time is relative. Your pace of improvement is determined by the specific

opportunities you decide to pursue and the specific strategies you decide to try. That means the time that passes on your journey of self-improvement will always be relative to the decisions you make.

Instead of asking pointless questions like, "How long does it take, on average, to master tennis?" or, "Why am I taking so much longer than my peers to understand organic chemistry?," the only question you should ever ask yourself is, "Is this the right strategy for me?"

### Destinations Versus Goals

Dark horses may ignore destinations, but they don't ignore goals. In the dark horse mindset, there is a clear distinction between the two. A goal is born out of an active choice you have made. In contrast, a destination is someone else's idea of an objective that you have acceded to.

If you are in high school, then getting into Harvard Law School is a destination. There are too many unknowns and intermediate events between you and the destination, and the destination itself is entirely defined by the Standardization Covenant, anyway.

But there are many purpose-driven goals you can work toward right now, such as reading philosophy books, winning your next debate club match and trying to get an internship at a local law firm. Sure, it's certainly possible that you will end up at Harvard Law. But it's far more likely that the self-knowledge you obtain from your experiences pursuing these immediate goals will open up a whole new range of choices better suited for your authentic individuality.

The difference between a goal and a destination may seem like a game of semantics. It is nothing of the sort. They are divergent conceptions of what an objective ought to be that emerge from two distinct systems of reasoning.

## Tricking the Eye, Cheating the Soul

All the bitter differences between the standardization mindset and the dark horse mindset ultimately stem from their divergent views of human potential. The old mindset declares, "Only special people have talent"; the new mindset declares, "Every person has talent."

Both assertions cannot be true. You have to choose a side.

According to the standardization mindset, only a small minority of people are capable of attaining excellence (and therefore only a minority are capable of attaining fulfillment), and our institutions should possess the exclusive power to identify and reward these talented individuals.

According to the dark horse mindset, everyone is capable of achieving excellence and fulfillment, and our institutions should help every individual develop his or her potential to its fullest.

It seems perfectly obvious that talent is something uncommon and special because very few people ascend to the top of the ladder. Very few people make the national track and field team or the national Mathematical Olympiad team. Very few people get to play for the Boston Symphony Orchestra or write a book that makes the *New York Times* best-seller list or become a NASA astronaut.

### The Talent Quota

Nowhere does the rarity of talent seem more apparent than in higher education. We instinctively presume that the small number of admittees at prestigious institutions corresponds in some meaningful way to the available talent in the population. But none of these universities wait to evaluate the pool of available talent before deciding how many candidates to accept.

Our foremost institutions of opportunity enforce a talent quota. This means our institutions cap the number of individuals who may attain excellence before they know the actual number of students with the potential for excellence. Under the Standardization Covenant, talent is not rare by empirical fact. Talent is rare by institutional decree.

If an institution employs standards, it must accept all applicants who exceed a fixed and predetermined set of criteria. There's no way of knowing in advance what this number will be. But if an institution employs a quota, it must accept a fixed and predetermined number of applicants, no matter how many talented candidates apply. These two numbers will almost never match up.

Whenever you impose a quota on talent, no matter what the reason, then the assessment of individual potential is moved into the eye of the beholder.

Our system of talent development seems fair and meritocratic. But the reality is that our standardized institutions force each of us into the role of a contestant in a beauty pageant, pleading, "Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!"

## The Dark Horse Covenant

A system that only makes opportunity available to an arbitrary quota is not a true meritocracy. It is a quotacracy.

In a quotacracy, the opportunities of the many are sacrificed for the opportunities of the few. Make no mistake about what this means for any society that abides by the

Standardization Covenant: *Far more than half the population will never even get the chance to realize their full potential.*

But the Age of Personalization empowers us to create a system of opportunity that institutes a radically expanded form of fairness. A system where you still have to earn your success but where opportunity is available to anyone and everyone, instead of those who fit an institutional mold.

For the first time, we finally have everything we need to build a meritocracy that is worthy of the name: A democratic meritocracy.

We have the right economy for a democratic meritocracy. We have the right technology for a democratic meritocracy. We have the right science for a democratic meritocracy. There is only one thing missing — one thing that each of us must actively choose instead of passively accept: We must ratify a new covenant.

If we want a democratic meritocracy for ourselves and our children, then we must each choose to ratify a new social contract: *Society is obligated to provide you with the opportunity to pursue fulfillment, and you are accountable for your own fulfillment.*

## Equal Fit and Personal Accountability

The supreme institutional obligation under the Dark Horse Covenant is to provide Equal Fit. The supreme individual obligation under the Dark Horse Covenant is Personal Accountability. These two obligations — when conjoined together — are necessary and sufficient to inaugurate a democratic meritocracy.

Under Equal Fit, every person is given their best opportunity to succeed, according to their individuality. The hard part of providing Equal Fit — the part that requires a new social truth vested in a new covenant — is guaranteeing individual choice. Only by providing processes and pathways flexible enough to adapt to individuality can institutions provide meaningful choice.

Why would an institution ever want to hand over the power of choice to the individuals it serves? Because institutions that provide Equal Fit will flourish in the Age of Personalization.

One example is Summit Public Schools. Summit is a network of 11 public charter schools in California and Washington state serving grades six through 12. They were built upon a personalized approach to learning and teaching called Summit Learning. Summit's mission is "to equip every student to lead a fulfilled life."

The Summit educational program is explicitly designed to help every student engineer their own passion, purpose and achievement through three main components. Every Summit student has a dedicated mentor who meets with them one-on-one every week to support them in understanding and harnessing their individuality.

In class, students apply the knowledge, skills and habits they've learned to projects that prepare them for the scenarios they'll encounter after they graduate. Lastly, all students are guided through a learning cycle that teaches them how to set achievable goals, make effective plans, demonstrate their abilities and reflect on themselves and their progress.

Fulfillment is not something that can be given to you. It can only be earned. That's why the supreme individual obligation under the Dark Horse Covenant is Personal Accountability.

The calculus is simple: With greater freedom of choice comes greater personal accountability. You are accountable for Knowing Your Micro-Motives. You are accountable for Knowing Your Choices. You are accountable for Knowing Your Strategies. And when you are accountable for all of these, then you are responsible for your own fulfillment.

Which system of opportunity do you want to support? A quotacracy? Or a democratic meritocracy?

Our institutions are charged with maintaining our quotacracy and preserving the Standardization Covenant. In contrast, the Dark Horse Covenant must be ratified and upheld by every one of us.

If we do, then we can all achieve personal fulfillment that's true to who we are. With the dark horse mindset, we can harness our individuality in the pursuit of fulfillment to achieve excellence.


### MORE SV CONTENT ON CAREER & SELF-DEVELOPMENT

**Summary: *Unsafe Thinking* by Jonah Sachs.** In *Unsafe Thinking*, Jonah Sachs reveals a path to higher performance and creativity for anyone ready to step out of their comfort zone. Sachs introduces counterintuitive insights that have the power to change the way you work and the way you live your life.

**Webinar: *Reclaim Your Sanity and Embrace the Daily Grind* by Leah Weiss.** Mindfulness expert Dr. Leah Weiss offers a set of practical, evidence-based strategies for practicing mindfulness in the real world, showing people not just how to survive another day but how to use ancient wisdom traditions to sharpen their abilities.

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# DataStory

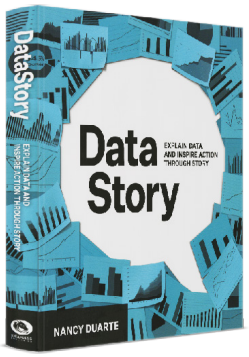
Nancy Duarte

Career and Self-Development

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# DataStory

## Explain Data and Inspire Action Through Story




*by* **Nancy Duarte**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Organizations use data to identify problems or opportunities, but communicating well is the top skill gap in roles that involve using data. The essential skill for today's leaders is to shape data into narratives that make a clear recommendation and inspire others to act.

In ***DataStory,*** Nancy Duarte and her team explain the unique power of stories, which make the brain light up in ways that no other form of communication does, and how using story frameworks to communicate data will encourage others to act on your recommendations.

Duarte also decodes how the highest performing brands communicate with data, to teach you the most effective ways to turn your data into narratives that blend the power of language, numbers, and graphics. It's not about visualizing data; instead, you'll learn how to transform numbers into narratives that drive action. ***DataStory*** is your indispensable guide for harnessing the power of story to stand out in the age of big data.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why you need to communicate data effectively and how to do it.
- To craft a data point of view (DataPOV) that persuades key decision-makers.
- To structure an executive summary as a DataStory.
- To make data stick by making it relatable.

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## Introduction

There's nonstop buzz about data, big data, small data, deep data, thick data, and machines that are learning to analyze data. Many organizations are doing cool things that are supposed to improve our lives because of, you guessed it, data. But without identifying the story emerging from the data, it's of little to no value.

The human brain is wired to process stories. Stories engage our senses. When we find ourselves hooked to a particular storyline, that resonance begins in our brains. This is the first trigger to enabling a physical and emotional response.

Stories also bring us closer together. Spoken narrative creates a powerful connection between the storyteller and the listener. Thoughts, brain activations, and behaviors become synchronized, causing our brains to literally "tick together."

Stories move us to feel. They have the magical ability to fully immerse listeners, making them feel like they have been transported into the narrative. When we are mentally stimulated by stories, our attention shifts away from critical thinking and becomes distracted by positive feelings.

Finally, stories move us to act. A study had people listen to a story about a father's relationship with his young, dying son. Participants were monitored before and after they heard the story, and the result showed spikes in cortisol, which focuses our attention, and oxytocin, which is connected with empathy.

The most astounding finding was that narratives can compel us into action by physically altering the chemistry in our brains. Stories that capture our attention cause us to emotionally connect with others and feel motivated to embark on a course of action.

By transforming your data into vivid scenes and structuring your delivery in the shape of a story, you will make your audience care about what your data says.

## PART I: COMMUNICATE DATA TO OTHERS

## Becoming a Communicator of Data

Virtually every company in every industry already has access to vast stores of intelligent data that can offer a competitive advantage. We can use data to invent new business models, help employees become more productive, and improve customer experiences.

The challenge of collecting, storing, analyzing, and providing all of that data is daunting, and yet the bigger challenge is using the data well to drive decisions. To make sense of the overwhelming onslaught, more people in a greater number of roles must understand how to leverage the various kinds of data at their disposal and bring the findings to life. Executives must constantly make decisions based largely upon data analysis. They want it presented to them in an expert manner.

Maybe you spend much of your time diving into pools of raw data looking for patterns or potential problems and opportunities, crisscrossing through tables, and pulling nectar of insights from charts. That work can be wonderfully energizing. You can feel like a detective let loose in a ***Choose Your Own Adventure*** book.

But for those who'd like to move into roles that help determine what an organization should do in light of data findings, they must develop communication skills. You must learn how to communicate where data is suggesting the organization should go.

### The Data Doesn't Speak For Itself

Making a recommendation requires that you first judge the data: A chart goes up. Was that good? Was it expected? Should we keep going in this direction, or change course? Do we have all the data we need to make a good decision?

Then you've got to construct a point of view based upon your conclusions. Communicating that point of view takes guts. For some of you, it will be crossing a chasm in your career, taking a leap into an exciting but perhaps nerve-racking position of greater responsibility. Making a recommendation comes with great responsibility but also accountability. How well you present a case can be a make-or-break, career-defining moment. If you learn to present recommendations well, you will become a trusted advisor.

Even with so much data at hand now, we're not always going to be able to find definitive support for decisions within it. Almost all data is historical—a record of what has already happened. It's a recording of what was or what is, not what could be. That means you need to use creative thinking and problem-solving to help shape the future state.

We've all heard the phrase "the data speaks for itself," but the truth is, it almost never communicates clearly for itself. We have to give it a voice.

Making a good recommendation involves more than presenting data that proves—or disproves—your hypothesis. That's just a starting point. A recommendation then takes

When you see your insights coming alive for people and inspiring them to action, it's deeply satisfying.

the creative step of proposing which action should be taken, and a good one makes a persuasive case for that action. This involves taking a big leap from making sense out of data to telling a meaningful story with it. You narrate the story the data has led you to.

If you have been operating in a well-worn mental groove of analytical thinking, you may feel a bit out of your element at first. But stepping out of an analytical mindset and into creative mode is highly energizing and fulfilling. When you see your insights coming alive for people and inspiring them to action, it's deeply satisfying.

## Communicating to Decision-Makers

When preparing to communicate data, think through who will be involved in its approval, and tailor your approach to appeal to them. Consider carefully what different audiences need to hear and how they want to hear it. Whenever your audience changes, so should the language you use.

Here, the focus is on making recommendations to executive decision-makers. They're the toughest customers and the ones people are generally the most intent to learn how to appeal to. Once you know the best approaches for persuading them, you can easily draw upon these elements for recommendations you make to anyone.

Executives are under incredible pressure to perform. No single job description covers the responsibilities of every executive at all organizations, but performance is almost universally assessed according to six primary levers of performance: revenue and profit, market share, retention, costs, time to market, and risk.

All these executive levers are measurable with key performance indicators (KPIs), and almost all KPIs fall into one or more of these areas. If your recommendation is destined for the desk of an executive, it should propose improvement in one of these categories. Addressing these areas will ensure that executives see its value, and they'll be able to tell right away why they have to be involved in approving it.

### Understand How Executives Consume Information

Executives have personal preferences in how they receive recommendations. To communicate to them, find someone who can mentor you in understanding these preferences.

If an executive wants you to make a stand-and-deliver presentation, make sure you also have a Slidedoc. A Slidedoc uses presentation software to make a visual document that can be easily skimmed and understood quickly, with clear hierarchy. They might ask for details afterward.

If they prefer a conversation, do not wing it. Think through the key points you need to make, and structure your discussion well. This creates a mental guide of what to say. A single-page recommendation is a great attachment to an email or complement to a conversation. This should be a very tight, visual overview of your thinking so you have time for discussion.

If you are asked to present a recommendation to an executive, you must be prepared to be interrupted before you finish. Way before you finish. Most executives are in positions of leadership because they can swiftly assess information and challenge it well. In an effort to be expedient, they will cut in to gain clarity on the full picture of what you're suggesting and how well you've thought it through.

Most executive meetings get chopped into half-hour increments, so a good general rule is to formally prepare only 15 minutes so you have time for questions.

# PART II: BRING CLARITY THROUGH STORY STRUCTURE

## Crafting a Data Point of View

As you explore data, you'll begin to formulate thoughts about what it's telling you. A point of view will emerge from your deep thinking. Once you've taken a clear stance on what you've found, you're ready to construct a data point of view (DataPOV™).

A DataPOV should be structured as a Big Idea. A Big Idea comprises two parts:

- **Your unique point of view requires action**. Whatever the data is telling you, it's speaking to you. You dove deep into the data to gain perspective. You made nuanced observations, and the understanding you developed about what needs to be done and how to do it is yours. Own it by expressing a point of view and clearly stating the action called for.
- **What is at stake**. You also need to propose what is at stake, whether your recommendation is approved or not. There is some cost, whether human or financial, to every recommendation. Articulating the stakes clarifies the benefit and risk inherent to a recommendation.

Your DataPOV is the centerpiece of your entire recommendation, and all other material you present stands in support of it. Make your DataPOV clear by expressing it in a complete, well-constructed sentence. The DataPOV becomes the title page of your recommendation, and you'll use it as the title of your Slidedoc. This way, people will know right away what your recommendation is about, and you'll construct a thoughtful, logical structure to support it.

### Choose the Most Effective Action For Your DataPOV.

Choosing the best verbs for expressing your DataPOV will make it clear exactly which action you're recommending. The verbs associated with data have three distinct modalities:

- **Change**—We need to change who we are or what we are doing. Choose a "change" verb ("expand," "prevent," "adopt") if your recommendation is about transformation. It could be a big change or a small change.
- **Continue**—We need to keep going in the same direction. Choose a "continue" verb ("endure," "maintain," "prolong") if your recommendation is about endurance. These verbs are in no way a cop-out. Sometimes, full speed ahead is a great course of action.
- **Finish**—We need to complete this. Choose a "finish" verb ("release," "attain," "solve") if your recommendation is about completion. Sometimes, completion is about accomplishing a goal, and at other times, it is about calling it quits.

## Structuring an Executive Summary as a DataStory

One powerful attribute of stories is how they are structured. Whether it's a personal story told over dinner or one from classical literature or a movie, stories told well usually have a similar three-act structure.

Act I presents the situation. The main character is introduced in their environment, and their current circumstances are made clear. Act II presents the complication, or messy middle. An adversarial force is introduced, and the hero attempts to resolve the central conflict. They are building the new skills necessary to overcome the adversary. Act III presents the resolution. The hero confronts the adversarial force and resolves the central conflict. The hero overcomes the challenge or learns new skills that transform them.

### Write an Executive Summary in Three Acts

One of the most important pages in your recommendation is the executive summary, because it is your first interaction with your readers. Their decision to continue reading depends upon their impression of your executive summary.

The rise and fall in a story arc can be applied to the way you structure an executive summary. This construction is called the DataStory.

Act I introduces the situation in which your organization currently finds itself. There is a problem or opportunity identified in the data. For example, "The average subscription renewal rate per region is 62 percent."

In Act II, the middle of the DataStory reveals the central conflict. The data reveals measurable symptoms that must change in some way. For example, "Only 23 percent of clients in the western region renew their subscriptions." What's the measurement that will be reversed if your recommendation is approved? Or, what are the numbers that will increase with the new opportunity?

That is where the "mess" is. Reversing a number or hitting the gas pedal on a number creates a lot of work, because it requires someone to take action. The numbers in the middle of your story will change direction when the right actions are taken.

In Act III, the end of the DataStory is your point of view for how to solve the messy middle and create a positive outcome in the future. The actions proposed will transform your future data. For example, "We need to tailor our content to appeal to regional preferences to gain market share in the west." Notice how the third act is your DataPOV. It states how you'd like the DataStory to end.

## Creating Action Through Analytical Structure

Proposing a recommendation that combines the familiar structure of story with the strength and credibility of logic will clarify the decision you are trying to derive from the data.

Crafting a recommendation for approval is a blend of argumentative and persuasive writing. Why? You are not just trying to prove you have your facts right (argumentation). You are also trying to move others to action (persuasion). A written recommendation from data blends a bit from both types of appeals.

> For gaining buy-in, clarity always outperforms cool.

You cannot submit a recommendation to an executive (or anyone, for that matter) if it doesn't have an intuitively logical structure. Without clear logic, your recommendation will take time for others to make sense of, and you will undermine your case.

Your structure itself communicates a message about what's important, and in what order. Crafting a good structure helps others see the logic in your thinking, and the process actually strengthens your own thought process. The most widely used structuring devices are an outline or a tree structure.

### A Recommendation Tree

In the tree structure, all supporting information hangs off a single topic at the top. In a Recommendation Tree, that unifying point is your DataPOV. All the points below cascade from it. Using a tree structure helps you look at the whole without getting lost in the parts. This format also helps filter out any tangential subtopics that don't directly support your DataPOV.

Consider using a Recommendation Tree in which the DataStory is supported by three points. We've been conditioned since we were young to use three supporting points. It follows classic, logical argumentation and even basic essay-writing.

**Define actions to support your DataStory**. The best way to support the action you are recommending is to break it into smaller actions. When you run (verb), you must swing your arms, pump your legs, and breathe through your lungs. Those are all sub-actions. The way to get traction on your DataStory is to use a series of phrases with verbs to support your main, proposed action.

**Motivate by explaining why**. The people on the receiving end of your recommendation may well be the very ones who have to do the things you recommend. They're going to want you to persuasively tell them why the action is necessary. If you explain clearly why it's important, your suggestion is more likely to get traction.

**Include assumptions by stating "This is true if…"** When using data to predict potential outcomes, you are making a case based on conjecture, inference, speculation, and sheer guesswork. Due to the subjective nature of business assumptions, it's crucial to be transparent about all of those you've made in arriving at your recommendation.

For example, in order to forecast your organization's profit over the next five years, you may make assumptions about factors that impact your finances. Your conclusion may be based upon assumptions like interest rates staying constant, donors continuing at current giving rates, or office vacancies remaining high in your area.

Executives are well aware that in order to make predictions with data, we often have to make assumptions like the ones listed above. They'll be impressed that you are up front about them, and that they don't have to ask what they are. Also be prepared to justify them. Otherwise, your recommendation will come into question.

## PART III: MAKE CLEAR CHARTS AND SLIDES

## Choosing Charts and Writing Observations

It's important to choose the best type of chart for communicating insights. Many beautiful and engaging ways to plot charts are available today. Huge databases with stunning visual intelligence can display data that whooshes across screens, unveiling clickable layers of data beneath it. As data sets grow ever more vast, charts are getting more complex and sexy.

The use of complex charts and fancy-schmancy business intelligence tools helps uncover insights, but when it comes to

explaining the action you are advising, you must share your findings in a visually simple way. For gaining buy-in, clarity always outperforms cool.

Don't disregard all the breathtaking business intelligence tools you may have. Use them to aggregate and explore data. But then articulate your observations in the simplest form that will showcase the key points. This is usually done with a bar, pie, or line chart. Using charts that are more complex than they need to be adds mental labor to the reviewer and pulls attention away from the key insight.

### Write Clear Chart Titles and Make Descriptive Observations

Chart titles are to be factual and neutral. To write one, you need to convey what, how, and when measurement happened. Organizations track concrete nouns (people, places, things) and abstract nouns (ideas) to monitor the health of the organization.

A precise understanding of what you have measured is vital. For example, are you measuring the quantity of customers, or are you measuring the percentage of online customers who also shop at your retail store? This clarity must be captured in the title of your chart. For example, "2019 Monthly Profit by Percentage" is a neutral chart title, but "We hit our profit goal this year!" is not.

If chart titles are factual and neutral, an observation is a statement of insight you have from a chart. An observation supports your perception of the problem or opportunity in the data. It is an additional short statement that frames the chart. It could be placed above the chart title, used as a slide title, or inserted as a major subhead within a Slidedoc. For example, an observation is "Female CEOs of public companies spiked in 2017." The framing of an observation tells the readers what to focus on.

## Building a Skimmable Slidedoc

In our time-strapped world, people prefer information that can be consumed quickly. A Slidedoc is a visual document designed for quick consumption. It is intended to be read and distributed versus presented. You can create highly effective ones with presentation software.

Many executives like receiving content in slide format, because it constrains the amount of detail you can provide. Chunking content into slides makes reading efficient, and encourages the author to exercise great discipline in terms of being concise.

Many executives say "Send me five slides" when they want insights from you, and they are usually looking for a succinct Slidedoc to read. Because you won't be presenting it, a Slidedoc must contain enough meaty information to be a piece of standalone communication that can be consumed quickly.

**Think of a Slidedoc as a visual book**. Slidedocs borrow aspects from well-designed books and follow long-established formats. Because a Slidedoc is visual and skimmable, you can also think of them a bit like magazines, in which visual hierarchy is paramount.

The components of a book that precede the main text are collectively called the front matter. First comes your cover page, which is an opportunity to convey a message right off the bat. How many times have you picked up a book just because it had a great title? The cover includes a title, your name, and the date of completion. The title and possible subtitle should be a tight, snappy version of your recommendation.

Your table of contents (TOC) allows your reader to get a quick overview of the structure and understand the gist of what the recommendation is about. You should also include page numbers so readers can jump to the sections they feel need the most attention from them. If the body of your Slidedoc is fewer than 10 slides, you might opt to forego a TOC.

The next slide should be an executive summary. Don't use bullet points. Write text in full sentences to convey complete thoughts.

**Organize content to be readable**. Slidedoc layouts consist of four elements: data, images, diagrams, and text. For the layout of each slide, your content must be organized with a clear visual hierarchy that conveys what to read first and where to go from there. Take the time to highlight sections of text on each page so readers notice the important bits.

# PART IV: MAKE DATA STICK

## Marveling at the Magnitude

We use numbers at very large and very tiny scales that humans sometimes struggle to understand. In 2004, Facebook hit 2 billion users. In 2018, Apple became the first public company with a net worth of $1 trillion. In December 2018, the U.S. national debt hit $21.97 trillion. How do we make sense of these sums? How can we envision how large or small something is that we can't even see with the naked eye?

To help your audience understand the magnitude of the

Empathetically understanding the people whose actions generate your data helps guide you to better communicate with them.

data, compare it to things that are familiar to them. Data should always be precise. When trying to help others understand magnitude, though, exactitude isn't the point. You want to find an approximate comparison to convey the scale of the number quickly.

The common ways people sense scale are size, distance, time, and speed. For example, many charts measure quantities. If a number on your axis is a million or more, convert it into the size of something. For example, if sales of your product dropped by a million units, maybe that much product would fill half of the glassy high-rise your sales team sits in.

Time and speed are often related to one another in our lives, so they are good sources for comparison. For example, a good way to convey a distance is to say how long it would take to drive there at the familiar speed of a car or airplane, because time x speed = distance. According to cosmologist Fred Hoyle, if you drove a car upward at 60 mph, in about an hour, you'd be in space. To get to the Moon, it'd take 4,000 hours of nonstop driving (or almost half a year).

## Humanizing Data

Some data has nothing to do with humans, but most does. Most organizational data wouldn't exist without humans generating it. We are buying and selling goods, clicking on links, wearing devices, undergoing medical tests, selling homes, etc. You can find life experiences within the data of almost every chart.

Empathetically understanding the people whose actions generate your data helps guide you to better communicate with them. Think of them as characters in your DataStory. They either help the organization achieve your goals, or contribute to falling short of them. They are, in other words, either heroes or adversaries of your data.

In storytelling, a hero usually has a goal or desire they'd like to fulfill. In a DataStory, the hero plays a role in moving the data in a desirable direction. The hero could be a customer, user, employee, partner, donor, voter, or patient.

The adversary thwarts the hero or has a competing goal the hero must prevent the adversary from achieving. They throw roadblocks in the way of achieving the goal. In a DataStory, the adversary could be competitors, the media, an activist, investor, a mindset.

You identify the adversary by understanding the type of conflict your hero is experiencing. The hero in your data could be in conflict with a person, group, way of thinking, or system that creates a roadblock for them. Roadblocks come in many shapes, such as fear, bureaucracy, technology, bias, and even cancer cells. The way you communicate can rally the hero to overcome an adversary pushing data in an undesirable direction.

### Speak With the Characters

Data tells you what has happened in the past, but doesn't always tell you why unless you talk to the heroes generating the data or the adversaries against it. The best way to really understand your heroes and learn about their issues is to speak with a number of them.

Identify a random sampling of data heroes and speak with them, asking about concerns, opinions, and motivations. Talking to them reveals their adversary in a way quantitative data can't. With such powerful technological tools for probing into data, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that it represents the desires, pursuits, and problems of individual people.

## Storytelling With Data

Almost every recommendation requires a group of people to execute it, whether that's peers in your department, the executive team, or a broader audience. If you need to influence a department, customer, shareholder, or the entire company, you'll likely be asked to give a formal presentation.

When you have the stage, you can use cinematic design and storytelling techniques to make a presentation dynamic, revealing insights in a dramatic fashion. Make your DataStory truly come alive by creating suspense and telling an intriguing story with some elements of mystery. By strategically

withholding key features of your findings at first, you can give the audience an exciting jolt of surprise with a big reveal.

Let's say your team has worked very hard, and you're about to present the results. You can create suspense by having each bar in a chart revealed one at a time. If the team is unaware of the final outcome, this lets you set up how messy it's been and how hard they have worked. Then the team rejoices when they see the final, positive outcome.

Two ways to surprise an audience are to add context to the data, which may give your data a strikingly different meaning, and to zoom in or out of the data, to reveal a hidden feature of a chart or axis that shows an unexpected result.

### A DataStory Wins an Academy Award

Who would have thought a movie about a slideshow full of data would win an Academy Award? During the documentary ***An Inconvenient Truth***, the producers revealed data in an unprecedented way. Former U.S. vice president Al Gore delivered the presentation in a small studio in southern California. The producers commissioned a custom, 90-foot-wide, digital screen for the movie, and Gore stunned the audience with a startling reveal.

The primary screen was so big that Gore had to get on a scissor lift to point to a rising red line depicting the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels predicted for future years. As the line ascended higher and higher, the audience could see the end of the rise was imminent when a yellow dot was displayed. After all, the screen only went so high.

What they didn't know was that the production team had built a secret screen above the 90-foot screen, which was hidden behind the stage drapery. The audience gasped as Gore continued to ascend on the lift as the extra screen was revealed, showing the shocking additional rise in carbon dioxide all the way to 2056.

We are only in the formative phase of the ways in which data will change our lives, and it needs the help of a communicator. Transforming numbers into narratives will become part of every leader's job.

We rely on data to tell us what has happened and stories to tell us what it means. Words are powerful. Skillfully wielding them only comes with practice.

As you journey through your career, may you master the science of data and the art of communicating it.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Resonate: Present Visual Stories That Transform Audiences*** by Nancy Duarte
- ***Let the Story Do the Work: The Art of Storytelling for Business Success*** by Esther K. Choy



Nancy Duarte is a communication expert who has been featured in *Fortune*, *Time Magazine*, *Forbes*, *Fast Company*, *Wired*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, and on CNN. Her firm, Duarte, Inc., is the global leader behind some of the most influential visual messages in business and culture. As a persuasion expert, she cracked the code for effectively incorporating story patterns into business communications. She's written five best-selling books, four of which have won awards.

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# Day In, Day Out

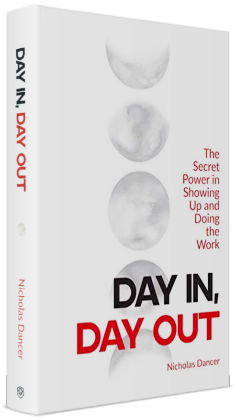
Nicholas Dancer

Career &
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# Day In, Day Out

## The Secret Power in Showing Up and Doing the Work




*by* **Nicholas Dancer**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

There have been plenty of books written on the topics of success, self-improvement, and career advancement, but many fail to address one of the simplest and most powerful principles— you have to show up, day in and day out, and do the work.

***Day In, Day Out*** explores the secret power to be found in showing up and doing the work for a sustained period of time. Now the owner and founder of Dancer Concrete Design, Nicholas Dancer was once confronted with roadblock after roadblock on his way to success, and used the principles in this book to transform his situation.

Dancer addresses four of the most important elements of his approach— Move, Grow, Build, and Truth. Then, he applies these principles in concrete ways to growing a business and working effectively in a business environment. Throughout, he explores real methods and mindsets that can help you show up, day in and day out, to create something truly innovative and exceptional for your life or business.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The importance of moving forward, and how it impacts every undertaking.
- How to grow and develop through curiosity, adaptation, and becoming your best self.
- Why building up the people around you is the key to growth and leadership.
- How to care for others and believe in the best of each other.

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

## Introduction

Businesses, relationships, and even parenting can benefit from following vital principles to live a life of strength, love, and growth. These principles, shared in this book summary, are designed to convey the core factors that can transform the way you live your life, think about your career, lead your family, and even run your business.

Most people don't want to believe that they can achieve the results they want if they stick to the basics. They assume that in order to succeed, they need one more degree or that they need to be on the forefront of something 'new.' They follow an ever-elusive dream of doing less while getting more. This tendency to look for secrets and shortcuts isn't new to this generation or to us.

But none of these supposed answers work. We all think maybe they will work for us, that we are different, special, or the exception. But trying to skip steps to our own development just leaves us further behind.

These principles are for anyone who understands that great things need time to mature and develop, anyone who wants something different than the 'quick fix' or 'make it happen' bravado that floods the business section.

Each day you show up, you'll gain insight and tools to use in your own life and business. At some point, you'll realize you have accomplished a big task by doing just a little bit each day.

## Move

Progress is about movement. All adventures start with movement, with action. It's the moving that gets the work done, and moving forward is the only way to keep from going backward.

One of the most critical components of every journey is deciding which way to go. This is no different in business. To follow the way you've chosen, you have to be self-aware. Ask yourself: Where am I right now, and where do I want to be? Through constant self-awareness, you can stay on your path as you move toward your potential.

### Stay Away from Extremes

Pick any of the world's most successful and widely known companies today. If you track back through their history, you'll see that they were not built overnight. To have lasting results in any area of life, including business, you have to stay away from extremes. Build a sustainable rhythm and stick to it day in and day out.

Working with steadiness results in less low lows, a steady and effective output, and more energy freed up to focus on your ultimate goals (rather than dealing with the extreme consequences of extreme actions). The key to lasting results is to use your discipline to keep growing.

### Show Up

We all rationalize opportunities to take a day off or ease back from our day in, day out work. On those days, we have to remind ourselves to 'just press play.' Just sit down and start working. You'll be amazed by what you can accomplish on days you originally planned on simply slacking off.

That said, the idea of just showing up is no excuse for doing shoddy work. But if you're doing your best with the energy, knowledge, and skills you have right now, your effort is valuable and meaningful.

## Grow

Growth and development go hand in hand. It's about being curious— about learning, adapting, and working toward becoming your best self, because when you are at your best, everyone else around you also grows.

When you do your best, momentum builds. The momentum makes it easier to do great work on the same thing next time, and the momentum even flows into other areas of your life, making what used to seem impossible seem possible.

### Choose Your "Yeses"

In many areas of our lives, we find ourselves doing things we don't particularly want to do. We want to please people; we want to be liked. If we're going to say no, we feel we need to come up with some lame excuse. But do we?

We're adults. We get to choose when we say no, and we can leave it at that. For the things we do say yes to, it should be a "Wow, that would be amazing! Absolutely!" When we leave room in our lives by saying no to most things, we have the ability to do the things we truly are excited about.

### Let It Sit

If you run a business, you are likely constantly hounded by emails, text messages, request for decisions, and everyday work goals. If you don't prioritize time for yourself, that time will quickly be occupied by something else.

It takes a ton of energy to be two separate people, and it never works well.

It's important to find your own space to turn off all of your distractions. You need your thinking time.

Letting things sit is simply deciding to not make decisions right now. It's choosing to wait. Many people will bring you things that seem to require 'right now' decisions. It's your job to keep the path steady, and to allow time and space. Oftentimes, a single night of sleep helps orient us; it allows us the space to make the right decision.

### Be Yourself

It takes a ton of energy to be two separate people, and it never works well. You spend way too much time thinking about who you are in a particular moment, and you ultimately can't fool anyone. It won't take long for others to find out that the person you are at work is not the same person you are at home.

When you are yourself, you invite other people to show up as who they are, too. You remove the façade and allow people to just be people, not pretenders. It's when we give the world our true selves that we find the most joy in work and in life.

## Build

Build up the people around you, even when it's difficult or you're distracted by your own concerns and goals. Lead others and create alongside them to accomplish more than any of you could have done on your own.

We often fall into "if only" thinking. But if we take a step back, we realize what we're really saying. We're essentially waiting for life to be better. Rather than 'wait,' what if we approach life for what it is right now?

### Embrace the Suck

Society has conditioned us to desire and look for comfort, and it's easy for any of us to say we deserve it. Yes, we all have obstacles to overcome; you are likely working through an issue right now that is taking your time and bringing stress to your day. That's how life works. But that doesn't mean we are worthy of an extravagant reward at every turn.

Comfort is great, but that doesn't mean we can ignore the reality of discomfort. In fact, if we embrace the suck, we'll realize that we grow through pain. Our lives and businesses grow stronger when we deal with and learn from painful events directly.

### The Rule of 100

As we move through our days, it's easy to feel that any single decision won't have much of an impact on our lives. We don't think much of skipping a daily run, ordering the burger platter at lunch instead of the salad bar, or watching just one more episode of Netflix.

But when you're in a rut in life or moving in an undesirable direction, you can identify where you're going off-track with the 100x exercise. Ask yourself: What is the compound effect of doing this one hundred times?

Take a moment to focus on one decision you're making in your business or life right now. Multiply that decision by one hundred, so you can see the big picture. Let that bigger picture inform the present.

### Priority Points

A priority point is a point in time when your presence is more important than at any other time. Some people say they don't have time for daily huddles or it's not conducive to their business. That's bunk. A daily huddle is a short, simple strategy that ultimately saves time and money through improved communication. For every minute we spend on a daily huddle, we hope to save an hour in our day.

What are your priority points? There are not many better trades than one minute of communication for an hour of work. When you find these kinds of priority points, stick to them. They will be key drivers in your business and life.

## Truth

Truth is about caring for each other and believing in the best of each other. Truth and love are synonymous; love is

the deepest truth we have and lies at the core of all timeless principles, including the notion that you should love others as you love yourself.

Whatever choices we make, as long as we make them based on the truth we're seeking, they will be the right choices for us. Sure, a certain path might be better for you in a given time, but the key is to keep your focus on the bigger truth you're searching for. If you do, you can be more flexible with the specific paths you choose to get there. The truth is not a result of the path. Truth is always there.

### Falling is Okay

Learning to ride without training wheels comes with crashes, bumps, and bruises. During the process, we tend to retreat to our safety nets. But when we see that falling is okay and that we can progressively reach our goals, something clicks. We gain confidence and ultimately realize we can do something we couldn't before.

Falling is normal, and growing and getting somewhere in life requires a process. We need to be there for each other as we learn. We need to use the bumps to get stronger and ride on.

### Don't Wait for Perfect

Rarely will the stars align such that everything goes perfectly. That's the fun part of leading. You plan well. You do your best to prepare. But when something happens, you adjust. You find out what you do have and what you can do.

In business, we choose to figure it out. That's why people want to work with us— we solve problems and offer solutions. Don't wait for perfect. Find a way, and make it work.

### The Way We Work

At Dancer Concrete Design, the way we work can help inspire you and your business to transform for the better.

We insist on accountable, both within ourselves and with each other. We always leave things better than we found them, and we always strive to do the best work we can in the moment with the variables and challenges given to us. We do our best with what's in front of us right now, even if it sucks. We always choose impact over comfort.

We work hard, smart, and long. We don't look for the easiest way, but the best and most enduring way. We show up when it's tough and stay consistent, day in and day out.

## Conclusion

Nothing in this book is revolutionary or new. In the end, it's all about following a handful of key principles. These principles will help you build a great life, a life you love.

It's not about taking the cold shower or drinking the green juice. Sure, certain practices can certainly help us on our paths, but they are ultimately meaningless unless they lead us to real change. When you want real change, the quick-fix solution won't cut it. You'll need a day-in, day-out, little-bit-each-day solution.

As you show up, as you create, you'll find a secret power that wasn't so secret after all.



Nicholas Dancer owns and operates Dancer Concrete Design, a specialty concrete finishing company that started in his basement and has grown to be the leader for architectural concrete finishes in the region. He lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and his favorite thing is celebrating life with his wife, Alexis, and three sons.

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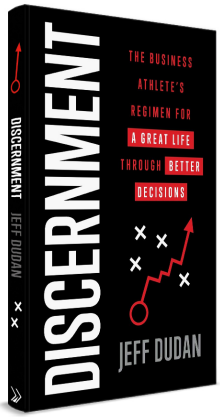
# Discernment

Jeff Dudan

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# Discernment

## The Business Athlete's Regimen for a Great Life through Better Decisions




*by* **Jeff Dudan**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The modern world is filled with opportunities. From the Internet to easy travel, opportunities are nearly limitless for those who are motivated and driven. Because of how many opportunities are at our fingertips, it can be difficult to know which opportunities we should take up and which ones we should leave behind. In ***Discernment: The Business Athlete's Regimen for a Great Life Through Better Decisions,*** you can learn techniques for finding the best opportunities by making great decisions. Jeff Dudan, the book's author, draws on personal stories and time-tested techniques to help you become a leader and efficient problem solver.

More specifically, Dudan provides readers with sets of tools, models of thought, beliefs, and principles that can help you make the best decision quickly by comparing them against one another. Although written specifically for the business person in mind, any person who wants to be a leader and efficient problem solver will benefit from these techniques. Learn how to become a leader and problem solver that people look to for advice by using the tools and models of thought offered in this book.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How business is like a game or sport.
- Why discernment matters in the game of business.
- How to become a business athlete in your business.
- How to win the game called business.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## The Sport Called Business

One of the most beloved pastimes in the entire world is sports. Sports can motivate people to work grueling hours to perfect their game to become the best player possible. Whether it's the intoxicating environment or passion that comes with rooting for an underdog, sports captivate people worldwide. Brits love football. Americans also love football, but a different kind. Canadians love hockey. It's just that simple. Sports have a profound effect on people that seems almost to be inexplicable.

Oddly enough, business is the same way. There are winners and losers in business. You have to train to become a winner. The score is kept. Some people train and push themselves so they can compete at the next level. This then allows their team to perform and show up at luncheons, proposals, or anything else that might be considered the business game.

In fact, thinking of business as a game is helpful and accurate. You have to learn the rules of the game to succeed and excel. Those who think of business in such a way can be thought of as business athletes. They train endlessly to perfect their game, be the best amongst their competitors, and lead their team to victory.

## What Makes a Business Athlete?

Business athletes are those that know how to play the game of business well. Though they might not win every round, they win enough to be revered by their team and other competitors in the industry. From their endless training on the fundamentals of business, they can tackle problems with intelligence and wisdom.

However, business athletes don't ever stop learning. They continue to develop their technique and perfect their craft to continue to be the best. This makes them push themselves to compete and reach the next level in business. Furthermore, business athletes lead their team and carry the ball. They don't sit passively on the sidelines.

As a result, business athletes perform. When it's time for them to make a play, they do it with confidence and discernment, even if they feel stressed or insecure. It is this desire and ability to perform no matter what that separates amateurs from business athletes.

### Business Coaching

All impressive athletes have coaches on their side. No matter how naturally talented an athlete might be, their skills will never fully develop without a coach's help. The coach's goal is to pinpoint weaknesses, fix them, and let their strength shine. Without an intelligent and helpful coach, most athletes won't go very far. The same goes for business.

Any business athlete needs a business coach. Without a business coach, you could fall into the trap of making the same mistake over and over again without realizing it. At the same time, a business coach can help you find your strengths to best use them to score and win the game. Trust experienced and proven business people to coach and lead you to victory.

### When Discernment Comes Into Play

All sports are about decision making. When should you throw the ball? When should you run? If you don't know how to make your game decisions properly, you can never expect to grow as an athlete. Once again, the same principle applies to the game of business.

Business is nothing but a bunch of decisions that affect other decisions. To be the best business athlete possible, you need to start learning how to discern between different opportunities that come your way. Whether it's making an investment in a potentially risky but rewarding company or hiring a new employee, discernment is crucial to becoming a successful business athlete.

## Intelligence vs Experience

Many people make the mistake of believing that discernment has to do with intelligence more so than experience. Although you need to be intelligent to make good decisions, a lot of discernment is actually a result of experience, not intelligence. If you are taking the time to improve your business game, you are probably intelligent enough, but you might lack experience.

Experience allows you to know what opportunities you should pass up and which opportunities you should take. Certain opportunities will come with red flags that might be subtle or difficult to detect as a newbie. There is no shame in that. You just need to learn how to look for those red flags so that you can discern between what's worth your time and what isn't.

With that in mind, improve your discernment by using your smarts and experience to make well-informed decisions. You need both to succeed. Any person without intelligence cannot make good decisions. Conversely, any person without experience won't know what fact to follow. Find a way

to meld your intelligence and experience so that you make good decisions for yourself and company.

### Discernment is a Full-Contact Sport

Whether you're just starting out or the CEO of a company, decision-making is a full-contact sport. Every decision you make will affect someone or something else down the line. The higher up in the organization you go, the bigger impact your decisions make. In fact, some people refuse higher-level jobs for this reason. Being responsible for important decisions is stressful and difficult.

In a perfect world, decisions will be based on stable information that you can count on ahead of time. Unfortunately, business is a moving sport. This means you cannot predict the future, and outcomes are rarely certain ahead of time. This makes high-level decisions nothing more than educated guesses about probable outcomes.

Discernment does not ensure control over the end results, but it allows you to help understand and reduce risks when you decide. That should be the goal of every decision you make: to maximize benefits and minimize risks so you can win the game.

## How to Play the Game

If you have decided you want to be a business athlete, it's time to play the game. Even if you are an experienced business person, you should always check up on the game, see how it has changed, and improve your abilities. Here are 6 ways that will help you play the game of business:

### 1. Learn the Game

The only way to play the game is to know it. You know the game by learning fundamentals about business and constantly pursuing education and improvement. If you don't know the game, it is impossible to win.

Part of knowing the game also means knowing the type of team you want to be. You need to establish what you want to accomplish as a leader. This means that you need to know what discernment looks like in action. There's no way to practice discernment if you don't know what it looks like. As you are learning the game of business, learn the game of discernment too.

### 2. Know Your Values

Having good discernment means knowing your values and sticking to your guns. Discernment is often up to a gut feeling. If you are constantly listening to other people's values instead of your own, you can feel lost and unsure of your decision-making process. Know exactly where you stand on certain things so you can be led by your own intuition, not someone else's. Trusting yourself and your values make you different and let you succeed as a business athlete.

Learn your values by reflecting on your life and taking a good hard look at what you want. If you think you already know your values, great, but you should always look back at your values to see how they have changed or if they should change. Take an active look at your values, as well, so you can easily apply them to your business model.

### 3. Create a Game Plan

Before any big game, all good sports teams practice and create a game plan for the exact opponent they're going up against. Whether it is a harmless game for fun or a national championship, no sports team approaches a game without a game plan. Business athletes should do the same.

Create an active game plan so you can score and win the game. Your game plan should include your natural skills, values, and whatever opponent you are going against. Make sure the game plan is actionable and easy to follow. If it is vague or too intensive, you won't be able to execute it. Do your best to create a game plan that allows you to tackle any situation with confidence and intelligence. This will help you to make decisions.

### 4. Challenge Yourself and Develop Your Abilities

Once again, discernment is primarily about the experience, not intelligence. The only way to improve your discernment is to expose yourself to a lot of new experiences. This will expose you to business fundamentals so you can have better discernment. The best way to get more experience is to challenge yourself. Don't constantly settle by doing what you always do. Expose yourself to a variety of situations and people, so you increase your experience and have better discernment abilities.

Every player brings something new to the table. That includes you. You have special abilities that no other business athlete has to offer. Learn how to use those abilities to get what you want. More than that, continue to fine-tune those abilities, so they become more and more impressive. Your natural abilities will only take you so far. Develop them through challenging yourself and constantly learning so that you can be the best version of yourself.

### 5. Be a Leader

All sports teams have a leader. Normally, that leader is the captain, but there are other ways to be a leader without necessarily being a captain. All business teams have a leader, as well. Make yourself a winner by actively becoming a leader in your team if you are not already.

Leaders are the ones who make the tough decisions. If you want to be a leader who makes profound decisions, expect your mind, body, and emotions to constantly be challenged. No matter what decision you make, someone will not be completely pleased. It is up to you as the leader to know how to lead your team while still remaining fit for yourself.

If you do not train your mind to become a leader, you will likely fail under pressure. Train your fitness and leadership so that you can remain on top of your game, lead your team to success, and win as a business athlete.

### 6. Train Hard

Even after you have learned the game, discovered your values, created a game plan, and prepared yourself to be a leader, the grind does not stop. The moment you stop pushing yourself is the moment you will start sliding. Stay on top of your game by training hard, even when you are a winning business athlete.

Establish a training cadence and discerning habits to help you train around the clock. By incorporating discernment habits into your daily routine, you'll become more productive and better at decision making. As a result, you can expect to be a better leader and win at the game called business.

## Winning the Game

To win the game, you need to recognize great opportunities, understand their value, and know when they appear. You cannot do that without discernment. At the end of the day, discernment is what separates amateurs from business athletes. You could only win the game by enhancing your discernment to improve your decision-making abilities and leadership skills.

Discernment is about more than just knowing stuff, though. It takes a lot of hard work and effort to become a master in discernment. Only through hard work and training will you master discernment and improve your game.

### Your Training Starts Now

Become the business athlete you've always wanted to be by working hard and enhancing your discernment abilities. Your journey to becoming the best leader possible begins today. Start your training, and don't look back.



Jeff Dudan is a seasoned business builder, Undercover Boss, and former college football player. He went to Florida to paint in the wake of Hurricane Andrew and two years later launched AdvantaClean, a national restoration franchise that had 240 locations in 37 states when Jeff exited the company in 2019. He's since joined up with his brother, Mike, to start Dudan Partners, a catalyst for enterprise growth in the franchise industry. Jeff recently retired from coaching his kids' sports teams-thirty combined seasons in the past twelve years-and is a top Forbes contributor.

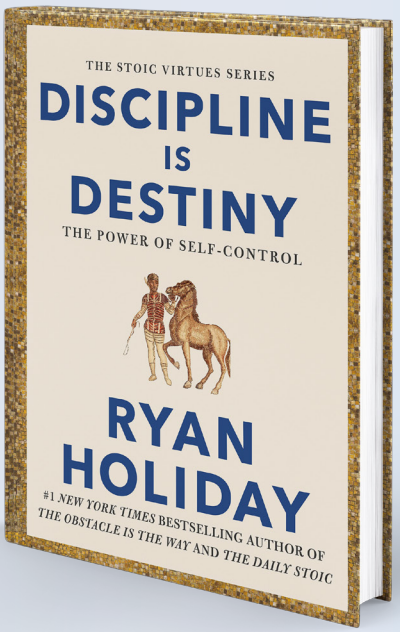
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# Discipline is Destiny

Ryan Holiday

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## Discipline is Destiny

**The Power of Self-Control**

*By Ryan Holiday*

**Ryan Holiday** is one of the world's bestselling living philosophers. His books, including *The Obstacle Is the Way, Ego Is the Enemy, The Daily Stoic*, and the #1 New York Times bestseller *Stillness Is the Key,* appear in more than forty languages and have sold more than five million copies. He lives outside Austin with his wife and two boys...and a small herd of cows and donkeys and goats. His bookstore, The Painted Porch, sits on historic Main Street in Bastrop, Texas.

# The Virtue of Temperance in the Modern World

Most people in any modern, developed nation have everything they need to survive and then some. Today, ordinary people live the way kings and queens would have been lucky to live in the past. We have the freedom to do anything we want, go anywhere we want, and believe anything we want. At the push of a button, we have access to all the pleasures and distractions in the world. With so many luxuries and opportunities at our fingertips, it can be challenging to live a life of virtue. In ancient times, four key components defined virtue: courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom. While each element is distinct from the rest, each virtue is interrelated. While it's challenging to live a virtuous life in today's world, it's not impossible. With some focus and determination, anyone can master each virtue and live a life of honor, glory, and excellence in every sense.

This is the second book in a four-part series on cardinal virtues written by the renowned philosopher and New York Times best-selling author Ryan Holiday. ***Discipline is Destiny: The Power of Self-Control*** focuses on self-discipline, "the virtue of temperance." Holiday defines self-discipline as "giving everything you have and knowing what to hold back. Temperance, he believes, "is not deprivation but command of oneself physically, mentally, spiritually – demanding the best of oneself, even when no one is looking, even when allowed less." This book was written to help everyone "figure out how to manage their emotions, abstain from what should be abstained from, choose what standards to observe." Holiday believes that "it is through discipline that not only are all things possible, but also that all things are enhanced. More than talent, life is about temperament. And temperance." This book dissects the virtue of temperance and shows us how to master ourselves; how to strike a balance between our higher and lower selves; how to live our best lives through self-control, moderation, composure, and balance.

## Part 1: The Exterior (The Body)

In today's modern world, it's pretty common to come across a person who appears to have everything they could ever want or need but still feels dissatisfied, discontent, and overwhelmed. Because it's so easy for us to get what we want, yet we're exposed to such an abundance of things that no one person can ever really have it all, it's almost impossible to live

in the moment and maintain a sense of gratitude for what's around us in our daily lives.

Temperance is about living a simple, modest life. It's about forging fortitude and self-control in all aspects except toughness and determination. Holiday believes that "We owe it to ourselves, to our goals, to the game, to keep going. To keep pushing. To stay pure. To be tough. To conquer our bodies before they conquer us." To begin developing the virtue of temperance, Holiday suggests, "When you have trouble waking up, when you find it hard, remind yourself of who you come from, remind yourself of the tradition, remind yourself of what is at stake. Think of how lucky you are. Be glad to be awake (because it's better than the alternative, which we'll all greet one day). Feel the joy of being able to do what you love. Cherish the time. But most of all, use it."

Beyond necessity, when everything we could dream of having is right at our fingertips, we become vulnerable to increasing desires, gluttony, laziness, and many other less-than-virtuous character traits. Even those who live their lives with the best intentions often end up neglecting their bodies and minds, falling into bad habits, and experiencing a state of internal imbalance. When our desires outgrow necessity, we find ourselves working harder and harder to get what we want and often ending up burnt out, stressed out, and in debt. Holiday reminds us that "No one is having less fun than an overextended, overcommitted person with debtors at their door . . . or a high-paying job they can't afford to lose. No one is less free than the person trapped on the treadmill moving faster and faster and faster but going nowhere. The less you desire, the richer you are, the freer you are, the more powerful you are. It's that simple."

The most important thing we can do to cultivate the virtue of temperance and achieve greatness is to take care of our bodies "Not just in the gym, but in the kitchen too." Holiday compares the human body to a high-end race car and urges us to "fuel accordingly." Following this seemingly simple path is far from easy. However, Holiday reminds us that "If we don't dominate ourselves physically, who and what does dominate? Outside forces. Laziness. Adversity. Entropy. Atrophy. We know that while it might seem easy to take it easy and more pleasurable to indulge our pleasure centers, in the long run, it is a far more painful route."

The path to greatness through temperance begins with self-discipline, and self-discipline starts with the body. A person who has gained mastery of their soul is a person who doesn't fear change or lack of abundance. A person who practices self-discipline and fuels their body well isn't only in better physical shape but is happier and more well-balanced. Holiday urges us to understand the importance of cultivating temperance, reminding us that "No one who is a slave to their urges or to sloth, no one without strength or a good schedule, can create a great life. Certainly, they will be too consumed with themselves to be of much good to anyone else. Those who tell themselves they are free to do anything will, inevitably, be chained to something. Discipline is how we free ourselves. It is the key that unlocks the chains. It is how we save ourselves. We choose the hard way . . . because, in the long run, it's actually the only way."

## Part 2: The Inner Domain (The Temperament)

While practicing self-discipline and taking care of the physical body are crucial first steps to cultivating temperance, it's important to understand that the body is only one vehicle for self-discipline. Imbalance can (and does) still exist in people who keep themselves in perfect physical shape. We all know or have heard of someone who is in complete control of their physical form, but their minds and lives are a mess. Holiday explains, "It doesn't matter how much discipline we exert over what we eat or when we wake up if we are driven by distraction, at the mercy of biases or bad moods, given over to temptation, impulses, or instinct. This is no way to live—in fact, this intemperance condemns a person to never reach their full potential, with perpetual misery as a possible chaser. True self-control means moderation not just in what we do, but also how we think, how we feel, how we comport ourselves in a world of chaos and confusion."

Holiday urges us to "work smarter, not harder," reminding us that "discipline isn't just endurance and strength" – temperance also requires us to be able to make the best of any situation, finding opportunities to adjust, grow, and improve regardless of the constraints of our world or profession. The ultimate test is to achieve temperance "creatively, consciously, calmly" with "equanimity and poise, even initiative and joy." Cultivating the virtue of temperance is an all-consuming, full-time endeavor. However, Holiday says, "It's the journey of a lifetime, one that gets more impressive (and rewarding) the longer you stay at it."

This journey begins with understanding the difference between the "higher self" and the "lower self." These align with "two types of mental processing we do, which psychologists call thinking fast, and thinking slow." Thinking fast is associated with your gut instincts and attributed to the lower self. Thinking slowly, rationally, and philosophically is attributed to the higher self. It's about pausing when the going gets tough and letting temperament prevail over fear, anxiety, and prejudice. One area where this rule can (and must) apply in many of our personal and professional lives is where it comes down to having the discipline to say no to superfluous things. Holiday explains, "The secret to success in almost all fields is large, uninterrupted blocks of focused time. And yet, how many people organize their days or lives to make this possible? And then they wonder why they are frazzled, unproductive, overwhelmed, always behind." When everything we agree to means saying no to something else, it's impossible to be committed to anything without developing the discipline to say no.

Holiday urges us to remember that "No one can say yes to their destiny without saying no to what is clearly someone else's. No one can achieve their main thing without the discipline to make it the main thing." It's equally essential to understand that once you decide to make that main thing your primary area of focus, you must put your entire mind into it. This leads us to Holiday's next area of focus: cultivating the discipline of patience. Holiday believes it's impossible for impatient people to do important things "because almost everything that matters takes longer

> Patient people understand that trying to achieve perfection is futile."

than it should, certainly longer than we would like. Meanwhile, the patient person is not only easier to work with, but more protected and resilient."

Patient people understand that trying to achieve perfection is futile. They have the discipline to avoid procrastination. They know that if and when they make mistakes, they can learn from them. They understand that "Discipline is not a punishment, it's a way to avoid punishment." Patient people also know that "You don't have to verbalize every thought. You don't have to always give your opinion—especially when it's not solicited. Just because there is a pause doesn't mean you have to fill it. Just because everyone else is talking doesn't mean you have to jump in. You can sit with the awkwardness. You can use the silence to your advantage. You can wait and see. You can listen more than you talk. You can speak only when you're certain it's not better left unsaid."

Cultivating temperance in your higher self requires you to create healthy boundaries for yourself. Understand, first and foremost, that "We don't need accomplishments to feel good or to be good enough. What do we need? The truth: not much! Some food and water. Work that we can challenge ourselves with. A calm mind in the midst of adversity. Sleep. A solid routine. A cause we are committed to. Something we're getting better at. Everything else is extra. Or worse, as history has shown countless times, the source of our painful downfall." Creating the boundaries you need to follow the rules above will give you the space you need to align your body, mind, and spirit so that you can discover all that you're capable of achieving, which is likely to be more than you thought possible.

## Part 3: The Magisterial (The Soul)

Once you've gained command over your physical body and have aligned your mind and spirit with it, the final test of mastering the virtue of temperance comes down to the soul. Temperance and restraint are common in monasteries and mountain retreats. However, Holiday asks us, "Can you achieve this stillness, this balance, in the chaos of real life? Surrounded by temptation? Whether the crowd cheers or jeers? Regardless of what would be tolerated, what you could get away with, what people even think is possible?" To find a person capable of mastering themselves mentally and physically on this level and having enough energy left to give of themselves is extremely rare.

This part of temperance is all about selflessness and sacrifice. It's about putting your ego aside and leaving other people's mistakes to those who have made them. It's about showing up, persevering, giving more, and living up to impossible standards. It's about keeping yourself together even in the most chaotic situations where everything seems to be falling apart, and everyone is watching and waiting for you to fall apart too.

Retreats are temporary, and conquerors aren't rare. "Talented writers, groundbreaking scientists, incredible athletes, bold entrepreneurs—all these types are rare. Rarer still, and all the more impressive, are those who manage to achieve these feats without losing control of themselves, without becoming slaves to their ambition, to their careers, to their urges," explains Holiday.

The secret to all this lies not only in self-discipline but flexibility. To be flexible in every sense of the word is an enormous challenge. It requires us to live and let live while resting comfortably in our own traditions and allowing new and improved ones to be created. It also requires us to adjust as the world, and our position within it changes – remaining true to our principles without becoming bitter, an outcast, or falling victim to failure. "Rigidity is fragility. Formlessness is unbreakable." It's all so much easier said than done.

The four virtues are about instilling good character in ourselves through the art of self-discipline. Self-discipline – and through it, temperance – must be cultivated. It's something you can only prove by the life you lead. "We can learn about virtue all we want, but when we get to the crossroads, there we will have to make a choice. Self-control must be observed physically. It must be embodied mentally. It must be rendered magisterially when our moment comes. It's our decision what this will look like. Not just once, but a thousand times in life. Not just in the past and the future but right now, today."

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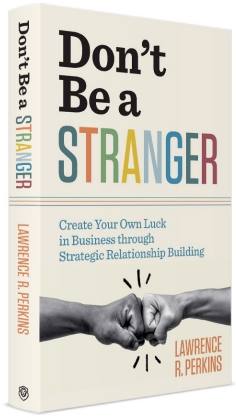
# Don't Be a Stranger

Lawrence R. Perkins

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# Don't Be a Stranger

## Create Your Own Luck in Business through Strategic Relationship Building




*by* **Lawrence R. Perkins**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you feel like some people have all the luck in business, but you are never one of those people, no matter how hard you try? Or do you feel like you could work for hours and hours and still not get that promotion or account that you have been working for? If so, you're not alone. The issue to this problem is finding a way to create your own luck instead of waiting on others to create it for you. ***Don't Be A Stranger*** explains exactly how you can become one of those lucky business people all by creating and maintaining strategic relationships.

In this book, Lawrence R. Perkins explains how you can succeed in business by creating your own luck through strategic relationship building. He explains that even though the world is getting more digitalized, business is still conducted with people you trust and like. By building strategic relationships, you can put yourself in the position to succeed while still maintaining a healthy life to work ratio. Written for introverts and extroverts alike, *Don't Be A Stranger* teaches you how to use your relationships to create your own luck and succeed in business without working harder.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The key to business luck is relationships.
- The importance of not being a stranger.
- How to be strategic in your relationship building.
- Sowing seeds and patience are crucial for beneficial relationship building.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

Many business people struggle and seem to work non-stop while seeing little fruit from their labor. For example, you may work overtime, maybe even set company records or standards. Despite all of this work, you still may not get where you want to be in your career. Whenever you feel stuck in this way, it is really difficult not to feel jealous when looking around at some of the luckier businessmen around you. You may begin to resent your boss who comes in at 9:30 every morning while you have been there since 7:00.

Most people start to accredit professional success to luck, not hard work. Unfortunately, this is a sad reality for many people: no matter how hard they work, the luck of someone else gives them the edge in the office. This leaves thousands if not millions of business people stuck in an endless maze of trying to achieve financial success only to fail.

### Todd's Story

Believe it or not, but a successful private investor named Todd credits much of his current success in business to his email getting hacked. That's right. While most email hackings cause people a headache, it provided Todd an opportunity to connect with people from his past and experience professional success that he never saw coming.

What happened was Todd's email got hacked, and the hackers sent an email to everyone on his contact list. Three thousand emails were sent out, requesting for his contacts to wire money to an account in China. Luckily, people knew that it was a hack, and nobody fell for the scheme. Even more lucky, dozens of contacts responded, informing Todd of the hacking, and requesting to catch up after years of not talking.

Todd was happy to catch up with many of his old correspondences and friends, leaving his social calendar busy for weeks. To his surprise, many of these contacts turned into business opportunities for both him and his firm. Some lucky break!

### Meet Lawrence

Much like Todd, Lawrence had a similar experience. Only instead of an email hacking, Lawrence's lucky break was a miserable cocktail party.

Just six days after starting his business, Lawrence went to a cheesy luncheon where he got a business card of Gabriel, a lawyer in the area. Little did he know it at the time, but this business card would lead him to form other relationships and create a successful business.

The next day, Lawrence immediately emailed Gabriel using the business card he was given. From Gabriel, Lawrence met Robert, who introduced him to Lindsey, who introduced him to Will. From the four of them, Lawrence received tens of millions of dollars of business.

## Luck Explained

After hearing Todd's story and thinking on his own business success, Lawrence started reflecting on business luck in general. Soon, he realized that the key to business luck wasn't just waiting for someone else to make your business dreams happen.

Instead, business luck is up for you to create. No, that does not mean working harder, at least not in the traditional sense. In contrast, you create your own luck by strategic relationship building. In Todd's story, his extensive contact list and meeting with old acquaintances from his past opened up dozens more opportunities than before. Likewise, Lawrence's success was rooted in simply introducing himself to a lawyer named Gabriel, who then gave him other introductions for his business.

### The Business World Today

It is easy to assume that the modern world and all of it's digital growth means that business relies more so on facts and emotionless decisions than classic relationship building. That could not be further from the truth.

Surprisingly, the business world has changed very little despite modern advances. To this day, most people conduct business with the people they like and trust. In other words, much of business is based on strategic relationship building.

What this means for business people is that relationships are a crucial part of professional success. No matter how digitalized the world becomes, you cannot ignore the relationships you build or maintain, unless you want to get stuck in the maze. If you work endlessly but ignore relationships, you cannot get anywhere in life, not even in your career. You must incorporate strategic relationship building to create the professional life you dream of.

## What About Introverts?

Whether you are an introvert or extrovert, this advice applies to you. Luckily, you don't have to be over the top or extroverted by nature to successfully build strategic relation-

ships. In fact, those with introverted tendencies succeed just as much as those with extroverted ones.

Take Lawrence for example. Lawrence is a self proclaimed introvert. Even though he has an outgoing and gregarious nature, he would much rather stay at home and watch Netflix if left to his own devices.

Even before going to any event, he and his wife often joke about how they would rather stay home. After the event, however, they both are happy they went, having had a good time and created more connections.

### Don't Be A Stranger

Don't get us wrong, nobody likes being in a room full of complete strangers. Whenever you go to different events, however, being surrounded by people you don't know gives you an opportunity to make connections, hence turning a stranger into a connection.

Whenever you find yourself surrounded by people you don't know, don't be a stranger. Walk up to them with friendliness and eagerness and simply reach your hand out to them. Introduce yourself and let your relationship take off from there. Though it may be scary at first, the second you introduce yourself to the stranger, they are not a stranger anymore. That person who was once a stranger may become your best friend or business partner.

In other words, just by introducing yourself and forcing yourself to not be a stranger, you are no longer alone in the room and you create a valuable connection that may benefit you later on. Simply by following this advice everywhere in life, you can unlock basically limitless professional opportunities.

### It's Really That Simple

At this point, I can probably guess what you're thinking. Professional success cannot be that simple. If it were, everyone would simply put themselves out there, making one connection at a time. Though it is true very few people take advantage of this tip, it really is that simple. Just by reaching out to people you already know and forming new relationships, you put yourself in the position to be one of those lucky business people.

After all, it makes sense. Would you trust someone's financial business if you didn't like them or thought them to be an untrustworthy person? Probably not. The same goes for everyone else. People want to do business with people they like and trust. It's really that simple.

## Don't Just Be An Empty Suit

There is one catch to this simple tip: you can't just be an empty suit. In other words, you have to actually create and maintain valuable relationships that extend into the business room. Without the necessary relationship and business skills, there is no way to create relationships that are beneficial to your business.

What this means is that you need to have the skills necessary for your own profession. If you are an entertainer, be memorable and make sure to entertain. In contrast, if you're an accountant, count well.

If you are just an empty suit, your relationships will be nothing. You must be able to back up your relationships with necessary skill and abilities. Make sure that your skills specifically match the job which you are selling or offering. Luckily, you're not an empty suit, making this step easy for you!

### Getting Into the Nitty Gritty

With the proper skills in check to become not just an empty suit, it is time to really get into the nitty gritty of becoming a good strategic relationship builder. Without the proper relationship building tools, it can be impossible to translate your eagerness and communication to others in a way that is beneficial to either party.

First and foremost, realize that you're already good at building relationships. Every day, you make connections, whether it be at the grocery store or picking up your kid from karate. Simply think of how you connect with people in real life and apply that within your professional life as well.

Thumb through a contact book or contact list in your phone to find out who you already know. Use the relationships you already have as starting opportunities to plant seeds and continue the relationship. Just by being intentional with your relationships you can go along way. People just want to know that you care and notice them. Simply reaching out will do a whole lot of good, and all it takes is a little bit more intention than before.

## Be Strategic

Every relationship has a natural progression. What this means is that you need to be aware of these progressive stages to benefit both you and the other party.

When it comes to building relationships for business purposes, you need to be strategic in who you choose. For

example, some people are simply not as interested in your business or services as others. With this in mind, be strategic in your relationship building process.

If you find someone who would be interested now or in the future in your services, don't be a stranger and reach out. Even if the conversation doesn't go anywhere at first, it is important to sow seeds with people. After all, flowers don't grow overnight. You must plant the seeds, water, and nurture them until they grow overtime. Strategic relationship building is the same way. You strategically sow your seeds and then continue to nurture the relationship from there.

From one seed, you can grow your network dramatically. This is known as the transitive property of guys. You know one guy who knows a guy who knows another guy. Just by planting and sowing the seed with the first guy, you can be opened up to a transitive network of opportunities.

## Offer And Ask For Help

One thing that people don't realize goes a long way is simply offering or asking for help. Offering help shows a person that you care about them, while asking for their help shows that you trust and value them.

To keep your relationships growing after you sow seeds, offer help anytime you see an issue or the other person complains. This is especially true if your business directly relates to the problem at hand. Be generous with your help!

Similarly, don't be afraid to ask for help. You can't expect a relationship of yours to benefit you if you aren't willing to be open and honest about what you need. If you ask your connections for help, most of them will be eager to assist you in some way.

### Patience, Padawan

By continuing to be intentional and earnest in your strategic relationship building, you will start to receive more of that business luck you have been looking for. Before you get too eager, you have to remember patience, padawan. Just as a flower doesn't bloom overnight, neither will your success from your strategic relationship building. Be patient and continue to nurture your seeds as they grow and benefit you more and more.

For some people, the benefits will seem to sprout up overnight. For others, you may need to wait months or so before your relationships make a lasting impact on your business. No matter what, just remember to be patient and continue intentionally pursuing your strategic relationships.

## Conclusion

Just by strategic relationship building, you can stop depending on other people for your business success and sow your own seeds for business luck. Just remember to bring skills and intentionality that both attract relationships and prove that your business is worth their time.

From there, just sow your seeds and be patient, always remembering that businesses are built on relationships. You are now the next lucky business person causing envy in your office!



Lawrence R. Perkins founded what is now SierraConstellation Partners at age twenty-nine with few connections and very little capital. Lawrence grew SCP into a nationwide management consulting group serving nearly 100 large companies in their times of most dire need. Today, Lawrence is a recognized industry leader who's spoken at major industry conferences and has been cited by the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, CNN, CNBC, and the Washington Post. Outside of work, Lawrence has built a remarkable life with his wife and daughter that includes interests ranging from reading and writing, singing and dancing, to cooking and running.

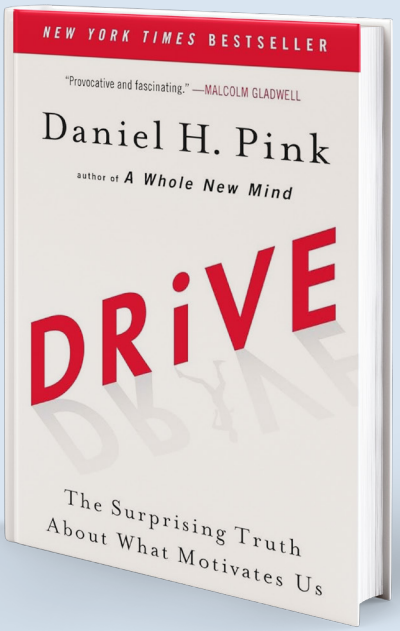
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# Drive

Daniel Pink

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Drive

### The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

*By Daniel H. Pink*

Daniel H. Pink is the author of A Whole New Mind, a long-running New York Times and BusinessWeek best-seller that has been translated into 20 languages. Besides writing two other best-selling books, The Adventures of Johnny Bunko and Free Agent Nation, Pink has contributed to The New York Times, Harvard Business Review, Fast Company and Wired.

Riverhead Books, © 2009

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# A Better Choice Than Carrots and Sticks

Human beings have been studying how people can be motivated to do better work since the dawn of the industrial age. But for the latest results of the most important experiments in motivation — and the ways they can be applied in the modern workplace — author Daniel Pink delivers an impressive collection of evidence in his latest book, ***Drive***.

According to the latest science, we've moved a long way from treating people like beasts of burden, who were once dri-ven with the promise of a carrot or the threat of a stick.

In an earlier life, Pink worked in the White House as the chief speechwriter for Vice President Al Gore. In that role, Pink became adept at turning a phrase and making profound insights under-standable. In the speeches he wrote and in all the books he has written since, his skills at relating stories to an audience are apparent. Ultimately, the stories he tells lead readers in smarter directions.

## The Need for New Rules

In his first two books, ***A Whole New Mind*** (2001) and the ***Free Agent Nation*** (2005), Pink asserted how our thinking must change if we want to adapt to the work needs of the 21st century. While examining the latest science and business case studies, he was able to show how people have moved out of a time when industrial-era business practices were useful and into a better place even beyond the time of the corporate information worker.

A new set of rules is needed, and the success of Pink's books shows that he has a gift for envisioning what those rules should be. He is on to something, and employee-manager relationships will never be the same.

In 2008, Pink even wrote a business book that combined his principles for a better work life with the Japanese *manga* format to create a business book/comic book hybrid titled ***The Adventures of Johnny Bunko***. In that unique, informative and entertaining book, he offered his trade-mark career advice in a groundbreaking new style.

The following year, Pink returned to his love of scientific research and its applica-tion in the working world with *Drive*. Tackling the elusive topic of workplace motivation is no easy task, but with piles of academic and business studies to back up his ideas, Pink has creat-ed a fascinating tool kit that any employer, manager or business leader can use to evolve out of the 20th-centu-ry thinking that actually hinders workplace motivation.

## Monkey Puzzles Promote Revelation

The research that lays the foundation for the concepts and advice Pink delivers in *Drive* started back in the 1940s when a professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin named Harry F. Harlow was studying the behavior of eight rhesus monkeys in his laboratory.

Although he set out to understand more about the ways in which they learn, he discovered a few important keys to human motivation along the way.

First, Harlow put a simple mechanical puzzle into each of the monkeys' cages to see how they reacted. The puzzle required the monkey to perform a series of simple steps to open a latch.

Instead of being compelled by either biological or extrinsic motivations, it seemed to Harlow that the monkeys were compelled by a *third* drive: an "intrinsic" motivation that provided its own rewards. In other words, these creatures actually enjoyed completing the task. Solving the puzzle was enjoyable enough to pro-vide its own reward.

Harlow wondered what would happen if he were to add some extrinsic rewards to the equation. Surely the monkeys would perform the task even faster and better. But the scientist discovered something even more inter-esting: The monkeys made more errors and solved the puzzles slower when they were offered food as a reward for solving them.

In other words, extrinsic rewards actually disrupted their performance. This was a new discovery indeed. Harlow hypothesized that this third drive — intrinsic motivation that comes from the sheer joy of completing a task — can be "as efficient in facilitating learning" as the other two drives, if not more.

## Edward Deci's Discovery

Although most people at the time believed that carrots and sticks and other types of external rewards and pun-ishments were the best ways to drive human behavior, Harlow's work indicated that they were all wrong! This was a radical theory back in the 1940s. In fact, it was so radical that Harlow moved his subsequent research in a completely different direction. Throughout *Drive*, Pink explores studies from a variety of other people whose work helps to support Harlow's theory.

Most scientists did not catch on to the deeper implications of Harlow's monkey study right away, but another researcher eventually picked up the torch and ran with it in 1969. That researcher was Edward Deci, a Carnegie Mellon University psychology graduate student.

Deci wanted to find out how pay influences the way people work over time, so he gathered some men and women for a study. Test participants were divides into two groups. Those in one group were never paid to solve a challenging puzzle. The other group went unpaid on the first day, was paid on the second day and was not paid on the third day. After the three-day experiment, Deci made an important discovery. He found that the people who were never paid to work on the puzzle actually worked on the puzzle longer each day than they did on the preceding day. But those who had been paid on the second day but went unpaid the third day actually worked less on the puzzle than they had during the time when they were being paid.

Deci concluded, "When money is used as an external reward for some activity, the subjects lose intrinsic inter-est for the activity." He found that rewards can create a boost in activity, but that boost eventually wears off and can actually reduce motivation over time.

## When Do Carrots Work?

Many more scientific experiments have been per-formed since both Harlow's and Deci's original studies of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In *Drive*, Pink expands on their findings while proffering the idea that the carrot-and-stick approach that has been favored by managers for decades can have negative effects on the motivation it was intended to create. But, in the name of fair and balanced reporting, Pink also offers a few cir-cumstances when that approach actually does work.

When do carrots work? Studies show that for simple, short-term tasks such as stuffing envelopes, paying peo-ple well to do it is actually a great way to get them to complete the task. Pink explains that acknowledging that the task is dull, explaining the importance of the boring task and giving people a sense of autonomy over its completion can be useful motivators in this situation.

## 'Type I' Behavior

After Pink firmly makes the point that carrots and sticks are usually the wrong way to go when trying to motivate people to do more compelling work, he pro-poses a new way to think about motivation. This new perspective on motivation is based around something Pink calls "Type I" behavior. (The "I" stands for "intrinsic.") This type of behavior is a counterbalance to the "Type X" behavior ("X" stands for "extrinsic") that has been the ruling theory on motivation in the work-place for many, many years. Connecting this approach to business and working life with a multitude of examples from the world of behavioral science and psychology, Pink describes how a better understanding of our "third" drive can help us better direct our own lives, create new things, learn more and improve our work and lives. Pink writes that Type I behavior "con-cerns itself less with the external rewards to which an activity leads and more with the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself."

One of the benefits of Pink's ideas about moving people from Type X behaviors toward Type I behaviors is the important

> . . . managers who tap into the power of autonomy not only enhance performance levels at work, but they also increase employee job satisfaction.

concept of work satisfaction. The formula for creating this satisfaction, which Pink describes throughout *Drive*, is made up of three vital ele-ments: autonomy, which is our desire to be self-direct-ed; mastery, which is our drive to improve what we do; and purpose, which involves our desire to be part of something that is larger than ourselves.

## The Importance of Autonomy

The first of these three important ways to tap into the power of intrinsic motivation is autonomy, which pro-vides a sense of personal choice that helps people feel good about the work they are doing. When we feel autonomous, we feel better about ourselves and our lives. A sense of autonomy, Pink explains, also has a powerful effect on our performance and our attitude. This theory is supported by a variety of behavioral sci-ence studies, including those by Deci, Harlow, researcher Richard Ryan and positive psychology inno-vator Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

In *Drive*, Pink describes how this new perspective on motivation is beginning to spread among many brilliant scientists and open-minded business executives. One of those executives is Jeff Gunther, the CEO of a computer software and hardware company called Meddius. Gunther is one of a new breed of forward-thinking business leaders who believe in the power of autonomy. That's why he allows the people who work for him in Charlottesville, VA, to do their work on their own terms. Pink explains how Gunther successfully applies the work of Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson, two for-mer human resources executives from Best Buy, to his people at Meddius. Ressler and Thompson are the inno-vators behind "results-only work environments," or ROWEs.

Meddius is built around the ROWE principle that says employees don't need schedules, they just need to complete their work. How and when they perform their work is up to them. Once the people at Meddius figured out the benefits of a ROWE, Gunther discovered that productivity increased, stress decreased and people were generally happier. After experimenting with ROWE during a trial period, Gunther found the program so successful that he moved his company to ROWE permanently.

Pink explains that managers who tap into the power of autonomy not only enhance performance levels at work, but they also increase employee job satisfaction. He also points out that one study at Cornell University found that companies that offered autonomy to their employees "grew at four times the rate of the control-oriented firms and had one-third the turnover."

The key to making autonomy work comes from what Pink calls "the four T's": *task, time, technique and team*. He explains that people work better when they have more control over their tasks. They can make choices about when they perform those tasks. They can also choose how those tasks get done as well as self-assemble the groups of people needed to perform more complex tasks.

## Defining and Understanding Mastery

The second part in the trilogy of elements that lead to more motivation is the concept of *mastery*. When people are pursuing mastery, they are fully engaged and working hard to become better at something that matters to them.

Pink writes that "flow" is an essential part of mastery. When we are in our personal flow, time disappears and we really enjoy our work. While in flow, we are chal-lenged, but not so much that we become frustrated. The task is also not so easy that we become bored. We are in flow when we are doing something that is perfectly matched to our abilities, yet we are also learning along the way.

While most employers and managers might not be able to facilitate flow every day for every employee, Pink writes that it is important to try to create as many opportunities as possible for an employee to work with-in his or her flow during the workday so he or she will remain more engaged and satisfied.

Pink writes that there are three principles that should be considered when applying mastery to a work situa-tion. First, mastery requires a person to see his or her abilities as improvable. It is a mindset. Second, mastery requires a little discomfort. Deliberate practice is not easy, so pursuing mastery will always require vast effort. And the third rule of mastery is that it is actually impos-sible to fully achieve. It is this illusive nature of mastery that keeps it somewhat frustrating yet captivating. That's the mystery that makes it so appealing.

## Connect With a Sense of Purpose

The final element in Pink's three-part motivation equation is *purpose*. We all need to find deeper meaning in our work.

The autonomy we create and the mastery we pursue must also connect to something bigger than ourselves to be truly satisfying. Whether this means creating a more meaningful legacy for those who will follow us on the planet or having a greater impact on the peo-ple around us today, Pink points out that research shows that a cause that is greater than ourselves can be one of the most powerful motivators of all. When leaders and organizations find meaningful ways to add purpose to the work of their people, they improve that work and create better organizations.

For example, one study of physicians at prestigious workplaces such as the Mayo Clinic shows that people in high-pressure jobs can cope with that pressure better when they are given a chance to do things in their jobs that are more meaningful to them. When a trial policy was put in place that allowed doctors to spend one day each workweek doing the work that had the most pur-pose to them, such as patient care, research or commu-nity service, they suffered half the burnout rate of other doctors who did not get to engage in those activities.

Pink shows that many studies and the policies that take them into account prove how effective the "purpose motive" can be when it is applied in many types of settings. Those studies demonstrate that short-term goals cannot motivate people over the long haul like the power of looking at the big picture and putting love and attention into the things that truly matter to us.

## A Better Way

When all three of these elements are combined in the workplace, the research found in Drive shows that peo-ple are more motivated to do their work because they are enjoying more satisfying work and careers along the way.

All the studies profiled in *Drive* point business leaders and organiza-tions in a new direction; they can improve their performance by shifting their management tactics and tech-niques to better reflect the latest dis-coveries made by forward-looking researchers and the experiences of executives who have taken their work seriously. Moving in this new direc-tion means moving away from old habits and outdated ideas that once dominated the business landscape. The point is that the carrots and sticks of yesteryear could actually hinder high performance.

The new world of work that Pink describes in Drive is built on leaders finding innovative and creative ways to tap into deep-seated desires: the need to be autonomous in our work, to get better at what we like to do and to find greater purpose in life.

When the leaders of today and tomorrow get better at offering all three of these things, they will begin to reap the benefits of the science and real-world experiences that Pink has compiled in his latest and most thought-provoking book yet. We are not donkeys. The time of carrots and sticks has come to an end.

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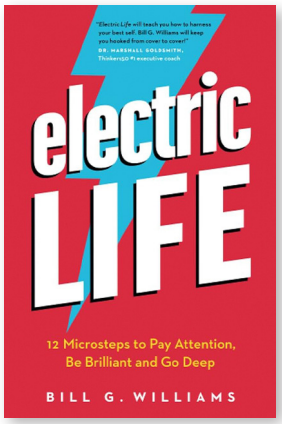
# Electric Life

Bill G. Williams

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# Electric Life

## 12 Microsteps to Pay Attention, Be Brilliant and Go Deep




*by* **Bill G. Williams**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

"Where do some people get their energy from?" If you've ever asked this question while looking at some people who light up every room they walk in, effortlessly spread their positivity, perform every task with immense enthusiasm, and carry tons of energy – this book unlocks the perfect answer.

The book ***Electric Life: 12 Microsteps to Pay Attention, Be Brilliant and Go Deep*** unlocks ultra-effective, but super-simple steps to help you tap into your reservoir of energy to reach your full potential.

By blending personal anecdotes with research-backed insights and tips, Author Bill G. Williams helps you nurture a growth mindset, create your own luck, celebrate your mistakes, and bring value to your every life, work, and community.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Ask the right questions about yourself and build a growth mindset.
- Why you should make "mis-takes" and celebrate them.
- How to intentionally create your own luck.
- How to pay attention, be brilliant, and go deep.

## Introduction

In this book, I'm giving you twelve tiny steps forward. I'm calling them microsteps because they aren't huge life changes that will require hours of your time to master. Not one of these microsteps is particularly difficult. I want you to gain energy, not lose it in the process!

To find that energy, we need to pay attention, be brilliant, and go deep. This book is about you, and what choices you can make based on knowing where your energy balance lies right now. It's about who you are, and the disconnect between that person and the person you want to be.

In the pages ahead, we will talk about our energy burning out, versus having the energy to go and do what we want to do now. We absolutely can create enough energy working so that we feel good every day, and so we have the energy to go and play after work. In fact, you can leave work feeling like you have more energy than you arrived with!

## Part 1: Pay Attention

### Chapter 1: Find Your Hurricane

Many of us have heard the legend that, engineering-wise, if you consider the weight of a bumblebee in comparison to the size of its wings, it should be impossible for that bumblebee to fly. But the fact is that bumblebees' wings are almost magic.

When bees fly, their wings flap in a rotating pattern known as the dynamic stall. This pattern creates a little gap in the airflow around them, lowering the air pressure. In that air pressure gap, bumblebees' wings operate at the perfect ratio to their bodies' shapes and sizes. So, bumblebees are, in effect, tiny little hurricanes. They bring the energy of a hurricane to every single flower they touch. All they have to do is show up! Just like bumblebees, we all have our own hurricanes.

Keep a list of all your accomplishments – a done list! In the corporate world, a company can only pay for your body to show up. Your job is to show up and be ready to work on time and to accomplish your tasks. Always have your resume on your desktop and always keep it up-to-date. Volunteer your ideas and be honest while doing it. Maintain a growth mindset. Ask questions and diversify your thoughts. Finally, remember why you're passionate about your job!

### Chapter 2: Choose Your Balloon

Human beings tend to interpret events as either good luck or bad luck. Often, we do this unconsciously. When we interpret events as good luck, we're usually happy about an outcome. When something bad happens, we think of it as bad luck. But there isn't any luck. Not really. There's just us, and how we perceive, use, and represent what we experience in the world, and even who we are. Good luck or bad luck – always question which it is you're experiencing and seek the other perspective.

Use your superhero power by being curious! Find out what events, workplaces, or social groups made you feel the most engaged and valued for your contributions. Detect who is in control of the conversations where you feel seen and heard.

Ask yourself, "How can I rethink my environment, even in the smallest way, so that I feel more alive and energized? What are the things I want to add to my life, to have an impact, and to change my balloon? What are the things I want to remove from my life so that they don't change my balloon? How can I get one percent more comfortable in my role at work?

### Chapter 3: "FINE" is Not a Feeling

The worst part of not knowing what we're really feeling is that the only lies for which we are truly punished are those we tell ourselves. So, before you can show up, you must know yourself. Check in with yourself and find out how you're feeling. Feeling just fine, or just neutral, about what's going on around you is, I believe, a form of lying to yourself. It's risking putting yourself into a mindset where you're not allowing yourself to see the whole picture of who you are.

People who understand and perceive their own emotions are better at understanding other people's body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. Through emotional intelligence, we can build a greater ability to understand ourselves and other people. We can do this through the practice of empathy. In fact, when we feel empathy for others, we learn faster. It's a mindset neuroscientists call prosociality. We can learn emotional intelligence from the inside out through three simple choices:

- Choice 1: Thumbs up or thumbs down? There's a fine line between a thumbs-up "fine" and a thumbs-down "fine." Ask yourself: am I okay? Am I good? Choose one: thumbs up or thumbs down to know what you're authentically feeling right now.
- Choice 2: How Much? Ask yourself: how much of a thumbs-up or -down am I sensing in my body right now?

- Choice 3: What's the impact? Ask yourself: What's the effect that you're having on other people when you're feeling like this? Being aware of the impact of your feelings is the best way to create energetic potential.

Finally, ask yourself: Why are you choosing to feel your feelings? Can you choose to feel a different way? Focus on what makes you feel the way you want to feel.

## Part 2: Be Brilliant

### Chapter 4: Plug In

Your energy can be converted to different forms, but it can't be created or destroyed. When we're not using our energy, it's still right there, in potential form. We can do anything with our energy.

Decide what your desired results are – both at work and in life. Find out what breathes life into you at work. Tapping into your potential energy starts with plugging in. Whenever you go, connect to your energy source and recharge.

Give the energy you want to receive. Do you remember why you got into the industry you're in right now? There are always reasons to be passionate about what you do. Ask yourself: why is my work so important to me?

We gain energy when we're honest, transparent, and truthful – when we give something in exchange for others' energy, no matter how small it may be. So, if there are still reasons for you to be passionate about your work, start there. Remember these reasons, practice them, and put energy into them.

### Chapter 5: Be Self-ful

Self-recognition is the beauty of allowing yourself to imagine what's possible and fully move into a growth mindset that you have the capacity to build because it inspires you to show up. Don't think of noticing yourself, and, indeed, putting yourself first, as selfish. In fact, it's critical to your own life to be self-ful (not selfish). When you're happy with your life choices, you're involved. And involvement breeds commitment! You'll be passionate about clocking in every moment. So, take care of yourself and put your own oxygen mask first before you start helping others. Write down, in detail, which activities that you choose for yourself give you the most energy.

Get a good night's sleep, know how your body works best, and stay hydrated. When you take some downtime, sleep, look at your nutrition and nourishment, and remember to check in with how your body is coping with everyday stresses, you naturally feel better.

When your body and mind perform optimally, you get the energy to challenge yourself and gauge the kind of energy you're leaving in the room so you can constantly learn from yourself and get better every step of the way.

### Chapter 6: Power Your Curiosity

When a person is in an environment or culture that doesn't recognize and reward them for their contribution, they will disengage. This is why it's critical for you to intentionally choose to only become a part of work cultures where you can be engaged. Know what you want and be honest, transparent, and truthful about it.

Reward your desired behavior. Neuroscience shows us that most of what we do is influenced and controlled by the subconscious mind. We live on a kind of autopilot, which is both a good thing and a challenging thing. Autonomous processes are running in the background, and they help us navigate the repetitive parts of life (like making phone calls or driving a car). Our familiar choices are made repeatedly, and they become legacy patterns. Often, these patterns extend to our personality and other life characteristics. Genetic memory, collective frequencies of others around us, and personal habits become repeated and ingrained.

To gain energy, we must dial up a superhuman power of curiosity. We mustn't hesitate to ask questions and be curious. Our curiosity can refine what we want to do and where we need to make energy-giving changes. So, ask yourself: what am I doing out of habit? Do I really like doing it? Do I feel vulnerable to constant critique from others or from myself? Am I feeling managed, rather than led? What might I do differently? How would it feel to try on a different approach?

### Chapter 7: Celebrate Mis-takes

Mis-takes, not mistakes, are new chances and opportunities for learning, in however many takes you need. Kids, for example, will take a chance on almost anything. They are energy personified. As adults, we know that if we lose this sense of fun, and if we're not prepared to be wrong, we'll never come up with anything original, innovative, or groundbreaking.

So make mis-takes. Discover, by listening and thinking creatively, new and better ways of doing what you've always done. Remember: all of what makes us human has to come to

work. All of what makes us human has to come home as well. All of what makes us human is perfect in its imperfection.

### Chapter 8: Practice Pausitivity

Pausitivity is the art of pausing, observing, and taking it all in. It enables us to be grateful for what we have. Pausitivity is our chance to conserve our energy for a moment. In fact, reflection, according to experts, gets us one step closer to realizing our passions at work. Discover your truth and say it. Own it. Take a pause and observe, whenever you want to, to make things better. Neurological research shows that active self-reflection, where you take the time to reflect on who you are and what matters to you, allows people to build connections between old and new ideas. At work, this kind of mindful approach can directly improve performance on the job. Focus on what you know. This could include your life experiences and what you've achieved and experienced in the past. Remember, if you could do it then, you can do it now.

## Part 3: Go Deep

### Chapter 9: Show Me You

It is important to see people and notice the things around them that may be important. Communication is about being understood in the way that we intend to express ourselves. Employers, now more than ever, are requiring potential employees to converse with clarity. Communication skills are the cornerstone of effective problem-solving and are useful in both personal and professional settings.

Find what's special about the people you work with. Let them know what you value. Create a safe space for people. Have zero judgment about them. Start turning outward and invite a deep witnessing and presence with others. If we can start turning outward and invite deep witnessing and presence with each other, we can create more mutual security, more innovation, and more peak experiences. All in all, we can create more happiness.

### Chapter 10: Live Giving

What if we can give gifts as our authentic, true selves and not our manipulative, forced selves? Why? Because giving feels good. And when you give, don't expect anything in return. By gifts, I don't mean giving birthday presents. Instead, giving, according to me, is being able to create positive, life-giving energy between two people. Don't just give a present. Be present. And give because it feels good to give without expecting anything in return.

### Chapter 11: See the Back Row

Deep listening and leaning into a conversation are two important elements of being able to gain clarity. Connecting with people feels like home. It energizes us because we find the link between our stories and our spirits. There's a shared foundation between those of us with entirely different lived experiences, that comes to the forefront and makes our next steps together easier to navigate. If you don't have all the lights on in the room, you can't see the back row; the same goes for the front row. And the same goes for you, yourself. Let's all avoid RJF (resting jerk face) if we can. Listen, ask questions, clarify, and then respond. Find hidden voices and stories, and in them, a source for new meaning.

### Chapter 12: Cross the River

We are constantly in a state of confluence with those around us. Confluence is about realizing what intrinsically motivates us, paying attention to what intrinsically motivates other people, and going with that flow. But sometimes, it is not about other people at all. Sure, we are constantly in a state of confluence with those we meet. We can add to others' energy with our commitment, knowledge, and joy. We can also bring our muddy waters and dampen their enthusiasm and add to their fears, as they can do for us. And then we might start to think: Are other people stealing our energy? Maybe! If the waters are always muddy, that feels like a problem. So, retain your power and don't carry someone else's burden. Keep your river clean, while purifying others' and always self-acknowledge your growth.

## Conclusion

We have the ability to use our potential energy and translate it into self-ful action. I want you to leave work with energy, so that you can live this one precious life beautifully, floating in your own personal hurricane. And if there aren't still reasons to be passionate about what you're doing every day, then something has to change. Remember: your energy can be converted to different forms, but it can't be created or destroyed. I've given you twelve tiny steps forward. Start by taking one. Show up!



He's called "Electric Bill" for a reason. **Bill G. Williams** is on a mission to shock us out of our static daily routines. He is known for his unique brand of electrified methodologies for the workplace, and is now offering them to you in this book. Bill caters his solution-based strategies to individuals and corporations in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. This is Bill's first book. Tap into his energy; it's positively electric.

***Electric Life: 12 Microsteps to Pay Attention, Be Brilliant and Go Deep*** by Bill G Williams
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# Empower Yourself

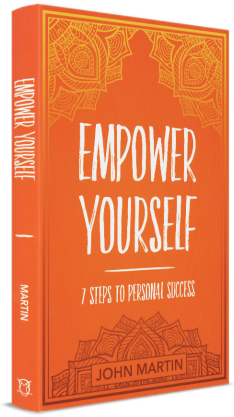
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Personal Growth

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# Empower Yourself

## 7 Steps to Personal Success




*by* **John Martin**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Success is not quick and easy, but it is attainable if you learn to push yourself out of your comfort zone and risk-free life. Empower Yourself is a guide to mapping your goals, becoming highly self-aware of your strengths and weaknesses, overcoming your fears, and learning to be present and positive.

Author John Martin explains how following the steps outlined in the book will lead you to create the life you want, one decision at a time. If you want to make a change in your life, if you are willing to look within and act on what you learn, you can change your circumstances. By setting small, attainable goals and sticking with the process, all the success you dream of is within your grasp. Now is the time to make the decision to follow your dreams.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to set goals.
- How to get over the fear of failure.
- How to control your mindset and weed out negativity.
- How to stay motivated.

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

## Assess Your Life

Write down your definition of success. Consider what your work, your primary relationships, and your overall lifestyle would look like. This is your ultimate goal. Whatever it is, your ultimate goal should be big enough to be challenging and inspire a sense of fulfillment.

Think about what made you happy as a child. Take a look at the kind of entertainment you like. What do you read or watch? This life examination can lead to the discovery of an interest that if pursued, could change your direction and give you renewed purpose.

Think about where you are now. Is what you are doing now in line with your ultimate goal? Will it lead to your ideal lifestyle?

Accept personal responsibility for your life. Even if there is a reason to blame others, overcome the impulse. It is not your boss that is causing you to be miserable, you are choosing to work there. If you're unhappy in a relationship, it's because you haven't taken the steps to improve it or leave it, if necessary. When you cut away the excuses, this is the cold truth. The good news is that if failures are your fault, then your success can come by the same method—your own choices. Once you accept personal responsibility for your circumstances, you can take steps to change them.

Be honest about your failures, habits, and current situation. Think seriously about why you do what you do for a living. It's critical to learn and embrace your reason why. When we are acting from consistent, authentic, and clear motives, we are getting closer to doing that thing we were meant to do.

Often, your self-assessment will reveal the need to make a significant change. Heed this. If you are assessing your life and find it wanting, make the decision to follow your dreams.

Achieving your ultimate goal means setting smaller, daily goals. Keep them attainable and in line with your ultimate goal. If you want to look for a more fulfilling job, your first small goal is to spend time updating your resume. Tomorrow, update your LinkedIn profile. The next day, send out five resumes. Little goals lead to bigger opportunities. This is why it is important to take action, any action, as long as it is in alignment with your ultimate goal. Use your why and your ultimate goal as guideposts to avoid getting distracted.

If you feel discouraged because you're not where you want to be, don't despair. It is never too late to try again.

## Self-Awareness

No matter where you are in life, when you know who you are, you have more control over it. Self-awareness takes effort and time, but it's a game-changer. When you know who you are, you waste less time thinking about what you should do; you do it, and you feel more confident about your decisions.

Journaling is a fantastic way to gain perspective. Document your thoughts throughout the day if possible. If you don't like to write, use your smartphone to record audio or video. You'll see your likes and dislikes, what motivates and excites you, and what causes you to procrastinate. Over a period of time, you will be able to recognize certain aspects about yourself and then accept or change them.

Some roadblocks that get in the way of self-awareness, include dwelling on the past and getting tempted by bad habits. Be thankful for your current opportunities rather than focusing on the past. In order to gain control of your life, you need to gain control of your impulses. If you are wasting money and time on bad habits and addictions, then you are losing resources that could be going toward your dream. Keep your goal in your mind and note what triggers a bad habit.

Poll close friends and family about your positive and negative traits to gain better understanding of how you appear to others. Ask what they see as your skills and what you are bad at; ask what they wish you knew about yourself that you don't. This can be uncomfortable, but useful.

Using all this data, you can learn your values, strengths and weaknesses, your goal, and your motivations. Now, act on what you learn. Double down on your strengths and work to minimize your weaknesses. Introspection will take you part of the way, but action is important. And remember, this process is never finished. Your new perspective will allow you to continue to set and reach goals.

## No Parking in Fear

Maybe you realize that big changes need to be made in order for you to achieve your goal. Often, this is the point at which people tend to get stuck. They know what should be done, but they stay parked in fear. There is no way to get rid of fear, but you can overcome it. Sometimes we overestimate the bad consequences of a change while downplaying the possible benefits. If you continually remind yourself of the positives and your goal, you can act. Eventually, you will become less fearful and hesitant to make decisions.

Failure is to be embraced, not feared. If you are not failing at something at least once in a while, you may be parked in fear. Sometimes it takes failure to learn, do better, and grow with the next effort, which increases your chances of success. It's the trying, failing, and trying again that eventually gets you on the path to success.

Fear of criticism can be overcome by owning who you are. An important truth is that not everyone will like you. Hear criticism and forget it if it's not constructive. If it is something you didn't know, learn from it. But if people are trying to pull you down, shake it off. Do things because they are right things to do, not to be liked. Accept that confrontation sometimes needs to happen. If you constantly bury your feelings in order to preserve someone else, you are suppressing yourself. If you have to say something, do it with as much tact as possible and let it go. If you let it consume your mind and energy, then you are wasting valuable moments.

Rejection also becomes more manageable the more often you experience it. What happens when you get rejected? Your feelings get hurt or you're embarrassed. What else? Not much. We blow up the consequences to such a level in our minds that we allow our imagination to dictate reality. Apply for that sales position, ask that person out. Get uncomfortable. Growth is living outside your comfort zone.

Imagine that you only have six months to live. You find yourself no longer procrastinating. You make the phone calls and the connections you had been wanting to make. Human relationships become more important. You spend more time with your loved ones. You stop caring about what people think of what you are doing. Would you die regret-free? Are you living your dream or are you living your fear? Don't let your fears be a roadblock to your success. Keep your goal foremost in your mind and put yourself out there. The more that you face and overcome your fears, the brighter the future.

## Choose Positivity

It is easy to be positive when life is going well. It is when you are faced with trials and circumstances beyond your control when you have to make a choice: You can focus on the negatives or you can look for the positive aspects—that's your test. The key to breaking through any obstacle is choosing positivity in your attitude and your actions.

We live during an amazing time. Look at your lifestyle, your relationships, and all the chances you've been given, and find a perspective of gratitude. When you start being thankful, it's hard to be negative and you'll stay calmer when something goes wrong.

Note when you start thinking negatively and stop yourself. If we think in a negative way, more negativity comes into our lives. Similarly, if we choose to think positive thoughts, more positivity is attracted to our lives. This is why it is so important to control your mind, choose your perspective, and weed out negativity. Watch the words you say. Statements like "I feel like crap" or "tomorrow's going to be rough," might seem normal, but they create negative thoughts. Choose positive statements. Be aware when you are in a conversation that turns toward complaining. Try to steer the conversation in a more positive direction or politely remove yourself.

Have boundaries when reading or watching the news. Violence, tragedy, and controversy sells ads and increases fear. This doesn't mean that we should avoid all discussion of news or politics, but have healthy debate or conversations with people from whom you learn different sides of an issue. That's how positive change will happen, not through calling each other names online. Turn off social media for a while and watch your problems diminish. Make it a point to talk with and connect to people. Get involved in your community. You gain the benefit of feeling better while also helping others to feel better. The more we look outside of ourselves, the better we will feel.

Our emotions are often cyclical. Sometimes, when you are feeling sad, give yourself permission to feel that way, knowing that you will soon feel better. Alternatively, forcibly change your thoughts to ones you enjoy. Pay attention to how your emotions change with the thoughts you choose. While we are not always in control of what thoughts enter our mind, we can choose how we react. Try smiling when you don't feel like it; laugh out loud. Positivity can also be called forth through physical activity. Not only does exercise boost your mood, it oxygenates the brain and gets the creative juices rolling.

If you are at a job or situation where you constantly complain and give off negative energy, leave. Not only are you hurting yourself with self-conflicting behavior, you are making it harder on the people who want to be there. That said, if you are honest about the reasons for being there, you can still be a positive person surrounded by negative people. Maintain your values and your work ethic at all costs, and do not let the environment dictate who you are. Set goals and give yourself a timeline. Bottom line, in a negative environment, maintain a strong sense of self and work hard to get out of that situation. Start a side project. It's not only useful as a plan B, but can provide additional experiences and skills. When things are rough in one area of your life

and you need to shift focus, it will give you another goal. Have a plan and stay positive.

It is hard to overemphasize the importance of being positive on the journey to personal success. Your attitude can make or break the process, and it is critical when facing obstacles.

## Stay Present

Try not to look back to the past, whether good or bad. Don't dwell on "what if" questions. Keep your thoughts on the present and get into what you are currently doing. This conscious effort will allow you to reach your dreams by consistently bringing your attention back to the work that needs to be done. It won't be long before you get into the flow state. When you are involved in a project, try to stay with it as long as you can without interruption.

There are times you might make an embarrassing mistake. Make amends where needed, but don't prolong painful or anger-filled circumstances by thinking about them for too long. So much time is wasted mulling over conversations that are long over. Let them go. Dwelling on past hurts is a form of procrastination. It might feel good to vent, and at times, it might be necessary to gain proper perspective. Go ahead talk to a partner or friend, but then let it go so that you can refocus. There is no need to go over every negative word because it only serves to give them more power. A key to happiness is staying in the present moment.

## Share Your Journey

Now is the time to open yourself up to the world and make connections. Developing relationships based on respect and mutual encouragement is crucial. If meeting people is outside of your comfort zone, start small. Get to know someone at work that you never really talk to. From there, you can be strategic in connecting with others in your industry that can become mentors or collaborators. We miss out on many connections, due to the awkwardness of a moment. Learn to work through it. It's often a numbers game in life, and this is an example. If you attempt to talk to ten people, and seven are full of their own thoughts, that still leaves three connections you made by being awkward enough to connect. It is worth it.

Even introverts can be social. Practice listening to others and ask questions based on what you hear. There is much to be learned in other people's stories. As you open up and share with others, you may be surprised to learn that you have also helped someone who heard your story. Think about the parts of your journey that can help empower others.

Each of us has unique skill sets, strengths, and weaknesses. Don't let pride or ego get in the way of asking for help. Get help on the weak spots of your endeavors and spend most of your time on your strengths. Offer your skills in exchange. When we help each other, we all win.

Believe that changing your circumstances is possible. If you don't overcome fears as quickly as you would like, give yourself grace. Undoubtedly, you will face downtimes where you second guess your decisions, procrastinate, and experience problems. When this happens, remember to stay present and allow the frustration to pass. You will feel ready to get back into the work soon. Keep moving forward, enjoying the process, and share what you are learning with others!



John Martin's titles include ***Empower Yourself*** and ***Increase Your Personal Productivity.***

His books are about how to do something different with your life. He provides tools and steps to analyze your mindset and strip away the beliefs you hold that are untrue and limiting your potential. Martin's content focuses on the truth about being authentic and aligning your goals with your strengths, and most importantly how to take action regardless of your current situation.

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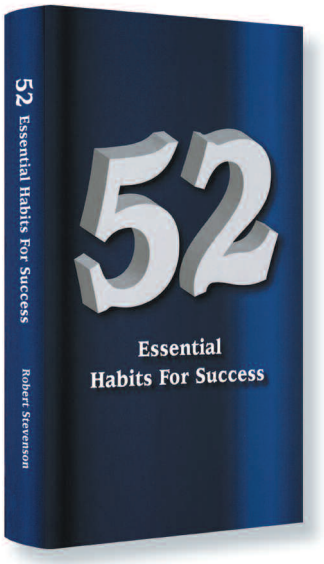
# Essential Habits for Success

May 2013

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®
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Career & Self-Development

# 52 Essential Habits for Success




by Robert Stevenson

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Why is it that some people succeed while others fail or lead lives of mediocrity? Not that a life of mediocrity is bad; if that is your aspiration, then so be it. But if you aspire to be something more, then you need the answer to this question: "What do you need to do to be successful?" That answer seems to elude most people. Professional keynote speaker and author Robert Stevenson wrote a book to address that specific question.

Psychologists have suggested if you see, read or do something 14-21 times, it becomes a part of you. According to Stevenson, if you spend a few minutes in the morning and the evening reviewing and contemplating a single essential successful habit for seven days, then by the end of 52 weeks you will have absorbed and incorporated all 52 habits into your life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to establish the 52 successful habits into your personal and professional life.
- How to shorten your learning curve and reduce mistakes.
- Why the people with whom you surround yourself have a huge influence on your personal success.
- How to use the power of your subconscious mind to make you better.
- The importance of acting as if the whole world were watching.
- Why you must accept without reluctance that you are where you are today because of the choices you have made.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **52 ESSENTIAL HABITS FOR SUCCESS**

**by Robert Stevenson**

**The author:** Robert Stevenson is an expert at building a high-performance culture and accelerating growth. He has worked with more than 2,500 companies and interviewed 10,000 employees, managers and senior executives in 250 different industries.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com.

## Introduction

Give me the amount of time it takes to brush your teeth in the morning and evening, just that amount of time, no more, and I will show you a way to substantially improve your level of success.

There are some excellent books that address the topic of success in great detail. Many of them have had some outstanding suggestions of what one should do to be successful. However, these suggestions are often too difficult to implement. In most cases, after people read a self-help book, they appreciate the wisdom of the author, and have every intention of following through on the suggestions the author made.

The problem is they just get burdened down with all the steps they must take, things they must do, lists they must write and self-analysis they must ponder to help them become a better person. Even those who have really good intentions find it extremely difficult to stick to the plan the author has laid out in the book. Their intentions were good. They actually finished reading the book, but they became overwhelmed with all the things the author said *"they must do"* if they are to become successful.

Most people don't like to study, refer back to books or articles they read, prepare lists, or assess their current situation and then change the way they do certain things. So how do you replace old, unhelpful, sometimes destructive wasteful habits with new, helpful, useful habits without studying, list preparing and more?

The simple objective is for you to read one of the 52 habits for success every morning and evening for one week, then go to the next habit and do it again. It is that simple.

The reason why this program will be so effective is because you will be involving your conscious and subconscious mind in establishing the habits you need to incorporate into your daily life if you are going to be truly successful. You see, after you read the success habit with your conscious mind, your subconscious mind will then take over. Your subconscious mind will start thinking about this one simple success habit all day long until it becomes a part of you. You will begin to know it, you will understand it and subconsciously you will start to do it. Before long, these 52 habits will be permanently conditioned in your mind, to help lead you on your journey to an extremely successful life.

### Don't Shorten the Learning Curve

Don't try to shorten the learning curve by reading each success habit for one, two or three days, thinking you can obtain your desired goal sooner if you were to only shorten the amount of time you spend on each habit. Nothing worth having was ever accomplished well by taking a shortcut.

Yes, it will take you one full year to get through the habits if you want to get the full impact of the program. But you need to understand, it does not take one full year for you to start reaping the benefits of what the book teaches.

You will notice a huge difference in your life after only the first month. Just allow yourself to read, receive, and believe, and you will start achieving. It is a proven fact that what you read can affect your thoughts and actions, so I am going to affect them in a positive way. Everything you will ever be is totally up to you. You are where you are today because of your past decisions, and your future is completely in your hands. These success habits will help you make better decisions. Let them work for you. If you will take the time to absorb the habits, you will change your life for the better. ●

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor In Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Melissa Ward**, Contributing Editor

## Habits 1-5

**Habit #1: Believe in Yourself.** If you don't believe in yourself, why should anyone else believe in you? People want to be around confident people. One of the most important traits of leaders is the confidence in themselves. People don't want to follow someone who lacks self-confidence. When you first start out, you may have to "fake it before you make it." None of us were born with all the knowledge, experience and talents we would need to be successful. These are all developed skills. So relax and learn from your mistakes, realizing we have all passed this way before.

**Habit #2: Act as if the World Is Watching.** Thomas Jefferson said, "Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were the world looking at you, and act accordingly." Even though that was said more than 200 years ago, it is still great advice for today, especially in this technological world with people carrying mini-video recorders in their cellphones. The next thing you know, your actions are being shown on national TV or on the Internet for all the world to see. So act as if there is a camera on you at all times and act accordingly.

**Habit #3: Practice, Drill and Rehearse, Then Take the Initiative.** If you want to beat your competition, then you have to be willing to put in the time to practice, drill and rehearse (PDR). The great ones don't need someone telling them to practice. They understand when they are not practicing, someone else is, and when they meet that person on the field of competition, that person will win. Success comes to those who take the initiative to do more, stay longer and work harder. The day you understand your success is dependent on you — your own desire, initiative and fortitude — is the day you start achieving greatness. To the great ones, PDR is not a motto on some wall, it is a way of life. Simply stated: If you want to be the best at what you do, then practice more than the rest and success will come to you.

**Habit #4: Don't Be Afraid to Fail.** It's amazing how much experience can be gained by making a mistake. As Henry Ford once stated: "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." If you never try to do something beyond what you already know how to do, you will never get any better. Failure is a major component to your success process. You need to decide that there are no failures in life, only results. Failure isn't fatal unless you quit. If you don't like the results, then analyze what went wrong, learn and then alter your method.

**Habit #5: Make Goal Setting a Habit.** If you don't know where you are going, then how will you know when you get there? The vast majority of people don't set goals, and the vast majority of people do not reach their full potential. You have to decide what it is you want and write it down; some call it "thinking on paper." You then have to decide what it is you will have to do to make what you have written down become a reality. The first two steps in making a dream become a reality are to write it down and then set a deadline. Remember to be "SMART" about your goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. It has been proven that people with goals earn twice as much as those without goals. ●

## Habits 6-10

**Habit #6: You Must Pay the Price.** One of the most valuable things you possess is your willpower. Great accomplishments come from great efforts. You will have to pay a price if you are to be successful. The question is: Are you willing to pay the price? Your actions are all that matter. Your actions are the only thing that will get you success. The price of mediocrity is far less than the price of greatness.

**Habit #7: Never, Never, Never Give Up.** Elbert Hubbard captures the point I am trying to make so profoundly in his words, "There is no defeat except in no longer trying. There is no defeat save within." Failure is just a result in the learning process; giving up is a choice, a very bad choice. Walt Disney was fired for lack of creativity and went bankrupt twice before he was able to turn his dream into a reality. At one time Donald Trump had a negative net worth of $900 million. Most people would have declared bankruptcy. Seven years later he was worth more than $2 billion. Bill Gates' first Microsoft company went bankrupt. He then became the richest man in the world.

**Habit #8: Hang Out with Successful People.** If you want to be successful, then you need to "hang out" with successful people. Watch what they do and how they work at their chosen profession. Unconsciously, you will start adapting these behaviors, habits, attitudes and opinions. Dr. David McClelland of Harvard found, after 25 years of research, that the choice of a "negative reference group" is enough to condemn a person to failure and underachievement in life. The good doctor simply means, if you hang with people who are going nowhere with their lives, then you'll be headed in that same direction. If you can't be around successful people, then read as many biographies/autobiographies as you can about successful people.

**Habit #9: Success Requires Self-Discipline.** Self-discipline is making yourself do what you need to do when you need to do it whether you want to or not. In the overall scheme of success, being self-disciplined is the most important trait you must possess. You can know, understand and identify what must be done, but if you don't have the discipline to do it, it's all for naught. The great ones get it done regardless of how they feel. Remember your action statement: If it is to be, it's up to me.

**Habit #10: Accept Criticism for the Benefits It Brings.** There is nothing fun about receiving criticism. It is amazing how painful words can be if we let them. Regardless of the agenda of the person giving the criticism, use the words to your betterment even if they were given for someone else's gain. This is all about creating a better you, not a better them. Filter out all pain and prejudice and allow only the things that will benefit you to enter your mind.

## Habits 11-15

**Habit #11: Contain Your Anger.** Anger is a self-induced reaction to an external stimulus. The amazing thing about anger is that it is unnecessary. Anger comes from within you. It is a response you choose to give when you feel you are being victimized, treated unfairly, cheated or taken advantage of. The next time you feel your anger raising up its ugly head, take a moment and get control, making certain that you don't say a word. Anger is a choice, not a cause or condition.

**Habit #12: Smile — It's Good for You and Those Around You.** There are thousands of languages we don't understand, yet a smile is understood no matter what language is being spoken. To successfully deal with people, you need to create trust, confidence and rapport. It is a proven fact that the simple physical response of a smile will help create all three. Smiling displays your frame of mind and warmth without having to say a word, and it puts you in a positive mood; this is all good.

**Habit #13: Look for Ways to Praise Often.** If you want to have a lot of friends in business and in your personal life, then look for ways to compliment (praise) them often. Make sure it is sincere praise and not contrived. Think how great you feel when someone tells you that you did a good job. Complimenting someone is not a hard thing to do, but we seem to forget to do it, even when the perfect opportunity avails itself. If you make it a habit to praise people rather than condemn, you will be amazed at how many people will want to help you.

**Habit #14: Shorten Your Learning Curve by Reading.** Life is too short for you to learn all there is to know by personal experience. Reading is an excellent way to shorten your learning curve. Reading will improve your creativity, vocabulary, spelling and language skills. Make it a part of your daily routine to read something (at least five days per week) that will help you become a better person.

**Habit #15: Never Neglect Your Body.** When you neglect your body, your energy levels diminish, fatigue sets in and illness ensues. Exercise is a key factor in all aspects of your success. There is a litany of incredible benefits to your overall health if you maintain a proper exercise program. So get up and get moving with some kind of structured exercise program a minimum of three times per week.

## Habits 16-20

**Habit #16: Be Positive — It's the Only Way to Act.** Being negative causes stress, illness, worry and anger; reduces productivity; and makes others not want to be around you. The remarkable thing about life is that every moment we have a choice regarding the attitude we embrace. Olympic gold medalist figure skater Scott Hamilton stated, "The only disability in life is a bad attitude." It doesn't mean bad things don't happen to positive people. It just means positive people don't let bad things hold them back.

**Habit #17: Watch What You Say.** Things have a way of coming back to haunt you. People take things out of context to support their own personal agenda. The best rule to follow is to say nothing about anyone you wouldn't have the courage to say directly to their face. Stick to what you know to be factual, not hearsay or rumor. Someday you may have to defend your comments, so make sure you speak only the truth.

**Habit #18: Want an Advantage? Be Early.** If you want to reduce your stress, then be early. Being late shows a lack of respect for whomever you're dealing with. Being early shows others you are motivated, organized and disciplined. Be known as the one they can always count on to be early, prepared and excited to be there, and you will have everyone wanting you on their team. True leaders don't keep people waiting.

**Habit #19: Do More Than Expected.** If you want to position yourself for success, then do more than expected. The people who do the minimum required will usually get the minimum return. All great athletes, musicians, actors, lawyers, doctors, businesspeople, etc.,

understand for them to excel at their profession, they have to be willing to do more than those around them.

**Habit #20: Say "Thank You" Often.** Two of the most powerful words in the English language are "thank you." These two words are so simple to say but so seldom used. We get so caught up in the speed of our daily lives that we forget to say the words that will help make people want to assist us again. Regardless of your position or status in life, you should never forget to say these two words. ●

## Habits 21-25

**Habit #21: Remember People's Names.** The words that are most familiar to you and the least threatening are the words that make up your name. When you first meet someone, try saying their name several times while you are speaking to them so it will help you better remember their name when they leave. People will be extremely impressed if you have just met them and you remember their name the next time you see them. It is a sure way of showing your respect for them by proving their name was important enough for you to remember it.

**Habit #22: Let Them Know You Care.** There is enormous power in sending cards, notes or letters to people. Using the Internet to stay in touch with friends, associates and clients is helpful, but if you want to stand out from the rest of the crowd, send them something they don't have to print off on their printer. If you want to really stand out, remember people on special occasions, holidays and especially their birthday. Always remember, people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

**Habit #23: Always Use Good Manners.** In this fast-paced techno-gadget world where people text rather than talk, email rather than converse and hurry rather than help, a person who shows a little common courtesy will be the exception rather than the norm. Treat everyone as if they were your equal, and always shower them with courtesy and good manners.

**Habit #24: Beware of Fads.** "Fads come and go." The problem with that statement is that they go. The desire to stay up with the latest fashion trends, wear the "right" clothes or tattoo, drive the "hot" car, or have the latest cellphone or technological gadget isn't new. It was that way 50 years ago, and it will be the same 50 years from now.

**Habit #25: Pay Attention to Your First Impression.** You will never get a second chance to make a good first impression, so that first impression really matters. You want the way you look to demand respect. People like to deal with individuals who are successful, and that means you need to look the part. If you want someone to pay attention to you, then you must first pay attention to yourself. ●

## Habits 26-30

**Habit #26: Prepare Now or Fail Later.** The great college basketball coach John Wooden (who won 88 consecutive games, 11 NCAA national championships, seven of them in a row) had a saying: "Failure to prepare is preparing to fail." The truly successful people leave nothing to chance. They put in the time, effort, research and thought to ensure they will achieve their desired goal. This is your life and you've got one shot at it. All success begins with a definite purpose, a specific objective and a plan to achieve it.

**Habit #27: Show Excitement in Your Greetings.** The simple expression of "I am really happy to see you" makes anyone feel good. Get up, make eye contact, give them a smile, and show a genuine interest in them. You will find that people will love to be around you, look forward to seeing you, and include you in their plans, parties and get-togethers.

**Habit #28: Be Persistent, Relentless, Determined.** What will separate you from those average souls out there who stay mired in mediocrity will be your willpower, your desire to see it through, to not fail, to pay the price to achieve success. Always think your next great victory is just about to happen. Thomas Edison failed more than 11,000 times trying to invent the light bulb. A person one time asked him what it felt like failing more than 11,000 times. Edison said, "I didn't fail 11,000 times. I discovered 11,000 ways how not to do it."

**Habit #29: Search Out Role Models.** In most cases, you aren't the first person to ever attempt your chosen goal. If you want to be great at your chosen profession, remember, others have passed this way before you who have learned great lessons they would love to share. In many cases, there are people who would love to share the lessons they have learned if you just ask them. People love a compliment. Approaching someone and asking for their help because you respect what they have accomplished and would like to learn from them is a great compliment to them.

**Habit #30: Never Waste Time.** When you are wasting your time, you are wasting your life. Your life is

a finite amount of time made up of moments. Successful people take full advantage of their time. They plan their day ahead of time. Time management skills are an essential tool for anyone who wants to be successful. You can do nothing about the time you have already lost, but you can do everything with the time you have left. Every minute spent in planning your day saves about 10 minutes in executing it.

## Habits 31-35

**Habit #31: Always Be Truthful.** The truth is but a simple thing, for it knows no right or wrong. There are those who would alter it; they will speak, imply, suggest what you know are not the facts. But the truth will remain the same, rest assured. The truth will rise above it all.

**Habit #32: Don't Gossip — It's a Waste of Time.** What do you accomplish when you gossip about other people? Nothing, except wasting time. You haven't learned a thing, you have helped no one and you have accomplished nothing. Don't get yourself caught up in the bashing, trashing, smashing, gossiping conversations. By wasting your precious time in this common activity, you are really hurting yourself.

**Habit #33: Concentrate on Your Strengths and Interests.** When you focus most of your time and energy on things you are good at, you will reap enormous rewards. Sometimes your strengths will be hidden in your interests. Focus on what you can do rather than on things you can't. If you aren't certain where your strengths lie, then focus on things you enjoy doing rather than on things you hate. Couple your interests with your strengths, and then commit to concentrated practice and study. Your concerted efforts will reap you enormous rewards, and you will also enjoy your journey toward success.

**Habit #34: Become Interested in Others.** Bestowing positive sentiments on or about others will eventually find a way back to you. Talk to people about what interests them, not you, and listen attentively. Getting people to talk about their favorite subject (themselves) is easy. Just start asking questions. Your objective in any conversation is to be listening more than you are speaking. By showing appreciation and admiration, by being agreeable and accepting, you will be a welcomed participant in any conversation. Being interested in others makes them more interested in you.

**Habit #35: Expand Your Vocabulary.** There are more than 650,000 words in the English language. The average person knows about 15,000 and a child of 5 knows about 5,000. A very scary statistic is that after the age of 30, the average person learns about 5 words per year. If you want to set yourself apart from the masses, start with learning one new word per week. The use of an excellent vocabulary will distinguish you from others and is usually an excellent indicator you are an intelligent person.

## Habits 36-40

**Habit #36: Don't Cheat the Face in the Glass.** There is a poem by an unknown author I have taken the liberty to paraphrase. I feel it best addresses the subject of cheating yourself.

*When you get what you want in your struggle for self and the world makes you king for a day, just go to a mirror and look at yourself and see what the face has to say.*

*It isn't your father, mother or wife whose judgment upon you must pass. The person whose verdict counts most in your life is the one staring back from the glass.*

**Habit #37: Admit When You Are Wrong.** Most people have more respect for a person who admits they are wrong than a person who won't. You will be amazed how people will be more forgiving of a person who admits they are wrong. It takes courage to admit you made a mistake. It is also a true sign of maturity by owning up to your errors and then moving on. Not being able to admit you are wrong shows a lack of self-confidence. Admit you are wrong, learn from your error and move on.

**Habit #38: Listen Every Chance You Get.** The need to listen to others is critical. Life is too short to be able to learn how to be successful all by yourself. If you want to profoundly increase your learning curve, start listening considerably more than you speak. You can't learn anything by being the person who is doing all the talking. You will be amazed at what you can learn from others if you just start listening. So start asking good questions, then close your mouth, listen and learn.

**Habit #39: Prepare a "Things to Do" List.** The key to being successful is for you to be the one running your day. Once you have established your goals, you must then start developing your plan of attack, what you need to do to achieve those goals. The perfect way to do that is to prepare a "Things to Do" list each night. You must prioritize the list in order of importance, with the most important on top. Consult that list at least three times per day so it will help you keep on track, and then knock them out in order of priority.

**Habit #40: Don't React — Get the Facts and Then Act.** There are two sides to every story, and the key to a successful career or relationship is to hear both sides before determining how you should act. Jumping to conclusions or reacting prematurely before you have all the facts can sometimes lead to horrible consequences for one or both parties. Every day I receive emails from friends and clients containing amazing stories. The problem is that many of them aren't true. They sound true and contain some elements of fact, but the majority of the story is embellished or totally fabricated. By passing the story on to someone else before you validate its truthfulness, you are helping perpetuate a false story, which could prove to be extremely hurtful to the people in the story. If you can't prove it, don't share it.

## Habits 41-45

**Habit #41: Beware of Quick Fixes.** Why is it we rarely have time to do it right the first time, but we always find time to do it right the second time? Anything worth doing is worth doing right the first time. Problems solved by quick fixes seldom stay fixed; therefore, it wasn't a fix, it was just a temporary remedy to a problem that still exists.

### Habit #42: Become Courageous

It takes a person of courage to overcome challenges and become successful. The following is repeated by the cadets during chapel services at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

*Make us to choose the harder right*
*instead of the easier wrong,*
*and never to be content with a half truth*
*when the whole can be won.*
*Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty*
*to all that is noble and worthy,*
*that scorns to compromise*
*with vice and injustice and knows no fear*
*when truth and right*
*are in jeopardy.*

**Habit #43: Sometimes You Must Lose a Fight to Win a War.** If you are trying to win an argument, then you are also trying to make the other person lose that same argument. Your victory has also caused a defeat. When you defeat someone, you haven't endeared yourself to that person. Everyone is entitled to their point of view. Sometimes by simply allowing a person to feel as if they are right, you can still get what you want. Words like "I can see your point" don't put the other person on the defensive. On the contrary, it shows you are willing to consider other possibilities, remedies or solutions.

### Be Like the Golden Bear

Jack Nicklaus, the world-renowned golfer nicknamed The Golden Bear, knows a thing or two about winning. Nicklaus raised his putter and nodded to the crowd after making an incredible shot; he didn't pound his chest in a display of egotism of how great he was. Be gracious in winning, humble in defeat and always confident.

**Habit #44: Strive to follow the Golden Rule.**

- CHRISTIANITY: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.
- CONFUCIANISM: Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you.
- JUDAISM: Whatever is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man.

The Golden Rule is a universally accepted principal. You can never go wrong incorporating it into your daily life.

**Habit #45: Ask for Help and Advice.** No one has enough time on Earth to be able to learn it all. You need to take advantage of those who have come before you and learn from their experiences. It is easier to have someone explain to you how to do something rather than you stumbling around trying to figure it out on your own.

## Habits 46-52

**Habit #46: You Have to Stretch Yourself.** It is amazing what you can accomplish when you put in the time, effort and practice. In order to keep progressing, you have to keep pushing yourself, stretching to achieve more. Mavis Lingren, when she was 62 years old, decided she wanted to run a marathon. The day she decided her goal, she couldn't run farther than a block. Eight years later she ran her first marathon. At the age of 86, she ran in the New York City Marathon, her 65th marathon in 16 years.

**Habit #47: Act Like You Have Been There.** Be gracious in your winning moment because there will

come a time when you don't win. By accomplishing the amazing feat and not making a big deal out of it, you will cause even more of a stir in the minds of others. Folks will be wondering how good you are when you don't make a big deal out of something. Carry yourself with confidence, show excitement for your feat but always act like you've been there.

**Habit #48: Handle Jerks Quickly and Cautiously.** "Jerks" are difficult people to deal with because they don't care about reasoning, and they especially don't care about you. Screaming, yelling, ranting or raving at them won't help either, because they are not listening. Those tactics only serve to worsen matters. To end a situation with a "jerk," you must first understand that you are not dealing with a rational person. Reasoning with them in any way will not work, so you need to minimize your losses. In simpler terms: Hold your tongue, and move on.

**Habit #49: You Have Got to Take the Shot.** It is a simple rule: You can't make the shot until you take the shot. Many a career failed because someone was just too scared to take the shot. Michael Jordan, probably the best pro basketball player to ever play the game, missed 50 percent of the potential game-winning shots he took. The key is, he took the shot. More important, he wanted to be the one who took the last shot. He wasn't concerned or thinking about the consequences of missing the shot. Success does not come to the timid or meek. In fact, success does not come to anyone; you must go out and get it. If you don't ask, you won't get. If you don't try, you have already failed. Prepare yourself; practice, drill and rehearse, then let it rip. If it doesn't work, then rethink, reload and take another shot. The only difference between a big shot from a little shot is the big shot was a little shot who just kept on shooting.

**Habit #50: Treat Everyone Special.** On your journey to being successful, you will encounter all types of people. You will meet folks who are talented, motivated, rich and/or powerful. You will also encounter folks who are less fortunate; people who, due to no fault of their own, haven't achieved any status, privilege, money or recognition in life. It doesn't matter who they are or what their status is, you must treat them all the same by treating them "special." By taking a few extra moments to be genuinely interested in others, you will greatly enhance your personal potential for success. You will never know when they might return your polite attitude or act of kindness with something that may prove to be extremely beneficial to you.

## Make the 52 Habits Work for You

Your choices will determine your success:
Choose to live a life of excellence.
Choose to rise above trivial things.
Choose to be courageous.
Choose to control your destiny.
Choose to never give up.
Choose to guard your integrity.
Choose to be punctual, orderly and diligent.
Choose to believe in yourself.
Choose to live a life of action, not words.
Choose to practice, drill and rehearse.
Choose to be a positive person.
Choose to never quit learning.
Choose to make the 52 habits a part of your daily life.

**And by making these choices,**
**you have now chosen to be successful.**

**Habit #51: Protect Your Integrity.** Everything in life can be taken away from you: your money, your home, your car and all your worldly possessions. You can lose your good health or even your life. The only thing that cannot be taken away is your integrity. Only you can give it up by lying, cheating and/or stealing. Integrity is a quality a person gives to him- or herself, so guard it, protect it, value it and respect it. Once you give up your integrity, you can seldom, if ever, get it back.

**Habit #52: Don't Procrastinate — It Kills Dreams.** You need to deal with whatever is holding you back. Many people create excuses or blame others for their inability to do what is necessary to become successful. The only thing really holding you back from reaching your desired goals is you. Remove the clutter in your life and focus on where it is you want to go, and then do it. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *52 Essential Habits for Success*, you'll also like:

1. ***Extreme Productivity* by Robert C. Pozen.** Pozen provides readers with a tutorial to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.
2. ***Drive* by Daniel H. Pink.** Pink examines the three elements of true motivation — autonomy, mastery and purpose — and offers techniques for putting these into action.
3. ***Linchpin* by Seth Godin.** Linchpins are the people who get the best jobs and the most freedom. Godin shows you how to become indispensable.

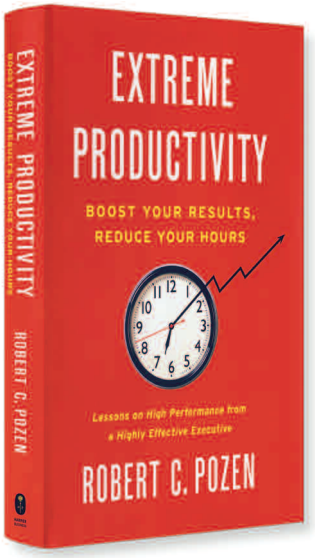
· Book 90 of 269 ·

# Extreme Productivity

February 2013

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Career & Self-Development




# Extreme Productivity

## Boost Your Results, Reduce Your Hours

by Robert C. Pozen

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Robert C. Pozen taught a full course load at Harvard Business School while serving as the full-time chairman of a global financial services firm. He's written six books and hundreds of articles, raised a family with his wife of almost four decades, and served on many boards of local charities and public companies. Pozen is a prince of productivity, a man who has worked smarter and faster than almost everyone around him for more than 40 years.

In *Extreme Productivity*, Pozen reveals the secrets to workplace productivity and high performance. His book is for anyone feeling overwhelmed by an existing workload — facing myriad competing demands and multiple time-sensitive projects. Offering antidotes to a calendar full of boring meetings and a backlog of emails, *Extreme Productivity* explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.

Pozen shows that in order to be truly productive, professionals must make a critical shift in their mindset: from hours worked to results produced. He helps people at all stages of their careers read, write, and make presentations quicker and more effectively. He provides professionals with practical tips on how to efficiently use their time in the office while leading full and productive personal lives as well.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to set and prioritize your goals.
- How to improve your productivity in your daily routine.
- How to manage your subordinates and your boss.
- How to embrace change and use it to chart a satisfying career.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **EXTREME PRODUCTIVITY**

**by Robert C. Pozen**

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## Introduction

Success comes not just from hard work and careful planning — though those are both important. Success depends in large part on proper mindset: focusing on the results you plan to achieve, rather than the number of hours you work. The results are what matter most to your employer, clients and colleagues.

Let's begin with what I mean by "personal productivity." I mean the quantity and quality of your results in achieving your own objectives. I won't attempt to dictate what those objectives should be, only that you should clearly articulate them and their relative priority. You may be looking to climb the corporate ladder as quickly as possible or seeking a better balance between your professional and personal lives. In either case, you will benefit by getting more done in the hours you work.

What follows are specific and practical suggestions on how to increase your productivity at work. You can pick and choose whichever suggested techniques seem most helpful to you.

There are no miracle cures offered. Most of my recommendations call for rigorous thinking and disciplined behavior sustained over long time periods.

## Part I: Three Big Ideas

### Set and Prioritize Your Goals

No matter what your career aspirations are, you should begin by thinking carefully about why you are engaging in any activity and what you expect to get out of it. Establish your highest ranking goals and determine whether your actual schedule is consistent with this ranking. This process has six steps:

**1. Write everything down.** On one or two sheets of paper, write down everything you are required to do in your professional life. This includes all those routine tasks in your job description. It also includes any long-term projects.

**2. Organize by time horizon.** Divide your list into three time categories: Career Aims (5+ years), Objectives (3–24 months) and Targets (one week or less). Make sure that each of your Objectives has one or two associated Targets.

**3. Rank your Objectives.** Start by thinking about what you want to do, what you're good at, and what the world needs from you. You should also consider what your boss wants and needs. Rank your own list of Objectives on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest.

**4. Rank your Targets.** Your Targets will typically fall into two categories: Enabling Targets help you accomplish your Objectives, and Assigned Targets are given to you. List your Enabling Targets and rank them based on the importance of the Objective in question and how effectively the Enabling Target furthers that particular Objective. In many cases, you should consider Assigned Targets low priority and spend as little time on them as possible.

**5. Estimate how you actually spend your time.** Take out your calendar and answer these questions: How many hours do you spend at work? What are the

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three main activities on which you spend the most time? How many hours do you spend on company meetings, filling out forms or reports, or responding to emails? Now go back and compare your allocations of time with your ranked list of Objectives and Targets.

**6. Address the mismatch between priorities and time spent.** If you're like most professionals, you will find that you are spending no more than half of your time on your highest priorities. Some professionals have not carefully thought about their Objectives and Targets. They often neglect an important goal — until it becomes a crisis, demanding their full time and effort.

At higher levels in an organization, an executive's ego often causes him or her to spend too much time on certain activities. This discrepancy between top priorities and time allocation can occur at all levels of an organization. Some solutions will require changes in your personal habits. Other solutions will require changes in your organization's procedures — or the way you deal with them.

## Focus on the Final Product

Focusing on the final product is critical to efficiently completing your high-priority projects, which are often broad in scope and complex in content.

Think hard at the start of a project about where it's going: What are the critical issues and how are they likely to be resolved? After a day or so of gathering relevant information, write down your tentative conclusions for the project. Write the conclusions in the form of a rebuttable hypothesis that can be revised as the project progresses.

Start with rebuttable hypotheses to guide your research, but you should not wait until the end to evaluate them. By pausing and reflecting midway through the project, you will be able to focus the second half of your work on a better set of hypotheses.

Many professionals have trouble getting started on their highest priorities. Instead, they procrastinate by distracting themselves with more pleasant tasks. Chronic procrastinators pay a high personal price for their habit. As the deadline nears, they go into panic mode.

Break the project into smaller pieces and get going on the first steps. Clear your docket, set aside time to concentrate on the big project, and cut off access to distractions.

You can help yourself by creating evenly spaced, mini deadlines — interim dates for completing specific stages of the project. I suggest that each of these mini deadlines be tied to a personal reward for completing tasks, such as allowing yourself to eat an ice cream sundae or watch a favorite TV show.

Focus on results, not hours. Punching a time clock made sense in the industrial age, but it makes no sense for professionals. Their contribution is not the time they spend on their work but the value they create through their knowledge.

## Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

Though attention to detail is usually considered a positive attribute, your time commitment should vary according to the importance of the project and the needs of your audience. It may take you one day to do B+ work, but the rest of the week to bump it up to an A. For your highest-ranked Objectives and Targets, it is usually worth spending that extra time and effort. But for most of your low-priority tasks, B+ is quite often "good enough."

One technique for not sweating the small stuff is to follow the principle of OHIO: "Only Handle It Once." This means tackling your low priority items immediately when you receive them, if possible. If you let a backlog develop, you will waste a lot of time and increase your anxiety level. For example, every day you receive a barrage of requests for your time and knowledge from your co-workers, family, friends and people you don't know. When you get a request, decide promptly whether you should ignore it or offer a response. Respond immediately to important requests. Don't waste time by having to re-find an email or think twice about an appointment.

Waiting — for an hour, a day or a week — to respond to a legitimate request will double or triple the time involved. In the best case, you have to reread the request and think again about the issues it raises. In the worst case, you will spend a significant amount of time trying to find the request again.

Multitasking is a good way of accomplishing low-priority tasks efficiently. It's perfectly OK to skim a report while listening to a conference call. Don't try to multitask if both activities are mentally demanding. The rapid switching between topics wastes your brain's energy. And don't multitask in front of actual or potential customers; they expect your full attention.

Avoid the tendency to micromanage. Give your subordinates significant freedom to complete projects, even if you think that could lead to a higher risk of mistakes. Learn how to deal with, or get around, bureaucratic impediments that force you to spend too much time on low-priority tasks. ●

# Part II: Productivity Every Day

## Your Daily Routine

How can you make sure that you are accomplishing your highest goals every day? The key is to create a daily calendar that drives home your most critical Targets.

First, your calendar must record all of your daily commitments in one place in a way that you can easily see the purpose of each appointment and the importance of each assigned task. Second, the calendar must be mobile: you must be able to carry — or have electronic access to — your calendar during the whole day so you can easily add new items or revise your existing schedule.

Gaps are crucial to the successful schedule; they give you time to make calls, write notes or even think! Many executives line up meetings and conference calls for every hour of the day. That is a big mistake — you need time to digest what has happened and develop strategies for the future.

Next to a meeting or phone call, I write down my purpose for the event — what I want to get out of it. This ensures that I'm focused on the purpose of each meeting or call while I am engaged in them.

A very important part of my daily routine involves getting enough sleep and exercise, both of which are easy to brush aside when work gets busy. But skimping on either of these key activities will seriously harm your productivity.

## Traveling Lightly

Even if you have a productive daily routine when living at home, you will have a harder challenge when you travel across the country or around the world. Although improved telecommunication has somewhat reduced the need to travel, there will never be a substitute for face-to-face interaction in certain situations. Professionals should learn how to remain productive when on the road for business. The key to a productive trip lies in good advance planning. Here are some suggestions:

- Make a to-do list — one that you can use every time you travel — that includes the dozens of small tasks involved in preparing for a trip.
- Line up a driver from the airport and check out local transportation when you plan your itinerary.
- Be clear about your goals for the trip and make sure your schedule reflects those goals.
- Never check luggage on a trip lasting less than a week. Instead, take a large carry-on roll-aboard with the items you really need to bring.
- Carry a canvas bag on the airplane with tools for sleeping (eyeshades, earplugs) and reading materials (hard copies and flashlight or computer/iPad).
- Buy a business-class ticket for overnight flights. A good night's sleep is worth the extra price.
- Drink lots of water on the airplane — roughly one quart per four hours.
- Maintain your daily routine on the road: review your calendar each night, get eight hours of sleep and exercise daily.
- Get into your destination time zone as soon as possible to mitigate jetlag. Exercise as soon as you land so that you can stay awake during the day.
- Talk to your spouse and children every day while on the road. The phone is OK, but video chatting (such as Skype) is better.

## Efficient Meetings

If run correctly, meetings can be quite productive. They can help formulate and implement an organization's policy, and they can provide forums to discuss and resolve issues. Unfortunately, too many meetings lack focus and fail to achieve any meaningful purpose. And in most organizations, there are simply too many meetings and they last too long.

Before I call any meeting, I carefully think about what I want to get out of it. If I'm not satisfied with my answer, I don't go forward with the meeting.

There are two main reasons to have a meeting:

1. You should call a meeting if you need to establish a personal relationship with someone outside your organization, such as an elected official or new customer.

2. Meetings are often necessary if you want to engage people in a debate; face-to-face dialogue cannot be replaced by email or phone calls.

You should not call a meeting simply because "it has always been held." Some weeks, the meetings may be necessary — but the boss should decide every week whether the meeting is actually needed.

Many in-person meetings are unnecessary in light of recent developments in videoconferencing. It's unproductive to spend hours on air travel to meet in person when you already know the other attendees and have access to top-quality videoconferencing.

Most meetings can be completed effectively within 60 minutes, and meetings really should never run longer than 90 minutes.

Hand out materials to be read one day before the meeting so that people have a chance to actually read it.

After the introduction, organize vigorous debate on the key points. The most powerful executive in the room must be willing to be challenged.

At the end of the meeting, ask participants to collectively decide who should do each task and when each task should be completed.

## Part III: Developing Personal Skills

### Reading Effectively

If you want to be an effective reader, you have to know your purpose for reading and stick to it.

List all the news sources, virtual and physical, that you read regularly for reasons other than amusement. Ask yourself how you're reading each source: Are you concentrating on your goal for that publication, or does your attention wander every time you see an entertaining headline? Next to each publication, jot down an estimate of how much time you spend each week reading it. Does your allocation of time make sense, given your professional Objectives? If not, read only those sections that are relevant to your purpose or stop reading that publication altogether.

To implement the general principle of active reading, you should follow a three-step process:

**1. Grasp the structure of the reading.** Before you start to read a document, take a few moments to understand its structure — how it begins and ends, and how it divides the major topics in between. In books, look at the table of contents. In shorter works, glance at the headings. This will help you both read faster and understand more, because you already know how the author plans to move from one idea to the next.

**2. Read the introduction and conclusion.** First, read the introduction carefully, looking for the theme sentence or paragraph that will unlock the whole article or chapter. Then skip directly to the conclusion. Why? Because the conclusion tells you where the writer is going to end up. Only when you know where the writer is aiming should you read the body of the text.

**3. Skim the tops of the paragraphs.** Unfortunately, skimming has gotten a bad rap in the academic community. But I'm not talking about that kind of passive skimming. To actively skim the body of an article or chapter, you should read the top of each paragraph. A good writer starts each paragraph with a topic sentence, followed by supporting facts or arguments.

As you read an article or memo, constantly ask yourself what you want to remember from it. Think about your purpose for reading before and during your review of the material. Think about what you want to remember during and after you review the material.

### Writing Effectively

Writing is an essential skill for knowledge-based workers. They must compose documents to inform, lead, and persuade others both inside and outside their organization. Poor writing undermines professional productivity in many ways, frustrating customers, baffling employees, and creating office tension due to miscommunication.

Think of writing as having several distinct phases, including an initial phase of mapping the terrain and the second phase of translating that map into actual prose. Formulate a rough plan for the entire piece before you put pencil to paper. If you try to write without a plan, you will face an enormous challenge.

My approach to creating an outline is completely systematic: first I brainstorm, next I categorize, and then I outline the final product.

The three key elements of any essay are the introduction, the conclusion and the body. In my view, a good introduction must fulfill three objectives: provide the reader with context, state the main theme of the author and explain the organization of the writing.

Create an executive summary for long or dense documents that describes the big picture so that readers short on time can understand the main points.

Don't use your conclusion to merely summarize the piece; provide the reader with additional insight, such as broader implications or suggestions for future actions.

Use effective language. This means short sentences, clear relationships between clauses and proper use of antecedents for pronouns. Proofread your paper for grammar and spelling mistakes. When you've finished, proofread again.

Don't try to write and revise at the same time or you'll get hung up on every sentence. Don't try to write a long piece in one sitting; write every day for an hour or two in an environment that best suits you.

### Speaking Effectively

The thought of speaking in front of an audience terrifies most people. But public speaking is an important skill for most professionals. Because most professionals have not been trained in this area, they make predictable mistakes.

The key to effective speaking is preparing well before the event. Preparatory activities can be divided into three main areas:

**1. Know your audience.** Start by figuring out the three Ws of your audience — who they are, why they are attending, and what they care about. For internal meetings make sure you clearly understand the priorities of your boss and your colleagues. For an external speech, think about the "bread-and-butter" issues that will affect the livelihood of your audience.

**2. Structure your speech.** Write an outline of your presentation. Make sure that your line of argument is crystal clear. Divide your speech into its introduction, body and conclusion. The body of your speech should have a logical progression. One possible structure is: here's the problem, here's my analysis, here's how we could solve this problem.

**3. Practice your delivery.** After you've outlined your speech, rehearse it out loud several times. There is no other way to get comfortable with your speech so you can appear confident and natural. At the same time, rehearsing will show you the weak spots in your speech. A good way to rehearse is to present your speech to someone — a colleague or friend — who is willing to provide honest and constructive comments.

Your opening sets the tone for your whole speech. Put on a bright smile and start with a funny joke or amusing story. Next, introduce your audience to your thesis and show how the speech will be organized. At that point, your challenge is to turn the audience into active listeners.

Keep your speech as short as feasible — 30 minutes is usually as long as you want to go. Allow time at the end for a Q&A session. Be prepared for what types of questions may be asked. Get feedback — a video recording is best, but a frank colleague can also be helpful. ●

# Part IV: Managing Up and Down

## Managing Your Team

Managers can get the most out of their employees by helping them achieve meaningful progress every day. Sadly, most managers don't seem to be aware of this. To be an effective boss, you have to set up a system that enables both you and your employees to get meaningful work done. The heart of that system is delegation.

If you're following my advice so far, you're spending most of your time on Objectives and Targets that rank highest for you and your organization. But your lower-ranking goals still need to get done. Here is where delegation comes into play: it allows you to focus on your top priorities while other people complete or assist with your lower-ranking goals.

So what's the key to effective delegation? You and your lieutenants need to embrace the principle of "Owning Your Own Space." After setting clear goals for a project, give your employees broad discretion to decide how best to achieve these goals — and then get out of their way.

If you allow your workers to own their own spaces, they can adapt quickly to changing conditions rather than waiting for your approval. When you give your workers broad discretion to carry out projects, they feel responsible for the outcome and become much more invested in its success.

If you have the power to hire people, take advantage of it! If you select the right lieutenants, you will save thousands of hours through effective delegation. Here are lessons for the recruitment process:

- Ask candidates to talk about their personal history, starting with where they went to high school.
- Ask candidates how they made the biggest contribution in their prior jobs.
- Engage candidates in intellectual debate about a subject of their choosing that they know well.
- Try to gauge the creativity of the candidate by asking a question such as "What are all the possible uses of a brick for our business?"
- Choose the candidate with the most potential, not the person with the most experience in the industry.
- Make the reference calls yourself and press hard for honest evaluations, rather than the usual platitudes.

After recruitment, carefully build trust between you and your employees. Have integrity, be courteous, and communicate openly and frankly. Provide employees with support and resources to complete tasks that they have been assigned. Be their advocate elsewhere in the organization.

At the start of a delegated project, agree with your team on objective and subjective metrics for each project goal. Choosing the right metrics will often force you to have a deeper discussion with your team about what you really consider important. Make sure that you carefully design each metric to accurately capture the project's goals.

During the course of the project, discuss its status with your team and revise the project's goals and metrics if needed. But let your employees decide how to implement those revised goals and metrics. Tolerate and celebrate well-intentioned mistakes, but don't condone repeated errors or ethical lapses. If you need to criticize

your employees, do so in private. Address their specific behaviors; don't attack their personalities.

Be effusive with praise of your subordinates. It's very hard to give them too much positive feedback.

### Managing Your Boss

Just as your productivity depends on how you manage your team, it depends at least as much on how you deal with your boss by "managing up." That does not mean manipulating your boss or apple-polishing; it means establishing a mutually beneficial partnership.

Start by getting on the same page with your boss: give him or her a list of your assignments, ranked in order of importance from your perspective. Your boss can then amend the list if there are any misunderstandings.

Whatever the management style of your boss, he or she will become your biggest fan if you consistently deliver high-quality projects on time and within budget. When you do good work, your boss will be more receptive to your ideas and give you more discretion to run your own show. You should also be a team player. Willingly perform whatever tasks need to be done for your boss, even if they involve grunt work.

When you succeed, make sure your boss knows it, especially before performance reviews or bonus decisions. On the other hand, your boss will turn against you if you do not produce results as expected. If a project looks as though it may fail, make sure to give your boss plenty of advance warning. Bosses don't want to be surprised by long delays or major blowups. When you warn your boss of a serious problem, you should simultaneously offer possible ways to mitigate its negative effects. You should also accept responsibility for a problem that has arisen under your watch.

For conflicts that do arise, if the stakes are modest or your chances of prevailing are low, grit your teeth and go along with your boss's position. When you do decide to stand your ground, you have to do it in a problem-solving way. Do your research and keep the tone collaborative. These strategies are even more important if you and your boss have repeated clashes rather than a one-time disagreement. ●

## Part V: Pursuing a Productive Life

### Maximizing Your Career Options Over a Lifetime

You don't control the trajectory of your career. There are just too many factors beyond your control that will shape your job opportunities — such as global economic trends, political elections, industry regulation and company finances.

On the other hand, you can increase your probability of success by approaching your career with the right mindset. Career planning is not a one-time event; it's a continual process that has to be actively managed over a lifetime. At each step, ask yourself: what can I do next that will maximize my options in the future?

To start, establish some tentative Career Aims by critically evaluating your supply and the world's demand:

**1. Your Supply:** Think about your own interests and the skills that you can offer to employers. What topics do you find most enjoyable and interesting? Are you more adept at reading and writing or playing around with numbers? Consider not only your formal credentials but also your intangible personal skills, such as the ability to think on your feet or empathize with the less fortunate. To get a good understanding of the skills and interests that you need for particular jobs, talk to people already in these jobs.

**2. The World's Demand:** Evaluate whether there is sufficient market demand for your desired career. Even if there are some jobs for your desired profession, there may be too much supply relative to the demand. Don't just look at market demand by taking a snapshot in time; find out where the industry is going. Is it expanding or contracting?

After creating some tentative Career Aims, ask yourself how you can move your career in the right direction. You should pursue a combination of formal classroom education and informal learning on the job. Seek knowledge and skills — such as leadership skills, experiences in foreign countries, and stints at different types of organizations — that would be transferable to many types of jobs in the future.

### Embrace Change but Stay the Same

To make productive choices in the working world, you need to learn how to embrace change at each step and take advantage of the opportunities change presents. At the same time, certain aspects of the working world have remained the same over the years. These include the fundamentals of profit and loss and the ethical values of honesty and integrity.

Despite the inherent preference for stability, change at work occurs frequently at several levels. People change jobs more often than ever. Leadership and strategy change constantly. Over a longer time horizon, your organization's standing will not remain the same. At the global economic level, your career prospects are likely to

be adversely affected — and perhaps derailed — by short-term crises.

When you start thinking about your next career step, pay close attention to long-term trends. You can gear your career choices toward products or sectors that are attractive to the largest demographic group. You also need to stay on top of technological trends. Interdisciplinary fields can offer great potential for breakthrough changes.

Whatever path you take in developing your career, abide by these precepts:

• **Economic fundamentals.** A company must generate profits as well as revenues to remain a viable business, and stock prices ultimately reflect the company's expected stream of future profits. To be successful, your firm will have to deliver economic value over time, as reflected by a steady stream of profits rather than just a growing volume of revenues.

• **Your personal integrity.** Personal integrity includes not only complying with applicable laws, but also following your own ethical code on standards of business conduct. My code includes honest communications to all stakeholders, fair treatment of employees, and no misuse of corporate information. Identify three or four main principles that will guide your personal behavior over your professional career and write them down.

### Balancing Home and Work

What's the point of getting more done in less time? In my view, the point is not just to build a more rewarding career, but to enjoy a more rewarding life. The more efficient you are at work, the more time you'll have for your family, your friends and other aspects of life that you care about.

Imagine that suddenly you had five extra hours to spend each week. Suppose you would spend most of that extra five hours per week with your children. That means that extra time with your children is more valuable to you than extra time at work. Or suppose you would spend most of the extra time on yourself. That choice implies that you feel you have given up too much of your personal life to tend to your job and your children.

To shift the balance from work to personal activities, there are two areas you should focus on:

• **Find a flexible employer — or try to create one where you are.** Almost 80 percent of employers permit some workers to periodically change their starting and quitting times within specified ranges. In particular, many high-tech companies and customer service firms allow employees to work from home. Investigate your employer's policies on paid leave and flex time before you accept a job.

• **Change the way you work.** Go home for dinner. Although you may occasionally have to work late at night if there is a real emergency, there cannot be one every day. Protect your family time. You will have to be assertive and learn to say no. You may be anxious about setting limits with your boss. But remember: if you have shown that you are productive and trustworthy, your boss knows that you will get your work done with a more flexible schedule.

When you finally arrive home, concentrate your full attention on your family. This is not a place for multitasking. Avoid interruptions from work such as phone calls and emails. When you're with your family, avoid all but the most critical interruptions from work. Most issues from work can wait until tomorrow morning.

## Epilogue

Professionals at all levels should focus on results produced rather than hours worked. It's the best way, in my opinion, for you to get more done at work while enjoying more time with your friends and family. However, I've also been impressed by how much your approach to productivity should depend on your own specific situation. You should carefully consider your own stage in life and your organization's culture as you apply the lessons offered here.

Remember that you have control over your own mindset and behaviors on productivity. Write down your goals, divided into time periods and ranked in order of priority. Then you'll be in a good position to spend the most time on your highest goals and minimize the time you devote to less significant matters.

Regardless of your employer's culture, you can adopt most of the specific techniques in this book. Ultimately, it is within your power to boost your results and reduce your working hours.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Extreme Productivity*, you'll also like:

1. ***Full Engagement!* by Brian Tracy.** Managers will learn how to inspire peak performance and trigger the "X Factor" that maximizes productivity.
2. ***You Already Know How to Be Great* by Alan Fine and Rebecca R. Merrill.** Well-known performance coach Alan Fine reveals his simple and proven approach to achieving breakthrough performance.
3. ***The Power of Professionalism* by Bill Wiersma.** Wiersma outlines the seven key mindsets that drive performance and build trust.

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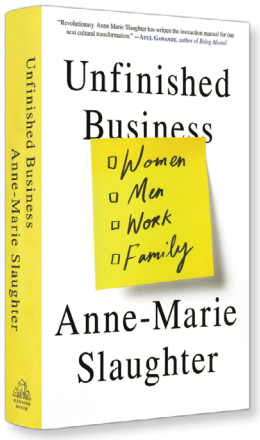
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# UNFINISHED BUSINESS
## Women, Men, Work, Family
**by Anne-Marie Slaughter**

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For many years, women were expected to make a choice: career or family. It was impossible, they were told, to have both. A woman could not devote the kind of time and commitment needed to climb the ladder of success while at the same time giving birth and taking care of children. Eventually, feminists began to fight back, rejecting the forced choice. It was possible, they declared, to build a successful career while still nurturing a family. It was possible, they eventually declared, to have it all.




In 2008, Anne-Marie Slaughter, author of a powerful new book on women, men and work called *Unfinished Business*, believed the mantra. It was indeed possible, under the right circumstances, to have it all, and she was proof. Slaughter had a very high-profile job as dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. She also had a family, including a husband who was a tenured professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton, and two sons, ages nine and 11. With the support and participation of her husband, Slaughter was able to thrive in her position while still leaving the office at 6 p.m.

In 2009, Slaughter was tapped by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to become the first female director of policy planning. The position was, of course, Washington-based. In accepting it, Slaughter began a commuter existence, spending the week in Washington, then returning home on Friday nights to spend the weekend with her family.

Once again, it seemed that she had it all. But not exactly. Slaughter knew she really wasn't there for her boys. Her younger son, then 10, would cry on the eve of her weekly departures. (He once told her during one particular cry, "I don't want you to go. I don't care about the country.") After two years and much deliberation, Slaughter returned to Princeton and her position as dean of the Woodrow Wilson School. And for the first time, she realized that women could not have it all. It was a bit of a revelation for her.

Despite all the progress that women had made to become accepted in the workplace, despite growing efforts by companies to create conditions where women could marry, have children and still have careers, despite the overwhelming number of husbands who were ready to share the housework and child-caring duties, women, Slaughter concluded, still had to choose, at some point in their lives, between career and family. In 2012, Slaughter wrote an article in *The Atlantic* explaining why this was so, using her own experiences as a launching point.

The article would quickly become one the most read articles in the history of the magazine. Slaughter had clearly touched a nerve with both men and women, who had grown weary of hearing the "you can have it all" argument. This was especially true of working women who could not afford 24-hour nannies.

In the aftermath of her article, Slaughter traveled the country giving speeches about the dilemma of working women — and listening to both the support and pushback to her speeches and writings. For some, Slaughter was revealing the unfortunate truth. Women are the caregivers, and successful careers don't leave room for caregiving. For others, Slaughter was throwing in the towel, wrongly accepting that women will never have the advantage of men, who are allowed to have both careers and family.

Readers of *Unfinished Business* will discover that neither camp is correct. The core of Slaughter's thesis is that women cannot have it all… yet. It is not impossible for women to build incredible careers while nurturing happy families; it is just not possible today.

### Deceptive Half-Truths About Women, Men and the Workplace

The problem, according to Slaughter, is that those who are arguing that it is possible for women to balance work and family are basing their argument on a series of half-truths. The first half truth is that "you can have it all if you are just committed enough to your career." In fact, this argument is telling women to act like the men who sacrificed family life

for careers, barely participating in their children's lives. The fact is that those men knew that a parent — their spouse — would be home with the children. Most women today do not have stay-at-home husbands, which means there is no parent for the children at home. Making the decision to sacrifice family life for career under those circumstances is much more difficult.

Instead, women try to stay committed to their careers while juggling career and family life, which may work for a while until something — a child gets seriously ill or in trouble; an aging parent faces health-care challenges; a spouse gets a promotion, which reduces his time with the family — makes the entire balancing act tip over.

The second half-truth, writes Slaughter, is that "you can have it all if you marry the right person." The idea is that a woman finds a man who shares the domestic duties 50-50. The problem is that 50-50 is not good enough if a woman truly wants to rise high through the ranks; the husband will have to do more, which also means that the husband will have to sacrifice his own high career aspirations.

Finally, the third half-truth that women hold dear, according to Slaughter, is that "you can have it all if you sequence it right." The sequence might be to build your career, then have children when you are secure in your career. One problem is that depending on how long it takes to build the career, it may be biologically too late for children. And coming back to the workplace after having children doesn't necessarily mean you can step back on the ladder and continue on your merry way. The window of opportunity for a career to the top may be closed.

Half-truths about women are not the only half-truths that explain why women still cannot have it all. Slaughter also points to the half-truths about men that too many people have signed onto.

The first of these half-truths is that "men can't have it all, either." This half-truth is meant to disarm the women and their allies battling for gender equality. And in some ways, it is true. Men who take advantage of parental leave, for example, might be stigmatized and find they have forfeited real advancement in the firm. However, to declare that men and women have faced the same problems in juggling firm and family would be, in Slaughter's terms, "revisionist history." The cultural barriers that women have faced have been much more challenging for women who want to balance a career and a family than they have been for men.

> "The argument that women can have it all today is bolstered by half-truths that don't stand up to scrutiny and explain why women are still unsuccessfully fighting the battle to have the same opportunities as men — no more, no less. Men can have great careers and great families; will women ever be able to do the same? The resounding answer from Slaughter is yes."

The second half-truth related to men is that "children need their mother." No matter how hard fathers may try to support their wives, the presence of the woman is needed. For Slaughter, this belief is a crutch. Obviously men can't get pregnant, give birth or breastfeed. But that is where it ends. The rest can be done equally well by men.

The third half-truth about men emerges from the Bible, which says that "a man's job is to provide." This is an ingrained assumption about the roles of men and women that does not necessarily reflect reality. First, 40 percent of American women are the primary breadwinners in their families. In addition, economic challenges often require a two-income family — the man cannot provide on his own.

Finally, according to Slaughter, the discussion about women successfully managing great careers and happy families is tainted by half-truths about the workplace. The first half-truth is that "work-life balance is a women's problem." Slaughter argues that work-life balance is neither a woman's nor a man's problem. It's a problem based on the cultural perception of care. "It's a care problem" is a theme she explores in much more detail in the second portion of the book.

One of the most prevalent half-truths about the workplace is that flextime options are allowing women to build their careers while caring for their families. Unfortunately, while flextime is helpful, employees are often unable to access these programs. And even if they exist, taking advantage of such programs is often a "black mark" on the employee.

In short, the argument that women can have it all today is bolstered by half-truths that don't stand up to scrutiny and explain why women are still unsuccessfully fighting the battle to have the same opportunities as men — no more, no less. Men can have great careers and great families; will women ever be able to do the same?

The resounding answer from Slaughter is yes. After explaining why it's not happening today (no matter what some might say), Slaughter then launches into a compelling, inspirational how-to manual on how it can happen tomorrow.

## Care and Competition

The first step is recognizing that half-truths are just that: insufficient maxims that don't tell the whole story. For men and women to truly have equal opportunity, there must be a serious shift in the attitudes of society — not about women and men but about care and competition.

In blunt terms, caring for others is not valued in today's society. While we may all express the greatest admiration for motherhood, no one truly believes that saying, "I'm a homemaker" is as impressive as saying, "I'm chief marketing officer for a major corporation." The corporate ladder-climber wins the admiration points every time.

One of the telltale signs of this discrimination against care and caregiving, according to Slaughter, is in the low salaries that society is willing to pay for caregiving. Indeed, salaries in the care industry are among the lowest of any industry.

The most egregious result of this discrimination against caregiving is what Slaughter calls the "motherhood penalty." Career women, she writes, must pay a penalty for being mothers. That penalty is manifested in two ways. First, mothers who must occasionally take time off to care for their children are considered poor leadership material; they are not given the marquee assignments or other opportunities on which to build a career, and they are not offered promotions.

Another manifestation of the mother penalty is the woman who interrupts her career to spend time with her children; when she returns to the workplace, the years away from the office are considered wasted years. There was, in the minds of corporate decision makers, no value of any kind acquired through caring for children.

Slaughter challenges this assumption in a chapter provocatively titled, "Is managing money really harder than managing kids?" Why should caring for others be considered "easy" — even unskilled? Why should successfully competing in the workplace, in contrast, be considered difficult and a laudable accomplishment?

Slaughter's point, as she states explicitly, is not to devalue competition but to revalue care. There is merit to succeeding in the workplace, but there is equal merit in succeeding as a caregiver. After all, successful caregiving begins by turning "income into goods and services necessary for survival," which includes shopping, cooking, cleaning, washing, organizing and outsourcing. Successful caregiving also includes the emotional components of loving and nurturing. And most impressive of all, successful caregiving includes "teaching, discipline… coaching, encouraging, problem solving, character building and role modeling" — none of which sounds easy.

Having compellingly argued that caregiving is just as important and valuable as competing in the marketplace, Slaughter then denounces what she terms "the competitive mystique" — the idea that true success is measured by how effectively you compete. As long as the bias of the competitive mystique dominates our culture, women with families will never be considered the equal of women who choose to focus exclusively on their careers.

"Having compellingly argued that caregiving is just as important and valuable as competing in the marketplace, Slaughter then denounces what she terms 'the competitive mystique' — the idea that true success is measured by how effectively you compete."

The question is, how do we move forward? How do we defeat the competitive mystique? Slaughter answers these questions with another provocatively titled chapter: "The next phase of the women's movement is a men's movement." The heart of her argument remains the need to revalue caring, but in this case, this revaluation would be manifested in the way men are treated if they choose to be caregivers. In short, stay-at-home dads are not treated with the same respect as corporate-ladder-climbing dads. And the lack of respect does not end there, since stay-at-home dads must often face the surprise of others that they are actually good at caregiving. The gender bias is so pervasive that our culture believes not only that "real men" should not want to be caregivers but also that "real men" are incapable of being caregivers!

Thus, to revalue care, Slaughter concludes, women must begin by letting go of society's expectations of who women should be and what women should do — and they should also let go of their own expectations of who men should be and what they are capable of doing. "If we can let go of the mountain of assumptions, biases, expectations, double standards and doubts that so many of us carry around," she writes, "then a new world of possibilities awaits."

## Four Action Steps

In the last section of her book, Slaughter moves from mindset to "concrete" action steps. She begins with the importance of changing the vocabulary — how we talk. We have come a long way since all women were expected to be homemakers and all men the breadwinners. We are no longer surprised at finding women as lawyers, doctors or CEOs (although not as numerous as they should be). What is often overlooked is how a two-letter word, Ms., had a significant impact in helping women break out of the perfectly coiffed and pearled homemaker stereotype. Unlike the title for men, Mr., the original titles for women immediately identified them as married or unmarried. Feminists believed (correctly) that marital status was not the most important piece of information concerning a woman. "Ms. gave women their own identities, regardless of marital status," writes Slaughter. A seemingly small change in language had enormous symbolic significance.

In many ways, language perpetuates our gender biases. A stay-at-home dad is referred to as "Mr. Mom." He's not really a dad; he's a male mom. And male employees with children are not referred to as "working fathers." The implied "correct" gender roles are obvious in the phrases

"Mr. Mom" and "working mothers." Slaughter argues that all of us should make deliberate attempts to avoid phrases and words that reinforce gender stereotypes. Even the phrase "stay-at-home" is unfortunate, as it assumes that going to work is the normal state of things.

Another step for "getting to equal," according to Slaughter, is to plan a career that incorporates intervals when you are less focused on career and more focused on family. The best-laid plans, of course, are rarely realized, but thinking in terms of intervals can help prepare and manage family phases and work phases. Concepts such as career portfolios (of different jobs) and tours of duty also offer different career scenarios that build family-focused time.

"Another step for 'getting to equal,' according to Slaughter, is to plan a career that incorporates intervals when you are less focused on career and more focused on family. The best-laid plans, of course, are rarely realized, but thinking in terms of intervals can help prepare and manage family phases and work phases."

The changing world of work also offers opportunities for men and women to have meaningful careers and still be successful caregivers. The on-demand economy, for example, allows for growing numbers of freelancers to work in flexible situations in which they can toggle from intense family-oriented activities to intense work activities. Slaughter also cites the open-work movement, in which employees define the rules of their work environment (in conjunction with the district manager). The changing world of work also calls for employees to take charge by "managing up" — learning how to collaborate and communicate with and even lead superiors in helping you to meet your needs.

The last of Slaughter's four steps is focused on public policy, which includes building an infrastructure of care (e.g., high-quality affordable care, paid family leave for both women and men). Slaughter also believes that electing more women is important. As sexist as it sounds, research has shown that women in politics will work more on care issues and helping the disadvantaged.

## What About Leaning In?

Although the book culminates in several action steps, the core of Slaughter's message is that our culture must look at care and competition through a new perspective, or "new lenses," to use Slaughter's term. This focus on mindset and cultural assumptions is what separates *Unfinished Business* from women-empowerment and success books such as the phenomenally successful *Lean In*, by Sheryl Sandberg.

Slaughter admires Sandberg and has had experiences with readers of *Lean In* who have asserted themselves and become more successful as a result. *Lean In*, however, is about operating within the system, helping women to break down the barriers that keep them from the C-suite. For Slaughter, the conflict is not so much between genders but between the concepts of care and competition. In some ways, *Unfinished Business* is a manifesto for the liberation of caring — a call for us to value care as much as we value competition. It is a tall order, and perhaps taller in America than in other countries. Competition is the lifeblood of the American way; there is an almost survival-of-the-fittest attitude that permeates many of our policy discussions. Of course, Americans care about their children and their aging parents as much as anyone. But will a 24-year-old nurse working in an assisted-living facility ever be as valued as a 24-year-old Wall Street trader?

*Unfinished Business* is an audacious challenge to America to dramatically change some fundamental attitudes. As Slaughter writes, "Not valuing caregiving is the taproot, the deeper problem that gives rise to distortion and discrimination in multiple areas of American society. When we open our eyes and change our lenses to focus on competition and care rather than women and work, we can see new solutions and new coalitions that can open the door to progress and change. Care can provide a new political banner under which all women can unite."

**The author:** Anne-Marie Slaughter is president and CEO of New America. She is the Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor Emerita of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University and the former dean of its Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. In 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton appointed Slaughter director of policy planning for the U.S. State Department, the first woman to hold that job. A foreign policy analyst, legal and international relations scholar and public commentator, Slaughter was a professor at the University of Chicago Law School and Harvard Law School and is a former president of the American Society of International Law.

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# Fail More

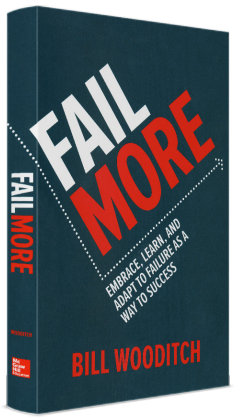
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# Fail More

## Embrace, Learn, and Adapt to Failure As a Way to Success




*by* **Bill Wooditch**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Learning from our mistakes is the only way to make sure we don't make the same ones twice. But what if you could use every failure—large and small—to actually create a successful business, career, and life?

You can. ***Fail More*** provides the knowledge, insight, and tools to do just that. This one-of-a-kind guide teaches you how to take active, strategic measures to turn the sting of failure into the reward of growth. It reveals the setbacks that are both inevitable and valuable, and it delivers practical ways of quickly moving past self-judgment and -recrimination to create large and small goals, establish milestones for achieving them, evaluate your actions, use failing as a core tool for motivation, and much more.

By embracing failure, not just "getting past it," you will fly past your competition, whether you're building a startup, advancing in your career, or improving your personal life. The most underrated tool for success is failure. ***Fail More*** provides a pragmatic program for turning failure today into profits and growth tomorrow.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why failure is not just acceptable but essential to success.
- To distinguish rational from irrational fear.
- To acknowledge and move beyond fear in order to reach your goals.
- To set goals and map out the steps to achieve them.

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## Always Forward: Achievement Is on the Other Side of Failure

At an early age, our teachers, parents, peers, and the rest of the social order teach us that failure is the result of a lack of innate ability. We're taught to compete for perfection—a zero-sum form of induced combat that pits our genes against the genes of others.

When it comes to obstacles that could result in potential failure, people adopt a cycle of avoidance. Avoidance is our natural inclination, followed by frustration, anger, excuses, and ultimately surrender. We carry the vestiges of this thinking into our businesses and homes. It becomes a part of our life, and we have one of two choices: deal with it and navigate forward in spite of it, or succumb to it and say, "I quit."

To escape the regret of what-ifs, you must summon the courage to break the cycle of avoidance. When it comes to courage, Franklin D. Roosevelt's words resonate: "Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear."

### The First Two Steps

And there it is! The first two steps to failing more productively are to recognize the cycle of avoidance and then have the courage to break the pattern and make the changes vital to growth.

The road to success isn't easy. If it were, we'd all be wildly successful. Herculean feats aren't required for sustained success. What is required is the persistence and willingness to do something every day that brings you closer to the realization of your dreams. Failure doesn't mean your efforts are over. It means they have just begun.

If you want to succeed, you have to fail more. The most significant difference between success and failure is the ability to learn from failure and apply the lessons to create success. Every failure comes with specific teachable moments, each of which deserves your undivided attention. If you don't heed those lessons, your failures are meaningless.

Failure can be a guide; it's a map that shows you where success lives. Think of life as an experimental lab—you are the innovator of your life, creating concepts that you can test in the field. Some of your ideas work and some won't, but each trial will give you a little more information, a little more encouragement, and a little more confidence. Each failed attempt will reveal what you have to do to make things work the next time. There can be no success without failure.

### The Poster Boy for Failure

Jack Ma, a Chinese business magnate, investor, and philanthropist, could be the poster boy for failing more. He found ways to fail that boggle the mind. Soul-crushing, hardcore stuff that would cripple even the strongest and most determined. He recalls, "I failed a key primary school test two times. I failed the middle school test three times. I failed the college entrance exam two times."

He applied to and was rejected from Harvard 10 times. Why he applied 10 times is a mystery that to date has been unanswered. He applied to be a police officer, but the police wouldn't even give him cursory consideration—prefacing their decision with three words, "You're no good." KFC was coming to China, and Ma, of course, applied for one of the 23 openings. Of the 24 applicants, only one wasn't hired. Can you guess who that was?

Ma knew that math wasn't his thing. Time after time, it was his issues with mathematics that made universities and employers turn him away. He realized that in order to move forward, he was going to have to leave behind the quantitative and focus on the qualitative aspects of his life.

It worked. Ma became fluent in English and secured his first job as an English teacher at the Hangzhou Dianzi University at the age of 24. Ma traveled to the United States in 1995 on an assignment, and he was introduced to the internet.

His first search was for "beer." He couldn't find any Chinese entries for beer, so he searched "China" and found no entries for the country either. Never lacking for inspiration, Ma channeled the innovator inside him and thought, "Why don't I make a website related to China?" He partnered with his friend Stuart Trusty, who worked as an internet consultant.

They developed a website, and it did well. But one year later, failure struck again. A state-owned enterprise, Zhejiang Telecom, took over Ma's innovative enterprise. He then moved back to Beijing and assumed a role in the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, building websites for the government.

Bureaucracy frustrated Ma, and he left to start a new internet venture, Alibaba, which would serve small businesses and would go on to become one of the world's largest companies. In 2018, Jack Ma's net worth was reported to be $40.9 billion, making him the wealthiest man in China. If he hadn't switched his focus to languages, he never would have come to the United States. This one success opened

Your dreams and aspirations for a better life can only become your lived reality when you recognize that fear is the ultimate dream killer.

the door to opportunities he never would have had if he just kept applying for the same jobs.

Failing more isn't a license to be irresponsible or to intentionally flunk life one mistake at a time. Instead, the goal is to constantly improve through intentional practice, while embracing the process and learning from the result. Success and failure both leave room for improvement. It's only through trying more that you can become more, learn more, and enjoy more.

## Recognize Fear

Anything in life of merit or value comes at a cost, with a sacrifice, and often with the clear and present possibility of failure. Refusal to acknowledge or engage in those activities that include the potential of failure means you're playing it safe.

You play it safe because you fear. Fear can sabotage your career and marginalize your life. Your dreams and aspirations for a better life can only become your lived reality when you recognize that fear is the ultimate dream killer.

It is important to recognize that fear originates from two sources: an avoidance of loss or an aversion to change. Once you understand where your fears originate, you can then weigh the course of action necessary to achieve your goals.

Fear disguises itself as procrastination or distraction. You think to yourself, "I'm not ready. It's not the perfect time. I'm not good enough. I'll be better tomorrow." Most fail to recognize that it's irrational fear that holds them back in life. We tend to blame external obstacles for our internal unwillingness to put ourselves in play.

But how do you recognize that it's fear that's stopping you? First, let's draw the distinction between fear and danger.

### Distinguishing Between Fear and Danger

Your ability to distinguish between rational and irrational fear will provide a guide to understanding what can cause physical harm and what is a product of your overactive imagination.

Rational fear is the early warning system that alerts you to danger. Conversely, irrational fear is a product of your imagination. When you perceive a "threat" and project future harm, your body reacts in the same way as it does to real danger. This fight, flight, or freeze response is a product of your genetic imprint.

Today's sabertooth tiger of your imagination can be an angry client or spouse, or it might be a deadline you're running up against.

Fear holds us hostage in a cycle of adrenaline release. The more dangerous the perceived situation, the bigger the buildup and release of adrenaline. Unutilized, adrenaline demands an outlet, and that unspent surge often results in anxiety and, left unchecked, the "black dog" of depression.

When we begin to fear fear itself, the trickle of adrenaline is released from the imagined consequences of confrontation. We feel out of control and helpless and caught up in a web of fear and adrenaline. Hypothetical scenarios create panic, and panic perpetuates feelings of fear and the release of adrenaline. This cycle of adrenaline release resulting in fear is physically and mentally debilitating.

There is a way to stop the cycle. To do this, we need to understand the difference between being aware of fear and accepting it:

- **Be aware**. Become acquainted with the feeling. Fear is a feeling. It holds as much power over you as you permit. Be aware that what you're feeling is human.
- **Accept it**. By accepting fear, you lessen its power. Expect it because it's never going away; then embrace and welcome the feelings that accompany it. This sounds crazy, but when you welcome the inevitable, you steal its power. When you expect it, you're prepared for it. Make a pact with yourself: "I can live with this." By making this statement, you take back your power—and you need this power to perform at your best.

## Break Through the Obstacles That Limit Success

Once you understand and rid yourself of the fear of trying something and falling short, you will be able to open doors you never even considered knocking on before.

The question is, how do you handle things? Are you more comfortable with risk? Did you learn from your failure? Have you been able to distance yourself from the emotional pain? Are you now ready to use logic and make a more informed attempt from failure to create a positive outcome?

When you move from emotion (fear) to logic (obstacle management), you can then visualize an outcome by walking through the imaginary steps it takes to achieve it. You have the lessons of failure at your disposal. Now you can rationally use them to avoid the pitfalls that you previously encountered. This is one of the gifts of failure: the ability to anticipate through logic and visualization. Anticipation asks the question, "How do I overcome this obstacle?"

Divide failures into two categories: major and minor. Quitting on your success is a major failure. It's a category of one. That's it. You're renouncing your responsibility to yourself to provide for a better station in life.

Everything else is a minor failure. Not only can you recover from a minor failure, but you already have done so a thousand times in your life. Whether it was attempting to walk, riding a bike, not getting a job, messing up a presentation, or failing a course, these are all things you can come back from.

Your goal is to improve every day, and you have to accept that minor failures are a part of that process.

### What Is It That You Really Want?

The purpose of life is to live your life to its most fulfilling promise. Purpose is your why. Purpose creates a passion that envelops, imbues, and creates the compelling how of what you do. To wake up every day with a chance to challenge and change, to improve and immerse yourself in the world.

Ask yourself what it is that you really want and what you are willing to sacrifice to earn it. Once you have the answers, you'll have a guide, but you'll still be confronted daily with the fear of failure. Whether it's resistance, procrastination, or distraction, it will be there in disguise.

Learn to say no to whatever it is—people, things, issues, or agendas—that derails or detracts you from doing whatever it is that brings you closer to what you must have. Learn the difference between what is important and what is urgent.

Here is where your victory over fear comes into play. It will give you the opportunity to break out of your comfort zone, to learn new skills, to become indispensable. Now that you know how to manage your fear, to embrace it, to use it, you can finally become unstoppable.

In order to get what you want, you have to do those things that give you the confidence to do just a little bit more the next day. Yes, there is an element of risk, but the next day brings the new opportunity that you create or one that you see, seize, and make available from your applied competence.

Career development holds personal responsibility as a nonnegotiable trait. Making a better way in life for yourself and others is an obligation. Don't cede your power. Don't give it away so someone else can dictate your fate. Your power resides in your personal responsibility to learn more, do more, and become more.

## Become a Master of Failure

Adam Kreek is a two-time rowing Olympian with a degree in geotechnical engineering and hydrology from Stanford University. Rowing is a mentally and physically demanding sport that revolves around the fact that the sum is greater than the individual parts. It's a team sport, but every person in the boat has to not only work together but do the work alone at the same time.

Kreek is a professional speaker today, and he informs his audiences that the most important thing he learned at the Olympics was a lesson on failure.

Kreek was the fastest starboard on the team until, he says, a "big, bald, Viking-looking guy named Jake Wetzel" started to kick his butt. Kreek didn't like being displaced as the fastest. His ego was dented, and he immediately thought Wetzel to be an idiot and someone he wanted to physically harm.

But Kreek stepped back from the emotional sway and reverted to the logic that served him well at Stanford: "Wait a minute—here we are competing against each other, but we're on the same team. Maybe I can learn from him."

One day Kreek approached Wetzel and asked him to have lunch. As they sat in front of a pile of bagels and a dozen eggs, Kreek asked Wetzel point-blank, "Jake, what's your secret to success? How are you so successful?"

Kreek didn't expect the answer Wetzel gave him. "I seek failure." Kreek was in shock and asked Wetzel if he was putting him on.

Wetzel went on to explain a Monday-through-Saturday step-by-step approach. He explained that he would pick one workout every week and train to his current limit, that boundary right before failure.

In his words, "I willingly push myself through my known limit, and know I will embrace failure. My body will fail on me and for the rest of the week as well. I will know what my limit is, and I will hover below it, and in fact, the greatest point of growth occurs right below your limit."

The lightbulb went on. Kreek found the brilliance in the method and embraced it as a way of consistent improvement. It became his edge. He embraced the process, method, and importance of failure, and it made all the difference. His team later won the gold medal at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

> Failure is a powerful punch in the gut, but it is not as painful as the sting of regret.

### Use All Emotions as a Tool—Even the Negative Ones

To fail forward, you have to distance yourself from emotions. You're only human—you will feel emotions first—but you need to react strategically, not emotionally. Feel your emotions, move beyond them, and start using logic instead of feeling. Here's how:

**Take a deep breath**. Before you do anything else, take a step back and breathe deeply. Only when you start to slow down will your emotions start to quiet. Focusing on your breathing will help you to get out of the instinct part of your brain (the bottom) and into the rational part of your brain (the top).

**Feel your emotions; then check them**. After giving your feelings a little space for acknowledgment, it's time to let them go, to make the switch to strategic thinking. Ask yourself, "What is really happening here? How would I rather feel?" These cues will aid you in making the transition. Forgive yourself and forgive everyone involved.

**Create an objective framework**. It's important to evaluate the failure dispassionately. Take a step back and look at all parts of the equation. What kept you from your goal? What steps can you take to avoid the pattern of failure? From there, each specific failure will provide you with an opportunity to improve by giving you clues on how not to fail.

**Test-drive your new direction**. Once the clouds are cleared, you can start to see the answers. How can you move forward? What new steps do you need to take? What old ones do you need to abandon? Be specific and intentional about your goals, and visualize yourself making them a reality.

**Assign a value to failure**. Now that you see the results evolving, you will start to value failure as the tool it can be. Continue to be vigilant for signs of failure, and start tweaking your direction along the way.

**Create your success profile**. Once you've figured out what works, get out your journal and make detailed notes. Write down everything that brought you closer to a successful outcome. You can refer to this "success profile" to avoid slipping back to the old ways and the ineffective methods that failed to produce a successful result.

**Be grateful**. Make it a point to practice gratitude for opportunities that come your way. Sure, failure is a powerful punch in the gut, but it is not as painful as the sting of regret. Having the opportunity to change and move forward is something to be thankful for.

You might have to repeat some steps in this process if you feel you are not moving forward or if your new steps aren't working for you.

## It's Goal Time: Define and Plan for Success

Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is success. Great accomplishments take time. Whether your "big goal" is crafting your next masterpiece, planning your ascent to the Oval Office, or positioning yourself for your next raise, focus on the fundamentals that make your big goal a reality. You must build your empire just like the Romans, stone by stone.

The laying of stones embodies a process. It's a systematic approach that is subject to disciplined habit, resolve, patience, and retrospection.

Experts define goal setting as the selection of a target or objective you intend to achieve. Rather than asking yourself what it is you want to achieve, ask yourself what it is you can endure to achieve it. What kind of pain threshold can you tolerate in pursuit of your goal?

The cost each of us must pay to enjoy the fruits of a better life is the pain of failure. The most significant advantage that failure provides resides in the lessons it doles out in the process. These lessons will shorten the distance between where you are now and where you intend to go, while lessening the pain of the next experience. The first lesson you can learn from failure is to avoid setting yourself up for it.

While you need crystal clarity about the nature of your goal, you need to break down the small steps you have to take to achieve it. If you are to approximate your potential, you have to start and stick with fundamentals.

**Stage 1: Play it forward by looking back**. Think about your time of demise. You're on your death bed reflecting on your life. Do you have regret? What would you have become if you had no self-imposed limits? Take the limits down, let your imagination run wild, and describe what that reality would have looked like.

**Stage 2: Get specific with your goals**. Create a "to-do" list that supports the goals drafted in Stage 1. For example, if you want to run a full marathon (26.219 miles), what do you need to do first? From the shoes you buy, to the partner you run with, to the pace you run at, you need to work up to a 5K, a 10K, and a half marathon before striking out for your big goal, the full marathon.

Use the same principle in your financial endeavors. If you want to be a millionaire, you first have to find your way to $100K in personal income. How do you get there? What do you need to do? Who around you is doing it now? And who has done it?

**Stage 3: Limit competing distractions**. When you have too many goals, you have no goal. What you have is a bunch of objectives, wishes, or wants but not a real "dig in, do what it takes, make it happen" goal. Competing goals look like this: "I want to be the star salesperson in my company, but I also want to be a triathlete. And, oh, by the way, I think a gourmet chef sounds good, too!"

Time, energy, and focus are vital in the pursuit of what you deem to be most important. You need to establish one major goal and separate that goal from all the other hobbies that seem like a goal. What are your competing distractions, and what do you need to do to limit them?

**Stage 4: Identify who, what, when, and where**. Who are those people who can help you achieve your goal? What can they contribute? When can they begin their contribution? And where do they begin?

**Stage 5: Keep track of your progress**. Start a success journal. Create two columns: one column for those accomplishments that brought you closer to your goal and another column for those distractions that impeded you from the tasks you needed to complete to make your day a success. Look for the lessons in your past successes and failures. What worked and why? What obstacles stopped you and why?

This is where honesty provides direction. If you're willing to learn from both columns, you have what it takes to make that progressive journey forward.

## The Road to Success

Your road to success is a process and a journey, not a destination. You can't pause along the road and hope improvement will ensue from lack of activity—success is always under construction.

The author Stephen King's road to success was anything but a straight line. As a matter of fact, his story is one of self-belief, perseverance, and talent. King wrote constantly and was rewarded with rejection slips after each submission to Alfred Hitchcock's ***Mystery Magazine.***

Over time, King started to make a game out of the rejection. Instead of throwing the slips out, he nailed them in a stack to his bedroom wall. Imagine going to sleep at night, looking at rejection, and waking up, only to face it the next day.

The rejection slips continued piling up, and soon the nail wasn't big enough to hold all the letters. So he got a bigger spike and kept on writing. In a capsule, this is the essence of ***Fail More***. Rejection will slap you in the face, not once, not twice, but so many times that you'll lose count. But like King, your purpose will compel you to keep going, adapt, and grow.

After myriad impersonal rejections, King found hope in the one personalized response he received after eight years of

Surround yourself with people who offer moral and intellectual support and feedback. You need assistance to become successful in life; you can't do it all alone.

failed submissions. Even though his manuscript was rejected, he found hope in the unsigned message that read, "Don't staple manuscripts, loose pages + paper clip = cor-rect way to submit copy." Although it was cold water to the face, King did find it useful. Often in the midst of failure, there is that ray of light that, however dimly, provides direction.

Even though the rejections kept coming, King was progressing, getting better and better. He was steadfast in his resolve to be published. His persistence would pay off again, when one of the magazines wrote back, "Your stuff is good, but it's not for us: Keep submitting."

King viewed rejection as a learning process, and he stayed with the process until he began learning, improving, and finally getting published.

### Channeling Your Inner Stephen King

Your goal needs to be clear and present, focused to the extreme. You must never lose sight of it. King found his purpose early. He loved to write; he wanted to be published, and nothing would stop that from becoming a reality.

King engaged in that intentional practice that leads to mastery. Are you ready to enter the 10,000 hours+ of practice that mastery requires? There are no overnight successes. You've got to do the work.

Do you have what it takes to be rejection-proof? Do you understand that rejection is a prerequisite for success? Accept that immediately, and get used to it!

Self-doubt and lack of confidence will derail you. No one will believe in you unless you first believe in yourself. Grow your confidence with small steps, little things that give you the impetus to try more. Don't run from rejection; use it as fuel.

Surround yourself with people who offer moral and intellectual support and feedback. You need assistance to become successful in life; you can't do it all alone. King had a major advocate. His wife believed in him, supported him, and encouraged him to keep going when he thought ***Carrie*** was a failure—and we should all be thankful she did.

## Embrace Risk

Every time you make a choice in life, you're taking a risk, and your life is a series of the choices you have made. When you assess the pain-gain game, know that to risk blindly is foolish.

Taking intelligent risk is a skill. Use the past to inform the present and positively influence the future. In order to risk intelligently, you need to

- **Be clear**—what is the worst thing that can happen if you fail?
- **Be real**—can you accept it?
- **Be practical**—is there a smaller risk you can take that will provide the momentum and experience you will need to take those bigger chances?
- **Be objective**—is the greater pain of failure emotional or financial?
- **Be prepared**—do you have what it takes to pursue the risk now? If not, when? Make a commitment to a timeline, do what it takes to prepare, get in position, and go forward.
- **Be aware**—as you're moving through the process, taking risks, and doing what needs to happen to win, conduct a "process audit." What is effective, and what can be improved upon? Adapt and apply on the fly.
- **Be reflective**—start a success journal and stay with it. This is where you can write what worked and what didn't work for you during the course of the day. Each day, you can learn from what happened the previous day if it's written down in a straightforward manner. No excuses, no bias—just straight-up facts. You'll find that what you learn every day will impact the week, the week the month, the month the year, and in time, it will make your career.

Nothing can happen unless you put yourself in play and take a risk. There's no perfect time, no magic formula. It's you and your willingness to either do or don't.

## Maintain a Mindset for Continued Success

Most of us reach a certain point in our journey—maybe it's a point we never thought we'd approximate—and then we tend to try to hold on to what we've accumulated. It may be a title, a salary, or a relationship, and we lay off the gas. We quit doing what enabled us to enjoy the life we currently have, and by doing this, we start to stagnate.

Stagnation pulls you back, so you have to work every day to keep improving—whether it's physically, emotionally, or intellectually.

Nature doesn't support the static: Nature, by definition, is dynamic. You evolve and adapt, or you become obsolete. It's often a rude wake-up call for those who think they can sit on success. You can't. Success is always under construction. It's always going to demand you do something to prove that you deserve it.

Perhaps you're at that point where you're motivated to make the change. Before you move forward, it may be beneficial to reflect. You'll find lessons in both success and failure hiding in plain sight.

Once you've reflected, it's time to ask yourself the questions that only you can answer:

- What is holding me back?
- Am I being honest with myself in my current assessment?
- Is there a common theme in the patterns of my past behavior that I can replicate or eradicate?
- Realistically, where can I set my bar of expectations?

Personal responsibility creates momentum, and momentum is the antithesis of stagnation. You generate momentum when you lose excuses and swing into action.

If you're going to create a better way of life and enjoy true happiness, you have to seek levels of improvement every day.

As you seek better, you're going to encounter setbacks, you're going to have missteps, and you're going to fail. Understand the nature of your fear, and use the tools outlined here to break through the sting of rejection and the despair of defeat to enjoy the deepest levels of true success.

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Bill Wooditch is the founder and CEO of The Wooditch Group, a risk-management and corporate insurance firm. He is on a mission to help people improve their lifestyle options. He mentors those who are hungry for success, teaching them skills to harness the lessons of failure to create new opportunities. His approach is a physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional journey based on 25 years in the trenches, from rough-hewn job sites to highly veneered Fortune 500 boardrooms.

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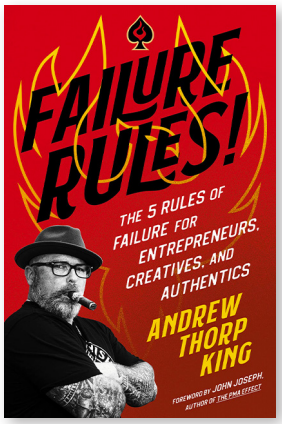
# Failure Rules!

Andrew Thorp King

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Failure Rules!

## The 5 Rules of Failure for Entrepreneurs, Creatives, and Authentics




*by* **Andrew Thorp King**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Failure can ruin lives and families. There's no denying it. It can destroy your health and obliterate your self-esteem. But it also holds a lot of value on the road to success.

***Failure Rules! The 5 Rules of Failure for Entrepreneurs, Creatives, and Authentics*** walks you through five essential rules to help you pull value from any failure—as proven by Andrew Thorp King, investor, fintech banker, podcaster, and two-time record label founder, and his personal stories of dramatic, cascading failures in business, relationships, art, and life.

The experience and immediate tangible results of failure suck. But if you follow the rules of failure—seeing beyond the mess and picking through the good stuff left in the rubble—you can move forward into success.

Embrace the F-word and let hard times make you stronger. Because after it sucks, FAILURE RULES!

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Five essential rules to pull value from any failure.
- Key failure lessons from a diverse set of successful entrepreneurs, creatives, and authentics.
- How to strategically work for free (or for little).
- How to leverage chaos as an idea engine.
- The importance of loving meaning over money.

## Introduction

Failure happens to us all. It has different levels of visitation on each of us. When it comes, we need to revere it. Before it arrives, we need to plan how we will greet it. In anticipation of it striking, we need to decide ahead of time how we will handle it. We need to manage our fear of it with reason and strategy. When it hits us, we will likely only be lowered to the level of our preparedness, not strengthened to rise to the intensity of its challenges. So, it behooves us all to prepare for it.

Embedded within the structure of this book, I've distilled five critical rules for engaging with and thinking about the F-word—most specifically, rules that apply specially to entrepreneurs, creatives, and authentics. The 5 Rules of Failure is your field manual to help you look at your failures, discuss them with yourself, and guide you into putting yourself back together better on the other side of your failures.

## Failure Rule #1: Failure Purifies

Failure burns off the areas of our lives that can gain from being reimagined, reconfigured, and reconstructed. Failure removes external entanglements that accumulate in our lives that mute our internal spirit voice so we can have an opportunity to hear it clearly and fall into the current of our calling journey.

Failure strips us of inefficient foundations so we can create new ones that will serve us better as we move forward into the fullness of authentic living. Failure turns our attention inward by disassembling what is outward so we can restore the audacity, vision, and courage we need to actionably invoke our Divinity of Purpose. Failure purifies us so we can rise with renewed strength colored by the value of pain.

Eliminate all of the clear "hell no" realities of your life to more precisely chase your "hell yes" pursuits. Keep in mind that the benefits of failure's purification are not immediate or obvious; you need foresight and patience to recognize them.

When entering a new space, understand that accumulating knowledge, gathering experience, and building relationships are more valuable than compensation. Be ever-open to unexpected game-changing connectors and mentors entering your path; seek them out as ladders in your calling journey and climb.

Pay attention to the groaning discomfort of stagnant mediocrity; let it push you into pivot points that join you with the next steps of your calling journey. Deliberately create work conditions that allow you to fall into iterative flow states. This is more important than rigid plans or a blunt-force work ethic.

Diligently live your life each day with your legacy in mind; let the clearing of failure's purification be an opportunity to strategically rethink how you write the next chapter of your legacy's story.

## Failure Rule #2: Nothing is Safe

The world is inherently unsafe. Jobs, industries, economies, relationships, and physical health are all inherently unsafe. Therefore, meaning, fulfillment, survival, and prosperity can be found in holding tight to internal attachments and holding loose to that which is attached to the unsafe external world. Nonattachment to this unsafe world enables nimble reinvention. It allows a path toward being content in all circumstances. It produces the freedom for one to live to win in an unsafe world—in spite of having been born to lose.

Build sustainable conditions to mind your fire inside. When you feel the weight of having been born to lose, defiantly choose to instead live every day with the intent to win. Don't inappropriately glorify or outsource safety in your life. At the end of your life, you will appreciate the reasonable risks you took more than the safe comforts you protected.

Choose the hard right way over the easy wrong way, even if suffering and hardship follow. When chaos surrounds or befalls you, leverage it as a springboard for forward-enabling ideation. When you feel unloved, change your internal monologue to one that reinforces the uniqueness of your created Being; do this until that mode of self-talk becomes your new reality.

Define the internal operating system that regulates you; rely on it when failure strikes. Because circumstances are subject to fluidity and volatility, you must cultivate strong reinvention skills. Understand that it is not your employer's job to take care of you; that is your job. Therefore, you must soberly build contingency pursuits on the side in an attempt to create financial and fulfillment redundancy.

Diversify your pursuits, not just your savings and investments; this way, you increase the probability of both your financial and fulfillment continuity. Learn to identify the unique chemistry of your individual talent composite; then, use that composite to create outputs of blessing that no one

else can create in the way that you can.

Find ways to reasonably extend your imprint on your circumstances or they will unreasonably force their imprint on you. Find a way to manifest enthusiasm in your work, even if it's painfully manufactured. Learn to mind many fires inside and cultivate these fires so they burn maximally. Learn to detach yourself from that which may be lost, destroyed, or taken away; instead, attach yourself to the beauty of living in all circumstances.

When you abide by the promptings of your internal spirit voice, expect to travel into messy, unsafe spaces. Time is not your friend, so get busy living to the fullest—and remember that you must die. Even though a departure from the safe path may come with high costs, if bearing those costs helps join you with your authentic calling journey, it is worth it. Live your life in such a way that you know exactly what your book would look like—one you want those left behind to read.

## Failure Rule #3: Money is Spiritual

Money is an elusive, versatile tool loaded with spiritual power. If misunderstood, it can fuel envy and greed and ultimately the failure of self-inflicted emptiness, but if viewed and used properly, it can be a multiplier of blessings and an enabling thank-you note that can help lift valued recipients up and out of their failure valleys.

Focus on that which is eternal by embracing gratitude and rejecting envy and greed. Honor the transactions you engage in; strive to fully earn each payment you receive in honor of the inherent thank-you note it represents. Viewed properly, transactions are sacraments—earthly expressions of the spiritual connectivity that exists in exchanges of measured thankfulness. Pursue and value both money and meaning as you seek to marry them, but only love meaning, not money.

Desire is the foremost necessary component for overcoming failure. Guard your inner self first, your spiritual core; then, the benefit you deliver to the world will be maximized along with the probability of commensurately maximized financial rewards. Don't decouple meaning from money; instead, aim to marry them. Strive to maintain pursuits of meaning as long as you have the physical and mental capacity to do so, whether you're formally working or have retired from formal work.

## Failure Rule #4: Build Your Thing One and Thing Two Dependency (Failure Prevention)

Failure only rules after it first sucks. Because failure sucks while also being ultimately inevitable in some form, it is ideal to try and avoid as much of it as possible. Failure prevention and preparation go hand in hand. Prevent what you can to minimize the suck so you can reserve your energy to optimize the extracted value from the failure you cannot avoid.

Building thoughtful enabler pursuits (Thing One) to sustain and empower you as you chart your plans toward your highest value primary dream pursuit (Thing Two) will mitigate the failure that punctuates your calling journey path. Your enabler pursuit is your Thing One. Your aspirational dream—which carries the most weight within your calling journey—is your Thing Two.

Carefully building and managing strategic enabler pursuits (Thing One) can minimize failure and empower you as you scheme toward your highest value primary-dream pursuit (Thing Two). Most everyone needs a low-meaning Thing One pursuit to sustain them while working toward their Thing Two dream realization.

Although it is a longer road, the Thing One Active Model can enable amazing Thing Two accomplishments. Consider all viable Thing One pursuit options and combinations as possible mechanisms to achieve your Thing Two dream realization; be creative and be open to unusual sacrifice.

The most common Thing One enabler is holding down a simple day job while side-hustling your Thing Two dream forward over time. All pursuits carry the potential for meaning, but a Thing Two dream pursuit represents the highest conception of an attempt to marry money and meaning. If your Thing Two doesn't have a constant, driving tug, it may not truly be your Thing Two pursuit.

It is when failure leaves you in a state of disassembly that your Thing Two pursuit often becomes the clearest. Shape your Thing Two pursuit to resemble an amalgamation of your interests, experience, skills, and style in a way that is distinctly unique to you. At times you will need to burn the candle at both ends as your Thing Two pursuit pulls you into its calling path. You need to welcome this.

The information age has created a democratization of access and reach that can uniquely enable Thing Two dreams like never before in history. Anyone can couple

action with reasonable risks to pursue their Thing Two dream; it is repeating this coupling as a practice that will drive Thing Two achievability.

## Failure Rule #5: You Are Not Your Failures (Impression Management)

Never let the failure events you experience define you. You must detach yourself from the optics of your failures. Sometimes your failures may cause division around you. Prepare to accept this with peace, knowing your identity is not tied to your failures. Convert these rejections into amplified motivation as you move forward. Through this, make sure to be kind and good to those who judge you even as you decisively ignore their opinions.

Guard your idealism and choose objective responses to your failure events. If your failure confronts you with a tragic moral choice, learn how to choose wisely and own your decision with peace—regardless of the outcome. Process your failures with healthy humor and stay unmistakably authentic. Harness the creative reshaping power of chaos when your failure moments push you to rock bottom. Then submit with faith to the new streams the rocks at the bottom push you into.

When failure strikes, you cannot let the impression it makes on others affect you; be kind and good as you ignore the low-resolution opinions of others. Use rejection as fuel to energize your fire inside to burn into a brighter, more powerful flame. Don't wait for perfect conditions before acting in accordance with your internal spirit voice; own your decisions and reject the notion that good decisions must always produce predictably good outcomes.

When your internal spirit voice is in clear opposition to the external feedback loops that surround you, you need to bypass permission and act. You must protect your idealism in the midst of failure; reject any cynicism that may cause you to lose sight of your Thing Two dream.

Should you ever fall into dependency, embrace healthy shame and gratitude simultaneously; then leverage both sensibilities to motivate your fight back to self-reliance. Ready your mind for the time when you must choose the least bad option between two terrible options and then peacefully live with your choice. If your very Being feels like a landmine, know that you have the power to organize the chaos of each explosion you cause to shape new order that will synch you with your calling journey.

Sometimes you need to accept, even induce, division to forge forward with integrity as your authentic self as an entrepreneur or a creative. Cultivate an insightful, playful, and self-deprecating sense of humor in times of failure and let it ease the tension of your hard times. You—and only you—are the final earthly authority on the meaning of the failure events of your life. Every day you have the opportunity to re-sketch the story of the rest of your life—despite your failures. You don't need to come from wealth or have a stacked resume, a college degree, or substantial seed money to actualize your Thing Two dream; bulldog tenacity and vision can often suffice. You are not your losses or your sufferings, but you are how you decide to respond to your losses, sufferings, and failures.

## Conclusion

Failure Rule #1: Failure Purifies is true even in the smallest of things. Failure Rule #2: Nothing is Safe is inescapable. Failure Rule #3: Money Is Spiritual ubiquitously applies to all commerce, and money is most fundamentally a thank-you note. Failure Rule #4: Build Your Thing One and Thing Two Dependency is a sound way to prevent unnecessary failure and eliminate future regret. Failure Rule #5: You Are Not Your Failures is critical to embrace.

I am not my failures. You are not your failures. They are not their failures. Now go forth and internalize The 5 Rules of Failure. And remember that after it sucks, if you know its rules, then eventually, Failure Rules!



**Andrew Thorp King** is an executive fintech banker, spy novelist, speaker, punk rocker, podcaster, ex-bodybuilder, and serial entrepreneur. He founded two independent record labels-Thorp Records and Sailor's Grave Records-and has invested in many spaces, including online lending, fitness, lead generation, and independent music. He has also crashed and burned through bankruptcy, divorce, mortgage default, public assistance, and multiple business failures. But, like a jack-in-the-box after a punch, he pops back up every time, rebuilding his life-informed by failure-with a big smile on his face.

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# Featured Book Review

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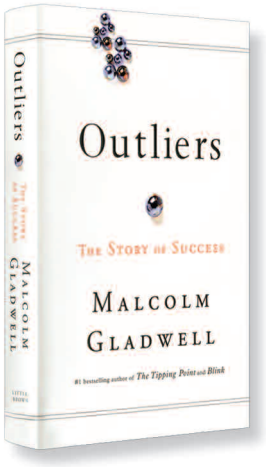
# How to Rise Above and Beyond the Norm

Review by Chris Lauer

## OUTLIERS
## The Story of Success
**by Malcolm Gladwell**

*© 2008, Little, Brown & Co., 309 pages, $27.99, ISBN 978-0-316-01792-3*

Imagine a gifted storyteller who has the ability to succinctly sum up the lessons he has learned as a groundbreaking journalist and turn those lessons into stories that transform his readers into devoted fans. First he hones his craft by writing dozens of newspaper columns, then he expands his range into magazine stories. Next, he widens his scope again by writing books that capture all of the reporting skills he has gained over a journalistic career built while working for some of the most respected publications on the planet. Over that time, he has been accumulating the thousands of practice hours needed to make him one of the most exciting and celebrated writers of our time. He has cultivated his career to the point where he finds himself head and shoulders above his peers. This outlier — a man whose experiences and accomplishments have elevated him to the top of his profession — is Malcolm Gladwell.




After many years as a venerated reporter for *The Washington Post* and *The New Yorker*, Gladwell has spent the last few years at the top of many lists of best-selling book authors. He has earned his fame by telling stories that captivate his readers and help them make sense of the tangled complexities of life. With his clever wit guiding the journey, Gladwell ventures into the hidden realms of our civilization. Along the way, he untangles our ignorance and delicately exposes the access points that allow us entry into the world of intelligent information gathering and exploration. The path he clears leads to intellectual breakthroughs of the most surprising kind.

After the success of Gladwell's first two international bestsellers, *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*, *Outliers* completes his triumvirate of classic yet timely books that help us get to know ourselves better and understand how the world works. Gladwell's rational, guiding voice draws readers through each of his three books. A master writer executing his craft, Gladwell gives his readers a plethora of fresh ideas to carry around with them for the rest of their lives. After reading his books, readers find themselves comparing all of their experiences that follow to the vast concepts and minute details brought to life throughout these marvelous tales.

### No One Gets There Alone

One of the magnificent revelations that emerges frequently throughout *Outliers* is the premise that no outlier reaches a pinnacle of success without the help of his or her own legacy. For example, Bill Gates might be a genius, but it was the fact that he was given access to one of the first modern computer systems at an early age that gave him the edge he needed to rise above the norm and become the billionaire entrepreneur he is today. Likewise, The Beatles might have been astounding musicians, but they achieved their record-breaking success with their long stints in Hamburg, Germany, as a young band performing every night for eight hours, for months on end.

One of the premises Gladwell pursues throughout *Outliers* is the commonality of successful people and

organizations. Although he often veers into other connected revelations made by some of the most cutting-edge researchers of our day, Gladwell proposes the theory that successful people, such as The Beatles, Bill Gates and dozens of others have each practiced at least 10,000 hours at their craft before becoming the successes we recognize today. The Beatles weren't simply genius musicians who took the world by surprise with their innate ability to perform and write songs in a vacuum, Gladwell points out. Instead, they succeeded because they practiced endlessly in Hamburg's breakneck performance culture, which allowed them to play so often and accumulate so much experience that, by the time they entered the mainstream, they were seasoned performers who were able to rise above the competition and become the success we recognize today.

## Thousands of Hours of Practice

Similarly, Gladwell explains, while Bill Gates was a privileged son of wealthy parents who was given all the benefits of a top education and exceptional upbringing, these advantages alone were not enough to make him one of the world's wealthiest men. Gates' family life was only part of the puzzle. Gladwell points out that several other factors must be explored to understand who Bill Gates is today. One of those factors was the purchase of a time-sharing computer terminal by the "Mothers' Club" at his school that allowed him to turn his interest in computers into a way of life during his most formative years. The thousands and thousands of hours he spent at the new computer terminal in his elite Seattle junior high school's computer club helped to prepare him for the changing world that he would be entering after high school and college. Gladwell's revelation is that Gates' experience writing code during his early years, plus his natural skills and ability to take advantage of the opportunities that came his way, added up to the man we now recognize as one of the most successful people of our era. Going even deeper into Gates' legacy, Gladwell also describes the importance of the place and time of Gates' birth, which turned out to be crucial in that he was able to drop out of Harvard after his sophomore year to start Microsoft.

"Gates' family life was only part of the puzzle. Gladwell points out that several other factors must be explored to understand who Bill Gates is today."

Explanations like these, fleshed out in highly researched detail, are the hallmark of Gladwell's work. As a writer, he's clearly fascinated by the minutiae that lead to the giant revelations that aptly define life and reality well beneath a first glance and initial tagline. Sure, some people at the top of their game can claim that they got to where they are by sheer chutzpa and determination, but the power of cultural legacy cannot be ignored. That's why Gladwell looks deeper into the phenomenon of success to reveal the underlying truths that are often obscure at the outset but that with additional determined study and examination, can be exposed.

## Logical Numbers

For example, since Gladwell is searching for the methods by which successful people have achieved their success, one question he asks is, "Why are Asians better at math than their U.S. counterparts?" Some might brush this question off with the terse assertion that Asians simply have higher IQs, and therefore people from China, Japan, Korea and other Asian countries score better on math tests than Americans do. But that answer doesn't go to the real heart of the matter, and Gladwell's inner investigative reporter will not be appeased by such a shallow, if not stereotypical, response. After examining the latest cultural research, he comes to some very provocative answers that might just hit the nail on the head.

For one, Gladwell writes, the Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages have numerical systems that are much more logical than those of English. Since the number-naming systems of Asian languages gave the words for their first 10 numbers much shorter, one-syllable names, such as the Chinese "si" for four and "qi" for seven, the memorization and understanding of their patterns is much easier and faster than is possible with their English equivalents. In addition, Gladwell explains, the Japanese, Chinese and Korean languages have more logic in the ways their words for numbers are formed. For example, in English, we say numbers above 10 as teens, so they start with the number and add "teen," such as "seventeen." But when we get to the 20s, we say, "twenty-seven." Think about it: Why does the number "seven" move from the beginning of the number in the teen to the end of the number in the 20s? This makes the English numerical system much more complex than the Korean language, for example, that expresses its numbers in a much more rational way. The word for 22 in Korean is equivalent to "two-

tens-two" and 12 is "ten-two." This simplicity, Gladwell reasons, helps give Asian students an advantage when it comes to math, and makes mathematical ideas much easier and faster to grasp for Asian students than for those unfortunate English speakers whose numerical system forces them to take longer to calculate numbers simply because of the length and complex construction of those numbers. But, as usual, that is not the end of Gladwell's reasoning on why Asians score higher on math tests than Americans do.

The other reason why Asians excel at math gets to one of the main points driven home throughout *Outliers*. This is the concept of cultural legacy. Our histories, and those of the great success stories, are driven by the idea that we are more than simply our individualistic selves. Each of us, instead, is the product of all of the people in our family and life who have contributed to our history and environment. The cultural legacies of the Asian nations, Gladwell asserts, have a commonality that contributes to the high math scores of their students, but these legacies have largely gone unnoticed by researchers. One cultural legacy, according to Gladwell and some of the world's top anthropologists, is the rice paddy.

## Mathematics and Rice Paddies

How does a culture that revolves around the cultivation of rice lead to higher math test scores? Although at first glance this assertion might seem somewhat preposterous, Gladwell once again digs deeper into the issue with insight based on the latest facts about cultural identity and cultural norms. Part of that connection is built on the fact that rice paddies are farmed year round. Because land can be scarce in Japan and China, many farmers must grow their crops on tiny plots of land that require constant attention and work. This labor-intensive crop forces its farmers to work long hours every day to ensure a successful yield and to keep hunger and poverty at bay. Gladwell explains that rice farmers have to work harder "than almost any other kind of farmer." Thanks to complex irrigation systems and cultivation needs, a successful rice farm requires 10 to 20 times more labor than a similarly sized corn or wheat field does.

So where do Asians' high math scores come in? Gladwell explains that the culture of people who must work 3,000 hours a year on a farm has helped to create individuals who naturally value the hard work it takes to master and complete complex tasks. This has led to the creation of students who spend more time on math problems than everyone else does.

Working harder than his peers was one way that Bill Gates rose above them to become a successful entrepreneur. It is also how The Beatles' long stints as a house band in Hamburg clubs gave them a distinct advantage over other bands at the time. Therefore, Gladwell concludes, it makes perfect sense that people from cultures that value the hard work it takes to cultivate rice would spend more time on math problems than those from other cultures would. And since the number systems of these cultures makes doing math somewhat easier than the number systems of English-speaking cultures, Gladwell writes, the students from these cultures naturally excel at mathematics, in part because of their common cultural legacy of rice farming.

## Hard Facts From Modern Research

Asking hard questions about success and then answering them with hard facts from modern research is only part of the beauty of Gladwell's writing strategy. In addition to his skills as a weaver of pertinent stories that make complex ideas more approachable, Gladwell has an inviting style that puts him as the narrator in the shoes of his readers while he guides them to the crux of his theories. One element that he uses time and again throughout *Outliers* is the conveyance of a backstory that he immediately discredits as only a partial and sometimes misleading truth. For example, when he tells the tale of his own legacy, he starts with a cursory depiction of his grandmother's life in a tiny village in Jamaica, and eventually leads to the birth of his mother. This brief story then leads to his mother's education, and then to her courtship and marriage to Gladwell's father.

> "Our histories, and those of the great success stories, are driven by the idea that we are more than simply our individualistic selves."

Next, Gladwell calls into question the very ideas that he has just presented: He calls that story of his grandmother's path to success a *lie*. By pointing out the missing pieces of his grandmother's story, he makes the profound point that no simple tale of a person's rise to success can be complete without an inspection of that person's cultural legacy. Then he tells the extended version of the same story of his grandmother, but this time he adds many vital bits of Jamaican history to illustrate the complexity that completes the idealized picture of the story that he has just labeled as false. The added depth that comes with his inclusion of facts about Jamaica's history in the slave trade, the country's educational system, an influential South African historian who helped

reform that educational system, how his grandmother benefited from those reforms, and many other details makes the story come alive with greater clarity than his first draft. This is how he helps readers get past the overly simplistic assumptions that are made when those types of important historical elements are either glossed over or ignored by a less-detailed story.

## Deeper Depths of Truth

By telling several incomplete stories and then retelling them with additional historical facts and cultural references, Gladwell puts into perspective the underlying message found in *Outliers*. The message is that simple stories cannot answer the greater questions we have about success and the ways we can achieve it. A simple story helps us get a taste of the underlying answer to the question, but it does not satisfy our deeper need to gain more clarity about reality and the depths of truth that help us make sense of the most important and complex questions we have about life.

The cultural legacies of the people Gladwell profiles in *Outliers* are not only fascinating, but are also necessary for creating a stronger foundation on which to build the real story of success. The outliers in his book — those people who lie outside of the norm thanks to their amazing successes — are the results of many factors, including the dates they were born, the cultural legacies of the places in which they grew up, the family members who mentored them, the opportunities they took and even the luck they had along the way.

In other words, not one of them became a success all by himself or herself. Each outlier had benefits of long storylines that led up to the individuals they became and their accomplishments in their fields. Opportunity, history, advantages, community and legacy are all at the root of the real story of success Gladwell tells in *Outliers*.

## Beyond Bootstraps

While the many lessons that Gladwell reveals in *Outliers* help to answer numerous questions about success in the fields of hockey, airlines, music, entrepreneurship, business, law and education, among others, the most important message that resonates throughout the book is that resourcefulness, hard work and an ability to make the most of our advantages and legacies are the keys to success.

"By relating the story of his own family, and those of a wide variety of others who either found success or failed in its pursuit, Gladwell demonstrates that the answers to questions about the origin of success are more complex than a few brief stories about people pulling themselves up by the bootstraps."

By relating the story of his own family, and those of a wide variety of others who either found success or failed in its pursuit, Gladwell demonstrates that the answers to questions about the origin of success are more complex than a few brief stories about people pulling themselves up by the bootstraps. And best of all, the reality that his reporting and journalistic skills reveals is one that helps us see that success is much more possible than we might have imagined if we were left with only an incomplete, cursory story. Instead, the secrets of success can only be found when we make a much more complete examination of ourselves and the world in which we live. *Outliers* provides a perfect example of how we can begin to re-examine all that we know to bring that elusive success within our reach. ●

**The author:** Malcolm Gladwell has been a staff writer with *The New Yorker* magazine since 1996. His 1999 profile of Ron Popeil won a National Magazine Award, and in 2005 he was named one of *Time Magazine*'s 100 Most Influential People. In addition to *Outliers: The Story of Success*, he is the author of two books, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Make a Big Difference* (2000) and *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (2005), both of which were No. 1 *New York Times* bestsellers.

From 1987 to 1996, Gladwell was a reporter with *The Washington Post*, where he covered business, science, and then served as the newspaper's New York City bureau chief. He graduated from the University of Toronto, Trinity College, with a degree in history. He was born in England, grew up in rural Ontario and now lives in New York City.

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# Featured Book Review

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# You've Got the Power for Maximum Performance

Review by Chris Lauer

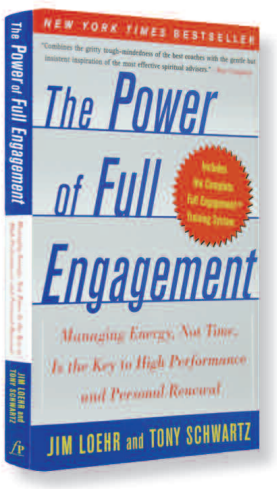
## THE POWER OF FULL ENGAGEMENT

**by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz**

*© 2003, Free Press, $15.95, 245 pages,*
*ISBN 978-0-7432-2675-2*

Many types of ideas cross through the busy intersection where self-help books and business books collide. Sometimes the titles are overly dramatic; other times they are short on timely facts and examples. Sometimes they are delivered with platitudes galore that evaporate quickly because they are missing the real substance needed to help business leaders do their jobs.

The thoughtful concepts found in *The Power of Full Engagement* are none of these. On the contrary, the principles described by co-authors Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz in *The Power of Full Engagement* offer readers many thought-provoking lessons that can be used instantly to improve their professional and personal lives.




### Powerful Habits

The primary idea is plausible: Sustainable high performance is only possible when we find better, more habitual ways to positively expend and renew our personal energy. When we develop habits that are filled with positive physical, emotional, mental and spiritual experiences that are sometimes active and other times recovering, we improve our overall capacity to become fully engaged in our work and home lives.

When we are fully engaged, we have more physical energy and more positive emotional capacity, the authors explain. This is the best place to be whenever we're doing anything that requires us to perform at our best, and *The Power of Full Engagement* presents a step-by-step approach to reaching that place where we can become more energized physically, more connected emotionally, more focused mentally and more aligned spiritually. Another name for this wonderful place is what most people would call a happy, well-balanced life.

### Lessons for Athletes

The lessons that Loehr and Schwartz impart in their book are taken from their experiences and research while working with former top athletes during the stars' careers. These remarkable people include tennis champion Monica Seles, golfers Ernie Els and Mark O'Meara, hockey players Eric Lindros and Mike Richter, boxer Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, basketball players Nick Anderson and Grant Hill, and speed-skating Olympic gold medalist Dan Jansen.

While helping these athletes to become the best of the best, the authors discovered many secrets to getting the most from one's skills and talents. Although Loehr and Schwartz never helped these sports stars work on backhands or slam dunks, they did help them master the ability to muster greater energy when a stressful moment required the athletes to operate at the peak of their capabilities.

Loehr, a psychologist, co-founded LGE Performance Systems, a training company where he serves as chairman and CEO. LGE helps executives, athletes and other people achieve full engagement in stressful environments. Loehr has also made a name for himself as the author of a dozen books, including

the best-seller *Stress for Success*.

### Lessons for Company Leaders

One of the things that sets *The Power of Full Engagement* apart from Loehr's other books is the input of performance expert Schwartz, who pushes Loehr's lessons in a new direction aimed at company leaders. As an expert on harnessing the science of high performance to improve energy, engagement, focus and productivity, Schwartz serves as the president and founder of The Energy Project. Organizations such as Google, Ford, Sony, the Los Angeles Police Department and Save the Children have all benefited from the lessons they have learned while employing Schwartz and his team of consultants to help them improve their work.

**"To help their readers understand the dynamics of full engagement, the authors break down personal energy into its four basic components: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual."**

Combining the knowledge and experiences of these two authors, *The Power of Full Engagement* offers readers a robust program for understanding and managing the necessary energy to not only develop enduring high performance, but also to build a healthy, happy and balanced life, inside and outside the workplace.

### The Four Forms of Energy

To help their readers understand the dynamics of full engagement, the authors break down personal energy into its four basic components: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. In the clearest of terms, the authors explore the commonsense essence of professional energy by developing a set of principles that can be used to understand how the four parts of energy can be improved and tapped for better performance.

The first principle that the authors delve into states that full engagement requires us to use all four of our intertwined sources of energy. They add that when we master the needs that each of these sources addresses — sustainability (physical), security (emotional), self-expression (mental) and significance (spiritual) — we become better equipped to shift smoothly between moments when we require intense focus and the times when we need to renew our energies.

The second principle in Loehr and Schwartz's energy improvement process is the idea that we need to balance how we expend our energy with regular energy renewal. This is important because our energy capacity has a tendency to diminish when it is used too little or too much. Of course, we all need to rest after working hard, but the authors' message goes deeper than that. They not only focus on ways to improve how we manage our energy, they also describe, at length, how energy in its four forms can be combined and expanded.

### The Need for Flexibility

To start, they point out that strength, endurance, flexibility and resilience are the primary markers of physical capacity. They explain that these markers also apply to the other types of energy as well. For example, we can become more fully engaged by increasing our flexibility not just physically, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

To stretch ourselves mentally, we must spend more time flexing our mental capacity by moving between rational and intuitive thought patterns. Embracing multiple points of view can also help us sustain our focus over time and develop stronger concentration skills. Likewise, becoming less emotionally rigid by resisting defensiveness and exploring a wider range of emotions can help us rebound faster when faced with disappointments and frustrations. Similarly, spiritual flexibility does not mean giving up our values and beliefs. It simply means being more tolerant of the values and beliefs of other people when they are different from our own. If other people have beliefs that don't hurt anyone, the authors write, we can improve our own spiritual strength by respecting their beliefs just as we want them to respect ours.

### The Exercise-Performance Connection

While showing us how to regulate our energy through periods of intense work interspersed with focused periods of replenishing rest, *The Power of Full Engagement* also offers many smart facts and examples that support its lessons. For example, the authors go further than simply stating, "Strength and cardiovascular training have a powerful impact on health, on energy levels and performance." They also present numerous studies and statistics that back up their claims.

To link the connection between fitness and energy improvement to the working world, they point out that DuPont reduced absenteeism over a six-year period by providing its employees with a corporate fitness program. One of the added benefits of that

program was that participants used 14 percent fewer disability days than those who did not participate in the program. In other words, DuPont saved a total of nearly 12,000 disability days by creating the program.

The authors also cite another study that demonstrates the exercise-performance connection: The journal *Ergonomics* reported, "Fit workers committed 27 percent fewer errors on tasks involving concentration and short-term memory as compared to un-fit workers." With statistics and studies like these filling their book, Loehr and Schwartz provide readers with powerful encouragement to make physical exercise a regular habit.

## Exercising Emotional Energy

The authors write, "Physical energy is the raw fuel for igniting our emotional skills and talents." When our physical muscles are in tune, our emotional muscles are better able to serve us when we need to do our best work. How do we exercise our emotional muscles? The authors write that we can overcome our lack of confidence and impatience — two signs of weak or insufficient emotional muscles — when we learn how to control and balance our emotional energy.

*The Power of Full Engagement* has just as many real-life stories and statistics on the importance of balanced emotional energy as those describing the importance of balanced physical energy. For example, after showing how the more emotionally controlled Jimmy Connors was able to create a longer tennis career than the more emotionally charged John McEnroe, the authors offer some insightful findings from the Gallup Organization. They write, "Gallup found that the key drivers of productivity for employees include whether they feel cared for by a supervisor or someone at work." Employees require praise and recognition at work to operate at their best. Therefore, it makes sense that managers need to be able to exhibit high levels of positive mental energy at work to manage their people more effectively.

In other words, a leader whose emotional energy is better balanced and controlled is more likely to be able to communicate praise and recognition to employees than a manager who displays less confidence and exhibits more negative emotional energy.

Useful examples of people who display anxiety and rigidity show readers the detrimental effects of negative emotions on careers and organizations. Through these individuals, the authors encourage readers to explore deeper and higher-quality emotional renewal to balance out emotionally challenging situations. One important lesson they impart: Don't rely on television to provide you with quality emotional renewal. Researchers point out that television is more likely to create anxiety and low-level depression. Instead, seek more nourishing forms of emotional recovery, such as sports, museums, concerts and quiet times alone after intense days surrounded by other people. Look into your personal interests and choose the right one for you. By tapping into positive forms of emotional energy, we can find the confidence, control, interpersonal effectiveness and empathy that lead to improved performance.

## Balancing Mental Energy

Concentration is a vital part of Loehr and Schwartz's recipe for performance improvement and full engagement. They write that mental energy is just as important as physical energy to attain the ability to concentrate on an important task. Mental energy, they explain, comes from more than just sustained concentration; it is also derived from the exercise received when we move our thinking between narrow thoughts and broad ideas. We must also be able to focus between our internal cognition and our external observations. Reaching an optimum level of concentration also requires the "realistic optimism" that allows us to see reality as it really is while still moving toward our intended goals.

The authors explain that our mental energy must be balanced between expenditure and recovery, in the same way that emotional and physical energy require a focused balance. The interplay between these three types of energy is more than a shift from one to another. They actually feed on one another. The authors write that poor physical health, such as lack of sleep or physical fitness, and poor emotional health, such as anxiety or anger, have a negative impact on optimism as well. When we are stressed by difficult circumstances, their negative impacts will increase unless we do the work that keeps us balanced between expending energy and recovering energy.

## The Important Role of Spiritual Energy

While the spiritual part of Loehr and Schwartz's energy management program might raise the most eyebrows, it is actually the most important element in their four-part dissection of engagement's core. Thankfully, there is no denomination behind their advice. Instead, the spirituality they write about involves the inner workings of a person's life. These include such integral pieces of the human puzzle as values, purpose, truthfulness and accountability. Although these topics are often difficult to define

without slipping into platitudes and clichés, the authors accurately and professionally describe how spiritual energy can be tapped as a powerful source of passion, perseverance, commitment, integrity and honesty.

By offering straightforward examples of people who have made mistakes and found better ways through personal introspection, Loehr and Schwartz describe role models for spiritual growth that is not mired in divisive dogma or polemics. The spiritual energy they describe also fluctuates between expended energy and energy renewal. The authors explore the interconnected nature of these two aspects of spiritual energy and show how balanced spiritual energy can help anyone "override even severe limitations of physical energy." This type of hopeful message offers readers an added boost that can help put peak performance within their reach.

## The Training System

Learning about the dynamics of the four energies that lead to greater performance is enlightening, but putting them all together into a useful program of daily habits is an even more important task. Thankfully, Loehr and Schwartz provide a training system that turns the knowledge they impart into a regular regimen of rituals that can help readers benefit from the lessons. Behaviors are just as important as the information that feeds them, so the authors help readers create "positive energy rituals" that adapt their book's broad principles into daily or weekly routines.

Negative habits slow us down. Likewise, positive habits push us ahead. The authors write that rituals serve as the foundation on which we can rely when the storms of circumstances buffet and bruise us when we least expect it. They point out that pilots, CEOs, athletes and soldiers all rely on positive rituals to manage their energies. These rituals help them achieve their goals even in the most trying times of their lives, whether on the battlefield, in the boardroom or before the final buzzer.

The trick is to master the art of moving "rhythmically between stress and recovery," the authors write. By building strong, positive rituals that balance all four energies into every aspect of our lives, we are better prepared when stress rears its ugly head.

Good habits and positive rituals provide the practice we need so we'll be able to continue to move forward through tough circumstances. They prepare our bodies and minds so we can conjure high performance whenever it is required. These rituals also provide structures for our lives on which we can rely when we need them most.

## Creating Rituals to Improve Self-Control

Although they are extremely personal, since they must serve our own, unique needs, energy management rituals can be constructed fairly easily. For example, the authors point out, one couple simply developed the energy renewing habit of setting aside an hour and a half to talk together, uninterrupted, every Saturday morning. It might have been difficult to do this at first, with a bevy of demands flying at them from all directions whenever Saturday rolled around, but setting limits, changing habits and adjusting roles allowed them to work it out.

The key to these types of rituals is creating precise and specific behaviors that improve our self-control. When we master the when, where and how of our behaviors, the authors explain, we don't have to worry about getting things done. We easily reach our goals because we have created the rituals that tap into the four sources of energy that take us where we want to go. We connect to our purpose and values by making those connections a habit.

Loehr and Schwartz expertly frame the creation of these vital habits in a positive, compelling light. The result is a powerful guidebook to a better, and more engaged, personal and professional life.

**The authors:** Jim Loehr, Ed.D., is the chairman and CEO of LGE Performance Systems and is recognized worldwide for his contributions to the field of performance psychology. He has worked with hundreds of world-class athletes, as well as with police departments, SWAT teams, emergency service workers and the FBI's elite Hostage Rescue team. He has authored 12 books, including *Stress for Success* and *Toughness Training for Sports*.

Tony Schwartz is the founder and president of The Energy Project whose mission is to ignite a fire in the hearts of organizations and their leaders. He is the author of three other books, including *Art of the Deal* with Donald Trump, *What Really Matters: Searching for Wisdom in America* and *Work in Progress* with Michael Eisner. (Tony@TheEnergy Project.com)

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# Flux

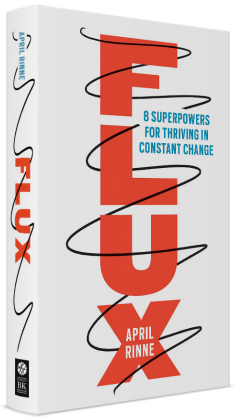
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# Flux

## 8 Superpowers for Thriving in Constant Change




*by* **April Rinne**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Being adaptable and flexible have always been hallmarks of effective leadership and a fulfilling life. But in a world of so much change and an ever-faster pace of change, flexibility and resilience can be stretched to their breaking points.

A world in flux calls for a new mindset, one that treats constant change and uncertainty as a feature, not a bug. ***Flux*** helps readers open this mindset—a flux mindset—and develop eight flux superpowers that flip conventional ideas about leadership, success, and well-being on their heads. They empower people to see change in new ways, craft new responses, and ultimately reshape their relationship to change from the inside out.

Whether readers are sizing up their career, reassessing their values, designing a product, building an organization, trying to inspire their colleagues, or simply showing up more fully in the world, enjoying a flux mindset and activating their flux superpowers will keep readers grounded even when the ground is too often shifting beneath them.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three key steps in the Theory of Flux.
- The eight flux superpowers and how to use them.
- What it means to lead with trust.
- To boost your digital intelligence.

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## Introduction: Who Moved My Future?

At home and around the world, it's an era to remember. Globally, we've witnessed the worst pandemic since 1918, some of the worst economic straits since the early 1930s, the greatest food insecurity in decades, and a climate catastrophe unprecedented in modern human history.

In the United States, this is compounded by social tensions on a scale not seen since 1968. Any one of these crises is enough to shake things up. All of them happening at the same time . . . is something else entirely.

We're living in a world in flux. The workplace is in flux. Climate is in flux. Organizations are in flux. Careers are in flux. Education, learning, and schools are in flux. Public health is in flux. Planetary health is in flux. Social cohesion is in flux. Financial markets are in flux.

And it's not just what is changing; it's how fast the world we've known is evolving. The pace of change has never been as fast as it is today, and yet, it is likely to never again be this slow.

Humans are not accustomed to this degree of upside-down-ness. We can be incredibly adaptable when we're forced to be, but on the whole, we much prefer stability and familiarity. Yet, if flux is our "new-now-next-never normal," then we need to be ready for—and have the tools to flourish in—this new reality.

### What the Flux?!

Flux is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, its most common contemporary definition is "continuous change." As a verb, to flux means "to cause or learn to become fluid." Hence, we're living in a world of flux (noun), and we'd do well not merely to flex our mental muscles but to flux (verb) them, too.

In a world in flux, we must learn to be comfortable with the reality that around the next corner is more change, much of which is unexpected, beyond our power to choose, or both. It's about a shift: from struggling with such change to harnessing and developing an eagerness to use it well.

Each and every one of us, for our entire lives, in some way has been following a script. Although each person's script is different, everyone's script is shaped by the same forces unfurling and the universal experience of being human. And with rare exceptions, your script is clear.

For many people, your script tells you to work hard and stay the course—whatever that course may be. It probably tells you to get good grades, go to a prestigious university, and get hired by a prestigious company. It may tell you to follow in your parents' footsteps. For a big subset of people, your script tells you that success is at the top of a corporate ladder, so you should climb it rung by rung and become CEO.

But many people's scripts are no longer fit for today's world—or one could say, they are fit for a world that's no longer there. And this is where Flux comes in. Individually and collectively, we are in the early stages of writing new scripts that are fit for a world in flux.

The Theory of Flux reveals the relationships between your old and new scripts, specifically how to transform an old script into a new script that's fit for today's world of constant change. This theory can be summarized in three steps:

- **Step 1: Open a Flux Mindset.**
- **Step 2: Use your Flux Mindset to unlock the eight Flux Superpowers:** run slower, see what's invisible, get lost, start with trust, know your "enough," create your portfolio career, be all the more human (and serve other humans), and let go of the future.
- **Step 3: Apply your Flux Superpowers to write your New Script.**

The relationship between the Flux Superpowers and Flux Mindset is similar to a hub-and-spoke structure: the Flux Mindset is the hub, and the eight Flux Superpowers radiate from it. When your Flux Mindset is opened, the Flux Superpowers can get to work.

## Run Slower

Take your pick of reasons to run. New and unexpected change happens every week, if not multiple times a day. It could be a new schedule that disrupts a routine that took ages to get right. Or a team that's behind schedule. Or a time-sensitive opportunity on the horizon.

The old script says we must run faster to keep up. But a world in flux has different race conditions because the finish line keeps shifting. Whether it's business demands, home and family priorities, responsibilities to juggle, relationships to nurture, or relentless uncertainty to decipher: The faster we run, and the more we run without resting or reflecting or even paying attention, the worse our results will be over time.

In an upside-down world that coaxes, cajoles, and coerces you to run ever faster, your key to true success and growth is to do the opposite: learn how to run slower. To thrive in a fast-paced world, slow your own pace.

Imagine for a moment that rather than optimizing for productivity, we optimized for presence.

In reality, running slower means plenty of motion and inquiry—at a sustainable pace. It means caring enough to quiet the mind and focus on what really matters.

### Instead of Productivity, Optimize for Presence

There is a better way to rethink our relationship to productivity, sustainability, and a world in flux. And guess what? It's right in front of us, and it's part of the new script.

For starters: Imagine for a moment that rather than optimizing for productivity, we optimized for presence. With the new script, rather than measure meetings, you can gauge presence: your ability to be fully in a moment, experience, or decision. One meeting in which everyone is fully present is worth more than a thousand meetings in which people are distracted.

So how does one learn to optimize for presence? Fortunately, there are many ways to begin.

**Stillness practice**. Start with 30 seconds, then one minute, two minutes, up to five minutes (or longer) of utter stillness. This is not meditation; it is even simpler. It's sitting, stilling your mind, and seeing where it wanders. Don't judge; just notice. Is your mind able to unwind, or does it speed up?

**Patience practice**. Cultivating patience is one of the most difficult yet most powerful ways to run slower. Pick something that you know will take time—say, waiting for an appointment—and deliberately don't fill that waiting time with social media apps, calls, word games, or whatever else. Just be . . . and wait. Do you feel tested or freed?

**Technology Shabbat**: Once a week, disconnect from the use of all technology with screens: smartphones, computers, tablets, and television. If that feels like too much, start with a few hours and build up to a day. Use the time for quiet personal reflection.

## See What's Invisible

Each of us is inspired by what we see. But in a world of constant change, that principle only gets us so far. How do we move beyond what we can see and find inspiration in what we can't? How do we learn to see differently and make the invisible, visible? This is all directly tied to writing your new script.

Learning to see what's invisible doesn't mean losing focus or ignoring what's visible. Quite the opposite, in fact: It's the ability to adjust your gaze, see the full picture, and really understand what's what. When you learn to see what's invisible, it becomes easier to embrace change today and a future chock-full of unknowns.

You deserve to see everything: what's visible and invisible. Tangible and intangible. What's right in front of you and what you can barely imagine. Why? Because the broader your vision, the more potential solutions you have at hand. The more holistic your worldview, the greater your capacity to help, to serve, to innovate . . . and to thrive.

### How Do You See Others? Consumer vs. Citizen

In today's world, we're seen first and foremost as consumers, or as futurist Jerry Michalski says, as "gullets with eyeballs and wallets." So long as we continue to consume, we're told, all will be well in the world.

But all is not well whatsoever. When we're treated as mere consumers for long enough, it affects how we think and behave, which also affects how we see. For example, we see our purchases as more important than our votes and what defines our self-worth.

At the societal level, we chase metrics like GDP that measure only economic activity "seen" as dollars and cents. GDP does not "see" a wide range of extremely valuable activities that underpin our economy and well-being, such as the invisible labor of parenting and volunteering, and the invisible value of shared (rather than owned) resources.

When we follow the consumer script, we also train our eyes to not see: to not see the full effects of what we buy, to not see those who are struggling. We even stop seeing when there are better paths forward.

One way out of this mess is to start seeing one another—and treating one another—as citizens and humans, rather

than as consumers (citizens not in terms of passports and borders but as participants and change agents in society).

This is a new script with a subtle yet profound shift: No longer merely passive purchasers and clickbait targets, we become proactive contributors. Together, we lead responsibly rather than follow blindly. We open our Flux Mindsets to develop this superpower and write our own new scripts.

In your new script, start by asking, Would you prefer to be seen by others as a consumer or as a citizen and catalyst for good? Beyond "buying stuff," what would you like your legacy to be?

Often times, whether you see or don't see something depends on your intention as you look. For example, whether we see people—and treat people—as consumers or citizens boils down to intention: If you want people to buy your products or click on your ads, that's seeing them as consumers. If you want to help, create, be of service, and help others reach their potential, that's seeing them as citizens and collaborators.

## Get Lost

Although many people would agree that getting lost is half the fun of life, the old script sees it as failure. Getting lost is a liability that's perceived to involve loss of some kind: "I've done something wrong, I've fumbled, and life will somehow be less as a result."

But in an upside-down world in which new changes hit every day—when familiarity is itself in flux—getting lost is part of a new script. In this world we are uprooted, disoriented, and unmoored constantly. Whatever compass you're using has gone kaput. What's more, this new landscape of change isn't something you or anyone gets to choose. Flux just is.

Once you've opened a Flux Mindset, getting lost becomes a virtue: a secret weapon and stroke of genius not only to embrace being lost but to actively seek out the unfamiliar and stretch beyond your comfort zone as well. Getting lost doesn't mean lacking direction or being foolish—that's just the old script at work again. Rather, it means being completely comfortable with what you don't (and may never) know. In the landscape of change, getting lost is how you find your way.

Fundamentally, this superpower boils down to your response: Does getting lost make you feel comfortable or distressed? Curious or anxious? Can you get out of your own way, or do you trip over your own feet?

When you open a Flux Mindset and learn to celebrate getting lost, this celebration becomes a piece of your new script. Until then, it may torment you: keeping you from making wise decisions, opening up to new opportunities, or being fully yourself.

Cultures that normalize getting lost are far better placed at navigating a world in flux, with or without GPS.

### Lady, Are You Lost?

On any given day, everyone is lost in some way. Yet when change hits, feeling lost can shift to feeling unmoored. Opening a Flux Mindset helps you regain your bearings while harnessing the strength that comes from getting lost.

There are many more ways you can get lost proactively in your daily life:

- Adopt the mindset of a traveler. Even if your adventures are limited to one room, your backyard, or your neighborhood: What do you carry with you? What do you really know (versus think you know or wish you knew about your environs)? What do you not know but could benefit from learning or exploring?
- Notice the first emotion triggered when unexpected change arrives. Do you see a crisis or an opening? Do you see an apocalypse or a bardo? Spend time with these feelings, and consider why they are your default. What happens if you try an alternative?
- Turn off your GPS. Orient yourself with your surroundings, as a human.

## Start With Trust

Today's global trust crisis makes headlines so often it's almost cliché. A global trust barometer has fallen to its lowest levels ever. Our trust in corporations, government, media, and academe seems fundamentally broken. Worse, we increasingly mistrust one another.

We've lost our bearings and urgently need to reestablish trust as our North Star: individually, organizationally, and societally. Without it, the future is beyond bleak.

When fully expressed, trust is an invitation to repair and strengthen relationships, an invitation to express your credibility, your reliability, your authenticity, and your values.

### When Trust Seems Broken, Assume Good Intent

In a world in flux, it becomes glaringly clear that trust is the

glue that holds relationships, organizations, and cultures together. When the world flips upside down, trust is how you anchor and right yourself. Trusted relationships help you ride the rapids of change with confidence. Mistrust surrounds you with fear and cuts you off from others.

Starting with trust doesn't mean being naive (again, this is the old script at work). Nor does it mean there aren't bad apples in society. The brilliant twist of this superpower is quite simple: Treat untrustworthiness as the exception rather than the norm. The effect is astonishing.

When it comes to trust, the new script isn't actually that new. In reality, it's timeless. It draws from universal human consciousness and indigenous wisdom that have been passed down for millennia. It's time to change the script back, starting with a few observations:

- Humans are naturally creative, curious, and trustworthy.
- Hamster wheels are not only not designed for humans, they are harmful to humans.
- Plundering natural resources is not okay.
- Trust is not built by marketing campaigns. Trust happens when we care for one another, look out for one another, and celebrate one another.

### The New Script: Lead With Trust

You might say, "I get the concept. But as a leader, really, what does it look like to start with and design from trust?" Here's a snapshot of what to do, where to begin, and what to aim for on the horizon.

**It sucks to hide everything**. When you design from mistrust, you have to hide information: from employees, from customers, from friends, ironically from whomever you wish to placate (or, in less-inspiring terms, from whomever you wish to co-opt).

For starters, err on the side of openness. Think open books: Let all employees see budgets, salaries, and metrics.

Then, go further: Let employees set salaries and bonuses, working together. Trust that if you delegate down and provide enough information, they'll get the job done well—and reciprocate the trust. You've just freed their genius and turned scarcity into abundance: When people feel trusted, they're not only more creative but more positively productive as well.

Treat untrustworthiness as the exception rather than the norm. The effect is astonishing.

## Know Your 'Enough'

In today's consumer-driven world, we are plagued by a stubborn script that proclaims "More is better" and taunts you for never doing, earning, or achieving enough. This script is old and crusty, but it remains very much alive.

Among its more popular manifestations is that you will never have enough: power to make a difference; prestige to feel important; money to be rich; choice to be satisfied; new toys to outshine your peers or neighbors; success, period.

And as we race to acquire more stuff, we leave essential priorities on the table such as:

- What is enough equality?
- What is enough integrity?
- What is enough well-being?

With your Flux Mindset opened, you can begin to reset your metrics and write a new script. This shift—from an interminable quest for more to a clear understanding of your enough—is simple yet profound.

Knowing your enough does not mean being miserly, uncharitable, or living in scarcity. Knowing your enough brings clarity about what really matters. When you know your enough, you have less anxiety and your ability to thrive expands a lot. Honing this superpower unleashes your full potential to the world.

### Leading With Enough

You're a leader and a seeker, but what does leadership in a world of enough look like? This superpower goes beyond dismantling hierarchies or establishing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. It has implications for responsible leadership and longevity, as well as sustainability and trust.

Ask yourself, and then ask your colleagues: Are you more likely to trust a CEO whose salary is in line with his team, or one whose salary is vastly greater? Why?

Next, consider your legacy. What do you want to be remembered for? Why do you do what you do?

Leading with the old script in hand, you might answer this question in terms of more: maximize profits, create a bigger company, have a bigger house, or build a big yacht.

Leadership with the new script and a Flux Mindset would answer in terms of paying everyone enough, ensuring everyone feels safe and valued, and treating others as peers rather than subordinates. Go back to your legacy. When you're gone, people won't remember whether you had "more." They will remember how you treated them.

In addition, if you're not having a conversation about enough, then you're leaving value (including money!) on the table. And here's why:

Conversations about more tend to focus on transactions: how to do more deals, monetize more interactions, and make more money. The time frame is short: The sooner money can be made, the faster you can cash out. In this world, people are consumers: They are mere means to a monetized end. There is no genuine care for their well-being beyond their ability to pay.

Conversations about enough, on the other hand, center on relationships: how to cultivate lifelong friendships, build sustainable and human-centric enterprise, and nourish the planet. The time frame is long: This is about lifetime leadership and evergreen legacies, with humanity at the core.

Relationships endure and sustain; deals are done and put on a shelf. Which do you want to be remembered for?

At the end of the day, knowing your enough means also fundamentally knowing that you are enough, just as you are, right here and right now. (It's not a typo. Both "your" and "you're" matter.) A Flux Mindset understands this intuitively. You are not defined by your purchases or stuck chasing ever more. Your worth comes from within.

## Create Your Portfolio Career

The coronavirus pandemic made it clear that the future of work isn't in the future: It is now. We blew through 10-year forecasts for remote work and "work from anywhere" in two quarters. Now each of us must write a new script for our careers, livelihoods, and professional purpose. Yours may have been in draft mode already, and with a Flux Mindset, it can get the kind of attention it deserves.

A Flux Mindset knows that the career of the future looks more like a portfolio: a diversified professional identity, with resilient roots and customized to you. For success and satisfaction in a world in flux, treat your career as a portfolio to curate rather than a path to pursue.

One's portfolio isn't limited to only professional roles; it includes capabilities that are customarily left off your résumé yet fundamentally make you, you.

For example, Binta Brown left a successful legal career advising Fortune 100 companies to launch her own firm representing musical artists, while she plays the saxophone and produces documentaries along the way.

Mari Nakama is a project manager and trainer at a scientific research company. She's also a fitness instructor, designs her own clothes, and co-runs a pottery studio with her partner. Each role nurtures her in a different way.

### Building Your Portfolio

Developing a portfolio career involves two phases: creation and curation.

**Step 1: What's already in it?** Whether or not you realize it, you already have a portfolio career. You just haven't necessarily been strategic about it. Pull out a piece of paper (or a blank Google document) and into it put things like, every role you've ever had, paid or unpaid; every skill you have that helps others; every topic you know comfortably more about than other people do; your superpowers, according to you; your superpowers, according to others; any new skills you've learned in the past six months, and so forth.

**Step 2: Be(come) the only**. Go back to Jerry Garcia. Don't be the best; be the only. What is your only? The key to one's "only" is that it's not about one skill. It's about your unique combination of skills, capabilities, interests, and dreams. This is your unique new script.

**Step 3: Cross-pollinate**. With a portfolio career, you rarely stay in your own lane. You're a cross-pollinator. You take a useful skill or expertise and parlay it into opportunities elsewhere, often in a completely unexpected arena. You translate across problems, roles, teams, and industries. You use your compass's orientation to discover new insights. In the process, you create new value, help others level up, and inspire them to write their own new scripts, too.

In a world with more robots, your key to thrive is to be all the more human—and to use your humanity to help others.

**Step 4: Redefine your identity**. With a Flux Mindset and a portfolio career, you are no longer defined by "what" you do. You are not defined by one profession. While you have many skills, you are not defined by them. Rather, you harness all of your capabilities and continuously reimagine how they can be combined and offered in new ways, creating new value and opening new doors.

**Step 5: Curate, forever**. Once your portfolio is sufficiently established, you can shift to curation mode. This is your ongoing, evergreen career: It is the script that, so long as you are breathing and thinking, you will continue to write. The essential point of portfolio curation is that it mirrors your growth, so long as you proactively take care of it.

## Be All the More Human (And Serve Other Humans)

In China, pedestrian lanes specifically for mobile phone users have been established, along with a new term to describe the phenomenon: "heads-down society." In 2019, teenagers spent an average of six hours and 40 minutes per day on their mobile, tablet, and TV screens. Assuming they sleep, that's more than 40 percent of their waking hours.

Automation is also proceeding at a breakneck pace. From e-commerce and driverless vehicles to text recognition and disease diagnosis, increasingly a wide range of activities and expertise that used to take intensive labor or many steps can now be done quickly, efficiently, and on almost any schedule by automated technology.

At the same time that we can connect with more people and learn more things than ever before in human history—with a mere click, swipe, or touch of a button—we are more divided and disconnected: from one another and often from our very own selves. We are alone, together.

In a world with more robots, your key to thrive is to be all the more human—and to use your humanity to help others. As you develop this Flux Superpower, your relationship to technology is reset. You harness the positive power of today's new technologies with the inner wisdom that none of them are as powerful as the "technology" of awakened human consciousness.

Being fully human means being wholly aware of your senses and your humanity: fully present and thoroughly, unabashedly yourself. This includes being comfortable with your discomfort (and occasionally being public about this) to harness it for greater growth.

Being fully human is also about showing up for others. When you're able to help others, you put interdependence into action. When you manifest a shift in awareness "from me to we," you unleash your individual capacity and our collective potential and make it easier to respond mindfully to change.

### Boost Your DQ

Digital intelligence, or DQ, is part of the new script. To truly succeed in the 21st century—and a world in flux—humans need to boost their DQ.

DQ is an overarching concept that encompasses a range of competencies to engage responsibly in the digital world. DQ includes skills related to digital safety, digital identity, digital literacy, digital rights, and digital communications. Having a high DQ means, for example, that you know when and how to put your device down and have a face-to-face conversation. It means responsibly managing your screen time, calling out cyberbullying, and knowing when you may be at risk of digital identity theft.

Fundamentally, having a high DQ means knowing that technology is only a means; it is neither a solution nor an end in itself. DQ is a human-centric compass for the digital world. It is an essential pillar of your new script.

## Let Go of the Future

From a young age, many people are led to believe that humans can predict and control the future. The messaging goes, work hard and you'll get a good job. Jump through the right hoops and the right doors will open. Make plans that will go as expected.

These instructions aren't bad, but each one assumes a predictable, controllable world . . . which couldn't be further from reality today. Today's world in flux demands a new script that understands, the ability to let go of your perception of control is where real control is to be found.

Letting go gives you control of what really matters, empowers you to move forward, and reminds you to live fully right now. With a Flux Mindset, you turn fear and frustration about tomorrow into fuel for your purpose, potential, and inner peace today.

### The New Script: 3 Shifts to Flux

Letting go of the future doesn't mean dropping it like a hot potato. Rather, it means reframing your relationship to the future and whatever change may come. There are three main ways this new script can be written:

**1. A mindset shift: from predict to prepare**. This shift recognizes that it's impossible to predict the future, nor is any one future guaranteed to play out. Rather, a whole bunch of different futures are possible, and your best approach is to be as prepared as possible for the prospects coming your way. Resist the urge to predict what "will" happen, and invest your energy in crafting initial responses to what "could" happen instead.

**2. An expectations shift: from "things will go to plan" to "plans will change."** Flipping your mental switch to treat change as the general rule, rather than the exception, improves everything: your ability to pivot, your foresight, and your compassion towards others as we all navigate today's landscape of uncertainty.

**3. A shift in focus: from known to unknown**. All too often, when solving problems or navigating change, people look to be better prepared should the same thing happen again. This isn't a bad strategy per se, but it's incomplete. What about things that haven't happened yet?

The future is only a concept; we can never truly know what it will be. When you shift to being in awe of life's mysteries, rather than expecting the past to repeat itself, your horizon literally and figuratively expands.

Absolutely everything that you do affects how you navigate change. You get better at whatever you practice. If you practice fear, you get better at being fearful. If you practice flexibility, you become more flexible. If you practice hope, you invigorate your capacity for hope.

Part of "what's next" is seeing flux as a practice. Being truly fluxy is a lifelong endeavor: It requires practice, practice, and more practice. The goal is improvement, not perfection.

And the upshot? Every day (and especially today!) gives you plenty of opportunities to do so.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***The Reinventionist Mindset: Learning to Love Change and the Human How of Doing It Brilliantly*** by Joe Jackman
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April Rinne has been weaving a story about how to navigate change, personally and professionally, for as long as she can remember. She is an acclaimed futurist, sought-after speaker, and trusted adviser, especially known for her role as a bridge: between startups and governments, between executives and customers, between financial and social returns, between for-profit and for-benefit business models, between developed and developing countries, and between those excited about change and those resistant to it. In 2011, the World Economic Forum named her a Young Global Leader.

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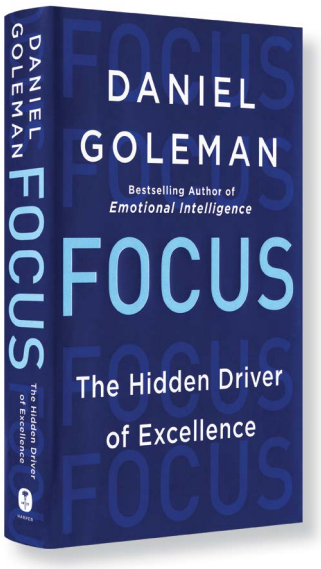
# Focus

Soundview Executive Book Summaries

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Career & Self-Development




# Focus

## The Hidden Driver of Excellence

by Daniel Goleman

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For more than two decades, psychologist and journalist Daniel Goleman has been scouting the leading edge of human sciences for what's new, surprising and important. In *Focus*, he delves into the science of attention in all its varieties, presenting a long-overdue discussion of this little-noticed and underrated mental asset that matters enormously for how we navigate life.

Attention works much like a muscle: use it poorly, and it can wither; work it well, and it grows. In an era of unstoppable distractions, Goleman persuasively argues that now more than ever we must learn to sharpen focus if we are to contend with, let alone thrive in, a complex world.

Those who excel rely on what Goleman calls smart practice — such as mindfulness meditation, focused preparation, recovery from setbacks, continued attention to the learning curve, and positive emotions and connections — that help them improve habits, add new skills and sustain excellence.

Combining cutting-edge research with practical findings, *Focus* reveals what distinguishes experts from amateurs and stars from average performers.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to find balance and restore attention.
- The importance of working your mental muscle to sharpen your attention and focus.
- How to apply a 360-degree evaluation to yourself and others.
- What the act of accentuating the positive can do for your mindset.
- What mindfulness can do for you at the workplace.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **FOCUS**

**by Daniel Goleman**

**The author:** Daniel Goleman, a former science journalist for *The New York Times*, is the author of 13 books, and he lectures frequently to professional groups, business audiences and on college campuses. He cofounded the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning at the Yale University Child Studies Center (now at the University of Illinois at Chicago). He lives in Massachusetts.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com.

## Introduction: The Subtle Faculty

Though it matters enormously for how we navigate life, *attention* represents a little-noticed and underrated mental asset. The good news on attention comes from neuroscience labs and school classrooms, where the findings point to ways we can strengthen this vital muscle of the mind.

For leaders to get results, they need all three kinds of focus. *Inner* focus attunes us to our intuitions, guiding values and better decisions. *Other* focus smooths our connections to the people in our lives. And *outer* focus lets us navigate in the larger world. A leader tuned out of his internal world will be rudderless; one blind to the world of others will be clueless; those indifferent to the larger systems within which they operate will be blindsided.

And it's not just leaders who benefit from a balance in this triple focus. All of us live in daunting environments, rife with the tensions and competing goals and lures of modern life. Each of the three varieties of attention can help us find a balance where we can be both happy and productive. Attention connects us with the world, shaping and defining our experience.

Anne Treisman, a dean of this research area, notes that how we deploy our attention determines what we see. Or as Yoda says, "Your focus is your reality."

## The Anatomy of Attention

The ability to focus in the midst of a din indicates selective attention — the neural capacity to beam in on just one target while ignoring a sea of incoming stimuli. There are two main varieties of distractions:

- **Sensory:** Notice the feeling of your tongue against your upper palate. It's just one of an endless wave of incoming stimuli your brain weeds out from the continuous wash of background sounds, shapes and colors, tastes, smells, sensations and on and on.
- **Emotional:** These loaded signals are more daunting. While you might find it easy to concentrate on answering your email in the hubbub of a coffee shop, if you overhear someone mention your name, it's almost impossible to tune out the voice that carries it. Your attention reflexively alerts to hear what's being said about you.

The biggest challenge for even the most focused, though, comes from the emotional turmoil of our lives, like a recent blowup in a close relationship that keeps intruding into your thoughts. Such thoughts barge in for a good reason: to get us through what to do about what's upsetting us.

The dividing line between fruitless rumination and productive reflection lies in whether or not we come up with some tentative solution or insight and then can let those distressing thoughts go — or if we just keep obsessing over the same loop of worry.

The more our focus gets disrupted, the worse we do. The ability to stay on one target and ignore everything else operates in the brain's prefrontal regions. Specialized circuitry in this area boosts the strength of incoming signals we want to concentrate on (that email) and dampens down those we choose to ignore (those people chattering away at the next table).

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Since focus demands we tune out our emotional distractions, our neural wiring for selective attention includes that for inhibiting emotion; those who focus best are relatively immune to emotional turbulence.

Failure to drop one focus and move on to others can leave the mind lost in repeating loops of chronic anxiety. The power to disengage our attention from one thing and move it to another is essential for well-being.

## Attention Top and Bottom

Our brain has two semi-independent, largely separate mental systems. One has massive computing power and operates constantly, purring away in quiet to solve our problems, surprising us with a sudden solution to complex pondering.

This back-of-the-mind attention typically comes to the center of focus when the unexpected happens. You're talking on your cell phone while driving (the driving part is back-of-the-mind), and suddenly a horn honk makes you realize the light is now green.

"Bottom-up" has become the phrase of choice in cognitive science for such workings of this lower-brain neural machinery, whereas "top-down" refers to mental activity that can monitor and impose goals on the subcortical machinery. It's as though there were two minds at work.

**The bottom-up mind is**

- faster in brain time
- involuntary and automatic (always on)
- intuitive, operating through networks of association
- executor of our habitual routines and guide for our actions
- manager for our mental models of the world.

**The top-down mind is**

- slower
- voluntary
- effortful
- the seat of self-control, which can (sometimes) overpower automatic routines and mute emotionally driven impulses
- able to learn new models, make new plans, and take charge of our automatic repertoire, to an extent.

Top-down wiring adds talents like self-awareness and reflection, deliberation and planning to our mind's repertoire. Intentional, top-down focus offers the mind a lever to manage our brain. As we shift our attention from one task, plan, sensation or the like to another, the related brain circuitry lights up.

A surprising factor constantly tips the balance toward bottom-up: the brain economizes on energy. The bottom/top systems distribute mental tasks between them so we can make minimal effort and get optimal results. As familiarity makes a routine easier, it gets passed off from the top to the bottom. The way we experience this neural transfer is that we need to pay less attention — and finally none — as it becomes automatic.

## The Value of a Mind Adrift

The easy assumption that attention need be in the service of solving problems or achieving goals downplays the fruitfulness of the mind's tendency to drift whenever left to its own devices.

The inner tug to drift away from effortful focus is so strong that cognitive scientists see a wandering mind as the brain's "default" mode — where it goes when it's not working on some mental task.

However, while mind wandering may hurt our immediate focus on a task, some portion of the time, it operates in the service of solving problems that matter for our lives.

Also, a mind adrift lets our creative juices flow. While our minds wander, we become better at anything that depends on a flash of insight, from wordplay to inventions and original thinking. In fact, people who are adept at mental tasks that demand cognitive control and a roaring working memory — like solving complex math problems — can struggle with creative insights if they can't fully switch off their concentrated focus.

Among other positive functions of mind wandering are generating scenarios for the future, self-reflection, navigating a complex social world, incubation of creative ideas, flexibility in focus, pondering what we're learning, organizing our memories, just mulling life — and giving our circuitry for more intensive focusing a refreshing break.

## The Architecture of Serendipity

"New ideas won't appear if you don't have permission within yourself," Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff says. Case in point: Benioff took a month off to go to Hawaii just to relax, and in that open space he realized the potential for cloud computing, which led him to quit Oracle, start Salesforce in a rented apartment, and evangelize for what was then a radical concept. Salesforce was a pioneer in what is now a multibillion-dollar industry.

Open awareness creates a mental platform for creative breakthroughs and unexpected insights. In open awareness we have no devil's advocate, no cynicism or judgment — just reciprocity to whatever floats into the mind.

But once we've hit upon a creative insight, we need to capture the prize by switching to a keen focus on how to apply it. Serendipity comes with openness to possibility, then homing in on putting it to use.

Life's creative challenges rarely come in the form of well-formulated puzzles. Instead we often have to recognize the very need to find a creative solution in the first place. A classic model of the stages of creativity roughly translates to the three modes of focus:

- **Orienting:** where we search out and immerse ourselves in all kinds of inputs;
- **Selective Attention:** given to a specific creative challenge; and
- **Open Awareness:** where we associate freely to let the solution emerge — then home in on the solution.

### Finding Balance and Restoring Attention

It's not the chatter of people around us that is the most powerful distractor, but rather the chatter of our own minds. Utter concentration demands these inner voices be stilled. When we can turn such full attention to our senses, the brain quiets its default chatter. Brain scans during mindfulness — a form of meditation which focuses on one's awareness of the present moment — reveal it quiets the brain circuits for me-focused brain chatter, which in itself can be an immense relief.

Tightly focused attention gets fatigued — much like an overworked muscle — when we push to the point of cognitive exhaustion. The signs of mental fatigue, such as a drop in effectiveness and a rise in distractedness and irritability, signify that the mental effort needed to sustain focus has depleted the glucose that feeds neural energy. The antidote to attention fatigue is the same as for the physical kind: take a rest. But what rests a mental muscle?

Try switching from the effort of top-down control to more passive bottom-up activities, taking a relaxing break in a restful setting. The most restful surroundings are in nature, argues Stephen Kaplan at the University of Michigan, who proposes what he calls "attention restoration theory."

Such restoration occurs when we switch from effortful attention, where the mind needs to suppress distractions, to letting go and allowing our attention to be captured by whatever presents itself. But only certain kinds of bottom-up focus act to restore energy for focused attention. Surfing the Web, playing video games or answering email does not.

The key is an immersive experience, one where attention can be total but largely passive. This starts to happen when we gently arouse the sensory systems, which quiet down those for effortful focus. Anything we can get enjoyably lost in will do it.

## Self-Awareness

What allows people to have a strong inner compass, a North Star that steers them through life according to the dictates of their deepest values and purposes? Self-awareness, particularly accuracy in decoding the internal cues of our body's murmurs, holds the key. Our subtle physiological reactions reflect the sum total of our experience relevant to the decision at hand.

The decision rules derived from our life experiences reside in subcortical neural networks that gather, store and apply algorithms from every event in our lives — creating our inner rudder.

The brain harbors our deepest sense of purpose and meaning in these subcortical regions — areas connected poorly to the verbal areas of the neocortex but richly to the gut. We know our values by first getting a visceral sense of what feels right and what does not, then articulating those feelings for ourselves.

Self-awareness, then, represents an essential focus, one that attunes us to the subtle murmurs within that can help guide our way through life. And, as we shall see, this inner radar holds the key to managing what we do — and just as important, what we *don't* do. This internal control mechanism makes all the difference between a life well lived and one that falters.

### The Brain's Map of the Body

When Steve Jobs gave a heartfelt talk to a graduating class at Stanford University, his advice was "Don't let the voice of others' opinions drown out your inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become."

But how do you hear "your inner voice," what your heart and intuition somehow already know? You need to depend on your body's signals.

Our "gut feelings" are messages from the insula — tucked behind the frontal lobes of the brain — and other bottom-up circuits that simplify life decisions for us by guiding our attention toward smarter options. The better we are at reading these messages, the better our intuition.

There are two major streams of self-awareness: "me," which builds narratives about our past and future, and "I," which brings us into the immediate present. The "me," as we've seen, links together what we experience across time. The "I," in stark contrast, exists only in the raw experience of our immediate moment.

The "I," our most intimate sense of our self, reflects the piecemeal sum of our sensory impressions — particular-

ly our body states. "I" builds from our brain's system for mapping the body via the insula.

Such internal signals are our inner guides, helping us at many levels, from living a life in keeping with our guiding values to remembering our running shoes.

### A Recipe for Self-Control

Attention regulates emotion — as long as one can stay tuned to an interesting object of focus, the distress calms; the moment that thing loses its fascination, the distress, if still held onto, will come roaring back.

Our mind deploys self-awareness to keep everything we do on track: meta-cognition — thinking about thinking — lets us know how our mental operations are going and adjusts them as needed; meta-emotion does the same with regulating the flow of feeling and impulse. In the mind's design, self-awareness is built into regulating our own emotions as well as sensing what others feel.

At least three sub-varieties of attention are at play when we pit self-restraint against instant gratification:

1. Ability to voluntarily disengage focus from an object of desire that grabs our attention.
2. Ability to resist distraction and keep focus elsewhere.
3. Ability to allow us to keep focus on a goal in the future.

All this adds up to willpower.

### The Power to Choose

Of the many nuances and varieties of attention, two matter greatly for self-awareness. Selective attention lets us focus on one target and ignore everything else. Open attention lets us take in information widely in the world around us and the world within us and pick up subtle cues we'd otherwise miss.

Extremes in either of these kinds of attention — being too focused outwardly or too open to what's going on around us — can, as Richard Davidson puts it, "make it impossible to be self-aware." Executive function (as cognitive control is sometimes called) includes attention to attention itself, or more generally, awareness of our mental states; this lets us monitor our focus and keep it on track.

## Reading Others

The executive circuits that allow us to think about our own thoughts and feelings let us apply the same reasoning to other people's minds. "Theory of mind," the understanding that other people have their own feelings, desires and motives, lets us reason what someone else might be thinking and wanting. Such cognitive empathy shares circuitry with executive attention; it first blooms around the years between two and five and continues to develop right through the teen years.

### Getting the Context

Those who do business with diverse sets of people in a global economy need particular sensitivity to unspoken norms. The cross-cultural talent for social sensitivity appears related to cognitive empathy.

Ground rules for what's appropriate can create invisible barriers when people from different cultures work together. Culture aside, ground rules also shift greatly depending on whom you are with. There are jokes you tell to your best buddies that you should never tell your boss.

Attention to context lets us pick up subtle social cues that can guide how we behave. Those who are tuned in this way act with skill no matter what situation they find themselves in. They know not only what to say and do but also what *not* to say or do. They instinctively follow the universal algorithm for etiquette, to behave in ways that put others at ease. Sensitivity to how people are feeling in reaction to what we do or say lets us navigate hidden social minefields.

Where we see ourselves on the social ladder seems to determine how much attention we pay: more vigilant when we feel subordinate, less so when superior. The corollary: The more you care about someone, the more attention you pay — and the more attention you pay, the more you care.

## The Bigger Context

Pattern detection signals the systems mind at work. This sometimes uncanny ability lets us spot with ease the telling detail in a vast visual array (think "Where's Waldo?"). If you flash a photo of lots of dots and tell people to guess how many there are, the better estimators should be better systems thinkers.

A "system" boils down to a cohesive set of lawful, regular patterns. We learn how to read and navigate systems through the remarkable general learning talents of the neocortex. Such cortical talents — as in math and engineering — can be duplicated by computers. That sets the systems mind apart from self-awareness and empathy, which operate on dedicated, largely bottom-up circuitry. It takes a bit of effort to learn about systems, but to navigate life successfully we need strengths in this variety of focus as well as the two that come more naturally.

### System Blindness

Through human history, systems awareness — detecting and mapping the patterns and order that lie hidden within the chaos of the natural world — has been propelled by this urgent survival imperative for native peoples to understand their local ecosystem. They must know what plants are toxic, which nourish or heal, where to get drinking water, and where to gather food, etc.

Here's the catch: We're prepared by our biology to eat, sleep, mate, nurture, fight-or-flee, and exhibit all the other built-in survival responses in the human repertoire. But as we've seen, there are no neural systems dedicated to understanding the larger systems within which all this occurs.

Systems are, at first glance, invisible to our brain — we have no direct perception of any of the multitude of systems that dictate the realities of our lives. We understand them indirectly through mental models (the meanings of wave swells, constellations and the flight of seabirds are such models) and take action based on those models. The more grounded in data those models are, the more effective our interventions (for example, a rocket to an asteroid). The less grounded in data, the less effective they will be (much education policy).

The obliviousness to the systems around us is puzzling. We seem curiously unable to perceive in a way that leads us to prevent the adverse consequences of human systems, such as those for industry or commerce.

## Smart Practice

According to Anders Ericsson, a Florida State University psychologist, "You don't get benefits from mechanical repetition, but by adjusting your execution over and over to get closer to your goal. You have to tweak the system by pushing, allowing for more errors at first as you increase your limits."

Apart from sports that favor physical traits, almost anyone can achieve the highest levels of performance with smart practice. Smart practice always includes a feedback loop that lets you recognize errors and correct them — this is why dancers use mirrors. Ideally that feedback comes from someone with an expert eye. If you practice without feedback, you don't get top ranks. The feedback and the concentration matter — not just the hours.

Learning how to improve any skill requires top-down focus. Neuroplasticity, the strengthening of old brain circuits and building of new ones for a skill we are practicing, requires our paying attention.

Daydreaming defeats practice; those who browse TV while working out will never reach top ranks. Paying full attention seems to boost the mind's processing speed, strengthen synaptic connections, and expand or create neural networks for what we are practicing. At least at first. But as you master how to execute the new routine, repeated practice transfers control of that skill from the top-down system for intentional focus to bottom-up circuits that eventually make its execution effortless. At that point you don't need to think about it — you can do the routine well enough on automatic.

Focused attention, like a strained muscle, gets fatigued. Ericsson found world-class competitors — whether weight lifters, pianists or a dog-sled team — tend to limit arduous practice to about four hours a day. Rest and restoring physical and mental energy get built into their training regimen. They seek to push themselves and their bodies to the max, but not so much that their focus gets diminished in the practice session. Optimal practice maintains optimal concentration.

### In the Mental Gym

Think of attention as a mental muscle that we can strengthen by a workout. Memorization works that muscle, as does concentration. The mental analog of lifting a free weight repeatedly is noticing when our mind wanders and bringing it back to target.

That happens to be the essence of one-pointed focus in meditation, which, seen through the lens of cognitive neuroscience, typically involves attention training. You're told to keep your focus on one thing, such as a mantra or your breath. Try it for a while, and inevitably your mind wanders off.

So, the universal instructions are these: When your mind wanders — and you notice that it's wandered — bring it back to your point of focus, and sustain your attention there. And when your mind wanders off again, do the same. And again and again and again.

As in any workout, the more reps, the stronger the muscle becomes. More-experienced meditators, one study found, were able to deactivate their medial strip more rapidly after noticing mind wandering; as their thoughts become less "sticky" with practice, it becomes easier to drop thoughts and return to the breath. There was more neural connectivity between the region for mind wandering and those that disengage attention. The increased connectivity in the brains of long-term meditators, this study suggests, are analogous to those competitive weightlifters with perfect pecs.

Muscle builders know you won't get a six-pack belly by lifting free weights — you need to do a particular set of exercises. Specific muscles respond to particular training regimens. So it is with attention training. Concentration on one point of focus is the basic attention builder, but that strength can be applied in many ways. In the mental gym, the specifics of practice make all the difference.

## Accentuate the Positive

Negativity focuses us on a narrow range — what's upsetting us. A guideline in cognitive therapy holds that focusing on the negatives in experience offers a recipe for depression. Positive emotions widen our span of attention; we're free to take it all in. In the grip of positivity, our perceptions shift; when we're feeling good, our awareness expands from our usual self-centered focus on "me" to a more inclusive and warm focus on "we."

## Cutting Through the Hodgepodge

The scientific literature on the effects of mediation amounts to a hodgepodge of bad, good and remarkable results in a mix of questionable methodologies, so-so designs and gold-standard studies. After asking the dean of contemplative neuroscience, Wisconsin's Richard Davidson, to sort through it all and summarize the clear benefits for attention of mindfulness practice, he immediately recognized two: mindfulness and selective attention.

"Mindfulness," he said, "boosts the classic attention network in the brain's fronto-parietal system that works together to allocate attention. These circuits are fundamental in the basic movement of attention: disengaging your focus from one thing, moving it to another, and staying with that new object of attention."

Selective attention inhibits the pull of distractors. This lets us focus on what's important rather than be distracted by what's going on around us — you can keep your focus on the meaning of what you're reading instead of having it being pulled away by a distractor like an endnote in the text. This is the essence of cognitive control.

## Mindfulness at Work

Mindfulness, in the form of mind wandering, may be the single biggest waster of attention in the workplace. Focus on our experience in the here and now — like the task at hand, the conversation we're having, or the building of consensus in a meeting — demands that we tune down the all-about-myself murmurs of mind stuff irrelevant to what's going on right now.

Mindfulness develops our capacity to observe our moment-to-moment experience in an impartial, nonreactive manner. We practice letting go of thoughts about any one thing and open our focus to whatever comes to mind in the stream of awareness without getting lost in a torrent of thoughts about any one thing. This training generalizes, so that in those moments at work when we need to pay attention to this and drop our stream of thoughts about that, we can let go of the one and focus on the other.

Mindfulness training decreases activity in me-circuitry centering on the medial prefrontal cortex, and the less self-talk, the more we can experience in the moment. The longer people have been mindfulness practitioners, the more their brain can decouple the two kinds of self-awareness and activate circuits that foster a here-and-now presence for the task at hand, free of the mind's "me" chatter.

Building executive control helps especially for those of us for whom every setback, hurt or disappointment creates endless cascades of rumination. Mindfulness lets us break the stream of thoughts that might otherwise lead to wallowing in misery, by changing our relationship to thought itself. Instead of being swept away by the stream, we can pause and see that these are just thoughts — and choose whether or not to act on them.

In short, mindfulness practice strengthens focus, particularly executive control, working memory capacity, and the ability to sustain attention. Some of these benefits can be seen with as little as 20 minutes of practice for just four days (though the longer the training, the more sustained the effects).

## Seeing the Bigger Picture

Business leaders are increasingly pressured by the acceleration of complexity in the systems they need to navigate: There's globalization of markets, suppliers and organizations; the hyperspeed of evolving information technologies; impending ecological dangers; products coming to market and becoming obsolete faster.

Setting aside some regular reflective time in the daily or weekly schedule might help us get beyond the firefight-of-the-day mentality, to take stock and look ahead. Very diverse thinkers, from Congressman Tim Ryan to Columbia University economist Jeffrey D. Sachs, are calling for mindfulness as a way to help leaders see the bigger picture. They propose we need not just mindful leaders but a mindful society, one where we bring a triple focus: to our own well-being, that of others, and the operations of the broader systems that shape our lives.

# The Well-Focused Leader

Directing attention toward where it needs to go is a primal task of leadership. Talent here lies in the ability to shift attention to the right place at the right time, sensing trends and emerging realities, and seizing opportunities. But it's not just the focus of a single strategic decision-maker that makes or breaks a company: it's the entire array of attention bandwidth and dexterity among everyone.

Attention in organizations, as with individuals, has a limited capacity. Organizations, too, have to choose where to allocate attention, focusing on this while ignoring that. An organization's core functions — finance, marketing, human resources, etc. — describe how a particular group focuses.

Signs of what might be called organizational "attention deficit disorder" include making flawed decisions because of missing data, no time for reflection, trouble getting attention in the marketplace, and inability to focus when and where it matters.

## How Leaders Direct Attention

Leadership itself hinges on effectively capturing and directing the collective attention. Leading attention requires these elements:

- Focusing your own attention;
- Attracting and directing attention from others; and
- Getting and keeping the attention of employees, peers, customers and clients.

A well-focused leader can balance an inner focus on the climate and culture with an "other focus" on the competitive landscape and an outer focus on the larger realities that shape the environment the outfit operates in.

A leader's field of attention — the particular issues and goals she focuses on — guides the attention of those who follow her whether or not the leader explicitly articulates it. People make their choices about where to focus based on their perception of what matters to leaders. This ripple effect gives leaders an extra load of responsibility: They are guiding not just their own attention but everyone else's.

## Think Different

Companies with a winning strategy tend to refine their current operations and offerings, not explore radical shifts in what they offer. A mental balancing act — exploring the new while exploiting what's working — does not come naturally. But those companies that can both exploit and explore are "ambidextrous": They separate each strategy into units with very different ways of operating and cultures. At the same time, they have a tight-knot team of senior leaders who keep an eye on the balance of inner, outer and other focus.

What works at the organizational level parallels the individual mind. The mind's executive, the arbiter of where our focus goes, manages both the concentration exploitation requires and the open focus exploration demands.

## The Well-Focused Team

For a team, self-awareness means tuning in to the needs of members, surfacing issues, and being intentional about setting norms that help. Some teams make time for a daily "check-in" at the start of a meeting to ask how each person is doing. A team's empathy applies not just to sensitivity among members but also to understanding the view and feelings of other people and groups the teams deal with — group-level empathy.

Team focus can take the form of both whom in the wider organization to help and where to get the resources and attention teams need to accomplish their own goals. Or it can mean learning what the concerns are of others in the organization who can influence the team's capabilities or asking whether what the team is considering fits the larger strategy and goals of the outfit.

## Leading for the Long Future

The largest lens for our focus encompasses global systems; considers the needs of everyone, including the powerless and poor; and peers far ahead of time. No matter what we are doing or what decision we are making, the Dalai Lama suggests these self-queries for checking our motivation:

Is it just for me or for others?
For the benefit of the few or the many?
For now or for the future?

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Focus*, you'll also like:

1. ***Working With Emotional Intelligence*** by Daniel Goleman. As Goleman documents, emotional intelligence is the essential ingredient for reaching and staying at the top in any field, even high-tech careers.

2. ***Ecological Intelligence*** by Daniel Goleman. Goleman reveals the hidden environmental consequences of what we make and buy and how we can drive the essential changes we all must make to save our planet..

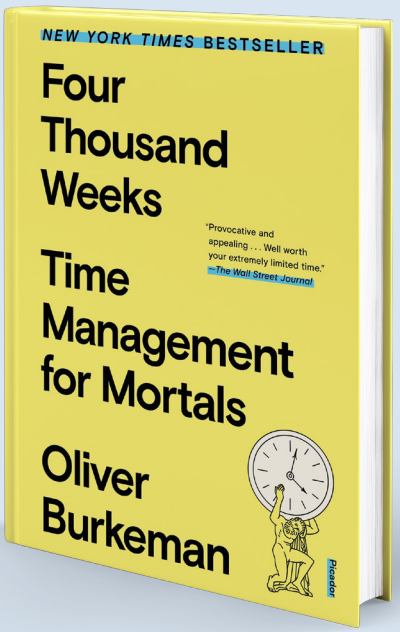
3. ***Primal Leadership*** by Annie McKee, Richard Boyatzis, Daniel Goleman. Great leadership works through the emotions. The authors describe what managers and executives must do to be emotionally intelligent leaders.

· Book 98 of 269 ·

# Four Thousand Weeks

Oliver Burkeman

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Four Thousand Weeks

**Time Management for Mortals**

*By Oliver Burkeman*

Oliver Burkeman is a feature writer for The Guardian. He is a winner of the Foreign Press Association's Young Journalist of the Year Award and has been short-listed for the Orwell Prize. He wrote a popular weekly column on psychology, "This Column Will Change Your Life," and has reported from New York, London, and Washington, D.C. His books include F*our Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals* and *The Antidote: Happiness for People who Can't Stand Positive Thinking.*

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Tools for Constructing a Meaninful Life

In his introduction to ***Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals,*** Oliver Burkeman states, "Arguably, time management is all life is. Yet the modern discipline known as time management - like its hipper cousin, productivity - is a depressingly narrow-minded affair, focused on how to crank through as many work tasks as possible…." The average human being has 4,000 weeks in which to accomplish all that is to be accomplished because that is the length of the average human lifespan. While most other time management books attempt to lay out productivity principles in order to help the reader gain mastery over their time, Burkeman takes a different approach. He believes that control over one's time is not something that human beings can strive for because it is largely out of one's reach. The more tasks a person attempts to fit into their day, the more tasks will arise. Accomplishing more tasks will never allow one to experience the sense of calm and control most people try to achieve because there will always be more to do. Therefore, in his book, Burkeman attempts to rehabilitate his readers' view of time and to help them form a new perspective that will allow for greater peace. Whereas most time management books rely on tips and tactics, Burkeman largely focuses on philosophy and psychology to help his readers gain a sense of peace in relation to time.

## Choosing to Choose

In his first section, Burkeman explains that "the real problem isn't our limited time. The real problem… is that we've unwittingly inherited, and feel pressures to live by, a troublesome set of ideas about how to use our limited time." He goes on to explain how people in medieval England saw time differently. They did not see time as an entity. This mindset is hard for modern people to understand, Burkeman explains, because it is so foreign to how we see the world and time. Farming peasants in the past did not have pressure to get everything out of the way because farmers would always have more things to do. There is no end point to milking a cow because it will always need to be milked again the next day. These farmers' lives are task oriented lives where "the rhythms of life emerge organically from the tasks themselves."

While there are benefits to this type of life, Burkeman goes on to say that this mode of living keeps people from accomplishing more than what a small-scale farmer can accomplish because if a person wants to coordinate with other people, then time must be measured in a different way. He explains that a need for this coordination is what led to the creation of clocks, but this visibility of time changed how people related to it: it became abstract, separated from "the specific activities on which one might spend it." When time is viewed in this manner, it becomes a resource, and people feel the need to make better use of it. People also begin to start thinking and planning for the future and attempt to consistently use their time in service of the future. He says, "the trouble with attempting to master your time, it turns out, is that time ends up mastering you." What people need to do, he maintains, is to accept their limitations and learn to see that in a lifetime with limited hours, choices must be made. Every time a person chooses to do one activity, they are by necessity, choosing to forgo any number of other ways they could be spending their time. He believes there is freedom in this acknowledgment because people can choose to spend their time on activities that matter most to them.

Burkeman maintains that if we cannot get everything we need to do done in the specified time period, that we simply cannot get them done no matter how efficient we become. Instead of acknowledging this, however, he maintains that most people just dig their heels in deeper and try to work harder to get more done. But he maintains that "there's no reason to believe you'll ever feel 'on top of things' or make time for everything that matters, simply by getting more done." Part of the reason for this is that the more a person accomplishes, the more their goalposts change: more things will start to feel important and meaningful. Another problem with simply getting more tasks done is that it does not necessarily mean a person is spending more time on what is important or meaningful.

He maintains that most people do not have full control over their time and simply must accomplish certain tasks. He is not advocating for the renouncement of responsibilities. Rather, he wants his reader to understand that becoming more productive and getting more done in a day will not result in more peace of mind or take away a person's feeling of uncomfortable busyness. He encourages his reader to become okay with not getting everything done. This requires a person to focus on what is most important.

## Facing Mortality

Burkeman discusses the different relationship with time people have when they realize that their time on Earth is temporary. He describes this difference in relation to a ski trip he regularly takes with his family. If he had an unlimited amount of years on the planet and a corresponding unlimited amount of time, this ski trip would not have the same emotional intensity that it does. This is because part of the value in the trip is in knowing that the trips will not last forever and that his relationships with his family will not last forever because they are all mortal, and their time on Earth will come to an end. He does not believe that people can realistically spend all of their time with this acute awareness of their own mortality, but he believes that coming to terms with one's mortality, even in brief moments, can make life more meaningful. This is because when a person truly understands the limited number of years they have, they can choose to use those years in ways that are meaningful. While some people might approach their mortality with disappointment, wishing they had more time, he thinks about it all as possibility, knowing that he might never have existed at all. Instead of seeing mortality as a lack of an infinite number of years, he sees it as the addition of years that he need not ever have had at all.

What all of this leads to is the inevitability of procrastination. At any given moment, a person is procrastinating all of the things they could be doing but are not. He does not believe that the problem most people face is that they are not adequately focusing their time on the things that matter the most. Instead, the problem is that they have too many things that matter the most. People frequently try to allot time to their most important activities by taking care of the smaller or less important activities first to get them out of the way. This usually does not work, so Burkeman implores his reader to instead pay themselves first when it comes to time by making sure to devote at least some time each day to those things that mean most. He also encourages his reader to limit the number of projects they have going at any one time. When a person has too many projects, they can flip from one to the other when things get tough. What this ends up doing, however, is ensuring that very little actually gets completed. Finally, he encourages his reader to get rid of mid-level priorities, instead choosing to focus on what is most important.

All of the above recommendations refer to a type of procrastination that Burkeman calls good procrastination. There is another type of procrastination that is better avoided, and this stems from perfectionism. He believes that people tend to procrastinate on tasks they ought to do or want to do because they are paralyzed by their own limitations and perceived inability to achieve perfection. To these people, Burkeman reminds them that perfection is impossible. He says, "If you're procrastinating on something because you're worried you won't do a good enough job, you can relax - because judged by the flawless standards of your imagination, you definitely won't do a good enough job. So you might as well make a start." He also addresses those who avoid committing to a person or decision because they fear something better may come along. He says, however, that people are happier when they have made a commitment than when they are continuing to pursue other opportunities.

## Distraction and Attention

People have been concerned with distraction all the way back to the time of the ancient Greeks. Distraction is an important concern because "what you pay attention to will define, for you, what reality is." Attention, according to Burkeman, is life because a person's life is defined by what they pay attention to. Distractions can be things that keep people from the tasks they are meant to do, but even careers themselves can be distractions if they are keeping people from what it is they really believe they should be doing. A person cannot commandeer their attention completely. This would not even be ideal because in order

> *. . . the person who devotes all of his or her time to living in the present moment is trying to control time just as much as the person who is always using it for future gain."*

to survive, people need to be able to pay attention to dangers outside of their immediate task that need their attention. Social media and other digital commodities are designed and focused to draw a person's attention and to keep it on the app or website in question. Since these apps have so much of our attention, they can influence our reality by feeding us information that conforms with a worldview. He maintains that the technology industry is not wholly responsible for our distractions, however, because we willingly devote much of our time to these apps.

## Beyond Control

Burkeman moves on to discuss attempts to control time, and he does so by maintaining that any act a person participates in will take more time than they plan. Allotting more time to a task does not help, however, because people will still go over time. He believes that people who obsessively plan do so in order to claim control over the future. Because the future cannot be known, this obsessive planning and future focus creates the very anxiety the planning was meant to get rid of. There is another problem with inordinate planning. That is that there will always be more to plan. When one task has come to fruition, more will arise. Therefore, if a person is forestalling peace until all the planning is done, they will never find peace. All of this does not mean that Burkeman believes that planning is futile. He agrees that appropriate planning for the future is beneficial. The problem "is the need that we feel, from our vantage point here in the present moment, to be able to know that those efforts will prove successful." As an antidote to this, Burkeman urges his reader to realize that a person can never be certain about the future and that "the struggle for certainty is an intrinsically hopeless one - which means you have permission to stop engaging it." He believes it is precisely because time cannot be controlled that many spiritual traditions urge their followers to focus on the present moment

## Instrumental Time and Leisure

Burkeman then turns his attention to the instrumental use of time, that is using time as a means to another end. To illustrate the use of instrumental time, he relays author Steve Taylor's observation of people viewing the Rosetta Stone. Taylor noted that many of the people were spending their time taking photos and videos of the Stone. They were using their time with the Rosetta Stone to prepare for its future benefit of providing them with a photo they can revisit. This is an example of people using time for future rather than present benefit.

He describes people who consistently believe they will be happy when some particular task or moment is over, and he believes they will never actually be happy because they are constantly seeing the value of their present moment only in terms of how it can be used to influence the future. He then goes on to describe this concept in terms of child rearing. He discusses those who make parenting decisions based on how it will help their children in adulthood rather than making parenting decisions for the child that is in front of them now. In short, these parents see childhood as a training ground for future adults rather than as a valid state of life in itself.

Just as people choose to cooperate with the tech giants who want their time, people also choose to use our time solely as a means to an end. He believes people make this choice because it allots for a feeling of empowerment over time. He says, "therefore you had better stop postponing the 'real meaning' of your existence into the future, and throw yourself into life now." Still, he cautions that the person who devotes all of his or her time to living in the present moment is trying to control time just as much as the person who is always using it for future gain. He implores his reader to instead realize that they are always living in the present moment because that is all anybody ever really has. He ends his chapter by saying, "Living more fully in the present may be simply a matter of finally realizing that you never had any other option but to be here now."

Burkeman then moves on to discuss leisure, and he states that people in ancient Greece and Rome used to see work as being undignified. In the modern day, however, people often see leisure activities as not being worth their time, and people often feel guilty for engaging in leisure activities. Industrialization helped usher in this mindset because people were expected to make the most use of the time they devoted to their employers, and any time not spent on work activities was viewed as theft from the employer. The problem was intensified when people began to see leisure as an activity to make them more productive at work. It has gotten to the point where many people feel uncomfortable resting, and it becomes an unpleasant experience. Since people are not guaranteed a future, it becomes imperative for people to learn to enjoy the time they have. A person uncomfortable with rest can become accustomed to it if they avoid believing it must be pleasurable at first. Burkeman believes that this discomfort is proof that relaxation is necessary.

## Impatience and Patience

Another problem Burkeman confronts is impatience. People have become accustomed to things moving at a rapid pace, and this is true both at an individual level as well as at a societal level. People feel uncomfortable with slowing things down and tend to deal with that anxiety by hiding from it through productivity. He compares the mechanisms behind speed addiction to

that of alcohol addiction and maintains that both can be dealt with according to similar principles. Both addicts must surrender. He believes that when a person finally comes to a realization that they have very little control over how long tasks take, they can release some of their anxiety about time.

Burkeman believes that in today's society, patience and the acknowledgment of a lack of power it denotes can become a power in and of itself. The type of patience he advocates for takes strength to resist the urge to hurry. In order to live in this patience he advocates for three principles: "develop a taste for having problems," "embrace radical incrementalism" by allowing oneself to make slow progress on tasks and to stop at a predetermined time, and acknowledge that "originality lies on the far side of unoriginality," in other words that oftentimes people have to follow in other's footsteps before they can embrace true originality.

Many people believe that the true marker of control over time is being able to spend it however one wants to. Burkeman maintains, however, that people do not need complete control over their time as much as they need "greater outside pressure to use their time in particular ways." This means aligning oneself with a community. He believes "there's the profound sense of meaning that comes from being willing to fall in with the rhythms of the rest of the world." He believes that much modern productivity writing is focused on helping people avoid having others influence their usage of time when in reality social control of time can be beneficial to people. He believes people can try to achieve these benefits of community by focusing on activities in the physical rather than the digital world and by allowing the rhythms of community life to sometimes take precedence over a person's desire to master their own time.

Burkeman moves on to say that in the grand scheme of the world, individual lives matter very little. He believes that acknowledging the insignificance of life can lead people to freedom. He concludes by saying that when people are finally willing to admit that they cannot do everything, they will finally be able to focus on what really matters the most. Burkeman acknowledges that he comes from a family of planners. Throughout his research into time management techniques, however, he has come to believe that they will inevitably fail to lead people to peace because the very prospect of maximizing one's time in the hope of future peace is futile. There will always be more to do and tough choices will always need to be made. It is in submitting to these realities that Burkeman believes true peace and satisfaction can come. In his book, he walks his reader through philosophical and psychological insights that can ultimately lead them to true peace.

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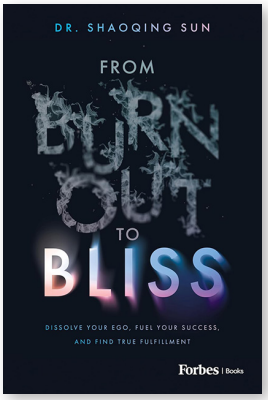
# From Burnout to Bliss

Dr. Shaoqing Sun

Executive Book Summaries®

# From Burnout to Bliss

## Dissolve Your Ego, Fuel Your Success, and Find True Fulfillment




*by* **Dr. Shaoqing Sun**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

How can high performers break free from ego-driven striving before sustained ambition turns into burnout? Many leaders and entrepreneurs achieve external success only to feel depleted, restless, and disconnected from any deeper sense of meaning—an experience that raises this question with growing urgency.

***From Burnout to Bliss: Dissolve Your Ego, Fuel Your Success, and Find True Fulfillment*** addresses this tension directly, offering a way to recover energy and clarity without abandoning ambition. The book reframes burnout not as a failure of discipline, but as a signal that identity and motivation have become misaligned. It explains how ego-centered achievement creates chronic pressure that ultimately erodes creativity, judgment, and well-being.

By blending scientific thinking with spiritual insight, Dr. Shaoqing Sun shows how dissolving the ego allows leaders to access a calmer, more resilient form of intelligence; one that supports sustained performance rather than constant overdrive. The author provides a practical roadmap for transforming pressure into purpose, making decisions from clarity, and building success rooted in presence rather than exhaustion.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Understand why ego-driven ambition leads to burnout and diminishing returns
- Learn how to restore mental energy and clarity while continuing to pursue ambitious goals without stepping away from performance or progress
- Discover how to lead with calm, conscious awareness under pressure, making clearer decisions and responding skillfully in demanding situations
- Explore practical ways to build sustainable success rooted in presence and purpose, aligning ambition with your deeper self

INTRODUCTION

## From Ego-Driven Striving to Conscious Leadership

The greatest hunger in life is not for material possessions or self-esteem. It is the yearning to unlock a hidden part of the self: *consciousness*.

Consciousness is the still and ever-present field in which all thoughts, feelings, and sensations arise. It is simply present, quietly perceiving what is.

Spirit is the vital force behind all biological systems. It's the engine that drives growth and transformation. It is our essence and it's why our brains are hardwired to guide us toward spiritual awakening. Life is meant to evolve. Without spiritual progress, even the most impressive achievements fall short of fulfillment.

Spirit and consciousness go hand in hand; one cannot exist without the other. These universal elements are fundamental to the human experience and play a central role in personal evolution and fulfillment.

Studies show that the brain's default mode network, which is associated with self-referential thinking and ego activity, can become overactive, perpetuating egocentric tendencies unless deliberately counteracted through practices such as mindfulness or meditation. When left unchecked, the ego shapes our thoughts and actions to serve only the self. It blocks natural energy flow and creates resistance to spiritual awakening.

The good news is that neuroplasticity also allows us to dissolve these self-limiting patterns and liberate ourselves, if we choose to do so. This transformation is rooted in understanding and dissolving the limiting power of the ego to unlock the boundless creativity, resilience, and clarity of consciousness.

As you move through life, you may find yourself caught in patterns dictated by the ego—an internal mechanism fueled by fear, insecurity, and a craving for external validation. Entrepreneurs, in particular, are vulnerable to this mindset. They might achieve early success driven by ego-based ambition, only to discover later that this path is unsustainable.

Lasting, meaningful, and deeply fulfilling success comes not from striving harder but from *knowing yourself* beyond the ego. When you become conscious of your thoughts, behaviors, and patterns, you begin to shift. The grip of ego loosens, space opens up, and you begin to see that your thoughts are not the truth of who you are. And in doing so, you begin to rewire your brain and consciousness starts leading the way.

CHAPTER 1

## Be Driven, but for the Right Reason

Chances are you are a driven person. You hate settling for the status quo and want more out of life. You don't want merely to survive; you want to thrive.

There are both profound upsides and dangerous downsides to being such a driven person. Being driven can propel you quickly toward success. Yet, that same power can become perilous if not properly managed. Without control, the very intensity that fuels success can also lead you to disaster in both life and business.

On one side, you have your relentless drive to build, to grow, and to win; on the other side, you have the voices around you urging you to slow down, be careful, and pull back. Maybe people have told you to tone it down or stop pushing so hard. Maybe you've even wondered yourself if you're going too far, too fast.

But here's what you need to know: The goal isn't to quiet your ambition; it's to redirect it. There's a big difference between being driven and being *consciously driven*. You may already feel that difference deep down. When your drive is rooted in ego and seeking status, recognition, wealth, or victory over others, it can take you far, but it comes at a cost. That kind of ambition burns hot but fast.

Your drive doesn't need to be suppressed; it needs to *evolve*. When you connect your ambition to something larger than yourself, everything changes. Your energy becomes sustainable. Your motivation becomes clear. And your success feels effortless, meaningful, and lasting.

Don't settle for less. Don't shrink your vision. Just aim it in the right direction. That's the path to lasting success. That's what conscious leadership looks like.

### Ego Defined

At its core, the ego is a mental construct, a stream of inner dialogue shaped by past experiences and future projections. It doesn't operate in the present; instead, it pulls us into memories of what was or anxieties about what might be. It is not your true self but an individualized construction made of collective concepts rooted in illusion.

But if left unchecked, it can create pain, resistance, and suffering. The ego-driven mind sees problems in everything and resists solutions that require flexibility or surrender. The ego cannot survive in the present moment. It needs the past or the future to stay alive.

> True success lasts, and it only lasts when it's rooted in conscious leadership and intentional living. ”

When decisions are made through the lens of ego, they often produce mediocre solutions and short-term gains rather than lasting impact. The key to breaking this cycle lies in discovering who you are beyond mental concepts.

### Opting for Conscious Awareness

Conscious entrepreneurs and business leaders make decisions grounded in love and passion, not fear and control. When they surrender to universal consciousness, they pursue their work with passion, free from attachment to specific outcomes. And when that happens, the dots connect naturally. Success follows, not as a chase but as a byproduct of alignment.

Conscious awareness, by its very nature, resides solely in the present moment. Through deliberate practices such as mindfulness and self-awareness, you train yourself to remain anchored in the present. This heightened presence allows you to observe your thoughts, emotions, and actions objectively.

If you're willing to embrace this higher level of awareness, everything can change. Your personal life will deepen. Your business will grow with greater stability. You'll stop operating in survival mode and start building something sustainable. Because the truth is that success that burns out isn't really success. True success lasts, and it only lasts when it's rooted in conscious leadership and intentional living.

### Put It Into Practice: Realigning Your Drive

**Step 1**

Grab a notebook or open your journal. Ask yourself the hard question: *What is fueling my ambition right now?* Be brutally honest.

**Step 2**

You don't need to dismantle your goals, but you do need to rethink the *why* behind them. Ask yourself the following:

- What does success look like for me if I'm operating from ego?
- What would success look like if I were operating from conscious alignment?
- Which one feels more sustainable? Which one feels more authentic?

**Step 3**

Set a five-day challenge. Each day, carve out fifteen minutes (just 1% of your day) to practice being still and present. No phone, no multitasking. Just you, your breath, and your awareness.

**Step 4**

Look at your current projects, business decisions, or relationships. Pick one area where ego might be running the show. Now ask yourself the following:

- If I were approaching this from service instead of self-interest, what would change?
- How can I show up here with presence, not pressure?
- What would a consciously driven version of me do differently?

**Step 5**

Every morning, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What do I need to do today? (tasks)
2. Why does it matter? (purpose)
3. How will I stay present while doing it? (mindset)

CHAPTER 2

## The Cost of Ego Is High

The emotional, mental, and physical price we pay for living egocentrically is high. That kind of life isn't just unsustainable; it's destructive. Relationships suffer, peace vanishes, and you lose the ability to experience joy, to connect, and to be fully human. And the worst part is you might not even notice it's happening.

In my thirties, I was doing five people's jobs, driving myself crazy, running here and there, traveling around the world to meet customers, and doing marketing and sales while working on product and technology development in the capacity of chief architect. It was way too much, so I was constantly anxious, frustrated, and emotional, angrily attacking anyone who didn't do things the way I wanted them done.

Looking back, it's obvious to me now: I was addicted—not to a substance, but to the pace, the performance, and the il-

lusion of control. Work became my escape route. It was my answer to every uncomfortable feeling. When I felt overwhelmed, restless, or numb, I didn't pause to investigate those feelings. I buried them by throwing myself even harder into work. That was my drug of choice and how I coped.

Only with the benefit of hindsight can I name what it really was: it was ego, and it was fully in control. So I want to encourage you to stop and ask yourself what this is costing you. Ask what you're trying so desperately to outrun. And please, don't wait for the crash to force the change. Because if you don't slow down, that crash *will* come.

### Put It Into Practice: Facing Your Ego, Restoring Your Connection

**Step 1**

Open your journal or grab a notebook. Quiet your mind and answer the following honestly:

- What has been the cost of my ego-driven actions?
- Who has had to pay that price?

**Step 2**

Review your list carefully and notice the following:

- When does my ego flare up the most?

Identify patterns: impatience, control, perfectionism, or defensiveness. Circle recurring themes. Ego thrives in your blind spots.

**Step 3**

For the next seven days, each time you feel driven by urgency, stress, or intensity, pause for a ten-second breath. Then ask:

- Is this my ego speaking, or am I acting from conscious awareness?

This brief pause helps interrupt habitual reactions and gives you a chance to consciously choose your next move.

**Step 4**

Choose one relationship you listed in step one. Reach out to that person with sincerity—not to justify your past actions but to acknowledge their impact. A simple message might say something like this:

- "I recognize my past behavior hurt you, and I'm genuinely sorry. I'm working on making real changes."

The goal isn't reconciliation; it's accountability. Showing humility through action is your pathway to restoring integrity.

**Step 5**

For five days straight, set aside fifteen minutes daily (only 1% of your day) for absolute stillness. Silence your phone and step away from distractions.

Ego dissolves in stillness. By prioritizing these moments, you retrain your mind to value presence over performance.

**Step 6**

Identify one situation, personal or professional, in which ego is currently in charge. Reflect deeply on the following:

- What would change if I acted from empathy and humility rather than ego?
- What does a consciously driven response look like here?

Then, take one small but intentional action this week to shift from ego to conscious connection.

**Step 7**

Start each morning with these three questions:

1. What am I prioritizing today? (tasks)
2. Who or what purpose does this serve? (intentions)
3. How can I remain connected and conscious today? (mindset)

Over time, this daily practice anchors you in humility, restoring your ability to lead and live with genuine presence and purpose.

CHAPTER 3

## The Crisis

While the cost of ego was great, the crisis that unfolded next was even greater. Individuals driven by unchecked ego often don't change until their world comes to a crashing halt. Such was my story.

The end of 2004 marked the beginning of what would become a seven-year crisis-filled existence. These years were marked by relentless hardship, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of despair so deep that, at times, I questioned whether I would make it through at all.

My life revolved entirely around my business. It was not just my occupation but the very foundation of my identity. I poured every ounce of myself into it and lived and breathed every part of it. So when things began to fall apart, I felt as though I was losing far more than a job or an enterprise. I was losing myself.

> Speed feels powerful, but if it's not built on structure, it breaks.

## Divert 1% of Your Attention

When someone tells you to *slow down* or *think things through*, it can feel like they just don't get it. You're not being reckless; you're being decisive. You're moving with purpose. And early on, that mindset can serve you well.

But here's the thing: that same intensity can also carry hidden risks. If you never take a moment to check your blind spots, you might miss something important, something that won't show up as a problem until it's too late.

You don't need to stop. You don't need to become cautious. If you can take just 1% of your energy, just enough to glance at the edges of your vision, you might save yourself from future pain. That's all it takes: 1% of your attention consistently applied to your foundation.

There's a seductive myth in the start-up world: build fast, break things, figure it out later. But when the foundation is weak, even small cracks can bring everything down. That's why I've become a believer in structure. Not as a constraint but as a launchpad.

## Put It Into Practice: Strengthen Your Foundation, Survive the Storm

### Step 1

Open your journal and list out the core areas of your business or life that feel most fragile right now. Ask yourself the following question:

- Where do I feel the most exposed, uncertain, or overextended?

### Step 2

Looking at your list, identify what got you here.

- Was it a lack of knowledge?
- Was it ignoring warning signs?
- Was it moving too fast to asking the right questions?

For each area, jot down what step you skipped. Awareness here is key.

### Step 3

For the next seven days, do a five-minute *blind spot check-in*. Before diving into your day, pause and ask the following:

- What risks or fragilities do I need to use 1% of my attention to scan for today?
- Is there anything I've been putting off that could turn into a future crisis?

### Step 4

Ask yourself the following:

- What am I currently building my identity around?
- What part of my self-worth depends on success, recognition, or control?

Write down your answers without judgment. Then, imagine what it would look like to separate *who you are* from *what you do*.

### Step 5

Even if you're early in your journey, take a moment to sanity-check your structure.

- Do I have legal clarity around intellectual property, licensing, or partnerships?
- Are my financials clean and reviewed?
- Do I have any agreements (formal or informal) that need revisiting?

### Step 6

Crises often reveal your true allies. Reflect on this:

- Who are the three people I'd call if everything fell apart tomorrow?
- Whom am I currently ignoring who could offer real wisdom or support?

Reach out to one of them this week, not because you're in trouble but because connection is your lifeline.

### Step 7

Speed feels powerful, but if it's not built on structure, it breaks. Ask yourself the following:

- Where in my business or life am I overoptimized for growth but underprepared for challenge?
- What would it look like to build for resilience here?

Choose one area and invest in the *boring* stuff: structure, compliance, documentation, and backup plans.

CHAPTER 4

## New Life Direction

One of the most common misconceptions is the belief that happiness and fulfillment are to be found in something external. But whether you call it God, Tao, or Buddha, that sacred presence does not exist somewhere far away. It resides within you. The spiritual search, then, is not a matter of reaching outward but of returning inward.

At the same time, many people place their faith entirely in the ego, assuming that their identity, intellect, and drive will shield them from life's hardships. They rely on ego to manage their discomforts and stay inside familiar routines, hoping control will protect them from suffering. But when life inevitably delivers a blow that the ego cannot absorb, the illusion begins to unravel.

Spiritual growth is not about mastering techniques or gathering knowledge. It is an inner transformation that occurs when ego slowly gives way to awareness, spirit, and deeper consciousness. This process doesn't add something new; it reveals what has always been there. As the inner fog lifts, you reconnect with your natural energy flow, the quiet current that nourishes love, clarity, creativity, and harmony.

No matter how many books you read or ideas you collect, there is a truth that only life can teach. Wisdom is not secondhand. It cannot be inherited, borrowed, or memorized. It must be lived. It must be discovered in the texture of your own experience.

You don't find truth by climbing higher or running faster. You find it by slowing down. By releasing your grip. By showing up fully for the life you're already living. The sacred isn't out there, somewhere else, waiting to be discovered in some far-off place. It's here. It's now. It lives inside your stress, your heartbreak, your quiet bravery, your burnout, and your longing.

### Put It Into Practice: Shift From Collapse to Inner Rebirth

**Step 1**

Open your journal and reflect on the moments or seasons in your life when you felt like everything was falling apart. Ask yourself the following:

- What version of me was trying to hold everything together?
- What finally gave out?
- What shifted internally as a result?

**Step 2**

For each moment you listed above, reflect on this:

- What lesson or insight was being offered through this unraveling?
- What new direction was life nudging me toward?
- What part of me needed to die so something new could live?

**Step 3**

For the next five days, set aside ten minutes each day to be still. No journaling, no background music, no phone, and no agenda. Simply sit, breathe, and allow yourself to be present.

**Step 4**

Look back over the last few months or years and reflect on what small but meaningful things have helped guide you forward.

- What seemed like a coincidence but felt more significant?
- What direction did those moments point you in?
- Are there themes or symbols that keep reappearing?

**Step 5**

Create a simple two-column journal entry each evening for the next week. In the first column, write down three to five actions you took that day. In the second column, describe the internal state you were in while doing them.

**Step 6**

Each day, ask yourself the following, quietly:

- Am I pushing or flowing right now?
- Where am I forcing something that wants to unfold naturally?
- What would trust look like in this moment?

**Step 7**

Instead of adding something new, choose one spiritual or grounding practice you already know and deepen it. This might be a short prayer in the morning, a breathing rhythm that calms you, or a book that realigns your perspective.

CHAPTER 5

## Embracing a New State of Being

The ego lives in fear, relies on familiarity, and thrives on approval. It is reluctant to experience the unknown, which is the very essence of life.

> Transformation does not send advance notice; it comes disguised as disruption.

There always comes a moment when you realize that continuing to tweak the old is no longer an act of wisdom but an act of delay. The real call is not to fix something broken, but to step into the much harder work of building something entirely new.

So here is the question you must confront: *What are you carrying today that is ready to be reimagined if only you would dare to release the old shape it once took?*

Transformation does not send advance notice. It comes disguised as disruption. It often wears the face of chaos, misunderstanding, and resistance. If you choose to move toward it, you will almost certainly be misunderstood. You will almost certainly be questioned. People will tell you that what you are doing is unnecessary, reckless, or even foolish.

You must move forward anyway. Because the deeper truth, the one that does not fit neatly onto a slide or a slogan, is this: what you are building now, with all your imperfect tools and incomplete understanding, has the power to serve people long after your name is forgotten. But it will only serve if you are willing to let go of what no longer works.

## Put It Into Practice: Step Into a New State of Being

**Step 1**

Open your journal and reflect on the systems, relationships, habits, or beliefs in your life that feel outdated or unstable. Ask yourself the following:

- What am I still trying to maintain that no longer truly serves?
- What am I afraid will happen if I let it collapse?
- What deeper life might be waiting if I stop propping it up?

**Step 2**

Think about one area where you feel stuck, hesitant, or overly cautious. Reflect on this:

- Whose approval am I subconsciously waiting for?
- What action would I take if no one else's opinion mattered?
- What is the cost of continuing to wait?

Write a single, clear sentence naming the step you would take if you trusted yourself fully.

**Step 3**

Each morning this week, before beginning your day, ask yourself the following:

- Am I focused on finding the perfect plan or on showing up fully present?
- What one small step can I take today without having everything figured out?

Write down your intention for the day, not as a goal to achieve, but as a way of being to embody.

**Step 4**

Notice where discomfort, fear, or internal resistance is strongest. Instead of avoiding it, approach it with curiosity.

- What feels most risky or vulnerable about taking the next step?
- What is the deeper invitation hidden within the resistance?

Spend ten minutes journaling about how you might move through it rather than around it.

**Step 5**

Take stock of the people closest to you. Reflect on the following:

- Who in your life helps you move forward into hard things with courage?
- Who encourages delay, safety, or avoidance?
- Who challenges you to expand rather than shrink back?

Write down the names of three people who energize your growth and commit to deepening those connections this month.

**Step 6**

Create one small, repeatable practice that grounds you in courage each day. This could be:

- a short mantra ("I move forward even when it is hard")
- a prayer or moment of silent alignment

- a physical gesture such as placing your hand over your heart before a difficult task

**Step 7**

At the end of each day, reflect briefly on the following:

- Did I meet the day fully, even if imperfectly?
- Where did I act from presence instead of fear?
- What is one thing I want to honor myself for today?

CHAPTER 6

## Egoless Leadership in Action

Just because you have embraced a new state of being doesn't mean the path is smooth. In fact, the path often becomes *steeper*, as the road to building something lasting and truly fulfilling is paved with adversity. The way you respond to that adversity defines everything. Egoless leadership is not about avoiding problems. It's about learning how to engage with them skillfully and purposefully.

When your mission aligns with something larger, something that serves others and contributes to humanity, you start to feel a different kind of momentum. Things happen that you can't explain through logic alone. There's clarity, alignment, and an unmistakable sense that the work matters beyond just profit or recognition.

Being an egoless leader doesn't mean you step aside and don't take responsibility, but it does mean knowing where you are strongest and creating space for others to lead where you are not.

And when you do that well, the entire company begins to breathe differently. It moves faster, thinks more clearly, and grows with purpose.

The ego self tends to see problems in everything, while those who lead without ego understand that every challenge carries within it the possibility for growth and transformation. Leaders who have released the need to control outcomes are able to embrace uncertainty because they recognize it as an essential part of life itself.

I no longer lead from fear or ego. I lead from presence and love. As a result, work no longer feels like a burden. It feels like an act of creation, a form of service, and a joyful responsibility that I am privileged to carry.

Each day, I begin with purpose. I take care of my health and well-being. I speak and act with intention. I empower others. I give my time and energy to what aligns with my values. I say yes with clarity and no without guilt. And in that space of conscious choice, everything becomes possible.

### Put It Into Practice: Step Into Egoless Leadership

**Step 1**

Open your journal and reflect on the areas of your work or relationships where you still feel the need to control, prove, or protect your image. Ask yourself the following:

- Where am I still trying to be the hero instead of building a team?
- What am I afraid will happen if I step back and let someone else lead?
- Where am I more concerned with credit than contribution?

**Step 2**

Take stock of what only you can do. Ask the following:

- What are the three things I do that energize me and create the most value?
- What tasks pull me out of flow or distract me from my deepest work?

Now draw a line. Commit to staying in your zone of genius and create space for others to thrive in theirs.

**Step 3**

Think of one area of your business or team where you need operational support or grounded execution. Then reflect on the following:

- Am I trying to find someone who thinks like me—or someone who complements me?
- Where could I benefit from different strengths, a different pace, or a different style?

Start imagining what it would mean to lead alongside, not from above.

**Step 4**

This week, practice leading without being the loudest. In meetings, try:

- speaking last instead of first
- asking questions instead of giving directions
- noticing whose voice is missing and drawing it out

**Step 5**

Reflect on your team or organization and ask the following:

- Where do people need permission instead of autonomy?

- Where have I created bottlenecks through my own need for oversight?

Choose one area where you can simplify, delegate, or step back—and let someone else own it fully.

**Step 6**

Each morning this week, begin your day with a question:

- What truly matters today?

Write it down before checking your phone or email. Let that answer guide your decisions, your calendar, and your conversations.

**Step 7**

Tell your team about a moment when you got something wrong, changed your mind, or needed help. Let them see your growth, not just your victories.

- What shifted when you let go of ego and led from clarity?
- What did it unlock for the company? For you?

Storytelling builds trust. Vulnerability builds connection. Try it.

**Step 8**

Before making your next major decision, pause and ask the following:

- Will this matter five years from now?
- What future am I shaping through this choice?

Write down what the wisest version of you would advise. Then move from that place.

**Step 9**

Pick one moment each day to practice egoless leadership. It might be:

- a quiet pause before a major meeting
- a breath before replying to conflict
- a walk where you reflect on the question, "What does leadership mean if I am not at the center?"

Let that presence reshape how you show up.

**Step 10**

At the end of each week, reflect not on what you achieved but on how you showed up:

- Did I empower someone else today?
- Did I act from clarity or control?
- Did I make space for joy, stillness, and purpose?

Over time, you will see that real success is not about doing it all yourself. It is about becoming someone who helps everyone rise.

CONCLUSION

## You Can Change Your Life

Life is a process to be experienced, a journey to be explored, and a purpose to be fulfilled. Truths only come from experience, and wisdom is only found through living. And once it becomes real to you, once you stop treating it as something separate and begin to live it in every breath, it changes everything.

Ego, mind, and consciousness are deeply interconnected dimensions of our inner life that together determine how we experience and respond to the world around us. As consciousness grows stronger, the mind becomes more flexible and creative, and your actions become more aligned with truth and love rather than fear and insecurity. When the ego no longer dominates the stage, the full potential of your mind and the quiet power of your consciousness can finally work together in harmony.

This entire journey, *from burnout to bliss*, is not about finding a new identity. It is about shedding the false ones. It is about releasing the need to be anything other than who you already are when all pretense falls away. It is about learning to live from the part of you that is not afraid, not reactive, and not bound by old patterns. It is about becoming quiet enough to hear the wisdom that has been speaking all along.

Trust that everything you need is already within you. You do not need to chase, to earn, or to prove. You only need to return to your breath, to your heart, and to the awareness that has always been here, waiting.

This is the journey. This is the invitation. This is the bliss beyond burnout.



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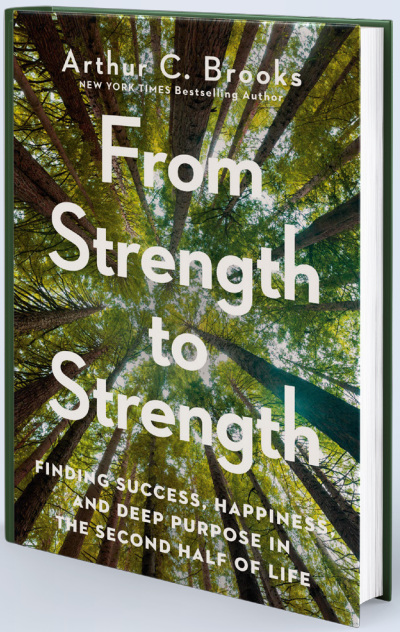
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# From Strength to Strength

Arthur C. Brooks

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## From Strength to Strength

**Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life**

*By Arthur C. Brooks*

Arthur C. Brooks is an American social scientist, the William Henry Bloomberg Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School, and Professor of Management Practice at the Harvard Business School. Prior, he was the president of the American Enterprise Institute for ten years, where he held the Beth and Ravenel Curry Chair in Free Enterprise. He has authored eleven books.

# Finding Purpose and Success As We Age

Many very successful people have gotten that way through hard work and an undying commitment to success. These traits can lead people to the top of their organizations, something many people strive for as they place being special over being happy. As Arthur C. Brooks posits in his book ***From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life***, this ceaseless striving for perfection and excellence can begin to produce diminishing results as people age. This is because, without exception, people's fluid intelligence peaks at some point relatively early on in life, giving younger professionals advantages that no amount of hard work in older adults can match. While this changes the playing field, it does not have to mean the end of productivity and purpose as a person ages if they change their trajectory and start focusing on tasks that utilize their crystallized intelligence, a type of intelligence that increases as a person ages. Brooks sets out to help people make this change with his book.

## Inevitable Decline

Brooks started his journey towards discovering meaning when he encountered a man on a plane who most people would recognize as being incredibly accomplished in life. While he avoids naming the man specifically, he tells the story of how this man told his wife that he would be better off dead. Brooks started to wonder what it was that leads hugely successful people to feel so unfulfilled in the later years of their lives. He discovered what he calls the striver's curse. He defines this as the tendency of people who strive for greatness during their peak years to feel terrified as they face their own physical and cognitive decline. These same people begin to feel unsatisfied with both their current successes and their current relationships.

Most people are familiar with the inevitable decline of professional athletes. Brooks states that it is not just athletes who decline in professional ability as they age; rather it is all of us. In fact, he says, "in practically every high-skill profession, decline sets in sometimes between one's late thirties and early fifties…the more accomplished one is at the peak of one's career, the more pronounced decline seems once it sets in." Unlike professional athletes who generally seem cognizant of their impending and eventual decline, many knowledge workers avoid facing such a

fact and expect a decline in their performance to not happen until they are in their seventies. This does not match with reality as Brooks understands it. He quotes a study by Benjamin Jones that shows that with Nobel Prize winners, the chances of great discoveries increases in a person's twenties and thirties and then "declines dramatically through one's forties, fifties, and sixties." While statistics vary by field, many people peak sometime in their forties. For creative careers, Brooks says a person's peak often occurs twenty years into their career. The reason for this decline is likely due to changes in the brain. The last part of the brain to develop is the prefrontal cortex, and this is also the first part of the brain to decline. It is responsible for multitasking, memory, and executive functioning among other things.

While this decline is inevitable, it does not always psychologically affect people equally. Some people suffer especially when they have lost esteem in the eyes of people who once looked up to them. This can lead people to feel irrelevant and useless. Studies show that people who feel useless are more likely to experience a disability or even to die. People who have been strongly driven by success and achievement are likely to feel the least happy after retirement as "high accomplishment affects people negatively when it finishes." This matches Brooks's "principle of psychoprofessional gravitation" in which he states that "the agony of decline is directly related to prestige previously achieved, and to one's emotional attachment to that prestige." Unfortunately, the glories of past achievements are not likely to provide people with solace once those achievements are gone. While Brooks clearly lays out the inevitability of decline, he does not end here. In his next chapters he goes on to show the areas in which people improve with age and helps lay out a plan for helping his readers embrace what it is they will begin to excel at in later years.

## The Second Curve

Earlier in the book, Brooks provides his readers with a curve of achievement and shows when they are likely to reach their peak. Working harder will not help a person stay at their peak longer. The most fulfilled people are those who are able to let this first peak, the peak of fluid intelligence, go and move on to the next curve, that of crystallized intelligence. While people's skills decline in some areas, their skills in others increase. For example, people's vocabulary increases, they get better at sharing ideas with others, and they get better at synthesizing ideas as they age. While fluid intelligence, "the ability to reason, think flexibly, and solve problems" diminishes, crystallized intelligence, "the ability to use a stock of knowledge learned in the past" grows. Crystallized intelligence continues to grow in a person's later years and may not possibly ever reach a peak. This crystallized intelligence is often what people refer to as wisdom. While some careers naturally lend themselves to crystallized intelligence, Brooks claims that many careers can be altered to better suit the intelligence a person has later in life. Brooks refers to first century BC Cicero who believed that older age is about service, wisdom, and counsel. Brooks believes that while people may not amass as much riches or fame when they center their lives around crystallized intelligence, what they do earn is often more valuable. He urges his reader to get off the fluid intelligence curve in which people will inevitably face age-related decline and jump on to the crystallized intelligence curve which will allow for continued growth and productivity, just in a different way.

## Chipping Away

Brooks goes on to describe the different ways that Eastern and Western people see art. He says that for many Westerners, art is about adding something to a blank canvas. For Eastern people, however, art is more about taking away what does not belong such as when a sculpture chips away at a block of jade to create a sculpture out of what is left behind. In a similar way, Brooks says, people in mid-life and beyond ought to start chipping away at what is unnecessary in life in order to leave behind what makes life meaningful. Many people, he says, pursue "money, power, pleasure, and honor" as well as their cousins, prestige and admiration. He does not believe that these are worthy pursuits after mid-life and that said pursuits will not lead people to what they most desire.

Unfortunately, success cannot make a person happy because, just as with addictive drugs, people need bigger and bigger successes in order to feel a satisfaction that is fleeting. Some choose to work harder as they get older to overcome their inevitable decline, but this leaves them running on a treadmill because they keep chasing after ever bigger successes as their ability to compete is declining. This leads many to dissatisfaction in older age. In order to overcome this, Brooks suggests that a person needs to temper their wants; this will allow them to be more happy with what they already have. Brooks gives multiple strategies for chipping away, and one of them is to begin to focus on smaller things rather than chasing larger things. Watching a flower can bring about a satisfaction that can be relived in the future in a way that an outward success cannot.

Many people, Brooks posits, are afraid of death, and for people who base their identity around their professional achievements, this fear of death can manifest itself in a fear of decline when a person cannot compete on the same level they could at a prior age. People cannot move to their second curve, their crystallized intelligence curve, until they have accepted the decline in their fluid intelligence. Acceptance of this decline is key. One step that Brooks thinks people need to take is to move from acquiring resume skills to acquiring eulogy skills. Resume skills are those that can help a person get ahead professionally but are never really considered by loved ones at the end of one's life. Eulogy skills, on the other hand, are the exact opposite. These are the attributes that people want others to remember about them at the end of their lives, and these are worth developing.

## Relationships

Many people who pursue success single-mindedly let their relationships suffer in the meantime. This can make decline even more painful as they have to experience it alone. People, Brooks states, are inherently connected "biologically, emotionally, psychologically, intellectually, and spiritually." People ignore this at their own peril as the secret to satisfaction after the inevitable cognitive decline resides in the interconnected nature of all

> All relationships require time and effort, but Brooks maintains that they are crucial for satisfaction later in life."

people. Brooks quotes George Vaillant as saying "happiness is love." Those who find themselves at the top of the leadership chain tend to be lonely because the position does not allow for community with those underneath them. This is a true source of suffering for people at the top of the hierarchical chain.

Romantic partnerships and friendships are often the most important relationships in a person's life, but falling in love is not what makes people happy. Rather it is the companionate love that persists after the strong rush of romance wears off that gives people what they truly crave. Romantic partners who see their spouse as their best friend have the best outcomes, but that does not mean that single people cannot achieve happiness and that those who are married cannot expect their romantic partnership to fully sustain them. Friendships are key. True friendships, Brooks claims, are easier for women than for men. All relationships require time and effort, but Brooks maintains that they are crucial for satisfaction later in life.

## Vanaprastha

Brooks explains the Hindu teaching of ashrama which are four distinct periods in a person's life that last approximately 25 years each. The first of these 25 years is spent learning, and in the second stage a person "builds a career, accumulates wealth, and maintains a family." The third stage is the one Brooks is most focused on, and this is called Vanaprastha. In this stage, a person begins to step back from "personal and professional duties, becoming more and more devoted to spirituality and deep wisdom." In short, they start to rely on crystallized intelligence. This requires a readjustment of goals. This stage prepares the way for the final stage where a person is focused on enlightenment. People search for spiritual growth as they age, and if they skip out on vanaprastha, they will suffer in the final stage because they will not be prepared for enlightenment.

One problem Brooks says that strivers experience at this point is that they previously may have shunned faith and have relied on their own abilities instead. This can make a journey back to faith feel humiliating for a person. This return to faith is normal, he says, and people are best off if they do not fight it even though it can cause significant changes in self-concept. To help overcome this discomfort, he urges his readers to realize that some of their earlier beliefs about religion may have been childish and that they leave those behind in search of a faith that is more mature and meaningful. As with relationships, the development of faith takes a consistent dedication of time.

Brooks aims his book at people who have achieved significant professional success in life, but it can be meaningful to a much larger swath of people than just the professional elite. The decline Brooks talks about happens to all people; it is just those who come from positions of great power who might experience its effects more acutely. Brooks ends From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life talking about vulnerability, something that people who have strived for greatness often shun. Brooks relies in part on the work of Brene Brown to explain that vulnerability and admitting one's weaknesses is not something that needs to be shunned because it is often through a person's weaknesses that others become more willing to approach them.

One benefit that people can glean from celebrating weaknesses is that they can finally relax. For a person who has spent their entire life trying to be the best, this can be a scary concept, but it can also be a liberating one. By admitting weakness, a person no longer has to pretend to be what they are not and can grow in true relationship with others. This is a worthy aspiration from Brooks's perspective as it is relationships and faith that make much of a person's later years meaningful.

While Brooks starts out his book stating that a person's professional decline likely comes much earlier than they expect and that the decline is inevitable and cannot be overcome, he maintains that this does not need to be the tragedy that some would see it to be. Rather, it can be an impetus to jump on a different path in life. This path can lead to happiness, contentment, and satisfaction throughout the second half of life. It is a path that can last a person many years as decline is not inevitable, and if it does come, it is much later in life. There is hope for much satisfaction in the later years of life, and Brooks provides his reader with ample ideas to consider as they map out these years of their lives.

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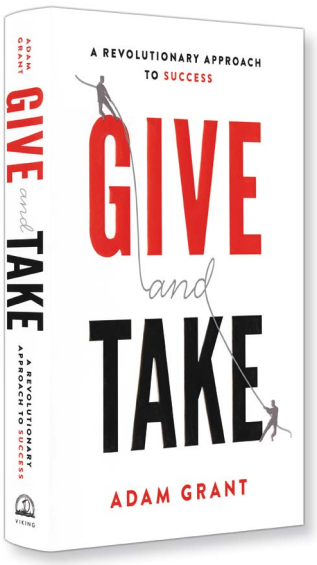
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# Give and Take

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# Give and Take

## A Revolutionary Approach to Success

by Adam Grant

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For generations we have focused on the individual drivers of success: passion, hard work, talent and luck. But in today's dramatically reconfigured world, success is increasingly dependent on how we interact with others. *Give and Take* illuminates what effective networking, collaboration, influence, negotiation and leadership skills have in common.

Adam Grant examines the surprising forces that shape why some people rise to the top of the success ladder, while others sink to the bottom. In professional interactions, it turns out that most people operate as *takers, matchers* or *givers.* Whereas takers strive to get as much as possible from others and matchers aim to trade evenly, givers are the rare breed of people who contribute to others without expecting anything in return.

Using his own groundbreaking studies, Grant reveals that these styles have a dramatic impact on success. Although some givers get exploited and burn out, the rest achieve extraordinary results across a wide range of industries.

Praised by social scientists, business theorists and corporate leaders, *Give and Take* opens up an approach to work, interactions and productivity that is nothing short of revolutionary. This visionary approach to success has the power to transform not just individuals and groups but entire organizations and communities.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What defines a taker, a matcher and a giver.
- How our reciprocity style affects our networking.
- How our reciprocity style influences our ability to collaborate and be creative.
- The power in Powerless Communication.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **GIVE AND TAKE**

**by Adam Grant**

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or www.giveandtake.com.

## Good Returns

### The Dangers and Rewards of Giving More Than You Get

According to conventional wisdom, highly successful people have three things in common: motivation, ability and opportunity. If we want to succeed, we need a combination of hard work, talent and luck. There is a fourth ingredient, one that's critical but often neglected: success depends heavily on how we approach our interactions with other people. Every time we interact with another person at work, we have a choice to make: do we try to claim as much value as we can or contribute value without worrying about what we receive in return?

### Takers and Givers

Over the past three decades, in a series of groundbreaking studies, social scientists have discovered that people differ dramatically in their preferences for reciprocity — their desired mix of taking and giving. The two kinds of people who fall on opposite ends of the spectrum are called *takers* and *givers*.

*Takers* have a distinctive signature: they like to get more than they give. They tilt reciprocity in their own favor, putting their own interests ahead of others' needs. Takers believe that the world is a competitive, dog-eat-dog place. They feel that to succeed, they need to be better than others. To prove their competence, they self-promote and make sure they get plenty of credit for their efforts.

The opposite of a taker is a *giver*. In the workplace, givers are a relatively rare breed. They tilt reciprocity in the other direction, preferring to give more than they get. Whereas takers tend to be self-focused, evaluating what other people can offer them, givers are other-focused, paying more attention to what other people need from them. These preferences aren't about money: givers and takers aren't distinguished by how much they donate to charity or the compensation that they command from their employers. Rather, givers and takers differ in their attitudes and actions toward other people. If you're a taker, you help others strategically when the benefits to you outweigh the personal costs. If you're a giver, you might use a different cost-benefit analysis: you help whenever the benefits to *others* exceed the personal costs. If you're a giver at work, you simply strive to be generous in sharing your time, energy, knowledge, skills, ideas and connections with other people who can benefit from them.

### Matchers

In the workplace, give and take becomes quite complicated. Professionally, few of us act purely like givers or takers, adopting a third style instead. We become *matchers*, striving to preserve an equal balance of giving and getting. Matchers operate on the principle of fairness: when they help others, they protect themselves by seeking reciprocity. If you're a matcher, you believe in tit for tat, and your relationships are governed by even exchanges of favors.

Giving, taking and matching are three fundamental styles of social interaction, but the lines between them aren't hard and fast. You might find that you shift from one reciprocity style to another as you travel across different work roles and relationships.

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Professionally, all three reciprocity styles have their own benefits and drawbacks. But there's one style that proves more costly than the other two. Research demonstrates that givers sink to the bottom of the success ladder. Across a wide range of important occupations, givers are at a disadvantage: they make others better off but sacrifice their own success in the process.

In the world of engineering, the least productive and effective engineers are givers. Going out of their way to help others prevents them from getting their own work done. The same pattern emerges in medical school. The givers go out of their way to help their peers study, sharing what they already know at the expense of filling gaps in their own knowledge, and it gives their peers a leg up at test time.

Across occupations, it appears that givers are just too caring, too trusting and too willing to sacrifice their own interests for the benefit of others. There's even evidence that compared with takers, on average, givers earn 14 percent less money, have twice the risk of becoming victims of crimes, and are judged as 22 percent less powerful and dominant.

### Who's at the Top of the Success Ladder?

So if givers are most likely to land at the bottom of the success ladder, who's at the top — takers or matchers? Neither. *It's the givers again.*

The engineers with the lowest productivity are mostly givers. But when we look at the engineers with the highest productivity, the evidence shows that they're givers too. This pattern holds up across the board. The medical students with the lowest grades have unusually high givers scores, but so do the students with the highest grades. Over the course of medical school, being a giver accounts for 11 percent higher grades.

Givers dominate the bottom and the top of the success ladder. Across occupations, if you examine the link between reciprocity styles and success, the givers are more likely to become champs not only chumps.

It's clear that givers, takers and matchers all can — and do — achieve success. But there's something distinctive that happens when givers succeed: it spreads and cascades. When takers win, there's usually someone else who loses. People tend to envy successful takers and look for ways to knock them down a notch. In contrast, when givers win, people are rooting for them and supporting them, rather than gunning for them. Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect, enhancing the success of people around them.

## The Peacock and the Panda

### How Givers, Takers and Matchers Build Networks

For centuries we have recognized the importance of networking. By developing a strong network, people can gain invaluable access to knowledge, expertise and influence. Extensive research demonstrates that people with rich networks achieve higher performance ratings, get promoted faster, and earn more money. We meet many people throughout our professional and personal lives, and since we all have different knowledge and resources, it makes sense to turn to these people to exchange help, advice and introductions.

### Spotting the Taker in a Giver's Clothes

If you've ever put your guard up when meeting a new colleague, it's probably because you thought you picked up on the scent of self-serving motives. When we see a taker coming, we protect ourselves by closing the door to our networks, withholding our trust and our help. To avoid this, many takers become good fakers, acting generously so that they can waltz into our networks disguised as givers or matchers.

Luckily, research shows that takers leak clues. Well, more precisely, takers *lek* clues. In the animal kingdom, *lekking* refers to a ritual in which males show off their desirability as mates. When it's time to breed, they gather in a common place and take their established positions. They put on extravagant displays to impress and court female audiences. In the CEO kingdom, takers do a dance that looks remarkably similar.

For the taker CEOs, studies showed it was all about me. Big photos glorifying them appeared in their companies' annual reports. Takers typically saw themselves as superior, so they felt entitled to substantial pay discrepancies in their own favor.

Networks have become more transparent, providing us with new windows through which we can view other people's reputations and lekking. Now, it's much harder for takers to get away with being fakers. On the Internet, we can track down reputational information about our contacts by accessing public databases and discovering shared connections. Research suggests that ordinary people can identify takers just by looking at their Facebook profiles. Takers and matchers tend to approach networks by building and extracting value from their connections. They do give in the context of networks, but they tend to give strategically, with an expected personal return that exceeds

or equals their contributions. When takers and matchers network, they tend to focus on who can help them in the near future, and this dictates what, where and how they give.

### Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a powerful norm, but it comes with two downsides. The first downside is that people on the receiving end often feel like they're being manipulated. When favors come with strings attached or implied, the interaction can leave a bad taste, feeling more like a transaction than part of a meaningful relationship. Do you really care about helping me, or are you just trying to create quid pro quo so that you can ask for a favor?

There's a second downside of reciprocity, and it's one to which matchers are especially vulnerable. Matchers tend to build smaller networks than either givers, who seek actively to help a wider range of people, or takers, who often find themselves expanding their networks to compensate for bridges burned in previous transactions. Matchers operate based on the attitude of "I'll do something for you if you'll do something for me." When matchers give with the expectation of receiving, they direct their giving toward people who they think can help them.

As these disadvantages of strict reciprocity accrue over time, they can limit both the quantity and quality of the networks that both takers and matchers develop. Both disadvantages ultimately arise out of a shortsightedness about networks in that takers and matchers make hard-and-fast assumptions about just who will be able to provide the most benefit in exchange. At its core, the giver approach extends a broader reach and in doing so enlarges the range of potential payoffs, even though those payoffs are not the motivating engine.

Givers are able to develop and leverage extraordinarily rich networks. By virtue of the way they interact with other people in their networks, givers create norms that favor adding rather than claiming or trading value, expanding the pie for all involved.

## The Ripple Effect

### Collaboration and the Dynamics of Giving and Taking Credit

When it comes to being successful in any career, creativity can play an integral part. But who turns out to be the most creative and to promote creativity most?

Takers have a knack for generating creative ideas and championing them in the face of opposition. Because they have supreme confidence in their own opinions, they feel free of the shackles of social approval that constrict the imaginations of many people.

So is the secret to creativity to be a taker? Not so fast. Givers can be every bit as creative as takers. By studying habits in collaboration, we can gain a rich appreciation of how givers work in ways that contribute to their own success — and the success of those around them.

In Western culture, we have a tendency to privilege the lone genius who generates ideas that enthrall us or change our world. According to research by a trio of Stanford psychologists, Americans see independence as a symbol of strength, viewing interdependence as a sign of weakness. This is particularly true of takers, who tend to see themselves as superior to and separate from others. If they depend too much on others, takers believe, they'll be vulnerable to being outdone.

### Expedition Behavior

Givers reject the notion that interdependence is weak. Givers are more likely to see interdependence as a source of strength, a way to harness the skills of multiple people for a greater good.

A defining feature of how givers collaborate is that they take on the tasks that are in the group's best interest, not necessarily their own personal interests. This makes their groups better off: studies show that on average, from sales teams to paper mill crews to restaurants, the more giving group members do, the higher the quantity and quality of their groups' products and services. This is referred to as *expedition behavior*.

This term was coined by the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), which has provided wilderness education to thousands of people, including crews of NASA astronauts. This behavior involves putting the group's goals and mission first and showing the same amount of concern for others as you do for yourself.

When givers put a group's interests ahead of their own, they signal that their primary goal is to benefit the group. As a result, givers earn the respect of their collaborators.

### Responsibility Bias

When partners overestimate their own contributions, it is known as the *responsibility bias*. It's a mistake to which takers are especially vulnerable. One of the factors at play is that we have more access to information about our own contributions than the contributions of others. We see all of our own efforts, but we only witness a subset of

our partners' efforts. When we think about who deserves the credit, we have more knowledge of our own contributions. This responsibility bias is a major source of failed collaborations. Professional relationships disintegrate when entrepreneurs, inventors and executives feel that their partners are not giving them the credit they deserve or doing their fair share.

## Finding the Diamond in the Rough

### The Fact and Fiction

Spotting and cultivating talent are essential skills in just about every industry; it's difficult to overstate the value of surrounding ourselves with stars. As with networking and collaboration, when it comes to discovering the potential in others, reciprocity styles shape our approaches and effectiveness.

Evidence shows that leaders' beliefs can catalyze self-fulfilling prophecies in many settings. Management researcher Brian McNatt conducted an exhaustive analysis of 17 different studies with nearly 3,000 employees in a wide range of work organizations, from banking to retail sales to manufacturing. Overall, when managers were randomly assigned to see employees as *bloomers* (those who show the potential for intellectual blooming or "spurting"), employees bloomed. McNatt concludes that these interventions "can have a fairly large effect on performance." He encourages managers to "recognize the possible power and influence in (a) having a genuine interest and belief in the potential of their employees…and (b) engaging in actions that support others and communicate that belief… increasing others' motivation and effort and helping them achieve that potential."

Some managers and teachers have already internalized this message. They see people as bloomers naturally, without ever being told. This is rarely the case for takers, who tend to place little trust in other people. Because they assume that most people are takers, they hold relatively low expectations for the potential of their peers and subordinates. Research shows that takers harbor doubts about others' intentions, so they monitor vigilantly for information that others might harm them, treating others with suspicion and distrust. These low expectations trigger a vicious cycle, constraining the development and motivation of others. Even when takers are impressed by another person's capabilities or motivation, they're more likely to see this person as a threat, which means they're less willing to support and develop him or her. As a result, takers frequently fail to engage in the types of supportive behaviors that are conducive to the confidence and development of their peers and subordinates.

Matchers are better equipped to inspire self-fulfilling prophecies. Because they value reciprocity, when a peer or subordinate demonstrates high potential, matchers respond in kind, going out of their way to support, encourage and develop their promising colleagues and direct reports. But the matcher's mistake lies in waiting for signs of high potential. Since matchers tend to play it safe, they often wait to offer support until they've seen evidence of promise. Consequently, they miss out on opportunities to develop people who don't show a spark of talent or high potential at first.

Givers don't wait for signs of potential. Because they tend to be trusting and optimistic about other people's intentions, in their roles as leaders, managers and mentors, givers are inclined to see the potential in everyone. By default, givers start by viewing people as bloomers…they simply start by seeing everyone as talented and try to bring out the best in them. They see potential where others don't, which sets in motion a series of self-fulfilling prophecies. In roles as leaders and mentors, givers resist the temptation to search for talent first. By recognizing that anyone can be a bloomer, givers focus their attention on motivation.

## The Power of Powerless Communication

### How to Be Modest and Influence People

Research suggests that there are two fundamental paths to influence: dominance and prestige. When we establish dominance, we gain influence because others see us as strong, powerful and authoritative. When we earn prestige, we become influential because others respect and admire us.

These two paths to influence are closely tied to our reciprocity styles. Takers are attracted to and excel in gaining dominance. In an effort to claim as much value as possible, they strive to be superior to others. To establish dominance, takers specialize in *powerful communication*: they speak forcefully, raise their voices to assert their authority, express certainty to project confidence, promote their accomplishments, and sell with conviction and pride. They display strength by spreading their arms in dominant poses, raising their eyebrows in challenge, commanding as much physical space as possible, and conveying anger and issuing threats when necessary. In the quest for influence, takers set the tone and control the conversation by sending powerful verbal and nonverbal

signals. As a result, takers tend to be much more effective than givers in gaining dominance. But is that the most sustainable path to influence?

The opposite of a taker's powerful communication style is called *powerless communication*. Powerless communicators tend to speak less assertively, expressing plenty of doubt and relying heavily on advice from others. They talk in ways that signal vulnerability, revealing their weaknesses and making use of disclaimers, hedges and hesitations. By using powerless communication, surely people wind up at a disadvantage when it comes to influence. Well, not quite.

It turns out that powerful communication doesn't always serve us well, and givers instinctively adopt a powerless communication style that proves surprisingly effective in building prestige. Givers develop prestige in four domains of influence: presenting, selling, persuading and negotiating. Because they value the perspectives and interests of others, givers are more inclined toward asking questions than offering answers, talking tentatively than boldly, admitting their weaknesses than displaying their strengths, and seeking advice than imposing their views on others.

### Presenting: The Value of Vulnerability

Expressing vulnerability is only effective if the audience receives other signals establishing the speaker's competence. In a classic experiment led by the psychologist Elliot Aronson, students listened to one of four tapes of a candidate auditioning for a Quiz Bowl team. Half of the time, the candidate was an expert, getting 92 percent of questions right. The other half of the time, the candidate had only average knowledge, getting 30 percent right.

As expected, audiences favored the expert. But an interesting wrinkle emerged when the tape included a clumsy behavior by the candidate. Dishes crashed, and the candidate said, "Oh, my goodness — I've spilled coffee all over my new suit."

When the average candidate was clumsy, audiences liked him even less. But when the expert was clumsy, audiences liked him even more. Psychologists call this the *pratfall effect*. Spilling a cup of coffee hurt the image of the average candidate; it was just another reason for the audience to dislike him. But the same blunder helped the expert appear human and approachable — instead of superior and distant.

### Persuading: The Technique of Tentative Talk

Alison Fragale, a professor at the University of North Carolina, finds that speech styles send signals about who's a giver and who's a taker. Takers tend to use powerful speech: they're assertive and direct. Givers tend to use more powerless speech, taking with tentative markers like these:

- Hesitations: "well," "um," "uh," "you know"
- Hedges: "kinda," "sorta," "maybe," "probably," "I think"
- Disclaimers: "this may be a bad idea, but"
- Tag questions: "that's interesting, isn't it?" or "that's a good idea, right?"
- Intensifiers: "really," "very," "quite"

These markers send a clear message to the audience: the speaker lacks confidence and authority. Lacking confidence is a bad thing, right?

When givers use powerless speech, they show us that they have our best interests at heart. But there's one role in which people tend to avoid talking tentatively: leadership. A marketing manager named Barton Hill found out why. He was invited to interview for a major promotion to a higher-level position where he would lead multiple business units. The interviewer opened with a softball question: tell us about your successes. Hill started talking about his team's accomplishments, using words like "we" and "us." Although Hill was the front-runner for the position, he didn't get it. The interviewer told him he didn't sound like a leader. The interviewer expected Hill to speak more assertively.

By speaking with greater speed, volume, assertiveness and certainty, takers convince us that they know what they're talking about — even when they actually lack competence. By failing to use powerful speech in his interview, Hill failed to create the impression of dominance. Yet the same powerless communication that cost him the promotion ended up earning prestige, making his teams successful.

## The Art of Motivation Maintenance

### Why Some Givers Burn Out but Others Are on Fire

Givers climb to the top of the success ladder through the unique ways that they build networks, collaborate, communicate, influence and help others achieve their potential. But givers are also more likely to end up at the bottom of the success ladder. Success involves more than just capitalizing on the strengths of giving; it also requires avoiding the pitfalls. If people give too much time, they end up making sacrifices for their collaborators and network ties at the expense of their own energy. If people give away too much credit and engage in too much powerless communication, it's all too easy for them to become pushovers and doormats, failing to advance their

own interests. The consequence: givers end up exhausted and unproductive.

There are two types of givers, and they have dramatically different success rates. *Selfless* givers are people with high other-interest and low self-interest. They give their time and energy without regard for their own needs, and they pay a price for it. Selfless giving is a form of pathological altruism, which is defined by researcher Barbara Oakley as "an unhealthy focus on others to the detriment of one's own needs," such that in the process of trying to help others, givers end up harming themselves.

Most people assume that self-interest and other-interest are opposite ends of one continuum. Selfless giving, in the absence of self-preservation instincts, easily becomes overwhelming. Being *otherish* means being willing to give more than you receive but still keeping your own interests in sight, using them as a guide for choosing when, where, how and to whom you give. Instead of seeing self-interest and other-interest as competing, successful people have found ways to integrate them so that they could do well by doing good. When concern for others is coupled with a healthy dose of concern for the self, givers are less prone to burning out and getting burned — and they're better positioned to flourish.

## Chump Change

### Overcoming the Doormat Effect

Givers tend to be humble and uncomfortable asserting themselves directly. Studies in controlled settings have shown that in zero-sum situations, givers frequently shy away from advocating for their own interests: when negotiating their salaries, they make more modest requests than matchers and takers and end up accepting less favorable outcomes. This reluctance to be assertive is especially likely to afflict agreeable givers, who pay a price in their pocketbooks.

For a number of years, researchers have known that successful negotiators tend to operate in an otherish fashion. In a comprehensive analysis of 28 different studies led by Dutch psychologist Carsten De Dreu, the best negotiators weren't takers or selfless givers.

The takers focused on claiming value: they saw negotiations as zero-sum, win-lose contests and didn't trust their opponents, so they bargained aggressively, overlooking opportunities to create value through developing an understanding of their counterparts' interests.

The selfless givers made too many concessions, benefiting their counterparts at a personal cost.

### The Best Negotiators

The most effective negotiators were otherish: they reported high concern for their own interests and high concern for their counterparts' interests. By looking for opportunities to benefit others and themselves, otherish givers are able to think in more complex ways and identify win-win solutions that both takers and selfless givers miss. Instead of just giving away value like selfless givers, otherish givers create value first. By the time they give slices of pie away, the entire pie is big enough that there's plenty left to claim for themselves: they can give more *and* take more.

Instead of assuming that they're doomed to become doormats, successful givers recognize that their everyday choices shape the results they achieve in competitive, confrontational situations. The dangers lie less in giving itself and more in the rigidity of sticking with a single reciprocity style across all interactions and relationships.

Although many successful givers start from the default of trusting others' intentions, they're also careful to scan their environments to screen for potential takers, always ready to shift from feeling a taker's emotions to analyzing a taker's thoughts, and flex from giving unconditionally to a more measured approach of generous tit for tat. And when they feel inclined to back down, successful givers are prepared to draw reserves of assertiveness from their commitments to the people who matter to them.

## The Scrooge Shift

Craig Newmark's "Craigslist" flourished by appealing to our basic matcher instincts. It facilitates transactions in which buyers and sellers can agree on a fair price, exchanging goods and services for what they're worth. Fundamentally, Craigslist is about trading value in direct exchanges between people, creating a matcher's preferred even balance of give and take. "We're not altruistic," Newmark writes. "From one perspective, we're like a flea market."

### Freecycle

Could a system like this function based entirely on giving instead of matching? In 2003, Ohio native Deron Beal decided to find out. Following the lead from Craigslist, Beal was aiming to create Internet-based local communities of exchange for anyone to access, connecting people who wanted goods with people who were ready to part with them. Beal set an unusual ground rule: no currency or trading allowed. The network was called Freecycle, and all goods had to be given away for free.

Although Freecycle grew in part by attracting people who already leaned strongly in the giver direction, it accomplished something much more impressive. Somehow, Freecycle managed to encourage matchers and takers to act like givers.

Interestingly, people often join Freecycle to take, not give. "People usually hear about Freecycle as a way to get free stuff. Your average person will join thinking, 'I can get something for nothing,'" Beal says. "But a paradigm shift kicks in. We had a big wave of new parents who needed help in hard times. They received strollers, car seats, cribs and high chairs. Later, instead of selling them on Craigslist, they started giving them away."

What drives people to join a group with the intention of taking, but then end up giving? The answer opens up another way that givers avoid the bottom of the success ladder. When dealing with individuals, it's sensible for givers to protect themselves by engaging in sincerity screening and acting primarily like matchers in exchanges with takers. But in group settings, there's a different way for givers to make sure that they're not being exploited: get everyone in the group to act more like givers. If a group develops a norm of giving, members will uphold the norm and give, even if they're more inclined to be takers or matchers elsewhere. This reduces the risks of giving: when everyone contributes, the pie is larger, and givers are no longer stuck contributing far more than they get.

## Out of the Shadows

Although many of us hold strong giver values, we're often reluctant to express them at work. But the growth of teamwork, service jobs and social media has opened up new opportunities for givers to develop relationships and reputations that accelerate and amplify their success.

In the mind of a giver, the definition of success itself takes on a distinctive meaning. Whereas takers view success as attaining results that are superior to others' and matchers see success in terms of balancing individual accomplishments with fairness to others, givers are inclined to characterize success as individual achievements that have a positive impact on others.

Taking this definition of success seriously might require dramatic changes in the way that organizations hire, evaluate, reward and promote people. It would mean paying attention not only to the productivity of individual people but also to the ripple effects of this productivity on others. If we broadened our image of success to include contributions to others along with individual accomplishments, people might be motivated to tilt their professional reciprocity styles toward giving.

There's a fine line between giving and clever matching, and this line blurs depending on whether we define reciprocity styles by the actions themselves, the motives behind them or some combination of the two. It's a deep philosophical question, and it's easy to identify with a range of views on how strategic matchers should be evaluated.

On the one hand, even if the motives are mixed, helping behaviors often add value to others, increasing the total amount of giving in a social system. On the other hand, our behaviors leak traces of our motives. If recipients and witnesses of our giving begin to question whether the motives are self-serving, they're less likely to respond with gratitude or elevation. When strategic matchers engage in disingenuous efforts to help others primarily for personal gain, fellow matchers may withhold help, spread negative reputational information, or find other ways to impose a taker tax.

To avoid these consequences, would-be matchers may be best served by giving in ways that they find enjoyable, to recipients whose well-being matters to them. That way, even if they don't reap direct or karmic rewards, matchers will be operating in a giver's mindset, leading their motives to appear — and become — more pure. Ultimately, by repeatedly making the choice to act in the interest of others, strategic matchers may find themselves developing giver identities.

We spend the majority of our waking hours at work. This means that what we do at work becomes a fundamental part of who we are. If we reserve giver values for our personal lives, what will be missing in our professional lives? By shifting ever so slightly in the giver direction, we might find our waking hours marked by greater success, richer meaning and more lasting impact.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Give and Take,* you'll also like:

1. ***The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg.*** Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed.

2. ***The No Asshole Rule by Robert I. Sutton.*** Sutton provides readers with practical ideas for what they can do about a poisonous work environment and how they can survive the people who inhabit it.

3. ***Drive by Daniel H. Pink.*** Pink examines the three elements of true motivation — autonomy, mastery, and purpose — and offers smart and surprising techniques for putting these into action.

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# Glow

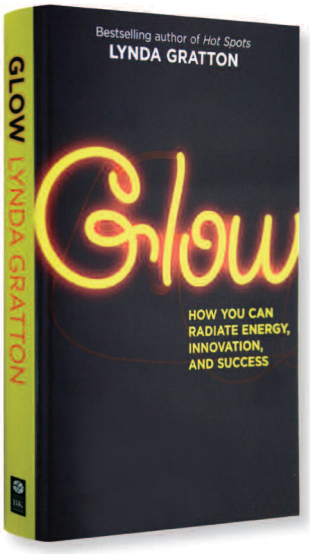
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Career & Self Development: Change & Advancement

# Glow

## How You Can Radiate Energy, Innovation, and Success




by Lynda Gratton

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You know them at first sight: teammates or colleagues, direct reports or bosses who radiate enthusiasm, positive energy and inspiration. Even in difficult circumstances they *glow* with an attitude that inspires others, fosters a great working experience for everyone and creates empowering relationships. Would you like to learn how to *glow*? Lynda Gratton shows you how in *Glow*.

Drawing on years of original research, Gratton identifies three principles that people who *glow* live by and three actions for putting each principle into practice.

To master the three distinct areas of their working life, people who *glow* are adept at understanding what they have to do as individuals, what they have to do as members of a team, and how to find their place in a company that encourages them to *glow*.

Gratton's aim is to engage and inspire you by focusing your attention on the key issues through a simple diagnostic profile. This will help you understand where you stand with regard to your own attitudes and competencies, your team and your organization.

*Glow* is an invitation to become more energized and innovative at work, and to radiate positive energy that will also excite and ignite others.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- You *glow* when you radiate positive energy and that fosters a great working experience for yourself and others.
- How to create Hot Spots — the times, places, and occasions when whole groups of people become highly energized and innovative.
- Why *glowing* depends on the three principles of a cooperative mindset, networking and igniting latent energy.
- How to tap into the three resources of *glowing*.
- How being able to cooperate with others is crucial to your capacity to *glow*.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **GLOW**

**by Lynda Gratton**

**The author:** Lynda Gratton is professor of management practice at the London Business School. She was in the top 20 of the most recent *Times* (London) "Thinkers 50" list of leading management scholars and was chosen by the *Financial Times* as the business thinker most likely to "change how you view the world and live your life." She is the author of six books, including *Hot Spots, Living Strategy* and *The Democratic Enterprise*.

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com.

## The Secrets of Glowing

In an ever-changing world, how can you be sure that you will find and pursue great opportunities? How can you relentlessly create value in your work and for yourself? How will you stay ahead of the curve?

Fall short in any way and globalization gobbles you up. Around the world, someone, somewhere has already put in a bid to do it faster, quicker and cheaper. To stay ahead of the curve, you have to work with more energy, more enthusiasm and, most important of all, more innovation. It is this combination that will bring you long-term success in this globalized, technology-enabled world.

But how do you do this without becoming yet another victim of an "extreme job" — working harder and harder just to keep up, jeopardizing your health, alienating your family and friends, and moving further and further away from your true self?

### When You Glow

People who manage to stay ahead of the curve, who are energized, innovative and successful — and remain healthy and happy — seem to *glow*. You can see it in their faces and hear it in their voices.

You *glow* when you radiate positive energy that fosters a great working experience for yourself, excites and ignites others, and through your inspiration and innovation creates superior value and success in your work.

When you radiate this positive energy, great things happen. When you *glow*, you are able to create or find and flourish in "Hot Spots." Hot Spots are times, places and occasions when whole groups or a community of people become highly energized and innovative.

So the challenge is to learn how to *glow* and then to create, find and flourish in Hot Spots.

There are examples every day of people taking what they sincerely believe to be the best course of action to create value for themselves and others, yet instead of *glowing* and creating or finding a Hot Spot, they are inadvertently behaving in ways and creating situations that reduce their value and leave them devoid of energy and unattractive to others.

### The Three Principles That Are the Foundation of Glowing

People who *glow* live life according to three principles that form the foundation for their daily behavior. These principles are brought to life every day by nine actions. Together these principles and actions create a frame for their work life that stokes their enthusiasm and enables them to *glow*.

When you *glow*, you design your working life around three principles:

**The First Principle: A Cooperative Mindset —** You have a warm and positive attitude toward others and choose to work where cooperation flourishes. You have developed conversational and relationship skills and habits.

**The Second Principle: Jumping Across Worlds —** You have jumped across into other worlds and have learned to appreciate and learn from people who are very different from you.

**The Third Principle: Igniting Latent Energy —** You are able to ignite your own energy and the energy of those around you by discovering sources of ignition.

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### The Nine Actions That Will Make You Glow Every Day

You live the principles on a daily basis through nine actions; three in support of each principle:

Action 1. You practice the daily habits of cooperation.

Action 2. You master the art of great conversation.

Action 3. You act on the "smell of the place."

Action 4. You know how to increase the value of your network.

Action 5. You are skilled at escaping the boundaries that constrain you.

Action 6. You find and move to boundaryless places.

Action 7. You ask questions that spark energy.

Action 8. You create visions that compel.

Action 9. You craft meaningful and exciting work.

## Your Glow Resources

You want to make *glowing* a daily experience in your working life rather than something that happens occasionally. You do this by working on the three principles and developing your skills and competencies.

You have three potential resources available to you to make *glowing* a daily experience:

- Your first resource is yourself. You have within you the power to develop the personal skills and capabilities that are the foundation for a life of *glowing*.
- Your second resource is your team, your immediate colleagues. They can play a key role in supporting and enabling you and other team members to practice the nine actions that will ensure that you *glow*.
- Your third resource is the community, business, or organization in which you currently work. Even if you work completely on your own, you are a member of a wider community of people who can provide a frame for you to develop these skills and habits.

### You Can Glow — It's You That Makes It Happen

As you increase your capability to *glow*, keep these points in mind:

- It's not about your personality — anyone who takes the nine actions can learn to *glow*.
- What are crucial are the everyday actions you take and habits you develop.
- Forget your pet theories and instead focus on the three principles.
- Work on all three principles, rather than concentrating on the one or two that are easiest for you.
- Find a few supportive people to engage with who can also profile themselves, and remember to listen and not become too defensive with one another.
- Patience is a myth. Take action now!

### An Introduction to the Glow Profile

As you progress through the three principles, you and your colleagues have the opportunity to complete the *Glow* Profile for each of the principles in turn.

The concentric circles of the *Glow* Profile (see Figure 3.2) are divided into three segments, representing the three principles (cooperative mindset, jumping across worlds and igniting latent energy). The inner circle corresponds to you and your work; the middle circle represents your immediate colleagues or team; and the outer circle your wider community, business or network within which you work.

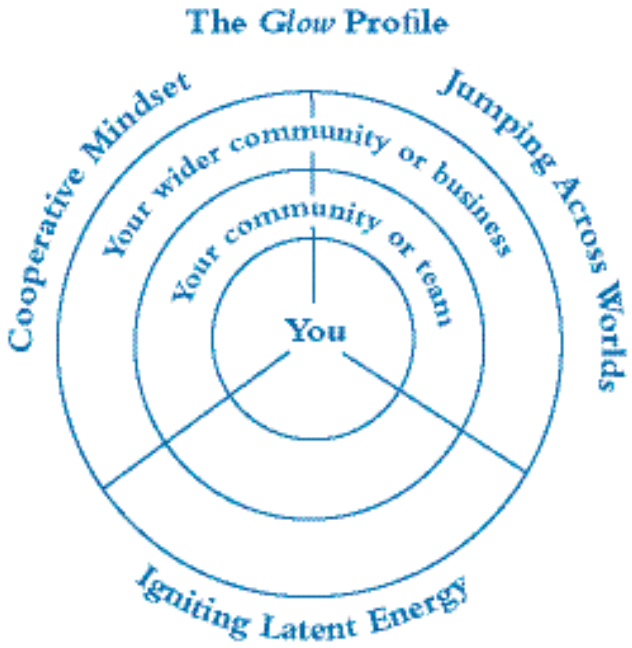



**Figure 3.2 Your Cooperative Profile**

## The First Principle: A Cooperative Mindset

You have said a resounding yes to staying ahead of the curve, to being able to create and flourish in high-energy places. You want a life where you *glow*, a working life of exhilaration, energy and insight. You have also said a resounding no to a life dominated by the "Big

Freeze" of political intrigue and gut-churning politics. Being able to cooperate with others is crucial to your capacity to *glow*.

## The Glow Profile

A *Glow* Profile is used to determine where you stand with regard to your own attitudes and skills, your team's attitudes and skills and the extent to which your company or community encourages you to be cooperative. There are five profile types.

1. Profile Type A — You, the team you work with and your wider community are highly cooperative, which creates a marvelous opportunity for you to *glow*.

2. Profile Type B — You, your team and the wider community are skilled in some aspects of cooperation, which suggests that developing the daily habits of cooperation will be crucial, while learning the art of conversation will also be useful.

3. Profile Type C — You are fairly cooperative but find yourself in a Big Freeze of limited cooperation, which suggests that you need to first concentrate on building your own cooperative skills, but then think seriously about acting on the "smell of the place."

4. Profile Type D — You are not cooperative but find yourself surrounded by a relatively cooperative team and community, which presents a terrific opportunity for you to learn from others. Developing the daily habits of cooperation could make a real difference.

5. Profile Type E — Neither you, your team nor the larger community values cooperation, which gives you and your team a great opportunity to think about the effect this is having and work together on developing the daily habits of cooperation, learning the art of conversation and acting on the "smell of the place."

## Action 1: Developing the Daily Habits of Cooperation

Habits are actions you take regularly that become part of who you are and define the person you have become. Adopting some of these habits requires you to develop a skill or an aptitude, while adopting others does not.

If you want to *glow*, you need to build into your daily behavior a set of habits that will enable you to cooperate with others with ease.

Here are five daily habits that are crucial to developing this aspect of yourself:

1. **The habit of sharing valuable information with others.** One of the most powerful habits of cooperation you can develop is "gifting": willingly sharing valuable information with other people.
2. **The habit of acting with discretion.** If you want to be cooperative, you have to learn to trust people and they have to learn to trust you.
3. **The habit of being open about yourself.** Cooperation flourishes when you have great conversations. For these to take place, you need to be open about your emotions and prepared to trust in an open and authentic way.
4. **The habit of using the language of cooperation.** You create stronger cooperation by making sure you use the word *we* rather than *I* when discussing business matters and by consciously using language that includes others to encourage *cooperation* among your *team of colleagues*.
5. **The habit of making and keeping commitments.** By making a commitment, you agree to a course of action you will take. Without commitments, cooperation simply becomes mere window dressing — a charade that you are playing.

Of course these habits come from within — they are about you. However, there are ways in which you can increase their potency. Since you develop habits by watching others, you need to be thoughtful about whom you have around you. Spend too much time with highly competitive people and you will abandon your cooperative habits.

The people who become your role models and mentors can have a profound impact on how your habits develop, so choose carefully. The most important influence on the cooperative habits of individuals or teams is how they see other people behaving. When people mentor you, they take a personal interest in you, they support your development and it is often from them you learn your habits. So choose your mentors with great care. This will mean at times steering clear of the person who looks most successful and instead choosing a mentor for his or her cooperative capabilities.

## Action 2: Mastering the Art of Great Conversation

People who *glow* know the art of great conversation and use conversation as the bedrock of their cooperation with others. They are able to bring emotional authenticity and analytical rigor to their conversations.

When you *glow*, one thing that is striking is the way you talk with other people. Sure, some of your conversations will be of little consequence, but many will be considerably livelier — thought-provoking, fascinating and purposeful.

Ask yourself this question: In what way do I most

typically converse, and what would it take to make my conversations more rigorous and authentic?

There are four ways to have a conversation:

***Dehydrated Talk.*** In these conversations, you bring neither the sharpness of analytical rigor nor the warmth of emotional authenticity. These conversations contain no doubt, no curiosity and no puzzling. Dehydrated talk is not the foundation for cooperation and it certainly won't help you *glow*.

***Disciplined Debate.*** These are good conversations in which analytical rigor is strong. In a disciplined debate, what you are talking about is based on fact rather than lazy thinking or prejudice. Disciplined debate can be a crucial igniter of a Hot Spot because it creates a context in which people feel prepared and able to ask the "big questions" that can engage and excite others and act as a focus for latent energy to emerge.

***Intimate Exchange.*** Emotional conversations flourish in your private life as you build trusting relationships with family and friends. You are able to talk about your emotions, explain your feelings to others and try to understand where they are coming from. This creates the basis for appreciating others. If you are to create cooperation as a foundation for *glowing* in your work life, you need the same level of empathy, mutual understanding and trust at work.

***Creative Dialogue.*** Creative dialogue results when analytical rationality and emotional authenticity are brought together to create important and meaningful conversations. Creative dialogue is crucial to your becoming energized and innovative. To have creative dialogue, you want to converse with people who are interesting and exciting and who are able to converse on broad and wide topics.

### Action 3: Acting on the 'Smell of the Place'

Sometimes you have no choice: If you want to *glow*, you may have to be prepared to move, to put yourself in a different place with different people. To do that you have to become skilled at understanding and acting on the "smell of the place." The smell of the place consists of all those subtle clues that tell you intuitively and rationally what a place is like before you join. Being aware of the smell of the place will help you find teams, communities and companies that will help you *glow* and avoid those that won't. *glowing* is a lot about you, but it is also about the company you keep.

These are the questions you should answer before you decide to join a team, community or company:

1. Is the language of the place cooperative or competitive?
2. How well does the executive team work together?
3. Will I be treated in a way that fosters cooperation?

## The Warmth of Cooperation

**When Cooperation Flourishes: Jill's Story**

I am a very driven person. From an early age I knew what I wanted to be and have always worked really hard to get there. I love the process of thinking about something and then bringing it to fruition. For me, the way I judge myself is the quality of my work — I have really high standards for myself and others.

When I left design college, I joined a small design team. At first I loved the work, really relishing working on my own and bringing my ideas to fruition. Then I began to feel more and more uncomfortable. I found I was not sleeping very well at night and often felt a pit of anxiety in my stomach.

At college we worked pretty much on our own, and I was used to doing my own thing. Here in the design studio I continued to work like this — getting in early in the morning, working on my project and leaving late at night. I felt increasingly exhausted and isolated.

The real shock came when, at the end of six months' work on a project, it came time to show the work to the clients. I was really pleased with mine. I had used all my skills and worked incredibly hard. Although I had done the very best I could, there were two areas of the design that I had completely failed to understand. I had not really come to grips with how the product I'd designed could be manufactured, and the prototype I had created was going to be too costly to mass market. It began to dawn on me that because I had worked so hard on my own, I had not had the benefit of my colleagues' insights and knowledge of the manufacturing process and of costing feasibility.

Looking back, that client presentation was a life-changing event for me. I began to realize that if I was going to excel in the way I wanted to, I had to learn to cooperate with others in a more skillful and thoughtful way. I had to make cooperation my day-to-day habit, and I had to get better at listening to and conversing with others.

## The Second Principle: Jumping Across Worlds

When your relationships with other people are built on cooperation, trust and appreciation, you have the

tantalizing possibility of undertaking extraordinary endeavors and *glowing*. However, it's not just your relationships with your closest colleagues that are so crucial. Think more broadly of the vast cloud of acquaintances, friends, and friends of friends who surround you.

Often when you work with other people who are very similar to you, you go through a process of homogenization whereby you become more and more similar and end up with mediocre and average ideas. However, when you jump across worlds, each person can contribute something unique. It is this combination of "uniquenesses" that is the magic of Hot Spots and what lets you *glow*.

Each of us has our own unique way of looking at the world. We have our own way of seeing situations and our own way of interpreting what we see; we can then generate our own unique solutions to problems (this has been termed *heuristics*); and we have our own unique way of predicting what we believe will happen.

If you think about your life and your work, you will see that, over time, you have created a way of looking at your world and deciding to act in it. These ways of looking — or heuristics — are developed through your past experiences. So your heuristics are influenced by such factors as whether your gender, your culture and the country you have grown up in, your religious beliefs and your education. They are also influenced by your life experiences and what you have learned from others. Your personally developed rules and ways of acting become the rules you use to define your world. The more cognitively diverse the collection of heuristics, the better able you and others are to create Hot Spots of innovation and energy and to *glow*.

## Connecting Different Worlds

Typically there are two events that can really energize a network and put it on the path to becoming a Hot Spot.

One possibility is that the variety within the network is expanded when someone with a different perspective joins. This variety increases the number of heuristics and begins the buzz.

The other important event that will transform the warm and trusting relationship to something much more dynamic and exciting is that the latent energy between group members is ignited.

It is astonishing to watch as the Hot Spot gains velocity and energy and more people are interested in getting involved. Some of the people who become involved are already associated. Others are acquaintances or even strangers, people who have been asked to join the job, project or task force, or have decided to do so of their own volition.

It is this combination of founding members, heritage relationships, acquaintances and relative strangers that bring this wonderful mix of insights, experience and ideas that fuel the Hot Spot and create a great context for people to *glow*.

## Action 4: Increasing the Value of Your Networks

People who *glow* are skilled at increasing the value of their networks and at balancing their networks between acquaintances and close friends who are similar to them with more extensive networks of people who are very different from them. They know that sometimes the most interesting and most innovative ideas come from people they barely know and who are very different from them.

The most valuable strategy you can adopt to increase the value of your networks is to both deepen your relationships and broaden your networks. You need strong, trusting and highly cooperative friendships and you need links with a wide variety of associates.

Remember that similarities and differences can come in all sorts of guises. Your friends or acquaintances could be of the same gender, be around your age, share a religion or culture, come from a similar background or have a similar profession. However, there are similarities and differences that are much deeper and less obvious yet still very important — for example, points of view, values or habits.

## Action 5: Jumping Out of the Boundaries That Constrain You

People who *glow* have broad and extensive networks and are skilled at jumping out of the boundaries that constrain them. They allow for serendipity in their lives and are prepared to meet new people and take the untrodden path to broaden their experiences.

It is wise to become skilled at escaping the boundaries that constrain you by building more valuable communities of practice and being prepared to wander away from your natural networks.

As you wander outside your normal networks, you must be interested and inquisitive about what you see and positive and open about the people you meet. To do this you need to allow for serendipity in your life by:

- Setting aside "golden moments" — leaving time for yourself
- Taking time out

- Taking mini-sabbaticals
- Creating broader networks
- Showing interest in and appreciating others
- Developing a fluid identity

### Action 6: Finding and Moving to Boundaryless Places

People who *glow* are adept at finding and moving to boundaryless places. They know how to escape from the "Fortress" and connect with teams and places that encourage them to grow by creating opportunities to jump across worlds.

The ability to *glow* is within you, of course, but it is also dependent on the context you are in — the friends and networks you have and the community, organization or business you are working in. If there are big walls around you, you may find it mighty hard to scale them; you feel as if you are trapped in a Fortress.

You will be surprised at how much potential there is to jump across worlds — even in a high-walled Fortress. Here are seven actions you can take right now to make the most of your current opportunities:

1. Pursue a boundary-crossing career path.
2. Seek out mentors with wide, diverse networks.
3. Make it known that you want to work in different functions or businesses.
4. Attend seminars and meetings outside your own group.
5. Join communities of practice outside your immediate work group.
6. Volunteer for socially responsible projects.
7. Widen your social and sports activities.

You want to be sure that your next job choice is more informed. Like many of us, you have probably in the past joined a company or accepted a project on the basis of rather superficial information. Perhaps you just accepted the first offer. To avoid joining a Fortress again, you need to understand what is really going on in the company. Here are three pointers:

- Ask tough questions in the interview.
- Examine the career information.
- Seek feedback from friends or online.

## The Third Principle: Igniting Latent Energy

You've created latent energy by behaving in a cooperative way and by jumping across worlds; now the scene is set for ignition. Without these sparks of ignition, you are consigning yourself to a "Country Club," a place where you feel comfortable and at ease but in which you will never, ever *glow*.

Country Clubs come in different shapes and sizes, but what they have in common is that they dislocate you from your work. This means that you never really get an opportunity to put your true self into your work, you no longer *glow*.

In the Country Club, underperformance is the norm, energy rarely sizzles and the mundane is venerated. In the Country Club, the big questions are stifled, visions are uninspired, and tasks are overspecified and homogenized. Here are the five telltale signs of a Country Club:

1. *Conflict seems remarkably low.* Everyone seems to agree with everyone else.
2. *Complacency is the norm.* There is an unquestioning belief in the status quo and an assumption that everything will continue as it has in the past.
3. *People are busy.* But be aware that busyness can mask a lack of focus and avoidance of the big questions.
4. *You sense that there are important matters that are being ignored.* But if you question why things are done in a certain way, you are made to feel that you don't really understand or that you are somehow naive.
5. *You notice that everyone is rather similar.* They look about the same, they act the same and they have the same point of view. Conformity is the norm.

### Action 7: Asking Questions That Spark Energy

People who *glow* are adept at asking questions that spark energy and require courage and focus. When you are able to engage with your own passion and beliefs, you become a source of energy for yourself and others. This energy is radiated to others as you *glow* and it ignites Hot Spots of innovation in your work community. Igniting questions have always been marvelous creators of energy and innovation.

Whether you realize it or not, you have big, igniting questions within your reach and inspiring visions in your head. The challenge is to form and access these questions and visions — and then to communicate them in a way that others find compelling and motivating.

Are there times when you feel it is not your place to ask big questions? By steering away from big questions, you are significantly reducing the possibility of *glowing* in Hot Spots.

Questions can be wonderful igniters of latent energy — particularly when they are big, important, conse-

quential and meaningful. Sadly, too often pragmatism means we focus on the day-to-day reality of living rather than the life-enhancing questions that permit us to *glow*.

### Action 8: Creating Visions That Compel

People who *glow* are able to create a compelling vision that sparks energy and is so exciting and engaging that others are drawn to it. A vision invites people into the future. It can describe what is important to you and can ignite the latent energy around you.

Visions are about the future — and a good way to begin to frame your thinking about the future is to go back to the ideas about questions, but this time phrase them as "what if" questions. Since "what if" questions are about events that have never taken place, you have to move beyond your conscious mind to access your ideas about possible futures. It is sometimes in your daydreams that you begin to rehearse possible futures and create a vision of what could ignite your energy. You ask "what if" questions every time you dream.

"What if" questions are about the future, not the past. By changing the focus of your vision, they serve to weaken the links to the past and strengthen the links to the future. Thinking about the future is a much less analytical and rigorous task than thinking about the past. So rather than accessing your rational and analytical mind, as you do when you are asking questions and engaging in disciplined debate, you are engaging your imagination and accessing your dreams.

We can all ask "what if" questions. The challenge to overcome is that we have been trained to look only to the past and ask "what was" questions.

### Action 9: Crafting Meaningful and Exciting Work

Visions and questions are excellent aids to keeping you ahead of the curve and helping you *glow*. To sustain energy over the longer term, you also need to be able to design your work and the jobs and projects you do in a way that brings meaning and excitement to you.

When the vision is a distant memory and the question begins to fade, tasks are what we do when we come to work in the morning, and they are what we are engaged in when we stay late into the evening; it is the tasks that help us *glow*.

Tasks are the parcels of time, activities and outcomes that define your working life. One of the reasons you *glow* is because you are engaged in something that resonates with you. You *glow* when you are engaged with tasks that are sufficiently complex that they capture your imagination or sufficiently meaningful that they capture your heart.

When your questions and visions resonate with your values and beliefs, you *glow* and it shows in your work. When you and others are engaged in a task that resonates with your values and beliefs, you are more likely to *glow* .

Meaningful tasks that can ignite latent energy can spring from your self image, values and passions — so the meaning comes from inside.

Meaning can also emerge from outside, through what is meaningful in your context, on the team, in the company or in the community. Tasks are meaningful to you because you can see that through their accomplishment you can make a difference — they have a consequence beyond you.

One impediment to creating interesting and meaningful work is the conviction that you are so busy you don't have time for anything else. If so, before you can think about making your work more exciting and meaningful, you may have to clear away some of the debris and face the problem of overdemanding work.

## Glowing Every Week

The challenge you face is to ensure that all the actions you take focus rather than dissipate your energy. People who *glow* over long periods of time stay on the path by focusing on the journey forward, by removing the obstacles on the path and by keeping track of progress.

### Keep Defining What is Important to You

Our lives have their own rhythms, and there will be times when more energy is available than at other times. People will say that cooperation is "unfocused" or that it's not up to you to ask the big questions or that you should focus on the immediate team. You will have to consciously and intentionally reduce these distractions — perhaps by avoiding these people, perhaps by spending time with the energizers around you rather than the distracters.

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Glow*, you'll also like:

1. ***Never Eat Alone* by Keith Ferrazzi with Tahl Raz.** This book goes beyond networking into the key skill of relationship building. It features a proven mind-set and skill-set to advance your community of associates.
2. ***Sway* by Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman.** Understanding the sway of irrational behavior helps us from falling victim to it. The Brafmans show you how to escape from under the influence of being irrational.
3. ***Winning* by Jack Welch.** In this book, Welch addresses his own management techniques and explores the external factors that can influence a person's and company's success.

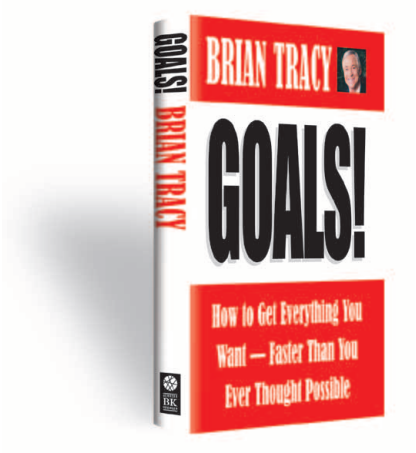
· Book 103 of 269 ·

# Goals!

Brian Tracy

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER TECHNIQUES




By Brian Tracy

## How to Get Everything You Want, Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible

# GOALS!

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*The most important quality you can develop for lifelong success is the habit of taking action on your plans, goals, ideas and insights. In* Goals!, *renowned business strategist and motivation expert Brian Tracy provides you with the essential steps for setting and achieving goals, and for living a successful professional and personal life as a result. By practicing these rules and principles, Tracy explains, you can accomplish more in a shorter period of time than you ever thought possible.*

*In* Goals!, *Tracy teaches you how to identify in clearest terms the things you want out of life, then how to make the plan to help you achieve those things. He covers the psychology and the physiology at work behind the goals you set, and teaches you how to combat frustration and elongate the elation that accompany the work you must do to reach your goals. Tracy also shows how goal achievement can be a process one can use again and again, to reach ever-higher levels of success and happiness.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ How to unlock your potential, take charge, and create your own future by setting goals for the things you want out of life, and creating a plan to achieve those goals.

✓ How to use vision, or "future orientation," to determine where you'll be in the future, and how you will get there. By imagining the ideal future, you can set yourself on the path to making it happen.

✓ How to clarify your values and determine your major definite purpose — the quantifiable, measurable, achievable goal that is most important to you *right now*.

✓ How to eliminate the limiting beliefs about yourself that are holding you back from achieving all you can achieve.

✓ How to measure your progress, every step of the way, as you push forward toward reaching your goals.

✓ How to maintain the fire and passion you feel for achieving your goals, by building momentum and persisting every day until that which you desire is yours.

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# GOALS!

**by Brian Tracy**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## SETTING THE STAGE

# Unlocking Your Potential

Success is goals; all else is commentary. All successful people are intensely goal-oriented. They possess the master skill of success — the ability to identify what they want, make a plan to attain it, and use the full scope of their personal power to achieve their dreams.

### *What They Didn't Teach Them at Harvard*

Consider this: In his book *What They Don't Teach You in the Harvard Business School*, Mark McCormack tells of a study conducted on students in the 1979 Harvard MBA program. In that year, the students were asked, "Have you set clear, written goals for your future and made plans to accomplish them?" Only 3 percent of the graduates had written goals and plans; 13 percent had goals, but they were not in writing; and a whopping 84 percent had no specific goals at all.

Ten years later, the members of the class were interviewed again, and the findings, while somewhat predictable, were nonetheless astonishing. The 13 percent of the class who had goals were earning, on average, twice as much as the 84 percent who had no goals at all. And what of the 3 percent who had clear, written goals? They were earning, on average, *10 times* as much as the other 97 percent *put together*.

### *Why Don't People Set Goals?*

In spite of such proof of success, most people don't have clear, measurable, time-bounded goals that they work toward. There are four reasons why people don't set goals:

- **They don't realize the importance of goals.** If the people with whom you spend the most time — family, friends, colleagues, and so forth — are not clear and committed to goals, chances are you will not be, either.
- **They don't know how to set goals.** Some set goals that are too general ("Be happy," or "Make a lot of money"); these are, in actuality, fantasies common to everyone. Goals, on the other hand, are clear, written, specific and measurable.
- **They fear failure.** Failure hurts, but it is often necessary to experience failure in order to achieve the greatest success. Do not unconsciously sabotage yourself by not setting any goals in which you might fail.
- **They fear rejection.** People are often afraid that if they are unsuccessful at achieving a goal, others will be critical of them. This is remedied by keeping your goals to yourself at the outset: Let others see your results and achievements once you've accomplished your goals.

### *A Little Every Day*

Make a habit of daily goal setting and achieving, for the rest of your life. Focus on the things you want, rather than the things you don't want. Resolve to be a goal-seeking organism, moving unerringly toward the things that are important to you. ■

# Taking Charge and Creating Your Own Future

In a study done in New York several years ago, researchers discovered that the top 3 percent of people in every field had a special attitude that set them apart from the average performers in their industries. These people viewed themselves as self-employed throughout their careers, no matter who signed their paychecks. They saw themselves as responsible for their companies, exactly as if they owned the companies personally.

You should do the same — from this point forward,

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**The author:** Brian Tracy is a world-renowned speaker and author on personal and professional development. His books include *Advanced Selling Strategies* (summarized by Soundview in 1995) and *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success*.

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## Taking Charge and Creating Your Own Future

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see yourself as the president of your own personal services corporation. View yourself as self-employed, in charge of your life and career. Set goals, make plans, establish measures, and create strategies, just as the president of a company would. Market yourself well, enabling you to sell yourself for the very highest price in a competitive market. Know, also, how much of your services you want to sell, how much you want to earn, how rapidly you want to grow your income, and how much you want to be worth when you retire. This kind of financial strategy is up to you — you are responsible for that and all other aspects of your personal "corporation." You are, after all, the president.

### *The Barrier of Negative Emotions*

Most people don't take take charge and set clear goals for their lives because they are dragged down by negative emotions.

Negative emotions hold you back, and take away all the joy in your life. You must free yourself from such negativity — fear, self-pity, jealousy, anger and other pessimistic, ultimately harmful emotional reactions — if you are going to fulfill your full potential. Start by identifying in your life one or more of the sources of negative emotions. These sources include:

**Justification.** You can only be negative as long as you can justify that you are entitled to be angry or upset for some reason. As soon as you stop justifying and giving reasons why you're entitled to be angry, your anger and your negative emotions disappear.

**Rationalization.** When you rationalize your negativity, you attempt to give a socially acceptable reason for feeling bad or unhappy. You create ways of putting your negative emotions in a favorable light by explaining how they are acceptable. Stop rationalizing your negative emotions, as well as the events that cause you to feel negative.

**Hypersensitivity.** Some people base their entire self-image around the opinions of others, maintaining little sense of self-worth and leaving themselves prone to anger, shame, embarrassment and even depression. Remember that what other people think of you has no effect on you at all, unless you allow it to have an effect. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

**The Blame Game.** No one else is responsible for your lot in life, or for the emotional reactions you have to various aspects of life. You are not a victim. Stop complaining, stop whining, stop making excuses and start to take control of your life. Only when you accept full responsibility for your life can you start to set goals and move ahead rapidly. ■

## Future Orientation

If there is one special quality that all great leaders have in common, it is vision. Leaders think about the future, where they're going, and what they'll do when they get there. They think about what they want, often many years in the future, and what can be done to achieve it. This leadership quality is called "Future-Orientation." Truly great leaders combine this orientation with an idealized long-term view of their lives — how their lives will look in x number of years, if they were perfect in every way — to create a personal strategic plan free of self-limiting beliefs.

For example, imagine if your work life was perfect five years from now. Answer these questions:

- What would it look like?
- What would you be doing?
- Where would you be doing it?
- With whom would you be working?
- What skills and abilities would you have?
- What level of responsibilities would you have?
- What kind of goals would you be accomplishing?
- What level of status would you have in your field?

Imagine anything is possible. What would that future look like? What would it take between now and five years from now to achieve all those things? Answer similar questions for your financial life, your personal family life, and your health and fitness. Once you have this ideal in mind, switch from future orientation to action orientation, and do what it takes to make your ideal a reality!

# Clarify Your Values and Find Your Purpose

The very core of your personality is your **values**; everything you do on the outside emanates from the values you have on the inside.

Think of your personality as a target with five concentric rings. The very center ring is your values — the core of your personality. Your values determine the next ring, your **beliefs**, about yourself and the world around you. If you have positive values, you will believe others are deserving of those values, and you will treat them accordingly.

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## Clarify Your Values and Find Your Purpose

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Your beliefs, in turn, determine the next ring out — your **expectations**. If you have positive values, you will believe yourself to be a good person; if this is the case, you will expect good things to happen to you, resulting in a positive, cheerful outlook.

Your expectations determine the next ring, your **attitude** — the outward manifestation or reflection of your values, beliefs and expectations. If you have a positive attitude, others will be drawn to you, and you will be more likely to find success.

Your attitude determines the fifth ring: your **actions**. You are happiest when your outside actions are congruent with your values on the inside. You always demonstrate your true values in your actions, particularly your actions under pressure. When you are forced to choose between one behavior and another, you will always act consistent with what is most important and valuable to you in that moment.

### *Integrity*

Perhaps the most important of all values is integrity. Someone once said that integrity is not so much a value in itself; it is, rather, the value that guarantees all other values. Once you have decided you are going to live consistent with a value, your level of integrity determines whether you follow through on your commitment. The higher your level of integrity, the happier and more powerful you will feel in everything you do.

### *Your Major Definite Purpose*

Since you become what you think about most of the time, a major definite purpose gives you a focus for every waking moment. Having a major definite purpose helps activate your subconscious mind on your behalf. Any thought, plan or goal that you can clearly define in your conscious mind will be brought into reality by your subconscious mind.

Your major definite purpose can be defined as the one goal that is the most important to you at the moment. It is usually the one goal that will help you achieve more of your other goals than anything else you can accomplish. It must have the following characteristics:

- It must be something that you personally really, really want
- It must be clear and specific
- It must be measurable and quantifiable
- It must be both believable and achievable
- It should have a reasonable probability of success when you begin
- It must be in harmony with your other goals

Here is an exercise to help you find your major definite purpose. Take out a sheet of paper and write down (in present tense, as if you had already achieved them) a list of 10 goals you would like to accomplish in the foreseeable future. After you have written your list, ask yourself which goal on the list, if you were to accomplish it immediately, would have the greatest positive impact on your life. In almost every case, this one goal is your major definite purpose — the one goal that can have the greatest impact on both your life and on the achievement of your other goals.

Write this goal on a separate sheet of paper, along with everything that you can think of that you can do to achieve that goal. Take action on at least one item on your list. Think about your goal morning, noon and night, continually looking for ways to achieve it. ■

**For Additional Information on how your subconscious helps you achieve goals, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Analyzing Your Beliefs

Perhaps the most important of all mental laws is the Law of Belief, which states that whatever you believe in, with conviction, becomes your reality. You do not believe what you see; you see what you already believe, viewing your world through a lens of beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and preconceived notions. All improvement in your life comes from changing your beliefs about yourself and your possibilities. Personal growth comes from changing your beliefs about what you can do and about what is possible for you. Napoleon Hill once said, "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."

### *Your Self-Concept*

Everything you do or achieve in life — every thought, feeling or action — is controlled and determined by your self-concept. Your self-concept precedes and predicts your levels of performance and effectiveness in everything you do. It is the master program of your mental computer; everything you accomplish in your outer world is a result of your self-concept.

Even if your self-concept is made up of erroneous beliefs about yourself and your world, as far as you are concerned, these are facts, and you will think, feel and act accordingly. In truth, your beliefs about yourself are largely subjective, often not based on fact at all. Your beliefs have been shaped and formed by your childhood, your friends and associates, your positive and negative experiences, and innumerable other factors. You may believe yourself to be limited in some way, and regard-

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### Analyzing Your Beliefs

*(continued from page 4)*

less of whether that is true, it becomes true for you.

The good news about beliefs is that all beliefs are learned, and can therefore be unlearned, particularly if they are limiting in any way. There are many things you think you know about yourself that are not true, and the starting point for unlocking your full potential is to identify self-limiting beliefs, then ask yourself, "What if they're not true at all?"

Imagine there is a "Belief Store," much like a computer software store you could visit and purchase a belief to program into your subconscious mind. If you could choose any set of beliefs at all, which one would be most helpful to you?

Consider this one: "I am destined to be a big success in life." If you absolutely believe you are destined to be a big success, you will walk, talk and act as if everything that happens to you is part of a great plan to make you successful. And if you act as if you are already the person you desire to be, your actions will generate the feelings that go with them. ■

**For Additional Information on Napoleon Hill, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Ignore the Experts

Albert Einstein was sent home from school as a young man with a learning disability. His parents were told he was incapable of being educated. They refused to accept this diagnosis and eventually arranged for him to get an excellent education.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer had the same problems at school as a boy. His parents were encouraged to apprentice him as a shoemaker so that he would have a safe, secure job when he grew up. Both men went on to earn doctorates before age 20, and to leave their marks on the history of the 20th century.

In fact, according to *Fortune* magazine, many presidents and senior executives of today's Fortune 500 companies were diagnosed in school as being not particularly bright or capable. By virtue of hard work, however, they went on to achieve great success in their industries. Imagine what would have happened — or, more to the point, not happened — had Einstein or Schweitzer internalized the self-limiting beliefs those in school tried to impose on them. Thank goodness they and their parents recognized that limiting ideas about oneself are not based on fact at all!

## GETTING OFF THE GROUND

# Start at the Beginning

Once you have decided on your values, vision, mission, purpose and goals, the next step for you is to analyze your starting point. Exactly where are you today, and how are you doing in each of the important areas of your life, especially as they relate to your goals? If you want to lose weight, the first thing you would do is to weigh yourself to determine how much you weigh today. If you decide to begin an exercise program, the first thing you do is determine how much you are exercising today. If you want to earn more money, the first thing you do is determine how much you're making right now.

It is important to be as accurate with these calculations as possible; the more accurate you are, the better and faster you can improve — and the better goals you can set.

### *Zero Based Thinking*

When you begin to plan your long-term future, one of the most valuable exercises you can engage in is called zero based thinking. In zero based thinking you ask this question: "Knowing what I now know, is there anything that I am doing today that I wouldn't start up again today, if I had to do it over?"

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make progress in your life if you allow yourself to be held back by decisions you have made in the past. No matter who you are or what you are doing, there are certain things in your life that, knowing what you know now, you would not get into today if you had them to do over. The next question to ask yourself is, "How do I get out of them?"

Apply this to every aspect of your life and career — to the people with whom you associate, the jobs you have taken, the activities in your business, and the investments you have made. Once you have identified these things, be prepared to make any necessary changes by doing the following:

- **Determine what is holding you back.** What is the major reason you are not doing the things you truly want to do? Find others who are achieving success in these areas and determine what they are doing that you are not, and what skills they have that you do not.
- **Determine your level of skills and ability.** Identify the key result areas of your work — the critical tasks that you must have in order to do your job well. You must be good at every one of these in order to achieve the highest levels of success in what you do.

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## The Reality Principle

Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, once said that the most important quality of leadership is the "reality principle." He defined this as the ability to see the world as it really is, not as you wish it was. He would begin every meeting to discuss a goal or problem with a single question: "What's the reality?" Peter Drucker refers to this quality as "intellectual honesty" — dealing with the facts exactly as they are, prior to attempting to solve a problem or make a decision.

If you want to be the best you can be, and to achieve what is truly possible for you, you must be brutally honest with yourself. You must sit down and analyze yourself in detail, to determine where you are today, as well as what you must do to get where you want to go.

### Start at the Beginning

*(continued from page 5)*

- **Identify your weakest areas.** Identify where you are below average or poor. How do these areas interfere with your ability to use your other skills? What key skills do you lack that are essential for your success? Identify them accurately and honestly, and make a plan to improve each one.
- **Imagine starting over.** Never allow yourself to feel locked in or trapped by a particular decision from the past. At any time, you could start your career over again, if you feel there is a limited future in your current direction.
- **Be prepared to reinvent yourself.** Stand back and think about starting your career over again today, knowing what you know now. If you had to start over again today, with your special combination of talents and skills, what would you choose to do differently from what you are doing now? ■

# Measure Your Progress

You have incredible mental powers that you habitually fail to use to their full extent. By systematically setting goals for your life and making detailed plans to achieve them, you will save yourself years of hard work and use vastly more of your thinking powers than the average person.

While your conscious mind enables you to identify and analyze your environment, your subconscious mind contains the great powers that allow you to accomplish great things. It is essential that you learn to tap into these powers in order to achieve your goals.

Indeed, your subconscious mind functions best with clear goals, specific tasks, deliberate measures and firm deadlines. The more of these you program into your subconscious mind, the more you will accomplish in a shorter period of time. Such things activate your mind's "forcing system," which helps eliminate procrastination and delay.

There are three keys to peak performance in achieving your goals — commitment, completion and closure.

When you make a firm **commitment** to achieve a particular goal, you step on the accelerator of your subconscious mind, enabling you to be more creative, determined and focused than ever before.

You must fight the temptations that keep you from **completion** of the tasks that lead to achievement. You must force yourself and discipline yourself to resist these temptations and push through to completion. Do what you must: Set benchmarks and create balanced scorecards, measures, metrics and deadlines for every key task. These things activate your subconscious forcing system, enabling you to start earlier, work harder, stay later and get the job done.

Bringing **closure** to an issue in your personal or professional life is absolutely essential for you to be in control of your situation. Lack of closure in the form of unfinished business or incomplete actions is a major source of stress, dissatisfaction and even failure in business. ■

# Eliminate the Roadblocks

Even with all the preparation, analysis and effort that goes into creating new goals, on average, people give up on their goals after one attempt at achieving them. Some do not even get that far, giving up before they even try once. The reason they give up is because of all the obstacles, difficulties, problems and roadblocks that immediately appear as soon as one decides to do something one has never done before.

Consider this, though: Successful people fail far more often than unsuccessful people. Successful people try more things, fall down, pick themselves up and try again, over and over again, before they achieve what they set out to achieve. Unsuccessful people try a few things, if they try at all, and soon quit to go back to their previous path.

There will always be obstacles that stand between you and anything you want to accomplish. The ability to solve problems is essential in any successful endeavor, and you possess that ability, if you desire the goal intensely enough; nothing can hold you back.

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## Eliminate the Roadblocks

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### *Dealing with Constraints*

Eliyahu Goldratt claimed one of the great recent breakthroughs in thinking when he wrote about the "Theory of Constraints." This theory says that, between you and anything you want to accomplish, there is a constraint or limiting factor that determines how fast you get to where you want to go. This theory rings true in so many aspects of our personal and professional lives — there are always bottlenecks that we must identify accurately, and then focus our energies on alleviating.

The 80/20 rule applies to the constraints between you and your goals — 80 percent of your constraints will be within yourself; 20 percent will be outside of yourself, in other people and situations. It is you personally who is usually the major roadblock setting the speed at which you achieve a goal. You may be afraid to make a change, or doubtful that you can really reach a goal.

However, negative emotions, like limiting beliefs, can be unlearned. Have you ever seen a negative baby? Children come into the world with no doubts or fears or helpless feelings at all — they learn to feel those emotions over time. And whatever has been learned can be unlearned, through practice and repetition.

### *Unlearning Helplessness*

Indeed, the way to get over a tendency like helplessness is by setting small goals, making plans and working on them each day. Over time, your doubts and fears will weaken and your confidence will grow, becoming the dominant force in your thinking. Other related issues to keep in mind include the following:

**Avoid the comfort zone.** Many people become complacent with their current situations; they become so comfortable in their job or relationship, that they avoid making any changes at all, even for the better. People who get stuck in a comfort zone, combined with learned helplessness, are almost impossible to help in any way.

**Set big, challenging goals.** Set big goals for yourself, then break each down into specific tasks, set deadlines, and work on them every day. Doing so will help break you out of your comfort zone.

**Organize obstacles by priority.** Make a list of all the obstacles standing between you and your goals, and organize those obstacles by priority. Look at each from different angles, until you find the best strategy to remove it.

For every obstacle that is standing between you and what you want to accomplish, there is a solution. ■

**For Additional Information on Eliyahu Goldratt, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## HITTING YOUR STRIDE

# Keeping Your Goals at the Front of Your Mind

Once your goals are in place, there are a number of things you can and should do to maintain the momentum of change and achievement, regardless of whether your goals are personal, professional or both. Among these actions are managing your time, reviewing your goals daily, visualizing your goals continually, and persisting until you succeed. Consider the importance of each in the ongoing effort in which you must engage to make all your dreams a reality.

### *Manage Your Time Well*

To achieve all your goals and become everything you are capable of becoming, you must get your time under control — this is key to your feelings of happiness, confidence, power and personal well-being. A sense of control is only possible when you practice excellent time management skills.

The starting point of time management, once you have determined your goals, is the organization of your goals by priority and value. You must be clear, at any given moment, exactly what is most important to you at that time. Start by dividing all of your activities into "A" activities (those that move you toward your goal) and "B" activities (those that do not move you toward your goal). Eliminate any activity that does not help you achieve something you want for yourself or which will not lead you to success. Focus all your time on the "A" activities.

Separate the urgent tasks (those determined by external pressures and requirements, that must be done immediately) from the important ones (those that can contribute the very most to your long-term future). Apply the 80/20 rule to your task list, separating the 20 percent of your activities that will account for 80 percent of the total value of your activities. You can then practice "creative procrastination" on the less-valuable 80 percent, in order to focus your time and energies on the more valuable 20 percent. Keep yourself on track, focusing on the specific results you want and need to accomplish.

### *Review Your Goals Daily*

Get a spiral notebook that you can keep with you at all times. Each day, open up the notebook and write

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## Keeping Your Goals at the Front of Your Mind

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down a list of 10 to 15 of your most important goals, without referring to your previous list. Do this every day, day after day. As you do this, several remarkable things will happen.

The first day you write down your goals, you will have to give them some thought and reflection. The second day you rewrite your list (without referencing the first list), your 10 to 15 goals will change, both in description and order of priority. Some goals will drop off the list, only to reappear at a more appropriate time. Each day that you write down your list of 10 to 15 goals, your definitions will become clearer and sharper, until you are writing the same goals and descriptions every day.

About this time (which takes three to four weeks), something remarkable will happen in your life — it will take off! Your work and personal life will improve dramatically, your mind will brim with ideas and insights, you will attract people into your life to help you achieve your goals, and you will make progress at a rapid rate. Everything will begin to change in a positive way.

Put a deadline at the end of each goal, to activate your subconscious mind's "forcing system." Even if you do not know how the goal is going to be achieved, deadlines will spur you to actions, like an exclamation point after every goal.

This exercise is a test, to determine how badly you really want to achieve these goals. The more you can discipline yourself to write and rewrite your goals each day, the clearer you will become about what you really want, and the more convinced you will become that it is possible for you.

### *Visualize Your Goals Continually*

Your ability to visualize is perhaps the most powerful faculty that you possess. All improvement in your life begins with an improvement in your mental pictures. You are where you are and what you are today largely because of the mental pictures that you hold in your conscious mind. As you change your mental pictures on the inside, your world on the outside will begin to change to correspond to those pictures.

Indeed, the most successful people are those who visualize the kind of success they want to enjoy in advance. A successful salesperson, for example, will visualize and remember previous successful sales presentations. A successful trial lawyer will visualize and remember his or her performance in court during a successful trial. Successful doctors will visualize and remember their successful treatments of patients in the past. Always visualize the very best you've done and you'll repeat it in your future.

## The Four Parts of Visualization

There are four parts of visualization you can learn and practice to assure that you use this incredible power to its best advantage:

**Frequency.** How many times do you visualize a particular goal as achieved, or yourself performing in an excellent way in a particular circumstance? The more frequently you repeat a clear mental picture of your very best performance or result, the more quickly it will be accepted by your subconscious and turned into reality.

**Duration.** How long can you hold the picture in your mind each time you replay it? The longer you can hold your mental picture, the more deeply it will be impressed into your subconscious mind, and the more rapidly it will express itself in your subsequent performance.

**Vividness.** There is a direct relationship between how clearly you can see your desired goal and how quickly it comes into your reality.

**Intensity.** The intensity of a visualization refers to the amount of emotion you attach to your visual image. This is the most important part of the visualization process.

### *Persist Until You Succeed*

Every great success in your life will represent a triumph of persistence. Your ability to decide what you want, to begin, and to persist through all obstacles and difficulties until you achieve your goals is the critical determinant of your success. Persistence is self-discipline in action; it is the true measure of individual human character. It is, in fact, the real measure of your belief in yourself and your ability to succeed.

> ***"I can summarize the lessons of my life in seven words — never give in; never, never give in."***
>
> - Winston Churchill

Each time you move forward in the face of adversity and disappointment, you build up a habit of persistence. You become stronger, prouder and more powerful; you deepen your levels of self-discipline and personal strength. You develop the iron quality of success, the one quality that will carry you forward and over any obstacle that life throws in your path.

In the later years of his life, Winston Churchill was asked to address a school class on what he believed to be the secret to his great success in life. His response was, "I can summarize the lessons of my life in seven words — never give in; never, never give in." ■

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# Grace Under Pressure

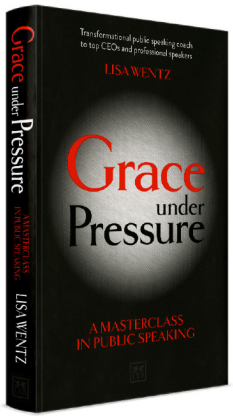
Lisa Wentz

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# Grace Under Pressure

## A Masterclass in Public Speaking




*by* **Lisa Wentz**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Humans are born communicators. As we grow older, however, parenting and societal influences make us second-guess ourselves and become more inhibited, less confident, and more afraid of failure. We think that we just don't have what it takes to be a competent public speaker. This is an emotional reaction not based in reality. With training, all of us can develop our public speaking skills.

***Grace Under Pressure: A Masterclass in Public Speaking*** unveils the tools that great speakers use to develop their skills. It is the rare book that addresses all three areas of a speaker's training: an understanding of what holds us back, physical training for vocal power, and delivery techniques to enliven performance. It is full of exercises to strengthen your voice and explore its role in sharing your message and connecting to your audience.

Author Lisa Wentz, a public speaking coach, draws on decades of training in psychology, theatre arts, and vocal pedagogy to deliver in-depth information essential for training yourself to become a speaker whom others will envy and admire.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What holds you back from being an excellent public speaker
- How to train and harness the power of your voice
- How the purpose of your speech affects its content
- What techniques will enliven your public speaking

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## What Holds Us Back

The greatest challenges and the greatest opportunities with public speaking are often psychological, stemming from the experiences or conditioning that lie beneath the surface of our daily lives.

### Stage Fright

Public speaking exposes us and makes us vulnerable. It can trigger the flight-or-flight mechanism we inherited from our ancestors through 500,000 years or more of evolution. In our early evolutionary history, being watched closely was often preliminary to being attacked by an enemy or animal. Today, this instinct isn't helpful in the context of public speaking.

Physiologically, your muscles tighten, restricting your breathing and your voice. To work through this, you must address what is triggering you. The underlying cause is often an unrealistic expectation of perfection and a fear of judgment. Many try to cope either by avoiding preparation and any acknowledgment of the problem or by overthinking the event to the point of obsession. Neither of these coping mechanisms works.

### False Beliefs

Several common beliefs afflict would-be public speakers: the belief you should be good at something you haven't trained to be good at; the belief you're a fraud (you're not good enough to learn this skill); a potpourri of negative messaging you may have absorbed in your formative learning years.

### Compare and Despair

Comparing yourself to others serves no purpose other than getting you stuck. The path to becoming a confident speaker is not to become like someone else—it is to discover, develop, and bring forward your own physical training, presence, and purpose for speaking.

Like athletes and musicians, public speakers must train to become good. People are not magically born great speakers.

### Impostor Syndrome

Feeling like a fraud, unqualified to be doing what you're doing, is common, and strikes even people who by any objective measure are highly qualified and successful. Impostor syndrome is completely reversible.

### People in Positions of Authority Are Always Right

A 35-year-old man had been told by a teacher when he was a teenager, after he explained something in front of a class, "You are not smart and you never will be. Sit down." Many years later, he felt judged when he spoke, though he was successful and personable and had a good life.

There is no way of stopping all negativity and criticism, but you can learn how to interpret such situations and avoid absorbing these messages. Negative messages are not a reflection of who you are.

### The Inner Critic

As a public speaker, you need to cultivate an inner dialogue that supports you. This is easier said than done—you may need to bring your attention and efforts to dismantling an inner dialogue that is harsh, judgmental, and undermining.

Growing up in an environment where your basic emotional and/or physical needs are not secure can send messages similar to the effects of trauma. Alcoholic or dysfunctional homes are examples. Survivors of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse will often have an inner critic. This critic can have a debilitating effect until the person makes a conscious decision to remove it.

An inner critic often develops from unreasonable expectations. Children who grow up with high expectations to succeed become adept at hiding their inner critic. It does not occur to them that they have been deeply wronged by their caregivers, who gave them strong messages that failure of any kind was not an option. They were pressured to be "perfect."

### Physical Habits and Challenges

Various habits, patterns, and physical challenges may impact your public speaking.

Most of us adopt postural and nonverbal communication habits from the environment we grow up. Some are subconscious; some we are aware of. You probably identify with your habits as part of who you are. Not all of them are helping you to be a better communicator.

Observe yourself and determine if you have nonverbal habits, such as: throat clearing, coughing, speeding, or vocal fry (commonly associated with the "valley girl" accent).

Some people have damage to their vocal track that an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) doctor may need to address or a speech–language pathologist may need to diagnose. Difficulty swallowing, a breathy sound, a break in your voice when you change pitch, and pain when speaking suggest the need for a medical evaluation.

## Vocal Training

A speaker, like an actor, must understand and train their vocal use. Before you walk out to the podium, you should know how your instrument (your voice) works and how good use of your instrument affects the audience and serves your goals.

To train and harness the powers of your voice, you need to go off autopilot. This involves understanding how sound is produced; eliminating unnecessary tension; and learning to access, enjoy, and rely on your body's natural resonant capacities rather than straining your voice. The best attitude is one of curiosity, experimentation, observation, and gradual progress.

### Posture and Coordination

It is important for your body to be in its natural neutral posture: being balanced without excess tension or slouching, knees hip-width apart, feet parallel under the knees, and the back with its natural curve without overextension.

As adults we often lose the coordination and centered fluency of our movements because of inactivity or holding fixed postures for long periods (for example, sitting in front of a computer all day). For a speaker, this can result in a strained or limited voice and distracting movements and postural habits. The Alexander Technique can help you to restore your mind–body connection.

### Breathing

We can develop breathing habits—conscious and unconscious—that greatly affect our voice. Many speakers hold their breath while speaking and take little top-up breaths as they speak. This is not ideal.

The job of a public speaker is to make the powerful breathing fueling the voice seem fluid and harmonious, without using excess tension. The resonant sound of your voice, your articulation of sound, your ability to stay focused, your ability to calm an adrenaline rush, and your influence on your listeners are all dependent on how you breathe.

### Resonance

In voice and speech training, projection is called "resonance." Most speakers need to increase the resonant sound of their voice. It's not about making your voice perfect or fitting into an idea of what's beautiful. It's about being free of tension and letting your voice naturally emerge in all its character, range, and color.

## Delivery

There are reliable techniques that will enliven your delivery. These foundations of great stage presence and delivery have been used by theatre artists and directors for decades.

### Purpose and Setting

Why are you speaking and to whom are you speaking? Consider the purpose of the overall event and why you are being asked to speak. Because you're an expert? Because you have a personal story to tell that is relevant to the overall event? Because your purpose matches the overall part of a conference? These considerations should affect the content of your speech. To improve your public speaking, strip away your personal agenda (getting people to hire you or like you, for instance) and focus on storytelling.

### Structure and Storytelling

Humans are born storytellers. We are hardwired to share experience and information and to connect with each other using stories. Stories are powerful. They make your content relatable and memorable. They help the audience connect with the speaker and build a rapport so the audience is more open to suggestion. Most audiences are predisposed to be skeptical about what the speaker is saying. By telling a story, by getting people to relax and relate, you start to open their minds to different ideas.

Choose your stories based on the theme and purpose of your speech. Then, you need to focus on telling them well. Try some simple techniques to invigorate your stories and your storytelling delivery, like: using details and imagery, stressing words appropriately, and delighting your audience.

### Tone, Pacing, Pausing, and Body Language

There are essential techniques for developing a delivery that matches your content and that brings your message to life in a way that ensures you reach your audience.

### Tone

Match the tone of your delivery with your content. If you are sharing great news, you should be happy and upbeat. Sharing negative information should be done in a serious, sincere tone. If your audience is hostile, ground yourself in what you believe to be the truth and how it may benefit others. Bring courage, fortitude, creativity, and respect into your tone rather than fear, judgment, or discouragement.

### Pacing

Many speakers speed up their rate of speech due to adrenaline or nerves or a sense of pressure to entertain coupled with a fear of being boring. Slow down. Match your speed to your content.

### Pausing

Humans are not built to constantly hear and take in information. Continuously listening to the sound of a human speaking, especially while being expected to remember facts, ideas, or discussions, is exhausting. There is a need for silence—for pauses.

Pauses should be silent. Work to rid yourself of the dreaded verbal pause, such as "hmm." Instead of a verbal pause, breathe.

### Body Language and Stage Direction

Posture and coordination are the foundation of body language. What should you do with your hands while speaking? What feels natural to you, while maintain a neutral posture.

Where should you look while speaking? If your audience is large (over 100), your eyes should stay at the horizon level. If it is smaller, you'll need to occasionally make eye contact. Face the audience—don't ever let them see the back of your head.

### Presence

Presence refers to the command of attention the speaker has from the audience. The quality of your presence, or your effect on others, is something that can be consciously developed.

### Charisma and Gravitas

Charisma, or charm, is a quality that many speakers who deliver great speeches possess. But you do not need to be charming for your presence to be strong and commanding.

Presence flows from a speaker's authenticity and focus. The tone or mood you display should fit with your content and the objectives you'd like to achieve with the particular speech or moment. The audience wants to see you, not your idea of what an audience might like. You are interesting enough. Never worry about whether you are compelling or interesting.

## Bringing It All Together

As you come into the final stretch before giving a speech, pitch, or presentation, consult this simple checklist:

- Finish your slides, ideally, five to seven days before your talk.
- Ground yourself in your purpose and setting.
- Practice and time yourself.
- Ask the organizers of your talk appropriate questions so you are well prepared.
- Wear comfortable, stylish clothes that you feel confident in.
- Avoid wearing shoes that make noise when you walk.
- Minimize the amount of jewelry that sparkles.

The journey of a speaker is an ever-evolving process. Embrace it—enjoy the stage you're in, and work to make yourself a speaker you can step back and admire.



Lisa Wentz is the founder of the San Francisco Voice Center, a public speaking expert, and accent specialist. Considered one of the top coaches in the San Francisco Bay Area, Lisa regularly coaches speeches, presentation skills and accent reduction with executives and managers from Fortune 500 companies. Her resume includes Adobe, Genentech, Google, Oracle, Salesforce and VMware among others.

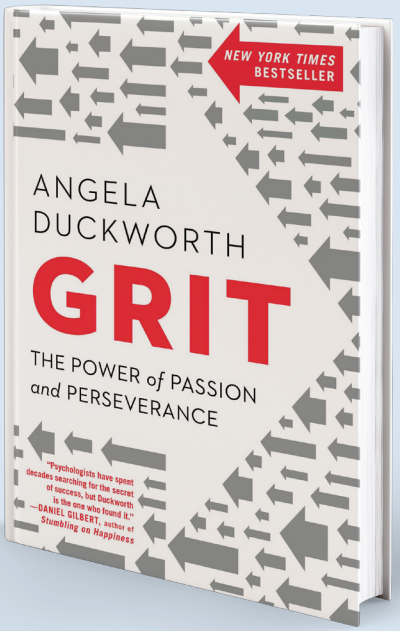
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# Grit

Angela Duckworth

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Grit
By Angela Duckworth

Angela Duckworth, PhD, is a 2013 MacArthur Fellow and professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. She has advised the World Bank, NBA and NFL teams, and Fortune 500 CEOs. She is also the founder and CEO of Character Lab, a nonprofit whose mission is to advance scientific insights that help kids thrive. She completed her BA in neurobiology at Harvard, her MSc in neuroscience at Oxford, and her PhD in psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance is her first book and an instant New York Times bestseller.

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*A Book Review by Soundview*

# How to Solve Painful Problems in Business

Angela Duckworth is a former math teacher, current professor of psychology, co-founder of the nonprofit Character Lab, and 2013 MacArthur Fellow. This particular award is sometimes called the "genius grant." When Duckworth got the news that she had been selected for the prize she was transported back to her childhood to "ponder the irony of the situation."

You see, throughout her life, her father had a habit of reminding her and her siblings of their intellectual shortcomings. He would regularly say, "You know, you're no genius." He seemed overly concerned with innate talent and intelligence and appeared to be disappointed that his offspring failed to measure up to his excessively-high standard. The girl who was told over and over that "she's no genius ends up winning an award for being one."

But, her father's offhand diagnoses were not really wrong. Duckworth is not an actual genius and she didn't become a MacArthur Fellow because she was superior to her colleagues at an intellectual level. She got there through passion and perseverance. She has spent her career engaged in work for which she is passionate. She challenges herself to be better and do better in that work continuously. When met with an obstacle that knocks her down, she gets back up. She writes, "I may not be the smartest person in the room, but I'll strive to be the grittiest." And that has made all the difference.

Duckworth has operated under the assumption that "in the long run, grit may matter more than talent." Years later she has the scientific evidence to back it up. And she doesn't stop there. Her research has shown that grit is liable to change and fluctuate, not fixed and therefore, it can be grown. In ***Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance***, Angela Duckworth summarizes all that she has researched and learned about grit so that you can apply it to your own calling in life.

## What Grit Is and Why It Matters

There are many ways in which we describe "grit" that we observe in everyday life. It is a "never give up attitude." It is a "kind of hang-in-there posture toward challenge." It is a deep-seeded

drive to keep going when times get tough. It is the will to pick yourself up and try again each and every time you fail. People who are highly successful in their chosen field, whether it be athletics, military, leadership, teaching, an artistic pursuit, or something else entirely, there are commonalities in how they operate.

Highly accomplished people are "paragons of perseverance." They are never complacent. They continue striving for the goal even when they have to do things that are "boring, or frustrating, or even painful" along the way. They never even consider giving up. Their passion endures, regardless of challenges. Duckworth writes, "In sum, no matter the domain, the highly successful had a kind of ferocious determination that played out in two ways.

First, these exemplars were unusually resilient and hardworking. Second, they knew in a very, very deep way what it was they wanted. They not only had determination, they had direction. It was this combination of passion and perseverance that made high achievers special. In a word, they had grit."

Having identified the common ingredients of grit, Duckworth set her sites on figuring out how to measure something that was completely intangible. She poured over her research notes looking for words and phrases and traits that showed what it was like to have grit. As she compiled the data, a list of questions emerged, half of which were about passion and half of which were about perseverance. These questions became "the Grit Scale–a test that, when taken honestly, measures the extent to which you approach life with grit."

A key finding from Duckworth's early work was that there was not a positive correlation between talent and grit. At first it was surprising to her that the talented would not endure and continue trying hard to achieve in their field. But she learned that "talent is no guarantee of grit." One of the deep explorations in the book is centered around this finding as Duckworth explores the reasons why.

People with "grittier" scores on the Grit Scale successfully complete Beast Barracks at West Point, graduate high school on schedule, stay in rejection-filled sales jobs, make it through Special Forces training in the military, and earn more higher degrees. The grittier the score, the more likely a person will stay the course.

It boils down to an insight that served as a foundational guide for all of Duckworth's later work. "Our potential is one thing. What we do with it is quite another." As a middle school math teacher, Duckworth could plainly observe that some of her students had greater innate talent in math than others. They just seemed to get it, without even trying. But when it came to performance, some of those talented kids failed to live up to their potential. And some who had lackluster innate ability put in hard work and achieved at high levels.

Aptitude and achievement are different animals all together, even in an area like math where we conventionally classify students into "math people" or "not math people." When we overly focus on talent, we lose sight of what Duckworth believes is far more important: effort.

Most of us are audience observers to those that are considered wildly talented. Musicians, professional or Olympic athletes, writers, and others awe us with their abilities to perform something so extraordinary. But we are missing most of the full picture. We are not privy to what happens behind the scenes. We do not observe the hours upon hours of training and conditioning and practice that results in the spectacular performances we witness. Our inclination is to shake our heads or shrug and say, "It's a gift! Nobody can teach you that." But Duckworth says we are wrong. There are innumerable factors that come into play and effort is a major one.

Now, Duckworth concedes that Micheal Phelps-level achievement is not available to anyone who puts in the required effort. There are anatomical advantages that cannot be selected, for example. The point is that greatness is something that is "doable" because greatness is really a compilation "of many, many, individual feats" and taken individually, they are each attainable. And further, we have the capacity to grow our grit and thus, improve our levels of achievement.

## Growing Grit from Inside Out

One need only attend a graduation ceremony from any higher-educational institution to hear the advice "do what you love." Despite the fact that we hear this message time and again, many of us choose practicality over passion. However, for some, "finding something you love" ends up being "a breadcrumb trail into poverty and disappointment." Is it ludicrous to advise fledgling adults to seek love over security? Duckworth revealed the "definitive answer" generated from scientific research on the topic over the last decade. Turns out, interest is a key factor.

"Research shows that people are enormously more satisfied with their jobs when they do something that fits their personal interests." People who have this level of job satisfaction are also "happier with their lives as a whole." They actually have better performance outcomes compared to those who do not have interest in their work, too. This goes for paid professional workers as well as students who are studying something that genuinely interests them. These interested students get better grades and stick with their degree program until they finish.

Of course, we cannot expect to make a living doing just anything that we have interest in doing. "Nobody is interested in everything, and everyone is interested in something. So matching your job to what captures your attention and imagination is a good idea. It may not guarantee happiness and success, but it sure helps the odds." Maybe, then, the advice dolled out at commencement ceremonies should be for young people to "foster a passion" so that they have a well of interests from which to choose.

Everyone has heard the saying "practice makes perfect." The kicker, though, is that not all practice is good practice. Those who become experts in their field and achieve greatness do not simply log more and more hours of practice. They practice differently than others. They do what Duckworth calls "deliberate practice." This involves several steps.

First, "set a stretch goal" that targets a specific and narrow component of the skill. Second, make intentional efforts to

> We can look for ways in which our work impacts the greater good and, in doing so, identify the purpose."

reach the goal with "undivided attention and great effort." Finally, seek feedback about what could be improved to make the performance of the targeted skill even better. This process is repeated again and again and again until the skill is mastered and a new stretch goal can be set.

Purpose is "the intention to contribute to the well-being of others" and it is also an important component to growing grit. When work has a higher purpose and meaning than the related tasks themselves, we are working with purpose. Duckworth's research showed that people who are grittier as scored by her Grit Scale are far more likely to "see their ultimate aims as deeply connected to the world beyond themselves.

For most of us, having purpose is deeply motivating. Interestingly, it is not the job itself that is or is not filled with purpose. It is more about how the person performing the job views it. We can look for ways in which our work impacts the greater good and, in doing so, identify the purpose.

Finally, grit relies on hope. This is not the kind of hope that something beyond our control will change. "It rests on the expectation that our own efforts can improve our future. The first kind of hope leaves it to the universe by pure chance or otherworldly intervention. We hope that tomorrow will be better. With the hope that influences grit, "we resolve to make tomorrow better." Intention and determination place us in the driver's seat with the firm understanding that what we do changes outcomes, not chance.

## Growing Grit from Outside In

Duckworth has more good news for those who are interested in helping others increase their grittiness. Parents, teachers, coaches, and organizational leaders can all "encourage grit" in the people they care about. Duckworth labels this kind of "bringing forth" as parentlike, whether it's coming from an actual mother, father, or guardian or if it is coming from a coach, teacher, mentor, or manager. "The word parenting derives from Latin and means "to bring forth." Therefore, you're acting in a parentlike way if you're asking for guidance on how to best bring forth interest, practice, purpose, and hope" in others.

There are two extremes on the continuum. To the far right of center, authoritarian parenting requires very high standards, little coddling, and more than the occasional scowl. On the other end of the spectrum are "child-centered" parents who lavish children with support, comfort, and choice on an unconditional basis.

In an attempt to answer which approach is best at fostering grit, Duckworth first states that there is a lack of research on the subject of parenting for grit but she is comfortable dispensing some advice on the topic nonetheless. Combing through separate research on parenting and separate research on grit revealed a pattern.

Duckworth says, "there's no either/or trade-off between supportive parenting and demanding parenting. When we look closely at the two ends of the spectrum, we find commonalities. Parents put the needs of their children first without allowing the children themselves to determine "what to do, how hard to work, and when to give up on things." In fact, research over a span of four decades has shown that "the children of psychologically wise parents fare better than children raised in any other kind of household."

This type of parenting style is both supportive and demanding. "When our parents are loving, respectful, and demanding, we not only follow their example, we revere it. We not only comply with their requests we understand why they're making them." In other words, parents who are gritty themselves end up having gritty children.

Angela Duckworth refers to research subjects who demonstrate grittiness in an exemplary fashion as "grit paragons." Time and time again, these high achievers report that they find their work to be thrilling, that they look forward to the challenges of each day, and that they know their passion-filled work serves a greater purpose than themselves. There is deep satisfaction in "doing something important" that is also very hard. In fact, the difficulty and joy they gain from finishing and succeeding through the difficulty of their task makes the internal reward all the more sweet.

In ***Grit***, Duckworth shows us that we all have the ability to become gritty and in doing so, both reach our highest potential and draw out the potential in others. It's an endeavor worth every difficult moment because gritty people "recognize that complacency has its charm, but none worth trading for the fulfillment of realizing their potential." Grit, as Duckworth poignantly puts it, is "putting one foot in front of the other. To be gritty is to hold fast to an interesting and purposeful goal. To be gritty is to invest, day after week after year, in challenging practice. To be gritty is to fall down seven times, and rise eight." And each of our lives, families, schools, organizations, and governments could use more of that.

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# Habits for Success

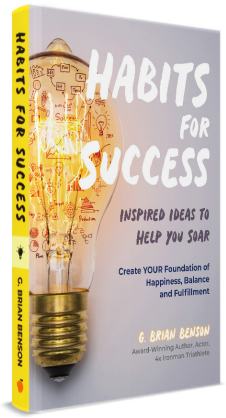
G. Brian Benson

Career &
Self-Development

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Habits for Success

## Inspired Ideas to Help You Soar




*by* **G. Brian Benson**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many of us have been taught by society and our loved ones (as they were taught as well) that happiness and fulfillment come from fitting into a certain societal mold. The familiar model is to head to college, get a job, get married and have kids. Unfortunately, that expectation sometimes clashes with information we are receiving from our heart and intuition.

G. Brian Benson, in ***Habits for Success***, stepped away from his family's business. The experience had nurtured and grown him, but he left the business he no longer loved in hopes of building a new, more stable foundation for the rest of his life.

There comes a time in all of our lives when it becomes more painful for us to stay mired in our old habits than to step outside our comfort zone and risk the unknown as we journey toward finding our true voice. Your true voice is the language of authentic fulfillment, joy, and happiness. While speaking your true voice, creativity flows, fears subside, and peace of mind prevails. Join Benson in the journey which Ram Dass calls "walking each other home." Create habits for living authentically.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The importance of building a strong life foundation.
- Your flourishing will positively impact others.
- Life balance relies on daily practices.
- Care of your body and mind are essential habits for success.

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

## Start With Your Foundation

When we think of a foundation, we typically envision a building of some sort, perhaps a house or a skyscraper. When a house is built, the strength of its foundation is vital. The same is true for us. If we want to live authentically and be the best versions of ourselves and accomplish our goals and live out our dreams, the first thing we need to do is build a strong foundation.

An award-winning sand-castle builder explained her process. Interested onlookers often complimented her on the creative details of her work, but what those onlookers don't realize is that her most diligent efforts were spent on the building of a solid foundation. Generally, the first two hours of her process were spent analyzing the sand content, digging until the ideal grains were found, then saturating the sand and applying pressure to compact it into a solid formation. Only then could she get to work on the impressive detailing of her sand creation.

With a solid foundation, we achieve balance so we can make proactive choices instead of reactive choices.

### Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

When we leave our comfort zones, we're taking a risk and opening ourselves up to the possibility of stress and anxiety because we aren't sure what is going to happen next. Shilpa Chatterjee says: "Although anxiety is not exactly something we go chasing after, a little bit of it can actually be healthy. A hint of anxiousness can push us to take risks, get more done, and continually better ourselves. Healthy stress acts as a catalyst for growth, motivation, and optimal performance."

When we step out of our comfort zone and challenge ourselves, we are provided with so many new gifts. We become more productive. As we expand our capabilities and break through barriers, we find new, exciting possibilities in our lives. Your creativity will increase as you have new experiences and learn and grow from them.

### It's OK to Fail

Go fail a few times. Without failure, we wouldn't become the people that we are meant to become. It is such an essential part of building our foundation of success. You grow and build strength through the process of failure. While that doesn't make it any easier going through it, things do get better, and you will gain clarity. All successful people have had setbacks or bumps along the way to their success. English novelist John Creasey received 753 rejections slips before he went on to publish 564 books. It took Thomas Edison ten thousand attempts to perfect the light bulb.

### Get Creative

It is never too late to create. Georgia O'Keeffe worked steadily into her nineties, continuing her tradition of fine work. French impressionist Claude Monet painted well into his eighties, even after cataracts clouded his vision. Acclaimed architect Frank Lloyd Wright completed the design of the Guggenheim Museum in New York at age ninety-two—and Giuseppe Verdi wrote Falstaff, thought of as his most renowned opera, at the age of eighty-five. Get creative! Do what you love. You may just surprise yourself.

## Make Room For Others

The beast that tells us that we are not enough is the same beast that keeps us separated from others. When we share our truths, pains, and imperfections, we shine light on our true essence. When we reveal ourselves, we stand unencumbered in truth; it brings us closer together as a community.

### Let Go of Judgment

Benson led a workshop for twenty-one teenage boys who were incarcerated at a youth correctional facility in Oregon. Instead of having a lot of silence and looks of "why am I here" from the youth, he found many intelligent young men who couldn't wait to speak and share their experiences, their regrets, and their dreams.

Some talked about forgiving their peers or family members who played a part in having them incarcerated in the first place. Many told how they wanted to go to college and how they were going to make it happen. Some talked about wanting to raise healthy families even though it wasn't modeled for them while they grew up. Others spoke about forgiving themselves for the crimes that they committed so that they could move forward. Benson was reminded to never, ever judge a book by its cover. A strong foundation has no room for judgment.

### Connect with Others

In today's fast paced, instant gratification world, where people's lives are broken down and validated into social media "likes" and "tweets," we may forget to take a long deep breath and remember what life is all about. One man who recognized this was a British hairdresser. He

Once I was in the habit of running early instead of running late, my stress and anxiety levels went down, and I was more ready for the day.

would walk the streets on his days off and volunteer his time, giving haircuts to the homeless. Through a simple act of connection, he was able to let these folks know that they have value and dignity. So, the next time you interact with a cashier at the store, walk by a person asking for help on the sidewalk, or make a deposit to the clerk at your bank, give them a smile and remember that they are just like you. Through connection, we live richer, more satisfying, and expansive lives.

### Clean Up Your Disagreements

Do you have unresolved issues hanging over you? We are human; it happens. But to truly free ourselves of the pain, anger, guilt, or confusion we are holding onto, we need to make our best effort to clear things up. Which means to forgive the other person and move on or try to patch things up so you can go back to being friends or productive coworkers. This is so important for our mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Not to mention the strength of our foundation.

## Strive For Balance

Just like the juggler with too many balls in the air, the more things we have going on in our life, the more difficult it is to keep everything going without dropping the ball. As the pace of our lives accelerates, so does our need to stay in balance. It is simple daily practices that maintain our foundation.

### Be Kind

Wayne Dyer once said, "It's better to be kind than to be right." Watch how everything improves when you are genuinely kind. Next time you're given the opportunity to let someone merge into your lane while driving, don't hesitate. You'll feel better, they will be appreciative, and the positivity shared will inspire others to do the same.

It doesn't have to just be on the freeway—help someone out at the grocery store or hold the door when entering a building. Say hello to a stranger, make a donation to someone less fortunate, or pay a compliment to someone who looks like they could use one. Kindness is another form of beauty and an essential part of your foundation. Share it, spread it, and be it.

### Leave Ten Minutes Early

How often do you find yourself rushing late to work or someplace else where you need to be? How does it make you feel? Stressed? Angry? Guilty? There's a very simple technique you can use to eliminate all of those unwanted feelings that come from being rushed. Try leaving ten to fifteen minutes early. (Simple, right?)

The author relates, "When I started leaving ten minutes early to go to work, I noticed the difference immediately. I arrived at work feeling much more peaceful and balanced. I was ready to start the day. Prior to leaving ten minutes early, I would be scrambling in to work, usually carrying a load of anxiety and stress. I would start those days feeling behind and definitely not in flow. Once I was in the habit of running early instead of running late, my stress and anxiety levels went down, and I was more ready for the day. Allow yourself that extra time; you will be glad you did. If you live in Los Angeles like me, better make it forty-five minutes!"

### Attitude of Gratitude

Try and give thanks for all that comes your way, the good and the bad. You may ask, "Why would I want to give thanks for something bad that happened?" Well, we are here to learn and grow, and the greatest learning opportunities usually occur during trying experiences. Be thankful for them, and the new and hopefully wiser you who came out of a tough situation.

The trying times will eventually pass, and you will be better prepared the next time they come around, or even better yet, you can help someone else going through a tough time with your experience. Take the challenge to write down five to ten things a day that you are grateful for every morning. Watch your spirit lift!

## Take Care Of Your Instrument

Taking care of ourselves is probably the most crucial task that we are given, yet I don't think enough people give it the importance that it deserves. If your health fails, it can outweigh everything else that's going on in your life.

### Drink More Water

Did you know that 60 percent of our bodies and 75 percent of our muscles are made up of water? Is it any wonder that a lot of people get headaches or feel fatigued when they are under-hydrated? Water not only provides us with invaluable sustenance, but it also helps flush out our system, which in turn allows our body to run more efficiently and provide us with more energy. Being adequately hydrated is well worth the trouble of having to make a couple of extra pit stops during the day.

### Get More Sleep

According to Thomas Dekker, "sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together." Are you getting enough sleep? Please don't think that by taking another hour of sleep each night, out of the 24 hours we have available, that you will be less productive. It has been proven that those who are sleep deficient work more slowly and make more mistakes along the way. Getting more sleep will in turn give you more energy, make you more productive, and probably a much happier person.

### Go Exercise

Need a little more energy throughout the day? Want to lose a few unwanted pounds? Want to think more clearly and be more productive? Go get some exercise. If you are just beginning, it could be as simple as going for a walk three days a week. Make whatever you do a habit. There are many ways to get some exercise that don't require special knowledge or skills. For example, gardening, swimming, going to a park and throwing a Frisbee, and walking are just a few.

### Eat Better Eat Less

If you are struggling for energy during the day and feel very sluggish after you eat, then you might not be making the best food choices for your body. Listen to your body; it will tell you what works for it and what doesn't. What is good? Moderate intake and a balance of fruits, vegetables, grains, and poultry/ fish/nuts—clean and unprocessed foods. Eating better/eating less is an incredibly important part of keeping your foundation intact and solid.

### Meditate

Do you want to feel calmer, carry less stress, have more energy, and be more tapped into your intuition? Give meditation a try. Meditation gives our brain a rest from the busy life and schedule that most of us lead. When we are in the space of feeling balanced and rested, we are better able to pay attention and listen to our intuition, our highest form of intelligence. Why wouldn't we want to tap into that?

Greatness is already within all of us. Sometimes we just need to peel away a few layers and do some inner housework to access it. Look within, be open to new ideas, and practice new habits. Remember to laugh along the way, pick yourself up when you fall down, and know that it's a journey, not a destination.



G. Brian Benson is an award-winning author, coach, inspirational TEDx speaker, actor, radio personality, and filmmaker. His mission is to wake up the world with conscious, thought-provoking media that inspires. As a 4x Ironman triathlete and cross-country bicyclist, Brian knows the value of hard work and never giving up on his dreams, a message he shares with audiences through each of his creative avenues.

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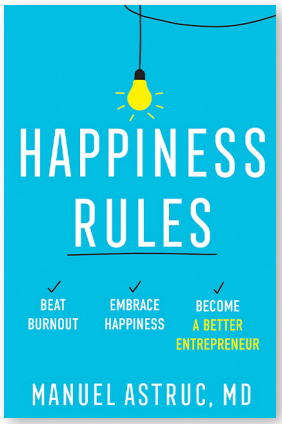
# Happiness Rules

Manuel Astruc

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Executive Book Summaries®

# Happiness Rules

## Beat Burnout, Embrace Happiness, and Become a Better Entrepreneur




*by* **Manuel Astruc**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Success is the measure by which most entrepreneurs judge themselves. But success doesn't guarantee happiness—especially if it leads to burnout.

Dr. Manuel Astruc wrote ***Happiness Rules: Beat Burnout, Embrace Happiness, and Become a Better Entrepreneur*** as a solution to the problem of entrepreneurial burnout. In Happiness Rules, he offers practices developed using his knowledge of the mind and our motivations as humans—all gathered from his decades of work as a psychiatrist. And these rules aren't hypothetical; Manuel has used them himself to escape from the deepest reaches of burnout.

*Happiness Rules* teaches readers how to make happiness the engine to success—rather than the outcome—leading to more personal fulfillment as well as being more productive, energetic, and engaged at home and at work.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How burnout causes intense disruption to your life and work.
- How to take small, positive steps toward a healthier, more optimistic, and happier life.
- How to maintain a consistent, healthier state of mind no matter what issues you're facing.
- Tools to help alleviate burnout.
- How to restart that engine that has driven you to success and maintain it in a way that is healthier for you, your business, and those you care about.

## Introduction

Burnout is defined by the World Health Organization as an occupational syndrome, a response to a life that is out of order. It manifests in those who constantly and consistently put work before everything else. And it causes intense disruption to your life, your work, and your health.

These rules allowed me—and will allow you—to take small, positive steps toward a healthier, more optimistic, and happier life. If you are feeling exhausted, bitter, detached from work, or seeing a lack of effectiveness in your work—or if you are feeling a lack of purpose, a sense of stagnation, or emotionally numb—the Happiness Rules can provide you with a consistent, healthier state of mind no matter what issues you are facing.

But before you can follow the rules that lead you back, you have to first acknowledge where you are—and that you have a problem. You have to accept that you are facing burnout. That it isn't a weakness. That you're allowed to struggle. And that the consequences of ignoring this situation can be serious. Only then can we commit to change and make our way back onto the path of happiness.

## Part 1: Why We Need New Rules

1. The Cost of Burnout

Entrepreneurs are, by nature, fixers. And we're often very stubborn fixers at that. We see it as our job to dig in and repair whatever isn't working in our businesses in order to reach optimum effectiveness. Under normal circumstances, this serves us well.

However, burnout isn't a nail. It isn't a standard problem that we can fix by concentrating on it and executing a strategy. Unlike other problems, we can't work through burnout while we ignore our underlying stress and exhaustion. That only makes it worse. We have to look at burnout like an underlying injury to our body and mind. Burnout is your mind and body telling you to change what you're doing, not lean further into it. Ignoring the symptoms of burnout only makes the injury worse.

Here, we looked at the nature of burnout. There is a continuum of burnout. Ignoring early, mild signs—such as exhaustion, feeling detached or negative about work, or losing effectiveness at work—will lead to these issues getting worse. There's an inclination to find ways to deny that this is happening. We have to face the truth about burnout.

Over time, burnout spreads to affect not just work but the rest of your life, from family and friends to health.

2. Why Burnout is So Prevalent

In an effort to be happy and fulfilled, we chase success. Society tells us from a young age that hard work is the key to this success.

This is wrong, and our focus upon work above all else is unhealthy. There is a point at which working hard can cross a line into addiction—defined as continuing to engage in an activity in spite of evidence that it is hurting you. When we eventually face burnout, society has few ways to bring us back to health and satisfaction.

Modern medicine is good at treating a disease, but burnout is an occupational syndrome and we don't have a treatment model for it. Because of the limitations in our methods and the insurance system, modern medicine is incentivized to make a quick diagnosis instead of looking for a root cause. The system prefers a diagnosis like depression or anxiety and a pill for treatment rather than a syndrome that is harder to quantify.

There are four pressures that lead to burnout:

1. Highly demanding work
2. High level of responsibility
3. Low control
4. Low reward

Entrepreneurs are exposed to all four. Most entrepreneurs strive to be good leaders. They want to motivate their teams, innovate their industry, inspire their customers, and push their companies to the limit. Unfortunately, the very qualities that allow an entrepreneur to do all this are the ones that make them most at risk of burnout.

3. The Happiness Rules Preamble

Your situation is not hopeless. No matter where you are on the burnout spectrum, the Happiness Rules can help pull you out of it.

With that in mind, there are three facts to recognize about yourself and your situation:

1. You are not alone
2. Change is possible

3. There is hope

Each of these concepts is an integral mindset adjustment on the road to happiness and becoming a better, healthier entrepreneur.

To overcome your burnout, we'll find the way back to happiness through three sets of rules:

1. Health Rules
2. Growth Rules
3. Purpose Rules

## Part 2: The Health Rules

4. Getting Your Body into Shape

It is incredibly difficult to be happy and a successful entrepreneur if your fundamental physical and mental health is out of order. In fact, solidifying the foundations of your physical and mental health can arrest your slide into burnout.

Small steps provide the consistent action that creates what we call motivation, and that forward motion allows us to create life-long, life-changing habits in the same way peddling can get us across an entire city.

There is no real secret to building a good foundation for well-being and happiness. It has to start with your physical and mental health. Any system that ignores health is bound to eventually fail.

To start improving your physical health, go for the low-hanging fruit first. Those are the things you can change quickly and a little at a time: eat better, move more, and focus on sleep.

To develop new habits, use BJ Fogg's ABCs:

- Anchor: Anchor the new habit to something you do every day.
- Behavior: Start the habit with something almost ridiculously easy and then build on that as the habit gets ingrained.
- Celebrate: Celebrate the wins, give yourself a high five, pump your fist, and shout out "DONE!" This gives you a dopamine reward and encourages your body to want more.

5. Getting Your Mind into Shape

If you want the benefits of this process, you need to be dealing with your psychological health at the same time. It doesn't take a serious psychological illness to lead our brains into a cycle of negative thinking.

As with your physical health, you can start improving your mental health by reaching for that low-hanging fruit.

Cut out negativity in your environment from sources like news media, social media, and people. Our brains are remarkably easy to "prime" with even brief exposure to negativity, so limit the negative as much as possible.

You can also stop indulging "automatic negative thoughts" by putting up blinders to them rather than wallowing in them. You can start to do this through the "think, think, think" process developed in AA.

Finally, set rules for when to stop working. You won't always be able to follow them, but creating clear boundaries to avoid "workaholic" working is important.

By making these small changes, you can start to reorient toward a sense you are in control and even "prime" the mind for greater happiness and opportunity.

## Part 3: The Growth Rules

6. Learn and Grow

In a busy, stressful life, we often take every chance to make things less challenging. In some ways, this is one of the key motivators in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are always trying to remove friction from the purchasing process for their customers and from their internal processes for their employees. Any time a challenge can be eliminated, we make a point of doing so.

However, we need challenges. It's hard to be happy being on autopilot.

By nature, we need to be learning. You should seek out the flow state—the state in which we feel our best and perform our best. According to author Steven Kotler, it occurs when we are operating about 4 percent beyond our capabilities, in a "stretch but don't break" situation.

You can also find new interests by cultivating the habit of exploring "adjacent possibles" that relate to your current strengths and interests. These require only a small commitment of time, energy, or money to learn about these new possibles.

Flow and adjacent possibles can lead to a program of learning and growing, all while hunting for new opportunities.

7. Strengthening Connections

We crave connection with us and react to social situations subconsciously. So the fact that modern life has left us so divorced from our relationships and communities is immensely difficult for our mental health.

We require a strong social network in our lives to provide meaning. This can be summarized through the 4 Cs: Connection, Community, Collaboration, Contribution.

Connection: The last fifty years have left us feeling isolated from our "tribe," and entrepreneurs are especially at high risk for this because of the nature of their work. We need to rebuild those broken ties to family and friends because there is a mountain of science that tells us the stronger our connections, the healthier and happier our lives.

Community: This is where we fit in; it's our place in our "tribe."

Collaboration: Humanity has dominated nature because of our ability to create well beyond what an individual can achieve. We crave this in our lives.

Contribution: We also crave a way to make our work matter.

We can use technology as a tool to build the 4 Cs in our lives. Find groups you want to join, seek out collaboration, or find your tribe through podcasts.

## Part 4: The Purpose Rules

8. Blaze Your Own Trail

The knowledge that things can change is central to the Happiness Rules.

We are never finished products. Our ability to choose what our life is and what it will become is our superpower. To enable that superpower, though, we have to flip the switch from living by default to living by design.

To start flipping that switch, ask yourself these questions: What are you uniquely good at? What are you curious about? What do you want? What do you want to contribute?

9. Creating Resilient Happiness

We live in a society determined to eliminate struggle. In a world in which our basic needs are easy to take care of for most of us and survival is assured—again, for most of us—we now work to reduce discomfort, eliminate friction, and increase convenience. Wherever possible, we concentrate our efforts on distracting thoughts of suffering and struggle with acts of pleasure.

We can be happy through any circumstances—without eliminating our other emotions and experiences. What's more, we have to develop more resilience in our happiness because pain and struggle are as inevitable as gravity. The Happiness Rules can't remove difficulties from your life, but they can give you control over how you respond to those difficulties. Struggle does not have to lead to unhappiness.

You can choose the way of happiness—of health, learning, connecting, and blazing your own trail—through everything life throws at you. That is the power you have over your circumstances, whatever they happen to be.

## Conclusion

In these pages, I have laid out my attempt to systematize and codify the tools I used to overcome and stay clear of burnout—so I could enjoy the ride, no matter what. One of the worst feelings I had in the midst of my own struggle was that I was alone and no one could help me through what I was experiencing. I hope this book has provided you the reassurance that not only have others been where you are but that there is a way through this.

I firmly believe that the best thing you could do for yourself today is to take your first small step towards implementing the ideas you've read about here. And tomorrow, take that next step. That step may be as small as buying healthier snacks or taking a ten-, or five-, or even two-minute walk at the end of your day. It may be turning off Netflix a little earlier in the evening and spending fifteen extra minutes reading about something that interests you—or going to bed fifteen minutes earlier. It could be an email to an old friend or signing up for a group that shares your passions.

Whatever step you choose to take, the most important thing is that you take one each day. Go at your own pace, but keep going.



**Manuel Astruc** is the founder of Your Next Act, a coaching program to help high-achieving entrepreneurs find the mental strength to not just survive their ventures but to thrive. When he personally experienced the effects of consciously choosing to embrace happiness in his daily life, he knew he needed to share the knowledge with others.

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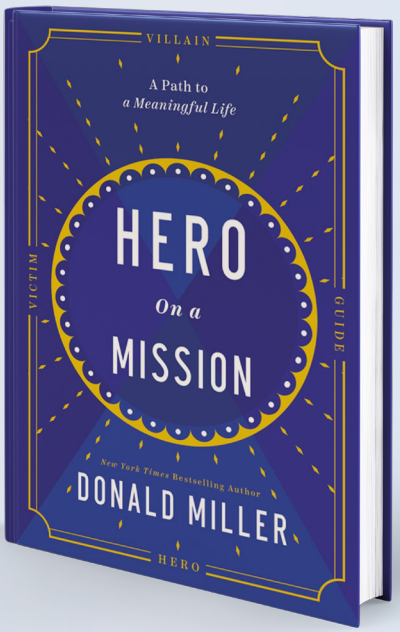
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# Hero On a Mission

Donald Miller

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Hero On a Mission

By Donald Miller

Donald Miller is the CEO of Business Made Simple (BusinessMadeSimple.com), an online platform that teaches business professionals everything they need to know to grow a business and enhance their personal value on the open market. He is the host of the Business Made Simple Podcast and is the author of several books including the bestseller ***Building a StoryBrand.***

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# The Power Of Finding Your Role In Life

Donald Miller is the CEO of Business Made Simple, an online platform that teaches business professionals how to grow and enhance their personal value on the open market. However, he wasn't always happily successful in business and life. He had to put himself into action in order to create meaning.

Before a life of meaning, Miller describes his life as apathetic, sleeping on the floor of an apartment he shared with friends. As an overweight man who spent his time pondering the crumbs in the carpet on the floor, his friends decided to hold an intervention. While this wasn't the magic moment for Miller to choose a life with meaning, it was a key point in time he would reflect back on while on the search for meaning. Not just in the one moment, but in every moment he has lived so far, all the way to the legacy he will pass on to his daughter.

## How to Create a Life of Meaning

As a person lives out their life, they are actually living out their story. It's that person's decision to live in a mindset that makes their story meaningful. As you write your own story, you can either choose to be a victim, villain, hero, or guide. Each one of us has a little bit of all these characters within us. However, the only character that gives us the option to find meaning is the hero. A victim leaves everything to fate, believing they are helpless and need to be rescued. A villain expelled negative energy to those around them. When Miller was sleeping on the apartment floor, he was living somewhere between both of these characters. He was waiting for someone to rescue him from the void he was in while also passive-aggressively leaving dirty dishes in his roommates' beds.

A hero experiences the same pain, but reacts to it as a challenge to learn from. As Miller says, "A hero wants something in life and is willing to accept challenges in order to transform into the person capable of getting what they want." Of course, it's not just about deciding which character you want to live as. It's also about curiosity and desire. The more Miller contemplated the elements that make a good story and how they apply to life, the more curiosity he had about who he could become. Identity is a key component in creating meaning.

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What Miller found is that meaning isn't a one time thing. Every hero's story journey has several subplots to keep the storyteller in constant motion and action. Action starts transformation. And the heroic transformation is where the creation of meaning takes place.

During a bike ride across the United States, Miller experienced the transformation from victim to hero. He decided to ask the question "Can I ride my bicycle across America?" and face the challenge by putting himself into action. The group of fifteen started in Los Angeles and cycled all Summer to end up in Delaware. Though a grueling physical activity, Miller and his co-cyclists found they felt a great amount of achievement after facing every challenge from dehydration to mountain trails. The greatest celebration was hitting the shores and realizing that every single person was able to face and overcome the challenge they set for themselves in the beginning.

Before the plane ride back, Miller stopped into a bookstore hoping for something to kill the time on the way back. What he found was a text that would set his tone for finding meaning in every subplot he chose to write for his life from then on out. His choice of reading? Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning.*

This is when Miller learned Frankl's theory as to why so many people find themselves in an existential vacuum, floating through life and essentially contemplating their belly button lint. "Man did not have a will to pleasure, but a will to meaning. And when man couldn't find meaning, he distracted himself with pleasure."

Enter Frankl's formula to experiencing the meaning of life. The three part formula is quoted in verbatim below:

- Take action creating a work or performing a deed.
- Experience something or encounter someone that you find captivating and that pulls you out of yourself.
- Have an optimistic attitude toward the inevitable challenges and suffering you will experience in life.

All three pieces are needed in order to experience meaning. If any one of them is missing, you're likely to end up back in the existential vacuum, picking at your belly button lint. And not surprisingly, we've all stumbled across this formula, it's success, and the fall back into the vacuum.

Since Miller says meaning "feels as though my life is a story that is interesting to myself and also good for the world", the only way to have meaning is to make it. Action always comes first. It's the decision to do something - writing a book, creating a team, going on a bike ride across the United States. By deciding to challenge yourself through an action, you actually decide to make meaning.

By taking that experience and placing it outside of yourself (into the community around you, the community you create, or nature itself) you're able to keep yourself in hero mode.

And because challenges aren't a guaranteed easy street, you, as a hero, will experience struggle and possibly pain. It's your choice as to how you react to that pain. An optimistic attitude will allow you to learn from it and grow, keeping you as the hero of your story.

Whether it was writing his first book or his third, becoming a father to his daughter, or building a community on his property, Miller has taken Frankl's formula and created a strategy for anyone to live their life like a hero on a mission.

## Create Your Life Plan

In order to use Miller's Hero on a Mission Daily Planner, which he makes easily accessible via QR code, you must create a life plan. This will act like a guide to set goals, prioritize them, and take action.

Step one is to think of your life the same way many writers think of their stories: starting with the end. Most people don't love to think about the end because the end means death. But Miller says, "Because we know that our stories will end, we are gifted with a sense of urgency." In a way, our death gives us a stopwatch. And knowing that one day it will hit zero can make you want to take action sooner rather than later.

So Miller suggests step one of his strategy is to start by writing your eulogy. Think about the kind of impact you want to have on the people around you. Think about the accomplishments you want to be known for. Think about the community you want to build and the legacy you want to leave. All of this equates to the role you aim to play in your own story.

Notice he doesn't limit this to the career role you play. This is the role of life, who you want to be for your family, community, the planet, and so forth. This is who and what you, as a hero, love. It's about how you experience your life outside of yourself, just as Viktor Frankl included in his formula.

Miller points out his belief that Frankl tells us "to find something in life we love - something that strikes a sense of awe inside us - and then make it a daily habit to engage whatever that is." Again, this is in finding something that lights up our excitement outside of ourselves.

A hero's story is never completely about the hero themselves. It's also about the other characters who are affected. As we share our lives, stories, and challenges with others, it becomes less about individual needs and more about a group of protagonists who are seeking meaning together.

Sometimes, that means joining a community of people who share similar interests. Sometimes that means creating a community that doesn't yet exist. Miller gives examples of this, opening his home to a political panel discussion, camping in the wilderness with a group of friends, or inviting neighbors over to a dinner at a large farmhouse style table. A hero on a mission attracts other heroes on missions.

Writing a eulogy is the first step that will allow you to reverse engineer your life goals. It creates a vision for the legacy you

> A hero's story is never completely about the hero themselves."

want to leave behind, which will help you break down long term ten-year goals, a five-year plan, and a daily to-do list that will create impact over time.

In the start of *Hero on a Mission*, Miller references his wife, Betsy, and the child they are expecting. Becoming a father is one of his journeys. When his daughter is born, he realizes his mission isn't about him anymore. It's about what he leaves behind as a legacy. His love, his education, his will to provide an example for his daughter. It becomes very clear to Miller how his hero journey isn't forever. At some point, he will grow older and become a guide. He'll use his experience to help others, like his daughter, on their own journeys. And one day, he'll leave behind his legacy.

This part of Miller's story is reflected in his dog, Lucy, as well. As a puppy, Lucy had taught him the same thing Frankl did: to find joy in things outside of himself. Take a nap. Go for a run. Break from what you're doing and enjoy the outdoors every day. But as Lucy ages, Miller knows he will eventually bury her on Goose Hill, their retreat property, and enjoy the legacy she leaves behind.

This circle happens for all of us. And in Miller's opinion, this is the motivation for all of us to write our eulogy and create a life plan to fulfill what we write down on paper. This creates a vision, which then creates hope and belief in your own agency to accomplish that vision. But of course, you can't actually accomplish that vision without a plan in place. This is where the *Hero on a Mission* Planner comes into play. Heroes need to start their journey somewhere, and as Miller states, "once a storyteller knows where they want their story to go, they plan the moments that will drive their character closer and closer to the climactic scene."

So if step one is writing a eulogy (plot), then step two is writing the elements that make up your life's chapters. Afterall, if you're going to go through a transformation, you might as well plot it out to do so in the right direction.

Miller's ten-year, five-year, and one-year vision exercises are a direct roadmap in the correct direction. "The more care you take to determine the direction of your growth, the more likely your life will look the way you want by the time your story is over." The ten-year, five-year, and one-year plans have all the same sections to fill out. The idea is to continue to reverse engineer a plan, starting with the ten-year worksheet and working your way back. Each one gets closer to the short term goals that are more possible to do now. And once you get to the one-year exercises, it becomes apparent that in order to live out your life plan, you need to start now.

## A Hero Transforms by Taking Action

The *Hero on a Mission* life plan and journal are a tactical reverse engineering strategy to create purpose and meaning in life. You can't rely on fate to provide it for you, because waiting for fate means waiting to be saved as a victim. And while Miller makes a point to say there are real victims in this world who are forced into their situations and really do need saving, those of us who aren't in that situation should not choose to identify as a victim. We can save ourselves.

However, the only way to save ourselves from the existential vacuum is to take action. Find what brings us joy outside of ourselves. Find the community that will join your journey with you. Create a vision for the legacy you want to live. Then, work your way from a ten-year plan to a daily ritual in order to prioritize your goals and accomplish the vision of who you want to be.

## Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

Our lives are a continuous story and once one subplot finishes, it's easy to drift back into the vacuum, staring at the living room carpet and wondering where the crumbs came from. This *Hero on a Mission* plan enables you to take agency and keep yourself from drifting too far back there. As long as your actions are simple to execute, repeatable, and foundation, you'll be able to follow the roadmap straight to where you want to end up: With a legacy that reads just as profound as the eulogy you create to trigger the plan in the first place.

Miller talks about his success with the *Hero on a Mission* plan, "If I get up early and write every day, my entire life settles into a healthy rhythm." He didn't want to become a writer. He wanted to become a person who loves to write.

That's his encouragement to his readers: don't work to become the thing you love. Make a plan to become the person who loves to do the action you decide to take. Meaning only happens when you experience transformation. Transformation only happens when you take action. You have to put aside any tendencies that don't align you with hero energy in order to take the first step.

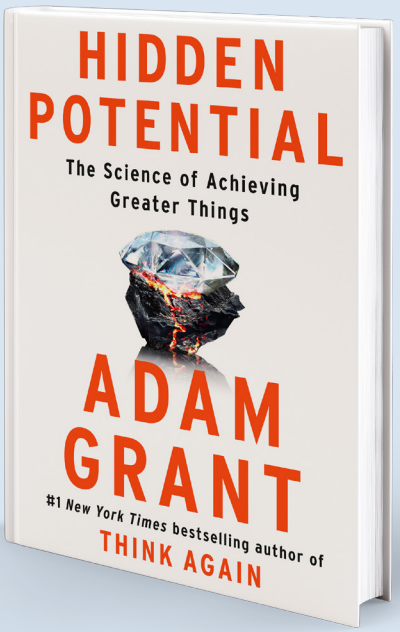
Be your own hero. Save your own self. Decide on transformative action and experience your purpose in life.

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# Hidden Potential

Adam Grant

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Hidden Potential

**The Science of Achieving Greater Things**

*By Adam Grant*

Adam Grant is an organizational psychologist at Wharton, where he has been the top-rated professor for seven straight years. A #1 New York Times bestselling author and one of TED's most popular speakers, his books have sold millions of copies and been translated into 45 languages, his talks have been viewed over 35 million times, and his podcasts Re:Thinking and WorkLife have been downloaded over 65 million times. His pioneering research has inspired people to rethink fundamental assumptions about motivation, generosity, creativity, and potential.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Reaching New Levels of Mastery

In his book, ***Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things***, Adam Grant attempts to help people and groups grow and improve. He focuses his book on such topics as avoiding perfectionism, overcoming stagnation, and improving institutions such as schools and workplaces. He breaks his book up into three different sections, and he includes anecdotes, academic research, and statistics to help his reader understand the importance of each of his concepts.

## Skills of Character

The first set of skills Grant discusses are skills of character. He defines character as "your capacity to prioritize your values over your instincts" Grant sees character as being a plastic or moldable trait. It is not enough for a person to just know their values; more is required in order for a person to live by their values during difficult times. That is where character comes in.

Grant discusses discomfort and embracing awkwardness. For Grant, "the best way to accelerate growth is to embrace, seek, and amplify discomfort." He goes into a discussion of learning styles: an educational theory that maintains that different people learn in different ways. Grant believes that the idea of learning styles is a myth, and he believes that the research backs him up. People have learning preferences, he says, but these preferences can change over time. People develop these preferences based upon what makes them most comfortable. He wants his reader to embrace the discomfort of abandoning a preferred mode of learning, especially because a person's preferred way of learning does not always correspond to the way they learn best.

He moves on to discuss procrastination where he maintains that procrastination does not stem from laziness but rather from a person's desire to avoid the uncomfortable feelings associated with whatever activity is being put off. He believes in the value of doing uncomfortable things as he quotes Ted Lasso, "If you're comfortable, you're doin' it wrong." Grant believes that "it's not enough to simply accept minimal discomfort when it arises. Surprisingly, we're better off actively seeking out discomfort. To do this, people have to be willing

to try new things and make mistakes.

In his second chapter, Grant moves on to discuss ways a person can increase their ability to both absorb information and adapt to it. "Absorptive capacity is the ability to recognize, value, assimilate, and apply new information." This involves the way a person acquires information as well as the way they filter information. On one hand, people can be driven by reactivity and ego, but this often stops learning. Other people drive themselves by proactivity and ego. These people seek out input on what they do and are effectively able to respond to this feedback in ways that can make them better. Others are reactive and growth-oriented. These people are highly coachable because they are able to improve based upon feedback. The most effective people, however, are both proactive and growth oriented, and he describes such people as being sponges. They constantly seek improvement.

Grant's final chapter in this section focuses on dealing with imperfection. He demonstrates a rise in perfectionism in numerous countries including the United States. He believes one factor in this rise is social media where people are focused on curating images for these platforms. Perfectionism is not a good thing. In fact, research shows that perfectionism has no impact on a person's outcomes. If anything, people may perform worse if they are perfectionists than if they had more leeway in their expectations. There are three reasons that explain the harm of perfectionism. The first is that people who are perfectionists tend to focus on unimportant details, and this can cause them to overlook other important problems. Second, perfectionists tend to avoid situations in which they could fail, resulting in a failure to develop new skills. Finally, perfectionists are so harsh on themselves for making mistakes that they tend not to learn from them. In the end, he believes that perfectionism stunts growth. The key is for a person to create achievable and realistic standards and then adjust these standards as necessary. He admits that "finding beauty in imperfection is often easier said than done." Perfectionists do not benefit by hearing someone tell them to do their best. This can actually make performance worse. Rather, they benefit by people giving them both specific and difficult goals.

## Structure for Motivation

In the second part of his book, Grant moves on to scaffolding. The character skills he previously discussed are important, but sometimes more is required in order for a person to truly grow. In such situations, scaffolding becomes important. Scaffolding refers to aid that can be put into place that can help a person achieve what they would not otherwise be able to. Scaffolding frequently comes from outside of oneself, and as such, it is important for people to look outward to others when in need of help. It is important that scaffolding is particularly tailored to the task at hand and that it comes at the right time. Finally, it is important that scaffolding remains temporary so that people can put the structures to the side when it becomes appropriate.

In his fourth chapter, Grant discusses passion. He believes that a key to unlocking potential is "to transform the daily grind into a source of daily joy" He discusses the unsuitability of work obsession because obsessed individuals tend not to perform any better than other people. Rather, they are more prone to exhaustion, burnout, and boreout. He describes that latter as the emotional deadening that can occur from under stimulation. Hard work is important, but it is also important not to drive oneself to the point of obsession.

Instead of obsession, a person should aim for harmonious passion. This refers to "taking joy in a process rather than feeling pressure to achieve an outcome." When a person works within this zone, they are able to become absorbed in a project while the world slips away around them. This happens because the person is not motivated by shoulds. While his book focuses on this quality with musicians, he says it applies to many different areas, and that scaffolding is what will help people bring about that passion.

People can bring out the joy in an activity by incorporating deliberate play. This can come in many different forms including improvisational play and role-playing. He contrasts gamification with deliberate play. In the latter, people often incorporate gimmicks in order to provide subjects with a dopamine rush. This rush helps people avoid boredom. Grant does not believe that this is enough to help people turn something they dislike into something enjoyable the way that deliberate play can. With deliberate play, the goals is to change the very task in order to making it motivating

Next Grant discusses how a person can get unstuck. He believes that getting unstuck can prove to be one of the most difficult parts of skill development. This is where stagnation can come in. He believes that "a rut is not a sign that you've tanked. A plateau is not a cue that you've peaked. They're signals that it may be time to turn around and find a new route." He believes that sometimes this requires a person to choose a different path even if it requires backing up a bit. Researchers have found that after stagnating, people frequently decline before they are able to continue to improve. This improvement comes after a person has found a new method to help them overcome stagnation, and this involves trial and error. To demonstrate this, Grant discusses sports teams when a star player gets injured and cannot play. These teams tend to get worse briefly, but when the star player returns, they are better than ever because the other players had to, through trial and error, figure out ways to step up and improve. In many situations, there is not a clear guide on how to do this. Rather, people have to figure things out one step at a time. Usually, he believes that once a person starts moving down a new path, they will find they never really needed a map to begin with.

Grant discusses the role of teaching in the name of improvement. He references the old adage that people who cannot do something, teach it. He turns this around as he believes that teaching others is a primary way that people can learn and grow. He also finds that those who are experts in an area tend not to be the best teachers because they have forgotten the difficulties faced by beginners and tend to speak over their students' heads. Students often learn more from people who are not experts in a field for this particular reason. Grant comes to the conclusion that expert direction can lead people stranded and frustrated and that a person might learn better from someone with slightly

> **. . . expert direction can lead people stranded and frustrated and that a person might learn better from someone with slightly less expertise."**

less expertise. Another problem with looking to others for help is that often a learner will not share the same sets of strengths and weaknesses as those they are learning from. This means that the starting point towards a set destination is different for different people. Because of this, he recommends people getting advice and guidance from multiple people rather than just one.

In his last chapter in part two, Grant discusses facing daunting tasks. The key is to view daunting tasks as conquerable challenges rather than as threats. This requires a growth mindset and a belief in one's ability to improve. Sometimes scaffolding is necessary in order for a person to achieve this optimal mindset, and this scaffolding can come in the form of bootstrapping. Most people think bootstrapping refers to pulling oneself up out of a predicament or undesirable place without any help, but he says that this is not the case. Rather it refers to a person using the resources they have to improve their position. This is best achieved through interdependence rather than through independence. As an example Grant refers to a class he teaches at Wharton. He told his students that on a particularly difficult test, they could choose one person in their class with which to consult on a single question of their choosing. The students did better on the exam than students in previous years had. This is because the students studied together so they knew who knew what types of information. They worked interdependently.

Grant then moves on to two other types of scaffolding that can help a person overcome difficulties. The first is coaching. He believes that when people help others build confidence, they build their own confidence as well, and they also help a person find their own motivation. Second is through doubt. When people are doubted by experts, they can recoil and fail because they believe the opinions of experts. When people are doubted by less credible authorities, however, motivation can be increased because they want to prove others wrong. In this way, certain types of doubt can help people to achieve what they otherwise would not have been able to.

## Systems of Opportunity

Grant discusses systems of opportunity, beginning with educational opportunity. Grant describes how the education system in the United States "is built around a culture of winner take all" where people are pigeon holed by early perceived innate ability or lack thereof. Those who are perceived as gifted are given ample resources while those perceived as less capable are frequently punished. Finland, whose education system has been proven to be more effective than others, operates under the supposition that all students have abilities that manifest in different ways, and highly autonomous teachers are tasked with the responsibility of discovering and helping develop these abilities in each individual student. Furthermore, students frequently have the same teacher for at least two years in a row. This helps teachers get to know students well and because of this, teachers are able to tailor experiences for them more effectively.

Grant then discusses teams. Referencing the rescue of Chilean miners, he says that building teams is not just about gathering together the best group of experts. Rather, it is about relying on the strengths and contributions of all team members. A big part of effectiveness in groups relies on prosocial skills and the degree to which people understand the need they have for others. He maintains that people often choose the person who speaks the most to be the leader, finding that this to be is a measure of ability. He finds that reactive groups frequently do best with extraverted leaders, but introverts are better leaders for proactive teams where the contributions of many members lead to greater success.

In his final section, Grant focuses his attention on finding hidden gems in job interviews as well as in the college admissions process. He believes that in these arenas, people are at the risk of focusing too much on past achievement instead of looking for the potential for future achievement. It is important that people with authority in these positions focus on people who are still rising to the top amidst numerous roadblocks as well as to look for people who are capable of learning to do a job rather than just on how long a person has done a similar job in the past. He believes that context is important in the judgment of the suitability of individuals for a job or school.

Because he ends his book focusing on systems, Grant effectively shows how his principles can help people in their personal lives, professional lives as well as in their part as a member of a community. Adam Grant's book is highly readable because of the extent to which his concepts are backed up by stories of individuals as well as of groups. This leaves readers with a clear guide for success.

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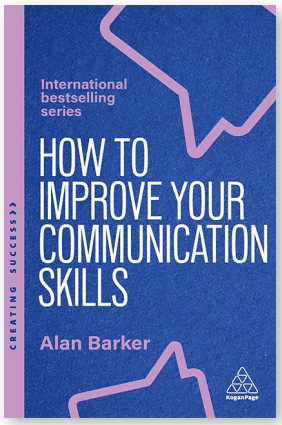
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# How To Improve Your Communication Skills

Alan Barker

Executive Book Summaries®

# How to Improve Your Communication Skills




*by* **Alan Barker**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Communication is at the heart of everything we do. It shapes relationships, fuels collaboration, and determines how effectively ideas become action. We rely on words, tone, and body language every day. Yet even with these tools, communication often falters. The problem isn't unclear messages; it's the gap between what is said and what is understood.

In ***How to Improve Your Communication Skills***, Alan Barker explores communication in its widest sense – not just the transfer of information, but the creation of shared meaning. At its core are conversations, the exchanges where trust is built, ideas are tested, and decisions are made. Barker highlights the skills that bring these moments to life, i.e. listening attentively, asking thoughtful questions, persuading with credibility and empathy, and telling stories that engage both head and heart.

***How to Improve Your Communication Skills*** also offers practical guidance for real-world challenges: presenting with confidence, running effective meetings, navigating tough conversations, and developing authentic networks.

Ultimately, communication is both an art and a discipline. When we focus less on the words we deliver and more on the understanding we create, we unlock the power to collaborate, influence, and lead.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Recognize that communication is more than transmission – it succeeds only when true understanding is created.
- Use pattern-matching to interpret messages, connecting new information to mental models and past experiences.
- Build rapport by mirroring and matching visual, vocal, and verbal cues to foster mutual understanding.
- Strengthen conversations as the core of communication by asking questions, listening actively, and creating shared meaning.

## Part 1: What is communication?

Communicate – it's what we humans do. We're not alone, of course; every living thing sends messages in one way or another to help it navigate its environment or attract others. But we humans seem to have developed certain kinds of communication. We have an extraordinary command of spoken language, but just as impressive is our ability to read facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures. Why, then, should communication be such a problem at work?

### The transmission model

We 'have' an idea. We 'put the idea into words'. We try to 'put our idea across'. The 'receiver' – hopefully – 'gets' the idea. This is the transmission model of communication. And it's very powerful. It governs all the processes and policies by which we communicate in organizations. It suggests that information is objective and measurable. Above all, it's simple. The transmission model is powerful, simple – and wrong.

Communication begins, not with transmission, but with understanding. No matter how effectively I transmit a message, it won't communicate to you if you don't understand it.

### Pattern-matching: The secret of understanding

So how *do* we understand? The simple answer is by pattern-matching. Mental models in our brains filter the information we pick up through our five senses and create meaning. Scientists call this process of filling in the gaps 'perceptual completion'. *How can I distinguish your voice from all the other noise in a crowded room? How can a taste bring back a childhood memory?* Our brains match information to a mental model and *complete* the pattern.

### Building rapport

Every time we meet another person, we're pattern-matching – seeking to understand each other by using our mental models. We usually refer to this process of establishing mutual understanding as 'building rapport'.

Rapport arises principally out of shared behavior. Or, more precisely, two kinds of behavior: Mirroring and Matching. Mirroring refers to the simultaneous 'copying' of another person's behavior. Matching usually has a built-in time lag. For example, if the other person uncrosses their legs, you would wait a few seconds and then do the same.

We can think of mirroring and matching in three kinds of behavior:

- Visual - posture, gestures, and facial expressions. The most important visual element is eye contact. Avoiding eye contact can be disconcerting while staring directly and constantly into the other person's eyes can feel intimidating.
- Vocal - we can vary our pitch (high or low), pace (fast or slow), and volume (loud or soft).
- Verbal - we build verbal rapport through the words we speak. An obvious way to build rapport verbally is to agree with what the other person is saying. An even more powerful technique is to ask a question.

### Communication: A new definition

Communication suffers not from garbled messages, information overload, or interruptions in transmission but because the process of creating shared understanding is breaking down. A clear sign of that breakdown is a lack of rapport.

### Conversation: The currency of communication

The fundamental tool of communication – the principal way by which we seek to share understanding – is conversation. Improving your communication skills means, more than anything else, developing your conversation skills.

## Part 2: Conversation: The basics

### How to start a conversation

How do you start a conversation, especially with someone you don't know? The key is to ask a question. Have a little store of questions ready. Look for something in your shared situation and ask a question relating to that. Keep it simple. It should be open, one that can't be answered with 'yes' or 'no'. Start with one of the six Ws – who, what, when, where, why and how. *How do you know the host? What interested you about this event?* Alternatively, start with a compliment or a relevant personal question. *I really enjoyed your talk. Tell me about that badge you're wearing.*

### Taking turns

The first golden rule of conversation is one speaker at a time.

To take your turn properly, you need to work out when to speak and what to say. And to do both of those things, you'll need to listen. By listening, you will be able to join the conversation naturally. First, come in on cue. Second, show that you've been listening. Third, say something relevant to what your companion has said.

The first golden rule of conversation is one speaker at a time.

### Using the Cooperative Principle

The second golden rule of conversation is to assume that the other person wants to say something meaningful to you. We call this assumption the Cooperative Principle.

The Cooperative Principle helps you take your turn more effectively. You can judge when your companion has finished making a point, or whether they need more time. You can then decide what to say yourself – which should link to what your companion has just said.

### Keeping the conversation on TRAC

The Cooperative Principle lays the foundation for four other assumptions we usually make in our conversations.

We usually assume that speakers in conversations will speak the truth, say something relevant to the topic of the conversation, contribute adequate information, and speak clearly. We can remember these maxims by using a simple acronym: TRAC — True, Relevant, Adequate, Clear.

### Making the most of small talk

One of the best ways to exercise your conversation skills is to hold some social, low-risk, low-stakes conversations.

Small talk is an opportunity to get to know other people and learn something from them. It's also an opportunity to build our own confidence in presenting ourselves to others. The best objective for a conversation is to make your companion feel good about themselves.

Small talk tends to be dominated by a few particular topics. Look for a topic that relates to the situation you find yourselves in or to the person you're talking to. To deepen the conversation, listen attentively. If your companion mentions the city where they went to school, use that detail to ask follow-up questions. Or use the link to tell a story of your own (keep it brief).

Sometimes the conversation will dry up. Or get stuck. That's okay. Have a store of moves ready that will allow you to end a conversation politely and respectfully – 'I hope you don't mind, but I have to…'.

## Part 3: Six ways to improve your conversations at work

### 1 – Clarify your objective

State your objective clearly at the start. This technique is called 'headlining'. For instance, *I want to talk to you about the development plan*.

Objectives roughly divide into two categories: exploring a problem and finding a solution. When you're thinking about your headline, ask: 'Problem or solution?' If you make your objective too specific at the start of the conversation, you might limit your options for success. In a negotiation, for example, think about different possible destinations – what's your preferred outcome, what would you be willing to settle for, and what's not negotiable?

### 2 – Manage your time

Conversations take time, and time is the one entirely non-renewable resource. Generally, an effective conversation will probably start quite slowly and get faster as it goes on. Manage time well, both for and in your conversations.

### 3 – Structure your thinking

You can improve your conversations enormously by giving them structure. The simplest way to structure a conversation is to break it in half. We can imagine thinking as a process in two stages. We do first-stage thinking when we're working out what we're thinking about; we do second-stage thinking when we're working out what to do about it. First-stage thinking explores reality and translates what we have found into language. Second-stage thinking then manipulates the language to decide on an action.

We can break down the two stages of thinking into four conversations:

- Relationship - an exploratory conversation seeking to build rapport and a shared understanding of our objective.
- Possibility - continues the exploration; it develops first-stage thinking and seeks to find new ways of looking at the problem.

- Opportunity - takes you into second-stage thinking; this is a planning conversation focused on future action.
- Action - involves agreeing what to do, who will do it, and when it will happen.

### 4 – Move beyond argument

If you want a conversation to move beyond argument, seek to do two things: distinguish ideas from people and think in parallel. We often identify with our own ideas. When that happens, criticizing an idea becomes, implicitly, a personal attack. When we think in parallel, everyone in the conversation should feel that we're thinking about the same issue or topic, and in the same way. The most satisfying conversations create the sense that we've found common ground.

The Ladder of Inference is another tool that can take our conversations beyond argument. At the bottom of the ladder is observation; at the top, action. We step onto the first rung of the ladder by selecting data (we choose what to look at). In the second rung, we infer meaning from our experience of similar data. In the third rung, we generalize those meanings into assumptions. In the fourth rung, we construct mental models (or beliefs) out of those assumptions. In the fifth rung, we act on the basis of our mental models.

### 5 – Make it visual

Many of our conversations use visual elements. There are lots of ways in which to make our thinking visual. We could draw on paper, draw on a flip chart, or build a model. Some of the most powerful visuals are the images we create in our listeners' minds with words we use.

### 6 – Summarize

Summarizing involves recognizing the specific point someone has made, appreciating the position from which they say it, and understanding the beliefs that inform that position.

## Part 4: The skills of enquiry

### Paying attention

'Seek first to understand, then to be understood.' We seek to understand by enquiring. And the skills of enquiry are the skills of listening. Listening starts with paying attention. Real listening means pausing our own thinking and allowing the speaker's thoughts to enter our mind.

Interrupting is the most obvious symptom of poor attention. We interrupt because we're making assumptions. Once you stop interrupting, the conversation will become quieter. Pauses will appear. Think of these pauses as junctions in the journey of your conversation.

### Treating the speaker as an equal

You'll only enquire well if you treat the speaker as an equal. Speaking raises our status; listening raises the other person's. If you raise your status, you automatically lower theirs. But raising their status might, in effect, lower yours.

Patronizing the speaker is the greatest enemy of equality in conversations.

### Cultivating ease

Good thinking happens in a relaxed environment. Cultivating ease will allow you to enquire more deeply and discover more ideas.

### Be encouraging

In order to liberate the other person's ideas, you may need to do more than pay attention, treat them as an equal, and cultivate ease. You may need to actively encourage them to share their ideas. One of the worst enemies of encouragement is competitiveness. Competition forces people to think only those thoughts that will help them win. Instead of competing, welcome the difference in your points of view. Then try to find common ground.

### Asking quality questions

Questions are at the heart of enquiry. We may stop ourselves from asking a question because we fear challenging authority, or looking stupid. Here are six main types of questions we can use:

- Closed questions – can only be answered with 'yes' or 'no'
- Leading questions – put the answer into the other person's mouth
- Controlling questions – help you to take the lead in the conversation
- Probing questions – build on an earlier question or dig deeper
- Open question – cannot be answered with 'yes' or 'no'
- Reflecting questions – restate the last remark with no new request

### Rationing information

Information is power. Withholding information can be a power move, putting you at an advantage over the other person. But offering too much information can also inter-

To ration information, don't interrupt, time your intervention, filter information, and don't give infomation to show off.

fere with enquiry; it can stop the other person thinking effectively. To ration information, don't interrupt, time your intervention, filter information, and don't give information to show off.

### Giving positive feedback

We use feedback to check that we've understood clearly. But feedback can do more: it can prepare us to switch from listening to speaking – from enquiry to persuasion. It can prepare us to move from first-stage thinking to second-stage thinking, from problem to solution. Begin your feedback by carefully reflecting your companion's idea back to them.

## Part 5: The skills of persuasion

The most successful persuasion will always include a great deal of influencing.

### Character, logic and passion

Persuasion combines three skills: Character (ethos), logic (logos), and passion (pathos).

Ethos is the skill of establishing trust and fostering respect. To develop your ethos, ask: 'Why should this person believe me?' Just saying you share someone's values isn't enough – you need to show it with examples.

Logos constructs an argument: it makes a case, finds reasons to support that case, links the reasons logically to the case, and uses the word 'because' to show the links. But logos never work in isolation. Every argument is based on assumptions. If your listener doesn't share your assumptions, logic alone won't persuade them.

Pathos is defined as an appeal to the emotions. The function of any emotion is to tell us what to do. So, if we want to persuade our audience to do something, we must engage their feelings.

### What's the big idea?

What do you want to say? A single idea is more likely to persuade your listener than a group of ideas because one strong idea is easier to remember. To find that big idea, ask three questions: What is my objective? Who am I talking to? What is the most important thing I have to say to them?

The best way to introduce your big idea might be to tell a story using the Situation, Problem, Question, Response (SPQR) method. Tell the listener something they already know and identify a problem that prompts your listener to ask a question. Your response should be your big idea.

### Arranging your ideas logically

Logic is the glue that binds ideas into arguments. An argument consists of three elements: a claim (the point you're arguing for), a reason (a statement that supports the claim), and the word 'because'. All the logic in your argument is tied up in that simple word: because. Look back at your big idea – that is your claim. It should provoke the question 'Why?' You must answer that question.

### Expressing your ideas

When we express our ideas, we need to combine the rational logos of our argument with the emotional and imaginative appeal of pathos. To express your ideas more vividly, use images, examples, and metaphors. By linking a topic to something the listener already knows, you create a bridge that allows them to cross over into your thinking.

### Remembering your ideas

The art of memory has been replaced by technology. But memory still plays an important part in persuading others. To remember your material, use visual aids such as mind-maps, flipcharts, and whiteboards.

### Delivering effectively

If you're saying one thing but your body is saying another, your listener is unlikely to believe you. To deliver your ideas well, maintain effective eye contact, use your voice well, and make your body language persuasive.

Professional persuaders observe their listeners' behavior and mirror it subtly. Try to match your own posture and movement to that of your listener.

## Part 6: Storytelling and the uses of narratives

### What is a story?

A story has four key features. First, it has a cast of characters, always doing something, interacting with their situation, their environment, or with one another. Second, it includes a moment of tension, a turning point or 'hinge' around which the story revolves. Third, it reaches a conclusion that gives the story social meaning. And fourth, it carries a moral – the 'so what' element, the reason for telling the story in the first place. A story without this final element will always leave us dissatisfied.

### How stories work

Stories are effective because they engage our attention. The human mind has a natural tendency to wander and daydream. A story latches on to that fantasizing tendency and channels it. And stories help us learn. They simulate experiences without us having to live through them; they create a sense of empathy and participation.

### How to tell a good story

To tell a good story, choose a message, choose your characters, and find the plot. Ask what you want your audience to think, feel, and do. Establish your story's subject, topic, and message. Identify the characters in the story, especially the hero. Map out the story's narrative arc.

### Using a narrative to explain

A narrative provides the underlying structure of a good story. We can use narrative structures to help explain and build your explanation around patterns of cause and effect.

### Using a narrative to persuade

We can also use a narrative structure to help us persuade. The trick is to link the narrative arc to the terms of the argument. A simple, powerful structure to do that is called ABT – *And, But, Therefore*.

## Part 7: Making a presentation

Think of a presentation as a formal conversation. It's not the most natural of conversations; you are speaking, and the audience is listening.

### Dealing with nerves

That nervous, jittery feeling is caused by adrenaline, a hormone secreted by your adrenal glands in the fight-or-flight response. Your task is to manage those nerves. And you can start by focusing on your breathing. Breathing in quickens the heartbeat and stimulates adrenaline production; breathing out does the opposite, slowing the heart and the production of adrenaline.

### Preparing for the presentation

The effective presenter understands that their presentation will be affected by a host of uncontrollable factors. You can't plan for the audience's mood. You may not even be able to foresee who'll be there. You can't plan for any sudden external development that might affect your topic. You can't plan for every question that you might be asked.

### Managing material

To make an effective presentation, you must take control of the material, the audience, and yourself.

To prepare the material, define your objective, analyze your audience, construct a message, create a structure, put it on note cards, design visuals, and rehearse. A presentation should *inspire* the audience.

### Controlling the audience

Your relationship with the audience matters much, much more than what you say. They'll forget most of what you say. But they'll remember you. Make eye contact and remember to smile. Animate your face and remember to make everything just a little larger than life so that your face can be 'read' at the back of the room. To control the audience, work on:

- Gestures - keep your gestures open, away from your body and into the room. Don't cross your hands behind your back, and don't put them in your pockets too much.
- Movement - moving about the room shows that you're making your own space, but rhythmic repetitive movement can be annoying.

### Looking after yourself

You will still be nervous as the moment of truth approaches. If you prepare adequately, you should be ready. Rehearse. Rehearsal helps you remember what you want to say, helps get the timing right, and helps you master nerves.

Just before you start, it can be useful to meet the audience and chat with them. It can break the ice and put you at ease. Pay attention to your breathing and articulate your words.

Tough conversations demand more than good intentions. They demand clear thinking, a clear strategy, and clear tactics.

### Answering Questions

Many presenters are as worried about the question session as about the presentation itself. Have a strategy for answering questions. For instance, decide when to take questions, anticipate the most likely questions, answer concisely and honestly, and if you don't know the answer, say so.

## Part 8: Holding a meeting

### How groups work

A meeting is a group of people thinking purposefully together. The group should be thinking in the same way at the same time. Groups have two objectives: task objectives and social objectives.

### Why meetings fail

There are numerous reasons why meetings fail. For example: the meeting is unnecessary, it is held for the wrong reason, the objective is unclear, the wrong people are there, the chair fails to control the meeting effectively, the timing is wrong, and the environment is unhelpful.

### Why are you meeting?

There are a number of good reasons for meeting: to exchange and evaluate information, to solve problems, to resolve conflict, and to inspire.

### Who is attending?

You will probably be taking one of three roles in a meeting. You might be the chair, you might be a participant, and you might be the administrator – responsible for recording the meeting, among other things.

### What's on the agenda?

The best meetings have a single, public agenda. The word 'agenda' is Latin for 'things to be done', so each agenda item is a task. As you gather items for the agenda, look for a logical order or sequence and, if you can, a common thread that holds all the agenda items together. No meeting, or part of a meeting, should last longer than 90 minutes.

### Where are you meeting?

The venue can have a powerful effect on the outcome of your meeting. Is it conveniently located? Is it accessible for people with disabilities? Are you meeting on home ground or on a manager's 'territory'? Everybody should be able to see each other and any screen or monitor. Seats should be comfortable enough to avoid numbness but not so comfortable that people can snooze!

### Meeting online

Meeting online can cut costs and save time; often, they're environmentally friendly. But they demand particular skills from the chair and participants.

When chairing online you should: give plenty of notice, know the technology, create a clear agenda, enforce one conversation at a time, schedule breaks, leave space for remarks, make a closing remark, have a strong internet connection, keep your camera on, dress for success, eliminate distractions, think about your camera background, respect other people's contributions, and know when to speak and when to listen.

### How will you chair?

Whether in a room or online, chairing requires you to do three things: keep the group focused on the task at hand, exploit the contributions of each individual, and develop an atmosphere in which the group can think together.

### Chairing responsibilities

The chair is responsible for making the procedural conventions clear at the opening of the meeting. Lead by example. Abide by your own rules: start on time, state the purpose or objective of the meeting, make all suitable introductions, announce procedures, and outline the meeting timetable.

Closing the meeting well is as important as opening it well. People must know exactly what will happen after the meeting, and who is responsible for making it happen. Delegate as many actions as possible. Summarize what has been decided. Make sure to emphasize the achievements of the meetings and thank everybody for attending and contributing.

## Part 9: Tough conversations

### What makes a conversation tough?

Tough conversations have three key features – the fog of uncertainty particularly in reading the other person's intentions; emotional arousal (emotions cloud our judgment, they often close down the rational part of our brain completely); and a combat mentality (happens when the first two features lead us to use defensive tactics).

### How we make tough conversations tougher

We can make tough conversations tougher by making poor tactical choices. The fog of uncertainty encourages us to blame the other person for the problem and creates a delusion of good intentions. Blame is, in fact, a completely natural and understandable reaction to uncertainty.

Faced with these uncertainties, our minds tend to respond emotionally. Emotional arousal causes us to oversimplify the problem and seek oversimplified solutions, forced either/or decisions, or generalized judgments. The problem, of course, is that this emotional arousal only serves to make a tough conversation tougher.

### Managing tough conversations

How can we break the cycle? We can only manage tough conversations better if we respect ourselves, the other person, and the conversation itself. Self-respect means understanding our own needs and working to meet them. Respecting the other person means remembering their needs and that they are trying to meet them. Respecting the conversation means thinking about it as a landscape to be navigated together.

### Three steps towards better tough conversations

We can adopt a number of techniques to break the cycle of a tough conversation: we can clear the fog of uncertainty by assuming constructive intent, asking questions, and using the Ladder of Inference. We can reduce emotional arousal by working on our breathing and our voice and by paraphrasing the other person's remarks before responding to them. We can transform combat into collaboration by using the 'how to' technique and by responding carefully to the four forms of adversarial thinking: critical thinking, ego thinking, political thinking, and rigid thinking.

Tough conversations demand more than good intentions. They demand clear thinking, a clear strategy, and clear tactics. We need to practice these techniques before finding ourselves in a tough conversation.

## Part 10: Reworking networking

### The power of a network

Effective networkers understand that our wellbeing – and our success – depends on our relationships with others, on the communities of which we are a part. We need to nurture those communities, and networking is one way to do that. Networking is the process of growing and maintaining our personal and professional network.

### Is networking changing?

Networking has changed since the Covid-19 pandemic. Many businesses retain a preference for online networking in terms of travel costs and environmental impact, not to mention the wider access to potential networking contacts. After all, an hour on Zoom can feel hard to beat. Online networking is undoubtedly here to stay. But face-to-face networking remains important. Networking can be strategic or spontaneous. Strategic networking is planned; spontaneous networking happens by chance.

### What makes networking work

Effective networking relies on three qualities. The first is an abundance of mentality. People with an 'abundance of mentality' understand that human resources – knowledge, intelligence, imagination – produce more when they're shared. Developing an abundance mentality means sacrificing something of our own: power, security, and certainty.

The second quality is generosity. An abundance of mentality allows us to give unconditionally. And the most important thing we can give in a conversation is attention.

The third quality is reciprocity. None of us can survive without others' help. Reciprocity helps build trust, which is the only sure foundation for cooperation and collaboration.

### Preparing to network

To prepare to network, you need to build your brand. Your personal brand is what others know you to be – your accomplishments, beliefs, values, and attitudes. To build a brand, we must create a self-introduction that develops rapport and generates interest; it can be one of your greatest networking assets. Keep your self-introduction short: use a verb, be distinctive, provide hooks, and engage. Rehearse. Practice makes perfect.

Now that you've prepared yourself, you need to set clear goals for the networking event.

Communication goes beyond transmitting information – it's about creating shared understanding.

### Networking conversations

However much you prepare, the moment comes when you have to get going. You have to walk into the room and start talking to somebody. At the start of a networking conversation, practice good eye contact and work on establishing rapport. It's more than likely that you won't remember the person's name within the first few minutes of your conversation. A trick to help a name stick is to use their name on first introductions and once or twice during the conversation.

Keep the conversation going by asking questions such as, *'What do you do for a living?'*; '*When did you start on this line of business?'* Be careful with the question 'Why?' It's difficult not to sound like an interrogator using that word however hard you try. Summarize and paraphrase. Check your understanding of what the other person is saying.

Practice joining groups. People worry about how to break into group conversations that are already in progress. One of the best ways to manage a group is to arrive early. You can judge the tightness of a group by how closely people are standing to each other. Conversations rarely survive being extended beyond three people. Look for two people talking and gently insinuate yourself as a third. Make eye contact. Respond to what someone is saying with smiles and nods and ask a question as your first contribution – it's a good way to enter a conversation without being too rude. Find different ways to enter a space by asking permission, such as, *'Excuse me, I don't mean to interrupt, but I overheard you talking about …'*

Close the conversations with care; never leave someone abrupt. Of course you could close a conversation by offering your business card. Business cards are gifts – treat them as such. Keep your card in good condition. Give your card respectfully and receive cards with respect.

### Following up and building your network

Don't waste the opportunities you've worked so hard for. Having contacts is of little use if you don't use them. There are lots of ways of reconnecting to people you have met. You could follow up with gifts of information, links to resources or other people, or ask for help.

Think about each networking relationship as being like a bank account. Make deposits and take care of how you make withdrawals. Use every opportunity to practice your networking skills.

## Conclusion

Communication goes beyond transmitting information – it's about creating shared understanding. People interpret meaning through mental models, pattern recognition, and rapport built with verbal, vocal, and visual cues. At work, breakdowns usually stem from lost understanding, not unclear messages. Conversations are the core, strengthened by open questions, active listening, and clarity (TRAC: True, Relevant, Adequate, Clear). Even small talk can build rapport. Structured discussions move from exploring problems to identifying opportunities and agreeing on actions. Persuasion relies on credibility, logic, and emotion, with stories making messages stick.

Strong communicators practice enquiry: listening fully, asking good questions, treating others as equals, and giving constructive feedback. Success in meetings, presentations, and tough conversations depends on preparation, clear goals, and respect. Meetings require focused agendas, presentations need confident delivery, and difficult discussions call for managed emotions and collaborative intent. Networking extends communication into lasting relationships, built on authenticity and reciprocity. In every context, true communication means achieving understanding.



**Alan Barker** is the Managing Director of Kairos Training Limited, a consultancy focused on developing creativity and communication skills. He leads the Chartered Institute of Marketing's Copywriting Masterclass and is the author of *The Complete Copywriter*, also published by Kogan Page.

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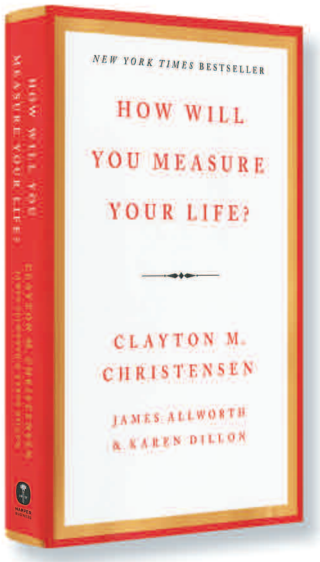
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# How Will You Measure Your Life

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# How Will You Measure Your Life?




by Clayton M. Christensen
James Allworth
and Karen Dillon

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In 2010, world-renowned innovation expert Clayton M. Christensen gave a powerful speech to the Harvard Business School's graduating class. Drawing upon his business research, he offered a series of guidelines for finding meaning and happiness in life. He used examples from his own experiences to explain how high achievers can all too often fall into traps that lead to unhappiness.

The speech was memorable not only because it was deeply revealing but also because it came at a time of intense personal reflection: Christensen had just overcome the same type of cancer that had taken his father's life. As Christensen struggled with the disease, the question, "How do you measure your life?" became more urgent and poignant, and he began to share his insights more widely with family, friends and students.

In this groundbreaking book, Christensen puts forth a series of questions: How can I be sure that I'll find satisfaction in my career? How can I be sure that my personal relationships become enduring sources of happiness? How can I avoid compromising my integrity — and stay out of jail? Using lessons from some of the world's greatest businesses, he provides incredible insights into these challenging questions.

*How Will You Measure Your Life?* is full of inspiration and wisdom and will help students, midcareer professionals and parents alike forge their own paths to fulfillment.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to think about your life and purpose.
- How to get equipped to lead the type of life to which you aspire.
- What critical decisions can bring happiness and success in life.
- How to find happiness in your career.
- How to find happiness in your relationships.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **HOW WILL YOU MEASURE YOUR LIFE?**

**by Clayton M. Christensen**

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## SECTION ONE: FINDING HAPPINESS IN YOUR CAREER

## What Makes Us Tick

When you were 10 years old and someone asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up, anything seemed possible. Your answers then were guided simply by what you thought would make you really happy.

There are a determined few who never lose sight of aspiring to do something that's truly meaningful to them. But for many of us, as the years go by, we allow our dreams to be peeled away. We pick our jobs for the wrong reasons, and then we settle for them.

Too many of us who start down the path of compromise will never make it back. Considering the fact that you'll likely spend more of your waking hours at your job than in any other part of your life, it's a compromise that will always eat away at you. But you need not resign yourself to this fate.

When we find ourselves stuck in unhappy careers — and even unhappy lives — it is often the result of a fundamental misunderstanding of what really motivates us.

### A Better Theory of Motivation

There are two broad camps on the question of how the concepts of incentives and motivation relate to each other.

Back in 1976, two economists, Michael Jensen and William Meckling, published a paper that has been committed to memory by those in the first camp. The paper, which has been one of the most widely cited of the past three decades, focused on a problem known as agency theory, or incentive theory: why don't managers always behave in a way that is in the best interest of shareholders? The root cause, as Jensen and Meckling saw it, is that people work in accordance with how you pay them.

Well, there is a second school of thought — often called two-factor theory, or motivation theory — that turns the incentive theory on its head. It acknowledges that you can pay people to want what you want — over and over again. But incentives are not the same as motivation. True motivation is getting people to do something because they want to do it. This type of motivation continues in good times and in bad.

Frederick Herzberg, probably one of the most incisive writers on the topic of motivation theory, published a breakthrough article in the *Harvard Business Review* focusing on exactly this.

Herzberg notes that the common assumption that job satisfaction is one big continuous spectrum is not actually the way the mind works. Instead, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are separate, independent measures. This means, for example, that it's possible to love your job and hate it at the same time. This theory distinguishes between two different types of factors: hygiene factors and motivation factors.

On one side of the equation, there are the elements of work that if not done right will cause us to be dissatisfied. These are called hygiene factors. Hygiene factors are things like status, compensation, job security, work conditions, company policies and supervisory practices.

Interestingly, Herzberg asserts that compensation is a hygiene factor, not a motivator. Compensation is a hygiene factor. You need to get it right. But all you can

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor In Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Jeannette Scott**, Contributing Editor

aspire to is that employees will not be mad at the company and each other because of compensation.

This is an important insight from Herzberg's research: if you instantly improve the hygiene factors of your job, you're not going to suddenly love it. At best, you just won't hate it anymore. The opposite of job dissatisfaction isn't job satisfaction but rather an absence of job dissatisfaction. They're not the same thing at all.

### The Balance of Motivators and Hygiene Factors

So, what are the things that will truly, deeply satisfy us, the factors that will cause us to love our jobs? These are what Herzberg's research calls motivators. Motivation factors include challenging work, recognition, responsibility and personal growth. Feelings that you are making a meaningful contribution to work arise from intrinsic conditions of the work itself. Motivation is much less about external prodding or stimulation and much more about what's inside of you and inside of your work.

### If You Find A Job You Love …

The theory of motivation — along with its description of the roles that incentives and hygiene factors will play — has given me better understanding of how people become successful and happy in their careers. If done well, management is among the most noble of professions. You are in a position where you have eight or ten hours every day from every person who works for you. I realized that if the theory of motivation applies to me, then I need to be sure that those who work for me have the motivators too. ●

## The Balance of Calculation and Serendipity

Understanding what makes us tick is a critical step on the path to fulfillment. But that's only half the battle. You actually have to find a career that both motivates you and satisfies the hygiene factors. You have to balance the pursuit of aspirations and goals with taking advantage of unanticipated opportunities.

### Balancing Emergent and Deliberate

I'm always struck by how many of my students and the other young people I've worked with think they're supposed to have their careers planned out step by step for the next five years. High-achievers and aspiring high-achievers too often put pressure on themselves to do exactly this.

But having such a focused plan really only makes sense in certain circumstances.

In our lives and in our careers, whether we are aware of it or not, we are constantly navigating a path by deciding between our deliberate strategies and the unanticipated alternatives that emerge. Each approach is vying for our minds and our hearts, making its best case to become our actual strategy. Neither is inherently better or worse; rather, which you should choose depends on where you are on the journey. Understanding this — that strategy is made up of these two disparate elements and that your circumstances dictate which approach is best — will better enable you to sort through the choices that your career will constantly present.

If you have found an outlet in your career that provides both the requisite hygiene factors and motivators, then a deliberate approach makes sense. Your aspirations should be clear, and you know from your present experience that they are worth striving for. Rather than worrying about adjusting to unexpected opportunities, your frame of mind should be focused on how best to achieve the goals you have deliberately set.

But if you haven't reached the point of finding a career that does this for you, then, like a new company finding its way, you need to be emergent. This is another way of saying that if you are in these circumstances, experiment in life. As you learn from each experience, adjust. Then iterate quickly. Keep going through this process until your strategy begins to click. ●

## Your Strategy Is Not What You Say It Is

You can talk all you want about having a strategy for your life, understanding motivation and balancing aspirations with unanticipated opportunities. But ultimately, this means nothing if you do not align those with where you actually expend your time, money and energy.

### Getting the Measure of Success Wrong

More than a decade ago, Seattle-based SonoSite was founded to make handheld ultrasound equipment — little machines that had the potential to truly change health care. Prior to these machines, the only thing that most family doctors and nurses could do when performing an exam was to listen and feel for problems beneath the skin. SonoSite's handheld ultrasound machines, however, made it affordable and easy for primary care doctors and nurse practitioners to see inside their patients' bodies.

SonoSite had two families of handheld products. Its principal product, dubbed the Titan, was about as big as a laptop computer. The other, branded the iLook, was less than half the size of the Titan — and one-third the price.

The iLook was not as sophisticated as the Titan or as profitable, but it was much more portable. The company's president and CEO, Kevin Goodwin, knew there was a promising market for it — the iLook had managed to generate a thousand sales leads in the first six weeks after its introduction. It became clear that if SonoSite didn't sell it, someone else was likely to develop the same compact, inexpensive technology and disrupt the sales of the more expensive machines — and SonoSite itself.

Eager to see firsthand how customers were responding to the new, smaller product, Goodwin asked to attend a sales call with one of the company's top salespeople.

The salesman sat down with the customer and proceeded to sell the Titan — the laptop ultrasound. He didn't even pull the iLook handheld out of his bag. After 15 minutes, Goodwin decided to intervene.

"Tell them about the iLook," Goodwin prompted the salesman. But he was completely ignored. The salesman continued to extol the virtues of the Titan. Goodwin asked one of his best salespeople three times to sell the iLook — in front of the customer. Each time, he was completely dismissed.

The salesman wasn't deliberately trying to defy Goodwin. In fact, he was doing exactly what the company wanted him to do — sell the product that provided the highest return.

The problem was that the salespeople were all on commission, and success for them was defined by the total value of their sales and gross margin dollars. It was much easier for Goodwin's best salesman to sell one of the laptop-size ultrasound machines than it was to sell five of the little products. In other words, Goodwin thought that he was giving clear instructions into the salesman's ear. But the compensation system was shouting the opposite instructions into his other ear.

### Allocation Resources Among Your "Businesses"

In the words of Andy Grove, "To understand a company's strategy, look at what they actually do rather than what they say they will do." Resource allocation works pretty much the same way in our lives and careers. Gloria Steinem framed strategy for her world as Andy Grove did for his: "We can tell our values by looking at our checkbook stubs." The dilemma of what machine to pull out of a salesperson's bag is very similar to the dilemma we all face near the end of a workday: do I spend another half hour at work to get something extra done, or do I go home and play with my children?

Here is a way to frame the investments that we make in the strategy that becomes our lives: we have resources — which include personal time, energy, talent and wealth — and we are using them to try to grow several "businesses" in our personal lives. These include having a rewarding relationship with our spouse or significant other, raising great children, succeeding in our careers, contributing to our church or community and so on. Unfortunately, however, our resources are limited, and these businesses are competing for them. It's exactly the same problem that a corporation has.

With every moment of your time, every decision about how you spend your energy and your money, you are making a statement about what really matters to you.

How do you make sure that you're implementing the strategy you truly want to implement? Watch where your resources flow — the resource allocation process. If it is not supporting the strategy you've decided upon, you run the risk of a serious problem. If the decisions you make about where you invest your blood, sweat and tears are not consistent with the person you aspire to be, you'll never become that person. ●

## SECTION TWO: FINDING HAPPINESS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

## The Ticking Clock

The relationships you have with family and close friends are going to be the most important sources of happiness in your life. But you have to be careful. When it seems like everything at home is going well, you will be lulled into believing that you can put your investments in these relationships onto the back burner.

### Investing for Future Happiness

Many of us thrive on the intensity of a demanding job — one that we believe in and enjoy. We like proving what we can do under pressure. Our projects, our clients and our colleagues challenge us. We invest ourselves in our jobs. But in order to accomplish all this, we start to think of our jobs as requiring all our attention — and that's exactly what we give them.

Unfortunately, the same consequences that businesses face for failing to invest for the future apply to us too.

While most of us do have a deliberate strategy for creating deep, love-filled relationships with members of our family and our friends, in reality, we invest in a strategy for our lives that we would never have aspired to: having shallow friendships with many but deep friendships with none; becoming divorced, sometimes repeatedly; and having children who feel alienated from us within our own homes or who are raised by a stepparent sometimes thousands of miles away.

And we can't turn the clock back. ●

## What Job Did You Hire That Milkshake For?

Almost everyone has heard of the discount furniture store IKEA. IKEA has taken a totally different approach. Rather than organizing themselves around the characterization of particular customers or products, IKEA is structured around a job that customers periodically need to get done.

A job? Through my research on innovation for the past two decades, my colleagues and I have developed a theory about this approach to marketing and product development, which we call "the job to be done." The insight behind this way of thinking is that what causes us to buy a product or service is that we actually hire products to do jobs for us. The mechanism that causes us to buy a product is, "I have a job I need to get done, and this is going to help me do it."

### Cheaper? Chocolatier? Chunkier?

The job-to-be-done theory began to coalesce in a project that I worked on with some friends for one of the big fast-food restaurants. The company was trying to ramp up the sales of their milkshakes. The company had spent months studying the issue. They worked and worked on making the milkshake better as a result — but these improvements had no impact on sales or profits whatsoever. The company was stumped.

My colleague Bob Moesta then offered to bring a completely different perspective to the milkshake problem: "I wonder what job arises in people's lives that causes them to come to this restaurant to 'hire' a milkshake?"

So they stood in a restaurant for hours on end, taking very careful data: What time did people buy these milkshakes? What were they wearing? Were they alone?

Surprisingly, it turned out that nearly half of the milkshakes were sold in the early morning. The people who bought those morning milkshakes were almost always alone; it was the only thing they bought; and almost all of them got in a car and drove off with it.

We came back another morning and stood outside the restaurant. As customers emerged we essentially asked each of them in language that they could understand, "Excuse me. Can you help me understand what job you are trying to do with that milkshake?"

As we put all the answers together, it became clear that the early-morning customers all had the same job to do: they had a long and boring ride to work. They needed something to do while driving to keep the commute interesting. They weren't really hungry yet, but they knew that in a couple of hours, they'd face a mid-morning stomach rumbling.

### What Job Are You Being Hired For?

If you work to understand what job you are being hired to do both professionally and in your personal life, the payoff will be enormous.

Like those milkshake buyers, you and your wife can't always articulate what the fundamental jobs are that you each are personally trying to do, let alone articulate the fundamental jobs that your wife has for which she might hire a husband. Understanding the job requires the critical ingredients of intuition and empathy. You have to be able to put yourself not just in her shoes but her chair — and indeed, her life. More important, the jobs that your spouse is trying to do are often very different from the jobs that you think she should want to do.

It's easy for any of us to make assumptions about what our spouse might want, rather than work hard to understand the job to be done in our spouse's life.

### Sacrifice and Commitment

This may sound counterintuitive, but I deeply believe that the path to happiness in a relationship is not just about finding someone who you think is going to make you happy. Rather, the reverse is equally true: the path to happiness is about finding someone who you want to make happy, someone whose happiness is worth devoting yourself to.

Thinking about your relationships from the perspective of the job to be done is the best way to understand what's important to the people who mean the most to you. It allows you to develop true empathy. Asking yourself, "What job does my spouse most need me to do?" gives you the ability to think about it in the right unit of analysis.

But you have to do that job. You'll have to devote your time and energy to the effort, be willing to suppress your own priorities and desires, and focus on doing what is required to make the other person happy. ●

## Sailing Your Kids on Theseus's Ship

With the best of intentions, we hand our children off to a myriad of coaches and tutors to provide them with enriching experiences — thinking that will best prepare our kids for the future. But helping our children in this way can come at a high cost.

### Never Outsource the Future

The history of outsourcing in the American semiconductor industry, for example, chronicles the woes that betide companies that blindly adhere to outsourcing. At the outset, it made all the sense in the world to outsource the simplest of the steps entailed in making semiconductor products to Chinese and Taiwanese suppliers. The American semiconductor companies thought they were safe as they retained the more complex and profitable steps, such as product design.

But although the Asian suppliers started out by assembling only the simplest of products, they didn't want to stay there. It was low-cost work, and almost anyone could do it. They knew that they would be vulnerable to losing that work to an even lower-cost assembler. So those Asian suppliers strove to keep moving up-market, fabricating and assembling ever more sophisticated products. Now the suppliers in Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and China have become capable of making products and components that their American customers, who outsourced to these suppliers in the first place, could no longer hope to ever make.

### The Greek Tragedy — Inside Our Families

As a general rule, in prosperous societies we have been outsourcing more and more of the work that a generation ago was done "internally" in the home. There was so much work going on that children essentially worked for their parents.

Step by step over the past 50 years, it has become cheaper and easier to outsource this work to professionals. Now, the only work being done in many of our homes is a periodic cleanup of the mess that we make. In the absence of work, we've created a generation of parents who selflessly devote themselves to providing their children with enriching experiences — so-called soccer moms, a term that wasn't even part of the American lexicon until 15 years ago. They lovingly cart children around to soccer, lacrosse, basketball, football, hockey and baseball teams; dance, gymnastics, music and Chinese lessons; send them on a semester abroad to London and to so many camps that many children don't even have the time to get a part-time job in the summer.

Are the children developing from these experiences the deep, important processes such as teamwork, entrepreneurship and learning the value of preparation? Or are they just going along for the ride? When we so heavily focus on providing our children with resources, we need to ask ourselves a new set of questions: Has my child developed the skill to develop better skills? The knowledge to develop deeper knowledge?

### Children Learn When They Are Ready to Learn

Denying children the opportunity to develop their processes is not the only way outsourcing has damaged their capabilities either. There is something far more important at risk when we outsource too much of our lives: our values.

In outsourcing much of the work that formerly filled our homes, we have created a void in our children's lives that often gets filled with activities in which we are not involved. As a result, when our children are ready to learn, it is often people whom we do not know or respect who are going to be there.

There's a wonderful conundrum left to us by the Greeks. It was first put to print by the author Plutarch, and it's known as the Ship of Theseus. As a tribute to the mythical founder of their city — famed for slaying the Minotaur — the Athenians committed to keeping Theseus's ship seaworthy in the harbor of Athens. As parts of the boat decayed, they were replaced ... until eventually, every last part of the boat had changed.

The conundrum was this: given that every last part of it had been replaced, was it still Theseus's ship? The Athenians still called it Theseus's Ship, but was it?

If your children gain their priorities and values from other people ... whose children are they? Children need to do more than learn new skills. The theory of capabilities suggests they need to be challenged. They need to solve hard problems. They need to develop values. Children will learn when they're ready to learn, not when you're ready to teach them; if you are not with them as they encounter challenges in their lives, then you are missing important opportunities to shape their priorities — and their lives. ●

## The Schools of Experience

Helping your children learn how to do difficult things is one of the most important roles of a parent. It will be critical to equipping them for all the challenges that life

will throw at them down the line. But how do you equip your kids with the right capabilities?

### Is it Really the Right Stuff?

In 1979, writer Tom Wolfe captured the public imagination with his depiction of one of the most competitive professional environments in the world: the screening of American fighter pilots. To find out who should rise to the top, the pilots battled it out in an ever-increasing test of nerves, a kind of Darwinian gauntlet. Early NASA executives had decided this was how to identify who had been born with the "right stuff." Those who thrived under the white-knuckle pressure of the program were deemed natural-born heroes.

Many companies looking to make top staffing decisions tend to replicate the same kind of thinking: that somehow there is a definitive way to identify the difference between the good and the great. In business, the "test" is what a resume shows; you can tell by this whether a candidate is likely to thrive in a challenging new position.

If finding the right stuff is a good way to identify top talent, why is it so common to see executives with a successful track record in one company coming into another company with great fanfare — only to be quickly dubbed a failure and ushered out?

It wasn't until I came across work initially developed by Morgan McCall, a professor at the University of Southern California, in a book called *High Flyers* that I finally found a theory that could help people make better decisions about whom to hire in their future.

The "right stuff" thinking lists skills that are correlated with success. It is, using the description of theory discussed earlier, looking to see whether job candidates have wings and feathers. McCall's schools of experience model asks whether they have actually flown, and if so, in what circumstances. This model helps identify whether someone, in a earlier assignment, has actually wrestled with a problem similar to the one he will need to wrestle with now.

### Sending Your Kids to the Right School

Thinking back on your own life, I bet you had many visits to various schools of experience, some more painful than others. Obviously, it will help a lot if you can work out which courses will be important for you to master before you need them.

When I worked with Boy Scouts over the years, I always wanted the kids to take responsibility for organizing their own camping trips rather than letting the parents step in to do it. When they had to do it themselves, they learned how to plan and organize, how to divide responsibilities, how to communicate among a group and to appreciate what they'd actually put their own work into.

It sure would have been easier to allow the parents to work through and divide up the tasks on the "to do" list for every trip. We probably would have prepared efficiently for every eventuality — and the boys would certainly have had fun. All they would have had to do was show up. But we would have been denying them important courses — leadership, organization and accountability.

The natural tendency of many parents is to focus entirely on building your child's resume: good grades, sports successes and so on. It would be a mistake, however, to neglect the courses your children need to equip them for the future. Once you have that figured out, work backward: find the right experiences to help them build the skills they'll need to succeed. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give them. ●

## The Invisible Hand Inside Your Family

One of the most powerful tools to enable us to close the gap between the family we want and the family we get is culture.

### How Does Culture Form in a Company?

Culture is far more than general office tone or guidelines. Schein defined culture and how it is formed in these terms:

*Culture is a way of working together toward common goals that have been followed so frequently and so successfully that people don't even think about trying to do things another way. If a culture has formed, people will autonomously do what they need to do to be successful.*

Those instincts aren't formed overnight. Rather, they are the result of shared learning — of employees working together to solve problems and figuring out what works.

### This Is the Way Our Family Behaves

The parallels between a business and a family should be clear. Just like a manager who wants to count on employees using the right priorities to solve problems, parents want to set those priorities too so that family members will solve problems and confront dilemmas instinctively whether or not the parents are there guiding or observing. Kids won't have to stop and think about what Mom or Dad wants them to do — they'll

just go about it because their family culture has dictated, "This is the way our family behaves."

What is important is to actively choose what matters to you and then engineer the culture to reinforce those elements, as Schein's theory shows. It entails choosing what activities we pursue and what outcomes we need to achieve so that as a family, when we have to perform those activities again, we all think, "This is how we do it."

As people work together to solve challenges repeatedly, norms begin to form. The same is true in your family: when you first run up against a problem or need to get something done together, you'll need to find a solution.

It's not just about controlling bad behavior; it's about celebrating the good. This is what is so powerful about culture. It's like an autopilot. What is critical to understand is that for it to be an effective force, you have to properly program the autopilot — you have to build the culture that you want in your family. If you do not consciously build it and reinforce it from the earliest stages of your family life, a culture will still form — but it will form in ways you may not like. Although it's difficult for a parent to always be consistent and remember to give your children positive feedback when they do something right, it's in these everyday interactions that your culture is being set. ●

## SECTION THREE: STAYING OUT OF JAIL

# Just This Once…

Most of us think that the important ethical decisions in our lives will be delivered with a blinking red neon sign: CAUTION: IMPORTANT DECISION AHEAD. Never mind how busy we are or what the consequences might be. Almost everyone is confident that in those moments of truth, he or she will do the right thing.

The problem is, life seldom works that way. It comes with no warning signs. Instead, most of us will face a series of small, everyday decisions that rarely seem like they have high stakes attached. But over time, they can play out far more dramatically.

### 100 Percent of the Time Is Easier Than 98 Percent of the Time

Many of us have convinced ourselves that we are able to break our own personal rules "just this once." In our minds, we can justify these small choices. None of those things, when they first happen, feels like a life-changing decision. The marginal costs are almost always low. But each of those decisions can roll up into a much bigger picture, turning you into the kind of person you never wanted to be. That instinct to just use the marginal costs hides from us the true cost of our actions.

The first step down that path is taken with a small decision. You justify all the small decisions that lead up to the big one, and then you get to the big one, and it doesn't seem so enormous anymore. You don't realize the road you are on until you look up and see that you've arrived at a destination you would have once considered unthinkable.

If you give in to "just this once" based on a marginal-cost analysis, you'll regret where you end up. It's easier to hold your principles 100 percent of the time than it is to hold to them 98 percent of the time. The boundary — your personal moral line — is powerful because you don't cross it; if you have justified doing it once, there's nothing to stop you from doing it again. Decide what you stand for. And then stand for it all the time.

# Epilogue

I promise my students that if they take the time to figure out their life's purpose, they'll look back on it as the most important thing they will ever have discovered. I warn them that their time in school might be the best time to reflect deeply on that question. Fast-paced careers, family responsibilities and tangible rewards of success tend to swallow up time and perspective. They will just sail off from their time at school without a rudder. In the long run, clarity about purpose will trump knowledge of activity-based costing, balanced scorecards, core competence, disruptive innovation, the four Ps, the five forces and other key business theories we teach at Harvard.

What's true for the students is true for you too. If you take the time to figure out your purpose in life, I promise that you will look back on it as the most important thing you will have ever learned. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *How Will You Measure Your Life*, you'll also like:

1. ***Great Work, Great Career* by Stephen R. Covey and Jennifer Colosimo.** How do you create a great career? Covey and Colosimo offer a complete handbook for anyone seeking answers.
2. ***Mojo* by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The best-selling author and executive coach lays out the ways that we can get and keep our Mojo.
3. ***The Power of Full Engagement* by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz.** The authors discuss the four key sources of energy and provide a scientific approach to create energy management rituals that are specific to the results you need.

· Book 112 of 269 ·

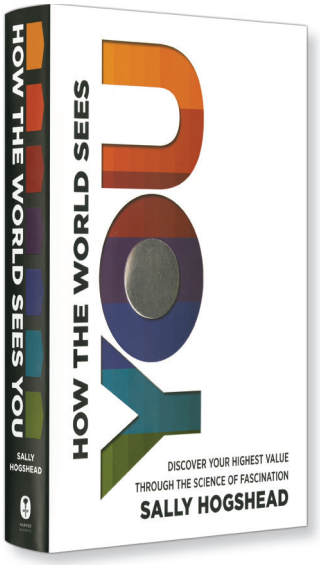
# How the Word Sees You

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November 2014

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Career & Self-Development




# How the World Sees You

## Discover Your Highest Value Through the Science of Fascination

by Sally Hogshead

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You already know how *you* see the world. But do you know *how the world sees you*? How is your personality most likely to impress and influence the person sitting on the other side of the desk or boardroom?

Once you know what makes you valuable to others, you're more authentic and confident and more able to make a positive impression. It all begins with understanding how the world sees you — at your best. *How the World Sees You* gives you the step-by-step method to describe yourself in just two or three words. This short phrase is your Anthem, the tagline for your personality. Your Anthem guides you like a mission statement, helping you to build your team, write a LinkedIn profile or captivate an audience.

To become more successful, you do not have to change who you are — you have to become *more* of who you are. Based on Hogshead's research with hundreds of thousands of participants, including dozens of Fortune 500 teams, hundreds of small businesses and over a thousand C-level executives, *How the World Sees You* reveals who you are at your best so you can create better relationships, grow your business, and become intensely valuable to those who matter most.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why you need to know your highest distinct value and how to discover it.
- The Seven Fascination Advantages and how they form Archetypes.
- How to create and use Anthems to mobilize your distinct Advantage in business and life.
- How to help employees become more of who they already are.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **HOW THE WORLD SEES YOU**

**by Sally Hogshead**

**The author:** Sally Hogshead rose to the top of the advertising profession in her early twenties, writing ads that fascinated millions of consumers. Her internationally acclaimed book *Fascinate: Your 7 Triggers to Persuasion and Captivation* has been translated into over a dozen languages. She frequently appears in national media, including NBC's *Today* show.

From *How the World Sees You: Discover Your Highest Value Through the Science of Fascination* by Sally Hogshead.
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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or www.HowToFascinate.com.

## Where It Begins: Unlearn Boring

On the day you were born, you already knew how to fascinate. Like breathing and swallowing and smiling, the ability to fascinate is a hardwired survival mechanism. Fascination is an instinctive form of connection. We all have this ability in some form.

But over time, people can lose their innate ability to fascinate. They acquire layers of boring. Like an oyster protecting itself against the grain of sand, people build shells that they believe can shield them from a negative outcome. You've seen this before or perhaps experienced it. The employee who waters down his ideas in order to shield himself from criticism. The new entrepreneur who tries to run her business just like everyone else and ends up with a "me-too" product. In any pressured environment, it can be easier to stay in the background. Unnoticed seems easier than unworthy.

Hiding works for a while. But it always backfires. You will never be your most successful when evaluated according to criteria that do not allow you to stand out.

Most people are afraid they have nothing special to give. They think there's nothing distinctly valuable that they can offer. Even when people do want to rise above the fray, they are terrified by the prospect of what to do with the attention once they've successfully earned it.

Your most fascinating traits are your most valuable traits. Too often, these traits are the first to go in favor of blending in or avoiding criticism. Yet, when you dull your edges, on some level you're giving up.

### How You Add Value

Your personality has a specific Advantage. When you communicate according to this Advantage, you will be more likely to add distinct value. What makes the Fascination Advantage system different from other assessments? Most assessments measure how you see the world. This system looks at the cues and signals that you're intentionally or unintentionally sending to the world and the pros and cons of each.

As conversations become more compressed and the marketplace more crowded, you need to know how others see you and respond to you. Rather than just knowing your strengths, you need to know your *differences.* The Fascination Advantage combines both personality *and* marketing into one system.

## PART I: HOW DOES THE WORLD SEE YOU?

## Why Discover Your Highest Distinct Value

Let's say you think you're funny. As far as you're concerned, a sense of humor is one of your best traits. There's just one problem: Nobody else thinks you're funny.

It's not enough to only consider *how you see yourself.* You must also consider *how the world sees you*. If nobody else thinks you're funny ... well, you're probably not funny. Humor is in the eye of the beholder. So are likability, leadership, and a range of other subjective qualities that are rooted in the perception of others. You get a vote, but your listener has veto power.

You want your messages to connect, or to educate, or to inform or to inspire. No matter what your message is *about*, each one of your messages has an intended purpose.

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Each time you communicate, you want people to listen and remember that message, and to positively anticipate your future messages. You want them to take action, change a behavior or be inspired.

### What the Violin Player Learned

In a recent experiment, one of the most famously exquisite violinists of our time, Joshua Bell, played in Washington, D.C. down in the subway, anonymously and without fanfare, drawing attention to his music only with his skill and priceless violin. Yet 1,000 people moved right past him through rush hour, oblivious. If one of the most celebrated musicians of all time cannot compete to earn attention in a distracted, competitive environment, how can you?

Today it's not enough to be the world's best if no one realizes you're there. In the battle against competition, our talents and skills are hopelessly lost unless we find a way to fascinate our listener. It's your job to show us why we should care.

Luckily, you already have the defining traits you need to stand out and be heard. Which is good, because you'll need to call upon every one of them. You're doing battle in a distracted and competitive world. Get ready to encounter the three deadly threats.

### Meet Your Archenemies

**Distraction** threatens your connection with others. Your listeners are distracted. Your customer goes from vendor to vendor. Your coworker goes from email to email. Your employees go from putting out one fire to the next. Every time you introduce yourself, you have about nine seconds to engage your listener. This is your window of opportunity for connection. If you earn their interest during those nine seconds, people will be more likely to engage further. If you fail to add some sort of value in that golden window, they're less likely to listen to what you say, let alone remember it or take action on it.

**Competition** threatens your ability to stand out and win. While businesses have been focusing on being "better," customers have gone in a different direction. *Different* is better than better. Different doesn't try to turn you into something else. Different allows you to highlight the singular traits you already have within you. You aren't necessarily better than your competition. But you are already different.

**Commoditization** threatens your relationships and loyalty. Commoditization is a silent assassin. It permeates your relationships with complacency, shaving off your points of difference, sapping your defining qualities, and eventually transforming you and your vibrant one-of-a-kind edge into generic replicas. If you become a commodity in the eyes of your customers, it means you're vulnerable. You can be easily replaced.

### Triumph by Adding Distinct Value

Beyond earning attention, leading with your specialized personality traits, and fighting the good fight even after you have earned the business, there is something you can be doing — should be doing — that will allow you to fascinate and succeed at every phase of the business cycle: Add distinct value. If you want to add value ...

- You become admired for a noteworthy ability to contribute a specific benefit.
- You're worth more than you're being paid.
- You deliver more than would normally be expected.
- You are the preferred option, even if you are more expensive or less convenient.

Your highest distinct value: You're already quite familiar with these three words, but they take on special meaning when combined. Let's break it down:

**Highest:** The pinnacle of who you already are; what makes you already exceptional.

**Distinct:** How you are different.

**Value:** Your specialized ability to deliver above and beyond what's expected.

When you live according to your highest distinct value, you become your most fascinating and most valuable self.

## How to Discover Your Highest Distinct Value

In certain types of situations, you will fascinate your listener. People will pay close attention to what you say. They'll ask your opinion and value your input. In these moments, you'll feel energized and purposeful, because it's clear you're adding value. In these moments, you're applying your most natural mode of communication. On the other hand, other situations put you at a real disadvantage. When you communicate in these situations, you'll struggle to get your point across. You won't be confident or feel at ease. You are unlikely to fascinate.

You know what fascination feels like. Fascination happens when you're engrossed in a cool project at work and feel so purposeful and focused that you completely lose track of time. This is the mental, emotional and physical state of focus, of being completely engaged.

When you're fascinated, you're not pretending or posing. You can drop the mask and just *be yourself.*

### The Art of Fascination

Think of your own favorite brands, maybe Apple or Pinkberry, Southwest or Zappos. When consumers are fascinated by a brand, it no longer has to compete on price. All great brands triumph over the three threats of distraction, competition and commoditization in the same way: by *adding distinct value.*

People will pay up to four times more for a product that fascinates them in some way. When a product is successful, it fascinates its customers; it is treated very differently than the generic version. People are willing to not only spend more but also spend more time with it. They make a greater effort to find it, they take better care of it, and they derive more enjoyment from it. The same is true for you.

When you make it easy for others to understand *how you are different* and *what you do best,* you're more likely to be rewarded for it. The key here is to fully recognize your *differences* rather than just your *strengths.* The reality is, strengths can be copied. People can copy your product, your pricing, your actions, your recipe or program or formula. But they can never replicate who you are. Who you are is the greatest differentiator you've ever had.

Once you understand what makes you different, you can leverage those differences to avoid commoditization. You are perfect for certain things. You are wrong for others. You do not have to be perfect for everything. Find the challenges that you're truly perfect for rather than merely adequate for. Find the situations in which you distinguish yourself, situations that allow you to fascinate effortlessly.

### Maximize Value, Subtract Everything Else

Every single time you communicate with someone, you are either *adding value* (and reinforcing why they should prioritize you) or *taking up space* (and reinforcing that your messages are irrelevant spam). In marketing, these interactions are sometimes called "touchpoints." They are points of contact. Every single interaction is a touchpoint.

Every touchpoint should highlight what makes you different and better. Every business email, every business lunch, every direct mail piece, every social media update and every expense report should reinforce your value proposition. If you can't improve people's perception of you or at the very least maintain it, then reconsider whether you should be engaging in the first place.

You will never rise to your greatest potential by being all things to all people. Maximize value. Subtract everything else. Remove it from the equation so that you're not being evaluated according to your dormant Advantage. Then you're far more likely to exceed expectations at every turn.

## PART II: THE FASCINATION ADVANTAGE SYSTEM

# The Seven Fascination Advantages

There are seven different ways to successfully communicate. Seven different ways to break through and win. These are the seven Fascination Advantages. Each of these has a distinct way of adding value. Each follows a particular formula. Each has a different approach to building relationships and fascinates for different reasons.

There isn't one Advantage that's better than the others. However, there are one or two that will be most effective and authentic for you. Tap into your particular Advantages, and you'll become the most valuable you.

**The Power Advantage:** Leading Through Authority. Power personalities speak the language of confidence. They inspire others through bigger goals and stronger opinions. Since they usually know what they want, they often lead the discussion. You'll find they ask direct questions, taking charge of a conversation, leaning in and stepping forward. They're comfortable in leadership positions and motivate others to rise to their best. Decisive and self-assured, they don't mind being the ones who make difficult decisions. Hire more Power personalities if your company needs stronger, more decisive leadership.

**The Passion Advantage:** Creating Warm Emotional Connections. Passion personalities speak the language of relationship. Their ability to forge relationships builds wide networks. Approachable and gregarious, they usually build rapport with prospects, customers and colleagues, which allows them to excel in positions that require strong interpersonal skills. Hire more Passion personalities if you want to build stronger personal connections with customers.

**The Mystique Advantage:** Thinking Before Speaking. Mystique personalities speak the language of listening. They tend to be solo intellects behind the scenes. Their ability to see the nuances of a situation and think things through gives them an edge over more outgoing personalities. Independent and analytical, they systematically gather evidence before reaching a conclusion and analyze statistics before making up their mind. Hire more Mystique personalities if you want to implement a more analytical approach or need to boost your team's negotiation power.

**The Prestige Advantage:** Achieving Success With Higher Standards. Prestige personalities speak the language of excellence. Their personal and professional aim is to always get better to exceed expectations. When excellence matters, they know how to push for success. Ambitious and determined, they don't want to disappoint. They help and encourage coworkers to achieve in everything they do. These overachievers are admired for their assertiveness, expertise and high-quality results. Hire more Prestige personalities if you want to raise standards, improve team performance or iron out quality issues.

**The Alert Advantage:** Careful Precision. Alert personalities speak the language of details. When details matter, Alert has an upper hand over less structured personalities. They are watchful, aware, with an ability to manage complex projects. Their risk-averse attitude helps them to avoid mistakes. They know the critical path of their projects by heart. They understand that minor issues can cause major delays. They never lose track of deadlines. They're able to juggle conflicting requirements, such as meeting tight deadlines without compromising product specifications. Hire more Alert personalities if you want to get things done.

**The Innovation Advantage:** New Ideas and Solutions. Innovation personalities speak the language of creativity. Their creativity gives them an edge when old solutions don't work anymore. These are the seekers of adventure. The experimenters. The proponents of the new. Their talent for new thinking helps them to propose unexpected solutions. They are able to develop a profusion of ideas, often quickly. Irreverent and entrepreneurial, they encourage others to break habits and to try new products and fresh ideas. Hire more Innovation personalities if you need to challenge the status quo or if you need more creative thinking.

**The Trust Advantage:** Building Loyalty Over Time. Trust personalities speak the language of stability. Their consistency defines their reputation. They follow through on what they promise and deliver on time. They are dependable, committed and trustworthy. Steady and focused, they get things done. They like to follow a proven method. Trust personalities create order in chaos. They develop a solid plan of action. They act and respond in predictable ways. Hire more Trust personalities if you want to create stability.

### What Are *Your* Advantages?

The first step in becoming an effective communicator is to understand how others see you. Then, once you know how the world sees you, you can concentrate on the best of those qualities and intentionally apply them. It all begins with knowing your top two Advantages.

Your **primary Advantage** is the mode of communication you naturally use. It's the most effortless way for you to speak, write and share ideas. It most closely describes how others are likely to see you.

Your **secondary Advantage** is the second most likely way for you to communicate.

Your **dormant Advantage** is the one you're least likely to use. It exhausts your energy and focus because this is your least natural mode of communication.

Your primary and secondary Advantages combine to form your **Archetype.** Your personality Archetype is composed of the top two Advantages that you are most likely to use in your communication to persuade and influence. ***Archetype = Primary Advantage + Secondary Advantage.***

## The Archetypes

Your Archetype is like your personality's own built-in superpower. It's already there. Each Archetype adds value in a different way, making it uniquely persuasive. Your Archetype defines how you intentionally or unintentionally express yourself and your ideas. There's no right or wrong here. Everyone has a highest distinct value. Here are descriptions of seven of the 49 personality archetypes. including their primary and secondary Advantages.

**The Ringleader: Power + Passion.** Ringleaders have the ability to energize their team. While some personalities might make you feel shut down or emotionally flatlined, a Ringleader is more likely to get you charged up. Their secondary Passion Advantage means that they know how to make you feel valued. Their personal dedication motivates you to contribute more as well. Ringleaders are driven personalities but not in a cutthroat, competitive way. They're inclusive; they know how to engage and inspire. They spark participation among teams; their enthusiasm is contagious. The Ringleader's top five adjectives are motivated, spirited, compelling, strong-minded and empathetic.

**The Beloved: Passion + Trust.** It's easy to like The Beloved. They build lasting relationships and earn loyalty by communicating with comforting stability. Beloveds are aware of relationships and the effect of their actions on others. They help those who are falling behind. They encourage those who feel neglected. They make an effort to help others feel welcome and at ease during team meetings. When a Beloved faces conflict, they'll gradually coax others to join their point of view. This ability to make

**The 49 Personality Archetypes and top 3 adjectives**

The Rockstar: bold, artistic, unorthodox
The Maverick Leader: pioneering, irreverent, entrepreneurial
The Trendsetter: cutting-edge, elite, progressive
The Artisan: deliberate, thoughtful, flexible
The Provocateur: clever, adept, contemporary
The Quick-Start: prolific, thorough, diligent
The Catalyst: out-of-the box, social, energizing
The People's Champion: dynamic, inclusive, engaging
The Talent: expressive, stylish, emotionally-intelligent
The Beloved: nurturing, loyal, sincere
The Intrigue: discerning, perceptive, considerate
The Orchestrator: attentive, dedicated, efficient
The Change Agent: inventive, untraditional, self-propelled
The Ringleader: motivating, spirited, compelling
The Maestro: ambitious, focused, confident
The Guardian: prominent, genuine, sure-footed
The Mastermind: methodical, intense, self-reliant
The Defender: proactive, cautionary, strong-willed
The Avant-Garde: original, enterprising, forward-thinking
The Connoisseur: insightful, distinguished, in-the-know
The Victor: respected, competitive, results-oriented
The Blue Chip: classic, established, best-in-class
The Architect: skillful, restrained, polished
The Scholar: intellectual, disciplined, systematic
The Evolutionary: curious, adaptable, open-minded
The Authentic: approachable, dependable, trustworthy
The Gravitas: dignified, stable, hardworking
The Diplomat: levelheaded, subtle, capable
The Anchor: protective, purposeful, analytical
The Good Citizen: principled, prepared, conscientious
The Secret Weapon: nimble, unassuming, independent
The Subtle Touch: tactful, self-sufficient, mindful
The Veiled Strength: realistic, intentional, to-the-point
The Royal Guard: elegant, astute, discreet
The Wise Owl: observant, assured, unruffled
The Archer: on-target, reasoned, pragmatic
The Composer: strategic, fine-tuned, judicious
The Coordinator: constructive, organized, practical
The Ace: decisive, tireless, forthright
The Editor-in-Chief: productive, skilled, detailed
The Mediator: steadfast, composed, structured
The Detective: clear-cut, accurate, meticulous

**Double Trouble Archetypes (there's too much of a good thing)**

The Anarchy: volatile, startling, chaotic
The Drama: theatrical, emotive, sensitive
The Aggressor: dominant, overbearing, dogmatic
The Imperial: arrogant, cold, superior
The Old Guard: predictable, safe, unmovable
The Deadbolt: unemotional, introverted, concentrated
The Control Freak: compulsive, driven, exacting

people feel safe allows them to establish secure bonds over time. The Beloved's top five adjectives are nurturing, loyal, sincere, tenderhearted and comforting.

**The Secret Weapon: Mystique + Innovation.** They are creative minds who produce agile solutions even when under high pressure. They are creative in a non-flashy way, preferring to do their work quietly. Secret Weapons enjoy working independently. They don't boast about their achievements. But they can produce great inventions, creative ideas and new product designs. They make great contributions to the company's performance, but they do so in an unassuming manner. The Secret Weapon's top five adjectives are nimble, unassuming, independent, reticent and autonomously creative.

**The Blue Chip: Prestige + Trust.** Their reputation for quiet excellence stretches far and wide. Their eye for detail is unmatched. Their direct communication style breeds trust. As CEOs you can expect them to meet or exceed the agreed budget year in and year out. They are quiet overachievers who continuously find ways to generate tremendous results. As with blue-chip stocks, others have confidence in their stability and high value. They are calm leaders who earn respect for their impeccable presentations, their outstanding results and their composed response to challenges. The Blue Chip's top five adjectives are classic, established, "best in class," safe and punctual.

**The Composer: Alert + Innovation.** Creative and goal-focused, Composers come up with innovations that contribute to your company's bottom line. When others suggest quick wins, a Composer will consider long-term consequences. Unwavering, they defend their long-term vision even if that means losing revenues in the short term. They know they can make up for potential losses. They have a clear vision for the company, and they focus on implementing it. Composers are open to new ideas, but they don't act on impulse. They work toward their vision of the required results — just like composers and artists have an image in mind when creating music or artwork. The Composer's top five adjectives are strategic, fine-tuned, judicious, rational and immediate.

**The Maverick Leader: Innovation + Power.** Maverick Leaders lead with a bold and unconventional vision. You recognize a Maverick Leader quickly. They're unafraid to take the lead and happy to propose a new direction for a product or market strategy. Even early in their career, they are confident enough to present their pioneering ideas to the board. And they do so with flair. If something starts to feel familiar, Maverick Leaders will start experimenting to see whether higher goals can be achieved.

They take their chances and depart from accepted strategies, processes or tactics. The Maverick Leader's top five adjectives are pioneering, irreverent, entrepreneurial, artful and dramatic.

**The Anchor: Trust + Mystique.** Anchors earn a good reputation for their solid thinking. Usually quiet, they have a distinct advantage because they keep their cool even under high pressure. They're able to come up with a workable solution when everyone else gets agitated. In team meetings they are plainspoken and businesslike. They don't reveal their innermost thoughts. Their quietness, however, doesn't stop them from making major contributions, because everyone listens when they speak. Anchors communicate their recommendations with solid, rational arguments. They keep their ideas and opinions firmly rooted in reality. That's why they're called Anchors. The Anchor's top five adjectives are protective, purposeful, analytical, calm and steady.

### Increase the Advantages of Your Team

Rather than trying to get employees to change (which doesn't work for long), help them become more of who they already are. Once you identify the Advantages that your team is using, you can help each person succeed by dialing up their existing traits. Rather than training people to follow a formula (and trying to force-fit them into a mold), you can support them in adding value in the way that is most effective and natural for them.

You wouldn't want to build a team with *only* Power or *only* Trust. When a group has an extremely high concentration of just one or two Advantages, it tends to be exaggeratedly strong in specific areas but very weak in others. Just as employers should seek diversity in gender and backgrounds, so should they also understand the Advantages used by their existing team members and potential hires, in order to build teams with a balanced and healthy interplay of perspectives.

## PART III: YOUR ANTHEM: THE TAGLINE FOR YOUR PERSONALITY

## The Fascination Laboratory

As much as we might like to think that we're all 100 percent special and unique, we're not. We're 99.9 percent average. Your human DNA is 99.9 percent the same as everyone else's. Only a minuscule amount defines our differences.

The same is true of our personalities. Like our genes, we have only a few truly singular characteristics. Yet, while there's not much that distinguishes you from everyone else, there is something. And it turns out, that something is more than enough. Your 1 percent is your distinct value. It describes the best of how the world sees you and how you are most likely to rise above and stand out. It's your own little zone of genius.

This is good news and bad news. First, the bad news. Struggling to marginally improve the less valuable parts of yourself won't work. At least, it won't work without a lot of strain and expense. Now the good news: Your built-in Advantages hold real promise for the way you can become invaluable and irreplaceable to others. Your Advantages reveal how you will be most likely to build a prosperous and fulfilling career.

### Your Anthem

Successful brands distinguish themselves from the competition, often with only a mere sliver of a competitive difference. Similarly, we will distill your personality's key defining qualities into just a few words, summarizing your key benefits.

Taglines are an exquisitely efficient piece of communication. They can convey a mammoth volume of information, distilling the essence of an entire company into a micro statement. Taglines tell you why to invest your time and money in a certain product. They establish what makes one brand different from another.

You might prefer to introduce yourself with a full-length resume, but in reality, your audience probably has the same attention span as a goldfish: nine seconds. Your Anthem solves this problem. This very short phrase is usually just two or three words. It describes *how you are different* and *what you do best*. An Anthem is your shortcut to how you are most likely to add distinct value to your coworkers, customers and your company.

## Discover Your Differences

First, identify the adjectives most strongly associated with your Archetype (see Sidebar). These adjectives indicate where you are most likely to be a high performer. By concentrating on these attributes, you are more likely to positively influence how the world sees you. Think of them as your built-in specialty.

If your Archetype is The Guardian (Power + Trust), for example, you are naturally suited to add value in situations in which you can be *prominent, genuine, sure-footed*. For the Blue Chip (Prestige + Trust), you're most likely to communicate clearly and effectively when your communication is *classic, established, best-in-class.* The Editor-in-Chief

(Alert + Prestige) can best support her team when she can focus on being *productive, skilled* and *detailed*.

Now, write down the three adjectives for *your* Archetype. Pick one adjective from the three. Find the one adjective that most closely sets you apart from everyone else. Then, use your adjective to complete these sentences:

"People can always count on me to be ... "

"I can solve certain problems better than anyone else because I am ... "

"I am better suited to serve my customers because I deliver solutions that are ... "

Now we're ready to create your Anthem to describe how you are different and what you do best.

## The Anthem Method

We're ready to customize a tagline that communicates the most valuable you, right from the very start.

**Step 1: Pick One Adjective (How You Are Different).** Look at the adjectives you wrote down, and pick *one* adjective. For example, if you are The Maestro, your three adjectives are *ambitious, focused* and *confident*. When selecting one defining trait of her personality, someone who is a Maestro might pick *focused*.

**Step 2: Pick One Noun (What You Do Best).** You do many things *well*. But what do you do *at your best*? When you are making a real difference on an assignment or task, what exactly are you giving to others? This word is a *noun* and forms the second half of your Anthem. It describes what you do best. Write down that word.

To get you started, consider some of these nouns: accuracy, action, attitude, character, creativity, credentials, efficiency, expertise, follow-through, insights, management, precision, problem-solving, reputation, solutions, team-building, tenacity, vision and others. These will help you envision your value in a more tangible way. You can also choose a noun related specifically to your expertise, industry or from your career highlights. Then ask yourself, "Which noun best describes what I do best"?

**Step 3: Bring the Words Together to Create Your Anthem.** Combine your adjective with your noun, to create a pairing of two words. This is your Anthem: the tagline for your personality. If you are The Victor, you might select *results-oriented* as your adjective and *action* as your noun. Pairing these two together, your Anthem is results-oriented action. This is what you stand for. It's your promise to co-workers and clients. You keep things moving forward, always in action, rather than passively observing.

Imagine that you take your new Anthem and describe it like this: "If you need someone who delivers [fill in your Anthem], I can help." Or "Even when things get tough, I promise to give [fill in your Anthem]."

The next time you have an important interaction, think ahead: How can the promise behind your Anthem solve this person's needs or give them more opportunity? An Anthem gives you more than just a snappy introduction. Many people find that it becomes their own rallying cry, a phrase that they can return to over and over.

Like a tagline, you can incorporate your Anthem throughout your marketing and communication. Make it the intro for your LinkedIn profile. Add it to your email signature. Put it above your desk, reminding you to always live to your fullest potential. Include it at the top of your "about" page on your website or on your bio. Use the wording in social media profiles. Knowing your Anthem gives you a sense of confidence when you introduce yourself. Beyond the first impression, however, it can also help you orient around one solid purpose and message.

### Your Team's Anthem

You can develop an Anthem to describe the highest value of your team, department or entire company. It's better than a mission statement, because it's based on the inherent Fascination Advantages of the group. Your goal is to show others the value of working with your team. A team Anthem can guide you internally as an encouraging way to rally people around a collective cause. If you take on new members or new hires, it can guide you like a north star for your purpose.

To highlight your brand's value, look no further than your employees. Employees are the living, breathing representation of your brand.

The greatest way to empower someone is to show them their highest value. Once someone understands how they naturally add value, they blossom. They become more confident, more persuasive and more influential.

Wouldn't the world be a better place if more people could realize their own highest value?

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *How the World Sees You*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Reality-Based Rules of the Workplace* by Cy Wakeman.** Learn how to calculate your true value to your organization by understanding your current and future potential against your "emotional expense."

2. ***MOJO* by Marshall Goldsmith, Mark Reiter.** Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get — and keep — our professional and personal Mojo.

3. ***Influencer* by David Maxfield, Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler.** The authors show how individuals — no matter who they are — can become the type of influencers that are bringing about change in the world.

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# How to Begin

Michael Bungay Stanier

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Executive Book Summaries®

# How to Begin

## Start Doing Something That Matters




*by* **Michael Bungay Stanier**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Are you ambitious, but feel you've never been given permission to seek out and discover what's possible for you, your life, and your career? Have you achieved some level of success but feel that you want to find that next level, and have begun thinking about the legacy you'll leave behind? Maybe you're unhappy with the state of the world and want to help be a force for good. Or maybe you simply want to be a force for good in the lives of your clients or customers.

If you're ready to 'begin'— whether for the first time or the tenth time— ***How to Begin*** is your guide to unlocking the best within you by doing work that truly matters. It's a practical guide to finding focus and courage as you set and pursue your Worthy Goal: a single, unifying vision and purpose that lights you up, compels you to grow, and serves a greater vision while challenging you outside your comfort zone. Overall, *How to Begin* is the key to avoiding regret in your life and career by starting today on something that matters, not tomorrow or the day after that.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to find and strengthen your Worthy Goal.
- How to become clear on your commitment so you know what you're facing.
- How to develop resources that will help you meet your goals without having to face challenges alone.
- How to build momentum, progress, and impact.

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## Find Your Focus

Worthy is a big word. It can feel a little.. earnest. Perhaps a little high and mighty. You might be thinking, "Who am I to be measuring things on a level of worthiness?" But "worthy" is less about an abstract moral rating and more about whether it's worthy enough for you to be committing to it.

Worthy becomes more accessible as a standard when you understand its three different elements: Thrilling, Important, and Daunting. They're the primary colours that allow you to paint the picture of your ambition. If you have all three of these in a goal or a project, you've got something intriguing on your hands.

The idea of taking this on gets you going. You're excited about this, not just in theory but in real life. Thrilling means something to you. It speaks to your values and lights up your receptors. It makes you rub your hands together and think: "Yes! This!" You'd be proud to do this. It's cool, fun, bold. It's an adventure you want to have.

With Thrilling, Important, and Daunting established as the base, you're ready to look for your Worthy Goal. Now, you may already have your Worthy Goal sketched out. You've just been waiting for a nudge and permission to get going. That's great... and even though you might be tempted, don't skip this section. The very worst thing that happens is you confirm you've totally nailed it. And a more likely outcome is you'll refine your Worthy Goal and make it even more compelling for you.

The first draft is always crappy. The first time you write anything, it's thoroughly mediocre. It's tepid and confused. It's overstuffed and underbaked. It's too specific and too vague, all at once. The same is true when you begin to claim a Worthy Goal. But we have to start somewhere, and when we start with full permission to write a crappy first draft, it's something.

Take your best shot at your Worthy Goal. Then go from there.

## Test Your Ambition

You've taken a brave stab at your Worthy Goal with your crappy first draft. It might be tempting to stop now, because it's already a big step forward to have something written down and declared. But don't stop here.

Don't. Stop. Here.

It's time to strengthen and fine-tune your draft by testing and triangulating this Here are three tests to work through. You don't have to "pass" all or indeed anv of the tests. You're just collecting feedback or information. But it's useful to run your draft Worthy Goal through these tests to see what data you gather.

### The Spouse-ish Test

Go tell your Spouse or other significant other (even a good friend) and clock their reaction. You don't need to agree with everything they say, but their response will absolutely give you some insights.

### The FOSO Test

Ask yourself 'Why' about your Worthy Goal, then create a reply that begins with 'for the sake of…' (or FOSO). If the answer is elusive, that could be telling you something.

### The Goldilocks Zone Test

In the Goldilocks Zone test, you're gauging the doability of your Worthy Goal. Is it too small and granular, or too abstractly aspirational? Does it have the 'just right' feel to it? Loading your Worthy Goal in the Goldilocks Zone is the way to ensure it has the right amount of 'heft.'

## Claim Your Goal

You're about to give your worthy goal one final working-over to get it as close as possible to a final draft that is genuinely thrilling, important, and daunting. After a final edit, you'll be ready to declare victory (or at least "Good Enough," which is often the same thing.

Rate the current expression of your worthy goal on a scale of 1-7 in the categories of Thrilling, Important, and Daunting. If your total score is less than 18, your Worthy Goal may not yet be ready. There may not be specific science behind this, but when facilitating people through this process, this calibration is a key step towards getting closer to a truly powerful Worthy Goal.

The Voting Test helps you reset how you're feeling about your worthy goal. It helps you step outside the subjective experience of wrestling with the details and gives you a more clinical (but still personal) reading against the three essential criteria.

No matter your score, the final challenge is to see if there's just one word or short phrase that, if added, would tighten the power and focus of your Worthy Goal. This word could

represent the commitment, reach, time, scope, standard, or outcome of your Worthy Goal. Or it could be something else. Use this new word or phrase to tighten up your Worthy Goal into an effective final draft.

## See Where You Stand

You have almost certainly declared an intention to do something that matters before, something that's in some way Thrilling, Important, and Daunting. It might have shown up, along with a glass of champagne, at midnight on December 31. It might have appeared at some other time, a moment when inspiration and ambition commingled. A tug on your sleeve, nudging you: Dream big. Dare bravely. Pursue boldly. Commit.

And commonly enough, not every time but likely the majority of times, you made little or no progress on it. You were becalmed, undone by some combination of: you didn't know where to start; you didn't know who to ask; you were denied access to resources and support; you made a few False Starts and lost heart; you were told you weren't the right person; you didn't trust the plan; you didn't master the skill immediately; you ran out of puff; you got distracted; you put it away "for now"; you were told to stop.

Don't do the usual and sweep these False Starts under the rug or conveniently "forget" about them. Instead, bring the stories out of the shadows and take a look. "Where," you can ask yourself, "have I seen something like this before?" Note all the versions and close relations to your Worthy Goal that you dabbled in or flirted with, versions that trailed off or never really got going; were shelved or put away in the drawer; were mocked or lost their mojo; were scaled down and then down again to nothing.

Acknowledge those times when you were disheartened, discouraged, discombobulated, distracted, and stuck.

## Weigh Up the Status Quo

What if you choose not to answer the call? Imagine not taking on this Worthy Goal. Imagine if you let this opportunity slide past.

It can feel like a sign of weakness or a betrayal somehow to bring that possibility to the surface. But answering it is absolutely essential for progress. There are very tangible reasons -Prizes- for not taking on the Worthy Goal. We're far more committed to the status quo than we realize. Until you fully understand this commitment, promises that run deep and are often unspoken and unrecognized, it's hard to shift that allegiance. Equally, there are very tangible consequences-Punishments-for stepping away from this opportunity.

Until you understand the cost to you and others for not taking on your Worthy Goal, you may never be pulled forward to commit.

Take the best three Prizes you get if you don't take on the Worthy Goal. List them below in the left-hand column. Then do the same for the Punishments, and list them in the right-hand column. Which way does the balance tip?

You can do this exercise in your head, or quite possibly the whole thing feels redundant--you just know the way things have played out. All of that's fine, so long as you've got a clear enough answer.

## Take Small Steps

With small steps, you're doing two things. First, fueled by curiosity, you're collecting feedback. It's the only way you can make your way forward in a complex situation: keep checking where you are, try some things out, collect feedback, and decide what's next.

Second, you're mitigating risk so you don't end up plunging off a cliff or running into one or more of the three terrors of the Fire Swamp, thus prematurely ending your quest.

Jim Collins of *Good to Great* fame explains the process of figuring out strategy thus: fire bullets, then fire cannonballs. Even if you're not a fan of military metaphors, this is helpful. Collins explains that bullets are cheap and low-risk. Firing them is a manageable commitment, one that helps you figure out the real target. Once you've identified the target, then you can fully commit and fire the cannonball. Collins says that most people don't fire enough bullets and fire their cannonball way too soon; or they spend their life firing bullets without ever having the courage to load up the cannonball.

## Remember Your Best Self

When you're across the threshold and on the journey, your feelings can swing back and forth between light and dark. There are times when every step feels assured, your confidence is unbounded, you're in the zone. Good times indeed.

Other times, doubt overwhelms you. Of course it does. You're on the edge of your own experience and compe-

tence. You're taking on something Thrilling and Important and Daunting. You've made a choice, which means saying yes and therefore also saying no.

You've decided not to dabble, not to keep your options open, but to commit.

In those moments of doubt, you'll be feeling some cocktail of confusion, anxiety, fear, heaviness, vulnerability, uncertainty, dread, guilt, and general dispiritedness.

That's all ok. That's normal. That's entirely expected and completely predictable. (Basically, don't make things worse by now beating yourself up for feeling that way. Perhaps throw your hands in the air and say, "How fascinating!")

How will you go on? By reconnecting to your Best Self.

## Don't Travel Alone

It's been said that we're the sum of the five people we're closest to. Our weight, our wealth, our ambition…it's the average of their weight, wealth, ambition, and so on.

As with everything apocryphal, it's not totally true. What is true is that it's important to have good people around you, particularly when you're journeying into the future.

There isn't room for everyone. That's ok, because quite frankly, you'd be better off without some of your current companions. It's not only who travels with you on the journey, it's also about who you choose to leave behind.

Who in your life wants you to stay unchanging?

Who takes more than they give?

Who in your life sows seeds of doubt?

Who has betrayed you and may betray you again?

Whose idea of you is historical, rather than future facing?

Who stains you with the worst thing you've done, rather than reminds you of the best you can be?

Who triggers the worst in you, or at least the less than great?

Who contributes to you being numb?

Who contributes to you being afraid?

Who colludes with you not stepping towards the Thrilling, Important, and Daunting?

If someone checks too many of these boxes, it may be time to check them at the door to your Worthy Goal.

## Conclusion

The time to start pursuing your Worthy Goal is today. The person to make it happen is you. The plan to make it happen is contained in this summary. Build your team, and get started.



**Michael Bungay Stanier** is at the forefront of shaping how organizations see coaching as an essential leadership competency. His book The Coaching Habit is the best-selling coaching book of this century, with over a million copies sold. In 2019, he was named the #1 thought leader in coaching, and he has spoken on coaching from Brené Brown's podcast to the TEDx stage. Michael founded Box of Crayons, a learning and development company that helps organizations transform from advice-driven to curiosity-led. He currently leads MBS.works, a place where people find the clarity, confidence and community to be a force for change.

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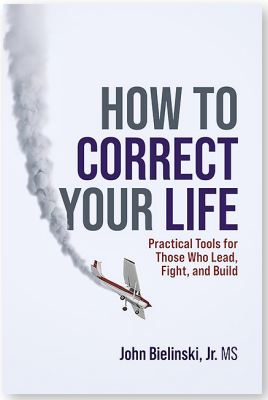
# How to Correct Your Life

John Bielinski Jr.

Executive Book Summaries®

# How to Correct Your Life

## Practical Tools for Those Who Lead, Fight, and Build




*by* **John Bielinski, Jr. MS**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many people experience a gap between outward success and internal alignment, often without a clear way to assess what is off track. ***How to Correct Your Life*** presents a structured approach to evaluating and correcting that imbalance through a practical system for personal and professional development.

At the core of the book is the CHERISH Matrix, which organizes seven key areas of life—career, health, ego and emotions, relationships, integrity, spirituality, and happiness—into a framework for ongoing self-assessment. It also introduces short, actionable "cheat codes" designed to guide decision-making, regulate emotions, and improve communication in real time.

The book further explores foundational concepts such as leverage, identity, habits, and mindset, showing how they shape behavior and long-term outcomes. Together, these elements provide a process for identifying misalignment, clarifying priorities, and building consistent routines.

Drawing on the author's experiences in medicine, business, and military service, the material emphasizes practical application, with a focus on daily execution and measurable progress.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Learn how to apply the CHERISH Matrix to assess key areas of life
- Use "cheat codes" to guide decisions, communication, and emotional regulation
- Understand how habits, identity, and leverage influence behavior and change
- Build routines that support consistency and long-term alignment

CHAPTER 1

## Building a Life You Cherish

In my early years, I built my life around a clear blueprint—one that included a successful career, a loving family, and a sense of balance.

I envisioned a life of prosperity and fulfillment and invested time, effort, and money into creating a legacy I could be proud of. Yet one day, I woke up and realized something was off. I was out of balance and had missed what mattered most.

Many people don't realize they're dying while they're still alive. I was one of those people.

My life looked great on paper, but I woke up every day with a gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach. Something was out of sync. I didn't know what to do to change that.

Ultimately, I discovered a lifestyle operating system that helped me mobilize my optimal self, navigate the complexities and distractions of life, and turn things around. I found the CHERISH Matrix.

### The CHERISH Matrix

Seven areas of life require daily attention and focus to maintain a balanced life:

- Career
- Health
- Ego and emotions
- Relationships
- Integrity
- Spirituality
- Happiness

The CHERISH Matrix became the catalyst for greater accountability and execution. As I began implementing it, I developed a system of practical tools designed to make key ideas easy to recall and apply immediately. I call these tools cheat codes.

Cheat codes are key for those seeking rapid, measurable change. They identify what matters most in a given moment and provide a practical way to make effective and aligned decisions even under pressure.

These tools are especially useful in everyday situations—when emotions run high or conversations become strained. In these moments, having a simple framework helps you respond with clarity instead of reacting impulsively.

### PAUSE for Emotional Regulation

- **Perspective (pray)**: First, look at the big picture and draw from spiritual inspiration, if that is within your faith.
- **Ask clarifying questions**: Default to curiosity rather than reaction.
- **Understand**: Ask questions until you understand the other person's perspective.
- **Sacrifice**: Identify what you need to surrender at the moment.
- **Empathy**: Seek to understand and connect with the other person's feelings.

### SAVE for Navigating Emotionally Charged Conversations

- **Summarize**: Repeat what you heard expressed, matching the words, tone, and body language.
- **Ask clarifying questions**: Use questions to deepen understanding before responding.
- **Validate**: Provide space for the other person's emotions.
- **Empathize**: Ask yourself, "Can I tap into the other person's feelings?"

No matter your starting point, there are always opportunities to correct your life where and when you veer off course. The CHERISH Matrix and these cheat codes are your toolkit for lasting change.

CHAPTER 2

## Leverage

After my divorce, I needed to understand myself—my deepest faults, fears, failures, and needs. So I asked, "If I died today, what would I regret most?" Putting pen to paper, I made a list and drafted a *Regret Eulogy* to motivate myself to take action. It hurt. My regrets echoed in my mind as I envisioned lying in a closed coffin with no chance of a do-over.

When experiencing pain, we have a choice: We can face fear and grow by bringing discipline into our lives. It is only through embracing the pain of change that we grow spiritually and emotionally.

Pain can be a great motivator, but it does not sustain momentum. To move forward, I needed a compelling vision of the future. So I also wrote an *Ideal Eulogy*, describing a life I cherished.

> Having a simple framework helps you respond with clarity instead of reacting impulsively.

No single initiative changed my life more than writing those two eulogies. I built leverage by tapping into the emotions it brought, both positive and negative. I used those feelings to propel myself into the CHERISH Matrix and begin to create a life of fulfillment.

### Disgusted or Obsessed?

We do not make significant life changes until we hit one of two extremes: We become disgusted or obsessed. Disgust and obsession are both forms of leverage.

With the Regret Eulogy, we feel disgusted. We realize we are not remotely close to living an optimal life. This is good, and we *should* be repulsed by the pain of regret.

With the Ideal Eulogy, we feel a sense of obsession. We visualize a compelling future that inspires new ways to use our time, energy, and focus.

Change is not easy. A considerable part of life's joy is growth. When you embrace growth, you'll feel more alive than you have in a long time.

CHAPTER 3

## Gridlock

Trauma doesn't always scream. Sometimes it waits. Then, when triggered, it hijacks your present without warning. And, in doing so, it brings you to gridlock.

Although it might seem like we can't avoid reacting to these triggers, we do have the power to change how we respond to our past. We can become *malleable*.

### How to Change Our Past

When we have a trauma like this, we change, and so does the way we think about the rest of our lives. Something inside of us creates a global belief about how we will react under similar circumstances in the future. We create stories that explain the situation and the meaning we derive from it. These stories provide continuity and become our narrative.

There's one problem with this: That narrative may be inaccurate. And that can steer us wrong for the rest of our lives.

We need to be able to see our past clearly to create a new narrative. Creating this new narrative leads to a new identity, bringing us closer to our ideal life and self.

### Tools to Navigate Past Trauma

To overcome trauma, you need the right tools and the support of professionals.

I believe strongly in eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). This is a therapy for effectively dealing with past trauma by consciously awakening your analytical mind. A trained EMDR counselor guides you to relive your past slowly and safely.

Accelerated resolution therapy (ART) is similar to EMDR, but you follow your therapist's hands with your eyes as they motion to the left and right. The therapist guides you to focus on the past trauma. With their help, you exchange painful memories for empowering ones.

### Forge a New Identity

Identity is who we are and the main driving force of human personality. It reflects how we see ourselves at our core and is expressed through "I am" statements. We can intentionally shape our identity. When we repeat "I am" affirmations consistently and with conviction, they begin to define who we are becoming.

We strengthen and evolve our identity by drawing on the strength and conviction found in our past narratives.

While we cannot change past events, we can change the meaning we assign to them. By reframing those narratives—and facing the past with courage—we can shape our present identity. It will be uncomfortable, but understanding it makes us better, and the pain is worth it.

### What Are Your Delusions?

To correct your life, you must explore your delusions. You need to be open to topics that have surfaced that make you unreasonably and instantly angry. In these moments, your brain does not function clearly—chemicals flood it, and you become temporarily irrational. As a result, you cannot examine your delusions in the moment.

Delusions are protective mechanisms that paralyze our growth and understanding of ourselves and the world. Facing them requires courage and being ready to feel uncomfortable. Only by doing so can we break free from acting without reason and start living a genuine and purposeful life. If not, we remain trapped in a victim mindset.

CHAPTER 4

## Foundations

Before you can start applying the CHERISH Matrix, you need to establish a strong foundation. There are four foundational stones, which are essential for success. These are:

- Cornerstone
- Keystone
- Touchstone
- Capstone

### Cornerstone: Locus of Control

Ultimately, you are in control of your life, whether you are aware of it or not. We are shaped by the decisions and actions we take every day. Understanding that we are the architects of our lives is the cornerstone of the CHERISH Matrix.

Of course, the answer to whether we control our lives is not a simple yes or no. It is more complicated. Our choices matter, but they are influenced by circumstance. The essence of correcting our lives lies in embracing a mindset of ownership. *I own my life. I control my life and accept with serenity the things I can't control.* It is a continuous process.

To correct your life, your locus of control needs to be internal, not external. Make conscious choices, and don't let subconscious decisions based on past trauma and delusion control you.

### Keystone: Expectancy Theory

Having a clear expectation of a fulfilled life is the keystone of correcting your life. I call this assumption "expectancy theory." We have four unique capacities that allow us to optimize this:

- **Self-awareness** – the ability to examine how we perceive the world and our role within it. It allows us to respond rather than react.
- **Morality** – the ability to assess what is right and wrong. It operates at a level deeper than our thoughts, feelings, and emotions.
- **Free will** – the ability to choose how we respond to situations. It gives us the power to do what is right, especially when life is hard.
- **Imagination** – the ability to envision something beyond our present reality. It empowers us to generate new possibilities.

### Touchstone: Habits

Our habits reveal whether we are working toward our ideal lives. They serve as a touchstone for change and help clarify our priorities.

Habits are a basic strategy of life. They allow us to operate effectively in a world that's constantly trying to disrupt our behavior. When we form habits that align with our priorities, they become intuitive. Living becomes much more effortless.

There are four steps to developing a habit, as detailed in *Atomic Habits* by James Clear and *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.

1. **Trigger** (cue): A trigger is what sets a habit into action.
2. **Motivation** (drive): This is your "why." Why do you want this, and what does it mean to you?
3. **Response** (action): This is the behavior we adopt.
4. **Reward** (feedback): What do we get out of a habit? Focus on the benefits of the habit.

### Capstone: Grit

Grit is that voice in your gut that says "keep going" when your mind is screaming to quit. It's pushing through pain, boredom, and failure. Life is short, and quitting is not an option. It shows up when no one's clapping, when nothing's working, and you keep going anyway. It is doing the hard thing *because* it matters.

CHAPTER 5

## The CHERISH Matrix

The CHERISH Matrix is the ultimate life checklist. It also provides a dashboard to monitor your progress. It allows you to be an objective observer of your own life—how you think, how you react, and the choices you make.

It is not just a tool; it is a blueprint to help you fight for your priorities before the noise of life drowns them out. It provides structure through patterns and rituals. Built through consis-

> We do not make significant life changes until we hit one of two extremes: disgust or obsession. ”

tency and discipline, these rituals are your weapon. You do not need more motivation. You need more rhythm.

Here's how to activate and engage the CHERISH Matrix:

**1. Determine how close you are to your optimal life**

When you look at your Regret Eulogy and Ideal Eulogy, what percent of your optimal life are you living now?

**2. Rank key areas of your life**

Look at the seven areas of the CHERISH Matrix (career, health, ego/emotions, relationships, integrity, spirituality, happiness) and score your life on a scale from one to ten.

**3. Set specific goals**

Now look at your scores and notice your lowest. Start asking questions why some scores are so low and what needs to change. In the initial use of the CHERISH Matrix, we look at our life globally. When using the CHERISH Matrix weekly, we ask, "What do I need to do this week to raise my score 20% or 30%?"

Next, set MAST goals:

- Measurable
- Actionable
- Specific
- Timed

**4. Uncover the principles driving your goals**

Once we have set goals to improve our lives, we need to examine the principles that drive those goals more closely. Principles are the guidelines we follow when making choices. They're solid, time-tested, and true.

To succeed in correcting your life, you must be crystal clear about the end goal and the principles that drive you.

**5. Set standards for yourself**

Make sure you set goals that challenge you. Goals that are too low and easy to hit keep us in our comfort zone but don't fuel growth. We tend to revert to a standard we have unconsciously set, so it's important to set ambitious goals.

**6. Craft a mission statement**

Identify the seven core principles that matter most to you based on your CHERISH Matrix goals. These will form the foundation of your personal mission statement. From these principles, you choose how to live and function each day.

CHAPTER 6

## Career

No matter what field you work in, your attitude can either elevate the people around you or make their jobs more difficult. Your mindset shapes your success in the workplace. Succeeding at work is not just about mastering the practical skills in your job description. It is also about seeing and engaging with the bigger picture and aligning it with your purpose in creative ways, even when asked to do more with less or work alongside difficult colleagues.

### PEAK for Peak Performance

By surveying audiences on what drives success in today's workplace, I have found that there are three critical aspects of employment: attitude, skill, and knowledge.

Adopting the mindset of a peak performer can help us take control of our attitude and actions. Organizations value these individuals for the advantage they bring.

- **Proactive**: Employees who take initiative, anticipate challenges, and communicate early are proactive.
- **Engaged**: Awakened. Passionate. Alive. When you're engaged, people can feel your energy as you walk into a room.
- **Adaptable**: An adaptable and flexible employee solves problems creatively, turning tough situations into chances to succeed.
- **Knowledgeable**: Knowledgeable employees are equipped with expertise, enabling them to enhance project quality and make informed decisions.

### GROWTH for a Growth Mindset

To become a peak performer, you need a growth mindset. The following framework outlines what that mindset entails.

- **Gratitude**: Looking for opportunities to be grateful is one of the best things you can do for your career,

but gratitude doesn't come naturally. It's a discipline that takes intention.

- **Resilience**: Resilient employees can adapt and bounce back in changing circumstances.
- **Optimism**: Optimism is looking forward to the future with the belief that good things are to come.
- **Wisdom**: Wisdom is putting things in context and considering the long-term consequences.
- **Tolerance**: Staying open to what others have to say, without feeling the need to set them straight, is tolerance.
- **Humility**: Humility is the ability to admit our imperfections, acknowledge our limitations, and learn from our mistakes.

High performers contribute more than average by tapping into three driving forces: play, purpose, and potential. If you're a leader or manager, embracing these forces in your workplace helps employees thrive.

### Building Workplace Culture

Building a culture of peak performers requires accountability and appreciation. Establishing both will keep your organization in balance.

Think of it as conducting a symphony, where each person knows their part and stays in rhythm. Generic praise fades fast. Genuine appreciation lasts when it is specific, heartfelt, and connected to an employee's purpose.

CHAPTER 7

## Health

Losing your physical health steals everything you have. Even if you don't lose your health entirely, neglecting it can rob you of the stamina, energy, and bandwidth needed to live a deeply fulfilling life. It can also erode your work performance.

Fortunately, regaining your resilience and energy is a momentum game, and once you take the first steps, you'll find that the rewards snowball. You need the right mindset to make lasting changes in your health.

Here are seven principles that will help you position yourself for success:

1. Willpower alone won't help you
2. Be proactive rather than reactive
3. Know your why
4. Goals don't matter without structure and accountability
5. Avoid unearned dopamine
6. Embrace the pain
7. Let go of regrets

### NSEW for Physical Health

There are countless books, seminars, and videos about how to optimize your biological health. Despite being a clinician, my nutritional education has been minimal. I don't pretend to be an expert. That said, here are some foundational truths that have helped me achieve my health goals.

- **Nutrition**: You can work out like a beast, but if you are eating poorly, it will catch up to you.
- **Sleep**: High-quality sleep allows us to heal more quickly, build muscles, and process information more effectively.
- **Exercise**: The best exercise program is one that you stick to. An ideal exercise routine will build your body and should include aerobic exercise, strength training, and a mobility routine.
- **Weight/Water**: Stepping on the scale is a poor measure of health, but it is better than nothing; it can still indicate whether you are overweight. Additionally, drinking adequate water helps your body flush out toxins.

CHAPTER 8

## Ego and Emotions

To correct your life, it is crucial to manage your ego and emotions effectively instead of letting them hijack you. This can be as simple as taking a breath when something triggers you, rather than reacting impulsively or bringing a personal problem into work.

Some people find that their ego causes many of the negative situations they face. The ego is "me-centric." *I am the center. All needs to revolve around me, in one way, shape, or form.*

To live a deeply fulfilling life, it is essential to become self-aware of how your emotions influence your actions. Only then can you genuinely help the people around you (your family, colleagues, and community) and develop a sense of purpose that transcends your own life.

> It is never a lack of resources;
> it is a lack of resourcefulness. ”

### PDQ for Managing Your Mental and Emotional State

You are in charge of your state. While there may be temporary interruptions, you ultimately control how you feel. When I recognize that I am in a negative state and want to change it, I aim to do so "pretty darn quick," or PDQ.

- **Posture/breathing**: Changing your posture instantly changes your state. Physical posture has a profound influence on our cognitive and emotional states.
- **Dialogue**: This refers to the internal dialogue we have with ourselves. "I am" statements can create an aspirational state, but they may feel inauthentic. Self-coaching statements that begin with "You are" are often more effective.
- **Questions**: They direct our focus. Real-life solutions emerge when the questions we ask become more important than the answers we find.

CHAPTER 9

## Relationships

If you want to correct your life, it's essential to prioritize your relationships. Too often, we take our key relationships for granted. There are people in our lives who love us dearly and treat us with kindness and respect. Yet, when we are having a bad day, they become our emotional punching bags.

While our intimate relationships often bring our greatest challenges, they also bring us the greatest joy. The true beauty of being in a relationship lies in growth, contribution, and deep emotional connection. Love thrives when both partners focus on giving rather than getting, making each other's happiness a priority. Relationships serve as a mirror for personal growth, helping us transcend our egos and cultivate unconditional love.

### The Eight Types of Love

The ancient Greeks recognized eight distinct types of love:

- **Philautia** – self-love. This is about embracing authenticity and identity and setting boundaries to protect who you are. Sometimes, it means saying "no."
- **Ludus** – playful love. This refers to flirtation or simple seduction—the initial spark of attraction.
- **Eros** – passionate, romantic love. This, the root word of "erotic," refers to the fiery, romantic love we see in the movies.
- **Pragma** – long-term love. This is enduring love, based on commitment and mutual understanding, the kind that sustains couples who have been together for decades.
- **Philia** – love of friends. This is the deep, affectionate bond between close friends.
- **Storge** – familial love. This is the natural affection we often feel toward family members, especially felt by parents toward children.
- **Agape** – self-sacrificial love. Often regarded as the highest form of love, it is selfless, unconditional, and compassionate, expecting nothing in return.
- **Mania** – obsessive love. Driven by insecurity and emotional dependency, this love is unhealthy. It often leads to possessiveness, jealousy, and even destructive behaviors.

True love is unconditional, meaning it is given without expectation. Love is a verb, expressed through our behavior and the actions we take in service to others.

### CASTLE for Loving Actions

No matter the type of love you are experiencing, loving actions deepen it. The CASTLE framework provides practical ways to express them.

- Compassion
- Appreciation
- Sacrifice
- Time and tolerance
- Listen
- Empathy

### Managing Conflict Constructively

All relationships involve conflict. I used to believe that effective conflict management was purely logical and rational.

That is how I approached problem-solving in medicine, business, and my relationships.

However, neuropsychological research shows that emotion and logic are intertwined in decision-making. We cannot solve problems effectively without input from both. It is therefore important to consider both the facts of a situation and how those involved feel about it, whether you think they should feel that way or not.

CHAPTER 10

## Integrity

Integrity is the essence of alignment with what is true in our lives. It means doing what is right, not what is easy. If you want to correct your life, start here. Stop lying to yourself. Own the truth, or it will own you. This requires consistent, rigorous honesty.

Integrity is not just about what you do; it is who you become. Living with integrity is not about being perfect but about consistency and correcting yourself when you fall short. It means being a reliable point of reference, even when everything else feels uncertain or chaotic.

### RISE for Living with Integrity

Consider how integrity connects to your personal values. When your behavior reflects your mission, you operate in a state of integrity, aligning your thoughts, words, and actions with your values. Integrity is your moral compass.

- **Reflect**: Your capacity to look at the past and evaluate right and wrong behavior.
- **Intention**: The act of choosing where to focus and deciding on the actions you are to take.
- **Self-awareness**: Your ability to perceive your internal environment and know what you are feeling and why.
- **Experience**: Your unique capacity to look at your past and create empowering meanings that allow you to grow and evolve.

### CHART for Building Integrity

Fortunately, we can all develop a higher level of integrity. It begins with a deliberate shift—charting a new course.

- **Courage**: Acting in the face of fear. When you are afraid to do what is right, it provides the strength to follow through.
- **Honesty**: Telling the truth—the whole truth—including all details people need to hear.
- **Accountability**: Taking responsibility for your actions and not adopting a victim mindset.
- **Respect**: Treating someone like their soul matters, even when it would be easier to be dismissive.
- **Trustworthiness**: Doing what you say. Say "yes" or "no," and stick to it.

Living in integrity builds trust and respect, creating a foundation for authentic and meaningful relationships.

CHAPTER 11

## Spirituality

I have no desire to convince you of my faith in God. I am challenging you to explore yours. What exactly do you believe? Is there a God? Is there an afterlife? Is heaven real?

When something positive happens to you, how do you perceive it? Is it luck, karma, or a blessing? The answer to that question often reveals a profound truth about how you perceive the world.

However you name it, it is important to notice our good fortune consciously. If you want to connect with your spirituality, you must have a heart for God. These are the steps, in exact order, that you should follow to hear from God with clarity and purpose.

### HEART for Hearing from God

- **Humility**: There is no spiritual growth without humility. An open mind requires that you allow your spiritual cup to be filled.
- **Expectation**: To understand your expectations of God, put pen to paper. What do you want God to do with your health, relationships, and children? Your afterlife?
- **Alteration**: To alter our expectations, we need to open our hearts for inspiration or a message from God.
- **Revelation**: When you know God's will for your life, you experience a revelation. The revelation is not usually a burning bush or a bolt of lightning; it is more of a gentle whisper.
- **Transformation**: When transformed, you won't see the world the same way. You won't be the same person again.

CHAPTER 12

## Happiness

Being happy means being in an optimal state and creating a life in which we have the resources to enjoy experiences with the people we love.

Happiness is not about the things you have or the money in your bank account. It is a mindset, a choice, and an attitude. You must choose it to attain it.

Fighting the tendency to rely on quick hits of gratification can be challenging. Our brains are hardwired to want new things. We are drawn to novelty, which shapes what we believe will bring happiness.

Enduring happiness comes from how I live each day and the mindset I choose. Deciding that happiness is internal and not letting external circumstances derail your life is one of the most important steps you can take to be happier.

### AGAPE for Building Happiness

To create an environment that supports happiness, I start my day off on offense. Priming the day to get myself into a peak state sets the tone.

- Altruism
- Gratitude
- Activities
- Positivity
- Exercise

### DECIDES for Eliminating Negativity

If we infuse our lives with negativity, we will struggle, so it's important to be aware of where we are doing this and subtract it. What must you eliminate from your life to find happiness?

- **Distraction**: Ruthlessly eliminate what blocks your priorities.
- **Ego**: Remember, "It's not all about me." Focusing on others makes happiness easier to find.
- **Criticism**: Do not let criticism defeat you before you begin. Adopt a more neutral perspective.
- **Indulgences**: Watch for immediate gratification driven by comfort or pleasure.
- **Drama**: Eliminate exaggerated or unnecessary conflict from your life.
- **Excuses**: Take responsibility for your life. It is never a lack of resources; it is a lack of resourcefulness.
- **Speed**: Keep your life calm and planned so you can be more available to help others.

## Conclusion

Now that you've learned to use the CHERISH Matrix, you have all the tools you need to create a life in which you're happy and moving forward on every front that matters to you. Even if you start to apply it in only one area of your life, I'm certain you'll begin to experience so many benefits that you'll want to go deeper.

We cannot control everything in our lives, but we have far more ability to build a meaningful life than most people realize. Once you begin applying what you've learned, you'll be on your way to a life that is more fulfilling than the one you imagined in your positive eulogy, leaving a life of regret behind for good.



**John Bielinski, Jr.** is an educator, clinician, and speaker recognized by *Guinness World Records* for delivering the longest medical lecture, raising funds for charity. As founder of CME4Life, an Inc. 5000 company, he has spent more than thirty years helping medical professionals improve critical thinking and clinical decision-making. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served in Desert Storm, Bielinski also brings frontline experience in emergency medicine. Known for his dynamic teaching style, he translates complex concepts into practical insight. Through his speaking, writing, and training, he empowers others to think clearly, act decisively, and lead with purpose, resilience, and enduring confidence.

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# How to Get a Return on Failure

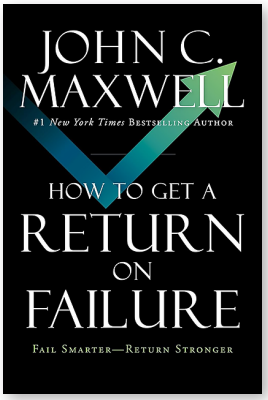
John C. Maxwell

Executive Book Summaries®

# How to Get a Return on Failure

## Fail Smarter—Return Stronger

*by* **John C. Maxwell**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

***How to Get a Return on Failure*** argues that failure is not simply an obstacle but a resource that can generate long-term growth when approached deliberately. The book's central premise is that successful people do not avoid failure; instead, they extract value from it by analyzing what went wrong and converting the experience into improvement. By treating setbacks as investments rather than losses, individuals can develop resilience, sharpen judgment, and progress toward larger goals. This approach reframes failure as a strategic tool rather than a setback to be avoided.

The book presents a series of practical tips designed to help readers rethink their relationship with failure, such as viewing failure as an investment in future success, keeping success and failure interconnected rather than separate, and distinguishing between "good misses" and "bad misses." By embracing the idea of a continuous improvement cycle, readers are encouraged to analyze setbacks, adjust their actions, and reengage with greater clarity and persistence.

Written by leadership expert John C. Maxwell, the book reflects decades of experience studying leadership, personal development, and organizational growth. By applying his leadership philosophy specifically to the role of failure, Maxwell shows how individuals and leaders can transform setbacks into catalysts for improvement and stronger future performance.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Reframe failure as a long-term investment that supports growth and learning
- Apply a continuous cycle of testing, failing, evaluating, and improving
- Distinguish good misses from bad misses to guide better decisions
- Use leadership practices to help others process failure and improve outcomes

## Introduction

What separates successful people from unsuccessful people? Do they start life with greater advantages, such as money, education, or upbringing? Have they received greater and better opportunities than others? Are they smarter? Or are they simply luckier?

Many of those factors certainly come into play. But the difference is *not* the avoidance of failure. Successful people fail as often as unsuccessful people. In fact, they often fail more. The difference is that they know how to deal with failure in a positive way, so effectively that they get a positive return on failure—an ROI.

They think differently, process failure differently, act differently, and as a result, achieve different outcomes. If you want to be as successful as you can be and reach your full potential, you need to learn how to get a return on failure.

CHAPTER 1

## See Failure as an Investment in Your Future

Failure will always be a part of your life. You cannot avoid it. But you *can* leverage it to create a better future for yourself. When you do that, it will separate you from the people who let failure stop or defeat them.

### Appreciate What You Can't Avoid

The first step toward seeing failure as an investment in your future is to learn to appreciate failure instead of simply trying to avoid it.

Appreciating failure means properly estimating the advantages it brings as you learn from it. Appreciation instead of apprehension will help you to see failure as an investment in yourself, your growth, and your future. But you must still properly prepare yourself to face failure positively. Here are seven things you can do:

**1. Expect to fail**

No one succeeds without failing along the way. As human beings, we need to anticipate failing. When you expect to fail, it softens your fall and shortens your recovery.

**2. Practice self-compassion**

Since we *will* inevitably fail, we need to give ourselves grace and compassion when we do. We need to be kind and understanding toward ourselves. We need to be patient with our struggles and work through them.

**3. Focus on the big game instead of the blame game**

The blame game is preoccupied with who is at fault. The big game concentrates on progress and production, which inevitably include both wins and losses. It acknowledges failure as normal.

**4. Embrace and live a positive life stance**

While we can't change the fact that we will have problems and experience failures, we can change our attitude about them. We can embrace a positive life stance. This doesn't make our failures disappear, but it does lessen their impact and put them into proper perspective.

**5. Reframe failure**

How you think about failure affects how you respond to failure. When you reframe failure by looking at context or any other factors, such as history, circumstances, relationships, and so forth, you obtain a bigger and better picture of their causes and remedies. This shift in perspective also removes some of the fear of failure and allows you to seize opportunities instead of avoiding them.

**6. Find the benefits of every bad experience**

If you want to move forward in life, you can't give up or cover up your failure. To use failure as an investment in your future, you have to find the benefits in every failure and use them to learn and grow. Never try to run from it or cover it up.

**7. Expect your failure investment to take time to pay off**

Nothing good happens when we give up. When we keep trying and adjusting, we find more and better answers. And if we keep believing, we never lose hope. The mission is greater than any failure we might face. Seeing failure as an investment in a better future not only makes a positive impact on you; it can also positively impact others around you.

CHAPTER 2

## Keep Success and Failure Together

People often think of success and failure as mortal enemies. Success is the hero of our lives. Failure is the villain. We root for success and keep failure as far away from us as possible. But life doesn't work that way. We should not be thinking about success *versus* failure. Instead, we should be thinking of success *and* failure.

Success and failure are present in every person's life, and we

> When you expect to fail, it softens your fall and shortens your recovery.

should intentionally *keep* them together because it puts us in a better position to get a positive return on failure.

### The Dangers of Separating Success and Failure

If we separate success and failure in our minds and convince ourselves that we can live with one and not the other, we create undesirable barriers to our potential. Here's what that looks like in practice:

- **Success alone creates overconfidence**. Confidence is good. Self-assurance is necessary for success. But believing you can't lose is arrogance. That kind of overconfidence is harmful. Arrogant people don't grow.
- **Success alone decreases our desire to ask tough questions**. People who succeed tend not to ask themselves "why" questions. Whenever we are confronted with failure, it is natural to ask why, to examine what happened.
- **Success alone makes us unappreciative**. If we experience nothing but success, we start to take the positive things in our lives for granted. We need the negative to truly appreciate the positive.
- **Failure alone makes us feel hopeless**. As troublesome as success alone may be, continual failure is even worse. Anytime people believe that failure is inevitable, they lose hope. More than anyone else in the world, discouraged people need to keep success and failure together.

### The Power of Keeping Success and Failure Together

Whenever failure and success are separated, we lose perspective. People attribute their successes to their skills and their failures to bad circumstances. That is not a mature or realistic perspective. The opposite is just as likely to be true.

There are three important benefits of keeping failure and success together:

- It presents a true picture of life.
- It allows them to complement each other.
- It develops emotional strength.

CHAPTER 3

## To Get Over Failure, Get Over Yourself

Failure often becomes exaggerated and prolonged in people's lives because it feels so personal. And this is only made worse by our natural human tendency to be selfish and preoccupied with ourselves. In other words, we can't get over our failure because we can't get over ourselves.

To overcome failure, each of us needs to conquer our inner toddler—looking beyond our selfish desires. When we do, we're better able to move past our failures. Getting over yourself means:

- thinking beyond yourself
- loving beyond yourself
- serving beyond yourself
- giving beyond yourself
- caring beyond yourself

One of the best ways to get beyond yourself is to recognize the difference between success and significance. Success is mainly about helping ourselves. Significance is mainly about helping others.

### How to Get Over Yourself

You can get over yourself by teaching yourself to think differently and to talk to yourself differently. When we're selfish and self-centered, we tend to evaluate everything that happens to us by how it affects us, not by how it affects others. We take everything personally. When we do that, we can't help but be discouraged.

Trying to grow up and take things less personally is easy to say but hard to do. There are specific steps you can take to become less preoccupied with yourself, shift your focus outward, and stop taking failure so personally. Here are seven ways to get started:

#### 1. Stop worrying about what others think of you

If we want to live more contentedly, we need to stop worrying so much about what others think. People think about us far less than we imagine, and the opinions of strangers should

carry little weight. The less we worry about how others see us, the more powerful we become.

**2. Put some distance between fault and failure**

There is great value in separating fault from failure. Refusing to place blame on ourselves or others not only reduces the emotional toll it takes on us; it also opens our minds to the lessons it offers. When we frame setbacks more positively, without assigning fault, we take them less personally and become more open to their benefits.

**3. Become comfortable with rejection**

No matter your history, profession, purpose, or aspirations, you will benefit from learning to reject rejection. It's simply another way of getting over yourself and working your way beyond failure to attain real achievement. When you get knocked down, never feel sorry for yourself and stay down. Reject rejection, and get back up.

**4. Follow the 24-hour rule**

Give yourself 24 hours to experience and process failure, and then move on. As someone pointed out, "You don't drown by falling into the water. You drown by staying there." Practicing this rule gets you out of deep water.

**5. Value progress over perfection**

The biggest failure is failing to start, which is often caused by perfectionism. So many of us want to know everything up front before taking action. In an ideal world, that would be wonderful. In the real world, that is impossible. To be successful, we must take action first, then figure it out as we go. Striving for progress instead of perfection moves us forward and makes us better.

**6. Become too big to let little things bother you**

The best way to ensure that small things don't bother you is to become bigger yourself. That means aspiring to achieve more significant things, striving to help more people, continuing to reach for higher goals, and learning and growing into your better self.

If you see failure as a small thing, it will become small. The bigger you become as a person, the smaller and less significant your mistakes will feel.

**7. Focus on the big picture instead of yourself**

Everyone else in the world is more important than any one person. Therefore, it's essential that we always look beyond ourselves. We need to focus on the big picture of making the world a better place by helping others. If you see others as more important than you, then your focus will be on *their* success, not *your* failure.

CHAPTER 4

## Use Failure to Make Yourself Better

You can let failure beat you down, or you can use failure to make yourself better. The choice is yours. If you're open to what failure can do for you, here are the ways you can use failure to improve yourself and your situation:

**1. Failure can make you more resilient**

Bouncing back from failure is one of the most valuable abilities a human being can possess. Unfortunately, it's a skill that many people today have a difficult time developing. You can become more resilient as you deal with failure by cultivating these practices:

- self-compassion
- recognition
- active learning
- cognitive agility
- problem solving
- finding meaning

**2. Failure gives you a reason to reflect**

Why do some people make the same mistakes over and over again? Because they never take the time to reflect. People can't discover why they made a mistake without examining their actions. Here's what I do:

- review by myself
- ask questions of myself
- talk to myself
- direct myself honestly

**3. Failure can help you develop good character**

Developing character is a never-ending process, and our response to failure is a major determining factor for who we are. The stronger we are in the face of defeat, holding onto our core values, the better our character becomes.

If you can face the hardships of life while retaining your values and bouncing back, you can come back much stronger than you were before. And you will be able to tackle bigger and more difficult challenges in your life.

**4. Failure can deepen your humility**

One of the greatest obstacles to learning and improvement is pride. It makes us think, *I already learned that.* In contrast, humility tells us, *I need to learn more.* And when we're open to learning, especially in the face of failure, we can become better as a result.

> The bigger you become, the smaller and less significant your mistakes will feel.

If you have a problem with pride, embrace the mindset of a learner to start the humility cycle.

**5. Failure can help you gain wisdom**

Most of the wisdom we can acquire in life comes from failure. Wisdom can come to us when we recognize the difference between what we cannot control and what we can, when we realize that some things we can understand and some things we can't. Knowing which is which requires thoughtfulness and life experience.

If we don't allow where we fall short to defeat us, we gain wisdom. We need to remember that failure is a temporary result of the actions we've taken that didn't work out. Defeat, on the other hand, is a choice we make.

**6. Failure observed can give you insight**

One of the smartest and least painful ways to learn from failure is to gain insight from observing others who have failed. Even the most stubborn person can become teachable and learn from the mistakes of others.

**7. Failure can prompt you to ask good questions**

As you learn to use failure to improve yourself, you should make it your goal to shift from questioning whether you're a failure to asking good questions about each failure you experience.

Author and business leader Jay Coughlan says that every time he or his team experienced a failure, he would lead them through a debriefing session that consisted of three questions:

- What did we do right?
- In hindsight, what would we have done differently?
- What are we going to change?

Asking yourself these kinds of questions is one of the best ways to use failure to make yourself better.

**8. Failure can challenge you to eliminate excuses**

Excuses are exits off the road to success. Every time we fall short and explain it away, we hold ourselves back. Whether we say we didn't do it, couldn't do it, or didn't try, the result is the same—we move farther from where we want to go. Excuses are not only deceptive; they can become habit-forming. They can keep us in a rut of failure. To eliminate them, we must first recognize when we're making them.

**9. Failure can prompt you to change**

It's been said that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. I'm not sure about that, but I do know that there is no age limit on learning from our failures.

Failure and mistakes can be hard on everyone. They can make people feel defeated. I think many people approach life like students who take a test, don't know the answers, and get a bad grade.

But life isn't like school. The point isn't to get a good grade the first time. It's to learn through the whole process so that you know more every day and are better prepared for whatever comes next.

CHAPTER 5

## Embrace the Value of Hard

In life, you're either doing the hard work of climbing uphill, or you're allowing yourself to slide downhill. There really is no standing still. Gravity has a pull that will take us downward unless we resist it.

If you want to achieve anything in life, you need to embrace the value of hard and accept that climbing is challenging, strenuous, difficult, and sometimes even grueling. You must be intentional, willful, and consistent to arrive anywhere worth going.

### Characteristics of Hard

You will be able to embrace the value of hard only when you understand the reality of it. To help you with that, here are six characteristics of hard that you would be wise to recognize, understand, and embrace:

**1. Hard never ends**

When you acknowledge that everything worthwhile is uphill and you embrace the climb, you accept that you are in for the long haul. You know better than to expect immediate results.

You apply your energy and time in measured increments and celebrate milestones of success along the way. This gives you *staying* power. That's what you need when you realize that hard never ends.

**2. Hard teaches us that the way up is down**

The key to a fulfilling and genuinely successful life on a deeper level comes from experiencing our downs. Loss can lead to gain if our attitude is right. We must fall and learn from those experiences to rise and move forward. You can receive a return on failure if you accept this necessary struggle and allow it to make you a better person.

**3. Hard is about what you do, not what you want**

Wanting something is easy; doing something is hard. What we do not only determines what we accomplish, but also who we become. You can shift your identity by choosing to be a different person and by doing things differently from how you've done them before. But to take those steps and become that better version of yourself, you must embrace hard.

**4. Hard is the seed of growth**

We learn more from failure than from success, and we can find a seed of growth in failure if we look for it. Adversity reveals the truth that the path of life is hard. It always has been and always will be. To fertilize the seed of growth during tough times, forget about your past achievements and allow yourself to become a beginner again. Have a learning mindset.

**5. Hard values what you have been through**

A lot of people don't strive to learn life lessons from hardship and failure because they find the process too difficult or painful. It requires determination and intentionality, and successful people embrace it. Because they value what hard teaches them, they don't shy away from it. And that learning opens the door to improvement and greater success.

**6. Hard gets harder unless you change your perspective**

Our perspective always impacts whether we see things as easy or difficult. If we expect everything in life to be easy, then nearly everything we experience will seem hard. The more we modify our expectations and embrace the normality and value of hard, the greater our ability to endure it, and the more we will learn from it.

CHAPTER 6

## Practice the Cycle of Improvement

Many people fear change. They don't want to give up the familiar. Or worse, they are so stubborn that they defend what they know doesn't work out of pride or inflexibility.

If we truly want to improve, how do we keep ourselves from settling into our comfort zone? How do we break out of the rut that has the potential to make us crazy or create stagnation that keeps us unsuccessful? The key is to develop a *reset mindset*. We need to find new approaches to the way we pursue success.

### The Cycle of Success

To help you develop a reset mindset where you can learn, unlearn, relearn, and improve, I want to acquaint you with what I call the Cycle of Success. What may stand out to you in this process is that failure is necessary for success. It assumes that you will take action, encounter setbacks, and learn from them instead of running away.

And one of the most valuable things about this cycle is that it can be used on a micro level on any given day, or it can be used for large business or leadership efforts. Here's how it actually works:

**1. Test**

The process starts with taking action because there is no progress or success without it. I like to think of this as testing because it removes hesitation. There is no pressure to make it perfect or to try to guarantee its success. A testing mindset believes there is a better way. Finding a better way usually requires going *many ways*.

**2. Fail**

If you are willing to test, you will fail. That may happen most of the time. The good news is that the cycle of success is exactly that: a cycle. Failure does not lead you to a dead end. It takes you to a temporary stop along the way on a journey worth taking, a journey that leads to success.

**3. Evaluate**

If we simply react to every success by celebrating and to every failure by avoiding the actions that led to it, we don't gain anything. But if we take the time to evaluate carefully, we can move on to the next phase of the cycle of success.

**4. Learn**

Every failure is a learning opportunity. The more you fail, the more you have the potential to learn. Each time you test, fail, evaluate, and learn, you develop layered learning. If we keep testing imperfectly and learning from it, the many lessons we learn from our losses will help us improve, layer by layer.

**5. Improve**

People who test, fail, evaluate, and learn put themselves in a position to improve. But learning alone isn't enough. Like good intentions, it doesn't change anything on its own. However, when you add improvement to learning, you can change *everything*. And here's the good news:

> Excuses are exits off the road to success.

- Everyone can improve
- Everything can be improved
- Every day has improvement possibilities

If you share that mindset, you open the door to many possibilities, and you will *always* get a return on failure.

**6. Reenter**

All this work in the cycle of success leads to this: the willingness to get back in the race and try again, only wiser and better prepared. Too many people become discouraged, and they quit because they didn't succeed the first, second, or third time. Successful people don't give up. They take the cycle of success full circle, reenter, and test again.

CHAPTER 7

## Learn the Difference Between Good Misses and Bad Misses

Most people think all failures are created equal, but that's a mistake. Once you understand they're not, you begin to appreciate the positive impact of good misses. Bad misses move us backward, but good ones move us forward when we know how to get a return on them. They help us fail forward—leading to breakthroughs instead of breakdowns.

Take a look at these seven key differences between good and bad misses:

**Good miss**: Failure discovered early

**Bad miss**: Failure discovered late

> Failure is like setting concrete. The longer you stay in it, the harder it becomes and the more difficult it is to get out. The sooner we are aware of it, the faster we can do something about it. A quickly discovered loss is a good loss, while an undiscovered and uncorrected one can become a bad one.

**Good miss**: Focusing on the benefits of failure

**Bad miss**: Focusing on the detriments of failure

> When we become preoccupied with all the bad effects of failure, not only does that negative past get in our eyes, but it also gets into our hearts. It's far better to look for the benefits in failure or loss. That requires people to embrace a positive mindset.

**Good miss**: Learning from failure

**Bad miss**: Fleeing from failure

> Most people try to avoid doing anything that might lead to failure, and if they *do* end up failing, they run away from it and pretend it never happened. The biggest problem with that is people who do those things never learn from failure.

**Good miss**: Failing in your area of strength

**Bad miss**: Failing in an area of weakness

> When you choose to do something you're not good at and you fail and you keep doing it, you're wasting your life because you will never receive a positive return on failure. Instead, stay with your strengths.

**Good miss**: Making adjustments

**Bad miss**: Making excuses

> Instead of making adjustments, many people make excuses. It's easier to move from failure to success than from excuses to success because excuses avoid personal responsibility, and a lack of responsibility leads to failure.

**Good miss**: Correcting a failure

**Bad miss**: Repeating failures without correction

> Failure is often not the cause of our problems; repeated, uncorrected failures are. To be productive and accomplish our goals, we must pay attention to our performance, recognize when we're making mistakes, and correct them.

**Good miss**: Taking positive action after failure

**Bad miss**: Mulling over negative emotions after failure

> When you experience failure, you need to acknowledge your emotions and process them. But then you need to move on. The best way to do that is to take action. The sooner you act, the sooner you can turn things around.

CHAPTER 8

## Lead Others Through Failure

Few things in life are more rewarding than adding value to others so that they can make a positive impact.

If you want to lead others through failure, I recommend taking these seven steps:

**1. Have up-front conversations about failure**

Leaders are responsible for being clear about the difficulties of the success journey for the people they lead. Up-front conversations create clear expectations, enabling people to have a realistic view of the ups and downs they should expect on their journey.

**2. Openly share your failures with others**

No matter what field you work in, openly sharing your failures with others is a good idea. It sets the right expectations for others, provides them with realistic examples of welcome behavior, and gives them permission to fail.

**3. Share the whole story, not just the highlights**

All of our journeys are complex. They take twists and turns. And the difficult parts are as important as, if not more important than, the easy ones. Helping others understand this prepares them to weather failure and come out on the other side.

**4. Close the gap for others**

Most people feel there is a great gap between success and failure, and they fear they will never be able to make the leap across that gap. If you're a leader, you need to try to help them bridge that gap.

**5. Redefine failure to help others change their perspective**

One of the most positive things you can teach people to do is redefine failure so they see it in a new light or from a different perspective. Here are five of the ways you can redefine it:

- think of yourself as a novice
- let go of perfectionism
- embrace ambiguity
- accept trial and error as normal
- view something that didn't work as simply unfinished

**6. Show others the bigger picture**

People who get tripped up by failure are often so focused on some aspect of failure that they lose sight of the bigger picture. By helping them regain sight of the bigger picture, you can help them get back into the game and succeed.

**7. Mentor others through the whole process**

Most of what I have suggested to help you lead others through failure has been focused on teaching. I want to encourage you to take that to another level by mentoring them through the entire failure process. Teachers say, "Sit down, and I'll tell you what you need to know." Mentors say, "Come with me. Let's walk this road together."

CONCLUSION

## The Future Favors the Bold

There are only three types of people in this world: the won'ts, the can'ts, and the wills.

The won'ts oppose everything. The can'ts never accomplish anything. But the wills accomplish everything because they know how to get a return on failure.

While it's true that learning to get a return on failure doesn't make success easy or automatic, it does open the door to many other life possibilities. Have the courage to seize them. If you pursue opportunities, you may fail, or you may succeed. But if you don't pursue opportunities, you will *always* fail. You give up that opportunity and all the potential it could bring. Plus, you give up something else: all the other opportunities it would lead to.

Keep doing all the things we tackled, and you'll continue to get a return on failure, make progress, and make the most of your opportunities. Do that, and success becomes inevitable.



**John C. Maxwell** is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling author, speaker, coach, and leadership expert who has sold more than thirty-six million books worldwide. His work has been translated into seventy languages and used to train millions of leaders across industries and nations. He is the founder of Maxwell Leadership and the nonprofit organizations EQUIP and the Maxwell Leadership Foundation. Maxwell has been recognized as the world's most influential leadership expert by *Business Insider* and *Inc.* magazine. His teachings continue to influence leaders at every level, from global executives to emerging leaders shaping the future.

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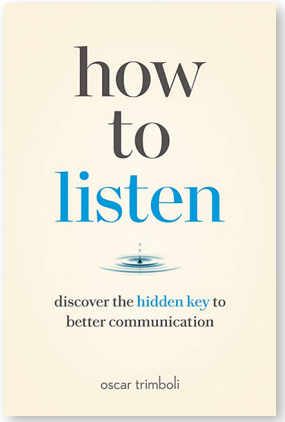
# How to Listen

Oscar Trimboli

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Executive Book Summaries®

# How to Listen

## Discover the Hidden Key to Better Communication




*by* **Oscar Trimboli**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you want to be heard, you need to know how to listen.

At a time when we are more technologically linked than ever, our conversations have never been more fractured and disconnected—because most don't know how to truly listen. The result? You constantly fight to be "heard" over all the noise and distraction. You feel frustrated, confused, and ignored and feel like no one is paying attention to you. You are tired of repeating yourself over and over again. At work and home, conversations leave you feeling drained.

In ***How to Listen: Discover the Hidden Key to Better Communication,*** Oscar Trimboli, host of the Apple-award-winning podcast Deep Listening, shows you how to unlock your listening superpowers to have more impactful conversations at work and home. Through stories, exercises, and tips, Trimboli shares invaluable insights to help you notice when you aren't listening—and what to do about it.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to unlock your listening superpowers.
- How to have more impactful conversations at work and home.
- How to notice when you aren't listening – and what to do about it.
- How to reduce conflict and confusion in your life.
- How to master the art of communication.

## Introduction

Communication isn't all about what you say. It's about what you hear, how you react to it and respond. In short: it's about how you listen. And despite the fact that leaders typically spend upwards of eighty percent of their day listening, only two percent of them have ever had training in how to listen effectively. Listening is human and intuitive. Listening is a skill, a strategy, and a practice—a way to balance how you communicate. Rather than looking for the one breakthrough idea or for a one-off tip, trick, or technique, you can improve your listening in every moment and every meeting. Listening is practical, pragmatic, and actionable. All you have to do is focus on being better than you were in your last conversation.

Imagine operating in a world where there are shorter, more productive meetings, fewer mix-ups and misunderstandings, healthier relationships at work, higher employee trust, reduced unnecessary rework, sustainable organizations, and opportunities to think, hear, and see your most complex challenges differently. There are Five Levels of Listening, each of which requires the foundation of the previous level. This book will take you through each level in order.

You are building a lifetime skill; some patience and practice will create sustainable foundations and change the way you communicate for the rest of your life. Listening is the willingness to have your mind changed. Are you open to exploring? As you develop your listening skills, you'll not only reduce the conflict and confusion in your life, you'll spend less time in conversations because you'll be paying attention to what matters. When you master the art of listening, you'll master the art of communication—and create more powerful connections in all facets of your life.

## Why Listen?

For individuals, the cost of not listening is fractured relationships with others in your organizations or at home. People's sense of isolation or disconnection grows when their manager doesn't invite, encourage, or prompt for contribution. The result is that people go through the motions, and human potential is wasted. For companies, the cost of not listening is measured in lost customers, ignored employees, unsuccessful products and services, and unsustained profits. For charities, not-for-profits, and for-purpose organizations, the cost is never achieving the changes they want to bring to the communities and countries they seek to serve.

When you are open to improving your listening, conversations and projects take less time because there is less wasted effort re-explaining. The additional people, resources, and quality costs are minimized because your initial conversations are focused and more effective.

Mastering the art of how to listen in the modern world creates and sustains higher-quality conversations that take less effort and make a more significant impact. The principles of listening are simple, yet consistent daily practice takes effort.

## Get Ready to Listen

Many people think that listening is about questioning. When your mind is absent or wandering, these questions appear random to the speaker rather than something that expands the conversation. Aimless and arbitrary questions waste the speaker's time and diminish the relationship.

Listening is demanding and draining when you compete with the chatter in your mind. When we are not conscious of the thoughts that our mind processes before we start a conversation, the discussion will be disjointed and out of tune.

When we listen to ourselves, we quickly notice what is going on beneath the surface. Allowing the subconscious time to process makes listening light and liberating rather than draining. When you take three minutes before the conversation, it shows respect to yourself and to others. It rapidly brings to the surface any potential distractions. These distractions take two forms: internal and external. Listening is about being present and open to many possibilities.

## Give and Pay Attention

You default to listening for similarities because your mind is a pattern-matching machine. It's anticipating and comparing what the speaker is saying at lightning speed because you can listen four times faster than they can speak. It takes great awareness to notice where your listening attention is focused—on what's familiar or dissimilar.

It's ironic that when seeking the familiar to form a connection with the speaker—a common listening barrier—we send a signal to our mind that does the opposite. The act of accessing our memory to match similar experiences takes away from working memory while attempting to allocate working memory to the function of listening. It's happening so fast that you are not conscious of how your mind is processing the multiple simultaneous activities.

There is another way to listen. When seeking difference, you need to let everything in—you need to be very open in processing what they are saying rather than the sifting and sorting that takes place when listening for the familiar. Notice that you have two orientations: similar and different. Neither is correct—be flexible enough in your listening to notice which one is the most productive for the discussion or decision you need to make. It's about being conscious of whether you are listening for similarities. Noticing and adjusting the position of your attention during a discussion is a crucial foundation stone to increasing your listening capacity.

## Hear, See, and Sense

When listening to the speaker's content, there are three discrete and integrated elements: hear, see, and sense. Each element will help you build more awareness of the next layer in your listening. We will explore each of these in turn: Hear: the audio content that your ears, body, and mind capture. See: their facial expression and body language. Sense: the emotion present during the discussion.

Being conscious and flexible enough to notice a mismatch and reset accordingly is the skill. It may take a little longer to notice the speaker's style when you meet them for the first time. It's essential to notice how you hear them. It provides an early warning signal to how quickly you will be distracted in the discussion. Mismatched preferences between the speaker's preferred style and yours will accelerate how quickly you drift away.

Listening is collecting verbal and non-verbal content. After listening to the words, you should collect as many visual signals as you can comfortably process. Your eyes are an important part of creating a connection between you and the speaker. When it comes to eye contact, staring or gazing for extended periods of time can be interpreted as aggressive or intimidating. Keep your eyes in the triangle from their eyes to their chin. Focus on the triangle as an area, rather than exclusively and continuously on their eyes.

Visual signals from the speaker are commonly referred to as body language. Consider this hierarchy as a way to start noticing body language, and when you feel comfortable that you have increased your awareness at this level, progress to the next: first face, then posture, and finally breathing.

## Explore the Backstory

Not all speakers commence the story at the beginning. Rarely will they outline each scene, with all the characters and their parts, into a coherent sequence. When the story's content is close or personal, speakers tend to start the conversation from their opening scene rather than from the opening scene. Yet something powerful and transformational happens when a speaker says the entire story out loud from the beginning—from the idea's inception. Verbalizing all the components of the story to all the participants creates meaningful connections for the speaker and the listener. It creates shared understanding and meaning.

There are two distinct perspectives of a backstory: what happened in terms of actors, events, and relationships (the backstory), and how each person views and explains their role relative to others (their backstory). Your role as the listener is to listen to the backstory, their backstory, and their place in the backstory. Most backstories have lots of twists and turns and create deep and nuanced context, which creates a foundational shared understanding between all participants—past, present, and future.

## Notice How it is Said

Speech and language offer a palette of colors. Colors have range, intensity, and vibrance. They can blend to form subtle and nuanced variations. They can also be black and white. purple. Like color, language has patterns, opposites, and combinations. When listening to the word patterns, you gain insight into how the speaker uses vocabulary to make sense of their world. Their speech pattern is how they translate the world into their unique words, sentences, and stories. We will explore these patterns using the following categories: Language: The syntax of the dialogue—adjectives and pronouns Preferences: The way they portray their history and ideas Time: Their relationship to the past, present, and future.

## Focus on What is Unsaid

Listening to the unsaid is powerful because the speaker notices what else they are thinking, rather than only the first thing they say. Listening for their unsaid is the most potent form of listening.

Your role is to become a book editor and consider the speaker as a writer. A writer has many words in their mind and many ways of expressing an idea. The writer's mind is a random collection of different concepts and many words. The editor's role is to get to what the writer is thinking

about in the best way to express the concept—the essence rather than the first thing they write.

An editor encourages the writer through multiple attempts to improve what they write and how they write it. Each writing round progresses the idea and makes it easier for the writer and their readers to understand. If we don't accept that what people write the first time is what they think, why do you as a listener only hear what they say the first time and assume it's what they are thinking? Their complete thoughts are not in their first explanation.

The unsaid in a group discussion amplifies if it is not carefully uncovered. The unstated emerges when you invite them to express the idea with more details, depth, and nuance. This technique allows the speaker's language to catch up with their thoughts.

An elegant and skillful listener will notice the speaker's breathing and when it changes. They will notice where the speaker is breathing from, because it suggests how deep inside the speaker's mind, emotions, or body this idea has traveled. The longer and deeper the breath, the longer they have been thinking and reflecting on it.

## Listen for Their Meaning

It's powerful when you create the capacity in yourself and the speaker to express the essence of the issue or idea. If you can help them listen to themselves a little longer, reflect on what it represents to them, and connect their past with their aspirations for their future, it will change their mind and the rest of their life.

The speaker creates their meaning when they link the past and the future. It's your role as a listener to help create this connection. While listening for the meaning, your perspective moves above the dialogue and the discussion. You start to become aware of the energy and interaction between the speaker and the listener. You treat the conversation as another participant to be conscious of during the exchange.

Reimagine your perspective: let it move from two participants in a ballroom dancing together to the role of a spectator observing from above. In this state, your mind flows continuously through three perspectives without losing orientation, and it stays entirely in the moment. This helps the speaker alter and reimagine the backstory, their narrative, and the possible future. It allows them to access this change where they are experiencing it: thoughts, feelings, or words.

## Conclusion

Listening requires practice to progress. A focus on incremental improvement before you can move safely to the next level. A commitment to self-awareness and self-improvement. If you advance without mastery at the preceding stage, it's unlikely that you can perform consistently and effortlessly when listening at the next level. Despite the urge to rapidly test higher performance levels, doing so could damage your progress.

Listening is a contact sport, yet you can practice alone. Reading this book is a way to practice safely. Your listening will progress in every discussion and meeting—it only takes a moment of conscious awareness and presence. When you bring a mindset of being open to having your mind changed, the seeds of listening will flourish.



**Oscar Trimboli** is an author, host of the Apple award-winning podcast Deep Listening, and a sought-after keynote speaker. He is passionate about using the gift of listening to bring positive change in homes, workplaces, and cultures around the world. Through his work with chairs, boards of directors, and executive teams in local, regional, and global organizations, Oscar has experienced firsthand the transformational impact leaders and organizations can have when they listen beyond the words.

***How to Listen: Discover the Hidden Key to Better Communication*** by Oscar Trimboli
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# How to Say Anything to Anyone

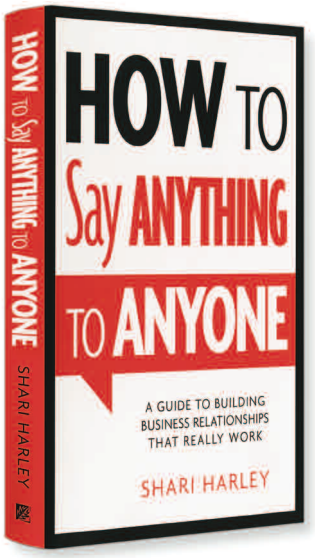
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Career & Self-Development

# How to Say Anything to Anyone

## A Guide to Building Business Relationships That Really Work




by Shari Harley

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We all know how it feels when our colleagues talk about us but not to us. It's frustrating, and it creates tension. When candor is missing in the workplace, employees feel like they're working in the dark. Leaders don't know what employees really think; managers are frustrated when outcomes are not what they expect; and employees often don't know where they stand performancewise.

Many of us remain passive against broken, indirect communication habits, hoping that things will miraculously improve — but they won't.

In *How to Say Anything to Anyone*, Shari Harley shares the real-life stories of people who have struggled to get what they want at work. With her clear and specific road map, she enables you to create the career and business relationships you really want — and keep them.

Harley urges you to take charge of your career by taking charge of your business relationships. Make your work environment less tense and more productive by practicing direct communication. Set relationship expectations, work with people how they like to be worked with, and give and receive regular feedback.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to ask for what you want at work.
- How to improve all types of working relationships.
- How to reduce the gossip and drama in your office.
- How to tell people when you're frustrated, in a way that resonates.
- How to take action on your ideas and feelings.
- How to get honest feedback on your performance.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **HOW TO SAY ANYTHING TO ANYONE**

**by Shari Harley**

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## The Case for Candor

Most of us have no idea how we come across to others or what our employers and colleagues think of our services. We don't know what people think, because, for the most part, they don't tell us. Instead, they tell other people behind our backs. This is why we need to encourage people to be candid with us, even when it hurts to hear their feedback. Otherwise, we'll operate under false assumptions and make unnecessary, career-killing mistakes.

Candor is not bad news, and a candid organizational culture is not necessarily about saying hard things. Instead, candor is asking more questions at the onset of relationships. Candor is stating expectations rather than expecting employees and vendors to read your mind. Candor is making a commitment to talk about things as they happen, not six months after the fact. In candid cultures, coworkers, employers and employees say what they need to say quickly and easily. They have created relationships in which all parties can speak openly without concern.

When you know what people think and say about you, you have choices. When you understand the impact of your behavior and consciously choose your outcomes, you are in charge of your career and your life. ●

## How to Establish Candid Relationships

Despite the abundance of training programs on giving and receiving feedback, speaking up in organizations remains difficult, and many people don't do it. We tend to think it's too difficult to confront people. We don't want to deal with the conflict, so we say nothing.

Be smarter. Rather than waiting for something to go wrong, set clear expectations at the beginning of working relationships and projects. Tell your coworkers you want to have good relationships with them. Make an agreement that when challenges arise, it's not only OK but also expected to discuss what's going on. Agreeing to talk about difficult situations before they happen makes it more likely that when breakdowns occur, you'll be able to speak up with less anxiety. ●

## You Get What You Ask For

### The Consequences of Insufficient Expectations

Lisa, an internal HR recruiter, is conducting a search for Carol, a hiring manager. Lisa doesn't get enough information from Carol when the job is posted. As a result, Lisa sources candidates who aren't appropriate for the position. Carol rejects every candidate she meets and finally decides that Lisa is incompetent. Lisa decides that Carol is difficult to work with and asks to support a different department. The two never speak to each other about their frustrations.

Does this scenario sound crazy? Of course! Yet it happens all the time.

If, at the onset of the search, Lisa and Carol had asked more questions about what was important to each person, had agreed to periodically talk about how the search was progressing and had given feedback when things weren't going well, their mutual dissatisfaction and the unfortunate outcome might have been avoided.

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### Setting Expectations

Follow the steps below to successfully set expectations with clients, coworkers or your boss during a one-on-one conversation or at a project kickoff meeting:

**Step One: State your goal.**

"We want a great relationship. We want our work together to be easy and smooth."

**Step Two: Set expectations.**

"Let's have a conversation and agree on roles and responsibilities so everyone is clear about who will do what."

**Step Three: Agree on how you will work together.**

"Let's talk about how we will address challenges. Things will happen that we don't anticipate. We'd like to be able to talk about any challenge that arises — as it occurs — and not have anyone take anything personally."

**Step Four: Ask for feedback.**

"Anyone can say anything at any time. We all want the project to go well, and we need to know on a regular basis how you feel things are going. Knowing what's working and not working will allow us to make improvements. We should all periodically check in and ask for feedback."

**Step Five: Ask for permission to give feedback.**

"If we have concerns at any point during the project, we'd like to be able to speak up and have you trust that we are speaking from our commitment to your business and the project and from our desire for this process to go smoothly."

**Step Six: Agree on roles.**

"Let's also discuss who will be having those conversations. Should particular leaders have the discussions, or is it OK for anyone on the project to give feedback at any time? Either way is fine. We just want to be clear so people know what to do and what to expect."

**Step Seven: Agree on the communication process.**

"Let's agree on what way, specifically, and how frequently we'll check in to assess progress and evaluate how our working relationship is going." ●

## Taking the Mystery Out of Working With Others

When beginning to work with a new set of people, avoid unforeseen missteps and shorten the inherent learning curve by asking about their work habits and preferences.

After I tell people I want a good and candid relationship in which both of us can speak freely, I ask permission to ask a few questions. Then I get specific as I inquire about their working-style preferences.

### Asking Your Coworkers About Their Working-Style Preferences

Below are questions that you can ask coworkers, fellow team members and direct supervisors to get a clear sense of their working styles.

1. How do you best like to communicate? Via email, voicemail, text message, instant messenger or telephone or in person?
2. Are you a morning, afternoon or night person?
3. If we need to talk, do you prefer to work by appointment or would you prefer I drop by your office or give you a call?
4. If I need to reach you outside of regular business hours, what method is best? What time is too early and what time is too late to call?
5. How do you feel about being called on your cellphone?
6. What are your pet peeves? What types of things annoy you at work?
7. How will I know when you're frustrated?
8. If I need something quickly, how do you prefer to be interrupted?
9. If I have something to give you when you're not in your office, where would you prefer I leave it? On your desk or chair or in your inbox or with your assistant?

There is one hard-and-fast rule here: You cannot introduce these questions via email.

Taking the time to ask about another person's working-style preferences is a rapport builder. Emailing a list of questions is not. ●

## How to Create Candid Managerial Relationships

If an employee quits and his manager is surprised, the manager doesn't know his employee as well as he thinks he does.

Every manager should be able to answer the following two questions about each of his or her employees. If you can't, I'll go out on a limb and assert that you're not as good a manager as you could be. You're at risk of losing employees and never knowing why.

1. What are three things that will keep you with the organization?

2. What's the one thing that would make you leave the organization?

Your employees are keenly aware of your authority. Even those with whom you have good relationships know you're the boss, and there are some things direct reports just don't say to the boss. Because they fear the consequences, employees often don't state their greatest needs, even when not getting those needs met will drive them out of the organization.

As managers, we sometimes assume that others want what we want. Not the case. People need different things to be happy. If we don't ask them, we'll never know what those things are. ●

## Managing Up With Candor

Your boss is, of course, responsible for managing you. But savvy employees know that they also manage their bosses. When we don't manage upward, our careers stagnate.

### Ask for Feedback Along the Way

Everyone has a preference regarding communication of information — how much, in what format and how often. Even people who say they don't care usually have a preference. Some managers want to know exactly what you're working on at all times. Others are happy to receive periodic updates on just the big initiatives.

Why guess what your boss is expecting, when it's such an easy question to ask? Consider asking:

- Did my last update contain enough detail, or would you have liked more information?
- What can I change about how I put the data together to make it easier to review?

### Your Job Is to Make Your Boss Look Good

The higher someone gets in management, the more his performance is evaluated based on his team's performance. This is why smart managers surround themselves with the best people. Thus, regardless of what you think of your boss, your job is to make him or her look good. And the more clearly you understand how your boss is being measured, the better position you are in to achieve your own goals.

Knowing where your boss sees your department going helps ensure that your actions are aligned with his vision and focused on what's most important. What you think is important may not be what your manager thinks is important. Work on agreed-upon priorities. ●

## Strengthening Internal Business Relationships

The next step is to learn more about what the people and departments you work with do on a daily basis, the challenges they face, and how your work impacts theirs.

### Departments Don't Talk to Each Other

In my experience, most people in organizations know very little beyond the basics about what other departments do. We often don't know what types of challenges and constraints other departments deal with. And even less often do we know why other departments require certain forms, timelines and processes. Asking these questions helps people get their jobs done and eliminates much of the strife, redundant work and frustration that is prevalent in most workplaces.

Every department has its own way of doing things. There is a reason why payroll needs to be reported by three o'clock, why you must supply accounts payable with a $2 receipt for a cup of coffee when the federal government doesn't require it, and why you have to go through purchasing for some purchases but not others. For the most part, there is a good reason — at least in someone's opinion — for those practices.

Unfortunately, there is often little communication about these policies and procedures. We just expect people to know why we do what we do and to follow our rules. When other departments don't play along, we become annoyed, grumbling about how difficult they are to work with and how they make our lives hard.

In the absence of knowledge, people fill in the gaps. And it's never good. Give more information than you think you need to give.

For the most part, people will do what you ask, but they want to know why you're asking. They need to understand the rationale behind what they're being asked to do. Once they understand, they often stop complaining and follow the rules. ●

## Relationships Require Maintenance

Starting a relationship by asking what people expect from you but never checking in to ask how things are going is like taking someone's order in a restaurant but never checking back to see how he is enjoying his meal. If the food isn't quite right, the customer is forced to track down his server to make a request. But most people are not likely to do that. They are more likely to

leave a lousy tip and tell everyone they know how bad the service was. Your coworkers are no different. They're more likely to work around you than tell you they're dissatisfied.

The priorities of a business tend to change. What was important during the first quarter may not be a priority in the second. If you don't periodically check in and find out what's changed in your coworkers' departments, you could be dedicating time and resources in the wrong places and never know it.

### You Can Be Fired and Never Know It

The VP of marketing at a firm I used to work for got a call from a friend who had seen the VP's job posted on a job board. The friend said, "Hey buddy, I just wanted to see if you were still there. Your job is posted on Monster, so I figured you'd moved on."

That's what I call feedback. It isn't specific or particularly helpful, but it is feedback.

In this case, the company determined that the VP of marketing wasn't working out and decided to replace him. To reduce the amount of time the job would be vacant and to keep the current VP engaged, the company began searching for his replacement before telling him that he wasn't meeting expectations.

This is wrong, but it happens all the time.

If you want to control your career, you must identify your blind spots and know your reputation. The only way to find out is to ask.

Consider conducting what I call a Relationship Inventory — a method of touching base with the people you work with to see what's changed in their business since you last talked. It's also an opportunity to ask for feedback.

You can schedule a meeting to ask for an update and get feedback, or you can use an already scheduled meeting. It doesn't matter how you get the information; it just matters that you ask for it and respond appropriately. Just ask a few questions. You want to have a conversation, not conduct an interrogation.

## Relationship Inventory Questions

1. What's happening in your department that you want me to know about?
2. What's changed in your business since we last met?
3. What's working about how our departments are working together?
4. What's one change we could make that would make the biggest difference for you?
5. What's it like to work with the people who report to me?

## Can I Trust You?

You can tell your colleagues, your boss and your direct reports that you want good working relationships with them. You can ask for feedback and promise to say thank you. And you can ask about their working-style preferences. But none of this will make a difference if the people you work with don't trust you.

You have to demonstrate that you meant what you said and that you really are the person you say you are.

We've all received feedback or input that we've questioned or invalidated because of our relationship, or lack thereof, with its source. If you want others to hear your suggestions and take them as you intend them, you must have trust-based relationships. If you don't, every word you say will be questioned and tested.

As relationships develop, it's important not to kill them by damaging trust. Building trust takes time. Breaking trust can happen in a moment. Do your best to avoid the behaviors that are classic trust and relationship killers.

### Relationship Killer Number One: Gossip

People have a tendency to talk about us, not to us. If you haven't been gossiped about, you just need to get out and meet more people.

If you have something to say, say it directly to the person involved. If you're not going to speak to the person directly, say nothing at all. As we all know, this is easier said than done.

Gossip will destroy relationships, organizational cultures and careers faster than anything else. And we are all tempted to gossip.

### Relationship Killer Number Two: Breaking Your Word

Do the things you say you will do. Here's a goal to aspire to: Make only commitments you intend to keep. We all know this isn't possible, so do the next best thing. As soon as you realize you can't or won't keep a commitment, tell the people who are affected. Don't wait.

### Relationship Killer Number Three: Not Telling the Truth

We all do things we wish we hadn't done. We miss deadlines, make mistakes and disappoint people. Adults are not very different from kids when it comes to confessing to failings. We've all said, "It wasn't me" or "I didn't do it" way beyond the age of 9. We don't want to disappoint the people we work with.

### Relationship Killer Number Four: Withholding Information

When people don't know what is happening or why, they make things up. It stems from a human need to know and understand what's happening in our surroundings. However, made-up information that starts quite innocently can quickly spread throughout an organization, destroying the culture leaders are working to create.

A little candor in the form of an organizational announcement can mitigate the gossip and rumor mill. And the organization's leaders can build good will for being candid and trusting that employees can handle sensitive information. The more you trust people, the more they will trust you. ●

## Giving and Receiving Feedback — What, When, Why and How

Landmarks in driving directions serve as feedback, letting us know we're on the right track and are progressing toward our desired destination. Just as we need to know whether we're driving in the right direction, we need to hear both what's going well and what's not going well regarding our performance at work.

### Knowing When to Shut Up

Before we talk about how to give feedback, let's talk about what feedback is and what it isn't. There are two purposes for providing feedback: to either change behavior or maintain it. There are no other reasons.

**Give feedback when:**

- The person asked for your opinion.
- You asked for and were given permission to give input, and you have a specific example to share.
- The incident happened recently, preferably within a week.
- You are trying to help the person improve his or her performance or want to be sure he or she keeps doing something that is working.

**Don't give feedback when:**

- You're annoyed and it's a chance to express your frustration.
- You don't like this person and this seems like a perfect time to tell him or her.
- He or she hasn't asked for feedback but needs it.
- You don't have permission.
- It's a chance to blast someone in front of others.

### If You Can't Give an Example, You're Not Ready to Give Feedback

If you want to be sure people get really defensive, give vague feedback. Any time feedback can be interpreted in more than one way, it's too vague.

*Arrogant* means different things to different people and can be demonstrated in many ways. Telling Mark he is arrogant is unhelpful, but telling him specific behaviors and actions that made him appear arrogant is quite helpful. Without knowing the specific behaviors that created that unfavorable impression, Mark is left with guesswork, which creates paranoia and defensiveness. ●

## The Feedback Formula

Below are eight steps that will enable you to say anything — no matter how difficult — in two minutes or less. Conversations following these eight steps enable recipients to remember the situation; see the impact of their actions; speak on their own behalf; and create, hopefully with your input, a plan for the future.

**1. Introduce the conversation** so feedback recipients know what to expect.

**2. Empathize** so both the feedback provider and the recipient feel as comfortable as possible.

**3. Describe the observed behavior** so the recipient can picture a specific, recent example of what you're referring to. The more specific you are, the less defensive he will be and the more likely he'll be to hear you and take corrective action.

**4. Sharing the impact or result** describes the consequences of the behavior. It's what happened as a result of the person's actions.

**5. Having some dialogue** gives both people a chance to speak and ensures that the conversation is not one-sided. Good feedback conversations are dialogues during which the recipient can ask questions, share his point of view and explore next steps.

**6. Make a suggestion or request** so the recipient has another way to approach the situation or task in the future. Give people the benefit of the doubt. If people

knew a better way to do something, they would do it another way.

**7. Building an agreement on next steps** ensures there is a plan for what the person will do going forward. Too many feedback conversations do not result in behavior change. Agreeing on next steps creates accountability.

**8. Say "Thank you"** to create closure and to express appreciation for the recipient's willingness to have a difficult conversation.

If you're giving more than one piece of feedback during a conversation, address each issue individually. For example, if you need to tell someone that he or she needs to arrive on time and also check his or her work for errors, first go through the eight steps in the formula to address lateness. When you've discussed an agreement of next steps about being on time, go back to step one and address the errors. But talk about one issue at a time so the person clearly understands what he or she is supposed to do.

### Remove the Emotion and Deal With the Facts; How You Feel Makes No Difference

The eight-step Feedback Formula is short, simple and straightforward. But something is deliberately missing. The Formula focuses on the facts — not on how you feel about the person or situation. Too often feedback conversations contain the following phrases: "I'm so disappointed in you" or "I can't believe we're having this conversation again." How you as the feedback giver feel is not part of the Feedback Formula, because the conversation is not about you. It's about the other person and the impact of his or her behavior.

### When Do You Cut Bait?

Addressing the same behavior multiple times begs the question, At what point do you stop giving feedback and either end relationships or work around people?

There's a point at which you (a) give up and fire the employee, (b) rotate him to a job where he can be more successful, or (c) get him moved off a project or account and then work with the people who remain. That's an unfortunate reality.

But no matter the outcome, you can do the right thing by giving specific feedback in a timely way. If after a reasonable number of attempts you don't see sufficient change, work with the people who will work with you. ●

## Tips for Giving Feedback

Feedback conversations can strengthen your relationships and build trust. When you are willing to have a difficult conversation, you demonstrate that you care about the person and the relationship. If you didn't care, you'd say nothing, tell other people, cut the person off, or work around him or her.

When you have something difficult to say, sending an email or leaving a voice mail is easier than having a live conversation. You can hone what you want to say until your message is just right. You can manage your emotions and you don't have to deal with the other person's reaction.

But with an email, you can't manage your tone, see the other person's response or ensure she hears your message as you intended it.

### Good Feedback Conversations Are Planned

Feedback conversations are stressful. To ensure you say everything you want to say, plan your conversations.

About 10 years ago, I had a manager who was often volatile, unpredictable and irrational. To describe Kathryn as difficult to work with was an understatement. Talking with her was beyond stressful. I would get so nervous during our meetings that I'd forget to discuss half the things I wanted to say.

Before each meeting I made a bulleted list of everything I wanted to talk about and practiced particularly difficult conversations out loud. When Kathryn became emotional and I became flustered, I would look at my list, check off the last thing we talked about and move to the next item. Having notes of what I wanted to say kept me calm and ensured that I got what I needed from our very stressful meetings.

What follows is a series of questions for you to consider writing down the answers to as you plan for difficult feedback conversations.

- What's working?
- What's not working?
- What's most important for this person to know?
- What would you like this person to do differently?
- What are your requests?
- What do you want to say but know you probably won't?
- What will you say first? ●

## Dealing With Difficult Situations

The following strategies are for dealing with some of the most difficult situations that arise in the workplace. One note before we dive in: I wince every time I hear the term "dealing with difficult people." We deal with situations, not people.

**SITUATION: You work for someone who doesn't provide enough feedback.**

Managers are frequently promoted into management because they're good at their jobs. But doing something well and coaching someone else to do it are not the same thing. If all you hear from your boss is that you're doing a good job, and if you've tried the techniques for getting more feedback as outlined throughout this book and that hasn't worked, get feedback from a different source.

Simply ask your colleagues for specific feedback, and give coworkers permission to tell you. If the feedback isn't specific enough or you doubt its validity, ask someone else until you either get useful information or can validate the feedback you're questioning. While you deserve a boss who provides regular and specific feedback, you won't always have one.

**SITUATION: You were promoted and now your former coworkers and friends work for you.**

When you get promoted above coworkers and friends, I suggest having a one-on-one conversation with each new direct report and saying, "We were peers and friends, and now I'm your boss. It's awkward for me, and I have to assume it's awkward for you as well. I want us to have a good working relationship. The nature of our relationship will have to change. Before we go there, I want to give us both a chance to talk about how we're feeling. Want to start? What's this like for you?"

Choose your own words. The more transparent and willing you are to speak candidly about things people are thinking but not saying, the more respect you'll earn and the more solid your relationships will be.

**SITUATION: Someone tells you about a problem but asks you not to say anything.** Or someone gives you permission to pass the feedback on but doesn't want to be identified as the source of the information.

Being told something in confidence and then asked not to take action puts you in a very awkward position. When this happens, ask the person why he told you. Request that he not do it again unless he wants you to do something with the information.

There are times you simply cannot keep confidences. If this is the case, go back to the person who confided in you and tell her what you're going to do. Don't let her hear about it from someone else. The conversation could go something like this:

"Mary, I appreciate you telling me about the client's complaint. I know you asked me not to share it, and I want to respect your confidentiality. But it's a big deal and I have to pass on the feedback. How can I share the information so that you're comfortable? Do you want to talk to the director of sales yourself? I'm sure he'll be receptive. Or do you want me to talk to him?"

**SITUATION: Every time you give feedback to a certain person on your team, she cries.**

Giving a crier feedback is uncomfortable. Some people say people cry to manipulate and get out of a situation. I don't think that's true. I think we have a natural reaction to feedback and stress. Some of us clam up and say nothing, some of us get angry, and some of us cry. You are not responsible for how the recipient feels or reacts. When the person is calm, resume the conversation. ●

## Business Relationships That Really Work

It's safe to ask questions and tell people, at all levels and in all roles, the truth. CEOs don't have to hire consultants to find out what's happening in the organization. Employees willingly tell them. Projects are completed smoothly, and teams and departments work well together because employees understand what other departments and individuals do and how they impact each other. More gets done, in less time.

When you know what others expect and what your coworkers think of your performance — because you asked — you're able to manage your reputation and thus your career. Information is power, and power means control.

Changing an organization's culture starts with one person who is willing to do something differently. One person who asks more questions and tells the truth. Is that you?

The difference between relationships that work and those that don't is courage — the courage to make requests and tell the truth. One quality distinguishes people whose careers are on an upward trajectory. That, too, is courage.

You can say more than you think you can. Ask more. Assume less. Start today. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *How to Say Anything to Anyone*, you'll also like:

1. ***Speaking as a Leader* by Judith Humphrey.** Learn how to make the most of your daily communications, creating a presence on the job as a genuine and constant leader.
2. ***Just Listen* by Mark Goulston.** Goulston reveals how to get through to anyone, even when productive communication seems impossible.
3. ***Well Said!* by Darlene Price.** Price presents techniques, guidelines and checklists to help you present your message with clarity, credibility and confidence.

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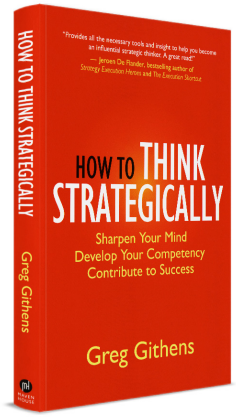
# How to Think Strategically

Greg Githens

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# How to Think Strategically

## Sharpen Your Mind. Develop Your Competency. Contribute to Success.




*by* **Greg Githens**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

There are thousands of jobs posted on career search sites that explicitly require strategic thinking. Organizations value individuals who can think strategically and want them on the front line of management as well as in the executive suite. Competent strategic thinkers are exceptions. For that reason, they are rare. One challenge of organizational development is in recognizing that prevailing culture often discourages deviation from the norm. Hence the cliché, the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.

Greg Githens, in ***How to Think Strategically***, draws from his experience as an employee and as a consultant, for an array of organizations: fast-growing entrepreneurial companies, family businesses, large businesses, government agencies, military, universities, and nonprofit community and professional organizations. He's worked with those at the top of the organization and those on the front line. Find the personal relevance in Githens' examples and questions. You will be rewarded with competence and mastery that will benefit you in all areas of your life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The difference between strategies and goals.
- To identify the microskills needed for strategic thinking.
- Understand why ambiguity is a precursor to great strategy.
- How curiosity sparks insight for forward thinking.

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

## Competence and Cleverness

This book's big idea is that individuals are the sole practitioners of strategic thinking, and each person practices it in a way that can be judged as competent or not. Competent individuals have the capacity and ability to understand a situation and act reasonably. Strategy is a relationship among ends, ways, and means. People with competence and cleverness are the ones who connect the dots in the relationship.

### Moneyball

***Moneyball*** is a story about a brilliant strategy developed by an unorthodox leader willing to challenge conventional beliefs. Billy Beane, the general manager of the Oakland A's professional baseball team, believed that his rivals were not valuing talent correctly and that he could exploit his better knowledge. His policy was to secure the contracts of undervalued players and deal away overvalued players. Oakland's Moneyball strategy was effective and produced an exceptional result: over a multiple-year period, Oakland won more regular-season games than any other team (except the Atlanta Braves) and reached the playoffs several years in a row. They did this with the lowest payroll in the industry.

Beane recognized the reality of the situation. He observed and acted on his insights. Then he developed a new set of dominating ideas. His premise was that getting runners on base was the key to winning games. This stood in contrast to the traditional approaches. By changing strategy based on data, they were making a smart bet—and it worked. Beane, an individual with unique competence and cleverness, changed baseball.

## Future Thinking

Christopher Columbus is one of the most significant people in the history of humankind, bringing the lands that are now called the Americas to Europe's attention. Columbus spent much of his early life on the Mediterranean Sea learning the basics of seamanship. He later ventured north and south on the "Great Ocean," as the Atlantic was then called. He acquired the idea of finding a trade route to Asia by sailing west. Columbus was curious and listened for details as he talked to fellow travelers. He then organized his thinking by looking to the future. He thought in new ways. He studied the weather and learned map-making. All these parts of his narrative provided sparks of insight.

### Resources

Columbus had a big idea, but he needed resources. He undoubtedly found it logical to begin with a request for sponsorship from King John II of Portugal, because Columbus had contacts within the Court. Columbus also smartly developed a relationship with the Spanish royalty, who eventually provided him with the resources needed for his project.

### Cognition

Columbus' curiosity and other habits of mind are consistent with the concept of higher-level thinking. When Portugal refused support, Columbus pivoted to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, who were receptive when he most needed their sponsorship. A good strategy adapts to changing information about the situation. He began his voyages expecting to find large and sophisticated trading centers. He never found those cities, so he switched tactics, applying all he had observed and taking advantages of relationships he had built. Although Columbus needed the help of many other people, his individual experiences, insights, and effort are at the center of the story. He understood the situation, adapted to it, and formulated a reasonable approach to advance his interests and the interests of his sponsors.

## Microskills

Githens draws attention to twelve microskills of strategic thinking. They apply whether one is discussing military strategy, stock market investing, or governance of a philanthropic organization. We'll look at a few here.

### Curiosity

Curiosity is perhaps the most familiar of the strategic thinking microskills and the easiest to incorporate into a busy daily routine. One tip for keeping curiosity in operation is to monitor your thinking, asking yourself this question: "Am I in learning mode?" Strategic thinkers tend to question everything. They want to know how things work and wonder how they can be made to work better. They're curious about people and their backstories. Githens offers this tip: Find people whose points of view are the opposite of yours. Rather than try to change their minds, learn why they hold that point of view and how they arrived at it.

### Storytelling

The strategic thinking microskill of storytelling is a natural capacity. People understand the basics of stories: characters, tensions, actions, and resolutions. A story can explain an organization's current position in society and its relationship

to its rivals. One important use of story is the prospective story, one that involves the organization and its people in a new, different, future state. A story can help others make sense of ambiguity, lead people to adopt new beliefs, and organize their actions.

### Reflection

The microskill of reflection is sharpness applied to oneself. Your goal is to develop a continually improving understanding of what is important to you and your organization. Productive solitude provides the opportunity for you to test your inclinations and deepen your understanding of the nature of your present reality and the possibilities of the future.

### Fuzzy Front End of Strategy

Githens describes the crafting of strategy as three phases: the fuzzy front end of strategy, the structured back end of strategy, and the programming of strategy. On the front end, the strategic thinker is noticing interesting things—patterns, trends, coincidences, curiosities, and anomalies.

### Better Questions

A better strategy can be generated if answers are found to quality questions, rather than quality solutions found for poorly posed questions. The ability to ask short, excellent questions is a skill. Notice how a talented television interviewer helps a subject reveal important information. Since strategy often involves conflicting ideas, status, and hurt feelings, it's better to use a conversational tone rather than an interrogative or argumentative tone. Ask one high-quality question at a time and patiently wait for a thoughtful answer.

### Knowledge Soup

Knowledge soup refers to loosely organized, dynamically changing knowledge. The problem is related to ambiguity: parts of the soup make sense to some people and not to others; some people see the same "thing" and label it differently from others, some people see things that others don't, and so on. A strategic thinker retains an open mental stance to sense the big picture. She will be optimistic that she can find a way through the knowledge soup and reach clarity.

### The Uncomfortable Unknown

Strategic thinkers focus more on learning rather than knowing. The lesson for strategic thinkers is to keep stretching, putting aside the feelings of stupidity and frustration. The fuzzy front end of strategy is a venture into the unknown. The better your questions, the more you increase your probability of learning something useful.

### Pockets of the Future

In the year 1996, fewer than one percent of Americans used cell phones. Within a decade, the cell phone became an everyday part of people's lives. Details found in the present have significant future implications. William Gibson remarked that "the future is already here; it's just not very evenly distributed." Strategic thinkers are the ones who recognize the future.

### Anticipation

Anticipation, the ability to imagine the later-than-now, is a strategic microskill. There are three different kinds of anticipation. The first two are preparation and planning, both of which operate with the assumption that the future is "closed." Stated differently, in the first two kinds of anticipation, the strategist operates with the assumption that everything worth knowing is known. The third kind of anticipation is discovery and is "open" to emergence.

## Strategic Decisions

Louis V. Gerstner Jr. was the only outsider hired as CEO in IBM's history. He started in 1993. IBM's business model was a good fit for the situation in the 1960s, and it followed the natural inclination of operational thinkers to use specialization and process to solidify its advantages. The good fit of the 1960s became a misfit in the 1990s.

IBM first gained success with its accumulated proprietary expertise in the computing industry. Over time, it gained advantages over rivals and became an incumbent leader. Eventually, discontinuities emerged, such as personal computing and competitors—Microsoft and Apple. IBM noticed the discontinuity (emergent opportunity) and responded with a new strategy. They planned to break the company apart and function as small companies. Gerstner listened, asked lots of questions, and reversed the decision. He revealed that his decision to keep IBM together was the most important decision he made as CEO. Strategy involves making bets. No strategy can be guaranteed to succeed. Gerstner's decisions layered one over another to produce success.

### Spark of Insight

Insights are the secret sauce of strategy. An insight is a person's realization of a new and better explanation of the situation. The mind realizes insights through three pathways: finding connections, exploring contradictions, and using creative desperation. Try the following techniques to spark insight.

### Walking the Fenceline

Begin with an analogy: the property line of a residence resembles the periphery of an organization. The first step is to walk the fenceline stopping periodically to look out at your neighbors, and then turn toward your house to take your neighbors' points of view. The next step is to use your imagination to examine various stakeholders' points of view. For example, how does a customer see your organization? Or a new hire? Or a government regulator? Or a supplier? The walking-the-fenceline exercise will increase your empathy for the perspectives of others and help you to identify the issues that may have a broad or long-term impact. You can spot opportunities for innovation, which are often found at the fringe of the organization, where things are murky and ambiguous.

### Time Travelers

Imagine a time traveler (from the past or future) who has just appeared in the present. This involves the reframing technique of projection (because this is one person's point of view) and narrative framing (because the time slice has changed). The visitor from the past sees the present as a special world, full of changes in technology and culture. The visitor from the future sees the missed opportunities. This time traveler scenario can help further elaborate the time horizons through questions such as these: What would the time traveler recognize as familiar? What would the time traveler recognize as new?

### Mastery

A strategist will always seek to mature her perspective and talents. Trust in self and others, confidence, regulation of thoughts and behaviors, influencing others, high-quality conversations, and the courage of leadership are marks of an individual exercising personal and interpersonal mastery.

### Perspective

A person's strategic perspective is grounded in her personality, life experiences, and present point of view. Jen-sen Huang founded Nvidia, a graphics chip manufacturer. He explained that, as a member of the video-game generation, it seemed obvious that there would be a continuing demand by video gamers for better-performing computer chips. Huang saw the opportunity for a business model focused on creating and supplying those chips. To him, it was common sense, albeit a common sense that was unique to his team. It wasn't a matter of having a vision; it was a matter of holding a unique perspective. One person's strong signal is another person's weak signal, and one person's nonsense is another person's common sense. Everyone has their unique perspective, and that's a source of value.

### Dialogue and Deliberation

The goal of dialogue and deliberation is to deepen and enrich the sharing of knowledge. Knowledge can be a turning point for strategy. Billy Beane's conversation with Sandy Alderman pointed toward an unorthodox logic that evolved into the underpinnings of the Moneyball strategy. Lou Gerstner's meeting with Dennie Welsh led to a "mind afire" realization that IBM's future was a service-centric business model. It's possible that a conversation between Christopher Columbus and his brother sparked the insight that a voyager could exploit the prevailing winds to sail west and the westerly winds to return. Better-quality discourse can lead to better strategy.

Leadership is a choice to grapple with the multi-faceted nature of reality and the courage to help other people do the same. Ordinary leadership involves "perfecting the known," whereas the chief task of extra-ordinary leadership is "imperfectly seizing the unknown."



Greg Githens is a well-known thought leader in the project management community: PMI SeminarsWorld seminar leader, and PMI Chapter speaker. He is an executive coach & advisor for innovation and strategy, applying the tools of program & project management. He brings superb skills in analyzing growth opportunities, industry insights, customer value propositions, and design. He has strong business acumen and is focused on the vital topics of strategy and strategic thinking, innovation, go-to-market & new product development process, business development, business model optimization, value proposition design, governance and risk management.

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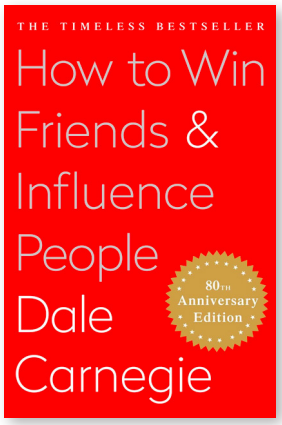
# How to Win Friends & Influence People

Dale Carnegie

Executive Book Summaries®

Career & Self-Development

# How to Win Friends & Influence People




*by* **Dale Carnegie**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Even now, the simple truths in Dale Carnegie's remarkable book are as fresh and vital as when they were first released in 1937. His principles for achieving success have withstood the ravages of time because they worked ... and still work!

Carnegie's advice has remained relevant for generations because he addresses timeless questions about the fine art of getting along with people: How can you make people like you instantly? How can you persuade people to agree with you? How can you speak frankly to people without giving offense?

As Carnegie, explains, the majority of our success in life depends on our ability to communicate and manage personal relationships effectively, at home and at work.

The core principles of this book, originally written as a practical, working handbook on human relations, are proven effective. ***How to Win Friends and Influence People*** will help you discover and develop the people skills you need to live well and prosper.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Techniques in handling people.
- Ways to make people like you.
- How to win people to your way of thinking.
- How to change people without offending them.

## Introduction

This book wasn't written in the usual sense of the word. It grew as a child grows. It grew and developed out of the reactions to my lectures, out of the experience of thousands of adults.

The rules we have set down here are not mere theories or guesswork. They work like magic. Incredible as it sounds, I have seen the application of these principles literally revolutionize the lives of many people.

"Compared to what we ought to be," said the famous Professor William James of Harvard, "we are only half awake. We are making use of only a small part of our physical and mental resources. Stating the thing broadly, the human individual thus lives too closely within his limits. He possesses powers of various sorts which he habitually fails to use."

## Part One: Fundamental Techniques in Handling People

### If You Want to Gather Honey, Don't Kick Over the Beehive

John Wanamaker, founder of the stores that bear his name, once confessed: "I learned thirty years ago that it is foolish to scold. I have enough trouble overcoming my own limitations without fretting over the fact that God has not seen fit to distribute evenly the gift of intelligence."

Do you know someone you would like to change and regulate and improve? Good! I am all in favor. But why not begin on yourself ? From a purely selfish standpoint, it's a lot more profitable than trying to improve others—and a lot less dangerous.

When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity.

Instead of condemning people, let's try to understand them. Let's try to figure out why they do what they do. That's a lot more profitable and intriguing than criticism; and it breeds sympathy, tolerance and kindness. "To know all is to forgive all."

As Dr. Johnson said, "God Himself, sir, does not propose to judge man until the end of his days." Why should you and I?

***Principle: Don't criticize, condemn or complain.***

### The Big Secret of Dealing With People

The only way under heaven to get anybody to do anything is by making the other person want to do it.

Let's cease thinking of our accomplishments, our wants. Let's try to figure out the other person's good points. Then forget flattery. Give honest, sincere appreciation. Be "hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise," and people will cherish your words and treasure them and repeat them over a lifetime—repeat them years after you have forgotten them.

***Principle: Give honest and sincere appreciation.***

### He Who Can Do This Has the Whole World With Him. He Who Cannot Walks a Lonely Way.

The only way on earth to influence other people is to talk about what they want and show them how to get it.

Tomorrow you may want to persuade somebody to do something. Before you speak, pause and ask yourself: "How can I make this person want to do it?"

"If there is any one secret of success," said Henry Ford, "it lies in the ability to get the other person's point of view and see things from that person's angle as well as from your own."

When we have a brilliant idea, instead of making others think it is ours, why not let them cook and stir the idea themselves. They will then regard it as their own; they will like it and maybe eat a couple of helpings of it.

Remember: "First, arouse in the other person an eager want. He who can do this has the whole world with him. He who cannot walks a lonely way."

***Principle: Arouse an eager want in the other person.***

## Part Two: Six Ways to Make People Like You

### Do This and You'll Be Welcome Anywhere

All of us—workers in a factory, clerks in an office or a king on his throne—all of us like people who admire us.

If we want to make friends, let's put ourselves out to do

things for other people—things that require time, energy, unselfishness and thoughtfulness. If we want to make friends let's greet people with animation and enthusiasm.

If you want others to like you, if you want to develop real friendships, if you want to help others at the same time as you help yourself, keep this principle in mind.

***Principle: Become genuinely interested in other people.***

## A Simple Way to Make a Good Impression

Charles Schwab, one of the most successful men in America, told me his smile had been worth a million dollars.

And he was probably understating the truth. For Schwab's personality, his charm, his ability to make people like him, were almost wholly responsible for his extraordinary success.

Actions speak louder than words, and a smile says, "I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you."

Professor James V. McConnell, a psychologist at the University of Michigan, expressed his feelings about a smile. "People who smile," he said, "tend to manage, teach and sell more effectively, and to raise happier children. There's far more information in a smile than a frown. That's why encouragement is a much more effective teaching device than punishment."

To someone who has seen a dozen people frown, scowl or turn their faces away, your smile is like the sun breaking through the clouds.

***Principle: Smile!***

## If You Don't Do This You Are Headed for Trouble

The average person is more interested in his or her own name than in all the other names on earth put together. Remember that name and call it easily, and you have paid a subtle and very effective compliment.

Libraries and museums owe their richest collections to people who cannot bear to think that their names might perish from the memory of the race.

Most people don't remember names, for the simple reason that they don't take the time and energy necessary to concentrate and repeat and fix names indelibly in their minds. They make excuses for themselves; they are too busy.

Napoleon the Third, Emperor of France, boasted that in spite of all his royal duties he could remember the name of every person he met. His technique? Simple. If he didn't hear the name distinctly, he said, "So sorry. I didn't get the name clearly." Then, if it was an unusual name, he would say, "How is it spelled?"

***Principle: Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest most important sound in any language.***

## An Easy Way to Become a Good Conversationalist

The secret, the mystery, of a successful business interview? Well, according to former Harvard president Charles W. Eliot, "There is no mystery about successful business intercourse ... Exclusive attention to the person who is speaking to you is very important. Nothing else is so flattering as that."

If you aspire to be a good conversationalist, be an attentive listener. To be interesting, be interested. Ask questions that other persons will enjoy answering. Encourage them to talk about themselves and their accomplishments.

Remember that the people you are talking to are a hundred times more interested in themselves and their wants and problems than they are in you and your problems. A person's toothache means more to that person than a famine in China which kills a million people. A boil on one's neck interests one more than forty earthquakes in Africa. Think of that the next time you start a conversation.

***Principle: Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.***

## How to Interest People

The royal road to a person's heart is to talk about the things he or she treasures most.

Talking in terms of the other person's interests pays off for both parties. Howard Z. Herzig, a leader in the field of employee communications, has always followed this principle. When asked what reward he got from it, Mr. Herzig responded that he not only received a different reward from each person but that in general the reward had been an enlargement of his life each time he spoke to someone.

***Principle: Talk in terms of the***

***other person's interests.***

### How to Make People Like You Instantly

Always make the other person feel important! You want the approval of those with whom you come in contact. You want recognition of your true worth. You want a feeling that you are important in your little world. You don't want to listen to cheap, insincere flattery, but you do crave sincere appreciation. All of us want that.

"Talk to men about themselves," said Disraeli, one of the shrewdest men who ever ruled the British Empire. "Talk to people about themselves and they will listen for hours."

***Principle: Make the other person feel important and do it sincerely.***

## Part Three: How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking

### You Can't Win an Argument

You can't because if you lose it, you lose it; if you win it, you lose it. Why? Well, suppose you triumph over the other man and shoot his argument full of holes and prove that he is non compos mentis? Then what? You will feel fine. But what about him? You have made him feel inferior. You have hurt his pride. He will resent your triumph, and he will still believe that he was right.

Which would you rather have, an academic, theatrical victory or a person's good will? You can seldom have both.

Opera tenor Jan Peerce, after he was married nearly fifty years, once said: "My wife and I made a pact a long time ago, and we've kept it no matter how angry we've grown with each other. When one yells, the other should listen—because when two people yell, there is no communication, just noise and bad vibrations."

***Principle: The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.***

### A Sure Way of Making Enemies—and How to Avoid It

If you are going to prove anything, don't let anybody know it. Do it so subtly, so adroitly, that no one will feel that you are doing it.

As Lord Chesterfield said to his son: "Be wiser than other people if you can; but do not tell them so."

You will never get into trouble by admitting that you might be wrong. That will stop all argument and inspire your opponent to be just as fair and open and broadminded as you are. It will make him want to admit that he, too, may be wrong.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus said: "Agree with thine adversary quickly."

In other words, don't argue with your customer or your spouse or your adversary. Don't tell them they are wrong, don't get them stirred up. Use a little diplomacy.

***Principle: Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "You're wrong."***

### If You're Wrong Admit It

Any fool can try to defend his or her mistakes—and most fools do but it raises one above the herd and gives one a feeling of nobility and exultation to admit one's mistakes.

When we are right, let's try to win people gently and tactfully to our way of thinking, and when we are wrong—and that will be surprisingly often, if we are honest with ourselves—let's admit our mistakes quickly and with enthusiasm. Not only will that technique produce astonishing results; but, believe it or not, it is a lot more fun, under the circumstances, than trying to defend oneself.

***Principle: If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.***

### A Drop of Honey

If a man's heart is rankling with discord and ill-feeling toward you, you can't win him to your way of thinking with all the logic in the world. Scolding parents and domineering bosses and husbands and nagging wives ought to realize that people don't want to change their minds. They can't be forced or driven to agree with you or me. But they may possibly be led to, if we are gentle and friendly, ever so gentle and ever so friendly.

The sun can make you take off your coat more quickly than the wind; and kindliness, the friendly approach and appreciation can make people change their minds more readily than all the bluster and storming in the world.

Remember what Abraham Lincoln said: "A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall."

***Principle: Begin in a friendly way.***

### The Secret of Socrates

In talking with people, don't begin by discussing the things on which you differ. Begin by emphasizing—and keep on emphasizing—the things on which you agree. Keep emphasizing, if possible, that you are both striving for the same end and that your only difference is one of method and not of purpose.

Get the other person saying "Yes, yes" at the outset. Keep your opponent, if possible, from saying "No."

It is a very simple technique—this yes response. And yet, how much it is neglected! It often seems as if people get a sense of their own importance by antagonizing others at the outset.

The Chinese have a wise proverb: "He who treads softly goes far."

***Principle: Get the other person saying "yes, yes" immediately.***

### The Safety Valve in Handling Complaints

Most people trying to win others to their way of thinking do too much talking themselves. Let the other people talk themselves out. They know more about their business and problems than you do. So ask them questions. Let them tell you a few things.

Listen patiently and with an open mind. Be sincere about it. Encourage them to express their ideas fully.

Even our friends would much rather talk to us about their achievements than listen to us boast about ours.

***Principle: Let the other person do a great deal of talking.***

### How to Get Cooperation

Don't you have much more faith in ideas that you discovered for yourself than in ideas that are handed to you on a silver platter? If so, isn't it bad judgement to try to ram your opinions down the throats of other people? Isn't it wiser to make suggestions—and let the other person think out the conclusion?

Twenty-five centuries ago, Lao-tse, a Chinese sage, said some things that readers of this book might use today:

"The reason why rivers and seas receive the homage of a hundred mountain streams is that they keep below them. Thus they are able to reign over all the mountain streams. So the sage, wishing to be before them, he putteth himself behind them. Thus, though his place be above men, they do not feel his weight; though his place be before them, they do not count it an injury."

***Principle: Let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers.***

### A Formula That Will Work Wonders for You

Remember that other people may be totally wrong. But they don't think so. Don't condemn them. Any fool can do that. Try to understand them. Only wise, tolerant, exceptional people even try to do that.

There is a reason why the other man thinks and acts as he does. Ferret out that reason—and you have the key to his actions, perhaps his personality.

Try honestly to put yourself in his place.

If, as a result of reading this, you get only one thing—an increased tendency to think always in terms of the other person's point of view, and see things from that person's angle as well as your own—if you get only that one thing from this book, it may easily prove to be one of the stepping-stones of your career.

***Principle: Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.***

### What Everybody Wants

Three-fourths of the people you will ever meet are hungering and thirsting for sympathy. Give it to them and they will love you.

"The human species universally craves sympathy," said Dr. Arthur Gates in his splendid book Educational Psychology. "The child eagerly displays his injury; or even inflicts a cut or bruise in order to reap abundant sympathy. For the same purpose adults show their bruises, relate accidents, illness,

especially details of a surgical operation."

***Principle: Be sympathetic to the other person's ideas and desires.***

### An Appeal That Everybody Likes

J. Pierpont Morgan observed that a person usually has two reasons for doing a thing: one that sounds good and the real one.

The person himself will think of the real reason. You don't need to emphasize that. But all of us, being idealists at heart, like to think of motives that sound good. So, in order to change people, appeal to the nobler motives.

When John D. Rockefeller, Jr., wished to stop newspaper photographers from snapping pictures of his children, he too appealed to the nobler motives. He didn't say, "I don't want their pictures published." No, he appealed to the desire, deep in all of us, to refrain from harming children. He said: "You know how it is, boys. You've got children yourselves, some of you. And you know it's not good for youngsters to get too much publicity."

***Principle: Appeal to the nobler motives.***

### The Movies Do It. TV Does It. Why Don't You Do It?

This is the day of dramatization. Merely stating a truth isn't enough. The truth has to be made vivid, interesting, dramatic.

You can dramatize your ideas in business or in any other aspect of your life.

James B. Boynton had to present a lengthy market report to one of the biggest—and most formidable—men in the advertising business.

"I didn't bother with tabulations of figures and data. I went to see this man, I dramatized my facts.

As I entered his office he was busy on the phone. While he finished his conversation, I opened a suitcase and dumped thirty-two jars of cold cream on top of his desk—all products he knew all competitors of his cream.

On each jar I had a tag itemizing the results of the trade investigation. And each tag told its story briefly, dramatically."

"I was presenting the usual dry facts, but this time I was using dramatization, showmanship—and what a difference it made."

***Principle: Dramatize your ideas.***

### When Nothing Else Works Try This

The way to get things done is to stimulate competition—stimulate the desire to excel.

"I have never found," said Harvey Firestone, founder of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., "that pay and pay alone would either bring together or hold good people. I think it was the game itself."

This is what every successful person loves: the game. The chance for self-expression. The chance to prove his or her worth, to excel, to win. That is what makes foot-races and hog-calling and pie-eating contests. The desire to excel. The desire to feel important.

***Principle: Throw down a challenge.***

## Part Four: Be a Leader: How to Change People Without Giving Offense or Arousing Resentment

### If You Must Find Fault, This Is the Way to Begin

It is always easier to listen to unpleasant things after we have heard some praise of our good points.

Beginning with praise is like the dentist who begins his work with Novocain. The patient still gets the drilling, but the Novocain kills the pain.

***Principle: Begin with praise and honest appreciation.***

### How to Criticize—and Not Be Hated for It

Calling attention to one's mistakes indirectly works wonders with sensitive people who may resent bitterly any direct criticism.

On March 8. 1887, the eloquent preacher Henry Ward Beecher died. The following Sunday, Lyman Abbott was invited to speak in the pulpit left silent by Beecher's passing. Eager to do his best, he wrote, rewrote and polished his sermon with the meticulous care of a Flaubert. Then he read it to his wife. It was poor as most written speeches are. She

might have said, if she had less judgement, "Lyman, this is terrible. That'll never do. You'll put people to sleep."

That's what she might have said. And, if she had, you know what would have happened. And she knew too. So, she merely remarked that it would make an excellent article for the North American Review. In other words, she praised it and at the same time subtly suggested that it wouldn't do as a speech. Lyman Abbott saw the point, tore up his carefully prepared manuscript and preached without even using notes.

***Principle: Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly.***

### Talk About Your Own Mistakes First

It isn't nearly so difficult to listen to a recital of your faults if the person criticizing begins by humbly admitting that he, too, is far from impeccable.

Admitting one's own mistakes—even when one hasn't corrected them—can help convince somebody to change his behavior.

***Principle: Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person.***

### No One Likes to Take Orders

Resentment caused by a brash order may last a long time—even if the order was given to correct an obviously bad situation.

Asking questions not only makes an order more palatable; it often stimulates the creativity of the persons who you ask. People are more likely to accept an order if they have a part in the decision that caused the order to be issued.

For example, Ian MacDonald, general manager of a small manufacturing plant had the opportunity to accept a very large order, but he was convinced that he would not meet the promised delivery date unless his workers made an extreme extra effort.

Instead of pushing his people to accelerate their work and rush the order through, he called everybody together, and explained the situation to them. Then he started asking questions.

"Is there any way we can handle this order?"

"Can anyone think of different ways to process it through the shop that will make it possible to take the order?"

The employees came up with many ideas and insisted that he take the order. They approached it with a "We can do it" attitude, and the order was accepted, produced and delivered on time.

***Principle: Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.***

### Let the Other Person Save Face

Letting one save face! How important, how vitally important that is!

Even if we are right and the other person is definitely wrong, we only destroy ego by causing someone to lose face. The legendary French aviation pioneer and author Antoine de Saint-Exupery wrote: "I have no right to say or do anything that diminishes a man in his own eyes. What matters is not what I think of him, but what he thinks of himself.

Hurting a man in his dignity is a crime."

***Principle: Let the other person save face.***

### How to Spur People On to Success

I can look back at my own life and see where a few words of praise have sharply changed my entire future.

You possess powers of various sorts which you habitually fail to use; and one of these powers you are probably not using to the fullest extent is your magic ability to praise people and inspire them with a realization of their latent possibilities.

Abilities wither under criticism; they blossom under encouragement.

***Principle: Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement. Be "hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise."***

### Give a Dog a Good Name

If you want to improve a person in a certain respect, act as though that particular trait were already one of his or her outstanding characteristics.

Give them a fine reputation to live up to, and they will make

prodigious efforts rather than see you disillusioned. There is an old saying: "Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him." But give a good name—and see what happens!

***Principle: Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.***

### Make the Fault Seem Easy to Correct

Tell your child, your spouse, or your employee that he or she is stupid or dumb at a certain thing, has no gift for it, and is doing it all wrong, and you have destroyed almost every incentive to try to improve. But use the opposite technique—be liberal with encouragement, make the thing seem easy to do, let the other person know, that you have faith in his ability to do it, that he has an undeveloped flair for it—and he will practice until the dawn comes in the window in order to excel.

***Principle: Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct.***

### Making People Glad to Do What You Want

Always make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.

I knew a man who had to refuse many invitations to speak, invitations extended by friends, invitations coming from people to whom he was obligated; and yet he did it so adroitly that the other person was at least contented with his refusal. How did he do it? Not by merely talking about the fact that he was too busy and too-this or too-that. No, after expressing his appreciation for the invitation and regretting his inability to accept it, he suggested a substitute speaker.

In other words, he didn't give the other person any time to feel unhappy about the refusal. He immediately changed the other person's thoughts to some other speaker who could accept the invitation.

It is naive to believe you will always get the favorable reaction from other persons when you use these approaches, but the experience of most people shows that you are more likely to change attitudes this way than by not using these principles and if you increase your successes by even a mere 10 percent, you have become 10 percent more effective as a leader than you were before—and that is your benefit.

***Principle: Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.***



Dale Carnegie was born in 1888 in Missouri and educated at State Teachers College at Warrensburg. As a salesman and aspiring actor, he traveled to New York and began teaching communications classes to adults at the YMCA. In 1912, the world-famous Dale Carnegie Course was born. Dale Carnegie's company became incorporated as Dale Carnegie & Associates, Inc. in 1954. He passed away a year later, leaving his legacy and a set of core principles to be disseminated for decades to come.

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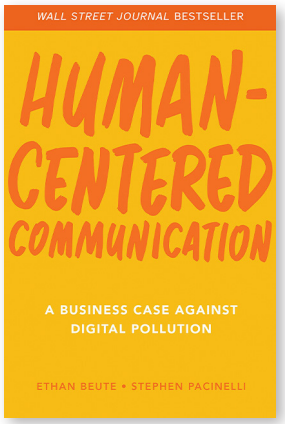
# Human-Centered Communication

Ethan Beute and Stephen Pacinelli

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Human-Centered Communication

## A Business Case Against Digital Pollution




*by* **Ethan Beute and Stephen Pacinelli**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

There is a problem invading society as a whole – it is nameless, and consequently we don't understand it or what it is costing us. Businesses feel it; individuals feel it; yet humans, not technology, are to blame for it. In ***Human-Centered Communication: A Business Case Against Digital Pollution***, Ethan Beute nd Stephen Pacinelli explore the scenarios that shape the argument of digital pollution and its effect on businesses, individuals, and society as a whole.

Across most virtual channels, we lose clarity in our interactions – with tone, intent, and meaning becoming more difficult to express and discern. Many people often find themselves misunderstanding others or even misunderstood themselves. All of this miscommunication leads to people becoming confused or frustrated. Through this book, the authors explore the problems and how we can move toward becoming more human-centric in our communication methods to bring about more meaningful interactions in everyday life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The problems currently plaguing our communication today.
- Real-life scenarios where digital pollution has hindered communication.
- How to move toward a more human-centric communication.
- How humans are to blame; not the technology.
- How to correct the error and miscommunication we face.

## Introduction

To cultivate a truly meaningful relationship, there needs to be as much time spent face-to-face as we build the connection. Once established, these connections can be sustained and deepened online, but it requires that initial foundation. Today, we aren't always afforded this sequence of events and people are not getting face-to-face interactions like they were once given. There is still a way to stay personal – and human – even when going virtual.

With all the annoyances found online – spam, bots, automation, robocalls, pop-up ads, spoofed accounts, phishing attempts, malware installs, data hacks, disinformation, and other forms of digital pollution – it is no wonder that we are continually being misinformed online due to their "human" features. It becomes impossible for us to decipher which is honest and safe from those that are misrepresented and dangerous. That is why most are finding that using video is the next best thing to being face-to-face – instilling trust once more in the interactions we have online, but it is not without its own flaws.

## Part One: Digital Pollution

When you think about digital pollution, you may think of a family member who spent several months, thousands of dollars, and several sleepless nights recovering from identity theft. The same thing happens when you throw up caution at a new friend request online for fear of a fake account using the name and photo of someone you are already friends with. Much like environmental pollution, digital pollution's harms are real, even when they are subtle. This pollution costs us time and money, but it also threatens other things, which are immeasurable and priceless – trust, relationships, bonding, and connection.

There are three categories of digital pollution – innocent, consequential, and intentional. The lines between these classifications are neither hard nor clear, but intent is what differentiates them, but judgements of intent are made subjectively by the recipient. With human-centric communication as an antidote to digital pollution, there is still potential for videos to pollute our digital environment – with intentional deepfakes that masquerade as authentic.

### Human-Centered Communication

We all know The Golden Rule: Treat others as you would like to be treated. There is a step above The Golden Rule that many people advocate for – The Platinum Rule. The Platinum Rule calls us to treat others as they would like to be treated, forcing us to shift our mindset from inside-out to outside-in. It makes us consider others' personal preferences rather than our own generalized rules, it calls us to form a general understanding of the individual.

These two rules provide insight into human-centric communication. You can approach every communication with the approach of The Golden Rule or The Platinum Rule. When you demonstrate warmth and competence, you show that you have their best interest at heart, which can earn you their precious attention. Human-centered design starts with empathy and understanding. But its success is in its compassion, acting to identify opportunities, improve processes, and solve problems.

### A More Human Funnel

There is a way to bridge digital pollution and human-centered communication as explained by Winning by Design founder, Jacco van der Kooij. He identifies that the wrong tool for the wrong job can exert too much force, producing negative consequences. There is a way to combat using too much force and in tern limit the consequences – it requires the proper order to design the process, and then select the best technology to support the process. Tools are levers that magnify power, so when we get turned around and put tools first, the likelihood and scope of negative consequences are magnified. When it comes to designing the process that focuses on your human-centered communication, it might be time to turn to a video face-to-face if you need to make a personal connection, manage emotion and tone, or need to break down detail or complexity.

## Part Two: Allies & Exemplars

### Emotion, Memory, and Motivation

Dan Hill, PhD shares what he considers to be the three distinct human qualities. These include speech/vocabulary, emotional flexibility, and sense of morality/need for vitality. Unlike rational thoughts, emotions are action oriented. If there is no emotion, there is no action – it is emotion that fuels us and if there is no fuel, things simply aren't going to happen. With the vast majority of our mental activity being visual, emotional, and subconscious, we must infuse messages and experiences we are creating with emotional components if we want something to happen from it.

### Noise, Attention, and Trust

When we ask better questions, we get better answers. Mathew Sweezey, researcher, marketer, and futurist, asked himself – why isn't our marketing working? This question would guide his work, learning that the journey doesn't necessary call for new marketing to create a revolution, but rather a shift in ideas, activities, and outcomes. Like human-centered communication, Mathew's proposed context marketing revolution puts customers first – The Platinum Rule. This breaks through the noise and motivates people to act, while creating the messages and experiences to help achieve that goal in the moment. The best way to help others is to create an approach that starts from the inside, rethinks the way we communicate, and adds video for face-to-face value in our communication.

### The Art (and Science) of Helping

Managing teams remotely can be complicated. Mario Martinez Jr. learned a way to navigate the struggles and frustrations that can come from the lack of face-to-face interactions to cultivate a fully remote workplace by using a human-centered management approach. Although they have never met, Mario and his team are as tight knit as family – much to do with his videos and messages that incorporate a personal touch with emotion and clarity his employees can benefit from. His use of video has allowed him to show his employees that he's a real person and not just management on screen. He has been able to use his invitation into his life to convey warmth, build connections, maintain trust, and enhance understanding within his team.

### The Teacher's Take on Connection

Viveka von Rosen is an expert on LinkedIn. She has created courses and has taught and train for strategy and tactics in almost every content format for more than a decade. She uses video to help enhance customer journey, create more engagement on screen, and builds confidence on camera. The goal is for a human-first philosophy that is consistent with human-centered communication. While tools and tech stacks vary, so do teams and company sizes. We all face out share of differences in our respective industries, but one thing is consistent, we are all human beings. We can enable our success when we work with and for our fellow humans. Directing back to the Golden Rule, Viveka states that to be human is to think of others first, to do no harm, and to treat others with the same respect that you want to be treated with. This opens the doors to building truly authentic relationships, even when you aren't face-to-face.

### Always Be Amazing

According to Shep Hyken, to be consistently amazing, you need to be better than average all the time. Something that has helped him reach this level of amazing is his emotional connection with his clients and community through his human-centered video approach. Regardless of the video style or channel, Shep keeps the other person top of mind with sincerity and gratitude – which is why people call him amazing. In a technology driven world, people want to use shortcuts to speak to people – like with automation. You can't automate cultivating real relationships. That is why you must automate what you can but strive to create human-centered relationships with people – it isn't something that can be digitized.

### People-First Prospecting

As humans, we should be striving to add humanity to our prospecting outreach and stop being robots. Morgan J. Ingram is a part of an exclusive club – one that requires creating mor than 10,000 videos for the purpose of building relationships and growing your business. As a part of his human-centered approach, Morgan consistently sends video messages and goes live across several social networks each day. His approach brings humanity to his sales process, making people feel more connected with him. He puts people first by sharing his story – but not though fancy developments – though real-life everyday situations from his webcam or smartphone. The video approach brings more connection than any blog or book could.

### The Year Of Video?

Dan Tyre predicted that people would start getting at least three video emails a day, but that still hasn't happened. An original HubSpot executive, Dan found out that when he incorporated human-centric video messages, his response rates rose from 50% to as much as 80%. He found that people don't need or want to be closed – they need to be helped. His method for this is to determine if they have a problem that needs solved, understand their decision-making process, engage early in that process, tailor your process to make it easy for the customer to buy, and focus on educating them. Using the extra layer of human-centered approach, even online, can help add thought and care to any digital format sent by using video. Success is about the tool or the technology, but about the personal touch you put with it.

## Part Three: Takeaways & Tomorrows

### Takeaways: Strategies and Philosophies

Taking a human-centered communication approach isn't new – it isn't radical. Instead, it is a restoration. In terms of environmental pollution, we take steps that help our natural environment through cleaner and healthier approaches. The same can be applied to digital pollution – taking a human-centered approach to add the personal touch necessary to eliminate the distrust and miscommunications that arise from it. The idea is to see the need for the change – human-centered communication starts with people. You must align with the needs and the wants of those affected to create a deep understanding and reach them. We have lost a lot of human emotion when we communicate, which is why using video helps instill the confidence back in human-centered communication, even if it isn't perfect. The flaws are what bring about the level of trust needed to circumvent the digital pollution that has fogged our ability to communicate with one another online. The final strategy is to stop selling and start helping. Just because you are selling something doesn't mean that you have to push it – it can solve a need, you just have to be willing to offer the help.

### Tomorrows: The Future of Human-Centered Communication

Implementing more human-centered communications in any area is a change for most – a movement away from dehumanization, disconnection, and digital pollution. This movement brings us closer to being more personal, create deeper connections, and implements more trust – which in turn provides us with stronger relationships and less miscommunications. Authenticity goes a long way when making connections – but there is that worry about deepfake videos that allow you to not only personalize videos, but also automate. Technology should be an amplifier of human intention – not be the one determining the intention. To protect authenticity and trust in digital spaces, it requires vigilance to meet whatever attacks may come its way.

## Conclusion

We have seen our share of miscommunication in the digital world, some of which we, as humans, can correct given the right opportunities. It doesn't take a full tech stack to create an impactful video, and even though we may stammer in front of the camera from time to time, it's the authenticity of our work that facilitate deeper relationships. Digital pollution doesn't have to drown out the efforts we make to remain digital when necessary, instead we can use digital advances to our advantage – working toward rehabilitating the relationships we once cultivated face-to-face. Throughout the case studies presented, one thing has been shown – being authentic, on video, and providing insight to those we share it with bring back the human-centered communications we all need.



Chief Evangelist at BombBomb and host of The Customer Experience Podcast, **Ethan Beute** helps business professionals be more personal and human through simple video messages.

A passionate storyteller by nature who measures his success by helping people reach their potential, **Steve Pacinelli** is Chief Marketing Officerat BombBomb.

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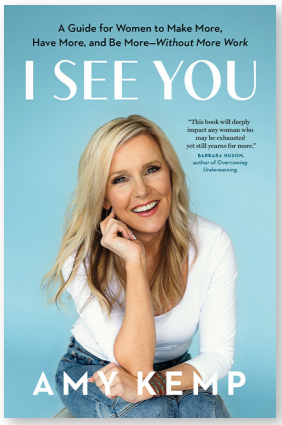
# I See You

Amy Kemp

Executive Book Summaries®

# I See You

## A Guide for Women to Make More, Have More, and Be More – Without More Work




*by* **Amy Kemp**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The greatest myth we all believe in? Professional growth comes from putting in more work. If this mantra truly worked, most women today wouldn't feel drained of time and energy despite putting their all into whatever they do.

The book ***I See You: A Guide for Women to Make More, Have More, and Be More – Without More Work*** unlocks the road to boost your impact, influence, and income without having to exhaust yourself. It offers a clear roadmap to create your boundaries unapologetically, harness your innate talents, delegate unpaid work at home, and ultimately enhance your income in the smartest possible way.

By bringing insights from her journey of building a successful business and coaching hundreds of women, Author Amy Kemp shows us how implementing small, consistent steps is all it takes to regain your time and energy and become a fulfilled and successful version of yourself.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Tap into your natural genius for professional growth.
- Discover how to set clear boundaries and create a robust structure to succeed.
- Learn how to boost success while working for fewer hours.

## Introduction

This is not a book full of quick tips and strategies. I am not here in a position of authority, swooping in to impart my sage wisdom upon you. You are all experts in your own right, even if you don't know it yet. Women like you don't need a complete system overhaul. You may need some updates to the way you think, which we will work through together, but more than anything, you need to know that someone sees you... someone sees all of you.

As you read, I hope you feel like you're sitting in an intimate one-on-one coaching session with me. I am your personal guide, humbled and honored to be along for the journey. There's no secret you need to rush to find in the pages ahead. Most of what you need is already inside you; you just need to uncover it and the exercises at the end of each chapter will be your tools to do the important excavation work.

More than anything, I know that your families, your places of work and businesses, your communities, and our entire world need you at your best. When women are healthy and confident, everyone wins.

## Chapter 1: A Moment of Truth

After reviewing everything there was about our money, our trusted financial advisor, Tess remarked, "I'm so impressed with how organized you are with your budget. However, there's only one problem if you want to achieve your goals." She paused for what seemed like a long time and then said, "You're not making enough money." At that moment, I felt so ashamed and frustrated. For fifteen years, I worked on building a successful business in direct sales. How could I not have been making enough money? At that moment, I knew something had to change. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I was going to create the income we needed. But if was already exhausted by my work and life outside of work, where would I find the energy to create something new?"

Following this epiphany, what has transpired over the last five years has exceeded my wildest expectations. Today, I work with clients in one-on-one engagements I call Empower, where we dive deeply into their habits of thinking in one-hour sessions every other week. I lead small groups of women who live all around the United States through a four-month experience called Encounter, in which we identify and start to replace limiting habits of thinking together in biweekly lunch meetings.

If you're facing a similar roadblock in life, know that Awareness is the first step to overcoming it. Pull out your journal or meet with a trusted mentor or coach and spend some time answering these questions:

- What is it that you want or need to create most right now-more income, influence, and impact?
- What resistance comes up if you are told that creating what you want most doesn't have to require more work?
- What will happen if you don't change anything and keep living and working as you are for the next five or more years?

## Chapter 2: Leverage the Value of Your Natural Genius

Most women undervalue or can't easily identify their natural genius. Maybe because the places where we shine feel so easy to us that we assume those skills are easy for everyone else too. Most of us learn at a young age to downplay our strengths for fear of rejection.

But we all have our own natural genius and it's time to tap into it. Spend some time pondering your areas of unique genius. Seeing it in black and white can bring a lot of clarity. Decode these questions: What are the things I do daily that feel so easy to me but that astonish everyone else? What am I doing when hours pass but I barely notice because I'm so engrossed in the experience? Am I currently receiving any form of financial compensation for the use of these unique gifts? Am I undervaluing myself in these areas or not being adequately compensated because using my gifts feels so easy to me? What would be the tiniest step I could take toward being paid to use these gifts or being compensated more than I currently am?

## Chapter 3: Stop Giving So Much

Most women give and give without even considering their own well-being. We overwork our way to the top of the corporate food chain, sacrifice our physical well-being to earn the next promotion, and we don't even consider our own emotional health when we say yes to one more family obligation or volunteer role.

The truth is, that you can increase your influence, impact, and income without destroying yourself in the process. But first, you have to unearth some deeply rooted harmful stories about what healthy giving looks like, and you've got to learn to say no. Pull out your journal and answer the questions in each of the following categories.

Your role as a leader is not to be a vending machine.

### Living and Working Conditions

- What is my emotional response to my living conditions? Do they make me feel peaceful, calm, and safe?
- Is there any area of my living space that needs to be decluttered?
- What physical items are draining my financial resources?
- How do I feel when I walk into my workspace? Is that space-whether it be inside or outside the home conducive to me doing my best work?

### Physical Health

- Am I fueling my body with food and drink that provide my body with the best energy and allowing it to reach peak?
- If I keep eating and drinking the way I am right now, what will happen to my body in five or more years?
- If I don't like the results of my choices in twenty years, what accountability or help do I need to seek out in this area in order to be able to write down a different answer?
- What doctor, specialist, dentist, or naturalist do I need to contact to take care of myself or things I've been ignoring?
- Am I getting enough rest to perform at my best and to be fully present in my life?

### Mental Health

- If I have felt anxious, sad, or depressed, how long have these feelings persisted?
- Would my spouse or children or those closest to me say my mental health is affecting my relationship with them?
- Is there trauma in my past that I've never dealt with that continues to affect my life every day?

## Chapter 4: You Don't Have to Work More

When I was a brand-new leader, with only a small number of people on my team, I often felt consumed by a deep responsibility to make sure every person I led was happy and that they all were successful. However, this self-imposed expectation created a very fragile dynamic in my organization that looked like a bicycle tire with long thin spokes. I was at the center of the wheel and all the spokes led to me.

Your role as a leader is not to be a vending machine. A vending machine? Yes, that contraption to which people come, insert a currency, and get rewarded with a snack or drink in return. The followers of vending machine leaders come to their leaders with their currency: a question. The leader then provides the instant reward of an answer. The follower learns that the leader is the source of all answers. Everyone depends on the leader to solve problems, answer questions, and to move forward in their own growth and journeys. That's not healthy or realistic for a leader of a larger organization.

So, how to turn off the vending machine? First, start connecting the people you lead with other people on your team or in your network who are great at answering those questions, the experts on any particular subject. When you connect them with more people who can help them find answers, they start developing their own network of resources and start tapping into that network before coming to you. Your role as a leader is to ask questions, to listen, to occasionally provide tools, to believe in people, and to empower people. Your job is not to solve their problems and answer every question they have. It's to teach them how to solve and answer them on their own.

Delay your responses. Don't answer the email, text, or call immediately. In my experience, the person asking the "urgent" question will go find the answer if you aren't always at their beck and call. Finally, pull out your calendar and look at the next ninety days. How much scheduled guilt-free play is in there? I triple-dog (yep, I said it) dare you to increase what is there by just one step. You'll be amazed at how your productivity increases as the amount of guilt-free play in your schedule does!

## Chapter 5: Can I Get a Little Woo-Woo?

This matter-of-fact interaction with my physical therapist inspired the idea for a brand-new webinar and even the name

for that course and this chapter – "Can I Get a Little Woo-Woo?" It can be said in the tone of an exuberant cheerleader, encouraging people to give you a little shout. Woo-woo! Or it can be spoken with more of a teasing spiritual connotation, like we are stepping outside the boundaries of practical, rational thought to explore something a bit more... woo-woo.

Let's start unpacking this woo-woo idea by building a foundation of core beliefs upon which we can agree. There is a source of unlimited abundance and energy. We are all created by this source. We are all connected to this source. If we open ourselves to it, the energy from this source flows through our unique gifts and into the world. We feel most alive when we live in this flow.

Most of us go through our lives swirling in our conscious thoughts, and we forget how astonishingly powerful the subconscious mind is. This subconscious mind is where our thought habits live. Here are a few subconscious habits that keep the flow of this powerful energy from moving through you: unhealed emotional pain, mistreatment of any kind or unhealthy relationships, lackluster or missing boundaries, exhaustion, cheap "highs" —any addictive escape, fear, shame, secrets, comparison, isolation, and mental or physical illness. Many times, consciously recognizing the limiting thought habits that are creating blockage in our lives is all it takes to move us back into the flow of creation.

Provide your subconscious mind with a clearer image of what we want, and it will in turn provide better instructions we can follow to create those results. Again, the subconscious mind cannot magically provide the results we desire, but it can give us inspired ideas and we can choose to act on them. Remember, the fuel that keeps the subconscious mind working is faith that what we are imagining and desiring will come to pass.

## Chapter 6: Boundaries Protect You and Allow You to Grow

How do you know whether you are living behind thick impenetrable walls, lacking boundaries altogether, or if you have healthy boundaries? The answer is quite simple. You ask this really important question: What is motivating you to create the protection you feel you need? If your protection is motivated by fear, extreme self-protection, defensiveness, shame, or secrets you don't want anyone to know, then it is most likely a wall.

The creation of boundaries, on the other hand, is motivated by healthy, healed self-esteem. Basically, you love yourself enough to demand that you are treated with respect by all people. Boundaries are not mean. Our deeply ingrained cultural conditioning wants to tell us they are.

Here's what people with no boundaries feel:

- Isolation: Even when surrounded by people, few people actually see you or know you.
- Fear: You live in paralyzing fear that if people really knew you or your life circumstances, their opinions of you would change drastically.
- Overwhelm: In both situations, you don't have anyone but yourself to depend on to get things done and the weight of all your obligations is nearly unbearable.
- Resentment or Anger: In every setting, your needs are the last priority. No one notices or cares that you are sacrificing yourself completely, and over time, you grow angry and bitter.

You see, our intuition is an internal boundaries radar system. it's just that you can't stifle your intuition in one area of life, then have access to it in every other. When our boundaries are repeatedly violated by people in our lives, and we stifle our intuition in order to survive the inappropriate breach, we learn to ignore that intuitive feeling, our body's internal boundaries radar system, in every area of our lives. Our intuition is what tells us when we are worn out and need a break or when we need to be done working for the day. When we continuously push through these quiet feelings and keep working, we eventually pay the price.

## Chapter 7: This Is Where I End and You Begin

As I've better understood where I end and others begin, I have had to redefine my expectations of myself as I lead people. I have also had to learn that as a coach, I am not responsible for the experiences or outcomes of those with whom I work. I can journey alongside them, and the action they take as a result of my coaching can have a significant impact on their progress, but I cannot carry the weight of their burdens or feel like their failures and struggles are my fault.

Many women sabotage their growth, even turn down potentially life-changing leadership opportunities, because they don't have adequate boundaries here. People are not problems that need solving. They are spiritual and emotional beings that need connection. If you're going to make up a story, you might as well make up a good one. In

People are not problems that need solving. They are spiritual and emotional beings that need connection.

other words, when something unexpected or disappointing happens in your life or work, you always get to decide how you interpret what just happened.

Remember, protecting your own priorities is bound to upset those who benefitted most from your constant availability. Be your own safe space. Set goals that acknowledge them. Goals without boundaries tend to lead to short periods of frenzied activity followed by exhaustion, burnout, sickness, and relational strife.

Write down the parts of your life that need to be considered when setting goals. What caregiving responsibilities have you taken on in your life? Does your partner have a demanding career that requires you to be more flexible? Do you have any limitations on your energy, maybe because of health issues or commitments to volunteer roles? Then write down one or two goals that include boundaries, ensuring you are considering all parts of your life in your pursuit of what you want.

## Chapter 8: Money Is a Mirror

Your relationship with money is a powerful mirror of your relationship with yourself. Pause for a moment and think about your money. How much money do you have? With whom do you share your money? What do you do to earn money? Does money move freely around you, or does it feel stuck and stagnant? And where is all of your money?

Everything that just came to the surface in this brief scan of your finances has something important to tell you if you will simply pay attention. Money is a powerful mirror. For years, I believed that if I just had enough money, then I would finally feel fully safe and secure. The problem was that no matter how much money I made, the same fears of running out or not having enough still haunted me. The truth is that money has nothing to do with our feelings of security unless we let it. You are safe. You are secure. Separate those feelings from your bank account, and you'll see the flow of money start to head in your direction.

It's our attachment to the ebb and flow of money in our lives that steals our best energy, and it takes the precious energy we need to be able to create more income.

We all have our unique money stories. For example, "It's selfish to want more. I'm earning enough to pay our bills. I should be satisfied with survival." "To earn more, I will need to work more hours. I'm already maxed out! How can I possibly do more?"

Identify these subconscious stories and called into question their validity so you can write new ones that would serve me better moving forward. Remember, we earn what we believe we are worth. Expecting to be compensated, and understanding the value of your contribution. It's not about working harder or longer. It's about standing unwaveringly in your intrinsic value.

## Chapter 9: Do a Thorough Check of Your Environment

Women are currently living and working within many invisible but powerful systems that were not created with their best interests in mind. Our traditional economic system was not created with working women in mind, and it was created for a world that no longer exists.

Fortunately, we are in the midst of a cultural transformation of how we define the concepts of work and business. New definitions of these two concepts are breaking the mold of our traditional views and becoming the new normal, especially as our workforce becomes more diverse.

In her book *The Moment of Lift,* Melinda Gates defines unpaid labor as "work performed in the home, like childcare or other forms of caregiving, cooking, cleaning, shopping, and errands, done by a family member who's not getting paid." Most women don't even quantify the amount of time and energy this work takes on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. We just do it without thinking. Based on these statistics, we know that most American women are not solely responsible for taking care of children and the home. Clearly, the majority of women are actively engaged in the workplace. However, as women have left the home to work, they have also continued to carry the bulk of the weight of

caregiving and homemaking, the unpaid labor in our world.

Assess how many hours per month you spend on doing this unpaid work. Are you astonished by the final number? Do you now know why you are so tired all the time? How do we shift the balance of unpaid labor in our world and lighten our loads so we can increase our influence, impact, and income? I've got six suggestions for you.

- Hire someone to do one thing off your unpaid labor survey.
- Be very aware of self-sabotage.
- Watch for naysayers. They will most definitely show up.
- Don't depend on husbands, wives, partners, or kids.
- Recognize the value of unpaid labor
- Categorize this as a stewardship

## Chapter 10: Surrender to Structure

Sure, structure has firm boundaries, but living with structure does not have to be restrictive. If this feeling of constant shame or hopelessness around structure resonates with you, or if your entire being recoils at even the thought of implementing a new structure because you know you won't stick with it, I'm here to help.

The five areas of our lives where structure or a lack of it causes the most frustration and pain are health, money, time, business, or work relationships.

- I've identified seven beliefs I have about structure that allow me to wholeheartedly embrace it. If you just try to change your behaviors without addressing these deeper mindsets, the changes you make in any area will continue to be fleeting.
- Structure is not a restrictive cage; it is the path to freedom. Structure doesn't limit our creativity; it gives us the freedom to create.
- Structure protects us from the inefficiency of multitasking. An important scientific fact: our brains cannot multitask
- The most powerful enemy of structure is the expectation of perfection.
- Embracing structure requires rest from it.
- At one edge of structure is mastery; at the other is loss of freedom.
- Surrendering to structure feels awkward and uncomfortable.
- You will never fully embrace structure until you recognize that your value is separate from your performance

Beneath residence to structure, you'll find unhealed pain. You will have to deal with this pain. No short cuts, no magic wands, no quick fixes. You have to heal. In the area where you struggle to embrace structure the most, can you backtrack to any experiences where you may still have unhealed pain? Instead of fighting through your resistance, can you surrender to some deeper healing work in this area?

## Conclusion: Respect the Mile

No matter what your "marathon" is, and no matter where you are in the training process, you absolutely must respect the mile you are running right now. The mile you are in right now might be a glorious, easy mile with lots of people cheering for you, promotions, financial abundance, and progress. Respect it. Or it might be a grueling, painful mile where you have lost your passion for your work, your best employee just left for another job, and you aren't sure you can cover payroll. Respect it.

Your mile, the one you are running right now, has something important to say to you. Are you listening? It will keep repeating the message until you get it. Respect it. Be in it fully. You will need what this mile has to teach you down the road, even if it's the worst mile of your life. The finish line is ahead, and it is important, but so is the journey, so is the mile you are running right now. So, respect the mile.



**Amy Kemp** is a successful entrepreneur and certified business coach with over twenty years of experience investing in people. As the owner and CEO of Amy Kemp, Inc., she coaches her clients in both one-on-one and small group engagements, and teaches in a variety of online webinars and in-person events each year. She lives in the Chicagoland area with her husband, Ryan, and their three children. You can learn more about her work at amykemp.com.

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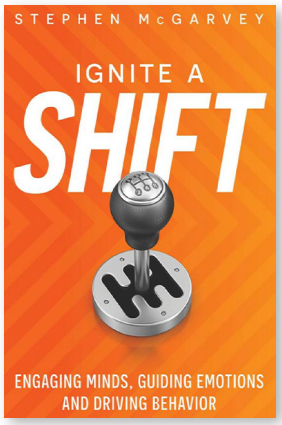
# Ignite a Shift

Stephen McGarvey

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# Ignite a Shift

## Engaging Minds, Guiding Emotions and Driving Behavior




*by* **Stephen McGarvey**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Spark a transformation, professionally and personally! No person is an island. Every day, we realize more and more how interconnected we all are, and how much we impact each other, both consciously and unconsciously. And each and every day, our individual success relies to some extent on our ability to persuade and influence others.

The ability to persuade and influence is the cornerstone of success. In ***Ignite a Shift: Engaging Minds, Guiding Emotions and Driving Behavior,*** internationally acclaimed speaker Stephen McGarvey explores the subtleties of effective communication and highlights the essential fact that thinking impacts emotions which drive behavior.

*Ignite a Shift* is the quintessential guide to communication, positive persuasion and influencing with integrity. It reveals the proven techniques that the world's most effective leaders are using to motivate themselves and others to excel professionally and personally.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The importance of rapport as the foundation for persuasion and influence.
- The impact that language has on engaging and guiding others.
- How to identify and harness various motivational factors that drive people's choices and behaviors.
- How to negotiate effectively.

## Are You On The Right Road?

In our daily lives, thoughts and various other cognitive processes impact the emotions we experience moment to moment, and these emotions ultimately drive our behaviors. As we shift thinking, we can alter emotions which then drive a different set of behaviors. When we understand how this process works, we can create more congruent and purposeful behaviors both in ourselves and in others.

The goal of persuasion is to change someone else's behavior. This usually begins by changing one or more of their thoughts, beliefs, and values. Once we influence their thinking process, then their feelings and behaviors will change as well. We can use these techniques to change our own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, too.

As a persuader, your goal is to move a person from their Current State to a Desired State. There are many techniques for leading someone to a Desired State, all of which boil down to this: engage and guide the person's thoughts. When that happens, their feelings and behavior will follow.

## Perception Is Real – Even When It Isn't

As persuaders, we have the opportunity to consider how we are communicating based on our expectations of others and how our expectations may cause other people to react and behave accordingly.

Our minds tend to seek subjective validation and search for evidence to support our existing beliefs. Rather than being intractable or permanent, these beliefs can be altered because they are actually processes rather than things. The processes of believing something and valuing something are closely connected, and usually even interconnected.

Your values serve as an internal navigation system, so when you're cognizant of what you value and why you value it, you can make better and more congruent choices in your life. In doing so, you will be drawn toward people, ideas, and situations that support and assist you as you achieve your goals. If you happen to identify a values conflict, examine your criteria and work to realign them with your values.

## Can You Trust Your Mind?

The mind is easily influenced by others—and by itself. In addition to being open to presuppositions, our minds regularly delete information and create distortions and generalizations by changing things and "filling in the blanks" when information is lacking.

While the human mind is able to process a seemingly infinite amount of information at the subconscious level, it appears to be limited to processing between five and nine (seven, plus or minus two) chunks of information at the conscious level at any given moment in time.

## Igniting Motivation

As persuaders, identifying what motivates a person in any given context teaches us a great deal about their Current State, how they think and feel, and why they do what they do. This knowledge combines to help us move them toward the Desired State. When we think about the factors that motivate us, we can generally divide them into two categories: motivational traits and working traits.

## Diving Into Your Unconscious

Most of what we consciously think about is based on deleted, distorted, or generalized information. This is problematic because it's this filtered information that we use to communicate with each other. As a result, our communication is inherently ambiguous since it is based on summarized, incomplete, and distorted information.

It's important to note that there are a variety of different language patterns to look out for when recognizing deletions, distortions, and generalizations. Comparative deletions, mind reading, and universal quantifiers are just a few examples.

The Meta Model and the Milton Model are opposite sides of the same coin. Each uses language strategically, yet differently, for specific purposes. As persuaders, it is critical for us to understand and use both models in order to gain a deeper understanding of a person's Current State and to shift them toward the Desired State.

## The Experience Of Being Understood

Masterful persuaders first build rapport with the person they are persuading and ask questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of that person's model of the world including their beliefs and values. Then, as progress is made toward the Desired State, the persuader knows how to connect what they are offering to something of relevance to the person, something that is meaningful to

them. Of all the concepts and techniques that we'll explore in this book, rapport is the most important because it is the foundation for influence.

Why is rapport so critical to persuasion? Because everyone craves the feeling of being understood; it validates our model of the world and gives us a sense of connection. By understanding how a person thinks and reflecting that understanding back to them, you provide them with the experience of being understood and they will be much more likely to trust you and follow your lead.

## Horse Sense

People communicate constantly, and a great deal of that communication takes place outside of spoken or written words. This can include facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, touch, our overall appearance, and countless other subtle gestures such as nodding our head or waving our hands.

We each use all of these representational systems to various degrees and in different ways. For example, one person might be mostly visual, moderately auditory, and slightly kinesthetic, while another person might be mostly kinesthetic, moderately visual, and slightly auditory—really, any combination is possible! It's also important to note that smell and taste also play a role in how some people process information.

The better you, the persuader, are at communicating in all of the sensory modalities, the better you will be at matching your communication to another person's dominant or primary processing style.

## The Million Dollar Question

The kinds of questions we ask guide our thoughts, emotions, and actions. The mind has a system for filing information, much the same as we would store information in a filing cabinet in different folders. Where a physical filing cabinet is limited by its size, the unconscious mind can store almost unlimited amounts of information. And the better the "files"—or memories—are organized, the easier it is to access the information. Effective questions can act as your access codes to the information.

Each question sends a person's mind on a quest, enabling us to elicit historical memories and information, allowing us to uncover Current State thinking, beliefs, and values, and giving us the opportunity to engage and guide the individual toward the Desired State.

## The Persuasive Power Of Stories

I've said it before and it's worth saying again: anything that we vividly imagine, our bodies will respond to as if it is real. Hence, stories can cause our neurons to fire the same way they would if we were actually performing the action that we are imagining.

Stories have the potential to shift a person from their Current State to a Desired State. This shift is accomplished by placing questions strategically throughout your story in a way that includes and engages the listener. If you ask the right questions at the right points in the story, then the person will find themselves involved in the storyline and will engage emotionally in the story. It's this engagement in the story that triggers and leverages the Think, Feel, Do process.

Using questions to engage and associate the listener into the storyline means that they actively become a part of the story, which evokes an emotional reaction. Stories that persuade people will engage their imaginations to enter into the storyline.

## Making, Breaking, And Reinforcing Connections

As persuaders, our goal is to engage and guide a person's imagination toward a Desired State because we know that once the desired thoughts are in place, feelings and behavior will follow.

There are many ways to make, reinforce, or break connections with words, tones, gestures, repetition, music, scents, images, and so on. Using presuppositions, you can guide a person's imagination, emotional state, and ultimately their behavior, from where it is now (the Current State) to where you want it to be (the Desired State). Be aware of presuppositions in your everyday language and either use them with intention or avoid them.

Words, gestures, tonality, and the whole range of verbal and non-verbal communication are highly influential in making, breaking, and reinforcing connections. You can use the totality of the options for communication to lead a person from their Current State to a more Desired State. Always use words mindfully because language is ultimately one of

the most powerful tools available to the persuader… and it's a skill that is worth mastering!

## Smarten Up!

When we think of goals, it's easy to set "big picture" objectives for ourselves that vary in terms of whether we can realistically achieve them.

You can help shift another person to the Desired State by ensuring that their goals, and yours, follow the SMART methodology. Setting a goal using the SMART model engages the Reticular Activating System (RAS), the part of the brain that plays an important role in attention. When refining our Desired State in the context of persuasion, remember that we need to ensure that we make the desired outcome relevant to the other person by connecting it to their current beliefs and values. This relevance activates their RAS and primes their mind to pay attention.

## Question Confidently, Challenge Respectfully, And Always Negotiate

The art of persuasion almost always involves some negotiation, whether the process takes two minutes, two months, or two years. Negotiations are most likely to fall apart if we move too quickly into details without ensuring that we have alignment and agreement at a higher level.

Remember it is our rapport and how we relate to another person, rather than a relationship, that allows us to lead someone from their Current State to the Desired State. Understanding the difference between rapport and a relationship will increase your ability to be bold and confident because you'll remember that rapport is elastic. Just as rapport can be stretched and even broken, it can also be repaired. You simply back up, re-establish it, and move ahead again using the techniques we have outlined in this book. This awareness allows you to be courageous and to challenge respectfully.

## Influence In Action

Results seem magical when you master the science and art of persuasion and influence, and as we well know, there is usually more at play than meets the eye. In your journey to mastering the arts of persuasion, influence, and effective communication, strive to always remain curious, authentic, and sincere as you engage and guide others toward a Desired State. To take control of your journey and reach your intended destination, begin by accurately mapping out your Current State and remain clear as to your Desired State. Doing so will allow you to engage and shift your own mind, emotions, and actions through the Think, Feel, Do process.

## Conclusion

The art of negotiation involves skillfully applying the valuable knowledge you've gathered through the totality of your life experiences along with the powerful persuasive techniques that you've learned as you've worked through this book.



**Stephen McGarvey** is a world-leading authority on unconscious communication, positive persuasion and influencing with integrity. Stephen has worked with businesses around the world to optimize their performance by helping them understand how their staff and their customers think and what unconscious elements/patterns drive their behavior. He has improved the performance of his clients internationally by speaking to a variety of audiences in a myriad of venues, ranging from the American Psychiatric Association Conference to numerous Fortune 500 companies.

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# Impact Players

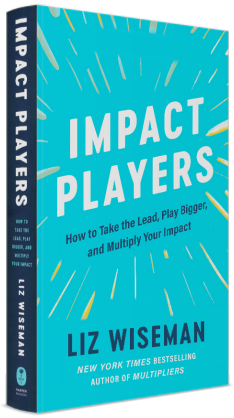
Liz Wiseman

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# Impact Players

## How to Take the Lead, Play Bigger, and Multiply Your Impact




*by* **Liz Wiseman**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In every organization there are Impact Players—indispensable colleagues who can be counted on in critical situations and who consistently receive high-profile assignments and new opportunities. Managers know who these top players are, understand their worth, and want more of them on their team. While their impact is obvious, it's not always clear what actually makes these professionals different from their peers.

In ***Impact Players***, *New York Times* best-selling author and researcher Liz Wiseman reveals the secrets of these stellar professionals who play the game at a higher level. Drawing on insights from leaders at top companies, Wiseman explains what the most influential players are doing differently, how small and seemingly insignificant differences in how we think and act can make an enormous impact, and why—with a little coaching—this mindset is available to everyone who wants to contribute at their highest level. ***Impact Players*** is your playbook for the new workplace.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The key differences between typical contributors and high-impact contributors.
- The five practices that Impact Players have mastered.
- Strategies to develop the Impact Player mindset.
- Tips for recruiting and developing Impact Players in your organization.

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## Introduction

Some people seem to know how to make themselves valuable. They pay attention. They look for the most productive places to put their capability to use. They make things work, and they get the job done, even when the job gets difficult. They not only deliver results but send ripples of positive impact throughout their team and across the organization.

Managers trust them when the stakes are high and turn to them in critical situations. They find a way to break through and make an impact while others are merely going through the motions.

Corporate leaders usually know who the superstars are and want more of them, but they struggle to explain what actually makes them different. Typically managers can articulate the more pronounced differences between their top and low performers; however, when it comes to their most influential, impactful players, the top of the top, there seems to be an ineffable quality about them.

The Wiseman Group's research based on 170 leaders from some of the most admired companies, including Adobe, Google, LinkedIn, NASA, Salesforce, SAP, Splunk, Stanford Health, and Target, from 10 different countries, revealed what managers need most from the people they lead, why it's easier for them to entrust critical assignments to certain people, and why they hesitate to fully support the efforts of others.

Additional interviews with contributors showed that it's not necessarily easy to become an Impact Player. You don't need special talent or capability, but you do need to understand the mindsets and behaviors that differentiate Impact Players from other contributors.

However, you can master these mindsets and practices. With a little coaching, this mindset is available to all those who want to step up and contribute at their highest level.

## PART I: THE IMPACT PLAYERS

## The Impact Players

Impact players make a significant contribution individually but also have an enormously positive effect on the entire team. Like an Impact Player in sports, the superstars in the workplace all have "game." They are smart and talented and have an extraordinary work ethic; but as with Impact Players in athletics, there is something more than just talent and work ethic at play. There's also their mental game: how they view their role, work with their managers, and deal with adversity and ambiguity, and how willing they are to improve.

Three different categories of contributors are

1. **High-impact contributors:** Those who are doing work of exceptional value and impact.
2. **Typical contributors:** The vast majority of people, who are doing solid (if not great) work.
3. **Under-contributors:** Smart, talented people who are playing below their capability level.

Here, the focus is primarily on the distinction between the top two categories (Impact Players and contributors) in order to explore the subtle, often counterintuitive differences in mindset that become big differentiators in impact. Each has a distinct mindset and way of working; one leads to a job well done, while the other carves a path to leadership and generates outsized value and impact.

### Understanding Impact Players

Research data made it clear that the approach taken by Impact Players isn't just marginally different; it is radically different—and it's rooted in how these professionals deal with ambiguity and situations they cannot control. While others get frustrated and either check out or freak out, Impact Players tend to approach such situations directly yet sensibly. They dive into the chaos head-on, much as a savvy ocean swimmer dives into and through a massive oncoming wave rather than panicking and being tumbled in the surf.

Impact Players respond differently to these perennial forces and frustrations at work: messy problems, unclear roles, unforeseen obstacles, moving targets, and unrelenting demands. Impact Players see everyday challenges through an opportunity lens, while others view the same challenges through a threat lens. This fundamental difference in outlook separates Impact Players from others.

The following practices are the five key differentiators between Impact Players and their colleagues.

- **Do the job that's needed**. While others do their job, Impact Players do the job that needs to be done.
- **Step up, step back**. While others wait for direction, Impact Players step up and lead.
- **Finish stronger**. While others escalate problems, Impact Players move things across the finish line and

The most impactful players don't just do their jobs; they do the job that's needed.

build strength along the way.

- **Ask and adjust**. While others attempt to manage and minimize change, Impact Players are learning and adapting to change.
- **Make work light**. While others add to the load, Impact Players make heavy demands feel lighter.

These five practices, along with the outlook that drives each, constitute the Impact Player Mindset, a framework for high-value contribution. Let's explore each of the five practices of Impact Players in detail.

## Make Yourself Useful

The most impactful players don't just do their jobs; they do the job that's needed. They venture out of the comfort of their role and work on the front lines of all types of problems. At the most fundamental level, this is about how to make yourself useful—how to understand what is important and then do the things that are important in a way that is extremely beneficial to your career.

### The Choice: Do Your Job or Do the Job That Needs to Be Done?

The world of work is getting messier—more complex, more chaotic, and more interconnected—thanks in part to the combined effects of globalization and technology. Complex problems—those involving too many unknowns and interrelated factors to reduce to rules and processes—are on the rise. These problems include challenges such as standardizing customer experience worldwide, reacting to disruptive innovation, creating a personalized learning experience for all students, controlling health care costs, and transforming a culture.

As problems become messier and mutate faster than a formal organization can respond, agility must come from the culture—the daily decisions and actions of people—not the organization structure. This leaves professionals with a messy problem of their own: "Should I stay in my lane, do my job, and attend to my duties? Or should I leave my post to pursue work in no-man's-land? If the latter, how can I make sure I still excel at what I've been assigned to do?"

Contributors see themselves as position holders. They do the work they're given and stay within the boundaries of their role but risk becoming so myopic that they lose sight of the overall strategy and veer off the agenda.

In contrast, Impact Players see themselves as problem solvers. They aren't trapped by antiquated organizational structures or overly enamored with their positions. They don't just do their job; they find ways to serve where they can be of greatest value. An overarching idea seems to govern their work: "I can be of service and solve problems."

Add to the service mindset a strong sense of agency ("I can act independently and make decisions") and internal locus of control ("I, not external forces, control the outcome of events in my life"). Now we have a winning formula for dealing with complex, messy problems that require more than a perfunctory response.

### The High-Impact Habits

**Habit 1: Learn the game**. To be of maximum value inside an organization—to be of service—we first need to know what is valued. We need to know the game being played. How clearly do you understand the skills and capabilities that are most prized in your organization? What are the top priorities?

**Habit 2: Play where they are needed**. When you know what's important now, you can focus your energy on doing the job that needs to be done and playing where you can have the largest impact. While Contributors play their position, Impact Players play where they are needed.

**Habit 3: Play with passion**. Impact Players work with a sense of purpose and conviction, but they work in service of the organization's unmet needs rather than their personal interests. Managers rarely described them as being passionate about a topic but often described them as being passionate about the work itself. Impact Players work *with* passion, not *on* their personal passion.

## Step Up, Step Back

The most impactful professionals aren't just loyal followers; they are ready leaders—the adaptive breed who are willing to step up and lead but who can also step back and follow others.

Ambient problems are the nonglaring, low-grade issues where the status quo is suboptimal but tolerable, such as a clunky business process that everyone complains about but isn't broken enough to fix. Some of these perpetual problems manifest themselves as organizational drag, a collection of institutional factors that interfere with productivity yet somehow go unaddressed, costing the US economy more than $3 trillion each year and reducing productivity by 25 percent.

Most people learn to live with these problems, but ambient problems erode performance over time. They are particularly damaging because they are easy to ignore. These problems become white noise in the organization. Left unattended, they become institutionalized, as people begin to accept them as inevitable or intractable.

That is, until someone takes notice and decides that the organization can, and should, do better.

When roles are unclear, people operating with a Contributor mindset look to their leaders for direction. They are loyal followers and supporters who carry out requests from their managers and collaborate with colleagues.

In contrast, Impact Players take charge of situations that lack leadership. When they see an opportunity for improvement, they don't wait for permission to act. They step up, volunteering to lead long before higher-ups in the organization ask them to do so. They are disruptors of the status quo who choose to lead rather than let things be. They offer a higher value proposition; instead of just carrying out the boss's direction, they can also rally others.

### The High-Impact Habits

Regardless of the impetus that propels them forward, Impact Players follow a distinct pattern as they step up and lead, bring others along, and, at the right time, step back.

**Habit 1: Step up**. When you see an opportunity to step up, the first step is getting into the room. And often, you won't receive an invitation. There are times when it's appropriate to invite yourself. Once in the right room, Impact Players aren't satisfied with passive participation. When an opportunity to contribute surfaces, they present themselves as capable leaders and take charge.

Those who take charge without a formal commission need tacit approval from their would-be supporters. Essentially, their peers and colleagues need to vote them into office. Voluntary leaders need the initiative to step up and take charge, but they must also demonstrate the humility to seek permission and garner support. When they can do both, other people choose to follow of their own volition.

**Habit 2: Enroll others**. Impact Players can lead without authority because they've acquired the power of assembly. By using their colleagues' time in efficient, productive, positive ways, they earn a reputation as someone who not only makes things happen but also respects others in the process. When they call a meeting, people come ready and willing to contribute.

With a common view of the problem, the group can establish a collective intent and a game plan. The leader continues to guide the nascent effort, ensuring the team takes action, achieves interim wins, and builds the momentum needed to sustain the effort.

**Habit 3: Step back**. Impact Players are versatile players who can both lead and follow, who pass the ball and share the glory. This flexible approach to leadership is again similar to the role of playmakers on a sports team, whose ability and willingness to move the ball to another player so he or she can make an attack is as important as their ability to take possession of a ball. This willingness to share and rotate the lead role creates a fluid, on-demand leadership model that enables organizations to respond quickly, adapt, and sustain commitment for the long haul.

Impact Players are not just heroes; they are hero makers. They pull others into the spotlight and lead the team so that there are multiple winners and potential leaders. And when the entire team looks good, so does the boss.

## Finish Stronger

A lot of professionals play a good game. They take action and work hard but too often stop before the job is finished. What happens when we stop just short of the goal line or celebrate early only to find that something we thought was done became undone? The most influential professionals—and entire teams—make a greater impact because they finish the job and finish stronger than others.

This practice is about how the highest-impact players deal

with adversity and unforeseen obstacles and get work done once things become difficult. It's about how to take ownership and move work across the finish line.

Impact Players have a touch of special agent in their blood—like Mary at NASA, dubbed "Mary the Mission Slayer" by her colleagues for her relentless drive to resolve problems that jeopardized her team's mission. They are ordinary people who have developed an extraordinary mental ability to withstand opposition and survive the gauntlet of everyday problems and ordinary challenges. They get the job done—hardships, villains, and all. As in the movies, they complete the mission without constant direction but summoning support from headquarters as needed.

> Being reactionary is often seen as a negative quality, but actually Impact Players are reactors.

### The High-Impact Habits

Impact Players offer a low-maintenance, high-accountability proposition: They take ownership, anticipate and wrestle down problems, and do what it takes to complete the whole job. They can finish strong because they anticipate problems and develop a plan.

**Habit 1: Finish the whole job**. The most impactful players tend to stick with problems longer. An Adobe manager described one such member of her team: "She's highly persistent. The harder the problem, the more she'll persist. The intellectual challenge drives her." Because these players persist longer, they make progress in the face of ambiguity.

Research showed that there were certain things that high-value contributors always (or nearly always) did: (1) take ownership and get a job done without being reminded; (2) act with integrity and do the right thing; (3) be easy to work with, likable, approachable, and positive; (4) learn quickly; and (5) apply their strengths to the work at hand.

**Habit 2: Maintain ownership**. It's not surprising that Impact Players take full responsibility. What is remarkable is that they retain it, even during setbacks and obstacles beyond their control. They don't hand it back when things get tough.

The most influential professionals can escalate an issue and ask for help while maintaining ownership of the solution. Google's Fiona Su manages to do both. She's known for her tenacity, independence, and ability to manage various internal stakeholders, but when she runs into trouble, she has no qualms letting her manager, John, know that this one is over her head and she needs help. She'll get him involved but more as a consultant than as a new owner.

**Habit 3: Anticipate challenges**. Impact Players don't have a superpower to see through walls or into the future; their strength lies in understanding that problems are constantly lurking around corners. They expect unpleasant surprises and normalize the challenges. With this mindset, obstacles aren't destabilizing or even distracting. Roadblocks become building blocks for growth, providing the resistance needed to become stronger and smarter and prove one's mettle.

## Ask and Adjust

The most valuable players are never finished. They are continually adapting, adjusting to hit the mark. How might the smallest adjustment to your approach lead to greater performance? This isn't about making radical, disruptive change; it is about the power and importance of making micro-changes, the small adjustments needed to stay on track. It's about tune-ups, not transformation.

For many professionals, work used to be like a game of darts: a game of skill with a clear target and a scoring system that makes it obvious how well you are doing. But as business needs continually shift, business targets are set into motion as well. The shot you once perfected no longer guarantees you'll hit the target. It now requires continual recalibration.

This constant shuffle creates so-called wicked problems—problems that change faster than we can solve them. You'll need to learn new rules, work with new players, and develop new skills and strategies. When targets are continually moving, you need continual feedback, guidance, and correction so you can adjust your aim.

Being reactionary is often seen as a negative quality, but actually, Impact Players are reactors—responding to changes in their environment and the feedback they are given. By being reactive (but not reactionary), they adapt to a chang-

ing environment, much like a chameleon changes color to fit its surroundings.

### The High-Impact Habits

When the world of work is changing fast, the critical skill isn't what you know but how fast you can learn. Savvy leaders know they need more than just a team of smart, capable people; they seek out players who have both the confidence and the humility to learn.

**Habit 1: Ask for guidance**. The Impact Players in the study showed greater levels of coachability, or responsiveness to guidance, than their peers did. It's easy to watch for signs of affirmation, but staying in tune with our stakeholders (and working on the right agenda) requires that we search for gaps: unmet needs, mismatched expectations, unflattering data, and contrary points of view. The top contributors didn't seek constant validation; they sought guidance.

**Habit 2: Adjust your approach**. Leadership expert John Maxwell once said that change is inevitable, but growth is optional. Instead of making big changes, fine-tune your approach by making a series of small adjustments in the right direction.

Jonathon Modica, a former HR leader at Adobe, exemplifies this ability to shift directions. When assigned to a high-profile project developing a new program for two senior business leaders, he started a meeting by framing the conversation: "I have some hypotheses to run by you." When one of the executives poked at his idea, he didn't become defensive or overreact.

Instead, he stopped, leaned back, and said, "Help me understand what you want to see differently." He asked a series of clarifying questions to help understand the issues and objectives. After the meeting, Jonathon took in their feedback and began testing each suggestion until they discovered an approach that fit best.

He left such an impression that the two executives later asked his manager, "When do we get to work on another project with Jonathon?"

**Habit 3: Close the loop**. Managers are willing to invest, but they want to invest in a closed-loop system, not a black box. When you ask for guidance and then close the loop, you let people know that their investment in you has yielded results.

## Make Work Light

This fifth and final practice is about how top contributors and leaders deal with pressure and unrelenting demands. When things are tough and the load is heavy, the most valuable players on teams make work lighter. Though they may not be able to reduce the workload, they make the work process easier and more joyful. They are like a bouquet of helium balloons.

Our workload can feel like a mounting debt that grows perpetually and follows us everywhere we go. There is too much work to get done each week, too many new tools and technologies to master, and more information than we can process, let alone retain.

Yet, our actual workload accounts for only a portion of the burden we experience at work. In one survey, over half of respondents said that their primary source of work-related stress didn't have to do with their workload; rather, they cited stressors such as people issues, juggling work and personal lives, and lack of job security.

When the pressure is on and the workload increases, typical contributors seek help rather than offering to help, becoming dependent on their bosses to relieve their burden.

Yet, other people, faced with the same workload and unrelenting demands, help lighten the load. While others create a tax, the most vital players offer a time rebate. They make hard work easier; the work doesn't necessarily become easier, but the process of working becomes easier and more enjoyable. They provide lift, not by taking on other people's work but by decreasing the phantom workload. They foster a light environment that lowers stress and increases the joy of work, both of which reduce burnout.

### The High-Impact Habits

**Habit 1: Be low maintenance**. Impact Players steer clear of noisy, taxing, and fruitless efforts like finger-pointing, complaining, showboating, and land grabbing. They eschew politics and dramatics that foment conflict but don't produce results. Each of these is an unproductive activity, a friction point that slows progress or stymies collaboration.

**Habit 2: Lighten the load**. Impact Players not only do their job well, they help their colleagues do their jobs well, too, which decreases the manager's worry load. When they lighten the load for their bosses and colleagues, they benefit as well.

**Habit 3: Lighten the atmosphere**. People enjoy

Failure to change is typically due to an overabundance of ambition, not a lack thereof.

working around Impact Players because they offer help and are easy to work with. While some players create a heavy, humid environment, they provide a light breeze. They help other people do their best work and create a sunny atmosphere, which helps eliminate the phantom workload.

Here are three of the ways Impact Players improve the environment and make work easier and more pleasant for all: bring levity, recognize others, and be human.

## PART II: DEVELOPING THE IMPACT PLAYER MINDSET

### Increase Your Impact

Carving a path to new behavior takes time. The road may have occasional epiphanies or transformative experiences; however, these changes are usually gradual, occurring in almost imperceptible increments. But each successive step strengthens nascent beliefs and reinforces new behaviors.

Failure to change is typically due to an overabundance of ambition, not a lack thereof. We generally fail by trying to adopt too many new behaviors at once. Instead of trying to simultaneously implement myriad outward behaviors, focus on one of the fundamental internal practices. These are called master skills—two core competencies that all the high-impact contributors in the study seem to possess.

**Master Skill 1: Changing your perspective**. Too many professionals are stuck in their own head, working on what *they* deem most important, not seeing beyond their own perspective. To increase our impact, we must know what is valuable to others. We must see through the eyes of those who benefit from our work.

Try pulling back from your position in the organization or work process and viewing your situation through a wide-angle lens. Ask yourself, "Who are the other players, and what do they need from me to be successful? Who are the people downstream who are affected by my work? Who are the people who benefit most from the work I do? What would benefit them most?"

**Master Skill 2: Changing your lens**. The five everyday challenges introduced above—messy problems, unclear roles, unforeseen obstacles, moving targets, and unrelenting demands—were like a Rorschach test. In the same situations, most people saw threats to avoid, but Impact Players saw opportunities to add value.

The difference between these two worldviews is much like the difference between a convex and a concave lens. Seeing ambiguity as a threat is like looking through a convex lens that causes light rays to converge at a single focal point, which tends to be ourselves. When we use a threat lens, we become myopic: We look inward, consider the situational impacts, and tend to see ourselves as standing alone, lacking control or organizational backing.

When ambiguity is viewed through the lens of opportunity, the resulting image is more expansive, and we tend to see what is happening around us. This is similar to the effect produced by a concave lens that disseminates light rays. With the opportunity lens, we view a broader context; we can see the upside as well as downside of our choices and the benefits to our stakeholders.

You can use cognitive reframing (a psychological technique to identify, challenge, and change the way a situation is viewed) to help you see opportunity in otherwise threatening situations. Specifically, recognize ambiguity, check your lens, reframe the situation, and replace with an opportunity lens.

### Build a High-Impact Team

A dream team isn't just a dream; it results from carefully curating players with the right mindset, developing them as individuals and as a team, and nurturing a robust, healthy culture. It is an act of bold, aspirational leadership. It requires purposeful development and the right type of coaching.

**Recruiting Impact Players**. Put simply, the best strategy for building a team of Impact Players is to hire people who already have the qualities that are most difficult to develop and then actively cultivate the other qualities. Insights from top executive coaches suggest that companies should hire candidates who are self-directed, community-minded, have a high tolerance for ambiguity, and are fun to work with, even in stressful times.

When these traits become table stakes, leaders can invest their training and coaching resources where they can produce real gains.

**Developing Impact Players**. More often, managers must create a dream team by conjuring brilliance from a group of inherited employees, an unruly cross-functional team, or a surprise summer intern who was a "gift" from a higher-up. In this case, it's the leader's job to grow the talent they already have. Managers need to create an environment in which the right mindsets and behaviors can grow.

If you want people to have a positive attitude, you need to create a positive environment. The best leaders cultivate a climate that is both comfortable and intense. They remove fear and provide the security that invites people to do their best thinking. At the same time, they establish an energizing, intense environment that demands people's best efforts.

The following five leadership habits will encourage the right behavior in a team:

**Define the W.I.N. (what's important now)**. If you want the people on your team to venture beyond artificial job boundaries and do the job that's needed, help them see what's most important at any given time.

**Redefine leadership**. Show your team that you can work as passionately as a follower as you do as a leader and that excelling as a follower is not a dead-end job but part of growing as a leader.

**Ask them to stay until the job is done**. When we hold people accountable for finishing their work, we send a powerful message that their work matters and that we believe they are strong enough to stay in the game, even when things get tough.

**Critique the work, not the person**. Think of feedback as critical information—data people need to calibrate and adjust their approach—rather than a critique.

**State what you appreciate**. Managers, if you want your staff members to make work light for you and others, make a practice of flagging behavior that you appreciate.

Though all people have value and bring capability to their jobs, some make themselves more valuable than others. They play bigger. They find a need and fill it. They turn uncertainty and ambiguity into opportunity.

Yet, the way they work is anything but random. They find out what's important to those they serve, and they make it important to themselves. They take the lead and finish the job. They stay light on their feet to adapt quickly, and they make work light for others.

How big do you plan to play? Where can you be of greatest value? What is life summoning you to do?

Tap into your passion and your purpose, and find a way to contribute, to create impact, to play bigger and better. Imagine the impact of starting right now.

## IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*** by Liz Wiseman
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Liz Wiseman is a researcher and executive advisor who teaches leadership to executives around the world. She is the CEO of the Wiseman Group, a leadership research and development firm. Some of her recent clients include Apple, AT&T, Disney, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Nike, Salesforce, Tesla, and Twitter. She is the author of *New York Times* best-sellers ***Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter, The Multiplier Effect: Tapping the Genius Inside Our Schools,*** and ***Rookie Smarts: Why Learning Beats Knowing in the New Game of Work***.

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# Initiative

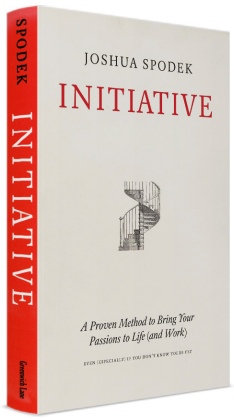
Joshua Spodek

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# Initiative

## A Proven Method to Bring Your Passions to Life (and Work)




*by* **Joshua Spodek**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***Initiative***, author Joshua Spodek explains how entrepreneurship has gone wrong, becoming more akin to a dog show. Spodek describes this Dog Show Entrepreneurship as a high-tech, fast-growth, investor-backed, founders-in-their-20s, companies emerging from a Silicon Valley–like environment fueled by Shark Tank, media, and venture capitalists leading the way. The problem is that this approach feeds on myths about entrepreneurship that hurts entrepreneurs along the way—and worst of all, stripping away their desire and initiative for change.

Spodek presents Method Initiative as the cure for the lack of initiative running rampant in our culture. Method Initiative replaces Dog Show Entrepreneurship with initiative and creativity, academic conformity with practice of the basic skills, and the myths of entrepreneurship with building relationships and partners who share a vision for solving the same problem.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What is wrong with entrepreneurship today.
- The common myths that hold people back from taking initiative.
- How practice and initiative are the keys to entrepreneurship through building relationships and refining your ideas and strategies.
- Ten exercises you can work through to start your own problem-based project.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

There is a problem among employees that run into problems in their work. Many want to go start a new company rather than taking initiative to start their own project that interests them and solves a common problem. Employees fall short of having the social and emotional skills to build relationships and act accordingly. Employees lack the experience, skill, and the belief to see and act on opportunities—to take initiative.

### The Problem

The basic problem is that our culture has turned initiative and entrepreneurship into a dog show. Dog Show Entrepreneurship is a high-tech, fast-growth, investor-backed, founders-in-their-20s, companies emerging from a Silicon Valley–like environment. Shark Tank, the media, and venture capitalists lead the way in this direction. Unfortunately, with examination, this type of entrepreneurship cares more about money than the entrepreneur. Joshua's dream company burst because of the tech bubble and post-9/11 regulations. He was replaced as CEO. This most discouraging even was one of the greatest learning experiences in his life.

### The Dog Show and Culture

People with the skills, experience, and beliefs to solve such problems, however unwanted, see these crises as an opportunity to help. Our society, sadly, is developing fewer such initiators. Changing the beliefs and goals of a system or culture can change it. So, there is hope.

### The Solution, Part 1: Initiative

The heart of this approach is initiative. Instead of working for your bosses, work with them. Take initiative, connect with people, and solve people's problems so well that they reward you for it.

Passion will increase throughout your life as you learn to sense your interests and emotions, as well as those of people around you. You will find and create more meaning, value, importance, and purpose in your relationships and in what you do. You will take responsibility for improving your situation and hold yourself accountable.

### Our Misguided Educational System

Successful initiators and entrepreneurs continue to arise without school. Many specifically leave school to greater success than those who finished. Our most educated are often the least skilled and feel the most trapped and helpless. Universities' interests conflict with those of students who want to succeed through practical initiative and responsibility. They are academic institutions. Academic means distinct from practice. The academic information schools teach is nice, but the behavior they teach is compliance—not social and emotional development that enable you to create meaning, value, importance, purpose, and passion in yourself and others.

### The Solution, Part 2: Method Initiative

Method initiative is about practice — much like laying piano. You start with the basics and advance. You become fluent in the language of your craft. Learning the piano and Method Initiative are both active, social, emotional, expressive, and performance-based (ASEEP).

I call what this book teaches Method Initiative, with a specific application being Method Entrepreneurship, which I've taught in person and online to hundreds of people, embodied in the exercises in Part Two. The exercises are our equivalent of piano scales and basic training.

### The Myths

Your biggest hurdles aren't external. Most people's biggest challenges are internal, usually beliefs justifying why they haven't acted. So many people believe and perpetuate the same beliefs that they become myths. Here are the top myths:

- The Myth of the Great Idea: People feel they need a great idea first. Most began not with surety and confidence but with people iterating and persisting with a glimpse of an idea.
- The Myth of the Great Résumé: People think they need to build their résumé first. The best way to build initiative is by taking initiative.
- The Myth of the Born Entrepreneur: Everyone learns with practice. Start where you are and with what you have.
- The Myth of the Great Elevator Pitch: Don't sacrifice development for a short pitch. Build relationships, practice communicating your ideas often, and reform and recast your vision as you go.
- The Myth of Needing Resources: Few social problems get solved by one person alone. Solutions come from teams, with different members contributing. Work to find the people who have the resources to help you.
- The Myth of Needing a Passion: What works in

finding passions is acting on what you have access to. Action leads to passion.

- The Myth of Too Many Passions (aka Fear of Missing Out, aka Fear of Regret): Act on an interest you sense has potential, develop skills, and apply them to your next one.
- The Sources of the Myths: What Method Initiative Overcomes: These myths feed on our need to protect ourselves and come from ignorance, vulnerability, fear of judgment, and insecurity. Your values and acting on them can reveal great discrepancies between values and behavior.

### Principles

The seven principles make sense even on your first read, but doing the exercises will imbue them with their full meaning and value. That growing meaning will tell you that you're developing the skills, experiences, and beliefs of effectively taking initiative.

1. Personality matters less than skills you can learn.
2. The idea of a lifetime comes once a month.
3. Better than a great idea is an okay idea plus market feedback, flexibility, and iterations.
4. Start where you are with what you have.
5. Pitch and they'll judge. Ask advice and they'll help.
6. The problem leads to the solution.
7. Almost nothing inspires like helping others so much that they reward you for it.

### Initiative, Action, and Passion

Life passions inspire us, giving us boundless energy. What works to focus us is what I call the Initiative-Action-Passion cycle. The last, beautiful, liberating main ingredient to Method Initiative is exhausting interests. Switching projects is like switching to another staircase that goes higher. Passion leads you to take more initiative, which leads you to act more, which increases your passion.

### Method Initiative: The Exercises

Method Initiative is a comprehensive progression of exercises that leads you to master the social and emotional skills, experiences, and beliefs of taking initiative to help others so they reward you for it. In the process you will create a supportive community, including valuable people in your field. Plan to 1) do one exercise, 2) reflect on it and write your reflections, and 3) do the next exercise. Repeat until the last exercise, or, if you exhaust an interest, restart and repeat the cycle with a new one. I recommend reflecting on the seven principles after each exercise. They will take on new meaning and importance with practice.

## You and a Problem You Care About

### Exercise 1: Personal Essay

Reflect on what brought you to this book. Direct your focus to a field you're interested in. 500 to 1,000 words is recommended. Name three people closer to your field of interest, three people with high status or value in your field, three relevant role models. These three can be people who are living or historical.

### Exercise 2: 5 Unsolved Problems

Exercise 2 is to think in the context of the field you wrote about in your personal essay and come up with five unsolved problems in that field. For each problem, write a potential solution.

### Exercise 3: 5 Close Contacts

Start developing your skills, experiences, and beliefs to attract people by sharing with them what you're working on and leading them to help you. List five people close to you likely to support you and unlikely to judge you. Family, friends, and colleagues can all work. Tell each about the projects from your last exercise. Ask each for a piece of advice on each. Write an improved version of the projects based on that advice.

## Creating Community

### Exercise 4: 10 Friends and Family Members

List ten friends and family members likely to support you and unlikely to judge you. Tell each your project and get three pieces of advice from each. Close each conversation by asking: i) "Is there anything to add that I didn't think to bring up?" ii) "Is there anyone you can think of you could put me in touch with who could help me with this?" The goals are to gather a list of the advice you got for your project and to write an improved version of the project based on that advice.

### Exercise 5: 5 People Who Feel the Problem

Find and talk to five people in the community you want to

serve who feel the problem you want to solve. Write each person's problem in his or her words. Five quotes, one from each person you spoke with, that states the problem in their terms from their perspective.

### Exercise 6: 10 People Closer to Your Field

Repeat exercise 4 ("10 Friends and Family Members") with ten people closer to your project's field. Tell each about your project so far and get five pieces of advice from each.

## Refining Your Solution

### Exercise 7: Create a Visual Model

Step 1: List the people and groups that your organization will interact with, along with what they will give and receive through your project's operation.

Step 2: Create a visual representation of your organization's operating model.

### Exercise 8: Details, Sustainability, and Financials

Your goal is to learn the operational details and assumptions as only financials reveal. Create a simple spreadsheet with 24 months of Revenues and Costs. Calculate the numbers.

Adjust the numbers until the project doesn't lose money.

## Creating Professional Relationships with Valuable People

### Exercise 9: Second Personal Essay

Write a personal essay about yourself in relation to:

The seven principles, your field of interest, the problem you want to solve, the people who feel the problem, your solution and goals, taking initiative in general, and your motivation and inspiration and purpose.

### Exercise 10: Valuable People

List ten people with value to your project whom you can reach. Tell each about the project so far and get five pieces of advice from each. Through this step, you may find that you have influential, resourceful people who are willing not only to help you but perhaps even employ you or fund your project.

## Conclusion

The way Method Initiative brings people together at work to cooperate and collaborate on passions becomes a new approach to the rest of life. It replaces isolation and alienation with support and understanding. Living by Method principles, Method Living, makes life about people—empathy, compassion, service, action, listening, understanding, making others feel understood, and so on. Once you start Method Living, there's no going back.

Beyond people using this book to learn and practice Method Initiative for themselves, teachers and parents should use it to teach the next generation to look forward to change with confidence and enthusiasm.



Joshua Spodek is a TEDX speaker, professor at NYU, host of the award-winning Leadership and the Environment podcast, a columnist for Inc. magazine, and author of the #1 bestselling book Leadership Step by Step. He holds five Ivy League degrees, including a PhD in astrophysics and an MBA from Columbia, where he studied under a Nobel laureate and helped build an X-ray observational satellite with the European Space Agency and NASA. Josh left academia to found a venture based on his invention that showed animated images to subway riders between stations.

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# Inner Excellence

Jim Murphy

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Inner Excellence

**Train Your Mind for Extraordinary Performance and the Best Possible Life**

*By Jim Murphy*

Jim Murphy is a Performance Coach (mental skills) to the best professional athletes and leaders in the world. Jim played professional baseball in the Chicago Cubs organization, coached with the Texas Rangers as well as in the Olympic Games. For his Masters Degree in Coaching Science, he interviewed 39 MLB GM's, field managers and coaches on how to build a championship team. In addition to coaching professional athletes and executives, Jim leads Inner Excellence offsite retreats at beautiful locations around the world. Jim is the president of the Inner Excellence Freedom Project whose mission is to build communities to alleviate spiritual and physical poverty around the world.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Mastering Your Inner Mind for Peak Performance

In his book, ***Inner Excellence: Train Your Mind for Extraordinary Performance and the Best Possible Life***, Jim Murphy shares with his readers keys he has learned that have helped him and those he has coached and aided move beyond fear and stagnation into lives of true meaning and worth. He believes that mindset is crucial in determining how a person both experiences and succeeds or fails in life. This mindset involves helping people focus on raising the level of excellence both in their lives and in the lives of those they compete with. Murphy maintains that a life focused solely on winning or gaining in certain areas of life is bound to lead to anxiety and fear. Rather than focusing narrowly on winning, Murphy wants his readers to seek out excellence in all areas of life, both external and internal. This, he maintains, will lead to contentment and a feeling of a life well lived.

## What We Pursue

Our culture, according to Murphy, is one set on a definition of success and a means of achieving it that will, in the end, fail to deliver what it is that people most want. Many people are likely familiar with Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. Murphy discusses people who Maslow termed self-actualizers. These people are not concerned with the external rewards that so often preoccupy the minds of most people. Rather, they have a firm idea of what they want out of life in the long term, and because of this, they are able "to develop an inner strength that [will carry] them through tough times." These people understand that their egos will want to protect themselves, and they actively work to bypass the needs of the ego in order to achieve their deeper dreams. These are the people Murphy hopes to help his readers become.

Western culture, Murphy maintains, is suffering from the affluenza virus. Because of this, people are focused on "possessions, achievements, looks, money, and status." The teachings of Maslow insist that these outward rewards will never bring true happiness. This is because the attainment of these riches often lead to envy and praise, and when this happens, we then

want ever more success in order to garner even more praise. One of the primary problems with this state of mind is that it is concerned primarily with others as people begin to want more not for themselves but in order to impress others. This ultimately leads people to feelings of emptiness.

Becoming self-actualizers requires people to develop self-awareness. This self-awareness is necessary because it allows people to perceive all of the world, rather than just what they can see through the lens of their own comparisons. Comparison can lead people to feelings of fear because in an effort to gain praise from others, they start to believe that they have no option but to succeed. This overwhelming desire to succeed can lead people to fear failure and become overly concerned with themselves and their appearance. This fear, according to Murphy's experience, stifles the freedom of people more than any other factor. Murphy is careful to note that while he insists that all people are self-centered because we necessarily see the world through the lens of our experiences, feelings, and perceptions, this is not the same as selfishness. Selfishness, in Murphy's view, is a moral issue whereas self-centeredness is just the lens through which people see the world.

Murphy moves into a discussion of self-consciousness. This occurs when people are attached to their past mistakes. He believes that when people feel self-conscious and afraid, they tend to turn to comparison centered around the five criteria of affluenza. "Looks and achievements" are especially relevant avenues for comparison because they are so personal. Murphy states that there will always be people who excel beyond us in these areas. This leads us to want ever more in order, leading to ever deepening affluenza.

## The Critic, The Monkey Mind, and The Trickster

A person must be able to control their thoughts in order to overcome the negative consequences of the affluenza virus, but there are three main obstacles to achieving more control over our thoughts. The first is the critic. "The critic is obsessed with (and attached to) our circumstances." It is the critic that is most concerned with comparisons. Murphy writes that "when we absolutely have to have something over which we are not in full control, we become a servant to it. In this we lose our power." In order to defeat the critic, we must learn to take our single-minded focus away from outcomes and focus it more on process.

The second obstacle to overcome is the monkey mind. The monkey mind refers to the "endless stream of thoughts" that are constantly running through our minds every moment that we are awake. These thoughts are often negative, fluttered, and unproductive. The main obstacle these thoughts provide is that they stop people from dreaming bigger. While Murphy understands there is a place for analysis, he believes that our minds become too focused on analysis as we replay our doubts. We become overly attached to our thoughts, and these thoughts establish their own reality.

The trickster is the final of the three impediments we may face as we try to gain control over our thoughts. Murphy writes that "when we're attached to our circumstances and invested in our goals, we don't reject the lies of the Trickster." Because of this, we can start to believe arguments about our own limitations. The Trickster tries to get us to believe that our "worth is entirely dependent on [our] results," and it uses "deception and accusation" to get a hold of us. The Trickster can get us to think either too highly or too lowly of ourselves, and both distortions lead to problems. When we base our identity on our successes and failures in this way, we begin to believe that we are a failure when we fail.

## Love, Wisdom, and Courage

Love, wisdom and courage are the "three pillars of excellence that overcome fear and form the foundation for mental strength and an extraordinary life." Love, for Murphy, is the antidote to fear. He wants his readers to lead from their hearts. This requires a pursuit of self-awareness so that a person can see what unique gifts and talents they have to offer the world. Murphy writes that "when you lead with your heart you have the capacity to see beauty and make connections only you can. You can connect ideas and people and dreams that no one else can." Instead of focusing solely on winning and defeating an opponent, someone who leads with their heart desires to always bring their best to a competition so that they can push their opponent to be their best. They pursue excellence in all areas and want to help others improve and grow as they, themselves, improve and grow. Competition is more about the pursuit of excellence than it is about single-minded victory.

Wisdom, for Murphy, "is the deep truth about who you are, why you're here, and what's possible in your life." This purpose must go beyond just the self and involve others. Wisdom also requires humility which Murphy defines as "an accurate view of self" as well as "freedom from self-inflation or self-rejection." Murphy believes that the byproduct of this clear view of self is gratitude. He believes that empowerment comes when a person finds a purpose that is rewarding in the pursuit of it, not just the attainment of it. The pursuit of a worthy purpose can infuse a life with meaning. Murphy writes, "your value increases and your concern for self decreases."

The final pillar Murphy focuses on is courage. "Courage," he writes, "is the ability to be fully present in adversity." It is easier to find courage when goals are focused on the process rather than on an outcome that we cannot fully control. Murphy lists four goals that focus on process. These are to give one's best, to be present, to be grateful, and to "focus on my routines and only what I can control." Winning is best achieved when it is the byproduct of a pursuit of excellence rather than the end goal itself. These three pillars of love, wisdom, and courage can help people in their pursuit of Zoe which "is absolute fullness of life, the selfless-actualization of those who are true to themselves."

## The Samurai

Murphy devotes considerable attention to the Samurai warriors in feudal Japan. These warriors followed what they called the "way of the warrior." This way prized "virtue and character above all else" and centered around "love, wisdom, and cour-

> *To achieve self-mastery, you need to, like the Samurai, 'let go of the fears and attachments that have mastered you - to surrender them to a power greater than your own."*

age." The Samurai "found pleasure in improvement, freedom in discipline, and connection in service to others." To achieve self-mastery, you need to, like the Samurai, "let go of the fears and attachments that have mastered you - to surrender them to a power greater than your own." Murphy believes that the strongest forces are love and fear and that with love we can overcome fear. It is in giving up one's life that one can gain the most. This is because clinging to one's life means a bondage to comparison. Samurai were always prepared to die, and Murphy believes that the highest purpose the rest of us can focus on is a "single-minded devotion to the purpose of your life." We must be willing to let go of our self-protection in order to love and so that we can allow our whole selves to engage in our pursuits.

Murphy then moves on to a discussion of the difference between happiness and joy. While many people seek out happiness in their lives, the pursuit of joy will bring more fruit. Happiness is dependent upon external circumstances. When good things happen to us, we feel happy. Joy, on the other hand, can be our companion even in the most dire of circumstances. "Joy is based on love and hope and truth, about who you are, created for glory, filled with infinite, inherent worth and unlimited possibilities." A pursuit of happiness often leads to a pursuit of comfort, but this can lead to a reactionary life. Murphy writes, "Stop running from discomfort and emotional pain. When you face it, you'll find out you're far stronger than you thought you were." Once people are able to divorce themselves from a fear of suffering, they will become more able to live lives of self-mastery. Murphy believes that "everything is here to teach" us and to help us to grow.

## Feelings

Murphy writes that "your state is the combination of your greatest desires, your beliefs about yourself, where you place your attention, and your physiology." Feelings dictate much of our lives, and they help determine how we experience the world. Our memories and beliefs filter our experiences. The results of this filtering creates thoughts which lead to feelings. Our feelings then determine our actions which in turn influence our results. There is a bias inherent in beliefs. Because of this, people can experience the same event in very different ways, drawing different conclusions.

Our brains are great at finding patterns. Patterns are how the brain is able to accommodate for so much information and make meaning from it. There are four processes through which our brains seek patterns: "assumptions, generalizations, deletions, and distortions." When we accept something without proof, we are working in the realm of assumption. Assumptions help the human brain because we do not need to take time in deliberation. Assumptions help us fill in the gaps when we have a small piece of information. For example, if we see part of an animal, our brains can fill in the missing body parts even when we do not see them or are focused on them. This can be problematic, however, when we want to narrow our focus and our brain keeps trying to zoom out and focus on aspects besides that which would serve us best. Murphy writes that "the key message here is that your focus improves when you can break down a task into its most basic element and concentrate on that alone."

Generalizations also deal with patterns but in a different way. When we experience a cause and effect, our memory stores that data and the next time we recognize the cause, we will come to expect the effect. Deletions occur when we filter out information that is not necessary. Oftentimes multiple things are happening at one time, and a person must be able to focus just on the necessary stimuli. Distortions occur when our brains give "too much meaning to a pattern." All of this is important because self-actualizers "organize their environment" purposefully, making sure to focus their time and attention on what matters most. They are intentional. Because of the importance of a strong and tailored focus, people need to learn how to both focus and relax and how to switch seamlessly between the two states.

## Beliefs

As mentioned previously, our beliefs are a key part of how we make sense of and perceive the world. Because of this, it is important that our beliefs are "in line with [our] dreams." Beliefs can develop quickly from external stimuli, but they can be changed. Just because a person is afraid of spiders because of one brief childhood incident does not mean they are destined to always be an arachnophobe. Beliefs are important because they "set the boundaries for what's possible in your life" and also because they "attract situations that keep those beliefs in tact." If a person begins to succeed in areas they did not believe they could, they will start to unintentionally sabotage themselves so that their outward circumstances reflect their inward beliefs. What we choose to believe about ourselves has great consequence.

Because of the power of beliefs Murphy maintains that "it's especially important to speak the truth about the past." He believes that it is important to think about negative past experiences as events that happened in the past rather than as ones that continue on into the present. Oftentimes the Trickster will appear when we try to move past failures. In times like these, it is important to stop negative thoughts as soon as we recognize them so that negative thoughts do not dictate our current realities. He believes that affirmations can be helpful in changing our current beliefs.

One belief that can harm us is a belief in the negative consequences that could arise should we achieve a particular goal. If we are pursuing a goal but deep down believe that the negative consequences of achieving it may be great, we may negatively and subconsciously sabotage ourselves. An example of this is when a smoker may have conflicting feelings about quitting smoking because if they quit smoking, they will lose the social ties they have that revolve around the habit. In these cases, "it's important to make sure your goals and dreams align with your true self."

## Subconscious and Resonance

Murphy claims three goals of the subconscious. The subconscious helps protect us from danger. It helps us live some aspects of our lives in the background to free up mental space for that which needs more attention, and it helps make sure our circumstances align with our beliefs. Our subconscious tries to protect us, sometimes to our detriment. For example, if a tennis player double faults, they may become distressed. The subconscious stores this feeling of distress in an attempt to protect against it in the future. The player then focuses on this in the future making it more likely that a double fault will happen again. When Murphy works with people struggling with fears and mental blocks, he tries to help them reprogram these painful areas. He does this in part by helping people remove emotion from the situation and figuring out what they could have done to change the situation and then inserting "a positive, high energy feeling – as well as the small change – into the context of the mental block." Finally, he has his clients "anchor that positive feeling into the original painful context." His clients are able to get rid of their fears permanently through this method.

Resonance refers to "the freedom and passion that come when we're fully present and in sync." Resonance depends on four factors. The first occurs when a person shares their heart rather than their ego. When a person performs in order to gain something from the performance, they likely will face great pressure. They will do better if they focus on sharing what it is they love. Second, they must work to pursue mastery, trying to improve in excellence. Third, they must strive to love their opponent, respecting them and realizing that great opponents are necessary for peak performance. Finally, a person must visualize presence. They must realize that failure is a part of the success journey. They must "visualize the path of mastery, seeking to be wholehearted and fully engaged" in life.

Murphy's purpose in his book is to help his readers achieve lives of deep meaning. While he works frequently with athletes, the principles he provides can guide people in all areas of life to achieve their biggest dreams and live lives of true meaning and purpose. While he walks his readers through his general principles, he ends each chapter with a list of questions to consider as well as activities they can partake in to implement the ideas in that chapter. Because of this, he is able to help make these principles concrete in the lives of readers despite the fact that much of the book talks about overarching ideas and principles. He ends with a list of the twelve steps developed by Alcoholics Anonymous because he believes that these principles can help people overcome stumbling blocks when other attempts fail because they are based on surrender, and this surrender can lead people on a path to excellence. Excellence comes to those who relish the process.

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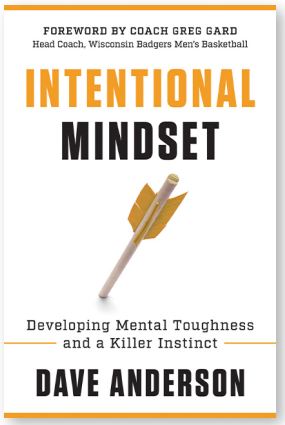
# Intentional Mindset

Dave Anderson

soundview Executive Book Summaries®

# Intentional Mindset

## Developing Mental Toughness and a Killer Instinct




*by* **Dave Anderson**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

When we are not where we believe we should be in our lives, we can feel a sense of inspirational dissatisfaction nudging us toward something better, and more. This dynamic can create a mental tension where although we are grateful for what we have and have accomplished, we also sense that we can become better. In spite of this, we can too often display the same thinking and tendencies that year after year have held us back. If you are in this state from time to time, or feel stuck there now, you can move forward after you intentionally change how you think.

Just as improving a physique requires intentionality, consistency, time, evaluation, adjustments, and trade-offs, so too does changing and building a mindset that makes you continually superior in performance to your former self in life's most essential arenas. That is the essence and purpose behind ***Intentional Mindset: Developing Mental Toughness and a Killer Instinct***. In it, Dave Anderson helps you become more intentional and less incidental when it comes to developing the killer instinct and mental toughness necessary to achieve your most essential goals.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The role killer instinct, mental toughness, and your WHY play in life
- The ten key success traits that are essential to building an intentional mindset
- The key aspects of each success trait
- How to continue your focus beyond the book

## Killer Instinct Gets Your Started, Mental Toughness Helps You Finish

Think of killer instinct and metal toughness as the "one-two punch" that accelerates success and knocks out complacency, with killer instinct being the impetus that "gets you started" and mental toughness being the driving force that powers you to fight to the finish.

Deficient killer instinct and mental toughness are the core causes of achievement shortfalls most often attributed to conditions such as bad breaks, bad upbringing, wrong job, wrong boss, and more.

Unconscious complacency is an enemy of personal progress and growth. It gives stagnation a foothold in your life and can make the dreams you envision seem always out of reach or even impossible. An important first step to jumpstart or accelerate progress and growth begins with developing greater measures of killer instinct and mental toughness.

There are ten key success traits that are essential to building an intentional mindset that increases your killer instinct and mental toughness, which form the acronym ACCREDITED: attitude, competitiveness, character, rigor, effort, discipline, intelligence, tenacity, energy, and drive.

## The WHY Fuels the Way

When it comes to achieving bigger goals, having clear and compelling internal motivators that fuel killer instinct and build mental toughness is non negotiable. This is your WHY. It lays out what you want for yourself and who is counting on you to come through. It is more than your goals; it's all the reasons you want those goals.

## Attitude: Build a Stronger ABLE So You're Able to Go Stronger

The acronym ABLE represents attitude, body language, and energy. The thrust of ABLE is that attitude influences body language, and body language impacts energy levels. It all starts with attitude, which is defined as a settled way of thinking reflected in one's behaviors or one's prevailing outlook on life.

People with similar skills, knowledge, talent, and experience go through identical trials but choose to handle it in a completely different manner.

### Seven Key Aspects of Attitude

1. **Responding well to negative things.** When negative things happen, instead of reacting quickly, take a few seconds to consider a more productive response, including a way to possibly benefit from it.
2. **Not being easily offended.** Regard an offensive incident as not mattering enough to invite misery into your life by repeating it, responding to it improperly, avenging it, or dwelling on it. No one can offend you without your consent.
3. **Demonstrate positive speech.** Words can inspire and words can destroy. Choose yours well.
4. **Focus on what you can control.** What you give your attention to grows bigger. Don't waste time on things you cannot control or affect.
5. **Maintain grace under stress**. Growth and maturity are shown in being able to experience negative or stressful emotions but not reacting to them.
6. **Avoid blame and excuses.** Taking responsibility for your actions, your results, and your life can be uncomfortable but blame is the anti-focus. Excuses are the DNA of underachievers.
7. **Make others feel better about themselves.** It takes a confident and secure person, and a selfless attitude, to shift one's thinking away from oneself and to build up others.

## Competitiveness: Go from Common Participant to Commonly Dominant

Within the context of Intentional Mindset, "competitiveness" is about competing with our former selves in a lifelong daily challenge for self-improvement in the ACCREDITED traits. The objective is to win victory over our former self. When you compete primarily with yourself, you continually raise your standards so that even if you fall short of your personal expectations, you blow away what others expected of you.

### Seven Key Aspects of Competitiveness

1. **Today's attitude is superior to yesterday's.** Handle aspects of your attitude better with each new day than you did the day before.
2. **Today's habits are superior to yesterday's.** Habits are behaviors that we repeat so often that

It isn't enough to know better.
To grow, you must do better.

they are automatic. Building an intentional mindset is about developing the discipline to do more of the right things and the self-control to avoid what is unproductive.

3. **Today's focus is superior to yesterday's.** It is vital that we consistently work to give attention to the activities and people that matter most.
4. **Today's discipline is superior to yesterday's.** Discipline fuels habits and subordinates temporary feelings to a better future. The key is to prioritize your future over your feelings.
5. **Today's knowledge is superior to yesterday's.** Enlarge your knowledge base and make yourself more valuable so you can add more value and achieve the valuables you have outlined in your WHY.
6. **Today's drive, energy, and motivation is superior to yesterday's.** When your WHY is clear and compelling enough, you will be on fire from within. Provoke and channel drive. Clarify and embolden motivators. Feed and manage energy.
7. **Today's results are superior to yesterday's.** The ultimate day would be one that sees fruit borne from past efforts, in addition to good seeds planted for future results.

When you build an intentional mindset, every day is more exciting, meaningful, challenging, and energizing than the day before. You approach each day not to get through it, but to gain from it, building the mental toughness and killer instinct you need to convert your most compelling WHY into a thrilling and fulfilling reality.

## Character: Cultivate a Rock-Solid Moral Code

Character can be defined as the moral and/or ethical traits that make up the individual nature of a person. Character is influenced by many things throughout our lives, but especially by our values and belief systems.

Strong character protects and helps leverage assets like talent, skills, knowledge, and experience. It ensures assets you have are applied rightly, with correct motives, even when life gets difficult or things do not go your way.

### Seven Key Aspects of Character

1. **Be honest in words and deeds.** Honesty is about being truthful but also encompasses freedom from deceit. Telling half truths or giving false impressions pricks the conscience, too and a guilty conscience is a mindset massacre.
2. **Accept responsibility.** Taking responsibility for your decisions, actions, results, and life allows you to learn and improve, build trust, and earn respect from others and yourself.
3. **Keep commitments.** Strong character is about doing what you said you would when it is not easy, cheap, popular, or convenient to do so. If others continually discover they cannot count on you, they are prone to reconsider whether they need you at all.
4. **Give complete effort at work.** You cannot afford to let yourself slack at your role because the stakes are too high. Doing less than you can eventually makes you less than you are.
5. **Put others first.** Putting others' welfare above your own demonstrates a serving spirit that builds your own self-esteem and confidence.
6. **Control your tongue.** Misspent words misuse energy and divert focus away from a *WHY* that matters most and onto a *what* that often means little or nothing.
7. **Remain humble and teachable.** There is no way you will put in the time and effort to develop an intentional mindset if you do not see the need for improvement.

Character leverages your skills, knowledge, talent, and experience by helping you stay out of your own way so you

can maximize those assets. It isn't enough to know better. To grow, you must do better.

## Rigor: Design a Relentless Daily Regimen

Rigor applies to having a highly structured daily routine that allows you to get more of the right things done, both consistently and with excellence. An intentional mindset helps you purposefully identify and execute your priorities on a given day and consciously work to improve your ability to perform them.

The goal of rigor is to develop better routines in all key areas of life. Rigor compresses focus and energy into what matters most, every day. It fosters discipline and enables consistency.

### Key Aspects of Rigor

1. **Schedule priorities in advance and successfully execute priorities.** Stop trying to squeeze your priorities into the day, and instead schedule your priorities and work the day around them.
2. **Today's daily routine is more effective than yesterday's.** Underachievers spend much of their life living in "someday." The problem with residing there is it takes all the pressure off performing well today.
3. **Make productive use of downtime and commute.** What you do in that time can make your WHY more attainable or create obstacles that can stall or reverse progress.
4. **Budget time to improve.** Life does not improve by accident and learning, like so much that is worthwhile in life, cannot be left to chance. Set daily time aside to improve yourself.
5. **Make time to add value to others.** Make time every day to encourage, equip, share, help, listen to, mentor, and coach other people. Adding value to others will challenge, stretch, and refine you in a way that makes you move valuable, too.

Rigor requires the killer instinct to embrace structure, follow processes, and attack your stated priorities each day. It also mandates mental toughness so that when things get tough during the day, or you get off track, you can remain tenacious and resilient and complete them regardless.

## Effort: Work Harder Smarter and Smarter Harder

People are fond of evaluating work ethic based on the number of hours or days they are at work instead of whether they are doing the most effective things intelligently and with vigor during those hours and days.

Working harder smarter means doing the right things with excellence and continually finding ways to improve them. Working smarter harder is about giving complete attention and effort to those high-impact activities, rather than doing them half-heartedly.

### Seven Key Aspects to Effort

1. **Do all that you can without holding back.** This aspect pertains to bringing all that you can to your vocation day in and day out.
2. **Execute the most essential tasks.** Effective execution is not just about getting a lot done, but getting the right things done. Doing more of the wrong things well, and often, cannot be declared as progress.
3. **Raise your basis.** Your basis is any routine that, while productive, does not challenge you as much as it once did because you have mastered it. Raising your basis involves increasing the most productive activities within a routine.
4. **Invest effort in growth.** Go beyond budgeting time to improve and give all you have to the time you budgeted.
5. **Don't spend major time on minor things.** You must limit things that are prone to rob our time if we let them.
6. **Say "no" to low-return things.** These can be former activities or bad habits you overlook, walk away from, and renounce or avoid altogether. Avoid what is unproductive whenever possible and escape when it is thrust upon you.
7. **Give all-out effort in various life areas such as family and exercise.** Any area you want to improve in your life requires an intentional mindset just as it does at work. It's about getting from the moment, not just getting through it.

Working smarter harder and harder smarter is an intentional, richly rewarding lifestyle that endows the doer with levels

You will not grow or progress by repeating the same old stupid things. You can grow and progress doing new stupid things and learning from them.

of self-esteem, self confidence, killer instinct, and mental toughness that are unattainable to those content to do just enough or who occasionally extend themselves, but only when it suits them.

## Discipline: Become a No-Nonsense Master of "No'ing"

Despite that discipline can sound like a punishing and restricting force that saps joy from your life, the opposite is true. In the context of this work, discipline can best be defined as an activity, regimen, or exercise that improves a skill, habit, or attitude.

Discipline is freedom, a morale builder, a bridge between where you are and where you aspire to be. No champion in any endeavor credited being undisciplined as their secret to success. A defined WHY makes it easier to know what to say "yes" or "no" to each day. "No" is a wonderful word, and highly disciplined people are "Masters of No'ing."

### Key Aspects of Discipline

1. **Execute a pre-work mindset and/or exercise routine.** This can be as simple as reviewing your WHY, reading or reciting affirmations, examining the day's priorities, or listening or reading to something inspirational or motivational. With exercise, it's all about challenging yourself to finish strong and resist the urge to rack the weight early.
2. **Execute commitments regardless of how you feel.** When you don't feel like executing key tasks or keeping other commitments but decide to do it nonetheless, you will feel even better about yourself than on the days you wanted to do them.
3. **Say "no" to shortcuts and instant gratification.** We are prone to repeat behaviors again and again until the wrong action has become a habit lethal to growth. Our actions have compounding effects, regardless of whether they are productive or unproductive.
4. **Spend less time with undisciplined "surfing."** Turning your head from an important task for just a moment can easily become an hour or even the entire day.
5. **Say "no" to excessive idle conversation and waiting/wishing/whining.** Limit or eliminate pursuing or listening to gossip, unmeaningful conversations, whining and complaining, or discussing personal problems with anyone the problem does not directly involve.
6. **Get off track less often than yesterday.** We all get off track from time to time. The challenge is to do it less often. The key to getting off the track less often is to be completely clear about what the track is in the first place.

Eliminate unproductive options to your downtime or daily routine to thus narrow your focus in a way that stimulates more discipline.

## Intelligence: Grow Your Smarts Before Stupidity Starts

If we know what to do but fail to do it, we are not just being lazy, forgetful, or apathetic; what we are doing lacks common sense and is, thus, stupid! To grow your potential you must become more intentional about doing more of what you know, learning better ways to do it, and doing it consistently.

You will not grow or progress by repeating the same old stupid things. You can grow and progress doing new stupid things and learning from them. In fact, this ability is a mark of intelligence.

### Seven Key Aspects of Intelligence

1. **Acquire new knowledge** in an area relevant to improving your key life sectors like finances, relationships, health and fitness, or spirituality.
2. **Practice or improve skills.** Prioritize strengths you are making stronger and focus on secondary abilities you have that are not at skill level, working to upgrade them.

3. **Ask for feedback** with the humility, killer instinct, and mental toughness needed to do so.
4. **Act on feedback** with the intent to make it work, not prove someone else wrong.
5. **Execute your action plan** and priorities before, during, and after work.
6. **Try new things.** It makes one uncomfortable which is essential to growth.
7. **Learn from mistakes.** We can turn the cost of our mistakes into bargains when we grow because of them and convert what we learned from them into results.

If there were ever an area of life where "it takes two" is true, it would be in applying both aspects of intelligence: acquiring and applying skills and knowledge. You must not only apply what you know works, but must also leave your comfort zone, continue to learn better and more relevant things, and also apply those. The consistent application of what is no longer optimal is not going to get you to your WHY.

## Tenacity: Hone a Rock Hardheadedness

Knowing when to persist and when to change your methods or course will be in direct proportion to the sharpness of your WHY. The clearer you get about what you want and why you want it, the more prone you are to adhere to the disciplines and principles that will take you there and avoid or discard what will not.

### Key Aspects of Tenacity

1. **Stay on track despite obstacles.** Engage your hardheadedness to return to the priority at hand, building your mental toughness, confidence, and resolve.
2. **Persist through tasks with excellence despite distractions.** When you have a setback, you still need to execute a priority and not do it casually or incompletely. You must do it very well.
3. **Keep going when you feel like quitting.** Set the bar high and expect more of yourself.
4. **Refuse to take "no" for an answer when pursuing a goal.** Learn from rejection, mentally regroup, and take another shot.
5. **Have encouraging self-talk.** What you say to yourself influences tenacity or surrender, confidence or compromise, drive or defeat.

When you feel stuck in the middle of a long and tough journey, you may not be able to see how or when you can possibly finish, but you don't have to know that much or see that far. All you need to see is how to get to the next step in front of you. And then choose to take that step. Then repeat. That is tenacity.

## Energy: Fuel a Fanatical Focus and Fight to the Finish

Energy provides the physical stamina to remain productive for the duration, and the mental fortitude to stay locked in and engaged so you can think clearly and execute well during the process. It is essential to become a more intentional daily manager of your physical and mental energy. This begins with your morning mindset routine and persists through the rituals, challenges, objectives, tasks, problems, and opportunities each day presents.

### Key Aspects of Energy

1. Increase mental strength by building and guarding your mind throughout the day.
2. Don't engage in evening activities that drain your energy tomorrow.
3. Stay mentally locked into the tasks that matter most by refusing the bait of distraction.
4. Power through when physically tired without "resting" at work.
5. Eat energizing food and stay hydrated.

When it comes to building, replenishing, and managing your daily energy levels, decide in which life areas your current habits or tendencies are your biggest foes. Be intentional and create a simple and workable action plan to address your self-afflictions.

## Drive: Become a Driven Driver, Not a Driver Who's Driven

A "driven driver" is one whose motivation comes from within and powers them to drive toward their WHY daily. On the other hand, a "driver who's driven" is one who must be prodded, cajoled, bribed, threatened, or otherwise motivated by outside forces. Drive can be considered a baseline

killer instinct. While drive prompts you to attack opportunities, especially those that come your way, killer instinct motivates you to seek out or make those opportunities.

### Seven Key Aspects of Drive

1. **Do a quality job of reviewing your WHY.** Don't miss the impact that comes with visualizing each element of your WHY and strengthening the emotional connection that takes you from merely reading the goal to seeing and feeling it.
2. **Choose and review your landing place.** Your landing place is your guard against getting off track. It is your couple of key priorities for that day that give you a place to come back to if you deviate off course.
3. **Don't require external motivation.** You cannot control whether you get noticed, complemented, rewarded, or applauded. If you are dependent on it, you are turning the motivational keys of your life over to people and things beyond your control, which is a recipe for personal powerlessness.
4. **Focus enough on the goals that matter most.** It requires significant discipline and mental intentionality to set aside or subordinate what is good or great to pursue relentlessly the goals that matter most.
5. **Focus enough on what you can control.** Giving time, energy, and focus to aspects of life you cannot control dampens your drive because feelings of helplessness and powerlessness ensue.
6. **Feel unstoppable despite conditions.** Tough conditions can cause you to take a shortcut, give up, enroll in the blame game, or lose emotional control. Rise to the challenge, power on, remain unfazed, and execute priorities with excellence despite adverse conditions.
7. **Avoid undriven people and drive-draining activities.** The thinking of an undriven person is a bad or wrong fit for anyone wanting to develop their killer instinct and become more mentally tough. Undriven people may make you feel worse about yourself, mock or put down your efforts because it makes them feel uncomfortable, or fill your head with unproductive nonsense.

Identify drive-draining activities or people that you need to limit your time with or avoid altogether. Decide on a substitute activity to put in their place. Remember that even trading in ten minutes per day of drive-drainers for something more productive compounds substantially over a lifetime.

## The ACCREDITED Course: Tailor Your Ten Weeks

If you choose, you can continue your journey to accelerate your mental toughness and killer instinct by taking the ACCREDITED course. In it, you will spend one week developing and evaluating each of the ten ACCREDITED traits discussed in ***Intentional Mindset***, focusing on the key aspects of each trait and you will evaluate your daily performance using a progress report found on the Learn to Lead site.

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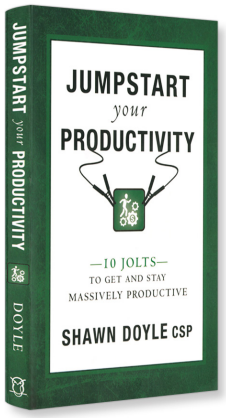
# Jumpstart Your productivity

Shawn Doyle

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# Jumpstart Your Productivity

## *10 Jolts* to Get and Stay Massively Productive




*by* **Shawn Doyle**

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## The Summary In Brief

Productivity has many definitions, but one of the best ways to view it is work less hard, and fewer hours. Becoming more productive takes being more consciously aware of how you spend your time and efforts and analyzing whether you're spending them effectively. It's about properly setting goals and achieving them to the best of your ability. Always keep in mind that productivity is an ebb and flow process. Some weeks you will have balance and some weeks you may not.

In ***Jumpstart Your Productivity***, you'll discover how to define your goals in both your professional and personal life. You'll receive tools and techniques to help you choose a time management system, better plan your activities, and make a to-do list that works for you.

In addition, you will learn how to gracefully decline invitations that interfere with your productivity and how to control and manage the many interruptions that arise on a daily basis. And you'll learn about the importance and power of rest, recovery, and relaxation, and how they directly relate to your productivity.

## In This Summary, You Will Learn:

- Ways to help you get and stay massively productive.
- How to select and use a quality time management system.
- How to detect and eliminate productivity vampires.
- How to make and keep an effective to-do list.

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## Set Goals and Write Them Down

When talking about productivity, you must decide what you are going to be productive about. You might be wondering, why should I set goals for myself personally and professionally?

Well, setting goals can be very motivating. They can help you plan better, make better decisions, increase your credibility, improve your thinking, and spend your time more wisely.

### The First Step in Defining Your Goals

The first step in defining your goals is actually defining them. How do you do this? The question is not really how to define your goals, but what it is that you want.

Start by writing what you want in these categories: Social, Professional, Love, Financial, Mental, Health, Family, Friends, Recreation, Spiritual, Community.

You can ask yourself questions like: What am I passionate about? What is it that I truly want? How would I know if I became successful? Why do I want success? Answer these in relation to each category.

### The Next Steps

Now that you've developed a list of your wants, you're ready to write down your goals for each on the basis of the ones that you have identified. Make sure your goals are specific with lots of detail.

Take your list of goals and transfer them to your calendar system (physical or electronic), and once you've written them down there, arrange the goals in the following time elements: Yearly, Quarterly, Monthly, Weekly, and Daily.

Now, ask yourself specifically what individual actions you need to take to make sure that each one is achieved. There will be your list of goals and in addition to it all the activities that are aligned with each one.

## Your Time Management System

If you want to be productive, successful, and credible, one of the main tools you need is some kind of system in place for managing and tracking your time. There are five types of time management systems: Phone-based, time management system apps, electronic/online, hard copy/written, and collaborative. But how do you know which system works best for you?

### Deciding Which Time Management System to Use

You will find that there are literally thousands of options available to help manage your time and productivity. There are some questions you can answer to lead you in the right direction.

First, ask yourself what it is that you need. Make a list of specific criteria that you want in your system. Then, consider the cost of the system. Is it user-friendly? Is it quick? Does it integrate with the rest of your technology? Do you like using it?

When you've answered these questions, ask other people which systems they prefer. Experiment with different kinds of systems. Take the time to do research to find out what systems are out there.

## Are You Wasting Your Efforts?

In 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor reported that employed persons worked an average of 7.6 hours on the days they worked. More hours were worked, on average, on weekdays than on weekends—8.0 hours compared with 5.6 hours.

On an average day, nearly everyone aged 15 and over (96 percent) engaged in some sort of leisure activity such as watching TV, socializing, or exercising. Of those who engaged in leisure activities, men spent more time in these activities (5.8 hours) than did women (5.1 hours).

On the days they did household activities, women spent an average of 2.6 hours on such activities while men spent 2.1 hours.

What can we learn from this study? It shows that people could be much more productive than they are. The average American spends over 5 hours of leisure time per day. This is a result of falling into habits and not thinking about what you are doing and how you are doing it.

### Productivity Vampires and What to Do About Them

Productivity vampires are the forces that prevent you from being able to accomplish what you want to accomplish and that interfere with your level of productivity.

When you work for yourself or for a company, there are activities that you get involved with each week; you need to analyze what those are and whether they are serving your greater purpose. You should note how much time you spend on e-mail, administrative work, meetings, instant messaging, phone calls, project work, travel, preparation, social media, and managing/leading.

If you find you are spending several hours on any of these, take steps to prioritize and minimize your time spent.

## The Key to Massive Productivity

If you want to be massively successful and massively productive, then you have to start planning for maximum success. In other words, if you want to be more productive, spend more time planning because the more time you spend planning, the more productive you will be.

For your goal to be successful you must set a measurement of success, a time frame for completion, and be as specific as possible in what you want to achieve.

### The Elements of Planning

The first element of planning is to look at time increments. If you're planning on achieving a specific goal, you can take that goal and break it into short-term (4–6 months), mid-term (6–12 months), and long-term (12–18 months) goals.

Next look at are categories for planning. That means placing goals under Resources, People, and Materials. Ask yourself, which resources will I need on this particular project to ensure that I will be successful? Which people will I need internally and externally to successfully pull off this project? What materials will I need to complete this project?

### Project Plan

Your project plan can be something as simple as a regular old calendar where you write the specific dates, an electronic time management system that will continually remind you electronically when things are due, or if you have a more complex project you can use project management software specifically made for managing large, complex projects. When planning, remember to have a specific plan that is all yours. Make sure it is time bound and written down.

## Make and Keep A To-Do List

Once you have your goals and your plans for the year, and then for the quarter, the month, and the week, then, of course, you will have the things you need to do every day. The tool you will use to do this is the world-famous to-do list.

### The Power of the To-Do List

This list should be aligned with your goals meaning it should include activities that help you achieve them. It should also be in writing. A written to-do list keeps you on track with exactly what you need to do and helps you keep track of what you've already done. It allows you to add to the list whenever something new comes up, and you can compare what you need to do for someone versus what you have on your list.

An effective to-do list will contain categories such as: Tasks to complete, Administrative work, E-mail, Phone calls, Travel arrangements, Meetings, Preparations, Household, Financial, and Social. You should prioritize your list items in each category as A, B, or C.

Remember that having a to-do list makes you more credible and increases your focus. It can motivate you, help you keep promises, and help clarify your thinking. You should include work items and other personal items in the same list, prioritize list items by deadline, have your to-do list with you at all times, and review it frequently throughout the day.

## Stop Saying Yes to Everything

The inability to say no is directly related to lack of productivity. If it is your habit and your approach to say yes to everything, that definitely has a negative impact on your productivity.

So, why do many people in life personally and professionally say yes when they really would rather say no? Some reasons are feelings of obligation, fear, or guilt. Do any of these apply to you?

### Why We Should Say No

In terms of productivity, there are some very powerful reasons why we should learn to say no. It is acceptable to say no when something takes away from your productive time, distracts you from thinking productive thoughts, and costs you in some way whether it's time, money, effort, or labor.

### How to Decide If You're Going to Say Yes or No

When a request is received, many people have a hard time deciding whether to do it or not and don't really know how to decide. There are questions you can ask yourself to help. Do I feel like doing it or not? Is this aligned with my goals? Will this result in conflict? What will be the impact? How will this affect other people?

## Control the Interruptions

It seems like at work we are constantly getting interrupted, multiple times per day and maybe even multiple times per

hour. That makes it very difficult to focus and be productive. How do we solve this dilemma?

### Different Kinds of Interruptions

In-person interruptions happen when you're sitting in your workspace and someone comes to ask you a question who does not have an appointment. What should you do in this situation? You can try to negotiate with the person visiting you, wear earbuds while working, move to a conference room or empty office where you can't be seen, avoid making eye contact while working on a deadline, or come up with some team guidelines so people know when and when not to interrupt.

Phone calls, emails, and meetings can also be a drain on your productivity. If you're in the middle of a project, you can let calls go to voicemail and call people back when you're finished. You don't have to respond to emails immediately, and you can turn off notification sounds. And if you have control over meetings, you can improve things by having an agenda, appointing a facilitator to keep conversation moving, and knowing the meeting's objective.

## Take Breaks, Boost Productivity

Scientific research shows that when people take breaks they are much more productive. In a study at Baylor University, Drs. Emily Hunter and Cindy Wu studied the break habits of close to one thousand workers. They found that taking a break in the morning, before lunch, was more effective at replenishing energy, concentration, and motivation. Workers who took breaks early in the day were more productive later in the day.

### The Break Manifesto

If you want to truly be more productive, you need to start habitually taking breaks at work. You can start by taking a break somewhere between when you start the work day and lunchtime. Leave your work area for 15 minutes and go take a walk. If you're worried about what other people will think, know that when you're more productive, they will realize that you taking a break actually has a positive impact, not a negative one.

Always take a 30- to 45-minute lunch break away from your desk. Disconnect from work by eating outside or in your company café. You should also take an afternoon break between when you come back from lunch and when you go home at the end of the day. If you take afternoon breaks, you will be much more productive when you come back to do more work.

Remember that productivity is an ebb and flow process. You'll achieve balance some weeks and others you may not. Always keep in mind that becoming more productive means becoming more aware of how you spend your time and making sure you spend it effectively.



Shawn Doyle is a professional speaker, book author, executive coach, and consultant. For the last 22 years, he has spent his time developing and implementing training programs on team building, communication, creativity, and leadership. His training programs help people become more effective in the workplace and in their lives. Shawn's clients have included numerous Fortune 500 companies, and his awards and honors are extensive. He is the author of twelve inspirational books.

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# Lean In

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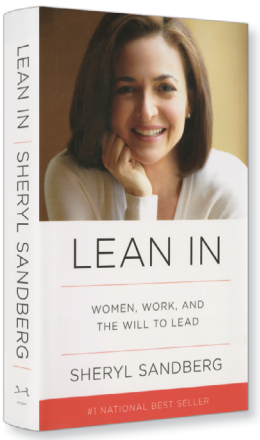
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# LEAN IN
## Women, Work and the Will To Lead
**by Sheryl Sandberg**

*© 2013 Lean In Foundation, 228 pages*

According to Sheryl Sandberg, "leaning in" is an ambitious challenge to women to push forward and chart their own course to reach significant personal goals. She notes that even though women are better off now than ever before in history, women's voices are still not heard equally. In fact, Sandberg believes that women should be dissatisfied with the status quo and push themselves to keep reaching for equality.

*Lean In* affirms that women often hold themselves back in their careers, whereas they actually deserve to move to the forefront, in leadership roles. Sandberg's chapters focus on adjustments that women can make, such as increasing self-confidence and not trying to do it all. She examines how women can "sit at the table," take on risks, embrace challenges and seek their own goals. She asserts that a better world will exist when "half of our institutions are run by women and half our homes are run by men."




A wide gamut of women will embrace this book: those who have choices as to where, when and how much they work and those who face challenges wherever they work. For both groups of women, Sandberg addresses practical ways to remove barriers that prevent women from getting to the top. These barriers are both external and internal. External hurdles include sexism, harassment and discrimination. The internal barriers, those that women build within our minds, are lack of self-confidence and reluctance to raise our hands. Women hesitate to assert themselves, according to Sandberg, by "pulling back when we should be leaning in."

### Gender Stereotypes and the Leadership Gap

So many times women have said of other women, "I don't know how she does it!" Sandberg notes that fear underlies many barriers to being both a happy mother and a competent professional: fear of failure, of being judged, of aspiring to too much, of not being liked, of attracting negative attention. She points to national trends: Highly trained women are scaling back and dropping out of the workforce in high numbers because integrating personal aspirations with professional goals has been very challenging.

Sandberg notes that different treatment of boys and girls, from birth through school, is a symptom of gender stereotyping, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A cause of this inequality is what Sandberg calls the "stereotype threat." When members of a group become aware of a negative stereotype, they are likely to perform according to that stereotype. This phenomenon may discourage girls from entering some technical fields, and girls may consequently hesitate to aspire to senior leadership jobs.

In fact, when a girl tries to lead, she may be labeled as bossy and may pay a social penalty. Even though girls outperform boys in many college classrooms, girls' academic gains have not been reflected in greater numbers of women in top jobs, writes Sandberg. This phenomenon is the "leadership ambition gap."

Women often feel undeserving and guilty instead of worthy of recognition for their high achievement (the impostor syndrome of underestimating ourselves.) Sandberg quotes Tina Fey: "The beauty of the impostor syndrome is that you vacillate between extreme egomania and a complete feeling of 'I'm a fraud.'" Research supports that when one feels more powerful and in charge, he or she has a higher tolerance for risk in reaching for opportunities. Sandberg acknowledges, "I know that in order to continue to grow and challenge myself, I have to believe in my own abilities. I still face situations that I fear are beyond my capabilities. But now I know how to take a deep breath and keep my hand up. I have learned to sit at the table."

## Does Achievement Put Women in a Double Bind?

Sandberg cites research showing that success and likeability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women. Research reveals that even though no one admits to stereotyping, when a woman is successful both men and women like her less. In other words, we evaluate people based on stereotypes.

Therefore, women are held back because they keep themselves back, insists Sandberg. Successful women may be perceived as non-team players or as too aggressive. Women's self-doubt may cause them to downplay their achievements.

The nice-vs.-competence dilemma is explained by a Stanford professor, Deborah Gruenfeld: "Our entrenched cultural ideas associate men with leadership qualities and women with nurturing qualities and put women in a double bind." Thus, women feel they need to do the job and get along with everyone. Even when a woman negotiates successfully for herself, she may pay the price of sacrificing good will, Sandberg asserts.

As Mark Zuckerberg told Sandberg at her first formal review, "If you want to change things, you can't please everyone." Sandberg found that Mark was absolutely right.

## Multiple Ways to Climb to the Top

Even though a ladder is a common metaphor for a career, Sandberg insists that a jungle gym is a more appropriate comparison, because it provides various ways of reaching the top, through creativity and individuality. Women who are starting or changing careers or re-entering the workforce especially benefit from the growth alternatives that a jungle-gym model represents.

Sandberg's work history exemplifies a jungle-gym career ascendancy. Her first job after college was at the World Bank, which included a stint in India researching leprosy. Subsequently she attended Cambridge Business School and joined the Nonprofit Club, where she studied social marketing. After her next job at McKinsey and Company, she became secretary of the Treasury Department, where she was involved in national and international economic policy. As she perceived the exponential growth of technology, she moved to Silicon Valley, where she was employed by Google.

She admits that the best piece of career advice came from a friend, Google CEO Eric Schmidt: Only one criterion mattered when picking a career: fast growth. She has since advocated that employees seek "rocket ships within their companies" by seeking positions that encourage stretching and reaching, as on a jungle gym. Sandberg also advises that everyone develop a long-term dream, namely, an 18-month plan that is two pronged: It sets goals to help us focus on results, and it sets personal goals for acquiring new skills.

## The Results of Missed Opportunities

Millennial women are not as likely as men to characterize themselves as "leaders" or "willing to take risks." Yet, aversion to risk can cause a woman to avoid tackling challenging tasks that could advance her career. Women may avoid "stretch assignments" because they feel they do not have the skills necessary for that reach. Unfortunately, this leaning back is counter-productive because many skills are actually learned on the job, she observes.

Seeking challenges beyond one's comfort level triggers leadership in climbing the jungle gym. In short, managing a career involves willingness to take risks, seek promotions and choose growth opportunities leading to a seat on the rocket ship.

Studies show that people who are mentored and sponsored report having more career success than those who are not. Mentoring has become a key topic in women's seminars, because mentoring (advising, supporting and providing feedback) is regarded as important for career progression.

The question arises, how do mentees find mentors? This book reiterates that mentors select their protégées based on performance, potential and initiative. Advice for mentees therefore includes the following:

- Be open to feedback;
- Use your working time productively;
- Do not expect hand-holding or solutions to be handed to you;
- Be proactive in your job (don't wait for a mentor to be a Prince Charming).

In reciprocal mentoring, both the mentee and the mentor benefit, because both gain useful information, a sense of collegiality and commitment.

## The Challenge of Honest Dialogue and Honest Feedback

Authentic communication is as difficult yet as necessary in the workplace as it is in successful relationships. Yet, open communication is stymied at work for many reasons, Sandberg notes. One barrier is that performance is often assessed by someone else's perception, which makes people less likely to tell the truth. Many women also perceive that speaking honestly will label them as negative or non-team players.

Sandberg affirms that communication works best when people combine appropriateness with authenticity, so that we are not brutally honest but delicately honest. Effective communication starts with several steps:

- The realization that there is my point of view (my truth) and someone else's point of view (his truth);
- The I-message, wherein opinion can be stated non-confrontationally using the first-person pronoun;

- Simple, minimal words, not wordy nuances that can obfuscate the point;
- The ability to really listen and acknowledge the speaker's feelings ("I understand you are feeling … because …")

The advantage of knowledge derived from honest interchange is greater than wallowing in supposedly blissful ignorance, which seldom leads to improvement. As Sandberg explains, asking for advice and feedback builds relationships that increase collegiality and equality in the workplace.

## Eliciting and Fostering Honest Views

She tackles the challenge of how to encourage those around us to speak authentically. We can actively seek others' input by simply asking what the other person is thinking. ("Mike, what do you think about …?") Another way to encourage genuine dialogue is to speak openly about our own weaknesses, perhaps admitting our own impatience or quirks, which helps others to relate to us and opens up deeper levels of conversation.

Sandberg adds that thanking people publicly encourages them and others around them to continue the good work. Moreover, sometimes humor can effectively help deliver an honest message. At other times when humor is not appropriate, an uncomfortable situation can be relieved by honest human emotion, such as when Sandberg "cried on Mark Zuckerberg's shoulder!"

Indeed, sharing emotions may increase motivation. Sandberg uses the phrase "Bringing our whole selves to work": no strict line of demarcation between our personal and professional lives. She cites prominent thinker Marcus Buckingham's research that leadership derives from "individuality that is honestly and sometimes imperfectly expressed." This shift bodes well for women who often feel obligated to relegate their emotions to a stereotypically male image. She concludes that compassion and sensitivity are the cornerstone for more authentic leadership.

## A Career-Loving Parent or a Working Mom?

Even though we may follow the maxim, "To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail," Sandberg notes the paradox that when it comes to meshing career and family, planning too far in advance can close doors rather than open them. The time leading up to having a family is not the time to lean back but the time to lean in to one's job. Women who do not stretch themselves professionally before they become parents may fall behind. When a mom returns to the workplace, she may feel marginalized or underutilized.

As a parent of two children, Sandberg continued to lean into her job and options; she took a new job at Facebook when her second child was seven months old. She points out the irony: "Women wind up leaving the workforce precisely because of things they did to stay in the workforce."

Sandberg declares that women most likely to leave the workplace are those married to men at two ends of the income gamut: ones earning the least and ones earning the most. Mothers married to low-income-earning husbands often cannot find jobs that cover the cost of daycare.

Mothers married to high-income men often leave employment because the hours husbands work require moms to care for the children. She advises that professional women weigh the cost of child care against their future salary rather than their current salary, before they contemplate leaving. The exodus of highly educated women from the workplace contributes further to the leadership gap.

"Sandberg's message is that if society truly values the work of caring for children and develops ways to help parents balance family and career responsibilities, both employees and employer will benefit immensely. Access to paid family leave, affordable day care and flexible work schedules would narrow the leadership gap."

## Real Partnership: Why Men Must Be More Empowered at Home

Without realizing it, women who do not view their partners as equally capable of chores and child care discourage them from sharing in work at home. But if women take a more collaborative approach to household duties, men will more readily assume their share. (Sandberg humorously suggests that even if dads put the diaper on the baby's head, the wife should just smile!)

Underpinning this need for equal partnership is Sandberg's contention that spousal support is crucial to a woman's successful leadership. The metaphor of a pendulum swinging back and forth aptly describes how partners can coordinate work schedules with household chores.

Because studies on child development reveal that children with involved and caring fathers show significantly high

levels of cognitive abilities and psychological well-being, it is crucial that men be encouraged to lean into their families.

Gender-specific expectations bring many unfortunate self-fulfilling complications. The belief that mothers are more committed to family than to work penalizes women because employers assume women are not as professionally dedicated as men.

Surveys of younger generations of men reveal the enormous advantages of an equal partnership:

- Partners experience greater happiness in the relationship and higher satisfaction;
- Men participating in raising children practice greater patience and understanding;
- Both partners experience/practice flexibility and negotiation;
- Women earning money gain an increased ability to make decisions at home and in their future;
- Partners model examples of greater equality for the next generation.

## Pursuing a Career and Children: It's a Matter of Focus

"Can we do it all?" Of course, the answer is no. Expecting women to do everything right leads them to major disappointment and self-doubt. Sandberg notes that women who have achieved professional success by pushing themselves ahead may have difficulty distinguishing between essential and non-essential aspects of the job, curtailing hours or "unplugging." But women can maximize their efficiency by focusing on what is important (being home for dinner, attending Sally's game or Billy's parent-teacher conference.)

The new normal in both the workplace and home includes an overloaded schedule and pressure to excel. Women whose children are in daycare often worry that their children suffer, but studies reveal no gaps in cognitive skills or social competence between children cared for exclusively by their mothers and those in day care. Thus responsive, caring parents working outside the home are quite capable of providing secure and nurturing environments for their children.

When Sandberg founded Women@Google, she tackled the problem of how women perceive themselves on the job. She contends that women need to speak out and seek solutions to barriers that impede advancement. At Facebook she teaches managers to encourage women to both vocalize their plans regarding families and to continue seeking opportunities. As she says, "Talking can transform minds, which can transform behaviors, which can transform institutions."

## Ongoing Dialogue about Equality

Sandberg reports that women will enjoy real choice when they have supportive employers, colleagues and partners, and men will have real choice when they are respected for contributing inside the home.

Achieving equality also requires women to support other women. Ironically, women already in power often regard aspiring women as competition. The term "queen bee" describes gender discrimination: A woman leader tries to dominate and keep other women down.

Sandberg also reminds us that even when we disagree, we should keep our shared goals in the forefront. She calls for not less debate but more constructive debate. "We versus us" and "Us versus them" is counterproductive to the goal, which is "a coalition of support," where children see fathers providing school transportation and mothers happy at jobs.

*Lean In* is a canonical must-read for working women seeking empowerment. In this inspiring powerhouse of a book, Sandberg provides pragmatic advice on overcoming the biases and gender stereotyping surrounding working women. Sandberg's firsthand experience, extensive research, interviews and humor lend strong credibility to her advocacy of women leaning in and charging ahead in pursuit of individual growth and goal attainment. Her engaging call to action reminds us all that more women in leadership positions will create a more equitable world of both professional and personal fulfillment.

She shares her contagious optimism in her final hope that her own children will end up where they want to be by leaning in — all the way.

**The Author:** Sheryl Sandberg is Chief Operating Officer at Facebook and is ranked on Fortune's list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in Business and as one of *Time*'s 100 Most Influential People in the World. Prior to working at Facebook, she was Vice President of Global Online Sales and Operations at Google and Chief of Staff at the United States Treasury Department. Before that, she worked as a consultant at McKinsey & Company and as a research assistant at the World Bank. Sheryl serves on the boards of Facebook, The Walt Disney Company, Women for Women International, V-Day and ONE, and she chairs the board of Lean In. She received a BA in Economics from Harvard University and an MBA from the Harvard Business School. Sheryl lives in northern California with her husband, Dave Goldberg, and their two children.

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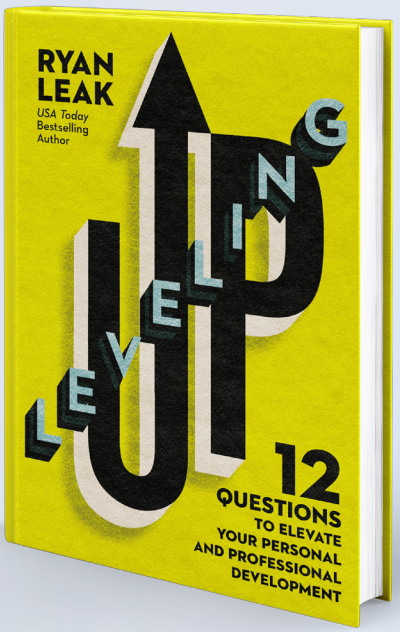
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# Leveling Up

Ryan Leak

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Leveling Up

### 12 Questions to Elevate Your Personal and Professional Development

*By Ryan Leak*

**Ryan Leak** is an author, speaker, executive coach, and filmmaker. He's known for two documentaries: The Surprise Wedding and Chasing Failure. The son of a preacher man, Ryan grew up in the church with a marketplace passion. Today, Ryan splits his time between speaking in churches and doing executive coaching and speaking in Corporate America through his company The Ryan Leak Group, LLC.

# Focus On the Person You're Becoming

Ryan Leak, in his book, ***Leveling Up: 12 Questions to Elevate Your Personal and Professional Development***, presents his reader with twelve questions to consider regarding how they conduct both their personal and their professional lives. Leak believes that by considering the answers to these questions, people will begin to notice the areas they can improve on which will help them go on to live more fulfilling lives defined by their own idea of what success is. Shortly into his introduction Leak explains that many people believe that their own leveling up is someone else's responsibility. "But leveling up is your responsibility. It starts with you," he says.

He then goes on to list the six stages that people are generally residing in in their life. They are as follows: aimless, stuck, coasting, developing, thriving, and mastery. The ideas in his book are meant to help people move up to the next level. He believes that questions help people do this "better than answers because questions equip people to lead themselves when no one else is around."

Leak starts off his list of questions by asking the reader what his or her definition of success is. Leak grew up in a poorer neighborhood but attended a private school in a wealthier neighborhood. This gave him a first hand glimpse into how different communities define success. He believes that the first step a person needs to take to define success for themself is to examine their current definition of success. Then, people can go through the success criteria to determine where the criteria came from and if they are worthy of keeping. It is important for people to understand where their ideas of success originated from as often they are based in what the person previously wanted but may not want anymore.

He says, "To find true success is to understand where your current definition of success comes from and make it yours." People must define success on their own terms. He believes that unless people clearly state what they consider to be successes, they will never know when to celebrate those successes, and they will be merely moving from one place to the next.

The next question Leak considers regards self-awareness as he asks his readers to consider what it is like to be on the other side of them: what it is like to work with them, live with them, and

do life with them. Many people, he believes, lack this awareness, and oftentimes it is the people who think they are the most self-aware who lack this trait the most. He wants people to consider what it is like to be on the other side of their facebook posts, emails, texts, as well as what it is like to be coached by them, led by them, and be friends with them. He urges people to err on the side of caution by assuming that they are not self-aware. He believes it is quite easy to start to believe a version of ourselves and reality that is partially based in truth and partially based in myth. He says, "One of the biggest myths about growing in your life and career is believing that it'll happen when somebody else changes. You will grow when you change." He believes that truly self-aware people are aware of their strengths, shortcomings, and their impact on other people.

Once Leak moves past self-awareness, he moves on to the question of self-improvement. The problem he sees is that when people want to be the best at everything they do, they usually fail as this is just not sustainable. Instead of always aiming to be the best, he urges people to try to be better than they were the day before. He urges people to look at what they can do to improve rather than placing the blame on other people.

He believes that focusing on self-improvement can offer five distinct benefits: it helps protect against becoming irrelevant, it helps protect against an overgrown ego, it can lead away from envy as it veers away from comparison, it helps prevent people from feeling offended by the criticism of others, and it helps protect people against the highs and the lows of the journey.

Moving on from the self to others, Leak next urges people to consider what credit they can give away to other people. He does not believe that anybody is self-made. Everyone has relied on others throughout their journey to get to where they are. He gives numerous examples of people, including Thomas Edison, who have gotten credit for inventions that they did not develop on their own. The problem he sees, though, goes beyond people taking credit for what is not theirs. In his coaching career, he constantly sees people who feel unseen or unvalued. Therefore, he believes people need to focus on who they can help share success with. Otherwise, both personal and our professional relationships can break down and suffer.

He urges people to adopt the following perspective: "I don't need to be that impressive. I don't need to be hailed, esteemed, or adored. It is better to share that spotlight with the team or the people in my life who deserve it. Everything I have has an army of support and love behind it."

While Leak urges people to give as much credit to others as possible, he also wants people to consider what mistakes they can own. This is difficult for many people because it often requires saying, "I am sorry." He wants people to use the words, "I might be wrong" much more frequently as he believes this forms the basis of intellectual humility. Too often people allow confirmation bias which is looking "for information that supports our views rather than rethinking our position." By admitting to mistakes, we help to avoid building in others.

The next question Leak considers is what risks a person needs to take. Part of the problem with considering risks is that people frequently suffer from decision fatigue. People have been asked to undergo so much change due to the pandemic that they suffer from change fatigue. Unfortunately, according to research, most employers overestimate how much change their employees can handle, and change that is forced on people is generally quite unpopular.

This does not mean, however, that change is not sometimes necessary and that taking calculated risks is important. Often companies stay insistent on the ways they do things without even knowing why things are done that way. Often companies that are able to think outside the box are able to thrive. Making no changes can become problematic in itself. He quotes a tweet that says, "if you ignore a problem for long enough, it either goes away or ruins your life." All options carry risk, those that involve making changes and those that do not. All of this requires a person to become comfortable with failure,

Returning back to interpersonal relationships, Leak next asks his reader to consider whose dreams they should support. He begins his chapter speaking about many of the unsung contributors who help the greats achieve what they do. Leak does not want to just be someone who helps others achieve their dreams; he wants to help others help others achieve their goals. He urges people to stop seeing themselves as the center of everything and instead see that they are part of other people's circles.

He says, "Our mandate is to discover the dreams of the people closest to us." He urges people to find out the dreams of those they know in both their personal and their professional lives. He believes, however, that people first need to look to the dreams of those in their inner circle. Once those needs are met, they can look outward and try to meet the needs of others in their spheres. A few ways that people can support others are through their influence, by "exposing them to new opportunities," and with time.

The question of integrity is the next one Leak approaches. This involves people asking themselves what the right thing to do is. All people, he says, are presented with opportunities whereby they could do the wrong thing without being caught. The problem, however, is that often people can tell when someone is acting without integrity. He says, "the tragedy is that they may have gotten away with their behavior, but deep down people trust them less because they could tell that person was giving the bare minimum. They might not know their colleagues have lost respect for them, but the shift is there."

The result of lying is a loss of trust. Leak believes that in order to level up in life, the trust of others is crucial. He says, "The basic idea of being a person of integrity is being a person who is whole. What you see is what you get." He urges people to consider what they would be willing to sacrifice their integrity for. The answer is not always an easy one to determine. One result of acting without integrity is that it becomes necessary for people to look over their shoulder to see if the consequences will catch up with them. He encourages his readers to try to figure out what is right for everyone and to seek out accountability.

> **Many people feel like they do not own their time because so much of it is spoken for by other people."**

Time management is something that many people struggle with, and this is the next question Leak considers. He says, "If we don't take control of our time, someone else will." Many people feel like they do not own their time because so much of it is spoken for by other people. Leak believes that he can quickly determine the trajectory of a person's life merely by looking at their schedule. Most people may have some of their time spoken for, but they have control over the time that is available.

Regarding time, he says that people need to start "treating it as the most valuable and limited resource we have." Other people will not value a person's time if they do not value it. He urges his reader to act proactively rather than reactively regard their time. The way he recommends doing this is to have people analyze their own calendar from the month before and see what they had on there that did not need to be and what they are missing out on that should be on there. Some important aspects of time management are to make room in one's schedule for growth and well as to make time for the people who are the most important.

Rest is not always something prized in modern culture, but Leak wants people to consider whether they have to do everything they are doing. He believes rest is crucial for people to thrive. Most people have pressures from their vocations, their parenting, their marriage or romantic relationships, their extended family, their friends, their community, their finances, and their health. Eventually people need to ask themselves whether they can do it all. It is not possible for people to perform at the best level in every aspect of life all the time. One way people can move away from this mindset is to consider where the high standards came from. Everyone, he says, is struggling. Guilt is a serious problem for people who believe they must do it all. Everyone will drop balls now and again. Leak urges people to consider which balls can be dropped without breaking.

In addition to rest, he also asks people to question whether they are enjoying life. Most people are told at some point what will make them happy. Much of this is culturally based. He quotes Stephen R. Covey as saying, "Between stimulus and response lies a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose a response. In our response lies our growth and our happiness." Leak refers to the research of psychologist, Martin Seligman, who says that there are three dimensions to happiness: the pleasant life which refers to enjoyment, the good life which refers to virtue, and ghd meaningful life which encompasses purpose.

The final question Leak asks the reader is whether anyone knows who they really are. This refers to transparency. It is hard for people to share who they are because there can be real and serious consequences for doing so. He does not believe that people need to tell everyone every aspect of their lives, but he does believe that everyone needs at least one person with whom they can share who they really are.

Unfortunately, the more power and influence a person has, often the more they have to hide who they really are. He brings up the process of code-switching which refers to when people speak and act differently depending upon the people they are around. Two downfalls of code-switching are loneliness and the danger of implosion that can occur when a person becomes filled with anger and hurt. He encourages people to become a safe space for others and to have their own safe person.

Ryan Leak, as a personal coach and speaker, is invested in helping people move up to the next level in their personal and their professional lives. His book asks questions that will help people move along this journey.

Along with numerous examples he encountered first hand and statistics compiled by experts, he helps his reader along this path. Each chapter ends with a recap as well as with an action point the reader can implement immediately to help along this journey. His simple ideas can lead to significant improvements in the lives of his readers when the questions are carefully considered and the suggestions are implemented.

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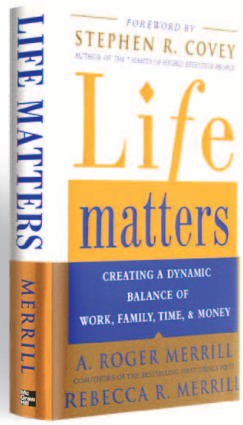
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# Life Matters

A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca R. Merrill

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FILE: CAREER/SUCCESS TECHNIQUES




By A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca R. Merrill

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## Creating a Dynamic Balance of Work, Family, Time and Money

# LIFE MATTERS

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Everybody is concerned about work/life balance, but few understand that time and money are as important to life balance as work and family. Each area matters, and focusing on one without considering the others is ultimately unfulfilling because they are so closely interrelated. Even the term "balance" implies a one-time effort instead of an ongoing journey.*

*In reality, a lack of balance is a misalignment of the principles that are important to you, and how you act with regard to them. It is possible that your expectations about work, family, time and money are unrealistic, and therefore you don't see them properly. With unrealistic expectations, you do not act effectively, and you won't get what you want. By examining your own experience, and seeking wisdom and inspiration, you can develop your navigational intelligence to optimize your life choices and stop wasting energy, money and time on issues and behaviors that are not important or that do not invest in the future.*

*To truly make every aspect of your life matter, you must focus on those principles that are important and make decisions to live accordingly.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ **How to discover and value principles** which allow you to lead a life that matters to you.

✓ **How to examine your expectations** about work, family, time and money, and why you see them the way you do.

✓ **How to optimize your efforts** to achieve maximum results.

✓ **How to develop and use navigational intelligence** to make decisions that align with your values and allow you to create balance in an ongoing fashion.

✓ **How to use the Time/Money Management Matrix** to determine where and when you are wasting resources and shift the focus to importance and investing rather than urgency and consumption.

✓ **How to implement this new synergy of balance** by building the character to make the decisions that matter.

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# LIFE MATTERS

**by A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca R. Merrill**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## What Matters in Life

For decades people have struggled to find a balance between what were traditionally considered enemies: work and life. Though people are getting better at meshing the two, there is still a gap between what many say matters and how they spend their time and money.

Look at your Palm Pilot or credit card statement. See if the way you are spending your time and money reflects the things that matter most to you. It still seems as though people have to choose, even though work, family, money and time are not isolated arenas. They are highly interrelated. The real issue is having the wisdom to be constantly balancing all areas no matter what the circumstances. ■

**For Additional Information and a questionnaire to help assess which areas need attention in your life, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## The Three Gotta Do's

There is a lot of advice out there about how to make your life better, but in the area of life balance there are three pivotal "Gotta Do's." You must: validate expectations, optimize effort and develop "navigational intelligence."

### *Validate Expectations*

People often operate out of incorrect or distorted assumptions and paradigms. However, you will not get maximum quality results unless you align your expectations with reality. The way you see and perceive situations so drastically affects your thoughts, expectations and behaviors that you must learn to validate your expectations by understanding what is real and what is realistic. Timeless principles such as "trust," "hard work," and "love" are real, but valid expectations around the pace and results of your alignment with these principles must take into account what you can realistically expect from yourself and others.

Consider these commonly misaligned expectations:

**The ideal life is worry-free.** Is there really any evidence that life is easy for anyone, even people whose lives you may envy?

**"Balance" means equalizing the scale.** True balance is not allocating the same time and energy to both sides of a scale. It is constantly changing and creating the capacity to balance in life's dynamic circumstances.

**Faster is better.** Speed isn't everything and it can be

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## Aligning Expectations

Suppose you have validated the expectation that having financial security is important to you. It is "real" because it is based on the principles of self-reliance and sustaining a happy, peaceful life. You also know that "realistically" you are a long way from that goal with your expensive house, two cars, a boat, credit card debt, and a home equity loan, on all of which you are making the minimum monthly payment. You have two children in grade school and junior high, and no money set aside for education. Your only retirement assets are in a mutual fund that recently lost half its value. Today is Friday, and you and your spouse have the weekend off. How will you spend your time and/or money?

1. **Go to an expensive resort to get away from it all.**
2. **Buy a big screen TV to enjoy the new football season.**
3. **Go to the zoo with your children.**
4. **Attend a financial planning seminar.**
5. **Take some time to discuss ways you can get out of consumer debt.**

Obviously, some of these choices are more aligned with the expectation of achieving financial security.

The authors: A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca R. Merrill are coauthors of the bestselling *First Things First*. In addition, Roger was a cofounder of the Covey Leadership Center and Rebecca assisted Stephen R. Covey on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*.

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## The Three Gotta Do's

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worse than nothing if it moves you in the wrong direction and cheats you out of the pleasure of the journey.

**Work and family are natural enemies.** Throughout most of history, "work" has been family work. Children worked and learned alongside parents as they performed the tasks that sustained life. Because the Industrial Revolution split family and work apart, accessing the full richness of both in our lives today requires us to work proactively to create a synergy between the two.

Once you create valid expectations, you must align your efforts with what is real and what is realistic and then leverage them to make sure you get the most results for your effort. In each area — work, family, time and money — consider **what** you do and **how** you do it to determine the "optimizers" that will help you create the most positive change.

### *Develop "Navigational Intelligence"*

The final "Gotta Do" is to develop the ability to deal with the tension between the need to focus and the need to be open to unexpected opportunities as you align and leverage your efforts with your expectations. It would be great if you could make a master plan and follow it to a T, but life is unpredictable.

Navigational intelligence is the ability to make good judgments in the decision moments, when both focus and awareness are required. By developing the gift of discernment, you can constantly scan for, recognize, and respond to what is most important to you, even when focused on something else. To calibrate discernment:

**Value principles.** Create a personal mission statement and read "wisdom literature" to keep yourself constantly scanning for priorities aligned with principles.

**Evaluate experience.** Learn from living. View mistakes as high-leverage feedback and take the time to evaluate and course-correct.

**Invite inspiration.** Be open to receiving personal insight that comes from a personal retreat, writing a mission statement, or quiet reflection. ■

# Work Matters

Clearly there is a difference in the way people see their work. To some, work is drudgery; a necessary evil. To others, it means fame and fortune. Work can also represent a life's mission, or a contribution of love. The differences in how people see work lead to differences in how they do their work, and ultimately, in what they get out of their lives.

Do you see your work as a joy, monotony, or an escape? The pleasure and satisfaction you get from work is as much a function of why and how you work as what you do for work. It is the context that matters.

For many people, the primary reason for working is economic. They need to pay debt and bills that cause much of the pain around the issue of balance. The fear of losing a job makes people feel trapped and compelled to work long hours. Other people work for a sense of personal fulfillment and self-worth. However, working to provide for those you love is one of the highest, noblest, and most fulfilling motives. It is not work and family that are at odds, but the cultural notion of my career and the focus on materialistic "stuff" that causes much of the imbalance. Work should be considered "our work" — work for the whole family.

Dual-worker families and single-parent families usually feel the pressure to work outside the home to meet economic expectations, and therefore can see work as a necessary evil. In other situations, though basic economic needs must be met, it often seems easier to spend more time outside the home at work than deal with the mental, social and spiritual needs that need attention at home. In all circumstances, we need to seriously consider whether the money is worth the other costs.

### *Work Optimizers*

The way you see work will also influence how you see yourself as a worker. It is possible to choose to be a great worker, but most people need some guidance or motivation. Considering research shows that most managers squander their time at inefficient tasks, and that the ability to manage money affects far more than the budgeting dimensions of an employee's job, here are some aligned, high-leverage optimizers to use at work:

**Be Proactive.** Take initiative and always think, "What can I do?"

**Focus on Job One.** Understand your organization, your role in it, and the vision of your boss and peers.

**Think Teams.** Maximize interdependent effort to achieve success.

**Create Partnership Agreements.** Make formal or informal agreements to create shared vision about what you are planning to achieve, why and how.

**Build on Your Strengths.** Align your work with your talents without sacrificing important priorities.

**Continually Improve.** Seek feedback and invest in professional development

**Just ... Work!** Develop good work habits. Make sure you are perceived as an asset for your dependability and ability to produce results.

You can simply do these optimizers or you can do them with awareness and build your navigational intelligence. Find timeless principles at their root, such as

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## Choosing Imbalance

On one occasion, the company for which *Life Matters* author Roger Merrill worked experienced intense growth, and he and his wife Rebecca made the decision to go into a period of conscious imbalance. Though he would be away from the family far more than they would usually allow, they agreed it would make an important contribution to the business and help them accomplish their shared long-term goals.

Things went well as Roger accomplished the company goals, and he and Rebecca teamed up to take up the slack at home. But when the agreed period of time was over, it was difficult for Roger to return to the old way. The unbalanced lifestyle had become a way of life. More and more, Roger felt he was missing out and allowing good things to take the place of best things.

After listening to his heart, Roger took a stand and set limits on the number of nights he would be gone each month. It wasn't easy, and there was a lot of pressure to do otherwise, but for him the decision was right. It increased quality time with family, freedom to contribute to church and community efforts, and time to write books.

### Work Matters

*(continued from page 3)*

responsibility, focus and alignment, and learn to consciously recognize and value such principles. Evaluate your own experience while using these optimizers and invite inspiration on unique ways to apply them to your own situation. Make the decisions that are right for you.

One way you can implement this at work is to solicit feedback from a sample of people — bosses, peers, customers — and send them an anonymous questionnaire. Attach a memo letting them know you are trying to find ways to improve and ask for a few minutes of their time to give some honest feedback. Ask someone to type up the results so complete anonymity will be preserved.

If you send out the questionnaire once or twice a year, you'll get some great information. Though you do not want to become feedback centered, you can read the questionnaires, think about them, and look for ways to implement the suggestions if they make sense. Some questions you may want to ask include:

- From your perspective, what do I do that is most useful?
- What are my greatest areas for improvement?
- What one thing do you think I should continue doing?
- What one thing do you think I should stop doing?
- What one thing do you think I should start doing?

### *Balancing Work and Family*

Work should truly become love for your family made visible. Work and balance are both principles, and they should be leveraged to bring maximum effectiveness in both areas. Involve children and family in building bridges between work and home. Here's how:

**Share the vision** of what you do and why with children.

**Teach children to work hard** in school and at home.

**Teach children to love work** by loving your work.

**Take your children to work**, to see how it helps the family.

**Participate in career days** at school.

**Share positive work experiences** with the family.

**Bring stories of work heroes home.**

**Be aware of what family members are doing** and keep in touch with notes or e-mails.

**Involve your family in work projects.** ■

## Family Matters

In relationships, the little things are the big things. Showing caring and commitment through small acts like listening, respecting others' space, and saying "thank you" consistently over time makes a huge difference in the quality of family life.

Many people consider family one of the most important things in their lives, but they are not satisfied with the quantity or quality of time they invest in their families. As with work, the way you see your family determines what you do with your family and what results you get.

### *How Do You See Your Family?*

From the *Brady Bunch* to the *Simpsons* to the *Sopranos*, the media shows very different views of family. We live in a time when social messages about family are mixed and the purpose of family is confusing. Family used to be a sacred institution, but now it seems optional, essentially social, and recreational.

But human history shows us that family is the nucleus of civilization, and as teenage suicides, out-of-wedlock births, divorce rates, and domestic violence statistics rise, it is clear we are headed in the wrong direction.

An ideal family would include members who love, trust, forgive, help and believe in each other. It would have members who work, serve, play and worship together. Few people believe their families live up to the ideal. But even if you think first of the faults in your

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## Family Matters

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family, remember, "ideal" does not mean "without challenge," it means "strength to handle the challenge." Also, the ideal family life is a saga of "becoming." No matter what your experience, your greatest impact on the happiness of future generations is to nurture them in principles of joyful family living.

Also consider your role in the family. Do you consider work the place to contribute, and home the place to crash? Family can give you great joy and satisfaction, but that only comes with work and sacrifice for the family. Once you align your expectations with the overarching principles, you can see both home and work as avenues of contribution. Capture your vision of the spouse/parent/family member you want to be. Be brutally honest with yourself concerning what kind of family member you are. Raise your sights to a mark and keep moving toward it.

### *Family Optimizers*

Begin to think in terms of family leadership and your unique opportunity to influence and nurture the members of your family. Though all members of the family have the opportunity to contribute leadership, the most important ingredient in a successful family is parental leadership. Parents have four basic roles:

**Provide the basic necessities of life: physical, social, emotional and spiritual.**

**Protect family members from physical, social and emotional harm.**

**Nurture family members in love and kindness.**

**Teach family members principles and values that empower them to have rich, rewarding relationships and joyful, fulfilling lives.**

Beyond these roles are some optimizers to further improve your family life:

**Create a Family Mission Statement.** Clarify a shared vision for the family.

**Have Weekly "Family Time."** Schedule a weekly time to bond, communicate, coordinate and play.

**Date Your Mate.** The most important thing you can do for your children is love your spouse.

**Have "Sneak-Ins" and "Sneak-Outs."** Share one-on-one time with children at home and away to build friendship.

**Hold Regular Parent Chats.** Develop your role as a parent by asking "What are you working on?" and "What can we do to help?"

**Have a Daily Family Wisdom Time.** Spend time each day discussing truly great thoughts and ideas throughout time.

### Merrill Family Mission

- ✓ To love each other ...
- ✓ To help each other ...
- ✓ To believe in each other ...
- ✓ To wisely use our time, talents, and resources to bless others ...
- ✓ To worship together ...
- ✓ Forever.

**Establish Clear Stewardships.** Make responsibilities and division of labor clear.

**Bring Heroes Home.** Talk about heroic acts of real people rather than glamorizing entertainment stars.

Again, approach these optimizers with awareness and build your navigational intelligence in the process. Seek and embrace principles such as contribution, creativity, stewardship, respect, love, service and forgiveness. You will discover other more personalized ways to apply them to your situation, and the navigational intelligence gained from examining your principles, experience and inspiration will help you know that you are making decisions that matter most in your family. ■

## Time Matters

Time becomes an important factor in life when it is necessary to coordinate all of the details and decisions that contribute to life balance, satisfaction and joy. Traditionally these challenges fall under the tricks and techniques of time management, but really they are a function of **personal leadership**. More than doing things right, it's doing the right things.

### *How Do You See Time?*

Like other parts of life, it is important to examine your expectations about time. In the Western world, the clock reigns supreme, and time is seen as a limited resource. Busyness becomes a status symbol and people are always working toward it. We also see time as the enemy. What is your relationship with time?

**How much of the time do you feel frustrated?** Frustration is a function of expectation. You may need to change your expectations or increase your ability to get things done.

**How much do you struggle with what is "realistic?"** Consider whether you expect too much or too little of yourself.

**Do you always think "Life will be better when ..."?** What is it that keeps you from immersing yourself in the present?

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## Time Matters

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**Do interruptions irritate you?** The expectation that life should move smoothly without any surprises is not realistic. And particularly in the family, interruptions are often opportunities to respond to what matters most.

**Does the way you feel about yourself affect the number of things you check off your to-do list?** Would you still get satisfaction if you couldn't check things off your list?

**Does your desire to do a lot of things reflect a lack of confidence in your ability to do a few important things well?** Don't mistake busyness for success and replace clarity around Job One with crisis-oriented urgency addiction.

**Do you feel that if you do the best you can, it still may not be enough?** Enough for what? Are your expectations of yourself too high?

**Do you honestly believe it's possible to have a satisfying work/family balance in your life?** Do you think it would be possible for someone else, but not for you?

### *What Is Urgent Is Not Always Important*

The most significant challenge to implementing high-leverage optimizers is to discern between what is **urgent** and what is truly **important**.

Quadrants I and III in the matrix to the right are where you run into urgency addiction, and waste time fighting fires or solving other people's problems instead of integrating high-quality values into your own life. In Quadrant IV you try to escape from all the urgency with wasteful, unaligned "downtime."

Quadrant II is the place to see the benefits of investing time in important activities like planning, preparing, recreating and building relationships. It highlights the importance of proactivity, because you don't have to do the things in Quadrant II now, but through investment and continuous improvement you can prevent fires instead of fighting them.

Time that is wasted in other quadrants can be better used in Quadrant II.

### *Time Optimizers*

Once you understand that time should be spent on issues that are important instead of those that are merely urgent, you can use the following optimizers to make decisions:

**Make Weekly Plans.** Review your personal mission statement and set goals for yourself each week, planning your schedule for greatest efficiency and synergy.

**Use Time Zones.** Schedule large, interchangeable blocks of time designated for different kinds of important activities.

**THE TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX**

| | *Urgent* | | *Not Urgent* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Important* | Quadrant I | | Quadrant II | |
| | **Work**<br>Handling an irate client.<br>Meeting a deadline.<br>Solving a production line breakdown.<br>Handling a cash flow crisis.<br>Responding to a window of opportunity. | **Home**<br>Taking an injured child to the emergency room.<br>Resolving a "credit card declined" problem.<br>Picking up a child from school.<br>Helping a late-for-work spouse find lost car keys.<br>Taking advantage of a teaching moment. | **Work**<br>Doing long-range planning.<br>Creating preventive maintenance systems.<br>Developing professional skills.<br>Building networks.<br>Anticipating client needs. | **Home**<br>Truly recreating.<br>Nurturing relationships.<br>Creating a family mission statement.<br>Having a regular family time.<br>Going on sneak-outs.<br>Improving family health. |
| *Not Important* | Quadrant III | | Quadrant IV | |
| | **Work**<br>Handling junk e-mail (spam).<br>Writing unnecessary reports.<br>Responding to some drop-in visitors, phone calls, and voice mail.<br>Attending unnecessary meetings.<br>Organizational politicking. | **Home**<br>Being on time for unimportant television shows.<br>Doing some errands.<br>Responding to some telemarketing and junk mail.<br>Rushing between scheduled, but not highly meaningful, activities and events. | **Work**<br>Gossip at the water fountain.<br>Unnecessary Internet surfing.<br>Doing non-aligned hobby-horse activities. | **Home**<br>Watching mindless TV.<br>Playing excessive and addictive computer games or reading addictive light novels.<br>Mindlessly surfing the Web.<br>Nervous eating. |

**T-Plan Daily.** This structure allows you to put time-sensitive activities on one side and any-time activities on the other, so you can prioritize and "keep score" as you make decisions throughout the day.

**Track Your Time.** A time log will give you surprising insight into which quadrant receives most of your attention and how much time you spend on actual priorities.

**Build Relationships of Trust.** Life is highly interdependent, and your ability to resolve time conflicts depends to a great extent on the quality of relationships with the people involved.

**Use Technology in Your Personal Leadership System.** Learn to understand and use technology to your advantage.

You might find yourself questioning how to use these optimizers most effectively as you develop your level of competence with time matters. Do any of these sound familiar?

*(continued on page 7)*

## Time Matters

*(continued from page 6)*

**"I am out of control!"** Move into Quadrant II. Spend five minutes today doing something to make tomorrow better.

**"I'm doing all right, but ..."** Track your time to discover any black holes and target improvement areas.

**"I manage my time well, but I want to get to a new level."** Try working in the upper corner of Quadrant II where you anticipate potential opportunities and problems.

**"I'm a great time manager at work, but not at home"** (or vice versa). If the problem is at work, analyze Quadrant III time wasters; if the problem is at home, examine Quadrant IV.

The quality of what we "buy" with our time is a reflection of our ability to make decisions about what is important in our lives. To avoid getting sidelined, place a powerful planning focus on importance. But keep in mind that your plan is a flexible framework. Every day other people's urgencies, potential opportunities, and your own flaky inclinations will challenge your framework; it will be up to you to determine whether the interruptions are important and worth changing course for, or simply urgent irrelevancies or methods of procrastination. In moments of truth you need to ask yourself what is important, and stay with your priorities. ■

# Money Matters

In order to manage money properly you must align yourself with the fundamental principle of **investing** instead of **consuming**. Like time, money is a huge communicator of value and what we buy reflects what is important to us. Money is tied inescapably into work, family and time, so improving your ability to manage it will make a significant difference in the other aspects of your life.

What is your immediate response upon hearing the word "money"? Confidence, security, anxiety, guilt? Consider the myths that promote some of the many negative emotions about money:

**Money and Things = Success and Happiness.** You may want to be successful so you can have better clothes, homes and cars, but people who have those things often have large debts as well. These symbols are not substance and do not necessarily bring happiness. Often their price is far more than money and includes broken health and relationships.

**The Best Financial Improvement Strategy Is to Increase Income.** This seems like the obvious solution, but more money usually also includes less time at home, more job-related costs, and a higher tax rate. Often you are quickly back in financial stress, just at a higher level. How you manage what you bring in is far more important than how much you bring in.

**THE MONEY MANAGEMENT MATRIX**

| | *Urgent* | *Not Urgent* |
|---|---|---|
| *Important* | **Quadrant I**<br>Bills<br>Payments<br>Immediate needs<br>Tax penalties<br>Legal judgments<br>Emergency medical expenses for self, family members or friends | **Quadrant II**<br>Savings<br>Investments<br>Insurance<br>Capital investments (e.g., education, training)<br>Business investments and improvements<br>Investments in preventive health<br>Investments in more effective personal systems or tools |
| *Not Important* | **Quadrant III**<br>Impulse spending<br>Interest on borrowed money<br>Excessive entertainment<br>Guilt gifts<br>Excessive tools or gadgets<br>Urgency costs (e.g., overnight shipping charges because you want something *now*) | **Quadrant IV**<br>Waste<br>Loss from bad judgment<br>Self-destructive habits<br>Gambling<br>Excess purchases (e.g., a third car)<br>Tools with features you never use<br>More clothes than you could ever wear<br>Shopping sprees<br>Anything that is a waste when compared to values and principles |

**Money = Privilege = Children's Success.** The best clothes, cars and schools do not necessarily provide children with the opportunity to do more in life. Character strengths such as honesty, integrity and thrift are best taught through sacrifice, cooperation and the need to prioritize and choose. Children often need you and your time more than they need what extra money can provide.

### *How Do You Spend Money?*

All of these myths added to messages from advertisers and credit card companies and the "have it all" version of the American dream create expectations that cause people to make choices that lead to debt and frustration. People also get expectations about money from childhood. Frustration often ensues when two people marry and bring different expectations about money.

People who deal effectively with time or money see differently than those who do not. They see in terms of importance and investing rather than urgency and consuming. And because they see differently, they act differently and get different results. You must honestly assess your paradigms and expectations about money. Then look at your assets and debts, and consider your

*(continued on page 8)*

## Money Matters

*(continued from page 7)*

retirement. What will your situation be five, 10 or 15 years down the road if you continue in the way you are going?

Think about money using the same matrix as you did for time. Consider the difference between what is important and urgent. In which quadrants do you spend most of your money now? Many people are in Quadrants I and III paying bills, meeting immediate needs, and buying on credit. Quadrant II is where importance and investment combine. That is where you want to focus your attention and your money.

Invest your money in places that create growth. You can invest in your own business, real estate and mutual funds, but also education, skill development and humanitarian efforts. Focus on creating instead of merely consuming. Using the matrix to think about money shows the importance of proactivity, and shows how to not waste money in Quadrants III and IV.

### *Money Optimizers*

Time and money are very similar because they communicate what is important in your life. The more you learn about how you spend and invest both time and money, the more you learn about yourself. But they are different in the way you can allocate them. Time moves independently. You need to learn to respond in the moment as it continues to flow. Money doesn't move until you move it. You have to decide to put it where it will produce the greatest growth. Many time decisions must be made on the spot, but money decisions can be made in advance. Use the following high-leverage optimizers to help you make those decisions:

**Know Where Your Money Is Going.** Track your spending to find areas of waste and misalignment with your principles.

**Know Where You Want Your Money to Go.** Create a clear, and if appropriate, shared vision of where you want your money to go. Prioritize your top five financial goals and focus on them when you are tempted to waste money.

**Plan Weekly.** Keep an ongoing look at the differences between your values and approaches and keep working toward greater alignment.

**Increase Your Financial Intelligence.** Invest time in learning about money by reading, attending a seminar, or talking to people who know how to set their standard of living below their level of income.

**Build Margin.** Increase the space between resources and immediate needs in this time of increased economic uncertainties, downsizing and national disasters when you might need to draw on reserves.

## Wisdom Matters

After looking at work, family, time and money, and ways to validate, optimize and navigate in each area, draw back and look at them as a whole life system. How do work, family, time and money interrelate and create day-to-day life balance questions, such as: whether to stay late to finish a project; whether to take a new job; whether to pay for nursing home care for parents or take them into your house; or whether to stay at home with the new baby.

These questions will never be answered with "balance the scale" approaches. The perceived imbalance is really misalignment with principles; the best way to make decisions about this everyday dynamic equilibrium is with wisdom, or navigational intelligence. Wisdom is the ability to make the choices that create the positive consequences we want to have in our lives.

With each of the areas of balance, it is important always to revisit the three wisdom builders:

- ✓ **Value Principles.**
- ✓ **Evaluate Experience.**
- ✓ **Invite Inspiration.**

All these attributes of wisdom are enhanced by solitude, so it is important to have quiet, uninterrupted times when you can increase your connection to timeless truths, awareness and inspiration.

### Character Is the Key

The final key to accomplishing this dynamic balance is character. It is the difference between knowing the things that bring positive results and doing them. Many people know what to do to improve their finances or not waste time, but they procrastinate or are distracted by paths that appear to be easier. The decisions you make to spend time doing what is important instead of what is merely urgent builds your character strength. Character is forged in the crucible of daily living.

**Develop an Effective Financial System.** Enhance the financial dimension of your personal leadership system so you can know what resources you have, what you spend, what your goals are, and how to plan for them.

### *Navigating*

Though it may seem difficult to spend time in Quadrant II creating shared vision, having weekly meetings, or increasing financial intelligence, realize that if you don't, you will end up spending that time in other quadrants later by working longer hours, paying more bills, and handling financial crises. The greatest value of Quadrant II is the wealth it generates, not just financial security, but inner wealth and fulfillment. ■

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# Listful Living

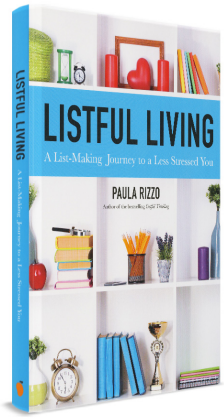
Paula Rizzo

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# Listful Living

## A List-Making Journey to a Less-Stressed You




*by* **Paula Rizzo**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you're overbooked, stressed, and feeling hopeless about it, this book is for you. Life really is what you make it, and you must make it work for you. The only way to do that is to set boundaries. Slowing down is "prioritizing on steroids." Rest is the new hustle.

***Listful Living: A List-Making Journey to a Less-Stressed You*** is intended to guide you to become a calmer, more balanced, and less stressed version of yourself through list making. By showing you how to look at where you are now, where you want to be, and how to meld the two, it walks you through what needs to happen to make sure you have systems in place to be less stressed for good.

Author Paula Rizzo, now an entrepreneurial media trainer, strategist, speaker, and author, was a very busy television producer. Then a burst appendix that went untreated for two days led to being off work for six weeks. This experience re-shaped how she views everything. She now lives her life with more intention and more mindfulness about the decisions she makes and where she spends her time. List-making helps her do it.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to design the low-stress life you'd like to have.
- How to reduce your stress through list-making.
- The most important list you can make.
- Practical ways to prioritize your time.

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## Prioritize Your Life

Before you can dive into this work, you need to get a baseline and know where you are right now. What matters to you? What are you tolerating? What's working? What's not?

What are your top priorities in life? Sleep? Money? Nutrition? Travel? Work? Meditation? Family? List your top ten priorities in order, most to least important. What's number one? Don't feel like you have to get the "right" answer. Draw a pie chart illustrating how much time you're currently giving your top five priorities. Be honest—don't judge yourself.

List the activities and commitments you said "yes" to this year in each area of your life. Then list those you said "no" to.

### Your Productivity Style

Determine what productivity style works for you. If you're not a morning person, don't try to become one. It will make you cranky and resentful. Once you understand your productivity style, you can arrange your work schedule accordingly.

Set a timer for five minutes and freely write down any words or phrases that come to your mind regarding your productivity today. Then set a timer for fifteen minutes and free write about why you feel this way. Be very specific. What is working or not working when it comes to your productivity and stress levels?

## Look, Listen, And Learn

Knowing the environment that will optimize your productivity and make you feel less stressed will help you cross tasks from your to-do list with ease. Use your senses to determine the optimal environment for you. Chart what you see, hear, smell, and touch in your work environment. Be honest about how every aspect makes you feel.

### The Golden Hour Of Productivity

Answer these questions in writing to determine when you are most productive: How productive do you feel in the morning, afternoon, and evening? What time do you start to feel sluggish during the day? What kind of work do you like to do in each part of the day? Look at your answers—what's your most productive time of day?

Pick a task that you've been avoiding from your to-do list and write it down. Then set a timer for twenty-five minutes. If you get distracted, you must stop the clock. Try your hardest to focus on only that one task for the time allotted. Take note of when your mind wanders and write it down. If twenty-five minutes doesn't work for you, try twenty or fifteen. Record how you feel about this exercise.

There's probably a big difference between how long a task will actually take you and how long you think it will take you. Find out how long specific tasks take you by timing yourself. Before you begin, write down your prediction and when you're done with the task, write down the actual time. You might be surprised!

### Burnout Syndrome Is Real

"Burnout syndrome," an official medical diagnosis, results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Characteristics include feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job, and reduced professional efficacy.

But stress isn't all bad; it only becomes a problem when you don't give your body a chance to recover from a challenging situation.

Visualize a scene from the last two months when you felt your stress levels were through the roof. Describe it using your five senses in ten minutes of writing freely. How did it feel? What made it so stressful for you? Jot down a few words or phrases that come to mind.

Make four lists: stress on the body, stress on the mind, stress on your habits, and stress on your performance. Write down your symptoms in each category.

Is there a recurring theme in the stressful moments of your life? Write out what commonalities you see in the situations you've listed, considering who was there, what you were doing, where you were, when it occurred, and why it occurred.

What is your de-stress style? Self-care is kind things you do for yourself. The benefits are immense: it will lead to an improved mood, boost productivity, and send your optimism soaring. Small, deliberate actions can feed your mind, body, and soul. List your current self-care activities, including how often you do them and how they make you feel.

### Your Blue-Sky Intentions—Where Are You Going?

This part of the book is about where you're going. Don't worry about how you'll get there. Instead, focus on how you'd like your life to feel and look. Let your creativity roam!

## Design Your Ideal Day

Write about how you'd like to feel when you wake up in the morning—how you want to feel, not what you are feeling right now. List words to describe specifically how you'd like to start your day.

What would you like your evenings to look like in the future? Write out all the words that describe that moment as you would like it to be, with all the details.

Now, chart out your dream scenarios. This can be a work schedule or a home itinerary. Fill in when you'll do work, when you'll play, when you'll take breaks, etc. Arrange your scenarios by time of day—morning, afternoon, and evening—day of the week, and weeks in a month.

### Choose Your Friends Wisely

Notice how you feel when you're around certain people, rather than how you think you should feel. List the people who make you feel the calmest and most stressed out at work, at home, and in your community.

Who would you like to see more of? List those in your personal life you'd like to see and how often. Then list the people you'd like to check in with to grow your business or career.

### A Matter of Health

Staying healthy should be at the top of your list, but it takes work. In a perfect world, what activities or appointments will keep you healthy? How often would you do them and check in on your health matters?

### Determine How Your Time Is Best Spent

Your "yes" list! This bucket list might be the most important list you write. It's the list of the things you want to make time for in your life. Categorize your list (work, home, finances, books, etc.)

Then create a "no-thank-you" list of the activities you'd like to cut out of your life altogether or do less of. Perhaps these are things that used to bring you joy but don't any longer. Be honest.

Now list out the things you absolutely love doing that get you charged up. Label each one to indicate how often you want to do them.

Renew with self-care. Self-care is kindness that you aim toward yourself. It doesn't have to be a big, grand thing. Self-care isn't a selfish act. It's an act of nurturing your body, mind, or soul. What would feel good to you? An extra five minutes in bed in the morning? Getting a massage? The possibilities are endless. List them.

Hobbies you love to do can enhance your self-care routine. What are some hobbies or skills you've always wanted to learn that would make you feel invigorated? List them.

### Gratitude List

Off the top of your head, list three things that you're grateful for today. Focus on things that seem ordinary. Taking time out of your day to write down what you're grateful for will retrain your brain. Evolution has conditioned us to be highly biased toward negative information because it could be a threat to our well-being. So, we must make an effort to focus on what we're grateful for.

If a daily gratitude list seems like a chore, pause when you realize that something has just happened that you're grateful for in the moment. Awareness is the name of the game. Keep this up and it will condition your brain to look for those moments. Then write it down—anywhere. Build this gratitude habit.

### Your Passport To Stress-Free Living

This section of the book fits the puzzle pieces together so you can design the life you want with as little stress as possible. You have complete control here. Simple changes can make a big difference.

To begin, compare your "yes" list with your list of what you want on your "yes" list going forward. List out what you'd need to do to make sure the things that stressed you out from the first list don't end up on your plate again.

### What Is Your #1 Priority Right Now?

Write down here what your biggest priority is right now. This is the lens that you'll look through for every decision you make going forward. It may seem dramatic, but it's freeing to know your priority. If it doesn't align with a task, then you say no to that task as much as you can.

Say "no" to things you don't want to do and that won't serve you in any way, and practice ways to do so out loud.

## How Will You Spend Your Time?

At work. You can decide to only do certain things at specific times and/or on specific days of the week. This takes the guesswork out of scheduling. Too many options lead to

indecision and procrastination. Make a chart of the days of the week and fill in your ideal work week. Take into account your productivity style.

Then do the same for months. Are there recurring meetings, events, or conferences that you want to make sure to make time for? Write down what your ideal weeks of a month look like.

At home. The next exercise is to fill in your ideal home week. When do you want to cook dinner at home versus go out? When do you want to entertain friends? Who do you want to see and how often?

When do you feel like your most productive self? Before lunch? After it? List out what times of the day you'll do certain tasks.

You have to factor in some time to recharge your soul, rest, and recuperate. What helps you to relax and refresh? Fill in a chart or calendar with what you'd like to do on a weekly and monthly basis to recharge.

### Map Out Your Vacation Time

How many vacations would you like to take this year, and with whom? List out the locations you'd like to visit, who you'd like to go with, and for how long. Be realistic.

Pick one of those trips and write out what needs to happen for you to plan it. Then pick one thing on this list that you can do this week to get closer to having this trip happen. Put time in your calendar to do this task right now.

### Social Hour

List your priority people, how often you'll see them, what you'll do, and potential dates. Then pick one of the people and write out what needs to happen for you to plan out your time together. Pick one thing on the list that you can do this week to plan to see this priority person. And put time in your calendar to do this task right now.

## Produce Your Self-Care Calendar

This is all about you! It's your time. Look back to your self-care lists and schedule time for yourself. When you see a self-care activity on your calendar, it's key to treat it like you would any other appointment and respect it.

### Keep The Momentum Going

This is where the rubber meets the road. It's time to get serious about not only implementing the strategies you've laid out but also keeping the momentum going. Make a list of strategies to help you do so.

### Celebrate!

Take a moment to look back at what you've done, because it's a big deal. Write down a prize you'll give yourself for finishing the book. Put it on your calendar so you can claim your reward!



Paula Rizzo is an Emmy-award winning television producer, best-selling author and a media trainer and strategist. She coaches experts and executives to perform better on camera and produce their own videos. She's the founder of ListProducer.com and the co-creator of Lights Camera Expert - an online course geared towards helping entrepreneurs, authors and experts get media attention.

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# Making Conversation

Fred Dust

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Making Conversation

By Fred Dust

Fred Dust was a Senior Partner and Global Managing Director at international design firm IDEO. A leading voice and practitioner of human-centered design and networked innovation, he helps organizations in media, finance, retail, and health confront disruption stemming from shifts in consumer behavior, social trends, economic pressures, and new technology. Prior to IDEO, Dust worked as an architect and spent eight years working with independent artists and major art organizations. He chairs the board of Parsons and sits on the board of the New School, NPR, and the Sundance Institute.

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## Overcome the Rift to Converse Meaningfully

Modern life presumably makes communication easier than ever but the quality of the connections and of those easily obtained conversations is dwindling. Fred Dust wants to change that. We all have the need to conduct important and sometimes difficult conversations but we seem to be challenged with how to do so in a meaningful and effective manner. Drawing on his people-centered design expertise, Dust has "become a kind of expert in the design of conversations."

Dust writes, "Constructive conversation is one of humanity's first and most powerful tools." Civilization's progress was made possible through conversation. Discourse among members of the public and those who were elected to represent us "has been the underpinning of all aspects of government and governance throughout history." We have lost the art of conversation, despite its irrefutably important role in our personal, professional, and societal experience. We live in a world whose pace makes it difficult to slow down and really engage in ways that propel us forward. What was once viewed as a disagreement between opposing views is now viewed as an impossible chasm between sides that are wholly divided, with both sides accused of lying. Young people are driven further inward, "only able to communicate through their devices" and we place weight on exchanges within social media that, in reality, only offer us the "thinnest slice of who we are as humans."

Dust acknowledges that it has always been difficult to "have important conversations across political, socioeconomic, gender, or racial lines" but presently the problem has extended into our personal lives. "We're having trouble talking to the people closest to us. It's happening between friends, family, coworkers, and people who share political beliefs and goals. The rift is visible everywhere." In ***Making Conversation: Seven Essential Elements of Meaningful Communication***, Dust teaches readers how to overcome the rift, cross the expanse between us, and heal our wounded ability to converse meaningfully. In doing so we can not only become more hopeful, we can change our lives and even the world.

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## Conversations that Matter

Before diving into the elements of meaningful conversation, Dust describes the three components of conversations that matter. We all engage in various types of conversations from the phone call to catch up with a friend to the late night rolling laughter of sharing memories with family. Though important and valuable, these are not the kind of conversations Dust is teaching us to design. The book is focused on conversations that: have a difference of opinion or stance on the key issue, feel difficult, such as those centered around strategy, politics, or other hard subjects, and have an aim at a positive outcome with a result that "moves us forward."

## Element One: Commitment

Most of us find it fairly simple to commit to our position on an issue. Doing so allows us to "feel safe and powerful." Creative conversations ask us to commit to the conversation itself, not our own ideas. Commitment in this context refers to our ability to let go of our personal commitment and place that commitment on the others involved in the conversation as well as the exchange. Dust says that this level of commitment is "an act of courage and optimism" and is "just about the hardest thing in the world." Lucky for readers, Dust provides clear guidance on just how to commit to a conversation.

Early in life we are conditioned to choose sides, stand up for what we believe, and be fully committed to our values. Over time we seek out evidence to support our beliefs and even surround ourselves with others who share them. When we hear the word commitment, we often think of this kind. However, this steadfast and unshakeable commitment to ideas that, in reality, could be accompanied with "biases, intolerance, and even hate" is exactly the kind of commitment we have to let go of in order to have meaningful conversations.

Instead of being committed to our values, we have to commit to being open to the ideas of others and the process by which beliefs are born. "Exploration, community, and conversation" are the framework from which we build our values and those are the values that require commitment. "A creative conversation is about choosing to hold your existing beliefs more lightly; it's about committing to exploration and to staying engaged with a set of people that will help you in that exploration." It requires a shift in mindset that is simple at its core but incredibly difficult to make.

## Element Two: Creative Listening

Listening is not a skill we often attribute to creativity. However, Dust shows us that listening can be a creative act that is "generative, satisfying, and pleasurable." Far from the chore we sometimes treat listening as, creative listening can teach us how to support better storytelling, test outside perspectives, and embrace and accept our "own reactions and judgment."

Dust recounts how his mother was a "magical listener," partly attributed to growing up with a brother who was born deaf. She was fluent in sign language and as a result she developed a physicality that emoted her when she was listening. She seemed to listen with her whole body. When someone is really listening, they generate feelings in the speaker that make them feel uplifted, powerful, and understood. This is active, not passive, and the kind of listening that needs to be done during difficult conversations.

Listening can be practiced to become something we do not from "a sense of duty" but from "a mode of joyful discovery." To do so, we have to "do something else entirely." Mindful listening keeps us attentive to the conversation, despite not showing the typical outward signs of listening. While performing a repetitive or somewhat mindless task that keeps our hands busy, our minds actually tune in to the conversation with more awareness and consideration. Despite what we often see in meetings today, texting and responding to emails is not the kind of task that works. Dust referred to husking corn or knitting as examples. It is a repetitive, meditative action that someone allows us to let go and tune in. This kind of listening lets the words wash over us in a passive way as we "go deep into listening."

## Element Three: Clarity

The base component of a conversation is words themselves. The trouble with words is that they can often lead to misunderstanding. Words can have different meanings across contextual and cultural lines. Words can be technical or industry-specific, not understood by those outside of a particular line of work. Words and their multiple meanings create a "gap between the words we hear and the meaning behind the words someone else is using." This is why conversations should be designed with clarity in mind. Those participating in the conversation need to have a common understanding of what words will be used and what those words mean in the context of the conversation about to commence. "The right words unite us and show us our way forward together."

## Element Four: Context

If commitment, listening, and clarity are the scripts of conversation, "context, space, and the things in that space are the stage." The space shapes the conversation, inspiring collaboration and creativity or stamping it out before it has a chance to begin.

There are three considerations to make when choosing a space for a particular conversation. Those elements are "cultural associations, personal association, and the "archetype" effect." Looking at cultural associations, there are spaces that are iconic in their purpose. A courtroom, board meeting, or AA meeting are offered as examples. When thinking about these conversation spaces, we can immediately conjure what they look like. The opposite is also true. We can first conjure up the kind of conversation and assign an iconic space to that conversation, such as with a wedding proposal.

Personal associations, naturally, stem from our own personal experiences with important and meaningful conversations. Dust lovingly recalls a porch swing at his great grandmother's house, where they would sit together and she would share

“Negative personal associations can be even more powerful than positive ones, wiping out any benefit from a cultural association. . .”

stories. Sitting on that porch swing, even many years after her death, Dust would find himself “flush with warmth and wistfulness brought on by the memory of the conversations we had there.” Negative personal associations can be even more powerful than positive ones, wiping out any benefit from a cultural association, for example.

The archetype effect refers to the feelings and associations we have with particular types of spaces or items found in those spaces. The kitchen table, for example, has an extremely strong archetype effect. Dust shares an example of a Peruvian bank he and his team at IDEO worked with to foster confidence from customers and encourage more participation in the bank’s product offerings. The financial advisors worked in single offices with a glass wall that surrounded the bank lobby. After engaging with many customers in their own homes, most frequently at a kitchen table, the design team decided to incorporate kitchen tables into the bank design. Instead of closed offices, customers were invited to sit at a kitchen table. This one change made customers much more comfortable joining a conversation about the bank’s services and made all the difference.

## Element Five: Constraints

It may seem counterintuitive, but constraints actually promote creativity rather than inhibiting it. The rules of engagement must be clearly stated, fair, and focused on the desired result of the conversation. If these rules are not made known to all participants, invariably the “loudest voice ends up dominating, reducing the dialogue to their own monologue.” Everyone else becomes frustrated and the conversation is unproductive and unfair. Modern thinking praises the virtues of thinking outside of the box but most designers and other creative types understand that “the creative process is often easier to navigate when there is a box to start with.”

## Element Six: Change

Every important conversation has the potential to move people from an assembled mix of opposing energies to “a group of individuals intent on creation.” Dust calls this the “moment of change” and it is “what allows us to imagine moving a conversation forward and inspires the potential for action.”

The kind of change that is needed in conversations that matter is the kind that forges a collective. It is a moment that says “we showed up for one another and now we’re moving forward together.” It is a change that happens to the participants of the conversation, not a change in the conversation itself. With continued practice, we can become so comfortable that the conversation feels routine and we can more easily spot the change happening to us and others.

## Element Seven: Create

The final component is creation itself. Talk is necessary and talk is required to come to any conclusion at all. However, in the absence of actual action, all the conversing is rendered useless. “Creation is about moving from actionable ideas to just plain action.” This element forces participants to “get real” and figure out if they are the ones who can take the ideas into the actual world and do something with them.

Life sometimes makes conversations impossible to happen. If a community or family or work group are divided, it can seem unimaginable to gather round to talk. Those are instances where “doing can have the most significant impact.” Organize a block party, set a date for litter clean up, or tend to the natural areas around your community. “When you can’t talk, create” and you will come together.

*Making Conversation* is a clear, complete, and compelling book that offers readers a way to move forward during a period of ultra-division plagued by misinformation and an unwillingness to engage in meaningful discussions. Connection between individuals and amongst groups has never been technically easier but we seem to find it increasingly difficult to draw meaning or understanding from those connections. This thoroughly enjoyable read goes a far way to shifting that dynamic.

Intentional design can bring hope, empathy, and a sense of coming together when faced with the inevitable difficult conversations that occur in life. His broad experience in architecture, design, consulting, and coaching have placed Dust in countless countries and cultures. This lends extreme credibility to his writing. He is not merely theorizing that these elements work. He has put them into practice himself in situations that were ripe for misunderstanding and miscommunication and they helped him bridge the gap between sides.

Each element, which encompasses a fully-dedicated chapter, includes actionable practice work to make the element more clear and to learn how to apply it. Dust calls these “Conversation Breaks” and they will be a welcomed bonus to readers looking to put these elements directly into practice. It is clear that Dust intentionally designed the book itself as readers are left with the feeling they have been conversing with the author himself upon its conclusion. Organizations, family members, politicians, leaders, followers, friends, and foes all stand to benefit from the tenets Dust artfully lays out in *Making Conversation.*

· Book 133 of 269 ·

# Making Yourself Indispensable

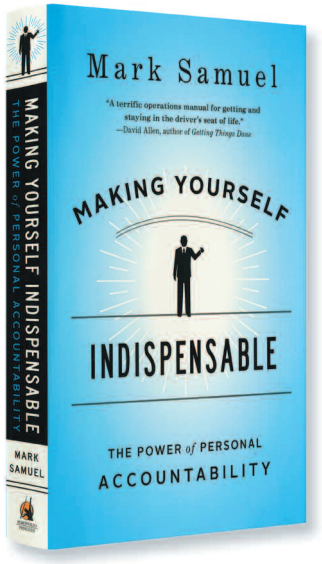
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Career & Self-Development

# Making Yourself Indispensable

## The Power of Personal Accountability




by Mark Samuel

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Imagine waking up with enthusiasm every workday. Imagine being certain that you are highly valued by your boss and co-workers. Imagine feeling secure and in control because, even if jobs are being eliminated, you're too valuable to let go. In other words, imagine being indispensable.

Sound too good to be true? Not according to Mark Samuel, who has helped thousands of people around the world get on the path to personal achievement and fulfillment. He shows why the key to becoming indispensable is to embrace accountability rather than run from it in everything you do at work and in your personal life.

Becoming indispensable doesn't require a fancy degree, a senior management title or huge income. It's a mind-set available to anyone. You'll also discover Samuel's proven strategies for letting go of victimhood, figuring out what's really holding you back and taking smart actions to achieve your highest goals.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to exhibit the 10 behaviors of indispensability.
- Six choices that can have a direct impact on your results in life.
- A step-by-step process for overcoming challenges and obstacles.
- A road map to make yourself indispensable to everyone in your life.
- Insights and tools for achieving success and satisfaction at work and at home.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **MAKING YOURSELF INDISPENSABLE**

**by Mark Samuel**

**The author:** Mark Samuel is the founder and CEO of IMPAQ, an international consulting firm that teaches organizations how to thrive in the competitive global marketplace.

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## Introduction

Making yourself indispensable is dedicating yourself to being "counted on" by others and yourself. Seth Godin makes this point in his book *Linchpin: Are You Indispensable*? when he says, "The only way to get what you're worth is to stand out, to exert emotional labor, to be seen as indispensable, and to produce interactions that organizations and people care deeply about." Just as Oprah Winfrey could be counted on by her audience and Nelson Mandela was accountable to the people of South Africa, you must be counted on by your customers, your manager, your teammates at work and your family at home. Ultimately, to develop confidence, happiness and a sense of fulfillment in your life, you must be able to "count on" yourself to honor your commitments that support your growth, your goals and your play. Thus the core competency necessary to making yourself indispensable is "accountability" — the ability to count on yourself and be counted on by others. Accountability is not determined by an event from your past. Accountability is an ongoing process based on the choices you make each and every moment. Living an accountable life leads to greater happiness, greater learning and making a meaningful difference to others.

## Committing to Make Yourself Indispensable

Making yourself indispensable is not about position, power or ego. It is about taking charge, overcoming obstacles and achieving your dreams at work, at home and in your life.

### Ten Behaviors of Indispensability

Based on hundreds of role models I have witnessed during my 25 years in business, I have identified 10 behaviors necessary for reaching the status of indispensability. For each behavior, take a moment and assess yourself on the 1-to-10 scale (where 10 is high and 1 is low). Add up the numbers to get your Indispensability Score.

**Behavior #1:** Be in service to others without expecting anything in return.

**Behavior #2:** Be dedicated to the highest standards of performance, teamwork and communication.

**Behavior #3:** Be open and adaptable.

**Behavior #4:** Keep commitments and agreements.

**Behavior #5:** Expand your role to support your organization, community or family.

**Behavior #6:** Be a valued resource to others.

**Behavior #7:** Be dedicated to self-improvement and professional development.

**Behavior #8:** Use obstacles and challenges as opportunities for improvement.

**Behavior #9:** Engage and include others when making decisions or changes.

**Behavior #10:** Acknowledge and value the contributions of others.

If you scored 85 to 100, you are probably feeling fairly safe in your circumstances. If you scored between 65 and 84, you're probably feeling a little vulnerable, but nothing critical. If you scored between 45 and 64, it is very important to identify areas for improvement and use the process and tools in this book to improve your level of indispensability. If you scored 44 or lower, you are in a very vulnerable situation. But you can change the situation very quickly with the clear intention to do so and by following the process and steps in this book.

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### Making Choices to Be More Indispensable

The choices we make have a direct impact on the results of our life. We make an infinite number of choices each day, but there are six fundamental choices that will dictate our life experience. Each choice is presented with a preference for making yourself indispensable, and while clearly these aren't rules but options based on the context of the situation, each preference represents where people tend to have weaknesses that prevent them from becoming indispensable.

**Choice #1: Purpose Driven or Goal Driven (the Master Choice)?** Goals without a purpose behind them will generally create an "empty" feeling of going through the motions. When you are purpose driven, you are dedicated. When you are indispensable, not only are you purpose driven, but your purpose is "service" to others. Being purpose driven leads to fulfillment.

**Choice #2: Play Big or Play Small?** Some people say that life is a game. If so, you have to determine what game you are in and how you want to play. Once you make the choice to play big by honoring and generously sharing your talents and gifts, you will experience a greater level of self-confidence, a greater sense of contribution and fulfillment, and a greater sense of recognition by others.

**Choice #3: Adaptable or Rigid?** Rigidity can come in many forms, including your mind-set or beliefs, your behaviors, your communication or your attitude. No matter how hard we try to resist change and remain in control, we are doomed to fail. Changing times require you to continually ask questions. When you are indispensable, you are continually reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of your practices, your procedures, your assumptions and your beliefs.

**Choice #4: We Centered or Me Centered?** There is a choice to be made between caring for yourself at the expense of others and caring for yourself in support of others. We are connected and interdependent with others. The greater the "we," the more indispensable you become.

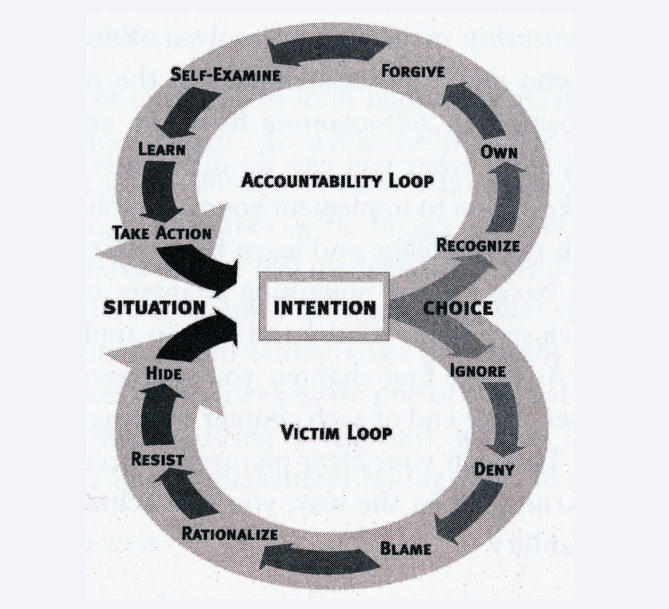
**Choice #5: Priority Focused or Activity Focused?** Unfortunately, most people are caught in the cycle of "more is better" and, as a result, keep adding priorities to their already full set of activities. When you scatter your energy, effort and resources across too many priorities, you risk breakdown from the lack of focus and attention. The indispensable person assists in creating a sense of calm and confidence.

**Choice #6: Value Others or Disregard Others?** Many people want to prove their value to others and, in so doing, neglect to acknowledge others for their contributions. Truly confident people have nothing to prove in terms of their value and, therefore, can share the value of success with others. Valuing others is really about expressing gratitude. Indispensable people are always looking for ways to help others grow. ●

## The Road Map

The foundation of becoming indispensable lies in taking personal accountability on the job, at home and in your life. This road map gives you a clear, step-by-step process for avoiding the Victim Loop and stepping onto the Accountability Loop moving up the trail to indispensability.

Making yourself indispensable is the destination, and personal accountability is the road map.




Accountability is taking action that's consistent with your desired outcomes. Knowing your desired outcomes is the key to accountability. If you don't know where you are going, it is impossible to get there. In other words, if you aren't clear on your "Picture of Success," it's almost impossible to be successful.

The Personal Accountability Model starts when a situation comes up — and it's usually a challenging one. Based on your *intention*, you have a *choice* as to how to respond. When you take the victim road, you *ignore* the problem, *deny* your involvement in it, and eventually *blame* someone else. Then you *rationalize* and justify why another person should take care of it and *resist* any attempt that others may make to get you involved. Finally, you *hide* to avoid dealing with it.

Given the same situation, based on an intention to *stay accountable*, you make a different choice. You *recognize* the problem and take *ownership* of getting it resolved. You *forgive* yourself and others who may have contributed to the problem. You are then in a position to *self-examine* how you contributed to the problem and *learn* what you can do differently to resolve it. Finally, you *take action* to implement your new solutions so that you can deal with the challenge and learn from your experience. This is the Accountability Loop. ●

## The Victim Loop

The Victim Loop is a way of life in which "stuff" happens to you. You don't seem to have a choice.

The surest sign is that you feel stuck — stuck in feeling angry, hurt, frustrated or discouraged; stuck in your job; stuck in your relationship at home; or stuck in physical pain. Everyone seems against you and you can't seem to get a break. Victimization is experienced regardless of intelligence, position of power, age or previous success.

There are six common phases of victimization that make up the Victim Loop. They don't always come in this order, but there is an underlying logic to how they progress. That's why we call it the Victim Loop.

**Phase #1, Ignore It: "Problem? What Problem?"** The problem with ignoring problems is that they usually get bigger — problems turn into crises, crises turn into breakdowns, breakdowns turn into lost jobs and eventually going out of business. When problems are ignored in organizations, they become underlying diseases that, when surfaced, elicit the response "That's just the way we do things around here."

**Phase #2, Deny It: "It's Not My Problem."** Denial is a tricky place to be because if the problem isn't yours to solve, it is someone else's responsibility, which leads you to further entrench yourself in victimization. For the organization, problems don't get resolved unless someone is assigned responsibility.

**Phase #3, Blame Someone: "It's Their Fault."** The rules of finger-pointing are pretty easy to follow: surface a problem, find someone else to blame, and blame away. There is always someone or something to blame. And you can even feel a false sense of control, domination and power by blaming others. This can go on with no end in sight and only leads us deeper into the Victim Loop.

**Phase #4, Rationalize It: "I Have Evidence."** It's hard to maintain the blame game without proof that we are right. We do anything to justify our lack of ownership. We convince others that our boss's decision was wrong, that we don't have enough resources or that it's not our fault that our performance isn't better.

**Phase #5, Resist It: "You're Not My Boss!"** When all else fails … get angry — throw a tantrum. Control is the issue and power is the goal. This is the point in the Victim Loop when conflict and irrational action start escalating. You are far from the original situation and you are still not dealing with it.

**Phase #6, Hide from It: "You Can't Find Me."** Having exhausted all other methods of avoiding the situation, you go into hiding. And, boy, are there lots of good ways to hide. Create busywork. Create unnecessary meetings, paperwork and projects. Generate a crisis. But the best way to hide? Stay confused!

When the pity party is over, you're stuck with yourself in the self-doubt created by knowing that you aren't achieving your goals or your Picture of Success. ●

## Intention: Take Charge of Your Life

Intention to take charge of your life is no small task. Creating a clear intention is part of developing that Picture of Success that represents your destination and changes your focus from victimization to accountability.

### The Mind-Set for High Performance

It is impossible to become indispensable without a mind-set for high performance. There are three essential elements to raising the bar on your mind-set of excellence. When put in place, these three things will lead you to a compelling destination that will drive every action you end up taking along the Accountability Loop to achieve your dreams of becoming indispensable.

**Step 1: State Your Intentions and Set Your Ultimate Goals.** There is no accountability without intention. Intention represents the desired purpose, goals and outcomes that are the basis of your plans and actions.

When creating your intentions, be true to yourself, your best self containing the wisdom, practicality and intuition that knows what is best for you and others. Your intention represents the combination of your purpose and "playing big" based on your unique talents, capabilities and opportunities to make a meaningful difference for others.

You can create intentions around any goals you want to accomplish. Your imagination is what limits your intention. So what's stopping you from achieving anything you

want? Declaring your intention clearly is the foundation for maintaining a positive focus and breaking free from the Victim Loop. It represents your commitment.

**Step 2: Picture What Success Looks Like to You.** The Picture of Success enables your intention to come alive. The Picture of Success describes the attitudes, behaviors and actions you would be exhibiting once you are accomplishing your intention. It's difficult to reach a goal if you don't know what it looks, sounds and feels like.

Your Picture of Success should include descriptive behaviors and actions you are taking that demonstrate what you are doing differently to achieve better results. As you read it and use it, you will refine it. It doesn't have to be perfect. It is a work in progress and the only way to fail is to not do it at all.

**Step 3: Test Your Picture of Success.** The challenge of creating a Picture of Success is that it can sound good but not be effective. There are a few ways to test your Picture of Success. Testing your Picture of Success begins with reviewing the six choices to being indispensable that we discussed earlier.

Does your Picture of Success clearly articulate your intention and purpose? Does it convey a clear picture of what you would be doing and how you would be communicating in order to "play big" and courageously? Does it include your ability to adapt as conditions change? Does it include impact on and benefit to others to ensure that you are "we centered?" Does it provide you a clear sense of priorities? Does it include how you will demonstrate your value of others? ●

## Recognize Your Current Reality

Call it what it is. Whatever it is. Be honest. Until you know what you are dealing with and are willing to call it out, you can't do anything differently. Recognizing your current reality is the first step in taking accountability to manifest your picture of success.

Recognizing your current reality has two main parts: identifying as many strengths and opportunities for improvement as possible and prioritizing the opportunities for improvement based on your current situation and what will move you forward to achieve your Picture of Success.

Common practice is to compare where you are today with current standards of excellence or with where you have been. While this is important for acknowledging progress, it can lead you astray from your intention and off the Accountability Loop. Achieve your Picture of Success to fulfill your intention, not just to get better. Your current reality measures the gap between your current performance and your desired future state described by your Picture of Success.

But how do you assess your current reality without going into negative self-judgment — feeling bad or getting discouraged? There are two ways to build your inner strength to face your current reality — a neutral frame of mind and a courageous heart.

With a neutral mind, you don't need to feel threatened by the truth. It is what it is, and there is no need to hide or judge.

You must have a strong heart and confidence in yourself to face your current reality. When you are accountable and on your road to becoming indispensable, you have the courage to search for the truth even when it could cause you disturbance. You don't cover up. You don't escape. You don't pretend. You boldly admit what doesn't work and you trust that you have the strength and resources to eventually find solutions. ●

## The Power of Taking Ownership

When you own something, you are more likely to take care of it. You are more likely to feel responsible for it.

When FedEx was first created, its founder, Frederick W. Smith, asked his employees to forgo their normal salary for weeks in order to save the company. Those who could, stayed, as owners of that problem, for the bigger purpose of keeping the company alive until it was successful. It was a risk. There were no guarantees, but that is what taking ownership is about: putting yourself on the line for your purpose, for sharing your gifts and making a contribution.

Before the economic downturn, I had failed to hire a financial planner to help us manage our increased funds. I had assumed that our business would continue to grow and neglected to make any contingency plan or recovery plan. And when other members of my management team had wanted to increase our expenses beyond what I was comfortable with, I had sat back in silence. During that time, we had lost sight of our purpose: to be a boutique company with a unique service that produces measurable results unlike those of other consulting firms. In one way or another, I discovered that I had *created* the problem by spending money that should have been saved for a rainy day, I had *promoted* it by participating in decisions that raised our overhead with little return, and I had *allowed* it to happen by not voicing my concerns when I had them.

I thought that admitting my accountability for ownership of the downfall of my business would make me feel even worse and more depressed. But the opposite was true. I was completely energized to see that I had a role in the downfall because that meant I could have a role in changing the situation. I got my power back by taking ownership. When you feel victimized and want to get your power back, take ownership by looking for the opportunity to learn and create a new pathway to your Picture of Success. It is very freeing.

Once you take ownership, problems are no longer running you. You are in command of them, even though they're not yet solved. ●

## Gaining Strength Through Forgiveness

Removing the barriers associated with guilt, resentment, disappointment and discouragement provides the strength necessary to move on in the Accountability Loop. The most indispensable and accountable people make mistakes, but their resilience begins with forgiveness and releasing the negativity of human error that plagues us all.

You will make mistakes, not keep a commitment to your boss and probably even not keep an agreement you made with yourself. It's bound to happen. Accountability is not about being perfect!

If you're making yourself indispensable, you're pushing the envelope on the status quo, taking calculated risks and inventing new pathways to higher levels of excellence. You are bound to make mistakes on that path.

The measure of accountability is based more on how you handle mistakes, mishaps and breakdowns than on getting everything right all the time. The reason forgiveness is the overlooked critical key to accountability is that when you don't forgive, you end up in either the blame game of making a problem someone else's fault or the excuses game of finding all of the reasons you shouldn't be blamed.

The sooner you forgive the humanness involved in any breakdown or inadequacy, the faster you move back to the Accountability Loop. And that is your only way to eventual success. Forgiveness is demonstrated by your actions to remedy the situation, not your words of apology.

The purpose of forgiveness is to let go of the baggage you don't need. What matters is that forgiveness is done for your own benefit. You become more confident when you forgive, knowing that you aren't stuck with your past and soon will be developing your better future. Forgiveness represents taking the high road — the accountable road. ●

### Letting Go: A Zen Tale

A young monk was traveling with an older monk when they came to a river. On the bank was an attractive, finely clothed young woman who could not cross the river without ruining her gown. The young monk heeded his vows to avoid contact with the opposite sex and looked away. But his elder walked directly to the woman and offered his help. He carried her across the muddy river and put her down. After she thanked him, the woman and the monks parted ways.

The young monk was shocked by the elder's behavior, and he silently stewed about it until, hours later, he could not hold his tongue any longer. "How could you do that?" he complained. "It is a violation to even look at a woman and you spoke with her. You carried her!"

The older monk thought about his young companion's criticism and, smiling, he replied, "I put her down on the other side of the river hours ago, but you are still carrying her."

## Self-Examination to Foster Solutions

Self-examination can be one of the most fun stages of accountability. It's an exploration of options without restriction.

Whenever there is a breakdown or problem, the most effective way to begin self-examination is to ask, "How am I creating, promoting or allowing this problem to continue?"

To effectively carry out the accountable step of self-examination to foster solutions, you have to combine analysis, intuition, innovation, creativity and patterning. All of these are what I refer to as critical thinking — the art and skill of looking at a problem or situation from several vantage points.

**Objectivity.** The ability to be unbiased and open to all other ideas about a problem and its solution.

**Global View.** The ability to see the "big picture" surrounding a problem or situation.

**Detail.** The ability to see all the fine and minute aspects of the problem or situation.

**Perspective.** The ability to see a situation from different points of view.

**Symptom-Source Link.** The ability to discern the difference between symptoms and root causes of the problem or situation.

**Integration.** The ability to balance and connect all critical thinking approaches in order to derive the optimal solutions to a problem.

Being indispensable doesn't mean that you are solving every problem by yourself. In fact, that is a good way to become dispensable very quickly. The more indispensable you are, the more you include others in your problem-solving process.

You can avoid a lot of grief or shorten the time you are stuck in frustration, disappointment or discouragement by using self-examination to ask yourself questions that will lead to new perspectives, new approaches, new thinking and, ultimately, a different way to do things to get better results.

It is very exciting to have fresh ideas, new responses and alternative solutions for moving forward on your Picture of Success. *Self-examination to foster solutions* puts you in the driver's seat for learning, making decisions and eventually taking action to make a difference. ●

## Master Learner — Your Default Response

Self-examination is the appetizer, while learning is the main course. Learning is the most important competency for anyone wanting to be indispensable — learning new skills, learning new habits, learning to correct mistakes and learning to improve performance. The day you stop learning is the day you become dispensable.

### Three Easy Steps to Learning

The first step is becoming *aware* of what works and what doesn't work about your role in the problem area that has surfaced. This could be as simple as the awareness that you are getting defensive or anxious, which causes you to communicate in a less effective manner.

The second step to effective learning is *understanding*. Do you understand what is behind your behavior, reaction or attitude?

The third step to learning is *motivation*. What is motivating you to make the change? Maybe you are internally motivated by your desire for a different result or maybe you are motivated by external drivers.

The foundation for any master learner is curiosity. Curiosity allows you to explore and try new things just to find out if you can stumble across a process, method or approach that not only breaks the norm, but also discovers a creative way to achieve better results.

### Teachers and Students

We are all teachers and students. While my clients hire me as an expert in accountability and making yourself indispensable, my view is that I am a student of accountability. It is being a student that has caused others to consider me an expert.

Learning is the outcome of every relationship we are in and every action we take. It begins in the relationship between parents and children. In relationships, we are constantly learning from and teaching each other.

Because we're all teachers and students of one another, it is important that we take responsibility for what we are learning from others in teaching those close to us. We must become aware of the impact we have on others as well as the impact others have on us to determine if adjustments need to be made in our relationships — whether at work or at home. ●

## Take Action to Be Successful

"Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there." — Will Rogers

Nothing you have read on these pages will do you any good if you don't take action on what you have learned.

It doesn't matter if you take a wrong step, but the surest way to fail at reaching your goals is to remain in place. The minute you stop moving, you ruin your chance of reaching your final destination. Remember the definition: Accountability is taking action consistent with your desired outcomes.

Action also builds other people's trust in you. When you take action — even if you don't always fully accomplish your goals — you prove that you're willing to accept challenges and try new things. You become the one who gets things done.

There are six strategies you can use to support efficient action:

**1. Keep Your Eyes on Your Picture of Success.** What is the purpose being served? What accomplishment do you intend the action to achieve?

**2. Do Differently.** This doesn't mean doing the same thing "louder." Doing differently is finding a way — any way — to take a different action than you did last time.

**3. Take Small Steps.** Break your actions down into small steps. Don't try to change everything at once. Go for small changes and let success breed success!

**4. Keep Moving.** Movement is the key to success. It's by moving that you gain the experience to determine what works and what doesn't work.

**5. Use Your Support Network.** Without support, you are putting too much pressure on yourself to keep the ball rolling or to pick up the pieces when something breaks.

**6. Have a Recovery Plan.** When you have a recovery plan, the breakdown results in the implementation of "next steps" rather than the occurrence of the next crisis that causes paralysis, blame and failure. ●

## The Missing Step: Celebrating Success

There are so many reasons for not celebrating success. You don't have time. You have to start the next project. It wasn't a big enough success to warrant celebration — there were even mistakes. While these all seem like valid reasons for skipping the step of celebration, none of these excuses are good ones. In fact, they represent a clear step into the Victim Loop. Remember, the first two steps in the Victim Loop are ignore and deny.

It seems simple to take accountability for success. But nothing could be further from the truth. Taking accountability for success means setting yourself and others up for even greater success. It comes with the responsibility to inspire, to teach, to prepare for future success and to sustain current success. And this doesn't happen through a simple pat on the back.

There are six steps for taking accountability for success:

**1. Recognize Your Success.** Ultimately, recognizing success is simply expressing gratitude — giving thanks for all the supportive effort, guidance, participation and problem-solving that led to achievement.

**2. Own Your Success.** It is important to acknowledge the contributions you made to the success. Regardless of their role and how much they were involved, it is important to acknowledge all of the owners who contributed to success.

**3. Forgive the Mistakes You Made Along the Way.** Achieving success will almost always include imperfections and mistakes. But to reap the benefits of learning it is critical to forgive the mistakes and celebrate the wins, no matter how small or large.

**4. Self-Assess Your Success.** By not conducting an assessment to learn from your success, you miss out on an opportunity not only to celebrate, but to learn. What worked well? What did you do differently that led to your success?

**5. Learn from Your Success.** Learning what specifically worked the best while you were accomplishing your goal, project or assignment means that you will have a greater chance of repeating your success. You will be able to replicate the best of your efforts to accomplish your next goal.

**6. Take Action to Celebrate.** What is the most meaningful celebration you can create for yourself? Your approach should not be determined by your needs alone. It should be based on the needs of the recipients and the reactions you desire from them. ●

## Living an Indispensable Life

By now you have probably learned one of the most valuable lessons for becoming indispensable — nothing can stop you except you! You can be slowed down and challenged, but as long as you are alive and continue making indispensable choices and demonstrating accountability, you will prevail.

Being indispensable is a never-ending pursuit of higher levels of excellence and service to others.

Making yourself indispensable doesn't mean you have "arrived." It only means that you have developed the inner strength and outer ability to take on bigger challenges and help even more people. It is very similar to building muscle. You can use weightlifting to make yourself stronger, but what happens when you stop lifting weights? The muscle atrophies.

One of the best ways to keep up your accountable behaviors and indispensable choices is to help others become indispensable. The greatest leaders are not those who achieve a business result. The greatest leaders are those who help other people become great leaders who get great results. Develop your plan for sharing the keys presented in *Making Yourself Indispensable* so that your team, your organization and your family become more accountable, more trusting, more successful and more fulfilling. Let it begin with you and never let that flame within you burn out. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Making Yourself Indispensable*, you'll also like:

1. ***Linchpin* by Seth Godin.** Godin provides the essential steps to become the critical contributor on which every organization counts.
2. ***StandOut™* by Marcus Buckingham.** StandOut introduces the next-generation strengths assessment from Buckingham, co-author of *Now, Discover Your Strengths*.
3. ***Clutch* by Paul Sullivan.** Do you choke under pressure or are you "clutch"? In this executive book summary of Paul Sullivan's book *Clutch*, you will learn how to successfully perform under extraordinary pressure.

· Book 134 of 269 ·

# Master Your Motivation

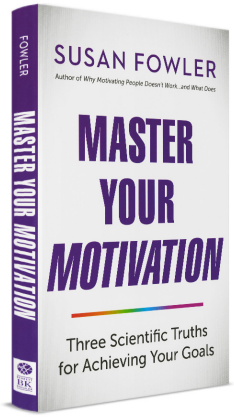
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# Master Your Motivation

## Three Scientific Truths for Achieving Your Goals




*by* **Susan Fowler**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Motivation is at the heart of everything you do and everything you want to do but don't. Unfortunately, the ways we typically motivate ourselves don't work. Relying on sheer determination eventually becomes exhausting—it's not sustainable. And even setting goals can backfire—if you're not setting them for the right reasons.

In ***Master Your Motivation***, Susan Fowler says that motivation is energy, and what matters is the quality, not the quantity. Traditional "motivators" such as fear, guilt, or the promise of a reward provide low-quality, short-term energy. Drawing on the latest empirical research, she proves that high-quality, optimal motivation is a skill that you can learn and apply.

Science tells us that satisfying three basic needs—for choice, connection, and competence—is essential to optimal motivation. You need to feel like you've picked your path, not that you're being driven down it. Your goal should be linked to people or a purpose meaningful to you. ***Master Your Motivation*** shows you how to identify and shift the quality of your motivation and finally achieve success.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three scientific truths about motivation and how to make them work for you.
- Three actions that allow you to master motivation as a skill.
- To overcome attitudes, distractions, and hazards that keep you from shifting your outlook.

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## Part I: The Truth About Motivation

Three scientific truths are at the heart of mastering your motivation. Using them in combination could transform the way you approach goals and your life. Their discovery represents one of the greatest breakthroughs in motivation science.

### Three Scientific Truths

You have a natural yearning to thrive—thriving is your human nature. We want to contribute, feel fulfilled, and grow and learn every day. Recognizing our nature to thrive leads to a critical question: How do I thrive?

The answer is different than what we've been led to believe. Thriving doesn't depend on money, power, or status. Thriving doesn't come from promotions, perks, or driving for results. Thriving certainly doesn't happen through pressure, tension, or fear—or even willpower or discipline. Thriving requires Choice, Connection, and Competence.

**First scientific truth: You need to create choice**. You have an innate need to perceive you have choices, recognize and feel you have options within boundaries, and have a sense of control over what is happening at any time: "I am the source of my behavior." When you don't create choice, your energy is diminished, and you are less likely to achieve your goals.

**Second scientific truth: You need to create connection**. You have an innate need to feel a sense of belonging and genuine connection to others without concerns about ulterior motives, to pursue goals aligned to meaningful values and a noble purpose, and to contribute to something greater than yourself. When you don't create connection, your energy is compromised, and even if you achieve your goals, you are less likely to find the experience meaningful or worth repeating.

**Third scientific truth: You need to create competence**. You have an innate need to feel effective at managing everyday situations, to demonstrate skill over time, and to feel a sense of growth and learning every day. When you don't create competence, your energy is blocked, and your frustration at not being able to meet challenges or make progress puts achieving long-term goals at risk.

### Motivation Isn't What You Think

Motivation is the energy to act. The quality of your energy determines the quality of your motivation. Eating a candy bar produces energy—but eating a handful of almonds generates longer-lasting and more efficient energy. When your physical stamina dips, if you grab a candy bar, soft drink, or french fries, your blood sugar shoots up and so does your energy. Then what happens? You crash. Your blood sugar drops below what it was before, so you need more sugar, caffeine, or carbs.

A similar phenomenon occurs with motivation—how you fuel your psychic energy produces either a junk food motivational rush or a healthier alternative.

When it comes to motivation, the quality of your energy is what matters. Mastering your motivation requires letting go of the outdated notion that motivation depends on how much motivation you have. Creating choice, connection, and competence generates high-quality energy, which leads to optimal motivation. Optimal motivation delivers productivity and results but also increased creativity and innovation, an enhanced sense of well-being, and higher levels of work passion that sustain your high performance and help you thrive.

On the other hand, eroding choice, connection, and competence leads to suboptimal motivation. Traditional ways of motivating ourselves—from relying on external motivators such as winning rewards, acquiring power, or achieving status, to succumbing to negative forces such as pressure, fear, or shame—tend to result in suboptimal motivation. Appreciating the difference between optimal motivation and suboptimal motivation has real-world implications.

### Create Choice

You have an innate need for choice—to perceive that you are the one controlling your actions and the ongoing source of your behavior, even when influenced by outside forces. To master your motivation, create choice.

To create choice, you need to perceive you have choices; recognize and feel you have options within boundaries; and feel that you are in control of your actions.

When it comes to motivation, choice is different than freedom. In ***Man's Search for Meaning***, Viktor Frankl describes living through a World War II concentration camp. Frankl realized that even though he had no freedom as we would define freedom, his captors could not take away his choice. He chose to see the beauty of a sunrise, accept the punishment promised as he came to the aid of a fellow prisoner, and share a piece of his bread with another starving prisoner.

They couldn't rob him of his autonomy—his perception of freedom. He understood that you might not be able to

Because we are social animals, connection is our deepest and most profound need, yet it's probably the least fulfilled in today's modern world.

control your situation, but you can choose your thoughts, reactions, and perspective.

Ask yourself targeted questions to create choice. When it comes to my goal or situation,

- What choices have I made? If I made choices I'm glad about, why am I glad? If I made choices I wish I hadn't made, why do I wish I hadn't made them?
- What different choices could I make going forward? How do I feel about those choices? If I perceive I don't have any choices, why is that? Is it true or is it just my perception that it's true?
- Do I feel the goal or situation was imposed on me? If I feel imposed on by the goal or situation, where is the pressure (or fear, guilt, shame) coming from? Why do I think that is? Could my behavior and actions positively impact the outcome? If I feel restricted, powerless, or controlled by current boundaries, how could I gain a sense of control over the situation? Why is that important?

## Create Connection

You have an innate need for connection—to care about and feel cared about by others, find meaning in everyday moments, and experience a sense of unity as you promote the welfare of the whole. To master your motivation, create connection.

Because we are social animals, connection is our deepest and most profound need, yet it's probably the least fulfilled in today's modern world. Connection means authentically caring about others and feeling cared for by them.

To create connection, you need to feel a sense of belonging and genuine connection to others without concerns about ulterior motives; align goals and actions to meaningful values and a noble purpose; and contribute to something greater than yourself.

Ask yourself targeted questions to create connection. When it comes to my goal or situation,

- Can it give me a greater sense of belonging or genuine connection to others involved? If I feel a greater sense of belonging, why? Could my active involvement contribute to the welfare of others? Could this goal or situation lead to a bigger purpose? Why might that be important?
- Is it meaningful to me? If I find it meaningful, why? Are important values aligned to it? When I think about the purpose of my role, do I see any connection between this goal or situation and my purpose? Why? What is the impact if I don't get involved?
- Do I feel what is being asked of me is fair and just? If I feel it is fair and just, why? If I feel it is not fair and just, why? Is it worth standing up for given my values or purpose? Why?

## Create Competence

You have an innate need for competence—to experience progress, gain mastery, and feel confident and resilient as you meet the challenges life can throw at you. Competence reflects your need to grow and learn each day.

To master your motivation, create competence. To create competence, you need to feel effective at managing everyday situations; demonstrate skill over time; and feel a sense of growth and learning.

Competence doesn't necessarily equate to mastery. It depends on your goal. Maybe you haven't mastered the goal of schussing down black diamond ski runs, but you can create competence if you are effectively managing the bunny slope and focusing on what you learn so you see progress each time you ski down the hill.

You can create competence by asking yourself key questions. When it comes to my goal or situation,

- What skills or experience do I have that might prove helpful? What core competencies can I draw from to manage the challenges I face? Why are drawing on my skills, experience, and core competencies important?
- What new skills could I develop? What progress have I made in my skill development? Why is developing

skills and making progress important?

- What insights have I gained—or might I gain—that could help me moving forward? Why is moving forward important to me? Have I made mistakes? Why is learning from my mistakes meaningful? What have I learned that will help in the future?

## Part II: Motivation Is a Skill

The skill of motivation includes three actions to generate and maintain the optimal motivation you need for achieving your goals: identify your outlook, shift your outlook, and reflect on your outlook.

Before you delve into the skill of motivation, select a goal to work on. Pick a persistent problem where you need a breakthrough or a routine task that is affecting the quality of your work experience (such as expense reports). Select a goal or situation where you feel blocked, are procrastinating, or aren't progressing as you wish.

### Identify Your Outlook

No matter what journey you're on, you need to know where you are before you can decide the best way to get where you're going. That's why the first of three actions to master your motivation is to identify the type of motivation you have right now. You are always motivated. The question is, What type of motivation do you have?

Motivation science has verified six different ways of being motivated, called motivational outlooks. Each outlook has distinct characteristics that either create or erode choice, connection, and competence.

Three **suboptimal motivation outlooks** include the following:

**Disinterested motivational outlook.** When it comes to achieving my goal or resolving my situation, the reason for my motivation is "I don't care," "I am too overwhelmed," or "I don't have the energy to manage what's required."

**External motivational outlook.** When it comes to achieving my goal or resolving my situation, the reason for my motivation is "I have been promised a tangible reward or incentive," "I expect that it will bring me power, an enhanced image, or status," or "I hope that I will receive people's love or respect."

**Imposed motivational outlook.** When it comes to achieving my goal or resolving my situation, the reason for my motivation is "I want to avoid damaging a relationship with someone who has expectations of me," "I have feelings of guilt, shame, or disappointment in myself," or "I feel pressure. I have to do it. (I fear what might happen if I don't.)"

Three **optimal motivational outlooks** include the following:

**Aligned motivational outlook**. When it comes to achieving my goal or resolving my situation, the reason for my motivation is "I am able to demonstrate important values," "I derive a sense of meaning," or "I've made a conscious and deliberate choice to do the right thing."

**Integrated motivational outlook**. When it comes to achieving my goal or resolving my situation, the reason for my motivation is "I feel a deep sense of purpose," "I feel I'm being the person I want to be," "I'm tapping into a conscious but almost automatic way of being."

**Inherent motivational outlook**. When it comes to achieving my goal or resolving my situation, the reason for my motivation is "I'm having pure fun and enjoyment," "I have an unexplainable interest in and attraction to it," "I have always gravitated to it naturally."

Three of the outlooks, the disinterested, external, and imposed outlooks, reflect motivation lacking choice, connection, and competence (low-quality psychological needs). When a suboptimal outlook describes the type of motivation you have for your goal, you are less likely to achieve your goal. But even if you did achieve it, you are less likely to experience positive energy, vitality, or well-being.

On the other end of the spectrum, the aligned, integrated, and inherent motivational outlooks reflect motivation satisfying choice, connection, and competence (high-quality psychological needs). When an optimal outlook describes the type of motivation you have for your goal, you are more likely to achieve it. But even if you don't achieve your goal, you are more likely to experience positive energy, vitality, and well-being.

### Shift Your Outlook

Shifting from suboptimal to optimal motivation—the second action in the skill of motivation—is inspiring! Shift happens when you proactively create choice, connection, and competence. When you create choice, connection, and competence, you also create courage—the courage to take action for the right reasons.

Giving up a bad habit may be as simple as loving something you value more than you love the bad habit. You cannot align to values if you don't know what your values are—which raises the question, how do you know what you value?

To begin exploring your values, try this experiment: Make a list of five to 10 of your general life values. For example, family time, health and well-being, financial security, compassion for others. Now, evaluate your stated values against two questions:

- How do you spend your money?
- How do you spend your time?

These two questions reveal the veracity of your stated values—they expose whether your values are fully functioning in your life or you talk a good game.

> Reflecting on your outlook heightens your awareness of just how good optimal motivation feels!

Values are personal choices. Begin to explore the beliefs and values you currently hold. Proactively develop values you act on and cherish by making conscious choices about how you want to live your life. Then keep those values in mind as you shift your motivation to give up a bad habit or embrace a new habit for something—or someone—more important. Aligning goals with values is a powerful way to generate positive energy and experience optimal motivation.

The word "credo" is Latin for "I believe." A personal credo is a statement of your core beliefs, or guiding principles, and your intentions for integrating them into your everyday life. To create an optimally motivating credo to help you shift when you feel overwhelmed by a situation, external distractions, or pressure, include actions that will help create choice, connection, and competence. For example, consider statements such as these:

- "I create choice: I choose how I wake up and live my life every day. My choices reflect my values and who I truly am."
- "I create connection: What I do to others, I do to myself. My work is meaningful and contributes to a greater good."
- "I create competence: I consciously improve my skills because doing what I do well is one of the ways I contribute to others. By learning something new each day, I spark wisdom, progress, and change."

Perhaps developing your own credo can help you master your motivation and generate the positive energy to achieve your goals and live your dreams.

### Reflect On Your Outlook

Creating choice, connection, and competence increases your sense of well-being. Reflecting on your outlook heightens your awareness of just how good optimal motivation feels!

Mindfully feeling good makes you want to continue feeling good. You realize you have created choice—and can initiate more; you have created connection—and can develop more; and you have created competence—and can build more.

But reflecting, the third action in the skill of motivation, also proves helpful if you haven't shifted or you discover you have a suboptimal outlook. Months after attending a motivation workshop, Josie, one of the participants, said, "I was sitting at my desk when I noticed my stomach was tied in knots. I was feeling pressure and almost sick."

"I reflected on my motivation and identified I had an imposed motivational outlook for a meeting scheduled later that day. As I peeled away the layers to understand where the pressure was coming from, I realized it was a co-worker who would be in the meeting. She pushes all my buttons. I was anxious and worried about having to deal with her."

"I decided to see if I could shift my motivation. I considered my choices. I had choice—I could go or not go to the meeting. I'd chosen to go. I asked myself how I could create connection, and realized the meeting was aligned to goals that were important to me, and I could also live one of my values—being a team player. And then, like a time bomb going off when I least expected it, I got in touch with how it would feel if I could handle my co-worker with grace instead of being scared of her! It may sound corny, but I walked into the meeting feeling determined, uplifted, and purposeful."

Sometimes talking to yourself isn't crazy. Asking yourself questions and mindfully answering them is a form of reflection. Ask yourself, when it comes to my goal or situation,

- Why am I making the choices I am making? Why am I not making certain choices?
- Why is this goal or situation meaningful to me? Why isn't this goal or situation meaningful? Why do I hesitate to connect with the people involved?
- Why is gaining competence important to me? Why isn't learning from this goal valuable to me?

Research by Richard M. Ryan and colleagues shows that answering the "why" question reveals "whether one perceives the goal-directed behavior emanates from one's self or, alternatively, is brought about by forces or pressures external to the self." The questions to create choice, connection, and competence probe your whys and prompt something even more profound in the process: mindfulness.

Mindfulness is being aware of and attuned to what is happening in the present moment, free from judgment or impulsive reaction. The point of mindfulness is to free us from feelings, emotions, experiences, bias, prejudice, and preconceived notions that prevent new ways of perceiving our world. To master your motivation, reflect by being mindful of feelings, reasons behind your motivation, and new perspectives.

Through reflection, you realize that you can choose the quality of your experience anytime and anywhere. With practice, mastering your motivation shifts not only the quality of your motivational outlook but the quality of your life.

## Part III: What's Stopping You?

As human beings, we want to exhibit the positive tendencies of our human nature, and we yearn for optimal motivation. What's stopping us from creating what we naturally long to experience—choice, connection, and competence? Let's explore the answers.

### I Can't Shift

Gina, a district manager, had a good excuse for not shifting. In fact, she refused to shift. She was being held accountable to implement a new approach to selling that she vehemently disagreed with. After years of providing award-winning service to her customers, she was being asked to focus on upselling her customers instead of meeting their needs.

Worse, she was expected to hold her team accountable for following the new policy. To say she had an imposed motivational outlook is an understatement.

It became clear: She was feeding on self-righteous indignation—that red-hot energy that fires you up when you know you are right and they are wrong. The only way to sustain this insidious form of junk food motivation is to continue fueling the flames of negative energy through blaming, name-calling, and comparing your intelligence or status favorably to theirs. Gina justified her suboptimal motivation by recounting examples of how moving from values-based selling to a profit motive was already damaging long-term client relationships.

But to Gina's credit, when she reflected on how sad and deflated she felt, she realized she wasn't saying "I can't shift"; she was admitting "I don't want to shift." She acknowledged that she had chosen not to shift. Her honesty provided the openness to ask herself, "Why haven't I shifted?" and entertain the questions, "What if I did shift? Do I have any values that could support a shift?"

Reflecting on these questions gave rise to a mindful moment and to intriguing possibilities. What if she was wrong? What if she could learn something?

With her newfound awareness, Gina announced to everyone in the class—including her sales team, "I just shifted. I'll either learn that I am wrong and they are right. Or I'll learn from experience what doesn't work and be a more effective advocate against the approach." She decided to embrace the new approach, full steam ahead. Her conclusion: "Either way, we all win."

Gina's experience of reflecting on her reasons for not shifting recalls Byron Katie's brilliant process of inquiry to question the thoughts at the root of suffering, called "The Work." Katie asks you to answer four powerful questions when you have a negative judgment or conflict about someone or something:

- Is it true?
- Can you absolutely know that it's true?
- How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
- Who would you be without the thought?

After you answer the four questions, Katie asks you to turn your negative judgment around—to find one or more opposites—and consider whether that turned-around thought or those thoughts could be true.

Without her realizing it, Gina's reflection had revealed answers to Katie's questions: Is it true that this new sales

Fatal distractions entice you, lure you in, and cast you into suboptimal motivation day in and day out.

approach is bad? How do you know it's true? Being open to the possibilities, Gina recognized the benefit of exploring the idea further. She'd either gain data to support the truth of her assertions or learn that she was wrong and fulfill her value for learning. Left with only constructive reasons for shifting, Gina could let go of her negative energy and focus on moving forward with positive energy, vitality, and well-being.

## Beware Fatal Distractions

Fatal distractions entice you, lure you in, and cast you into suboptimal motivation day in and day out. If you gravitate toward incentives, bonuses, prizes, rankings, competition, and recognition to feed your motivation, you have surrendered to the distraction of external motivation.

To arm yourself against a fatal distraction, you need to recognize one when you see it. Three of the distractions are so common—and so commonly projected as good things—that you may be surprised at how they erode your choice, connection, and competence without you realizing it. Beware materialism, the search for happiness, and busyness.

**Materialism**. Money is one of the most sinister fatal distractions because we all need money (or its equivalent) to survive. But there is a difference between needing money and being motivated by money. When money is your driving force, you do not control it; you are controlled by it—robbing you of choice. Money distracts you from high-quality reasons to do what you do—undermining connection. Money becomes the end goal instead of learning and growth—diminishing opportunities for competence.

Money does not buy happiness or the things that make you happy. In fact, the more materialistic your core values are, the more the quality of your life is diminished. A lower quality of life is reflected in a variety of ways, including low energy, anxiety, substance abuse, negative emotions, depression, and a likelihood to engage in high-risk behaviors.

With the insight gained through recent motivation research and the fascinating field of social neuroscience showing how our need to connect with others is more basic than our need for food and shelter, you can master your motivation and shift your focus from fatal distractions such as money and materialism to the more empowering values of acceptance, compassion, emotional intimacy, caring for the welfare of others, and contributing to the world around you.

**The search for happiness**. Consider what the word happiness really signifies. It derives from hap (n.) meaning "chance, fortune." Happy means "'lucky, favored by fortune, … prosperous;' of events, 'turning out well.'" Happiness depends on what happens. By its nature, something "making you happy" is antithetical to your psychological need for choice—the perception that you are the source of your own actions.

Instead of searching for happiness, an option is to focus on mastering your motivation.

**Busyness**. Maybe you wear busyness as a badge of honor: "I'm so busy doing important things that I don't have time for anything else!" If that sounds familiar, you might consider how it is that many of the most successful people in the world find time to refresh their spirit and connect with people they love. You have the same 24 hours a day as everyone else on the planet.

What fuels your inability to disconnect from work is important to understand. If your passion is fueled by fatal distractions—power, status, image, money—your passion may prove obsessive, not harmonious. You don't control obsessive passion—it controls you. If you are caught up in busyness for the wrong reasons, your busyness is a fatal distraction that erodes choice, connection, and competence.

## Work Hazards

Traditional techniques for motivating people at work have proven ineffective, faulty, or downright wrong. Yet, well-intentioned managers still drive for results, promote suboptimal motivation, and make creating choice, connection, and competence at work a real challenge.

Don't cast all the blame on your manager for resorting to carrots or sticks, praise or pressure, and promises or threats. Have you ever seen the competencies your manager is being held accountable for achieving? "Drive for results,

exceed goals successfully, constantly and consistently be one of the top performers, be very bottom-line oriented, steadfastly push self and others for results, assess staff members' hot buttons and use them to get the best out of the staff"—these are real expectations from real performance plans.

The real job falls to you to move beyond the carrots and sticks that can beat you up. Since motivation is at the heart of everything you do or don't do, why depend on others to do what you can do for yourself? You will discover that proactively creating choice, connection, and competence at work is worth the effort. Three ways to begin are to flip feedback, deepen connection, and advocate for justice.

**Flip the feedback**. Getting pure feedback on your performance is essential to your development and ultimate success at anything you do in life. Most managers don't like giving feedback, so maybe it's time you flipped the feedback. Don't wait for it; ask for it. Requesting feedback delivers the information you need when you need it but also results in less defensiveness—meaning you are more likely to hear what you need to hear and act on it.

**Deepen connection**. Your greatest opportunity to master your motivation at work is in creating connection. Even if you create choice and competence, they are incomplete without the meaning, sense of purpose, or fulfillment of connection. You create connection when you find meaning in whatever you are doing—especially at work.

**Advocate for justice**. If you work for an organization that you think is unfair, you have a choice. You can leave. You can continue feeling disconnected and joyless but not leave (or as it's often described, you can quit and stay—rationalizing that you need the money).

Or you can choose to stay and stand up for justice. You can work to open closed-door policies where information is used as a form of control. You can campaign against wage discrimination, favoritism, and implicit bias.

When you advocate for the principles of justice and fairness, you create deeper connection for yourself and with others.

A common thread of every great spiritual practice throughout history is the belief that human beings can raise their conscious awareness and live life at a higher level. The belief that change is possible entices you to greet a new day. Hope is a belief that things—and you—can change for the better.

We are beings with self-determination and the ability to reflect and mindfully choose who we are, what we believe, and how we behave. The skill to master your motivation may be your greatest opportunity to evolve, grow in wisdom, and be the light the world so desperately needs.

## IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Why Motivating People Doesn't Work...and What Does: The New Science of Leading, Energizing, and Engaging*** by Susan Fowler
- ***CRAVE: You Can Enhance Employee Motivation in 10 Minutes by Friday*** by Gregg Lederman



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***Master Your Motivation: Three Scientific Truths for Achieving Your Goals*** by Susan Fowler, Copyright © 2019 by Susan Fowler, has been summarized by permission of the publisher, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. 192 pages, ISBN 978-1-5230-9862-0. Summary copyright © 2019 by Soundview Book Summaries ® www.summary.com, 1-800-SUMMARY.

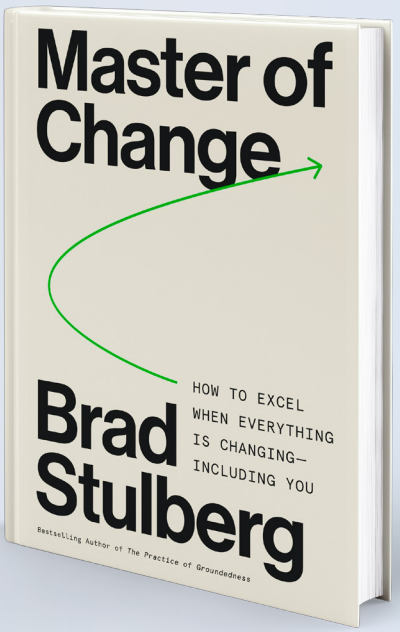
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# Master of Chang

Brad Stulberg

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Master of Change

**How to Excel When Everything Is Changing – Including You**

*By Brad Stulberg*

Brad Stulberg researches, writes, and coaches on health, well-being, and sustainable excellence. He is the bestselling author of The Practice of Groundedness and co-author of Peak Performance. Stulberg regularly contributes to the New York Times, and his work has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, The New Yorker, Sports Illustrated, Outside Magazine, Forbes, and other outlets. He also serves as the co-host of The Growth Equation podcast and is on faculty at the University of Michigan's Graduate School of Public Health. In his coaching practice, he works with executives, entrepreneurs, physicians, and athletes on their mental skills and overall well-being.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Making Meaning and Moving Forward

Change is an inevitable part of life. Everybody experiences it constantly, and according to Brad Stulberg, the trick to living purposefully and productively with change is to accept it and to learn to adapt according to it. At the outset of his book, ***Master of Change: How to Excel When Everything Is Changing – Including You***, Stulberg discusses the different attitudes towards change that homeostasis and allostasis present us with. With homeostasis, the belief is that when an organism is presented with change, it will do all that it can to return to its original state. In life, however, Stulberg does not believe this is always either possible or practical. Instead, he relies on the notion of allostasis. Allostasis states that when presented with change, an organism will confront the challenge and change because of it, arriving at a new normal. He describes this pattern as being one of "order, disorder, reorder" rather than the homeostatic process of "order, disorder, order". Stulberg attempts to help his reader proceed through this process of allostasis in a manner that allows them to flourish despite the myriad changes that life confronts every person with.

In his book, Stulberg succeeds in combining research from numerous fields including psychology, religion, and philosophy, and he has a desire to share only those insights that are relevant across different studies and different fields. He does this because he believes individual studies can lead people astray if they prove to be inaccurate. As such, he trusts most what is replicated and believed to be true in numerous different areas. Because of this, his book is littered with quotes, propositions, and theories from everything from Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance to Tao Te Ching [tow-tay-ching].

Stulberg begins by discussing the importance of non-dual thinking. By this, he means "that truth is often found in paradox: not this or that, but this and that". He extols the virtues of rugged flexibility. He believes that people need to allow for changes and bumps in the road, but they must also be tough. He believes that the "result is a gritty endurance, an anti-fragility that not only withstands change, but thrives in its midst". This allows people the opportunity to change and adapt while still maintaining a "strong core identity".

Stulberg notes that one of the biggest problems people face

with change is accepting it. All too often, he claims, people make situations worse when they refuse to acknowledge change that is in their midst. If a person is able to accept change, Stulberg believes that he or she can "enter into conversation with change". Another critical factor in accepting change is something Stulberg calls the inescapability trigger. He proposes that people are much more likely to engage with change if they believe it is immutable. In order to get to the point of accepting change, a person must not only think and talk about the change and make plans concerning it but they must actually fully accept it.

In his second chapter, Stulberg moves on to the concept of expectations. He claims that expectations are a large part of how a person experiences the world and are a key component to happiness. As he writes, "Swaths of psychological research shows that our happiness in any given moment is a function of our reality minus our expectations". In other words, a person is happy when their situation is better than what they expected it to be, and they are unhappy or disappointed when reality does not live up to those expectations.

Stulberg then goes on to discuss Victor Frankl and tragic optimism. Concentration Camp survivor, psychologist, and author Frankl believes there are three types of tragedy people experience: suffering, guilt, and the realization that everything will pass away. Stulberg posits that because of the inevitability of suffering and negative change, it is irresponsible and impossible to expect ourselves to be happy at all times. Stulberg believes that tragic optimism is an antidote to this. "Tragic optimism," according to Stulberg, "is the ability to maintain hope and find meaning in life despite its inescapable pain, loss and suffering". This requires maintaining a positive attitude despite the setbacks that life presents. With tragic optimism, a person need not rely on denial, despair, and self-judgment because that person will accept that these are a normal part of life. This, according to Stulberg, is preferable to either toxic positivity or pessimism. Maintaining tragic optimism allows a person to see a situation clearly and then adapt to it as best they can.

Hope is a necessary component to maintaining peace in the midst of change. What can derail a person when faced with unwanted change is resistance. Resistance, Stulberg maintains, is what leads to greater suffering. He believes that resistance is multiplicative so that suffering equals pain times the amount of resistance a person holds against it. As an example of this, he describes the Mayo Clinic's Pain and Rehabilitation Center. The Center's aim is "to eliminate the overwhelming desire of patients to eliminate their pain". This allows patients to engage in more activities once they stop trying to eliminate their pain at all costs. The clinic is effective because it reduces resistance while improving expectations at the same time.

Stulberg moves on to discuss a person's sense of self, and he maintains that this sense of self must remain fluid if a person is to thrive. He explains that the closer a person's sense of self is tied to one area or pursuit, the greater difficulties they face in life. Things change, and having such a narrow, rigid view of self makes those changes much more difficult to endure. This does not mean that it is wrong to care deeply; it just means that a person's identity is most helpful when it is not rigidly tied to one pursuit.

He discusses complexity, differentiation, and integration when it comes to self-identity. He explains that in regards to evolution, the complex are more apt to survive. A species must have differentiation; this means that it must have numerous distinct parts. These parts also, however, must be integrated and work in unison with each other. In order for a person to thrive during times of change, this complexity will benefit them.

Along with these concepts, he discusses interdependence and independence and a belief that a person must nurture a sense of both. This requires a person to "be both singular and stable on the one hand and porous and constantly changing on the other". Stulberg summarizes psychologist Jane Loevinger by saying that a person needs to understand that an ego is not static over time; rather, it changes. A person must be cognizant of this and understand when their ego or self view become detrimental to their sense of well-being. Self-identity only becomes harmful when it becomes rigidly attached to one circumstance or characteristic. A person has a somewhat stable ego that is acting in the present moment. They also have a sense of the ultimate self which is connected to and influenced by everything around it. A person must keep in mind their ultimate self which is constantly changing and is not attached to any particular circumstance. This will help shield people from the distress that arises because of inevitable failures.

Stulberg moves on next to discuss boundaries. He analogizes boundaries to the banks of a river. They are what keep the water flowing in a steady and contained direction. The water itself, however, is fluid. People are fluid. They are constantly changing. They need boundaries, however, to keep them going where it is they want to go. Stulberg believes that while much of life is out of control, a person can control their own boundaries. These values are particularly important during periods of change and upheaval. He advises people to consult their core values when they are unsure of how to proceed in difficult circumstances. In general, these values provide stability when life starts to seem out of control. Stulberg writes, "But if you can know and trust in your core values, essentially knowing and trusting in the deepest parts of yourself, then you can courageously walk forward into the unknown". He recommends people develop a list of 3-5 core values, define those values, and then devise practical ways to implement them in everyday life. He believes in rugged flexibility, meaning that people and organizations must be willing and able to change in changing circumstances, but they also must strictly or rigidly adhere to their values.

Throughout his fifth chapter, Stulberg maintains that it is vital for a person to learn to respond rather than to react to situations. He discusses target fixation. This occurs in many different arenas, but one example he gives is when a person focuses closely on the car in front of them. They focus so closely, in fact, that they hit it inadvertently. He believes that this applies to all areas of life. In order to overcome this, he advocates for the expansion of a person's view. To expand one's view, he tells his reader

> . . . people need the ability to pause and consider responses rather than engage in knee-jerk reactions."

that when they find themselves focusing too heavily on anything, they should zoom their focus out and pay attention to all that is happening around them.

He then goes on to explain the neural circuitry referred to as the RAGE network. This pathway is activated when a person faces a threat to their safety such as a lion on the horizon. Evolution has equipped people with a fight or flight response to help them get out of such situations. This is a reaction, however, and since people are infrequently in this type of danger these days, it can prove detrimental for everyday 21st century living. Instead, people need the ability to pause and consider responses rather than engage in knee-jerk reactions. In order to move from this RAGE response to a more beneficial SEEKING response, he advocates pausing and naming emotions, processing and removing oneself temporarily from the situation, planning what to do based upon this more removed perspective, and proceeding to take small steps.

The key component in responding rather than reacting is a moment of pause long enough to allow a person to consider the most beneficial action. The more a person is able to pause and respond, acting on the SEEKING pathway, the more effectively they will be able to respond to situations. Because feelings are so important for determining behavior. This SEEKING pathway is important. This is because taking the time to pause and consider elicits a dopamine response which is pleasurable. This pleasurable effect will entice a person to respond in a similar way the next time they find themselves in a threatening or anxiety provoking situation. One way a person can activate this seeking pathway is through behavior modification.

Stulberg moves on to discuss activation energy. This can be helpful when a person is struggling, and feelings of despair or apathy are making it hard to do anything. This term borrowed from psychology explains that one small act can create a dopamine reaction which can spur on future acts. He maintains that sometimes when a person feels very bad, dwelling on those feelings can make it worse. What can help is taking one small action which may lead to other small actions. Stulberg writes, "productive actions are self reinforcing". If unsure of how to start down this path, Stulberg goes back to core values and advocates letting them dictate which action to take.

Finally, Stulberg discusses serious tragedies that occur in a person's life. These are situations that are not easy to overcome and that are hard to make sense out of. At the most extreme example, he refers to the loss of loved ones, but other situations such as a layoff or a health crisis can also be detrimental to a person's sense of self. In these situations, Stulberg strongly recommends against trying to force meaning onto suffering. He believes that over time people will come to find growth arising out of these difficult times, but that trying to force meaning on intense suffering when it is fresh can make people feel like failures because they will not be able to view suffering from a distanced perspective. Sometimes, he maintains, people have to allow themselves to sit with and accept their suffering. He believes that one of the most important things a person can hold on to during these difficult times is to remember that "What feels like forever now will not in the future".

In the end, Stulberg maintains, suffering and trauma do result in growth and resiliency. How long that takes often depends on the severity of the trauma. He maintains the importance of asking for help when needed. This is an important factor in resilience. Voluntary simplicity where a person focuses on what matters most is also helpful during the most stressful or difficult circumstances.

Stulberg finishes his book by answering five questions and giving ten tools to help people accept and embrace change. He also provides his reader with a list of core values and advice on how to implement these values most optimally. Throughout his book, Stulberg maintains committed to understanding the difficulties of change while helping his reader learn to adjust and adapt to inevitable life changes. He understands that some changes are so severe that they take time to adjust to and that surrender to them is sometimes the best step in working through to the other side. The one thing constant in life is change, both small and large and both good and bad, and the tools Stulberg provides can help his readers come to a better understanding of how to approach this reality in the most effective and beneficial manner.

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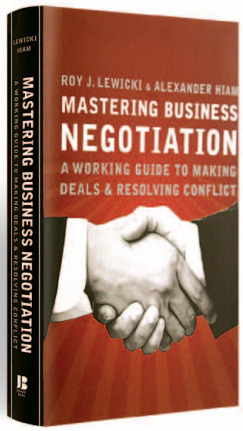
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# Mastering Business Negotiation

Roy J. Lewicki and Alexander Hiam

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

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## A Working Guide to Making Deals and Resolving Conflict

# MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION

By Roy J. Lewicki and Alexander Hiam

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Mastering Business Negotiation *is a handy resource for any leader or manager who needs practical strategies and ideas when conducting business negotiations. The authors — one a professor of Management and Human Resources at Ohio State University, the other a principal of a firm that specializes in training for leadership, conflict resolution and business strategy — base their conclusions on solid research and their many years of experience in the field. With this book, they have reduced the huge volume of available information into an easily accessible resource for busy executives who need to prepare for everyday negotiations as well as for more complicated situations.*

*The authors contend that the basic skills and techniques of what they call "the master negotiator" are essential for resolving conflicts, handling difficult conversations, protecting oneself against a competitor and managing good business deals. Their techniques and suggestions cover negotiating from a variety of perspectives and parameters, from simple to complex. Many are based on the importance of the relationship between the negotiating parties and the respective levels of importance they place on the outcome. Specific tactics used during negotiations are detailed, such as collaboration, compromise, how and when to divulge true intentions, how to spot and use deceptions, and others. Invaluable for business executives, the book is also useful for more informal day-to-day negotiations on the job such as selling, buying and team building.*

*In this summary you will learn how to:*

- ✓ ***Understand the game so you can better control what happens.***
- ✓ ***Predict the sequence of negotiation activities.***
- ✓ ***Identify the strategies and tactics of other players in the game.***
- ✓ ***Apply the rules of the game that will lead to success.***

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# MASTERING BUSINESS NEGOTIATION

**by Roy J. Lewicki and Alexander Hiam**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## Negotiating Effectively

You may wonder if negotiation is different from bargaining or haggling or from broader processes of conflict management and conflict resolution. The answer is that these are, at best, different flavors of the same thing.

*Negotiation* is the proper term to describe this process, while bargaining and haggling are often used to describe the more competitive dynamics of the process. *Conflict management* and *conflict resolution* encompass a broader set of processes that may include negotiation and the involvement of third parties such as mediators and arbitrators. But the basic skills and techniques of the master negotiator outlined in this book are the key to resolving conflicts, handling difficult conversations, protecting oneself against a competitive adversary and managing good business deals.

They also help immensely with a variety of more informal day-to-day negotiations on the job: selling, buying, team building, product development, project management, hiring, correcting poor performance and much more.

Negotiation is the master practice that allows you to move in and out of business situations with confidence and success. ■

## The Negotiation Imperative

Negotiating is a bit like breathing. You don't have to do it, but the alternatives aren't very attractive. Negotiation is the daily give-and-take of social interactions. Once your eyes and ears are tuned to the language of negotiation, you realize that everybody negotiates constantly — all day long.

Is negotiation as prevalent in business as in life in general? What's true at home and among friends is even truer at work. We work in ever more interdependent ways. Nobody can accomplish anything alone, which means we often help each other at work — and just as often get in each other's way or run into conflicts and problems.

That's why the business that negotiates better generally grows and prospers faster than others. And that's why individuals who master negotiations are rated high in emotional intelligence by their peers, tend to be promoted more rapidly, are more productive and emerge as natural leaders. Whether it's sales, customer service, engineering, management or any other area of business, negotiation skills play a surprisingly large role in career success.

This, then, is the negotiation imperative: *Recognize the many times each day you have to negotiate and influence others. In doing so, treat these as opportunities to advance your personal goals, help your business prosper, and build stronger supportive relationships in a widening business and professional network.* ■

**For additional information on the negotiation imperative, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## The Flexibility of the Master Negotiator

Style flexibility is one of the hallmarks of the master negotiator. To master every negotiating situation and resolve varied conflicts, you need to adjust your approach to each. This is a little like dressing for the correct sport before you go onto the playing field. Don't

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**The authors:** Roy J. Lewicki is the Dean's Distinguished Teaching Professor at the Max M. Fisher College of Business, The Ohio State University, where he teaches courses in negotiation, leadership and management. He is the author of more than 30 books, including *Negotiation, Negotiation: Readings, Exercises and Cases* and *Essentials of Negotiation*.

Alexander Hiam is a principal of Insights for Training and Development, a firm that provides leadership, conflict-management and negotiation programs and materials to managers in business and government.

This is the third book that Lewicki and Hiam have co-authored; the others are *Think Before You Speak* and *The Fast Forward MBA in Negotiation and Deal Making*.

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**For additional information on the authors, go to: http://my.summary.com**

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## The Flexibility of the Master Negotiator

*(continued from page 2)*

show up in shin guards and cleats for a tennis tournament. But do make sure you know how to play both tennis and soccer well enough that you can win either, depending on which you find yourself playing!

Athletes may not be able to switch games easily and still be the best at both, but master negotiators should be able to. That's because we're playing the bigger negotiating game, and it sometimes requires us to suit up for one type of negotiation and other times another. Getting ready for negotiation is more like staying in shape to play either tennis or soccer; although there may be some difference in the unique skills, both require a strong degree of basic athletic conditioning.

### *Choosing a Negotiating Strategy*

By considering the relative importance of both outcome and relationship, you are able to adapt your game to each negotiating situation. Untrained negotiators, and those who have taken a simplistic course in competitive tactics, generally use the same approach in every conflict situation. Yet each deal is different and each opponent may be different; you will get better results by flexing your style to suit the situation.

To choose the right strategy, you need to address these two important factors: the outcome and the relationship. When considering the outcome, you need to ask yourself what you will win or lose on the substantive issues in negotiation. When considering the relationship, you must ask how will the negotiation process, and the specific outcome settlement, affect your relations with the other player now and in the future?

The following strategies are based on varying degrees of concern for the relationship and for the outcome:

- **Avoiding (lose-lose)** — The priorities for both the relationship and the outcome are low. Neither aspect is important enough for you to pursue the conflict further.
- **Accommodating (lose to win)** — Importance of relationship is high, importance of outcome is low.
- **Competing (win-lose)** — Importance of outcome is high, importance of relationship is low.
- **Collaborating (win-win)** — Importance of outcome and relationship is high.
- **Compromising (split the difference)** — A combination approach used in a variety of situations. ■

# Getting Ready to Negotiate

It can be helpful to put the information gained thus far into a structured analytical framework. The following method is recommended for complex or high-impact negotiations. Allow plenty of time for this process. As you go through the analysis steps, be sure you thoroughly understand your strengths and weaknesses at each stage. This will help you make convincing arguments for yourself or against the other party.

**Step 1: Define the issues and goals.** Analyze the conflict situation from your own point of view. Look at the issues and decide which are major issues for you and which are minor.

**Step 2: Assemble the issues, and define the agenda.** List all issues in the order of their importance. This should be relatively easy because of the work you did on prioritizing goals.

**Step 3: Analyze the other party.** Although it may be difficult to obtain information on the other party, researching the other side is vital to planning a good strategy.

**Step 4: Define the underlying interests.** To define the interests and needs that underlie the issues you specified, remember the following "why" questions: Why do you want this item or goal? Why is it important to you?

**Step 5: Consult with others.** Unless this is a simple negotiation, other people will probably be involved. For example, if you are negotiating a bank loan, the loan officer probably has to clear it with higher-ups.

**Step 6: Set goals for the process and outcome.** Be sure you have a clear picture of your preferred schedule, site (location), time frame, who will be involved and what will happen if negotiations fail.

**Step 7: Identify your own limits.** It is very important to know these. These will arise from having a clear picture of your goals and their priorities, your bargaining range points, and your alternatives or BATNA (best alternative to a negotiated agreement).

**Step 8: Develop supporting arguments.** Once you know your goals and preferences, think about how best to provide supporting arguments for those goals. You will have accumulated many of these during your research. ■

# The Art of the Master Competitor

Competition is the strategy most of us associate with negotiation and deal-making. It is the classic bargaining or haggling style used in open-air markets throughout much of the world; it also rules in many boardroom negotiations.

### *The Impact of Competition on Relationships*

It's natural to use competitive negotiating if the relationship with the other party does not matter a great deal or you simply don't need to worry about the other party because you know this person can take care of

*(continued on page 4)*

## The Art of the Master Competitor

*(continued from page 3)*

himself or herself. For example:

- This may be a one-time negotiation with no future relationship (you are buying a coffee table at a garage sale, for example).
- The future relationship may not be important.
- The relationship exists but was poor to begin with.
- The other party likes to negotiate hard and views it as a challenging game.
- The other party has a reputation for hard bargaining or dishonesty and you need to compete just to make sure you don't get taken advantage of.

### *How to Prepare for a Competitive Negotiation*

To effectively prepare for a competitive negotiation, you must identify four key points. We will define these four points in terms of a buyer-seller exchange, which is usually referred to as the classic negotiation, but they apply to all competitive negotiations. They are:

1. *What you consider to be an acceptable deal*. This is your target point. A target point is the settlement you would like to achieve when the negotiation is finished.

2. *Where you will start*. Since most people expect that a negotiation involves the process of give and take, or making concessions, you probably will have to ask for more than you really expect to get (if you are the seller) or have to offer less than you will ultimately have to pay (if you are the buyer). This is your opening offer.

3. *What your limits are.* Think in terms of the most you will pay (as the buyer) or the least you will take (as the seller). This is your walkaway.

4. *What you will do if you cannot strike a deal with this other party*. This is your alternative.

### *The Benefits and Costs of Competition*

Competitive negotiation is widespread and often the right choice, but it has potential costs as well as benefits. Sometimes, as in negotiations within a family or work group, competition can create bad feelings and get in the way of positive, open communications. The following will help you decide when competition is most likely to be a good fit and when you might want to avoid it.

**Benefits: Situations Where Competition Is Effective**

- ✓ The goals of the parties may be short-term.
- ✓ The parties have no interest in establishing a deeper or more personal relationship with the other.
- ✓ The parties assume that their goals are incompatible — there is no way both parties can achieve their goals.
- ✓ The other party takes a competitive stance.
- ✓ The negotiators represent somebody else in negotiation — a boss, a labor union, an advocacy group — who will evaluate the negotiator well if the negotiator is strong, is competitive, doesn't give in and forces the other side to give in.

**Costs: Situations Where Competition Is Ineffective**

- ✓ Negotiations that rely on competition can be costly and time consuming, especially if each party holds out for all its demands.
- ✓ Time and goodwill may also be lost if the other party anticipates that you will be competitive and prepares in a similar manner.
- ✓ A major problem with competition is that it is a strategy frequently used by inexperienced or untrained negotiators who believe that it is the only way to negotiate.
- ✓ It is possible to underestimate the other party's determination in a competitive situation. When using competition, we tend to underestimate the strength, wisdom, planning and effectiveness of the other party and assume that we can beat them at their own game. ■

# Executing a Competitive Negotiation

As you interact with the other party, recognize that everything you do and every decision you make is part of the negotiation.

### *Rules of Thumb for Your Competitive Negotiation*

Once you get past the opening offers or demands of each side and into a pattern of concessions, any number of things can happen and it becomes difficult to anticipate what will happen next. However, if you follow these rules of thumb, you should be able to plot a successful course through the dangerous middle ground of a competitive negotiation:

**Stick to your planned target and walkaway points.** Try not to be manipulated by the other party. Watch out for the tendency to find a midpoint between the other party's asking price and your first offer and to settle there too quickly.

**Do not reveal your target until you are close.** Provide minimal information to the other party about your real target point. If you let your target point be known, you will be open to manipulation, particularly if you think you can do better than your target point. So reveal your target points only if you can't possibly do better.

**Never reveal your walkaway point.** Never let opponents know your limits. If you do, they will try to settle as close to your walkaway point as possible. Even worse, they may assume that this was a bluff and try to

*(continued on page 5)*

## Executing a Competitive Negotiation

*(continued from page 4)*

get you to take a deal less than your walkaway point.

**Get the other party to make big concessions.** If you believe that the pie is limited in size, then you want to get as much of it as you can while allowing the other side to get as little of it as possible.

**Keep your concessions few, slow and small.** When you have to give in, do so in small increments, one item at a time. Be patient, and remember that time is on your side. Most negotiators dislike the ambiguity and uncertainty of the middle part of negotiations and rush their concessions just to make themselves feel better about the pace of negotiations.

**Investigate the other party's level of concern for the outcome, other issues, and his or her costs of ending negotiation.** You may learn this through direct information — for example, if a company claims it cannot withstand a strike. And you may learn it from the behavior of people on the other side — for example, if they push to settle quickly. ■

# Mastering the Art of Collaboration

Though some say real negotiators aren't supposed to collaborate (they are supposed to fight to the bitter end for what they want), we all collaborate often. Writing a book is collaboration. Doing anything in business these days is a collaboration — between associates, department, divisions, companies, even nations. And collaborating is often the best way to handle differences and conflicts. Here's why:

Collaboration, as it has evolved in the field of negotiation and conflict handling, brings problem solving into the conflict equation. It treats the conflict itself as a puzzle or problem and harnesses all the combined abilities of everyone involved to find a good way to solve the problem or crack the puzzle. As a result, collaboration often creates breakthrough solutions that make all parties happier than if they had competed, compromised or walked away.

### *The Four-Step Collaborative Process*

There are four major steps used in carrying out collaboration:

**Step One: Identify the Problem** — Identifying the problem may sound like a simple step, but it's not. In the collaborative model, both sides are involved equally in the process of problem definition, and both need to agree fully on what the problem is. Beware of the tendency to define solutions before you have fully defined the problem. In fact, avoid discussing solutions until you have thoroughly understood and defined the problem. The point of collaboration is to treat the outcome as variable, not fixed. So don't fix it up front.

**Step Two: Understand the Problem** — In this step, try to get behind the issues to the underlying needs and interests. Learn not only about the needs and interests of each party, but also about their fears and concerns. The reason for getting behind their position is that positions

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## Finding Solutions

There are two major ways to go about finding solutions. One is to redefine the problem so you can find win-win alternatives for what at first may have seemed to be a win-lose problem. The second is to take the problem at hand and generate a long list of possible solutions. In the latter case of generating solutions, consider the following options:

**Expanding the pie.** If the problem is based on scarce resources, the object would be to find a way to expand or reallocate the resources so that each party could obtain his or her desired end.

**Logrolling.** If there are two issues in a negotiation and each party has a different priority for them, then one may be able to be traded off for the other.

**Offering nonspecific compensation.** Another method is for one party to "pay off" the other for giving in on an issue. The "payoff" may not be monetary, and it may not even be related to the negotiation.

**Cutting costs.** In this method, one party accomplishes specific objectives, and the other's costs are minimized by going along with the agreement.

**Finding a bridging solution.** In bridging, the parties invent new options that meet each other's needs. Again, both parties must be very familiar with the other party's interests and needs.

**Brainstorming.** This common method for generating ideas usually works best in several small groups rather than one large group.

**Forming breakout groups.** In this method, each negotiator works with a small group — perhaps his or her own constituency — and makes a list of possible solutions.

**Surveying.** Another useful method is to distribute a questionnaire stating the problem and asking respondents to list possible solutions.

Once you have a list of possible solutions, you can reduce the number of possibilities by rating the ideas. In communicating your priorities and preferences to the other party, it's important to maintain an attitude of firm flexibility: Be firm about achieving your interests while remaining flexible about how those interests might be achieved.

## Mastering the Art of Collaboration

*(continued from page 5)*

tend to be fixed and rigid — they are the result of a long reasoning process about how firm and tough to be. Try to get "behind" their firm position to more basic underlying interests, needs and values.

**Step Three: Generate Alternative Solutions** — Once you have defined the issues to the satisfaction of both parties, you can begin to look for solutions. Notice that this is plural: solutions. You want to find a group of possible solutions, then select from among them the best solution for both parties. In collaborations, the more potential solutions, the more likely it is that the parties will find one that both can embrace.

**Step Four: Select a Solution** — Using your prioritized list of potential solutions, narrow the range of possibilities by focusing on the positive suggestions that people seemed to favor most. One way to prioritize is to logroll by packaging each person's first choice together. ■

# Mastering the Art of Compromise

Compromising may be thought of as an "adequate for most occasions" approach to negotiation. In this strategy, each side will have to modify its priorities for the relationship and for the preferred outcome.

**When to Compromise:**

- A true collaboration does not seem to be possible but the relationship is important.
- A party's position is weaker than that of the other side.
- The parties are short of time or other critical resources necessary to get to collaboration.
- Your competitors are chasing the deal.
- When the resources are limited and can't be expanded or creatively shared.
- If both parties want to be assured that they gain something, and don't lose anything, on their key issues.
- If there are good options available on each side, one party might propose a compromise to obtain a concession on one of their more important objectives.

### *The Tactics of Master Compromisers*

Following are some suggestions for how to compromise successfully. Success in compromises is a personally satisfying outcome that also leaves the other party reasonably satisfied. Here are the tactics.

**Do your homework.** Know what you want. Be sure you have clear goals and objectives.

**Prioritize your goals.** If you are going to compromise, you need to know what you must have, as opposed to what would be nice to have.

**Know your walkaways and alternatives.** This can give you power in the negotiations, because at some point you may be better off pursuing your alternative than settling for a suboptimal agreement.

**Know which person will make the decision.** If the person you are negotiating with does not have the authority to make an agreement, you may be spending a lot of time waiting while he or she consults with the one who does.

**Show that you want to negotiate.** Say and do what is necessary to overcome the other party's reticence or distrust.

**Try not to be the first side to make a major concession.** Since making concessions may be interpreted as a sign of weakness, the other party may want to take advantage of this and become aggressive.

**Do not wait until the deadline to offer a compromise.** Compromises should be offered from a position of strength, not as a last-ditch gesture, which would suggest to the other party that you are in a weaker position.

**Start with small compromises.** A gradual or staged approach can help you to move toward more compromise. ■

For additional information about The Tactics of Master Compromisers, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Three (or More) Is a Crowd

Negotiating is a challenge when there are just two parties. Add a third or fourth party with interests of their own and things become more complicated in a hurry. Two may agree, only to find the third upset and feeling that he is being ganged up against. Or one of the parties may be hard to bring to the table, preferring to stay disengaged and avoid conflict — which holds up the parties who want to resolve the conflict. These are just two of the many special problems that arise in a group negotiation. Group dynamics come into play, interweaving with the already complex dynamics of conflict and negotiation.

There are two forms of multiparty negotiations. In the first type, all the parties are at the table at the same time. This kind of a negotiation might occur in a team, task force, committee or decision-making group where there are different interests present and all must converge on a collective decision or agreement. In the second type, there are several parties, each of whom has different interests, but you deal with them separately and sequentially. Because the parties often find that they can gain strength in dealing with Y by forming an

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## Three (or More) Is a Crowd

*(continued from page 6)*

alliance with Z, these negotiations tend to be about forming and sustaining coalitions.

Entering into a coalition with others can yield several advantages:

- Coalitions can give you more power and leverage in a group. If several members band together, you may be able to push through a plan or program that no one member could gain individually.
- Coalition partners can sometimes bring strengths to the negotiation that balance your weaknesses. Coalitions can pool all kinds of resources: different skills, different ideas, different past experiences, contacts with different people. For example, voting coalitions emerge in government bodies all the time to support or defeat proposed legislation and policies.
- You can probably be more collaborative with your coalition members, which permits you to do more creative problem solving than you could if you competed with every other party to the negotiation.

### *How to Interact with Coalition Members*

To form durable coalitions, keep in mind the following tactics. These are considered helpful rules of conduct for interacting with your coalition members:

**Be honest about saying no if that's what you really mean.** Coalition members need to be clear about their concerns and objections rather than hedging.

**Share your information; don't hoard or conceal it.** The best coalitions use the rules of collaborative negotiation: Each partner trusts the other with information about their needs, strengths and weaknesses.

**Speak clearly and honestly.** Avoid political doublespeak with your partners.

**Don't take a new position or say yes just to be accepted in the coalition.** It takes real compatibility to form a good coalition.

**Try to find a common vision that unifies your coalition.** If there isn't one, see if you can provide it.

**Don't bad-mouth other parties.** In spite of the fact that you may think what you say will be kept a secret, it always seems to get back to the other parties and causes problems later. ■

# Mastering the Framing Process in Business Negotiation

Framing affects business conflicts and negotiations. Every time two negotiators define a problem or issue — in a similar or a different way — they have enacted frames that may make resolution easier or more difficult. And when a negotiator shifts his own or the other person's frame, negotiations may move forward or may deadlock and stalemate. Negotiators who master the art of framing are better at handling all sorts of business conflicts and come out ahead in negotiations.

Those who study perception and communication in conflict have defined a number of frames that commonly arise in conflict situations. The seven most common frames are:

**Characterization** — Characterization refers to the way parties define other parties in the conflict. In conflict situations, characterization frames are usually negative, and the other party is seen in weak, bad or otherwise unfavorable terms.

*(continued on page 8)*

## The Importance of Frames

The important message about frames is to understand the frames you are using and the frames others are using. When the parties are consistently not communicating, talking past each other or find their conflict escalating from simple differences to an angry confrontation, the problem is most likely rooted in a difference between their respective key frames.

### *Tips for Managing Frames*

Here are some general tips and techniques to help you manage frames during negotiations.

**Stop. Assess.** Figure out what frames are for. Everyone uses frames. By thinking about them before you make any moves or demands, you may be able to come up with a better approach or strategy.

**Don't talk issues if the other party is focused on process.** Some people have a strong process frame, meaning they focus on how the parties should go about resolving their dispute. If someone repeatedly asks process questions, stop talking about issues and outcomes and take the time to agree with them on the process — or agree to come back to them after the issues are defined.

**Don't be a victim of characterization.** Does the other party have a prejudice or negative assumption about you? Do you have one about him or her? Negative characterizations are common and tend to strengthen as a conflict escalates.

**Share personal feelings and pressures leading to past behaviors.** Empathy (emotional understanding) is a powerful weapon against negative characterizations. If the other party understands the factors leading you to act the way you did, he or she is less likely to blame you or be mad at you.

## Mastering the Framing Process in Business Negotiation

*(continued from page 7)*

**Identity** — Identity frames are the ways that parties define themselves. In conflict situations, identity frames are often the opposite of characterization frames.

**Outcome** — This frame refers to what the parties prefer as the specific outcome or resolution of their differences.

**Interests** — This fourth frame focuses on the parties' underlying interests (identified earlier). Interests are sometimes called aspirations in that the party focuses on attempting to satisfy his or her basic needs and concerns rather than push hard on obtaining a particular outcome.

**Rights** — Some people frame conflicts in terms of whose rights were upheld or violated. Whereas conflicts over interests are often resolved by negotiation, conflicts over rights are usually resolved by efforts to determine whose side is favored by the law, regulation or policies.

**Power** — Some people frame conflicts in terms of power: who is stronger, who has more resources or who is able to force the other to back down and accept a dictated solution to the conflict. People who are frustrated in their efforts to try to resolve a conflict by focusing on interests or rights often escalate to a power frame; those who have the power to enforce their will and make the other party do it their way will win the conflict.

**Process** — Parties often adopt different process frames in conflict. A process frame is the way each party prefers to work the conflict out or resolve it. ■

# Mastering the Power and Influence Process

Fundamentally, negotiation is all about each party's efforts to influence the other. Social interactions are all about influence. No person is an island. Yet most people never study influence in depth, and so they go through life, and negotiations, in constant ignorance of the forces of influence at work around and on them.

Your mastery of the arts of power and influence not only puts you in control of your negotiations, but also inoculates you against a great many ploys and tactics that will be used against you. While most negotiators don't know all the tricks in the influence book, many have preferred two or three of them and will use their special weapons on every unsuspecting negotiator they encounter. Some negotiators have won over and over by using just one or two of the more potent techniques. Do your homework and be prepared to identify and counter their influence moves.

### *Four Easy Defense Moves*

There are several major tactics you should be aware of and protect yourself against. These are:

**1. Watch out for cascading yeses.** If you are being maneuvered into agreeing repeatedly, the other party is herding you in his or her desired direction. Never let yourself be herded.

**2. Watch out for power plays.** Do you always have to accommodate more powerful players? You can defend against power plays by recognizing that you do have control over the outcome in every negotiation or interaction. This isn't a hostage situation; you have a lot more choice than you think.

**3. Watch out for strange requests.** Research shows that an unexpected request has considerable persuasive power when used in certain ways. Defend against strange requests and unexpected behavior by focusing away from the behavior and evaluating the substance of the request or position instead.

**4. Never let someone get you intoxicated during a negotiation.** Don't try to negotiate over a lunch or dinner where alcohol is being served. Drinking and negotiating don't mix.

### *The Balance of Power*

The most persuasive and influential negotiators often avoid loud, overbearing or overly colorful styles and instead rely on careful presentation, sound arguments and subtle tactics to win others over. As you negotiate, always keep one eye on the balance of power and the uses of influence. If you find yourself out-influenced and out-powered, stop and seek sources of additional power and influence for your side.

Your negotiating skills and knowledge of technique are valuable resources of influence and power, as are your abilities to manage your emotions and take the high road of reasoned, reasonable positions in any negotiation. The master negotiator is always mindful of power and careful to create sufficient influence to press his or her agenda forward. ■

### SOUNDVIEW Recommended Reading List

**If you liked *Mastering Business Negotiation*, you'll also like:**

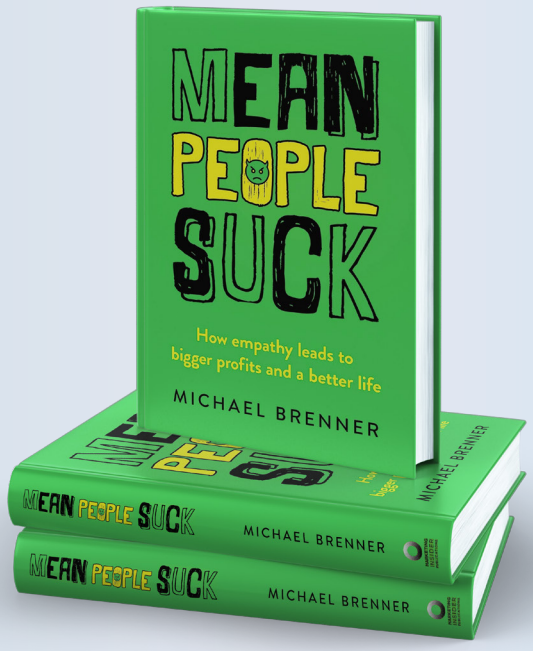
1. ***Shaping the Game*** **by Michael Watkins.** Four fundamental objectives that should guide leaders' actions in every negotiation they undertake.
2. ***The Art and Science of Negotiation*** **by Howard Raiffa.** A sophisticated self-help book that emphasizes negotiation skills designed to benefit all parties concerned.
3. ***Bargaining for Advantage*** **by G. Richard Shell.** A step-by-step program for bargaining success that focuses on six key psychological leverage points.
4. ***Trump-Style Negotiation*** **by George H. Ross.** The author explains the tactics that took Donald Trump to the top and how anyone can use the same tactics and strategies to get ahead in business.
5. ***3-D Negotiation*** **by David A. Lax and James K. Sebenius.** A systematic, complete approach to negotiation that goes beyond the standard win-lose framework to create lasting value.

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# Mean People Suck

Michael Brenner

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Mean People Suck

By Michael Brenner

Michael Brenner has been recognized as a Forbes top CMO influencer, a Top Business Keynote Speaker by the Huffington Post and a Top Motivational Speaker by Entrepreneur Magazine. He is CEO of Marketing Insider Group, where he has worked with more than 75 brands in building effective thought leadership, marketing, and employee activation programs. Michael has championed a customer-centric approach at organizations large and small. He led sales and marketing for software companies like Nielsen and FullTilt. Today, Michael is the CEO of Marketing Insider Group, founded on the belief that strong leaders who champion their teams are the key to unlocking massive growth.

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# How Empathy = Bigger Profits and a Better Life

Michael Brenner once took himself through the exercise of listing out and counting every job he could remember ever having. He knew there had been quite a few but he was pretty surprised to see that the total came to 53, all within the span of 25 years. His varied experience meant that he had the opportunity to encounter people of every sort. The customer service jobs he held taught him just "how much mean people suck."

He says of the long list, "...inside corporate organizations and start-ups alike, I've witnessed unique management styles, workplace cultures, and bosses, all of which taught me a few lessons about business and how to manage it all. I've learned that sometimes your boss sucks. Sometimes you just want to get your job done without being challenged or questioned. But the real question is...How happy are we in our jobs?" Unfortunately, most people he queries about work are unhappy with their job itself, the culture in which they work, their boss, or the decisions over which they have zero power. They feel stuck. Brenner and his long list of jobs mean that he has experienced a bit of it all, with almost all of his positions having some aspects that are good and others that are bad. It got him wondering, "what separates the positive experiences from the negative?" "What makes us either love or hate the work we do?" "What makes us love or hate the lives we live?" Over thousands of conversations with people around the world, Brenner submits that the "overwhelming answer" he has heard again and again comes down to one simple thing. Mean people suck.

Mean people have a way of infecting those around them with meanness. Those on the receiving end of their ugly behavior suffer in silence until they finally fill up and lash out at those around them, shedding "some of that pain and frustration" that has sunk them so low. Despite regular and constant modeling and explicit teaching about being kind and taking care of one another and treating others as we'd want to be treated, there are still meanies out there that simply cannot put themselves in the shoes of another. "We know that we should be kind and have empathy, but why do so many of us, especially in the business world, not display empathy for others?" This is the central question that author Michael Brenner explores in ***Mean People Suck.***

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## The Shocking Decline of Empathy

Science has proven that empathy is a learned behavior that we develop throughout our lives. Research has also shown that it is in sharp and ceaseless decline. "The University of Michigan Institute for Social Research found that we are 40 percent less likely to describe ourselves as having empathy for others today than we were 40 years ago, with the steepest declines coming in the last 10 years." This decline permeates our political system as well as our organizations.

We are born with "the capacity for empathy" but somewhere along the way, we lose it. Empathy and age tend to have an inverse correlation, which Brenner calls "the paradox of confidence." Brenner credits this downward slide of empathy on social change and disruptions. Our daily communications are less connected as they occur through text or social media. We find it much easier to be mean to people through the veil of technology. Unlike a mere couple of decades ago, "today, we can anonymously spew so much hate without any real fear of repercussion." The digital environment is almost entirely lacking in empathy and that has moved into our workplaces, with terrible consequences.

## Your Company Sucks, Your Manager Sucks, and Your Customers Know It

Organizational charts have existed for over a hundred years, providing a visual reminder of who is above, who is below, and who is in line with our own position. They are meant to help us out by showing us who is in charge, who we should go to for approvals, and who will make decisions about particular aspects of our job. There are, as you may imagine, loads of problems with traditional org charts.

Org charts are rigid, while the world demands flexibility. They only encourage "upward communication" when companies desperately need peer collaboration. We focus on what is best for us and how we can move up and up the hierarchy, rather than focusing on what is best for the organization as a whole.

In reality, companies are not organized into clean lines and tidy boxes. Human beings and their relationships "are complicated, constantly in flux, and can change so quickly." To account for this human element, companies have to rethink the org chart in a way that busts up the "silos throughout our organizations" and ensure that "all departments focus their efforts on the customer." But it's not just the company's method of organization that sucks. Mean managers suck, too.

Managers sometimes fall into an insistence trap, in which they come up with an idea that feels like a winner, but you know better. You can see that this idea will not work and is destined to not only fail, but to waste precious time and money in the process. But you say nothing. This is so often the case. We feel powerless to push back against those in a superior position to us and we go along with their idea, even when we know with certainty it is a terrible idea. Why do we do this?

Brenner says that it may feel like the buck stops with the boss, but in reality, you are part of the problem. In order to avoid the trap of implementing a doomed strategy, we have to step up and do some difficult insisting ourselves. We have to push back, explaining with crystal clarity that "all our wasted effort is in no one's best interest." If we can establish common ground with our managers, we can find a way for everyone to walk forward with freedom and purpose. Leaders have to get on the sidelines and start cheering for their people. Managers who champion their employee's ideas get better results for every stakeholder involved. When managers suck, customers can tell and they choose not to spend money with managers or companies that suck.

Modern consumers are savvy to say the least. Advertisements are completely ignored at best and seen as an annoyance that deters buying at worst. Brands must come to terms with the fact that consumers simply are not interested in being "reminded relentlessly of how great a product is." Consumers know that some companies suck and they are, increasingly, intolerable of this.

Customers need and desire connection with the brands they use. Companies that are successful at making this connection do so because they have a meaningful core mission that is consistently executed. Meaningful brands make a difference in the lives of others. They "stand for something and promote the values that their customers connect with" and people are moved by them on an emotional level. Brands that cannot, will not, or do not do this will have a very difficult time thriving in turbulent times.

## Empathy for the Win

Customers need to be engaged, employees need their ideas championed, customers have to be at the center of all decisions, and pain points of customers need to be addressed to drive growth. Knowing that these are the things a leader must do is just the beginning. How you do these things "will ultimately determine your effectiveness." This is where empathy comes into play.

Families, communities, businesses, and indeed, the world at large needs empathy. The dictionary defines empathy as "the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another...without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner." It is putting yourself in someone else's shoes, even if just for a moment. In business terms, Brenner asserts that "Empathy is the counterintuitive secret to getting more of what we want."

Today we fail to realize that "infusing empathy into our workplace cultures also makes for a more profitable and stable business model." Communication runs more smoothly when we lend an empathetic ear. It makes us more strongly bonded to those around us. It is "essential in grabbing, and keeping, the attention of others, specifically our customers." It also drives "actual business results" by promoting a positive culture, decreasing turnover, increasing productivity, and improving the customer experience. "It can transform a business's profitability and interna cost level." In short, empathy wins. And it wins big.

> Acts of kindness and empathetic interactions spark others to behave the same way."

## 5 Tips to Deeper Empathy

No matter if you are a leader, manager, employee, spouse, parent, or friend, you will find that people will like you more when you "take interest in them and their concerns." Being empathetic will improve your life, at work or at home. Follow these five guidelines to avoid being the mean person who sucks, that everyone around you complains about.

1. Learn to listen. It is critical to first learn to ask questions, rather than talk ceaselessly about yourself. Once you learn to ask first, you have to learn how to genuinely listen to the answers. "This is easier said than done." Distraction is a major part of the problem. Our phones are constantly buzzing and dinging, providing endless opportunities "to look away when someone is talking." Put your own agenda, and your phone, aside when you are engaged in conversation with others. Make an intentional effort to try to see where the other person is coming from and be open to any feedback you may receive.

2. Try being kind. Stanford psychologist Jamil Zaki says, "Kindness is contagious." When we behave kindly towards others within a group, such as a team or entire staff at work, that kindness contributes to Zaki's theory called "positive conformity." Acts of kindness and empathetic interactions spark others to behave the same way. It is an idea as old as time itself. You attract more bees with honey than vinegar. Treat others as you would like to be treated. It works at work, too. "It's easier to get what you want from others when you're nice."

3. Don't take it personally. We've all been there. You are having a terrible day with one annoying set back after another. By the end of the day, you are feeling pretty impatient and crabby. The next person that happens along your way becomes the target of your sour mood and you lash out at them, unjustly. Guess what? You are not the only person who experiences this. Every human has bad days. Every human experiences circumstances beyond their control that occasionally become misplaced or projected onto someone else. When this happens, don't take it personally because it isn't about you. Instead of ruminating over it or looking for ways to pay that person back for their bad behavior, let it go. Don't carry it forward. Leave it in the past and maintain your overall happiness.

4. Remember the good times. It is sometimes hard to see the good in a bad situation. Of all the 50+ jobs that Brenner has held, none of them were all bad all the time. He still enjoyed moments of laughter and bonding with coworkers. He still learned valuable insights and lessons that he applies in his life and work today. He credits mean people with teaching some of the most valuable lessons of the lot! "Shifting your focus from dwelling on the negative to appreciating the positive changes your mindset." You become more open to positive experiences and you feel better. That's a win for everyone.

5. Find meaning in what we do. Brenner sums up this guideline with three simple phrases. "Be kind. Be cool. Be you." Go out into the world and into your workplace being authentic, empathetic, and nice and you will find meaning in all that you do. Brenner asserts that there is always meaning to be found, even in a job that you absolutely loathe. "If you can't find that larger purpose in the work itself, you might find it in working together with your teammates or colleagues." To do this, start by asking yourself four questions. "What do I know? What does the world need? What do I love? What are people willing to pay me to do?" Your answers will intersect to reveal the path to personal and professional happiness.

Brenner's book boils down to a simple, but profound idea. "Empathy for others is the key to getting the lives and careers we want." Every single one of us wants the same thing. We want to be happy, fulfilled, and make a difference through the work we do. We want our time on this planet to matter. Yet most of us fall short of that. We are not happy. We are unfulfilled. We do not put ourselves in the shoes of others. Some of us are downright mean. In Mean People Suck, Brenner makes a case for exactly what we can do about that.

All we really need to do is "make a choice." "Make a choice to not be unhappy, unfulfilled, disengaged and focus on others. Apply empathy where it matters the most. Make a choice for empathy–in business, in life." Empathy is the key to making meaningful connections, enjoying your work, creating meaningful solutions for your customers, and making a real difference in this world. Do not fall into the dismal trap of believing that the only way to get what you want is to take it. "Showing others that you care is the best way to get what you want and to live a better life in the process." You only have to ask yourself one question to make the change. "What choice will you make?"

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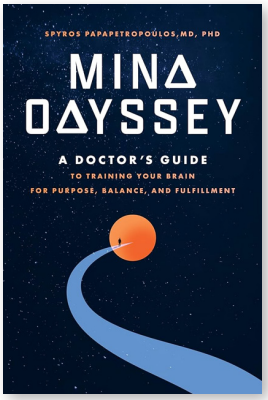
# Mind Odyssey

Spyros Papapetropoulos

Executive Book Summaries®

# Mind Odyssey

## A Doctor's Guide to Training Your Brain for Purpose, Balance, and Fulfillment




*by* **Spyros Papapetropoulos, MD, PhD**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For many professionals, overcoming major career challenges may come with a high toll, professionally and personally, but what if the key to navigating these difficult moments was already in our possession? And what if living a full and rich life ultimately depends on three core principles: having a clear purpose, maintaining balance, and, as a result, achieving fulfillment?

According to ***Mind Odyssey: A Doctor's Guide to Training Your Brain for Purpose, Balance, and Fulfillment***, these are not abstract ideals, but trainable mental skills grounded in neuroscience. Drawing on Homer's *Odyssey*, the book likens modern careers to a long journey marked by progress, detours, and adversity. Purpose acts as an internal compass: the "why" that guides decisions through uncertainty and distraction. Balance provides the "how," allowing individuals to manage stress, regulate emotions, and respond thoughtfully rather than impulsively. Fulfillment represents the destination, emerging when purpose and balance align over time.

By combining scientific insight with personal stories and practical exercises, neurologist and biotech executive Dr. Spyros Papapetropoulos teaches readers how to train their minds to navigate uncertainty, manage pressure, and build sustainable confidence—allowing career success to support, rather than undermine, a meaningful life.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Understand how to define purpose as the intersection of ability, motivation, and recognition
- Find ways to train emotional balance to handle pressure and setbacks
- Acquire useful strategies for aligning time, ambition, and well-being
- Learn effective practices for sustaining fulfillment through curiosity, reflection, and community

## Introduction

When considering the many successes and unexpected setbacks in the course of a career, I often turn to Odysseus. For this "man of many talents," the journey is filled with incredible adventures, each marked by unbelievable feats. But it is equally full of tragedy and failure.

What ties the whole story together, though, is that Odysseus always knows his purpose. He knows why he continues on his journey across the Aegean Sea—in order to get back to his family. And that purpose allows him to see his destination: the place where he'll find true fulfillment.

Homer's epic poem has been foundational for many stories told ever since. These same elements—purpose, balance, and fulfillment—are equally important in a modern career as they were for a sailor in the 10th century BC.

Whether you're a salesperson, a software developer, a nurse practitioner, or a plumber, these same three qualities can allow you to guide your career through every trial ahead. They are so powerful because, in essence, they answer three key questions:

- Why do we do what we do?
- How are we going to do it?
- Where are we going?

Our *why* is our purpose. This is our drive, the engine that pushes us forward. Balance gives us our *how*. It's our ability to manage the inevitable turbulence that erupts from time to time over the course of a career. When we have balance, we're able to avoid overreacting to any situation—particularly negative ones. When we have purpose and balance, we naturally steer toward our fulfillment. That is exactly *where* we want to go in life.

Words such as purpose, balance, and fulfillment are vague and hard to grasp fully. But while I am fond of metaphors, mythology, and good stories, I've spent my career studying the brain. And every concept I bring up is backed up by not just literary analogy but also hard science.

We know with relative certainty where in the brain your purpose, balance, and fulfillment reside. And we can access these regions through conscious effort.

Achieving purpose, balance, and fulfillment is all about connecting the right neurons through the right synapses. In other words, you can train your brain to deal with negative situations and avoid the big dips or unnecessary highs that drag you and your career down.

CHAPTER 1

## Defining Purpose

Purpose is such a powerful guiding principle in the rough moments of a career because it's the meeting point of what we're good at, what drives and motivates us, and how we're perceived by others. Purpose is more than a job or even an entire career—it's what gives that work meaning for you.

Scientists believe that they now understand, at least partly, how and where the human brain generates the sense of purpose. It lies in the prefrontal and frontal cortex. This is the area of the brain that makes us human. It's where we form our emotions, regulate our behavior, and solve complex problems. It's also where we process life decisions by combining and analyzing memories and experiences. This makes sense because purpose is a uniquely human need.

### Create the Conditions for Introspection

You need to explore purpose (as well as balance and fulfillment) when life is calm and you're in relatively good physical and mental health.

The reason for this is that when we are in distress, our neuronal circuits are overwhelmed, and the amygdala takes control of our behaviors. The amygdala is the most primitive part of our brain, and it's where we experience fear, rage, stress, and anxiety. In those moments, the highway to the higher functions of the frontal lobe is cut off, and instincts take over.

In other words, the part of our brain where we do our processing and logical thinking—the part where we fashion our sense of who we really are—is not open for business as usual.

### Passion Is a Clue, Not a Purpose

Once you have the right conditions and the time to focus on purpose, you need to know what you're looking for. Importantly, purpose has to go deeper and be more personal than the impulses we all have in our work. Everyone works to make money, for instance. That isn't a purpose.

A purpose ultimately states what you care about in your position that goes beyond those material interests. What do you care about that doesn't earn you money or make you powerful or famous?

The advice most people give when searching for such a purpose is some version of follow your dreams or follow your passion. The problem with fusing the ideas of passion and purpose is that they are very distinct things. While purpose

> Gratitude is an antidote to that sense within us that we can do everything ourselves.

can provide a consistent center to your work for an entire career, passion burns brightly and then dims or burns out entirely. In other words, passion is a finite resource. It is a state of constant stimulation, and for that reason, it exhausts itself.

### Assessing Your Strengths and Signals

Passion is not our only clue to the nature of our purpose. We can also consider our natural skills and aptitudes. They can be a source of new possible candidates for our purpose or serve as disqualifiers when considering our potential as we follow our passions.

There's only so much we can do to understand ourselves. We'll always have gaps in how we perceive ourselves because we can only look from the inside out, making openness to outside criticism essential.

This is often the hardest step for people to take when determining their purpose. No one likes to be criticized or to hear they may not be as good at something as they'd hoped. But if we are willing to open our eyes and our ears, we'll find that many people are trying to tell us how much potential we have, one way or another.

CHAPTER 2

## Refining Purpose

We have two paths we can follow as we climb the mountain of our career: One of the paths builds directly on the foundational blocks we're discussing—purpose, balance, and fulfillment. The other follows the more common interests and impulses that people mistake for purpose.

Following your passion can end up leading you astray. This is how it happens. People enter a career because of a hobby or a general interest. Because they like this type of work for one reason or another, they're motivated to continue pursuing it. It becomes a passion for the work. Then, when they achieve moments of success, they feel true happiness.

The problem is this latter "happiness trajectory" is not a sustainable emotion. We constantly chase it, exhausting our reserves of passion and motivation. Then, we either fail to attain happiness and collapse into sadness, or we do achieve happiness, only to see it evaporate in a moment. Happiness is almost always short lived and is almost always followed by a crash.

In contrast, the "fulfillment trajectory" uses purpose as its starting point. When following the fulfillment trajectory, we're on a path that shines a little less brightly day to day. Instead of relying entirely on those passions and interests as our sole source of deeper meaning in our work, we use them to fuel our rise. Underneath, we have firmer stuff that prevents us from crashing when we achieve success or miss out. This means we can keep going up without suffering major falls.

This is a more consistent and sustainable path, one that can allow us to reach far greater heights.

### Dreams Versus the North Star

Dreams are valuable, just like passions and motivations. They can help inspire our purpose and even refine and redirect it, but they aren't our ultimate aim. Dreams can usually be fulfilled, and achieving them or even just getting close to them gives us that extra juice to keep moving forward on what is most important.

The North Star, in contrast, is a point we're always steering toward. It's always untouchable, always just out of reach. That's what allows it to provide our purpose with an ultimate direction, which keeps us fulfilled and balanced. This isn't something you expect to achieve; it's something you look up at from time to time to check your progress and the direction you're steering your career.

### Creating Harmony with Your Parallel Purposes

Having a clear North Star that is the ultimate extension of your purpose has value beyond your career. Knowing both your purpose and your North Star also allows you to better balance the other purpose in your life: your personal purpose. This second form of purpose includes everything else that goes into your life—not just your family and friends but also your health, spirituality, and community.

Every one of us has this dual and parallel purpose. We all serve two masters. The more time you spend building a career, the less time you're at home with family. The further you advance in your career, the more resources you have to

give your family. A setback at work will affect how you behave with your family, and vice versa.

And if these two purposes ever come into conflict—if balance is lost and one suffers too much for the other—we will struggle to progress along any trajectory. Therefore, we have to define, understand, and feed both of these purposes at the same time.

Once you know both these purposes, you can seek points of connection that allow you to nourish them at the same time. By finding these points of connection and monitoring the trajectories of your dual purposes, you can avoid most of the conflicts that appear over your time, attention, and energy. You'll know better where to allocate those resources to keep life moving in the right direction. This can only help in both areas of your life.

CHAPTER 3

## Protecting Purpose

Win or lose, when your primary motivation is some impulse toward a concrete improvement for yourself, you risk finding only disappointment at the end of the road. Either the event doesn't happen and you end up discouraged, or it does happen but doesn't live up to what you dreamed of for so long.

To exit this empty feeling, there are two clear paths forward from here. If you have fallen short of your ambition, you can give up and abandon your dreams. If you have succeeded and still feel let down, you can keep building toward something even bigger, hoping the next big achievement offers more lasting happiness.

The next win always has to be bigger. As with a drug, you never seek a smaller hit. This can work for a while, but as soon as you hit a bump in the road—as soon as you fall short of the next big goal—it can all come crashing down. As soon as that string of wins turns into a major loss, you're stuck with that empty feeling again. And it becomes all the more tempting to just walk away.

### Seek Impact Over Impulses

To ensure we are fully protecting our purpose, we need to understand thoroughly what counts as an impulse and what elements within ourselves we can rely on. We've already encountered impulses in one form. Our passions and motivations are long-term impulses that we can regularly dip into and satisfy. Here are the career-related impulses that offer a single, big boost in positive emotions:

- money
- power
- praise

These three impulses share certain characteristics. They're all common forms of rewards in our work. When we receive them, they feel wonderful in the short term. And after that initial boost, we adapt and require another, bigger hit to get the same boost next time.

This is known as hedonic adaptation, and it also follows us as we get more promotions and receive more recognition for our work.

The only escape from this is to enjoy these impulses while we prioritize the impacts of our actions. While an impulse focuses on the internal feelings of reward, an impact is external—it's about how our work acts upon others, whether those others are our colleagues, customers, family, society, or humanity at large.

CHAPTER 4

## Evolving Purpose

Your purpose is like a living, breathing part of you. It has to grow and change with you. You have to take care of it and nurture it. As you change through the years, your purpose has to take part in that same change process. Otherwise, it dies—it becomes useless.

If your purpose fails to evolve with you, one day, you'll wake up, punch the clock, and realize you no longer feel the fulfillment or balance you once did. To avoid that future, you have to regularly inspect your purpose to double-check that it accurately reflects where you are today.

If you find your purpose is no longer doing its job, there's no need to panic.

Ask enough questions with enough open curiosity, and purpose tends to present itself in its new form.

CHAPTER 5

## The Balancing Act

We all know how difficult it is to work with people who lack emotional balance. No one wants to work with a reactive colleague whose effort on a project is determined by the side of the bed they rolled out of that day. No one wants a manager who blows up any time a report comes in an hour late

> Time is our ultimate currency and the most precious commodity—and something we can never get back. ”

or who drinks too much at the office party when celebrating a big sale.

No matter your position, emotional balance is important for maintaining good team rapport, and it's a crucial part of good leadership. If we want to keep our team invested, positive, and moving forward successfully, we need to bring balance to our environment.

The key to achieving this balance is not blocking emotions but *training your brain to reset* to its natural equilibrium after that initial burst of feeling. You feel your emotions without letting them control you and overwhelm you. By resetting to your ideal mental condition, you leave all your neural networks open and active.

Along with follow your dreams, one of the most common pieces of advice offered professionally is to *trust your instincts.*

But our instincts can be wrong when dealing with complex problems or the modern work environment. Overall, we shouldn't rely heavily on them to guide our professional lives. They shouldn't play a prominent role in determining our purpose, and they definitely shouldn't be involved as determinants of balance.

### Training Your Brain

To train our brains to rebalance themselves requires consistent effort and, above all else, awareness of our mental state. This training is an active and intentional effort to recognize when our brain allows itself to be controlled by an overwhelming set of emotions.

Once we recognize our emotional imbalance, we should turn back to our purpose. This is one of the many reasons why purpose comes first. We need purpose in order to train ourselves to remain balanced.

Some of us have a natural ability to recognize when our minds drift in this way and return to purpose and balance. For others, this process takes significant effort and practice. The key, though, is to remain vigilant when your emotions are spiking and having an effect on how you're thinking.

In such moments, allow yourself to feel the emotions before turning your thoughts back to your purpose. This process also allows us to learn from the cause of our current imbalance. If this imbalance is the result of a mistake we made, we can admit the mistake instead of looking for the cause in others, and we can commit to avoiding it in the future and move forward.

CHAPTER 6

## Balancing Ambition

Like technology, passion, or financial compensation, ambition is a tool—a powerful one we need to utilize in pursuing our purpose. But when left unchecked, that same tool can drive us into poor decision-making just as easily as emotional imbalance does.

We face as much risk from too little ambition as too much. While too much ambition can destroy your purpose, too little can keep you from making any progress at all.

Unfortunately, we only have so much control over our level of ambition. That level is somewhat engraved in our personality. Whatever your level of ambition, you have to find balance in it. The risk of leaving ambition unbalanced is that it not only alienates our colleagues but also makes it difficult to recognize our shortcomings, accept feedback, or see which path is best for our career and purpose.

### Be Ambitious for Your Purpose

The first step to balancing ambition is to return our thoughts to our purpose. As we do this, we may have to push past some initial instinctive feelings about the state of our career and material interests.

Our natural instinct is always to seek more for ourselves, and ambition is one of the many manifestations of this urge. But we've already seen where this path leads. To short-circuit this pathway, we must firmly ground our ambition in purpose to see a better way forward.

Unfortunately, the relationship between ambition and purpose is not always straightforward. In some professions, they are almost synonymous.

But most of us have careers in which ambition and purpose are less obviously tied together. We don't approach our work with purpose directly in mind. Instead, we chart progress by

how well our ambitions are satisfied—tying ambition to our instinctive drive to secure ever more resources for ourselves.

To keep ambition in check, we have to tie these concepts more closely together. You can aim to move up in your company while linking that advancement to better achieving your purpose. That way, purpose becomes a meaningful check on unchecked ambition.

### Be Careful How You Compare

An important aspect of ambition is comparison. This is really how we feed our ambition. We can only know if we're moving up fast enough in our organization by checking if we are moving faster than those around us—or those who came before us.

Comparison is an inevitable part of our social existence. It's built into our nature; it is as instinctive as breathing.

So this is not something we should try to remove. In fact, comparison can be a useful ally in balancing ambition—but only if we employ it correctly. Ambition often leads us to think about the best-case scenario. This can be nice and motivating for our purpose, but it blinds us to the obstacles that are holding us back and the contingencies that make such a future less likely. Comparison can fill in these blind spots.

Through comparison, we can see where others stumbled as well as the strategies they used to overcome setbacks. We can create a more realistic picture of our potential success and prepare for what may be ahead. But if we aren't careful, it can also drag down our confidence.

### Gratitude: The Antidote for Ambition

When you see everything as the result of your efforts, your ambition sees no reason to ever shoot for anything but the highest possible bar of success.

This is where gratitude comes into play. Gratitude is an antidote to that persistent sense within us that we can do everything ourselves.

It forces us to look outside ourselves at those who can do things better and whose efforts and wisdom move us forward. It allows us to identify the contributors and their contributions to our success.

When we practice gratitude, we should even extend it to those who hold us back. We have to be grateful for the good and the bad that have happened in our professional career—because they are the reason we could ultimately end up where we are now.

CHAPTER 7

## Balancing Time

Time is our ultimate currency and the most precious commodity. This is a fact we all know on some level and something we all eventually learn on a deeper level—but when we're young, healthy, and focused on advancing in our careers, it doesn't compute; time feels like an infinite resource. So why not trade a little time in order to achieve another promotion ahead of schedule?

But every time we trade off time to give in to our instincts and feed our impulses, we have to recognize we're giving away something we can't get back.

We make this mistake because we fail to recognize that there are two separate concepts of time at play: objective time and subjective time.

Objective time includes the seconds on a clock, the days on a calendar, the rise and fall of the sun each day, and the passing of the seasons.

Conceptually, we bunch all our ideas of time into this category, but we actually experience time subjectively. Time passes more quickly or more slowly depending on our mental state—particularly our emotional state.

The only way we can truly use this resource well is by training ourselves to appreciate its nature. This process begins by simply taking stock of our time usage. After we take stock of our time balance, we have to focus on *appreciating* time. This word is crucial. When we appreciate something, we try to make the most of it. This is far better framing for our ultimate currency than enjoying our time.

If we focus on enjoying our time, we still feel the urge to speed through the tough moments. In that state of mind, we either waste time passively waiting for things to improve or, even worse, spend that time feeling stressed out and pessimistic.

### Learn to Say No

To improve our focus and appreciate our time, we have to be more careful about where we're directing our attention. We have to focus on the work that matters most so that we don't waste our time and attention on work that others can do. That means we have to accept that we aren't there to do everyone else's work. We have to learn to say no sometimes, even if that upsets people.

This is a particularly difficult lesson for entrepreneurs. Because it's their company, they feel a responsibility to pitch in

> Fulfillment is less an emotion than a mood—it's an overall state of being.

everywhere. Early on, that may be necessary, but when the company is running smoothly, their time is best spent leading, not getting involved in every task.

CHAPTER 8

## Clear Sailing

Fulfillment is where the whole process we've been learning has been leading. You can think of it as your reward for finding purpose and being balanced. It's a super balanced state—one in which we feel content and satisfied professionally, all while we increase our resilience to the tough moments in our career.

Crucially, this sense of fulfillment is different from happiness. While there is some overlap, it is actually a different category of experience from happiness. It is less an emotion than a mood—it's an overall state of being. We can be fulfilled and happy, but we can also be fulfilled and sad, angry, depressed, or anxious.

This distinction also tracks with what we know about how the brain operates. Happiness, as we've seen already, is driven primarily by dopamine.

Instead, fulfillment allows us to train our brains so they don't become flooded with neurotransmitters—whether these neurotransmitters cause happiness, depression, or panic. Reducing the firing of neurotransmitters such as dopamine allows another player in our brain chemistry—namely, endorphins—to better achieve their role. Endorphins dampen stress and discomfort. They give us a deeper sense of calmness and resilience.

This can be our overall state of being if we train our brain for fulfillment. When we break the cycle of dopamine surges by training for purpose and balance, we leave more room for endorphins to do their work. This is an ideal state to be in, both for our own positive mental outlook and for any efforts to achieve our long-term goals.

### Recognizing Fulfillment

Because fulfillment is a by-product of purpose and balance, we can access it once at least some of these other elements are in place. But we can become so distracted by the day-to-day demands of life that fulfillment can go completely unacknowledged. We sometimes even convince ourselves that we aren't fulfilled because we're still *lacking something*.

And this is a waste of our time because being fulfilled isn't about having everything. It's not about reaching a destination. Instead, it's about appreciating your sense of direction—whether in the times when you have the wind at your back, a clear sky above, and smooth seas in all directions or in the times when the water is choppy and the skies aflame with lightning.

In both cases, so long as you are balanced, purposeful, and sailing toward your North Star, you can be fulfilled.

CHAPTER 9

## Investing in Fulfillment

Taking care of your mental health is a crucial step in achieving fulfillment. If you don't have wellness within yourself, you are unlikely to be able to develop or improve other aspects of your life. You can't pour from an empty cup.

These days, work and home are two separate places with distinct responsibilities. The brain is a single organ. It doesn't dedicate one hemisphere to work life and another to home life. Instead, it experiences life holistically.

If we are stressed at home, that stress remains with us at work. If we're depressed about our career, we feel depressed on the weekends, wasting our precious time being absorbed in negative feelings rather than enjoying our family. Likewise, positive alignment in one area of life feeds into the other.

So once we have alignment between our purpose, balance, and fulfillment at work, the next natural step is to pursue it in our personal lives. Or, to coin a phrase, we have to expand these techniques across the rest of life in order to achieve "holistic fulfillment."

Luckily, once we achieve professional fulfillment, we are far closer to achieving fulfillment in our personal life. The reason is simple: The same techniques and principles we've covered for professional purpose, balance, and fulfillment also apply to our personal lives. It's all one brain. The training you've done in one area will work in the other.

### Committing to Continuous Curiosity

Achieving the wisdom of fulfillment is a great gift, and the earlier we can acquire it—professionally and personally—the better. But we have to remember that this is not the kind of wisdom we can learn, implement, and then forget. Like purpose and balance, fulfillment is not something we achieve once and then move on from. It's something that we cultivate and develop forever. And a huge part of that maintenance is simply committing to continuing to proactively explore ourselves and the world around us.

Many of us come by some of these lessons naturally at various points along our professional odyssey. We end up training our brain through experience—learning from times when we allowed our ambitions to grow too great or when we spent years aimlessly working without purpose—and perhaps we're lucky enough to put all of the pieces together at some point without consciously working on the process. But if we leave everything to nature and experience, we risk this wisdom coming too late.

Life is simply better the sooner we achieve these qualities. We are more content. Our relationships are stronger. And we achieve more in our work. We're all on a lifelong odyssey, so we may as well set ourselves up to sail with as much comfort, confidence, and contentment as possible—and do it as soon as possible.

CHAPTER 10

## A Lifelong Odyssey

The most frustrating obstacles we face are the ones that are beyond our control. Along with the exasperation we feel from the difficulty itself, there's a sense of helplessness when we realize there's little we can do to change our circumstances. When we lose our job because the company is downsizing or see a promotion go to an undeserving colleague because of nepotism, it stings more than if we had done something wrong ourselves.

It's nice to imagine that some technique or philosophical principle could give us more control over our destiny, but the reality is that sometimes, life just happens to us, and all we can do is react.

This is how it is to be on a lifelong odyssey. We're all out here sailing on the seas, heading toward our own individual North Star, and we have no control over the weather.

No matter how much we try to chart a journey under clear skies, the longer we're on the water, the more likely we'll run into a bad storm. But that's okay. We just have to accept that part of our journey is about rediscovery. It's about reassessing and reinventing our purpose, balance, and fulfillment—from now until our journey is truly over.

## Conclusion

If you choose to follow the ideas we've covered, you can train your brain to reduce these gods and monsters to interruptions in an odyssey leading toward your ultimate impactful purpose. You have the power to maintain balance even as you skim over choppy surf and to sail forth with a heart full of lasting fulfillment.

Since that's on offer, there's really no reason to wait any longer. There's no harm in starting to train your brain now. There's just absolutely no downside. It won't hurt your career or your family life. Far from it, in fact. Training your brain can only have a positive impact across every aspect of your life. Even just incorporating a few of the ideas can improve your quality of life.

This process will take time. There will be benefits from a little training, but real results will take consistency and effort over a longer period. Training your brain for balance takes consistent effort. The more you pursue these principles, the more benefits you'll see, but you have to pursue them consistently over time before they become automatic.

The sooner you start, the sooner you'll be swimming in the warm seas of fulfillment.



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***Mind Odyssey: A Doctor's Guide to Training Your Brain for Purpose, Balance, and Fulfillment*** by Spyros Papapetropoulos. Copyright© 2026 by Spyros Papapetropoulos. Summarized by permission of the Publisher, Advantage Books. ISBN 9798891882478. Summary published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®. Copyright 2026 Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. For permissions and reprints, please contact service@summary.com. 48SS03A

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# Mindset

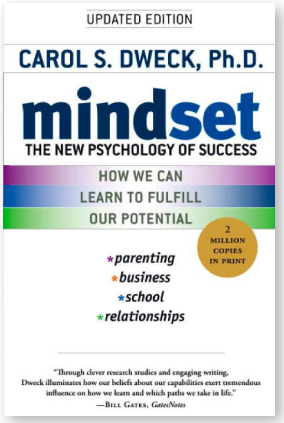
Carol S. Dweck

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Career & Self-Development

# Mindset

## The New Psychology of Success




*by* **Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Every so often a truly groundbreaking idea comes along. World-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a truly profound idea — the power of our mindset.

Dweck has found that everyone has one of two basic mindsets. If you have the fixed mindset, you believe that your talents and abilities are set in stone —either you have them or you don't. If you have a growth mindset, however, you know that talents can be developed and that great abilities are built over time.

In ***Mindset: The New Psychology of Success***, Dweck makes clear why praising intelligence and ability doesn't foster self-esteem or lead to accomplishment, but may actually jeopardize success. With the right mindset, we can motivate others and help them improve, as well as reach our own goals — personal and profes-sion-al. Dweck reveals what all great CEOs, parents, teachers and athletes already know, and shows how a simple idea about the brain can create a love of learning and a resilience that is the basis of great accomplishment in every area.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn how brains and talent can stand in the way of success.
- A deeper look into why praising brains and talent doesn't foster self-esteem.
- How does teaching a simple idea about the brain raise productivity?
- Insights on how a change of mind is always possible.

## Introduction

One day, my students sat me down and ordered me to write this book. They wanted people to be able to use our work to make their lives better. It was something I'd wanted to do for a long time, but it became my No. 1 priority.

My work is part of a tradition in psychology that shows the power of people's beliefs. These may be beliefs we're aware of or unaware of, but they strongly affect what we want and whether we succeed in getting it. This tradition also shows how changing people's beliefs — even the simplest beliefs — can have profound effects.

In this book, you'll learn how a simple belief about yourself — a belief we discovered in our research —guides a large part of your life. In fact, it permeates every part of your life. Much of what you think of as your personality actually grows out of this "mindset." Much of what may be preventing you from fulfilling your potential grows out of it.

## The Mindsets

For 20 years, my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you live your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value. How does this happen? How can a simple belief have the power to transform your psychol-ogy and, as a result, your life?

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone — the *fixed mindset* — creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality and a certain moral character — well, then you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn't do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics.

Some of us are trained in this mindset from an early age. Even as a child, I was focused on being smart, but the fixed mindset was really stamped in by Mrs. Wilson, my sixth-grade teacher. She believed that people's IQ scores told the whole story of who they were. We were seated around the room in IQ order, and only the high-est-IQ students could be trusted to carry the flag, clap the erasers or take a note to the principal. Aside from the daily stomachaches she provoked with her judgmen-tal stance, she was creating a mindset in which everyone in the class had one consuming goal — look smart, don't look dumb. Who cared about or enjoyed learning when our whole being was at stake every time she gave us a test or called on us in class?

I've seen many people with this one consuming goal of proving themselves — in the classroom, in their careers and in their relationships. Every situation calls for a confirmation of their intelligence, personality or char-acter. Every situation is evaluated: *Will I succeed or fail?Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected?Will I feel like a winner or a loser?*

But doesn't our society value intelligence, personality and character? Isn't it normal to want these traits?

Yes, but. . .

There's another mindset in which these traits are not simply a hand you're dealt and have to live with, always trying to convince yourself and others that you have a royal flush when you're secretly worried it's a pair of 10s. In this mindset, the hand you're dealt is just the starting point for development. This *growth mindset* is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cul-tivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way — in their initial talents and apti-tudes, interests or temperaments — everyone can change and grow through application and experience.

Do people with this mindset believe that anyone can be anything, that anyone with proper motivation or edu-cation can become Einstein or Beethoven? No, but they believe that a person's true potential is unknown (and unknowable); that it's impossible to foresee what can be accomplished with years of passion, toil and training.

### The Growth Mindset

Did you know that Darwin and Tolstoy were consid-ered ordinary children? That Ben Hogan, one of the greatest golfers of all time, was completely uncoordinated and graceless as a child? That the photographer Cindy Sherman, who has been on virtually every list of the most important artists of the 20th century, *failed* her first pho-tography course? That Geraldine Page, one of our greatest actresses, was advised to give up for lack of talent?

You can see how the belief that cherished qualities can be developed creates a passion for learning. The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or espe-cially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

## Inside the Mindsets

When I was a young woman, I wanted a glamorous career,

but nothing too hard or risky. And I wanted it all to come to me as validation of who I was.

It would be many years before I was satisfied. I have a great career, but boy, is it a constant challenge. Nothing was easy. So why am I satisfied? I changed my mindset.

I changed it because of my work. One day my doc-toral student, Mary Bandura, and I were trying to understand why some students were so caught up in proving their ability, while others could just let go and learn. Suddenly we realized that there were two mean-ings to ability, not one: a fixed ability that needs to be proven, and a changeable ability that can be developed through learning.

That's how the mindsets were born. I knew instantly which one I had. I realized why I'd always been so con-cerned about mistakes and failures. And I recognized for the first time that I had a choice.

### Enter a New World

When you enter a mindset, you enter a new world. In one world — the world of fixed traits — success is about prov-ing you're smart or talented; validating your-self. In the oth-er — the world of changing qualities —it's about stretching yourself to learn something new; developing yourself.

In one world, failure is about having a setback. Getting a bad grade. Losing a tournament. Getting fired. Getting rejected. It means you're not smart or talented. In the other world, failure is about not growing. Not reaching for the things you value. It means you're not fulfilling your potential.

In one world, effort is a bad thing. It, like failure, means you're not smart or talented. If you were, you wouldn't need effort. In the other world, effort is what *makes* you smart or talented.

You have a choice. Mindsets are just beliefs. They're pow-erful beliefs, but they're just something in your mind, and you can change your mind. As you read, think about where you'd like to go and which mindset will take you there.

### Mindsets Change the Meaning of Effort

Author and *The New Yorker* writer Malcolm Gladwell has suggested that, as a society, we value natural, effort-less accomplishment over achievement through effort. We endow our heroes with superhuman abilities that led them inevitably toward greatness. It's as if Midori popped out of the womb fiddling, Michael Jordan drib-bling and Picasso doodling. This captures the fixed mindset perfectly, and it's everywhere.

A report from researchers at Duke University sounds an alarm about the anxiety and depression among female undergraduates who aspire to "effortless perfection." They believe they should display perfect beauty, perfect woman-hood and perfect scholarship all without trying (or at least without appearing to try).

Americans aren't the only people who disdain effort. French executive Pierre Chevalier says, "We are not a nation of effort. After all, if you have *savoir-faire*, you do things effortlessly."

People with the growth mindset, however, believe something very different. For them, even geniuses have to work hard for their achievements. And what's so heroic, they would say, about having a gift? They may appreciate endowment, but they admire effort, for no matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment.

## The Truth About Ability and Accomplishment

Thomas Edison was no naïve tinkerer or unworldly egg-head. The "Wizard of Menlo Park" was a savvy entre-preneur, fully aware of the commercial potential of his inventions. He also knew how to cozy up to the press — sometimes beating others out as the inventor of something because he knew how to publicize himself.

Yes, he was a genius. But he was not always one. His biographer, Paul Israel, sifting through all the available information, thinks he was more or less a regular boy of his time and place. Young Tom was taken with experi-ments and mechanical things (perhaps more avidly than most), but machines and technology were part of the ordinary mid-western boy's experience.

What eventually set him apart was his mindset and drive. He never stopped being the curious, tinkering boy looking for new challenges. Long after other young men had taken up their roles in society, he rode the rails from city to city learning everything he could about telegraphy, and work-ing his way up the ladder of teleg-raphers through non-stop self-education and invention. And later, much to the disappointment of his wives, his consuming love remained self-improvement and inven-tion, but only in his field.

### The Myth of the Lone, Brilliant Person

There are many myths about ability and achievement, espe-cially about the lone, brilliant person suddenly pro-ducing amazing things.

Yet Charles Darwin's masterwork, *The Origin of Species*, took years of teamwork in the field, hundreds of discussions with colleagues and mentors, several prelimi-nary drafts and half a lifetime of dedication before it reached fruition.

Mozart labored for more than 10 years until he pro-duced any of the work we admire today. Before then, his compositions were not that original or interesting. Actually, they were often patched-together chunks taken from other composers.

### The Fixed Mindset Limits Achievement

The fixed mindset limits achievement. It fills people's minds with interfering thoughts, it makes effort disagree-able and it leads to inferior learning strategies. What's more, it makes other people into judges instead of allies. Whether we're talking about Darwin or college students, important achievements require a clear focus, all-out effort, a bottomless trunk of strategies, and allies in learning. This is what the growth mindset gives people, and that's why it helps their abilities grow and bear fruit.

## Sports: The Mindset of a Champion

Character is what allows you to reach the top and stay there. Darryl Strawberry, Mike Tyson and Martina Hingis reached the top, but they didn't stay there. Isn't that because they had all kinds of personal problems and injuries? Yes, but so have many other champions. Ben Hogan was hit by a bus and was physically destroyed, but he made it back to the top.

"I believe ability can get you to the top," said basket-ball coach John Wooden, "but it takes character to keep you there. It's so easy to ... begin thinking you can just 'turn it on' automatically, without proper preparation. It takes real character to keep working as hard or even harder once you're there. When you read about an ath-lete or team that wins over and over and over, remind yourself, 'More than ability, they have character.'"

### Staying On Top

Let's take an even deeper look at what character means and how the growth mindset creates it. Stuart Biddle and his colleagues measured adolescents' and young adults' mindsets about athletic ability. Those with the fixed mindset were the people who believed that:

- "You have a certain level of ability in sports and you cannot really do much to change that level."
- "To be good at sports you need to be naturally gifted."

In contrast, the people with the growth mindset agreed that:

- "How good you are at sports will always improve if you work harder at it."
- "To be successful in sports, you really need to learn techniques and skills, and practice them regularly."

Those with the growth mindset were the ones who showed the most character or heart. They were the ones who had the minds of champions. What do I mean?Let's look at the findings from these sports researchers and see.

### What Is Success?

**Finding #1: Those with the growth mindset found success in doing their best, in learning and improving.** And this is exactly what we find in the champions.

This idea — that personal success is when you work your hardest to become your best — was central to Wooden's life. In fact, he said, "There were many, many great games that gave me as much pleasure as any of the 10 national championship games we won, simply because we prepared fully and played near our highest level of ability."

### What Is Failure?

**Finding #2: Those with the growth mindset found setbacks motivating.** They're informative. They're a wake-up call.

Only once did Jordan try to coast. It was the year he returned to the Bulls after his stint in baseball, and he learned his lesson. The Bulls were eliminated in the playoffs. "You can't leave and think you can come back and dominate this game. I will be physically and mental-ly prepared from now on," Jordan said. The Bulls won the NBA title in each of the next three years.

### Taking Charge of Success

**Finding #3: People with the growth mindset in sports took charge of the processes that bring success — and that maintain it.**

How come Jordan's skill didn't seem to decline with age? He did lose some stamina and agility with age, but to compensate, he worked even harder on conditioning and on his moves, like the turnaround jump shot and his celebrated fall-away jumper. He came into the league as a slam-dunker and he left as the most complete player ever to grace the game.

## Business: Mindset and Leadership

### Fixed and Growth Mindset Leaders in Action

The fixed mindset feels so stifling. Even when fixed-mindset leaders are globe-trotting and hobnobbing with world figures, their world seems so small because their minds are always on one thing: ***Validate me!***

When fixed-mindset bosses judge people or mete out humiliation, a change comes over a place. Everything starts revolving around pleasing the boss. In *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins notes that in many of his com-parison companies (the ones that didn't go from good to great or that went there and declined again), the leader became the main thing people worried about. "The minute a leader allows himself to become the primary reality, you have a recipe for mediocrity, or worse."

When bosses become controlling or abusive, they put everyone into a fixed mindset. This means that instead of learning, growing and moving the company forward, everyone starts worrying about being judged. It starts with the bosses' worry about being judged, but it winds up being everybody's fear about being judged. It's hard for courage and innovation to survive a company-wide fixed mindset.

When you enter the world of the growth-mindset leaders, everything changes. It brightens, it expands, it fills with energy and possibility. You think, *Gee, that seems like fun!* It has never entered my mind to lead a corporation, but when I learned about what these lead-ers had done, it sounded like the most exciting thing in the world. Growth-mindset leaders start with a belief in human potential and development — both their own and other people's. Instead of using the company as a vehicle for their greatness, they use it as an engine of growth — for themselves, the employees, and the com-pany as a whole.

### Corporate Training: Are Managers Born or Made?

Millions of dollars and thousands of hours are spent each year trying to teach leaders and managers how to coach their employees and give them effective feedback. Yet much of this training is ineffective, and many lead-ers and managers remain poor coaches. Is that because they can't be trained? No, that's not the reason.

Studies by Peter Heslin, Don VandeWalle and Gary Latham show that many managers do not believe in per-sonal change. These fixed-mindset managers simply look for existing talent — they judge employees as competent or incompetent at the start and that's that. They do rela-tively little development coaching and when employees do improve, they may fail to take notice, remaining stuck in their initial impression. What's more, they are far less likely to seek or accept critical feedback from their employees.

Managers with a growth mindset think it's nice to have talent, but that's just the starting point. These man-agers are more committed to their employees' develop-ment and to their own. They give a great deal more developmental coaching advice, they notice improve-ment in employees' performance and they welcome cri-tiques from their employees.

### Are Leaders Born or Made?

When Warren Bennis interviewed great leaders, "They all agreed leaders are made, not born, and made more by themselves than by any external means." Bennis concurred: "I believe ... that everyone, of what-ever age and circumstance, is capable of self-transforma-tion." Not that everyone *will* become a leader. Sadly, most managers and even CEOs become bosses, not lead-ers. They wield power instead of transforming them-selves, their workers and their organizations.

Why is this? Authors John Zenger and Joseph Folkman point out that most people, when they first become managers, enter a period of great learning. They get lots of training and coaching, they are open to ideas, and they think long and hard about how to do their jobs. They are looking to develop. But once they've learned the basics, they stop trying to improve. It may seem like too much trouble, or they may not see where improvement will take them. They are content to do their jobs rather than making themselves into leaders.

Or, as leadership expert Morgan McCall argues, many organizations believe in natural talent and don't look for people with the potential to develop. Not only are these organizations missing out on a big pool of possible lead-ers, but their beliefs in natural talent might actually squash the very people they think are the naturals, mak-ing them into arrogant, defensive nonlearners. The les-son is: Create an organization that prizes the develop-ment of ability — and watch the leaders emerge.

## Relationships: Mindsets in Love (Or Not)

It had to be a person with the fixed mindset who coined the

phrase "Revenge is sweet" — the idea that with revenge comes your redemption — because people with the growth mindset have little taste for it. The sto-ries they tell about rejection are every bit as wrenching, but their reactions couldn't have been more different.

For them, it was about understanding, forgiving and moving on. Although they were often deeply hurt by what hap-pened, they wanted to learn from it. One man said, "That relationship and how it ended really taught me the impor-tance of communicating. I used to think love conquers all, but now I know it needs a lot of help."

For people with the growth mindset, the No. 1 goal was forgiveness. As one woman said: "I'm no saint, but I knew for my own peace of mind that I had to forgive and forget. He hurt me but I had a whole life waiting for me and I'll be damned if I was going to live it in the past. One day I just said, 'Good luck to him and good luck to me.'"

Because of their growth mindset, these individuals did not feel permanently branded. Because of it, they tried to learn something useful about themselves and relation-ships, something they could use toward having a better experience in the future. And they knew how to move on and embrace the future.

### Relationships Are Different

In his study of gifted people, Benjamin Bloom includ-ed concert pianists, sculptors, Olympic swimmers, tennis players, mathematicians, and research neurologists. But not people who were gifted in interpersonal relation-ships. He planned to. After all, there are so many profes-sions in which interpersonal skills play a key role —teachers, psychologists, administrators, diplomats. But no matter how hard Bloom tried, he couldn't find any agreed-upon way of measuring social ability.

Sometimes we're not even sure it's an ability. When we see people with outstanding interpersonal skills, we don't really think of them as gifted. We think of them as cool or charm-ing people. When we see a great marriage relationship, we don't say these people are brilliant rela-tionship makers. We say they're fine people.

Maybe that's why Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* struck such a responsive chord. It said: There are so-cial-emotional skills and I can tell you what they are.

Mindsets add another dimension. They help us under-stand even more about why people often don't learn the skills they need or use the skills they have. Why people throw themselves so hopefully into new relationships, only to undermine themselves. Why love often turns into a battle-field where the carnage is staggering. And, most important, they help us understand why some peo-ple are able to build lasting and satisfying relationships.

## Parents, Teachers and Coaches: Where Do Mindsets Come From?

No parent thinks, "I wonder what I can do today to un-dermine my children, subvert their effort, turn them off learning and limit their achievement." Of course not. They think, "I would do anything, give anything, to make my children successful." Yet many of the things they do boo-merang. Their helpful judgments, their lessons and their motivating techniques often send the wrong message.

In fact, every word and action sends a message. It tells children — or students or athletes — how to think about themselves. It can be a fixed-mindset message that says: *You have permanent traits and I'm judging them. Or it can be a growth-mindset message that says: You are a developing person and I am interested in your development.*

### Messages About Success

It's remarkable how sensitive children are to these messages and how concerned they are about them. Listen for the messages in the following examples:

You learned that so quickly! You're so smart!"

- "Look at that drawing. Martha, is he the next Picasso or what?"
- "You're so brilliant, you got an A without even studying!"

If you're like most parents, you hear these as support-ive, esteem-boosting messages. But listen more closely. See if you can hear another message. It's the one that children hear:

- "If I don't learn something quickly, I'm not smart."
- "I shouldn't try drawing anything hard or they'll see I'm no Picasso."
- "I'd better quit studying or they won't think
- I'm brilliant."

How do I know this? For a long time, I was thinking about all the praise parents were lavishing on their kids in the hope of encouraging confidence and achieve-ment? You're

so smart. You're so talented. You're such a natural athlete. And I thought, wait a minute. Isn't it the kids with the fixed mindset — the vulnerable kids— who are obsessed with this? Wouldn't harping on intelligence or talent make kids — all kids — even more obsessed with it?

That's why we set out to study this. After eight exper-iments with hundreds of children, we had some of the clearest findings I've ever seen: Praising children's intel-ligence harms their motivation and performance. How can that be? Don't children love to be praised?

Yes, children love praise. And they especially love to be praised for their intelligence and talent. It really does give them a boost, a special glow—but only for the moment. The minute they hit a snag, their confidence goes out the window and their motivation hits rock bot-tom. If success meant they were smart, then failure meant they were dumb. That's the fixed mindset.

### Sending Messages About Process and Growth

So what's the alternative to praising talent or intelli-gence? Should we not praise our children enthusiastically when they do something great? Should we try to restrain our admiration for their successes? Not at all. We should keep away from a certain kind of praise —praise that judges their intelligence or talent, or that implies that we're proud of them for their intelligence or talent rather than for the work they put in.

We can praise them as much as we want for the growth-ori-ented process — what they accomplished through practice, study, persistence and good strategies. And we can ask them about their work in a way that admires and appreciates their efforts and choices:

- "That homework was so long and involved. I really admire the way you concentrated and finished it."
- "That picture has so many beautiful colors. Tell me about them."
- You put so much thought into this essay. It really makes me understand Shakespeare in a new way."
- "The passion you put into that piano piece gives me a real feeling of joy. How do you feel when you play it?"

I was excited to learn recently that Haim Ginott, through his lifelong work with children, came to the same conclusion. He writes, "Praise should deal, not with the child's personality attributes, but with his efforts and achievements."

One more thing about praise. When we say to chil-dren, "Wow you did that so quickly!" or "Look, you didn't make any mistakes!" what message are we send-ing? We are telling them that what we prize are speed and perfection. Speed and perfection are the enemy of difficult learning: "If you think I'm smart when I'm fast and perfect, I'd better not take on anything challeng-ing." So what should we say when a child completes a task — say, math problems — quickly and perfectly?Should we deny them the praise they have earned? Yes. When this happens, I say "Whoops. I guess that was too easy. I apologize for wasting your time. Let's do some-thing you can really learn from!"

### Our Legacy

As parents, teachers and coaches, we are entrusted with people's lives. They are our responsibility and our legacy. We now know that the growth mindset has a key role to play in helping us fulfill our mission and in helping *them* fulfill their potential.

## Changing Mindsets: A Workshop

The growth mindset is based on the belief in change, and the most gratifying part of my work is watching people change. Nothing is better than seeing people find their way to things they value. Studies have shown that when manag-ers are taught a growth mindset they become more effective; when students are taught a growth mindset their achieve-ment rises; and when peo-ple in general are taught a growth mindset they take on more challenges, they are more per-sistent in overcoming obstacles and they accomplish more.

Many people with the fixed mindset think the world needs to change, not them. They feel entitled to some-thing better — a better job, house or spouse. The world should recognize their special qualities and treat them accordingly. Imagine yourself in this situation.

***The Dilemma.*** "Here I am," you think, "in this low-level job. It's demeaning. With my talent I shouldn't have to work like this. I should be up there with the big boys, enjoying the good life." Your boss thinks you have a bad attitude. When she needs someone to take on more responsibilities, she doesn't turn to you. When it's time to give out promotions, she doesn't include you.

***The Fixed-Mindset Reaction.*** "She's threatened by me," you say bitterly. Your fixed mindset is telling you that, be-cause of who you are, you should automatically be thrust into the upper levels of the business. In your mind, people should see your talents and reward you. When they don't, it's not

fair. Why should you change?You just want your due.

But putting yourself in a growth mindset, what are some new ways you could think and some steps you could take? For example, what are some new ways you could think about effort and learning? How could you act on this new thinking in your work?

Well, you could consider working harder and being more helpful to people at work. You could use your time to learn more about the business you're in instead of bellyaching about your low status. Let's see how this might look:

***The Growth-Mindset Step.*** But first, let's be clear. For a long time, it's frightening to think of giving up the idea of being superior. An ordinary, run-of-the-mill human being isn't what you want to be. How could you feel good about yourself if you're no more valuable than the people you look down on?

You begin to consider the idea that some people stand out because of their commitment and effort. Little by little you try putting more effort into things and seeing if you get more of the rewards you wanted. You do.

Although you can slowly accept the idea that effort might be *necessary*, you still can't accept that it's no guar-antee. It's enough of an indignity to have to work at things, but to work and still not have them turn out the way you want — now, that's really not fair. That means you could work hard and somebody else could still get the promotion. Outrageous.

It's a long time before you begin to *enjoy* putting in effort and a long time before you begin to think in terms of learning. Instead of seeing your time at the bot-tom of the corporate ladder as an insult, you slowly see that you can learn a lot at the bottom that could help you greatly on your rise to the top. Learning the nuts and bolts of the company could later give you a big advantage. All of our top growth-mindset CEOs knew their companies from top to bottom.

## A New Source of Satisfaction

Instead of seeing your discussions with your colleagues as time spent getting what you want, you begin to grasp the idea of building relationships or even helping your col-leagues develop in ways they value. This can become a new source of satisfaction.

As you become a more growth-minded person, you're amazed at how people start to help and support you. They no longer seem like adversaries out to deny you what you deserve. They're more and more often collab-orators toward a common goal. It's interesting. You started out wanting to change other people's behavior— and you did.

In the end, many people with the fixed mindset under-stand that their cloak of specialness was really a suit of armor they built to feel safe, strong and worthy. While it may have protected them early on, later it constricted their growth, sent them into self-defeating battles and cut them off from satisfying, mutual relationships.

## The Road Ahead

Change can be tough, but I've never heard anyone say it wasn't worth it. Maybe they're just rationalizing, the way people who've gone through a painful initiation say it was worth it. But people who've changed can tell you how their lives have been enhanced. They can tell you about things they have now that they wouldn't have had, and ways they feel now that they wouldn't have felt.

Did changing to a growth mindset solve all my prob-lems? No. But I know that I have a different life because of it — a richer one. And that I'm a more alive, coura-geous and open person because of it.

It's for you to decide whether change is right for you now. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. But either way, keep the growth mindset in your thoughts. Then, when you bump up against obstacles, you can turn to it. It will always be there for you, showing you a path into the future.



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# Motivate This

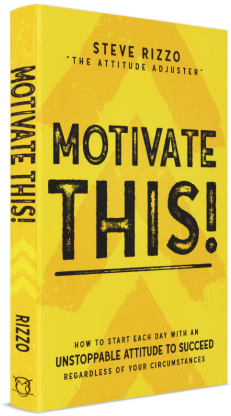
Steve Rizzo

Career and Self-Development

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# Motivate This!

## How to Start Each Day With an Unstoppable Attitude




*by* **Steve Rizzo**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***Motivate This!: How to Start Each Day With an Unstoppable Attitude***, comedian turned motivational speaker and author, Steve Rizzo asks readers to embrace the simple message that attitude is, in fact, everything. If you can do that, you will discover increased productivity, greater enthusiasm, new levels of success, and a higher degree of happiness.

The Common Sense Success Strategies will help you reframe your perspective so that you have the energy, motivation, and positive attitude to succeed despite any circumstances. In short, you will go from "woe is me" to "WOW is me!"

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How your thoughts have a direct impact on your life experiences.
- Why enjoyment makes you more creative, productive, and resilient.
- How to nourish your soul to get a boost of optimism and stay motivated.
- How to bring balance into your life by honoring your cherished values.
- Seven Common-Sense Success Strategies will enable you to start each day with an unstoppable attitude to succeed.

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## It's All About How You Feel

Your beliefs, positive and negative, are formed over a period of time throughout a consistent way of thinking. In other words, your thoughts create your beliefs. Your beliefs cause you to feel a certain way. The feelings you have on any given day, good or bad, dictate the tone of your attitude. The attitude you have on any given day regulates your overall degree of motivation. This entire process eventually leads to the choices you make and the actions you take.

The key to starting your day with an unstoppable attitude to succeed -and to keep that motivation going throughout the day- is to make sure you are feeling good during the process of whatever you are trying to achieve. Feeling good is the fuel that drives motivation.

A State of Feeling Good is the foundation on which everyone should build their business and their life. The way that you feel in any given moment is dependent upon and evoked by what you are thinking or saying out loud in any given moment. Your emotional state is the direct result of your thoughts and the tone of your thoughts becomes your life experience.

View your feelings as an emotional warning system. When you're feeling good and happy, you must be thinking good, positive, and productive thoughts. When you're feeling bad and crappy, you must be thinking bad, negative, and unproductive thoughts. Those feelings trigger sensations that can range from stress, frustration, and self-doubt to fear, anger, hopelessness, despair, and a host of other damaging emotions.

When you're feeling uptight or stressed out or experiencing any negative emotion at all, stop and acknowledge that something is not right in your world. As soon as you become aware of how you are feeling, the negative sensations will temporarily cease. In that moment of awareness, you enter into a whole new world of opportunities where you can choose healthier response alternatives.

## The Wrath of Self-Curse Talk

Nothing can kill motivation and stifle your attitude more than self-curse-talk. The thing to understand about self-curse-talk is that it reflects your internalized negative feelings about yourself rather than an empirical truth. Just because you feel it or say it doesn't make it true but if you believe that it is true, that's all that matters in the world.

Your subconscious does not know the difference between true and false. It cannot make independent judgments and instead understands your thoughts to be what they are-just thoughts. If you do not recognize and squash a negative thought when it pops up, your subconscious takes it as truth, thus affirming that negative feeling and further solidifying a belief system that will have negative consequences. That's what self-curse-talk does. It distorts your reality.

One negative thought can create a pattern of similar thoughts that eventually cause a negative emotional response, setting off unhealthy physiological side effects. You will be in the Negative Zone. Fostering a sense of awareness about this will produce a gradual shift in your way of thinking, which has significant positive mental, emotional, and physiological effects. The power of your beliefs is immense. They can motivate you, lift you up, and take you to the highest highs or they can drag you to the lowest lows.

> Feeling good is the fuel that drives motivation.

## Enjoyment: A Shift into High Gear

Now more than ever, we are having difficulty balancing our lives. Stress and negative emotions can become dangerous mindsets. Without realizing it, we allow enjoyment and our ability to laugh and have fun to become secondary at a time when they're most necessary.

Studies have shown that those who make a conscious choice to enjoy themselves and laugh throughout the day (and it is a choice) are more creative, productive, and resilient. They are also more likely to find solutions to complex problems easily. In other words, focusing on your happiness not only makes you smarter, it shifts motivation into high gear.

We have the power to operate from a position of optimism rather than one of negativity. Don't wait for a problem to be solved or a challenge to go away before you allow yourself to feel good. Don't wait for a goal to be fulfilled to be happy. Learn to exercise positive alternatives that will enable you to feel confident. ***"Don't wait for the storms of your life to pass. Learn to dance in the rain."***

## Nourishing Your Soul

There is a higher part of us, a force, a powerful energy in our lives, and if we adhere to this higher part, then life becomes easier to embrace, both at home and at work. It doesn't really matter what you call this part of yourself (Higher Self, God, the Light, Love, whatever). The name you give it does not diminish its power in your life.

Every time we think, feel, or choose to act in a negative way, we run the risk of separating ourselves from our natural state of joy and inner peace. The price we pay for this is the burning inner conflict that leads to physical duress and a host of mental and emotional disorders.

When alive to the personal identity of the Higher Self, life flows. Life is filled with peace, joy, and laughter because it is possible to fully appreciate who you are. When the Higher Self takes over, any challenge can be met head on, learned from, and life can forge ahead. It is this rock-solid attitude that opens up a motivational reservoir and fosters the soul to grow.

> Don't wait for the storms of your life to pass. Learn to dance in the rain.

- You nourish your soul when you:
- Learn lessons life is trying to teach you.
- Are compassionate, loving, giving, and forgiving,
- Engage in activities that give your life depth, meaning, and joy.
- Are grateful every day for what you have.
- Live in and enjoy the moment.

Nourishing your soul with these and countless other ways replenishes hope and faith and gives you a boost of optimism to stay motivated throughout the day. Your soul can lift you up and take you to the highest of highs but only when you take steps that foster it. If you ignore your soul, it can't help you.

## Honor Your Values

Your personal and professional lives make up the whole of you. If you put most of your time and energy into one area, you run the risk of leaving the other unfulfilled. This is especially common among high achievers. Some examples of cherished values that often become neglected because of our jobs include spending time with family, taking a weekend off without interruption from emails, phones calls, and text messages, or doing things that connect you to your spirit. These cherished values need to be experienced and expressed. They give us self-worth. Ignoring them for too long can only lead to unhappiness, regardless of how prestigious your profession is, how much money you make, or how successful you think you are.

When you are in a situation where you are trying to bring professional and personal balance into your life, ask yourself the three free-will "will" questions. It will reduce the gap between aspiring to be fulfilled and actually feeling fulfilled, thus reducing the risk of burnout.

1. Will there be personal consequences to the choice I'm making?
2. Will this choice affect others, now and in the future?
3. Will this choice make me happy, now and in the future?

## Seven Common-Sense Success Strategies

Employing these seven Common-Sense Success Strategies will enable you to start each day with an unstoppable attitude to succeed and to keep that motivation going throughout the day -every day- regardless of your circumstances.

1. **Shift into a State of Feeling Good as You Go to Sleep:** Every night as you're getting ready to go to bed, spend a few minutes thinking of all the things that you were grateful for during the day. Then, as soon as you get under the covers, relax, take a few deep breaths, and take a few moments to program your subconscious by repeating affirmations that begin with I am and I deserve. For example, I am capable of handling any challenge that comes my way. I deserve to be happy.
2. **Seize the Day:** Whenever you first rise, set your men-

tal stage and emotional gauge to feel good. Know that the creation of your day is about to begin and that you alone are its creator. Your first decision as creator is to focus on the things that please you and the things that you are grateful for.

3. **Unleash the Power of Your Humor Being:** The initiative and proficiency by which you utilize your sense of humor comes from your Humor Being. Take time every day to find the laughter within you and all around you. The easiest way to do this is to make fun of your own frustration. What's important is not necessarily to be funny in a stressful situation but rather to see the funny in a stressful situation. Or to allow yourself to step away temporarily from stressful moments and seek the laughter in other aspects of your life.
4. **Ignite Your Passion and Enthusiasm:** Enjoyment is the spark that ignites passion and enthusiasm. Get out of bed, plant your feet on the ground, and declare to the entire universe, "I'm going to enjoy this day!" and "I choose to be happy now!" Allow yourself to let go and have a BLAST with this. Whether you're in an up or down period, remind yourself that feeling good and cultivating true happiness (and inner peace) are your top priorities.
5. **Visualize and It Will Materialize:** Visualization is the application of your given gift of imagination to your faith and confidence. You can use it to discover ways to work through tough times, rise above your problems, and see the possibilities of a solution. It can also be used in the process of healing or to manifest a particular desire. Feel the things you desire with your heart and soul. Feel and experience the emotions as if you already have what you want.
6. **Meditate to Motivate:** Meditation is a very powerful activity that connects you to a higher part of yourself. There are many different types of meditation techniques, but the main goal is to train your mind so you can become aware and at peace in your surroundings. Take a few moments throughout the day to quiet and manage your mind through meditation. Notice how much better you feel and how empowered you become.
7. **Power Shift Your Focus:** Nothing in life is permanent, and our success and happiness depend on our ability to ride these waves of change with equanimity. Happy, successful, and optimistic people are not exempt from trials and tribulations. What they all have in common, though, is their uncanny ability to shift their focus to a higher part of themselves. This is called a Power Shift in Focus and it can have a profound effect on how you cope with any challenge and help you understand the great duality of life.

***Motivate This!*** will help you reframe your perspective so that you have the energy, motivation, and positive attitude to succeed despite any circumstances. In short, you will go from "woe is me" to "WOW is me!"



Steve Rizzo, affectionately known as the "Attitude Adjuster," provides the skills organizations need to get to a better place at work and in life. Once a national headliner with opening acts like Drew Carey, Rosie O'Donnell and Dennis Miller, this former stand-up comedian takes motivation and confidence-building to a whole new level.

Rizzo walked away from his stellar success to positively impact others, sharing his blueprint for realizing dreams, achieving personal excellence and attaining professional satisfaction.

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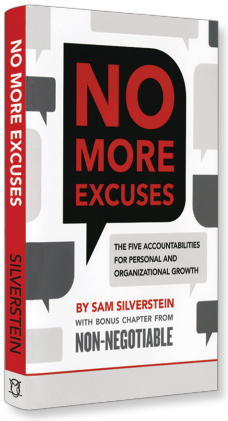
# No More Excuses

Sam Silverstein

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# No More Excuses

## The Five Accountabilities for Personal and Organizational Growth




*by* **Sam Silverstein**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

***No More Excuses*** is a way of looking at the world—a standard to which we hold ourselves and others accountable. It's a strategy that attracts others to us, because accountability is a universal trait of admired people. ***No More Excuses*** is not a slogan. It is a competitive choice.

***No More Excuses*** is about closing the gap between where we are and where we could be as individuals and as organizations. We can do this by learning and applying, on a personal level, the five critical principles that support an expanding "Accountability Zone" that has us at the very center. Author Sam Silverstein challenges us to expand our Accountability Zone by embracing the Five Accountabilities: right things, new space, process, expectations, and relationships.

Using interviews with Highly Accountable People from all walks of life including corporate CEOs, politicians, professional athletes, educators and more, Silverstein shows how the Five Accountabilities can be used to open doors, take advantage of new opportunities, and expand Accountability Zones in our lives, careers and our organizations.

***No More Excuses*** gives us the tools we need to design and live an excuse-free life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To align your strategic intent with doing your right thing.
- To evaluate and optimize your space for growth.
- How to lead from the future instead of being stuck in the past.

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### Introduction

Every meaningful achievement and every great organization starts with an individual who has established a personal Accountability Zone—a place where transparency is high, the values are clear, and the commitment to the Five Accountabilities is unmistakable.

## The 1st Accountability: Doing the Right Things

Be accountable for doing the right things. This means ethical execution of the activities that will support the goals you have chosen for yourself.

### Strategic Intent

Silverstein relates the story of Mount Everest explorer, Ronnie Muhl. Muhl told him, "One of the things that climbing Mt. Everest does for you is help you get very clear about what you should be doing and what you shouldn't be doing. Because so much of what you do has such direct impact on whether you live or die, you have to do the right things, and you have to do that consistently. … You get into the habit of asking yourself, 'If my life depended on the next action I took, how differently would I perform that action?'—because doing the wrong thing can have massive consequences."

How do we know what our own right things are? By asking a critical question, "Is what I am doing right now supporting my own strategic intent?" Strategic intent is nothing more or less than a driving goal, passion, or purpose that we are motivated to pursue at the level of excellence. On the individual level, strategic intent is that which you are personally most committed to making happen in your life at the level of excellence.

John Hannah held the strategic intent to become the best offensive lineman in the National Football League. He achieved that goal. How did he do it? In part, by using a single stance to throw off his opponents about what he was planning. He pursued that goal by studying game films for hours on end so that he could uncover opportunities that didn't look like opportunities to most people. He found his right thing, and that aligned with his personal goal of being the best offensive lineman in the NFL. It was something he was willing to pursue and execute at the level of excellence.

### Know Your Right Thing

We are each accountable for doing the right things consistently in life. If something is not working at the level of excellence for us, that fact is our responsibility and no one else's. That means choosing activities that support our strategic intent.

Once we have settled on a goal that makes sense for us, we must be relentless in pursuing the answer to this question, "What can I do consistently, with a commitment to excellence, that will make it easier to achieve this goal sooner rather than later?" We must pose this question for ourselves as individuals and for any people who are looking to us as a leader.

## The 2nd Accountability: Managing Your Space

We must be accountable to ourselves to create the new space we need to grow and innovate in our own lives, which sometimes means taking space from something else that we're doing. No one else is going to do that for us, and if we don't do it, it won't get done.

Be accountable for managing your space for new opportunities. This means being willing to step away from things that are working, even though they may be familiar, to make room for something that may work better.

Silverstein tells the story of finding space in his closet for a new and much-desired coat given to him by his daughter. "I went to put the big down jacket into my hall closet where all my other coats were stored. Guess what? It wouldn't fit. I began to wonder something. Why hadn't I gotten rid of some of those coats—thrown them away or given them to charity—years ago? The answer was that I had simply gotten used to seeing them each time I opened that closet door. I started pulling out old jackets that I didn't wear anymore and putting them into a big pile to give to a local charity. I just had to clear out the old stuff so that I could make room for the new stuff, the stuff that really mattered to me."

Your personal priorities must be based on your optimum choices, which are not necessarily your most familiar choices. Ask yourself, "If I finished my work by noon and I still had to do something productive for the afternoon, what would that something be?" What would you do with that time that could produce even greater results for you? We are each accountable for asking the questions that allow us to manage our own space.

### Ask What If?

We are accountable to ask what if. We are responsible to explore where we can create space that could be filled with something that could offer a greater yield.

A few years ago, Apple, the dominant player in the personal music player category at the time, dropped its best-selling product, the iPod Mini. Why? Because they were launching a brand-new product that took the iPod experience to another level: the iPod Nano. Most businesses would have been extremely hesitant to simply jettison a profitable product, let alone a category leader, regardless of what they had on the drawing board at the time. Apple was different. Why?

The answer: Apple's business philosophy was based on creating new space. The company's stated operating principle was that they would rather make themselves obsolete than watch the competition do it!

## The 3rd Accountability: Managing the Process

Managing the process is what happens when our strategic intent faces an obstacle, and we still move forward to take creative action toward attaining the goal. Effective people and effective organizations accept full accountability for managing the process rather than let unforeseen obstacles and unanticipated events manage them.

When the lives of the Apollo 13 astronauts were in grave and immediate danger, NASA didn't throw up its collective hands and say, "Well, I guess a successful outcome to this mission just wasn't meant to be." Why are so many people ready to relinquish their accountability for managing the process when they hit obstacles that are far less daunting?

To provide that kind of leadership, we must model the skill of thinking and acting creatively. Following the most familiar set of instructions wouldn't have gotten the Apollo 13 astronauts home safely, and it won't get your team past the many unpredictable challenges they will encounter.

### Examine Near Misses

One big asset in managing the process is close analysis of the phenomenon known as a near miss. The near miss idea applies not only to processes that affect human safety but to every undertaking with the potential to affect our strategic intent. That means we want to know about the sales that were nearly lost, the defective units that were nearly shipped, the P.R. disaster that nearly played out.

If we are truly accountable, we will recognize these events for the blessings in disguise that they are. Near misses tell us where there are likely to be challenges that keep us from realizing our strategic intent.

## The 4th Accountability: Establishing the Right Expectations

Expectations are the targets we set for ourselves. Once we accept them, they determine our actions, our outlook, and our destinies. They create our world.

### Mutual Expectations

Sometimes, when people think of accountability, they think of the traumatic experience of being held accountable to someone else's goal. Silverstein tells a story from his window business.

Competition was squeezing the production timeline. There had to be a better process. He could have mandated the new process. But, he took a different approach and got a better outcome. His team focused on developing shared expectations based on the situation being faced, the true capacities, and the company's strategic intent.

Instead of his holding them accountable for a goal that they had no role in shaping, he asked the team some questions: "What are all the steps in the process of making a window, and how long does each step take?"

Silverstein knew that just setting the target was not enough. He had to give his employees ownership of what was going to happen on the production floor. They had to feel empowered and challenged by the new goal, and they had to decide for themselves that the goal was realistic.

Without shared expectations, the production process had rambled aimlessly. With shared expectations, a quality product was manufactured in a much shorter period of time, and the customers were happier. What allowed them to turn things around? It was the ability to set and act on mutual expectations and the willingness to give the team both the responsibility and the authority they needed to do the job.

### Stretch Your Expectations

We have to be extremely careful with expectations, because if we're not careful, we can train ourselves to build our expectations around what was possible for us. That is very different from what is possible! The present and the future may have entirely different requirements than those faced in the past, and our own capacities may be far greater than we realize.

What are you using to establish your expectations—your goals for yourself and your organization? If it's past prec-

edent, or what you've always been able to do before, your expectations may not reflect your true potential, either as an individual or as an organization.

## The 5th Accountability: Contributing to Your Relationships

The final accountability involves our relationships with others and with the larger world. Success means managing our relationships. This depends entirely on the quality of our contributions.

Stop and think about any great accomplishment or positive event in your life. Whether it was your graduation, a promotion, or starting your own company, you didn't experience it entirely on your own. Whatever that achievement or positive experience was, it involved someone else.

Our accountabilities to manage our relationships come in two big categories. First, we need to contribute to our relationships with family, friends, and business associates. This falls under the heading of *personal accountability*. We also need to contribute to our relationships with the larger world in which we live. This is *social accountability*. The secret of successful relationship management in terms of both personal and social accountability can be summed up in one word: give.

How do you treat the key relationships in your life? Do you look for reasons to give? Or, do you look for reasons to give because you feel you owe someone something? There's a big difference. The kind of giving that supports relationships is the giving that doesn't think about what's gone before or what's likely to come back in return.

### Your Sphere of Contribution

Building relationships is about choices, and the choices should always be based on your values. To get a fix on your values, ask yourself, "How can I best serve this relationship in the short term and the long term?" Posing that question on a consistent basis allows you to create a group of values-based connections—this is your sphere of contribution.

Keep giving to the people in your sphere. Give time, give energy, give thought, and give care. The relationships will grow. Don't worry about what's coming back to you. Get better at giving than anyone else. This is one of the classic secrets of leadership. Someone always has to start digging the well. If you stop and take a look around, you'll realize there are a lot of wells waiting to be dug.

You can begin the job of building a more accountable world by building a more accountable you. That means practicing and implementing what you've learned here about right things, new space, managing the process, establishing expectations, and contributing to relationships. It means reaching the point in your life where you can say, "No More Excuses! I'm not going to make excuses, and I'm not going to buy excuses, and I want the world to know that." Remember that accountability is not a consequence—accountability is your competitive advantage!



Sam Silverstein is founder and CEO of Sam Silverstein Enterprises, Inc., a think tank dedicated to helping companies create an organizational culture that prioritizes and inspires accountability. He is both a sought-after speaker and the author of several books including ***Non-Negotiable*** and ***Making Accountable Decisions***. He is an internationally recognized consultant, coach, and business advisor. A past president of The National Speakers Association, his client list includes such organizations as AFLAC, Lucent Technologies, the National Association of Home Builders, Prudential Insurance Company, and the United States Postal Service.

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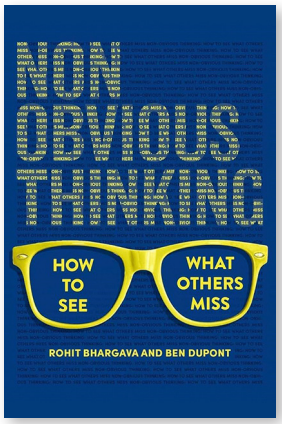
# Non-Obvious Thinking

Rohit Bhargava, Ben duPont

Executive Book Summaries®

# Non-Obvious Thinking

## How to See What Others Miss




*by* **Rohit Bhargava and Ben duPont**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The goal of this book is to teach you how to overcome blind spots and become a more original thinker. The authors call this "non-obvious thinking." In ***Non-Obvious Thinking: How To See What Others Miss***, the argument is made that often the best ideas come from unexpected voices, the non-experts who bring an outsider's perspective.

At a time when social media algorithms fuel deep polarization in our society, our culture is desperate for more non-obvious thinkers. Old solutions for new problems rarely work. We need people who see what others don't, ask questions, and push back against the obvious status quo—people who have the empathy to put themselves in other people's shoes without dismissing alternate perspectives as misguided.

The world needs more non-obvious thinkers. Non-obvious thinkers are the instigators who come up with bold, original ideas that propel all of us forward—and have the courage and determination to turn them into reality. They are the ones who change things for the better. And every country on Earth is hungry for more of them. You can become one. This book will show you how.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Discover how to create space for innovative thinking.
- Learn strategies to uncover hidden insights.
- Explore techniques to focus and sharpen your ideas.
- Transform your ideas by adding a unique twist and an unexpected approach.

## Part One: Create Space

Creating space goes beyond simply producing more time for contemplation. Sometimes it also involves creating the physical space to have new ideas. Or being more productive with the free time you do have so you can invest it in ways that can help you open your mind into unexplored directions and be more receptive to non-obvious insights.

Yes, having more time can help. But cultivating more mental agility to truly benefit from this additional space is the real cornerstone of non-obvious thinking, and it requires more than just reducing clutter or clearing your to-do list. In this section, you will learn proven techniques to create space, starting with something that you do every day but hardly ever think about.

### Start With Breathing

For an instinctual human function fundamental to life, surprising new science suggests we have much to learn about what good breathing truly means. Without proper breathing, our thinking can remain constrained and obvious. Shallow breathing can often lead to shallow thinking too. Breathing may be something we do every day, but most of us have never learned how to do it "right."

Breathing with purpose helps you do everything else with purpose too, which makes it the ideal first step to create the space required for non-obvious thinking to happen.

### Ditch Your Prebuttals

A prebuttal is a counterargument to what someone might say before they ever say it. It is the equivalent of shouting your disagreement with an unspoken idea, effectively shutting down any chance for genuine dialogue.

Prebuttals declare to the world that instead of choosing to listen and think, those who employ them believe that their perspective is the only one that matters.

Prebuttals are a lazy coping mechanism that can lead anyone toward a more narrow-minded perspective.

Human interactions aren't meant to be battlegrounds where you argue until you win. They can be opportunities to understand and see things you might have otherwise missed … if you let them.

### Make Oasis Moments

An oasis moment offers refuge from the usual noise and chaos of the everyday, allowing for reflection and open-mindedness.

Taking a short break from a chaotic situation, even just for a few minutes, can help prevent overstimulation at the wrong moment. In her popular book *Quiet*, author Susan Cain explains that one key difference between introverts and extroverts is the amount of stimulation they deem comfortable. While each of us has different ideal levels of stimulation, we all reach a point when we must regroup and quiet ourselves to recharge.

Finding "oasis moments" where you can slow down and reflect for a few minutes is the ideal way to create space in unusually crowded or busy moments.

### Embrace Danger

Embrace danger and invite friction into your life to heighten your awareness and build resilience.

When we bubble-wrap our world to make it ultra-safe or super-easy (or both), we risk losing the ability to learn from the mistakes we never make.

Embracing opportunities to take risks and make mistakes, on the other hand, opens you to push your own mental and physical boundaries. When we are in this heightened state of awareness from a hazardous situation, we are more likely to see things we otherwise would have ignored.

Taking more chances is not about recklessly careening ourselves down the equivalent of an icy road without a seat belt. Rather, it is about creating more space for experimentation and saying yes to more unfamiliar experiences.

### Change Your Rituals

What you do first in the morning matters—which is why everyone seems to have an opinion about it. Although experts may offer different advice about morning rituals, they seem to align on one suggestion: For any of these daily habits to work, you must stick to them. Consistency is key. Or is it?

To avoid getting stuck in a mental rut, try something different in the first moments of your day. Rituals are often presented as going hand in hand with perseverance and dedication.

While morning rituals do have the potential to evolve into positive habits, they can also get us into a mental rut. As they harden into rigid routines, they can have the effect of setting our brains on autopilot. And when we are in this sort of instinctual mode, we stop thinking. If what we do first in the morning matters, starting every day in the same way can make non-obvious thinking much harder.

Uncovering an insight can afford a new way to understand behaviors, habits, and perspectives.

Here's an alternative way to think about starting your day: What if you treated your morning rituals as a series of experiments? For a week, try drinking chai instead of coffee. Or charge your phone in a different location out of reach from where you sleep.

Instead of starting this morning in automatic mode, you can send a powerful signal to your mind that this is a day to be engaged and receptive to new perspectives and ideas.

### Allow Time Spaciousness

Practicing time spaciousness can help you avoid feeling constantly hurried or pressured by time constraints.

Perhaps the most widely read self-help book ever written, Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, only happened after a literary agent finally convinced a reluctant Carnegie to publish the book after years of persistence. By the time the book came out in 1936, Carnegie had been teaching his signature course on public speaking and human relations for 24 years.

When it debuted, it was an instant hit, going on to sell more than 30 million copies worldwide and becoming one of the bestselling books of all time.

Allowing for more time spaciousness, like being more patient, can be challenging because it demands that we ignore some of the pressure the world puts on our shoulders. Giving yourself more time starts with the mental permission to slow down without feeling that any self-imposed pause is a failure.

## Part Two: Uncover Insights

An insight is a surprising truth that explains why things are the way they are.

Often, insights come from deep listening, research, or analysis. Occasionally they get illustrated in cleverly conceived and effective advertising stunts. But the common starting point for insights is observation.

Uncovering an insight can afford a new way to understand behaviors, habits, and perspectives. In this section, you'll learn techniques to help you make and explore your own interesting observations and transform them into insights, starting with a better technique for listening that will evolve the way you approach any conversation.

### Ask Story Questions

If you could take a master class in asking questions, Jacqui Banaszynski might be the ideal person to lead it. Banaszynski has inspired aspiring journalists for decades with her methods.

One of the many techniques she teaches students is avoiding pre-scripted interview questions. Instead, she suggests a dynamic, circular technique that involves crafting each subsequent question of an interview based on the answer received to the previous question. The goal of this approach is to shift the focus away from looking for answers to eliciting stories instead.

Asking questions that elicit stories rather than answers leads to more interesting observations.

### Hone Your Nunchi

Understanding what others think and feel without asking them directly is a familiar skill in Korean culture. Known as nunchi, this 5,000-year-old form of emotional intelligence is essential to navigating social pressures and sensitive topics.

In Japan, there is a similar concept called kuuki wo yomu, which roughly translates to "reading the air" or being able to discern the unspoken meaning behind what people say and do.

Both philosophies operate on the principle that what is being said or done explicitly doesn't always reflect or match the actual meaning, deeper emotions, or intentions of others. The practice of reading body language is also based on this idea: our physical actions reveal cues about our feelings that our words do not. Similarly, police interrogators have also learned to detect signs of lying by looking for subconscious bodily cues. Unusual rises or falls in vocal tones, non-congruent gestures (like nodding yes while saying no), and covering one's mouth while speaking are all telltale signs someone could be lying.

Being able to gauge the unspoken thoughts, feelings, and intentions of others opens a window into layers of meaning

others often miss. In Western cultures, where directness is both expected and respected, learning to read the air and becoming better at reading body language can also supercharge your ability to uncover insights.

It is like having access to the emotional subtitles of a situation, offering you an understanding and perspective that others who are less attuned will miss.

Some neurodiverse individuals do have difficulty seeing these social cues for reasons outside their control, but even those who struggle to read social cues can improve their social skills through direct instruction.

This neurodiversity can also create perspectives that allow people to see or experience the world in entirely different and nuanced ways that most others are missing.

### Get Your Hands Dirty

When we immerse ourselves in tasks we typically don't do, we can gain a deeper understanding of the processes, intricacies, and challenges involved. We also build empathy for the people who are doing those tasks.

Doing something yourself offers invaluable lessons you may not learn through observation alone.

### Spot Natural Wisdom

Tapping into nature's wisdom can open the door to discovering new insights from unexpected sources around us.

Observing nature's patterns—such as the changing seasons or the life cycles of plants—can offer ideas for how we might deal with or manage change ourselves. Nature can be a profound source of insight and inspiration at every level and often has been in the past.

For example, seeing various animals and their methods of camouflage to hide from predators has inspired a wide range of gear for military uses and outdoor enthusiasts also looking to disguise themselves in the wild.

By cultivating a practice of mindful observation of the natural world, we can harness its wisdom and gain unexpected insights to help solve any challenge we are facing. The key is taking time to notice these easy-to-ignore clues that have been there all along.

### Find the Right Room

Sometimes the best way to uncover insights is to be part of the right room so you can be inspired by the right people.

How to do this? Attend think sessions - or host your own. Expand your professional development by joining a friend to attend an event about their passion which you know little about. Sometimes finding the right room just requires opening a nearby door instead of walking right past it.

### Step Into Others' Shoes

Magazines and immersive experiences offer a uniquely captivating glimpse into the passions of people different from you. Beyond print media, digital media can also offer similar and even more immersive ways to extend your understanding of others.

Virtual reality, in particular, has been lauded as an "empathy engine" thanks to its visceral ability to help users shift their perspective and take on someone else's. Today, users can don a headset to immerse themselves in a virtual experience that simulates being a refugee in a holding camp or a prisoner incarcerated in solitary confinement.

Media and experiences like these can help us understand the lives and circumstances of others in an intensely human and unforgettable way. They pave the way for feeling genuine empathy for their lived experience in a way that reading an article about them or watching a documentary may not.

Being able to step into unfamiliar shoes allows us to think beyond our assumptions, biases, and limitations, opening us up to see what we might miss otherwise.

## Part Three: Focus Your Ideas

Focus also involves a similar process of distillation. Our favorite analogy to describe this is through a term that is usually associated with museums: curation. The art of curation is about discerning what is most meaningful.

In this section, we'll show you how to focus your ideas on what's most important so you can become a speed understander for yourself.

### Identify the Real Problem

Often, the path to non-obvious thinking starts with focusing on solving the right problem.

Building your skills to dig deeper to spot and spend your attention on those masked issues is a skill often associated with consultants. What they do is ask smart questions and learn from the answers to identify the real problem where they should spend their focus.

Learning when to appreciate when an idea is good enough instead of always seeking more options can be the key to focus.

### Discover the Water

A cornerstone of the search for alien life is the "Goldilocks zone," a term first coined more than fifty years ago to describe the theory that every star in the galaxy must have a region where conditions are neither too hot nor too cold—but just right—to sustain liquid water, which is still believed to be a prerequisite for all organic life (as we know it) to exist.

Pinpointing a common element among ideas can help you zero in on the bigger picture.

Seek that common element among your insights to focus on what really matters. That is how you find your water.

### Be A Satisficer

Barry Schwartz's *The Paradox of Choice* stunned the business world by suggesting that too many choices can diminish happiness and cause anxiety. One of the main points of the book is that people are maximizers or satisficers, depending on the situation.

Maximizers "seek and accept only the best," and they also score high on the regret scale. Even when they end up with a decision or outcome that is objectively better, they often struggle to be happy with their choices.

In contrast, satisficers "settle for something that is good enough and don't worry about the possibility that there might be something better." And, interestingly, satisficers are just as discriminating as maximizers.

Learning to appreciate when an idea is good enough instead of always seeking more options can be the key to focus.

Besides helping you avoid decision paralysis, a satisficer mindset allows you to focus on an idea without regrets and devote yourself to fully understanding and developing it - and perhaps seeing something in the process others have missed.

### See the Other Side

There is more than one way to see something; seeing it from a different perspective is the real challenge. In the famous "duck or rabbit" and "Magic Eye" optical illusions, the most important thing is not which side of the optical illusion you see first or even how quickly you can find the hidden message in the Magic Eye, but if you even see it.

And whether you can appreciate the perspective of those who seem certain everyone is just pretending to see something and there is actually nothing there at all.

### Add Constraints

Constraints can force you to be more creative by pushing you to do more with less. As you turn your attention to curating your ideas, consider imposing a few creative constraints of your own. When you are forced to innovate with less, you can focus your thinking in new and interesting ways.

### Use Augmented Creativity

Seeking collaboration partners (human or technical) to enhance your creative output can help you focus. Today, there are many ways to automate creative augmentation using generative artificial intelligence tools (Gen AI).

As Gen AI continues to become a larger part of our daily lives, workplaces, and any new professional tasks, the challenge to integrate and benefit from it in productive and ethical ways will become more urgent.

Yet if you learn to do it well, you will find yourself able to harness a superpower that makes you more productive, creative, and prolific.

## Part Four: Define the Twist

The final stage of our method, defining the twist, is about using your insights to create or imagine something new and original that no one else can or has before. Defining the twist is about taking your ideas in an unexpected direction. The twist is where the magic happens, where non-obvious thinking becomes concrete and actionable.

### Seek Flip Solutions

Flip the rules upside down to intentionally challenge conventional wisdom and do the opposite of what others do.

### Find Option C

Avoiding limited two-option thinking can help you arrive at nuanced, original third options that others are unable to imagine.

### Practice Enigmatology

Developing your ideas with a puzzle maker's mindset allows you to make the known unknown (and irresistible) again. Using enigmatology means drawing inspiration from what is already there and then applying a twist to make it unique and lasting.

### Think Un-Whatever

Defining your thinking and ideas as the opposite of the status quo can successfully offer a twist that sets them apart. Ask yourself, "what is the argument that no one else in my field would ever make?" The answer might lead you in a fascinating, non-obvious direction.

### Mind the Intersections

Examining the intersection of markets and industries might help you spot a non-obvious solution or idea. Seeking intersections can help you define a twist in your thinking and lead to a new combined direction that is better than its components.

### Create Your Argot

The words you use can help your ideas stand out as non-obvious or be dismissed as stale and obvious. Words often enter mainstream culture after starting as an argot - the lingo used by a particular group. Creating your own argot can be a powerful way to define an idea uniquely. This book and our philosophy are also examples of the power of an intentional argot.

Non-Obvious is the word and brand we chose to describe the sort of thinking we want to see more of in the world.

Non-obvious thinking often requires questioning the things we know so we can broaden and shift our perspective. Opening your mind to see other perspectives takes bravery. Choosing to engage with people unlike yourself or seeking information that is outside your usual media diet does too.

More than anything else, this book is about unlocking this sort of mental courage in yourself and using it to see the things that others miss. That's what non-obvious thinkers do, and the more of us there are in the world, the better the future will be.





Rohit Bhargava is on a mission to help the world be more open-minded by teaching others how to be non-obvious thinkers. He is the founder of the Non-Obvious Company and previously spent 15 years leading brand strategy for large global brands while at Leo Burnett and Ogilvy. Ben Dupont is co-Founder and Partner at Chartline Capital Partners venture capital fund that invests in B2B software companies. He co-founded yet2, an Open Innovation company in1999.

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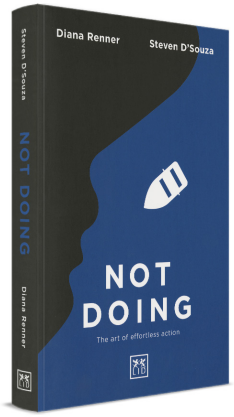
# Not Doing

Diana Renner and Steven D·Souza

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# Not Doing

## The Art of Turning Struggle into Ease




*by* **Diana Renner and Steven D'Souza**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We live in a world of constant busyness and striving that in myriad ways makes us feel compelled to push, control, and work harder. Too often this leads to exhaustion, burnout, worsening health, and diminished relationships.

***Not Doing: The Art of Turning Struggle into Ease*** describes and gives many examples of the philosophy of Not Doing. It suggests that we go with, rather than against, the flow, working in harmony with the natural energy around us. By effortlessly adapting to the environment, like the river that wends its way from spring to ocean, we can discover a new way of living, working, and succeeding, so that our action can sustain us, our organizations, and our environment for generations to come.

Diana Renner and Steven D'Souza, with more than 30 years' experience between them, consult, coach, facilitate, and train on a diverse range of leadership and management development programs. They wrote Not Doing to propose an antidote to a harmful narrow view about how we get things done.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The symptoms of a kind of doing that lead to exhaustion and burnout.
- How our ways of doing are often dysfunctional and counterproductive.
- The negative capabilities that are important to develop.
- How to improve your life with Not Doing—going with rather than against.

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

Coping with the complexity and uncertainty in the modern world is challenging. We might feel that despite our best efforts, we are

- making no progress in our work
- tempted to find a quick fix or jump into action
- overwhelmed by strong feelings, like anxiety or anger
- excessively busy
- lacking in joy and fulfillment

These are symptoms of a kind of doing that is not tuned in and working with the dynamics and energies of the system of which we are part. When we resist or try to control it, this can lead to exhaustion and the destruction of our health and well-being. To learn and grow, we have to surrender to the currents in the ocean, tap into their energy, and follow their lead. This is called Not Doing, which is not inaction or passivity; It is allowing and going with, rather than against, so it requires less energy and more awareness of the context in which we are working.

## The Dysfunctions of Doing

We live in a get-things-done world. We speed up and jump into action without taking time to think because we are faced with so much that is unknown. Too much busyness can become counterproductive, resulting in exhaustion, ineffectiveness, mistakes, and despair. Burnout symptoms lead the body and emotional system to operate in survival mode and ultimately shut down.

### Why We Do What We Do

In an achievement-oriented culture, the default focus is on the output—how much we are doing rather than what it achieves. Our dysfunctional relationship with doing is shaped by the economic myth—bigger, or more, is better.

When we manage other people, we can feel a strong expectation to provide answers and lead the way with confidence and certainty, even as we question our ability or responsibility to do so. When we feel overburdened, pressured to do more, and unable to ask for help, it is likely that we have taken on too much.

### Negative Capabilities

Waiting, patience, observing, and listening, are based on Not Knowing and Not Doing. Negative capabilities like these have low status in the workplace but are the very capabilities we should foster to make progress and facilitate the space for learning and growth—the space between doing nothing and overdoing.

## Let the Mud Settle

### Pause

Pausing, whether something life forces us to do or a choice we make, is an effective intervention to break momentum and create benefits we would otherwise not enjoy, including space for regrouping and reflecting before reacting.

### Create Space

A leader who creates space allows for different inputs, ideas, and experiences to emerge. The negative capability of creating space can be fostered in the workplace by valuing, creating, holding, and protecting the space between the words we speak, meetings we attend, and projects we manage; by not acting when we feel the urge to step in and fix; and by letting go of the need to control everything.

### Presence

If we can let the mud settle, we can become present to the current, sensing the flow, keenly aware of the forces at work. Presence is a way to engage with, tap into, and benefit from our environment.

### Silence

We are so addicted to busyness that we crowd out the internal voice, the subtle messages, the unconscious stories that we may need to hear. In silence, we can have an increased awareness of our own discomfort, our anger or frustration, our fear or nervousness.

### Solitude

Solitude has many benefits, such as creativity, intimacy, and spirituality. Solitude is about creating the experience of space and freedom, despite the constraints of roles and expectations of the outside world.

### Wait

We do everything we can to evade experiences of passivity and waiting, with our emphasis on activity and control. Rather than avoiding the discomfort, we can wait for new information to evolve, ideas to gestate, opportunities to appear, resources to become available, and relationships to develop.

### Deep Listening

Listening is undervalued and underutilized in the fast-paced world of work. Deep listening is a crucial skill when operating in complex and uncertain environments. In the absence of words and the compulsion to speak, through the quality of our attention and listening, we can have a positive impact on the world around us.

### Boredom

With boredom, as with the blank page that confronts a writer, there is great possibility. The individual allows nothingness to flow through them until new ideas and imagination emerge. If we give our brain space and time away from doing, we make space for ideas to take shape, filter through the noise, and reach our consciousness.

### Sanctuary

We need a sanctuary where we can find some space, protected from all the pressures of the roles we have in our lives.

## Let Go of the Shore

### Step Back

Stepping back temporarily is useful when people expect immediate action or when we feel pressure to solve problems quickly. It allows us to spend more time understanding the problem, collecting further information, and exploring alternative interventions.

### Let Go

Whenever we go through a period of change, or grapple with a complex problem or decision, we come face-to-face with the unknown. At this point, when we find ourselves at the edge, we need to let go of the certain and familiar, trust, and be open to new possibilities.

### Unlearn the Doing Instinct

We need to accept that uncertainty cannot be managed and unlearn the doing instinct. Old habits can be changed by slowing down, pausing, and becoming present to ourselves and our context.

### Get Out of the Way

In embracing Not Doing, we need to have courage to break the rules that get in people's way, regardless of the perceived risks. Leadership is about enabling people to learn and grow without assuming that we know best, without interfering in their process.

### Being There

Just being with someone can have a significant impact, beyond helping, advising, or solving problems. It forms a space—a negative capability—that has the capacity to contain the anxieties of a situation.

### Refrain from Reacting

Refraining from action can at times be the most compassionate thing to do. The danger in rescuing is that it has the potential to place the other person in a position of dependence, getting in thse way of learning and interfering in a process we have no way of fully understanding.

### Yield to Overcome

When someone is attacking us with words, how we stand, listen, and respond is key. Meeting force with force is not effective. If we are aggressive in the workplace, others will react by resisting our suggestions. We can relax in tough situations and yield like water, finding a different way to flow around the stone.

### Say No

For most of us, the ability to say no doesn't come naturally, especially if we value being helpful or being the go-to person or we associate meeting expectations with achievement and success. We need to learn what lies behind our impulse to say yes to learn how to say no respectfully and confidently.

### Less Is More

A minimalist approach is essential to working in complex systems characterized by flux and unpredictability, no right answers, emergent patterns, and many competing ideas. Attempts to make big changes in the workplace often result in unintended consequences that are negative, whereas small changes will accomplish more positive results.

## The River Knows its Destination

### Follow the Current

Following the current allows us to trust the creative process to unfold as a journey, recognizing that there may be several twists and turns along the way. Paradoxically, by not being attached to our goals, by holding them lightly, and focusing instead on the process, we can yield more effective, successful, and enduring results.

### Wandering

If we trust in the river's course, we can let go of the need to reach a destination and replace fear and control with curiosity. The less travelled pathway with its surprising twists and unexpected vistas may lead to more insights than a known highway if we are open to the learnings along the way.

### Let Things Emerge

When we are confronted with challenges and blockages, we can simply accept them as the river accepts the rocks and boulders in its way. We can observe the terrain, the natural patterns in our environment, becoming the soft around the hard, turning obstacles into opportunities.

### Active Surrender

In a world that values pushing through and working harder to get things done, what may enable us to be more effective is to actively surrender to what is happening right now, rather than resist or use more effort than required.

### Stillness within Action

In order to experience stillness, it isn't always necessary to stop. Not Doing is about carrying stillness within as we go about our activities. Not Doing is not inactivity or passivity. It is following the natural pace in our environment.

### Embodied Action

In our culture, which privileges the rational over the somatic and emotional, many of us live disembodied lives. Reading the environment is a key skill in dealing with complex situations, and it all starts with being able to read one's own feelings and sensations.

### Build Creative Capacity

Following your curiosity and letting things emerge may allow you to tap into the creative dynamic at the heart of the doing–Not Doing continuum.

### Be Water

In a world that is dynamic and constantly changing, we need to be less rigid and more adaptive and flexible, responding to the changes we see around us. Like water, which takes the shape of the cup it is poured into, we need to adapt to our environment without becoming set in our ways.

### Wu Wei

Wu Wei literally translates as non-doing. It means not inaction but effortlessness and spontaneous action, without struggle or excess effort, tuning in and taking time to follow our energy, not just our will.

### Do Nothing

What would our organizations be like if we took time to discovery where things flourish and under what conditions? What if we removed things that were necessary? What happens when we step back from our need to control everything and live in harmony with the natural world?

In the context of Not Doing, beautiful action is the culmination of all the negative capabilities explored in the book. It means that we pay attention to how we live and interact with the world and people around us. It is a call to action, one that is more purposeful and aligned with the natural flow of life. It encourages us to do right by the hand and by the people.



Diana Renner is a leadership educator and award-winning author. As the director and co-founder of the Uncharted Leadership Institute she helps individuals and organizations navigate uncertainty and make progress on complex challenges. She has written two books with co-author, Steven D'Souza, ***Not Knowing*** and ***Not Doing***.

Steven D'Souza is an international educator with international experience in the fields of HR, leadership, and talent management, diversity and organizational development. He is an experienced executive coach, working frequently with senior teams including at the CEO level.

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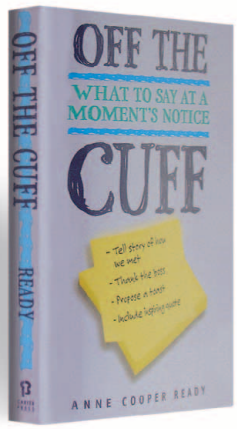
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# Off The Cuff

Anne Cooper Ready

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS — CAREER TECHNIQUES




By Anne Cooper Ready

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### What to Say at a Moment's Notice

# OFF THE CUFF

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*The phrase "off the cuff" is believed to have originated with waiters who were among the first people to use their shirt cuffs as notepads to take orders or to calculate the tab. Hollywood directors were the next perpetrators of the practice, carrying notes to actors about the scene on their shirt sleeves. Impromptu speaking has likewise become known as off the cuff. The speaker is pictured as hurriedly jotting down notes on his starched shirt cuff during the meal and delivering them afterward from an arm's length note card.*

*About 99 percent of what people say is impromptu, which is defined as without preparation or advance thought. Virtually everything that people say — after-dinner speeches, discussions, product announcements, answers to questions during job interviews, new business pitches, media interviews, and arguments — is off the cuff.*

*Now, to help readers build up their confidence when asked to just "say a few words," writer and communications coach Anne Cooper Ready offers them a useful combination of encouragement and preparation to face impromptu speaking in* Off the Cuff. *In an easy-to-reference guidebook that helps readers put words together that motivate, direct, entertain, and get a point across, Ready teaches both the basic and advanced skills that are needed to solve communication challenges ranging from apologies and meetings to introductions and rallying the troops.*

*Delivering ways to speak easily, effectively and fearlessly,* Off the Cuff *provides readers with tips, tactics and strategies for successfully navigating through situations when communication skills are crucial, and helps them prepare for those moments when time to prepare is at a minimum.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ How to face Americans' number one fear.
- ✓ How to display self-confidence when addressing an audience.
- ✓ How to keep it simple when communicating.
- ✓ The best ways to market yourself with proper business etiquette.
- ✓ The best things to say and the best times to say them.
- ✓ How to master job interviews, conferences, panels and workshops.

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# OFF THE CUFF

**by Anne Cooper Ready**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## The Cs of Communication

Communication is the third C after chemistry and compatibility in any relationship. Establishing a command of all the Cs of communication will change your relationships and the life that you build around them.

- **Concise.** Audiences appreciate respect for their time and will pay more attention when the end is in sight. It's better to let an audience out early than to drag it out.
- **Conversational.** The most effective way to plug a product, service or book is to mention it, by name, in conversation. Practice dropping your mention into conversation easily and naturally, without overdoing it.
- **Careful.** Good or bad, sound bites seem to live forever. Sum up the essence of your purpose in a sound bite you can deliver in a simple seven-second phrase.
- **Candid.** Tactful candor and simple honesty are very refreshing in today's world of bluffing and hype. Speak to audiences as you would a friend with a big mouth: with careful candor, circumspect trust, and respect.
- **Cogent.** Begin by deciding what opinion you want changed or action you want taken by your presentation, and go for it by being forceful and to the point.
- **Convincing.** Show respect for your audience with a logical presentation. The most compelling speech is one that makes sense.

### *Radiate Confidence*

- **Confident.** Fake it till you make it. Be prepared and rise to the occasion. Smile and radiate confidence.
- **Clear.** Logical flow can help you make your case. Test your logic on friends to make sure it stands up.
- **Compassionate.** Show your passion, compassion, warmth and humor. Radiate confidence and energy.
- **Cool, Calm and Collected.** Keep cool. Stay calm and collected. Bottom-line each point, one at a time.
- **Correct.** Check your facts. Acknowledge what you know and don't try to answer hypothetical questions.
- **Compelling.** Your communication should make people care. Touch your audience with your voice.
- **Consistent.** Consistency of message is crucial. Make your habits, behaviors and conversation consistent with your values.
- **Credible.** You need to be credible to be trustworthy. Establish credibility by name-dropping as background.
- **Crisis Conscious.** In a crisis situation answer questions with an acknowledgement of compassion, the bottom line in a sound bite, appropriate history, repetition of the sound bite, and the next steps you will take.
- **Controversial.** If controversy serves your purpose, use it. However, you should not be the only one who is served.
- **Charismatic.** Make everyone feel good about being themselves. From a handshake to handing over your business card, look at the color of their eyes. Once you've registered the color of the eyes that are being introduced to you, you've kept enough direct eye contact to be considered charismatic. ■

## Mastering the Moment

Imagine the pressure on an evangelist or president facing the flock during a breaking sex scandal. Integrity and authenticity go a long way in establishing your credibility, because the lens doesn't lie, whether it is in the eyes of your audience or on the front of a camera.

Lee Iacocca said that being honest is the best foundation — to be clear and candid about what must be accomplished and what sacrifices may be involved. And in the case of a serious problem, you cannot do much to put out a brush fire if you first insist there isn't one.

If you are in a relatively formal role in your professional life, trying to be folksy on a platform can be risky. You can also be a fish out of water if you are nat-

***(continued on page 3)***

**The author:** Anne Cooper Ready has been coaching executives to face audiences in person and through the media at her company Ready for Media since 1981. She has written for the *Chicago Tribune*, *Ad Age*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, and has taught at UCLA's Anderson Graduate School of Business.

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## Mastering the Moment

*(continued from page 2)*

urally casual and try to be formal because this is an "important" occasion. If no one ever laughs at your jokes, don't try to reverse the trend while standing before an audience. Be yourself — and be the best you can be at being you.

### *Master the Medium*

Know what presentation media you'll be using and how to handle it well. Go to the speech site days before and be very early on the day of the event to get the lay of the land and take care of logistics. You will be the one who looks bad when the monitor doesn't work, a microphone doesn't project, or a podium light flickers. Don't leave anything to chance or to somebody else. It is better to use an old-fashioned slide projector or even an overhead with ease than to fumble with a computer-based presentation you don't know how to operate.

If your medium is the media, offer to be a media resource as an expert in your field. Cultivate media contacts. Make yourself available for background or a sound bite when there's a breaking story.

To successfully master the moment, you must master your material. Adapt it to the level of the audience and have it organized in a way that will lead your audience to respond. When the material is second nature to you, this allows you the freedom to work the room and the audience. Keep your facts and processes in order.

Master the message by keeping whatever you are presenting simple and organized around a single idea, preferably a provocative, profound or at least cogent thought, to make it worth the audience's time. Presentations with several competing ideas only compete for the attention of an audience that is no longer clear about what is important. ■

# Business Etiquette

Recent history is littered with bodies that were brought down for arrogance or lack of humility. Sadly, arrogance almost always seems to be a front that masks an otherwise poor self-image. It inspires followers to root and, sometimes even vote, for a downfall, or at least a comeuppance.

### *Shaking Hands*

Conduct yourself properly. Those in business favor a simple handshake — not pulverizing, but firm. Save the two-hand handshake and air kiss for personal encounters or old friends. An executive may reach over and shake hands from behind his or her desk, but it is more gracious and welcoming when he or she comes around to greet the visitor. Appropriate greetings include "I am pleased to meet you" and "How do you do?" reinforced by a sincere smile and direct eye contact.

Here are some tips for association mixers, cocktail parties and networking events:

- **Arrive early, before the cliques are formed and begin your own conversation with new people as they arrive, informally playing the role of the host.**
- **Include others in your conversation to give them a sense of comfort and gratitude.**
- **Find or create an unofficial role for yourself (name-card maker, guest-list monitor, pollster) that gives you an icebreaker.**
- **Open a conversation with a genuine compliment that is appropriate for a business, rather than a personal, situation.**

### *Areas for Compliments*

In other than business casual situations, men's ties and women's jewelry are still their personal statements and thus, are usually safe areas for compliments. Avoid commenting on other items of clothing, hair, or eye color, particularly if you are the opposite sex. It seems too personal and may be read as inappropriate flirtation.

Tailor your practice to the culture and country where you are. Practicing a "less is more" approach is wise and prudent to creating a good business environment.

The best etiquette is following a version of the Golden Rule, do unto others as they would have you do unto them. ■

## Trade Show Etiquette

If you are a "booth sitter" at an industry trade show, you are the greeter and gracious host. Welcome all visitors to your booth and product demonstrations with a smile and an offer to be of assistance. Your friendly personality will put a face and a name on your product line and company in customers' or potential customers' minds.

Facilitate media coverage for your company by knowing who the designated hitters are and offering to introduce them and provide their contact information through business cards.

Talking to the media without being ready for it is playing with fire. Don't spoil years of hard work getting ahead in your company and career by letting your name be attached to an inappropriate sound bite heard round the world, industry and company. In this Age of the Sound Bite, what you say is every bit as important as how you say it — probably more so because the words will be quoted out of context, usually in print and by others without the inflection or meaning that you perhaps intended.

# What to Say and How to Say It

The *Harvard Business Review* reports: "The number one criteria for advancement and promotion for professionals is an ability to communicate effectively."

The most important moments of any presentation are the first and last ones. Everything else may be forgotten if it starts or ends badly.

Usually the best attention-getting beginnings come out of real-life experiences that are funny or insightful. Speakers who can be humorous and roll with the punches because they are relaxed enough to be spontaneous are the ones who triumph over adversity and win the appreciation and approval of their audiences. Short, true-life stories with humor, paradox or pathos are usually safer than jokes, even for professional comedians.

Revisit the beginning at the end. If you began with a story, tell the audience how it came out at the end. The end of a speech requires three things:

1. **A payoff or something dramatic (but not necessarily forceful).**
2. **A sense of humility.**
3. **A reiteration of expectations or call to action.**

Effectively presenting yourself, whether to your peers, your boss, the customer, the general public or even the media, plays a major role in career advancement. Good grammar is a key to being educated, which is the key to getting ahead. Poor grammar, vulgarity, crudeness and insensitivity have the opposite effect on your image. If your standard usage causes other people to consider you uneducated, you may want to consider changing it.

Use nonstandard English only when you intend to rather than do it mistakenly because you don't know any better.

## How to Face Ending Questions

One of the most terrifying moments of any speech is when you ask if there are any questions, and there are none. You've probably left a third to a half of your time for questions and no one speaks up. You may have just answered all of the questions in a really complete speech or the audience members may be shy or intimidated by their peers. But it gives the impression that no one is, or was, really interested.

Solution: Bring three or four really good questions (ones you have answers for) with you along with extra information that hasn't been covered in the prepared remarks. Next, pose them to the audience with, "You might be asking yourself ..." or "You may be wondering ...," then answer them. This may serve to get them started asking their own questions or may simply finish your presentation smoothly.

Constant reinforcement of good grammar will help you, and so will writing it down, correctly, over and over. Gradually, you will teach your ear to hear and your mouth to speak correctly. Here are some grammatical do's and don'ts to keep in mind:

- **Number and Quantity.** Things that can be counted should be referred to as fewer (in number), such as birthday candles and cars. Less refers only to quantity, such as orange juice, pollution and shoe polish.
- **Tense.** A commonly made mistake is using the past tense instead of the past participle with "have" and "had." This is understandable because often the past tense of a verb is the same one you use with the past participle. For example, I walk, I walked, I have walked.
- **Subjects and Objects.** To say, "Susan and me went for Chinese" is *incorrect* because you and Susan are the subject of the action or verb. But, "The deliveryman brought Chinese to Susan and me" is correct when you are the object of the action or verb.
- **Agreement.** If the subject is plural, the verb should be, too. The rest of the sentence should also agree.
- **Modifiers.** Adverbs are often words ending in "ly" and always describe verbs or the action. They answer the questions Where? When? and How? For example, "She played fairly" explains *how* she played. *Not*, "She played fair." Adjectives describe nouns or subjects by answering which, what kind of, and how many. For example, "It was fair play" (what kind of play).
- **Articulation.** If anyone has ever asked you to mumble that again, or is constantly asking you to repeat yourself, you may have a problem with articulation. Slow down and emphasize every syllable and sound, particularly the letters at the ends of the words.

### *Lights, Camera, Action!*

Not only will you make more money if your grammar is up to snuff, but you may lose your job if you can't speak correctly. Recently, a brilliant turnaround president was hired, and then fired, by a high-profile company because he spoke in "dems" and "dose" instead of "them" and "those." He was a street warrior and let loose with expletives, too, that were very inappropriate for the executive suite. Swear words in the executive world are seen as uncouth and uneducated.

Because people hear in three different languages, but only one per person, it's best to include video, audio and kinesthetic words and approaches in your communication. For the audios, use audio words such as "hear this" and "let me tell you." For the videos, use visual words such as "see it this way" or "my view is." Kinesthetics learn most from experience. The important relationships of your life should be typecast so you can reach them with the words they can best hear. ■

## Don't Talk to Strangers

The audience is the other half of your conversation. It's best to involve audience members through acknowledgement, laughter and poignancy; by name or participation. Learning how to use an audience is the single biggest key to success in a workshop or presentation. Here are some do's and don'ts:

- **Be your audience's champion.** Help them win.
- **Ensure that the audience recognizes the value you are offering by applying your expertise directly to current circumstances.**
- **Do whatever you have to do to engage an audience, on an individual basis.**
- **Enable a successful response.**
- **Don't single out an audience member for critique or ridicule.** The group will close ranks against you.
- **Don't embarrass anyone, if at all possible.**
- **Don't take on or criticize the audience as a whole.** The audience may close ranks on you and you'll be a dead man walking.
- **Don't try to enlist a member of the audience in doing your dirty work.** Don't say, "Nudge your neighbor and wake her up for me."

Find out what the audience wants or needs to know. You will be most successful if you know your audience. The secret to being interesting to audiences is being interested in them. ■

## Question and Answer

The question-and-answer portion of a presentation is often the part both reporters and audiences look forward to the most. In press conferences, members of the press often wait until remarks are over before they turn on the cameras and begin taking notes. According to former San Francisco news anchor Fred LaCosse, journalists fall into a number of types depending on their styles.

The **Machine Gunner** is the type of interviewer who likes to fire off several questions all at once to bewilder and frustrate you. Take control of the interview, and choose one question to answer. Then shut up.

The **Intruder** never allows you to finish a thought. You are midway through your message when another question is thrown your way. Take control and finish a thought and then wait for the next question.

When the **Paraphraser** repeats your message, it comes out antagonistic and wrong. Make sure you always correct the reporter right then and there.

The **Softsoaper** is super friendly. Stay alert and remember that nothing is ever off the record.

The **Bully** is hostile, and has a few extra nasty habits. Take control, stay calm, and say politely that you are happy to answer the questions if given the opportunity.

The **Sneak** always has tricks up his or her sleeve. Stay on your toes and refer back to your message.

The **Rookie** is an unprepared reporter who requires you to give a lot of background information. Don't let it get in the way of the messages you want to convey.

The **Old Horse** is a reporter who is tired of doing the same old stories. Be careful not to mimic him or her and bore everyone. Establish your own level of energy.

Don't let your guard down when dealing with the **Pro**. Appreciate the reality that he or she will give you the opportunity to use your good material.

Think of journalists as your boss or your mother-in-law: Never forget where their loyalties lie.

### *The 'Teflon President'*

President Ronald Reagan is a good role model for speakers who are often put on the spot. He pioneered the practice of listening intently to a difficult question, and then began his answer in the direction of the interrogator, but would finish his answer looking at a more sympathetic member of the press. In essence, he took the floor from the interrogator and avoided getting locked into one-on-one verbal combat.

**Bridging** begins with an acknowledgment of the question, then bridges to one of the messages you came to give. These are called SOCOS (Single Overriding Communication Objective Sound bites). They are the three to five bottom-line message points that you want the audience to take home with them. Just choose the one most appropriate to the question and bridge to it.

**Flagging** is a technique that alerts your audience that something important is coming. It is a phrase that sets them up to listen, such as, "My most embarrassing moment was ..." or, "I'll never forget the time that ..."

Another way to maintain control of the situation is by **addressing** the question *rather than* answering it. Any question can be responded to with a quotable statement that addresses the question clearly and concisely. ■

## What Should I Wear?

When you are a guest of the media, and, perhaps most especially, if you are a brilliant college dropout with a mega-million-dollar software company in Silicon Valley, Calif., wear a coat and tie. Shirts should be bought to go with the suit and the belt and socks should match the shoes.

The difference between bosses and their heir apparents should only be in the expense of the fabrics, which reflects higher salaries. Never is it more apparent that you don't get a second chance to make a first impression than with your choice of wardrobe.

# Working a Room

Whether they are called mixers, parties, or meet and greets. The bottom line is, it's you in a room full of people you don't yet know, perhaps with name tags, and the expectation that you will emerge with votes, business cards or phone numbers.

Stephen Clouse, an on-camera communications coach based in Washington, D.C., recommends observing and then emulating the image of coaches at the end of a sporting contest. The losing coach almost always slouches, head bent over, and eyes looking downward. However, the winning coach stands straight with shoulders back and chin up. He visually communicates the role of a winner and it carries over into gestures and even the smile on his face. "Always be the winning coach on camera and in person," Clouse tells his congressional clients. "That's the type of individual people like to vote for."

### *Likability*

In connecting with an audience, the issue is almost never your knowledge but your likability. In her book, *How to Work a Room* (HarperResource, 2000), Susan RoAne lists what she calls the Top 10 minglers when meeting new people. Here are her Top 10:

1. **Make others feel comfortable.**
2. **Appear self-confident and at ease.**
3. **Laugh at yourself.**
4. **Show interest by maintaining eye contact, asking questions and listening.**
5. **Lean into greetings with a firm handshake and a smile.**
6. **Convey a sense of energy and enthusiasm.**
7. **Be well rounded, well intentioned, well informed and well mannered.**
8. **Prepare interesting conversational vignettes.**
9. **Make introductions of others with enthusiasm and compliments.**
10. **Convey respect and genuinely like people.**

Always remember that you get one point for sharing your own topics of conversation and twice as many for your genuine interest in someone else's. ■

# Awards and Acceptance Speeches

When Yogi Berra was receiving the key to New York City on a miserably hot and humid day, Mayor Lindsay's wife, Mary, commented on how cool he looked. He replied, "You don't look so hot yourself." Later, he reflected, "I guess I was a little nervous about the speech I had to make."

There are two sides to an acceptance speech: Giving the award and making the acceptance.

A good technique for giving an award is to save the recipient's name as the last thing you say. Even though everyone may know whom you are talking about, it creates some suspense and a payoff.

Whichever role you play, do your research for some little known but charming and relevant facts about the recipient and/or the award. If something interests you, it is likely to interest the audience, too.

The biggest mistake to make in accepting an award is making your acceptance speech too long or too political. Your audience may not share your politics. Stick to the subject and event at hand.

When you are competing for an award, take your lead from sports where players and teams genuinely compliment their opponents. Don't give a speech but rather a thank you. You can be pleased, but not proud. Make yourself the example of a lesson learned, but never the hero or heroine. That is too much like bragging, which turns everyone off. ■

# Arguments and Apologies

In arguments, as in sports and life, whether you win or lose depends a lot on how you play the game. One of the best ways to make your points is to avoid blaming the other and take responsibility for your own feelings.

Instead of, "YOU did such and so," try saying, "What happened made ME feel disappointed, hurt, sad, lost or

***(continued on page 7)***

## After-Dinner Speeches

Follow these tips when making an after-dinner speech:

✓ Make your speech a metaphor or personal anecdote. Give it a middle, a surprise and a laugh.

✓ Start with a personal, real-life story that taught a lesson or personified some truth. Make yourself the butt of the joke, *never* the hero or heroine.

✓ If you choose to write your speech out as a security blanket, write for the ear, not the eye.

✓ Spell out acronyms after using them.

✓ Never start a speech with, "Tonight, I'm going to talk to you about ..." Instead, build rapport from the introduction or circumstance, followed by an attention-getting story with a provocative but appropriate moral, statement or question as the main point.

✓ Do not jingle the change in your pocket.

✓ Avoid hanging on to the podium.

✓ Say what you believe and believe what you say.

✓ Twenty minutes is probably long enough.

✓ Be succinct.

## Arguments and Apologies

*(continued from page 6)*

betrayed because ..." "I" statements keep the responsibility for your feelings with you. Your worthy opponent, instead of feeling blamed and becoming defensive, can usually at least sympathize with your feelings. He or she then has the option of mirroring back what he or she has heard; expressing understanding, sadness or regret, and offering to do something to help you feel better if he or she cares to. If not, you still have a clear understanding of how you feel and perhaps how he or she feels about you.

If you are in an argument where blame is being leveled at you, justifiably or not, try this in reverse by stating the feelings that would seem appropriate to the situation: "That must have made you feel disappointed, hurt, sad, lost or betrayed." If you identify the correct feeling, it's like throwing a life raft to a drowning soul. Even if you guess wrong, you've taken the argument to a feeling level and your contrarian will almost always come back with the correct feeling.

Sometimes, the best question to ask is, "What can I do to help you?" By involving your opponent in the solution, you guarantee that you've gone to the heart of the matter and will find out what to do next if you care and can. This technique of active listening deepens the surface conversation, too. By identifying the feelings that come up in any situation, people seem to feel not only heard but understood as well.

Fighting fair means limiting the argument to the issue at hand and not condemning the other person's character or being. Arguments, and avoiding them, take planning.

### *Apology*

The best antidote for regret was shared by well-known journalist Jim G. Bellows. He follows the guiding principle of "begin at once and do the best you can."

Once you've acknowledged your wrongdoing, correct the wrong and make amends. Be genuinely sincere about winning back trust.

Make apologies brief and sincere. Recap what you did and how it hurt the other person or situation. Acknowledge how you feel about it.

Accept apologies graciously by briefly mentioning the impact of the other's actions and how you felt, and then offer to move on. If you can't, then at least acknowledge your appreciation for the courage it takes to apologize.

In the media, one of the most important aspects of apology is timing. It's not only what did you know and when did you know it, but what did you say and when did you say it.

Lead from a position that responsibility has not yet been determined, unless it has, then move directly to ways in which your company is reacting in a respectable manner. Don't meet the media and deny it was you if it was.

The minute you know you are wrong, begin at once to do what's right. If your company was in part responsible, show as well as tell that specific actions have now been taken to ensure that the situation will not — cannot — be repeated. ■

## Five Rules for Conversation

**Do's**

✓ Do be well-read.

✓ Do be willing to expose your ignorance.

✓ Do avoid wasting time in conversations where there is no contribution you can or want to make.

**Don'ts**

✓ Don't pretend agreement or interest.

✓ Don't be a spectator to the conversation. Get involved.

# Job Interviews

Whether you are a guest on a talk show or in a job interview, sit up straight with your head up, shoulders back for relaxed but full breathing, comfortably perched on the front half of your chair.

One seasoned job applicant thought well and quickly in an interview by answering the question, "Did you ever make a mistake?" with "Sure, I'm certainly human. But I never made a mistake that I didn't fix before it became a disaster." This was a perfect example of candor, creativity and confidence. Instead of going into dangerous and damning detail about the errors of his ways, he answered the interviewer's "unasked" question of whether they could count on him to help the company survive and succeed, particularly in a crisis.

### *Do Your Homework*

Don't wait until you are in the lobby to read the annual report. All of your homework should have been done online from home. If there is an interesting reprint or article about the company in the lobby, it might be a good conversation starter once the interview begins.

Learn as much as you can to ask intelligent questions of genuine interest to you. Prepare yourself with more education, skills, industry-specific information, and knowledge of trends.

If your resume contains a topic that might be considered a "pink elephant," address it to open the subject for discussion, if necessary. More often than not, a simple comment bridged to a related benefit will be more than enough to dispel the issue.

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## Job Interviews

*(continued from page 7)*

If an industry executive offers to spend time with you, even if there is no position currently available, take the opportunity. Every industry is a small town and you never know who knows whom.

Avoid cattiness at all costs, but be ready to hear insider gossip. Let it roll off your back without being judgmental or condescending. And never, never, never repeat it. You never know where alliances lie. ■

For Additional Information on tips for job interviews, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Panels, Seminars and Workshops

If you are chosen to be a panelist in a panel discussion, take the time to research the bios and backgrounds of the other panelists and be generous in spirit, even if they are your biggest competitors. A panel is a great opportunity for potential customers to compare and contrast the competition, and you want to appear gracious and good-natured.

Take a dynamic point of view, but not one that contradicts your business philosophy. Address the topic both from experience and research. Be subtle in your advertising or self-promotion. Use your experience, client list or case histories as logical examples of points that need to be made. Avoid being too commercial.

Look intently at each speaker and listen very carefully to what each one says, noting places where you can refer back for agreement. Very often the audience will be watching you to see how interested you are in what the others have to say. Nothing will hurt the others' credibility or yours more than a yawn from you or a roll of your eyes or even staring into space.

### *Seminars*

Every audience has smilers and stoics. Both can be misleading. Smilers will smile and nod at anything: That's their social mode. Involve the stoics and those who are looking at their shoes. Interrupt your flow and engage the stoics with questions. ■

# Media Interviews

The media has been a thorn in the side of many presidents and presidential hopefuls since the early days of television. In the first televised presidential debates, Richard Nixon's nerves, pallor and 5 o'clock shadow contrasted sharply with the tan, relaxed Jack Kennedy.

Politically incorrect, culturally insensitive, last-minute remarks made in anger or jest can get anyone fired, or worse. Distinguished careers are forgotten in an instant, replaced by a sound bite that lives on forever.

Don't try to find sound bites or lines. Sound bites will come naturally when, like Winston Churchill, you speak a simple truth, "The maxim of the British people is 'Business as usual.'" Or offer a powerful word picture, "An iron curtain has descended across the continent."

### *The Biggest Media Mistake*

Not mentioning the name of the sponsor, company, product or book by name early and often is the biggest branding mistake made in the media. A close second is not including the advertising slogan or subtitle, once you know what you're selling.

Crisis happens even to the best companies. There is a proven formula for responding to it: Give an acknowledgement of compassion, a bottom-line sound bite message, appropriate history, repeat of the sound bite, and then the next step. Rightly or wrongly, companies and their products have gotten reputations exclusively for how they have handled crisis. Johnson & Johnson acted quickly to address the Tylenol poisonings and used its media moment to introduce Tylenol's tamper-proof packaging on the front page of every newspaper. ■

# Rallying the Troops

UCLA's winningest basketball coach, John Wooden, motivated his championship teams with, "Be quick but don't hurry." And football great Vince Lombardi said in a 1962 interview that "winning isn't everything but wanting to win is." This was homogenized into the reported battle cry for rallying the troops, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."

When speaking to audiences of your peers and reports, what you have to say should be second nature when you get up to bat. It's what you know and what you do all the time.

### *Transfer Passion*

Picasso said, "To draw is to close your eyes and dance." What music are you dancing to? Your job, as a communicator, is merely to transfer the passion and music of your life into the expression of your work or project or subject. It is, after all, your life's work, your contribution to society. Your job, since you've chosen to accept it, probably holds within it your leadership potential and possibility.

By finding passion for the work you do and expressing it, your briefings and speeches will become much more exciting and inspirational. Bottom line, don't seek to inform, seek to motivate and inspire. ■

For Additional Information on batting practice for rallying the troops, go to: http://my.summary.com

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# Optimal Outcomes

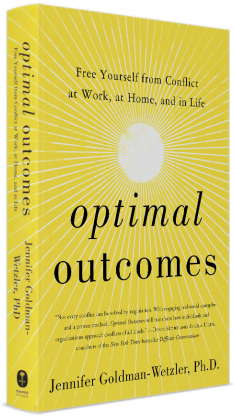
Jennifer Goldman-Wetzler

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# Optimal Outcomes

## Free Yourself from Conflict at Work, at Home, and in Life




*by* **Jennifer Goldman-Wetzler, Ph.D.**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Where can you turn when your attempts to resolve conflict fail? Most approaches emphasize collaboration. You are supposed to sit down, calmly talk through your differences, and find a solution. But what if nothing seems to work, no matter what you do?

***Optimal Outcomes*** reveals eight groundbreaking practices proven to help people everywhere free themselves from conflict. When situations resist resolution, the Optimal Outcomes Method teaches us conflict *freedom.* Dr. Goldman-Wetzler's innovative method blends mindfulness, Jungian psychology, and practical, step-by-step advice to free anyone from seemingly impossible conflict.

You'll learn to observe complex situations with clarity, access your shadow values, and take bold, simple, surprising action. Applying the practices, you'll reach your Optimal Outcome—which may be vastly different from what you originally imagined but more satisfying than you ever dreamed possible.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The four habits that keep us stuck in the conflict loop and the eight practices that help us get out of it.
- To map out conflict and put your emotions to work for you.
- To imagine your Ideal Future and design a pattern-breaking path.
- To overcome hesitation and identify your Optimal Outcome.

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## PART I: UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT LOOP

## Introduction

Conflict is a natural, normal, healthy part of everyday life. Conflict can also be productive and lead to innovative solutions.

For instance, diverse teams, in which team members engage in conflict as a result of naturally arising differing perspectives, have been found to be more creative, innovative, and productive than teams in which everyone looks, sounds, and thinks alike.

Interesting plot lines in books, plays, and movies—and to some degree life itself—depend on the protagonist facing an inner or outer conflict and learning how to overcome it. Think of the main characters in the world's best-known pieces of literature, from Gilgamesh to Moses, from Mohammed to the Buddha, all of whom face and overcome gargantuan conflicts—both inside themselves and with others.

Some conflict—a healthy amount of it—is and should remain part of a well-functioning life, team, organization, or society. However, conflict that returns no matter how many times you try to resolve it tends not to contribute to your health and growth. Instead, it makes it hard to enjoy life or achieve your goals.

### The Conflict Loop and the Optimal Outcomes Method

When we experience conflict with someone else, we tend to think, feel, and act in ways that cause more conflict, which leads to thoughts, feelings, and actions that cause more conflict, and so on. Conflict recurrence is the nature of the beast. This is called the conflict loop.

When you're stuck in a conflict loop, you develop conflict habits, including blaming or avoiding others, blaming yourself, and relentlessly seeking "win-win" solutions even when other people refuse to cooperate. And your conflict habits interact with other people's conflict habits to form a pattern of interaction that keeps you stuck in the conflict loop.

The Optimal Outcomes Method is a set of eight practices you can use to free yourself from the habits and patterns that reinforce the conflict loop. Breaking free from a conflict loop can be challenging. The habits and patterns that reinforce it have a strong inward pull. In order to break free, you'll need a force from outside the loop to pull you out.

The Optimal Outcome is that force. The following eight practices will help you to create it to pull you away from the conflict loop and toward freedom.

## Practice 1: Notice Your Conflict Habits and Patterns

Our conflict habits arise based on how we have been conditioned or taught to approach the world. What we learn from parents and other family members, teachers, sports coaches, religious clergy, and other influential people in our lives has a strong influence on our conflict habits.

If you want to free yourself from conflict, the first practice is to notice how your conflict habits might be contributing to it.

There are four conflict habits that, despite our best intentions, keep us stuck in patterns that perpetuate the conflict loop. The good news is that once you understand how your own habit may be getting in your way, you can then choose to stop and do something different.

**Blame others**. People with this pattern may lean on their competitive spirit too heavily, to the point where it gets warped into blaming and attacking others. Many wonderfully competitive spirits, from all kinds of backgrounds, develop the Blame Others habit. If that's you, perhaps you've experienced the results of your behavior: Other people with strong personalities are liable to react by counterattacking you, while people who are conflict avoidant shut down completely.

**Shut down**. Maybe you shut down in the face of conflict. Your good intentions, to avoid confrontation, can be useful in situations where you're too upset to have a productive conversation. However, when you avoid conflict at any cost, your behavior goes beyond simply avoiding things when you're too upset; you become incommunicative, which allows situations to fester, making them worse, not better. The typical outcome is that the conflict is prolonged in "simmer mode." It remains unaddressed until it eventually breaks out again, sometimes more intensely than before.

**Shame yourself**. You may blame yourself when you're in conflict. When you take the blame, your well-intentioned goal is to learn and do better next time. The upside is that you're taking responsibility for your own actions and you're focused on how you can improve. But when you're compelled to do this regardless of the extent to which you played a part in any particular situation, and when you feel that not only did you do something wrong but you are bad or wrong, your

Conflicts are typically caused by multiple factors, but our tendency is to view the situation in much simpler terms.

original intention to learn becomes distorted. Though you may extract some helpful lessons, your learning is overshadowed by shame. The conflict is prolonged while you put yourself through the wringer unnecessarily.

**Relentlessly collaborate**. When you're relentlessly collaborative, your well-intentioned openness to others becomes warped. You're on a mission to collaborate at any cost. You end up wasting valuable time and energy devising potential solutions that will never satisfy the others involved. Either you reach a "Band-Aid" solution that unravels later, or things escalate into a more heated dispute, all while time continues to tick by.

Self-knowledge is power, and understanding your conflict habits will loosen their grip on you. Review the four descriptions. Which one might be your primary habit? Although you may use different habits depending on whether you are at work, at home, or in the community, it is still useful to ask yourself which habit you use most often.

## PART II: BREAKING THE CONFLICT PATTERN

## Practice 2: Increase Clarity and Complexity: Map Out the Conflict

Conflicts are typically caused by multiple factors, but our tendency is to view the situation in much simpler terms. This inclination to simplify into narrow "us-versus-them" affairs stems from the fight-or-flight instinct, which restricts our focus in the face of danger. When a tiger is charging you, the tiger is all you can afford to pay attention to. Even if you understand that a situation is complicated, your mind seeks rapid clarity so you can take quick action.

When you take a step back and use a wide-angle lens, you gain a more complex and nuanced understanding of a situation that previously seemed black and white. This allows you to identify levers for change that were impossible to see before and develop approaches to the conflict that are different from when you were looking at the situation in a simpler way. One of the best ways to widen your perspective is to map out the conflict.

Sometimes the primary benefit of mapping the conflict is that it broadens your perspective. Other times, the benefit is the exact opposite: Mapping clarifies, even crystallizes, your perspective.

### Map Your Situation

The following mapping process is informed by Dr. Peter T. Coleman, director of the Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution at Columbia and founder of the Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity at Columbia University's Earth Institute.

In the middle of a large blank page, write down the names of the people or groups involved in a conflict. This conflict should be something that directly impacts you, that you or someone else has tried to resolve and failed, and for which you can do something to help.

Now add as many people, places, events, ideas, and other factors to the map as you can. Pay particular attention to include people, places, events, ideas, and other factors that might not have been obvious to you before. They can be factors from the past, that are occurring today, or that you anticipate may influence the situation in the future.

Then draw circles and lines to show how all the factors are connected. Be sure to put at least one new person or aspect of the situation on your map that you didn't consider relevant before. Draw or write anything on your map that will help you understand the situation better.

For example, thick arrows can denote exertion of pressure or influence or simply strong relationships. You can use different colors to represent the feelings you get from different people or groups of people. Or you can add shapes, colors, pictures, or words inside each circle to represent the meaning a person, place, event, idea, or factor holds for you.

Now take a look at your map. What story does it tell? Mapping your situation can give you some new insight, at least enough to create even a small break in the conflict loop.

## Practice 3: Put Your Emotions to Work for You

In order to understand someone else's emotional experience, you must first identify and understand your own. If you don't, you risk projecting your own emotions onto other people or, equally as problematic, taking on their emotions as if they were your own. Doing either of these things can make it difficult to respond to others in a truly helpful way.

Depending on how we experience and express our emotions in any given situation, all of us, at one time or another, become vulnerable to each of three emotion traps.

When you fall into the **Knee-Jerk Reaction Trap**, you express a quick reaction based on your emotional experience.

When you fall into the **Inaccessible Emotions Trap**, your emotions exist inside of you, but they remain inaccessible to others and often even to yourself.

In the **Lurking Emotions Trap**, emotions tend to be hidden but lurking, lying in wait to emerge. It is the nature of emotions to be expressed. When we do not consciously express them, they often materialize anyway, in ways we don't intend.

**Practice pausing.** When you have the presence of mind to notice as you're falling into one of the traps, you have the opportunity to take a reactive pause. Instead of reacting to other people, you simply stop and take a short break. You can do this in your head or out loud. You can use proactive pause time to acknowledge and name your emotions.

**Let your emotions settle**. Once you acknowledge your emotions, what should you do? The well-known Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh offers the metaphor of a muddy glass of water when you're in the desert: You want to drink the water, but it's clouded with mud. What to do?

You let the dirt settle to the bottom, so you can drink the clear water. It's the same with emotions, Hanh says. Don't try to throw away, change, or examine the muddy emotions—just let them settle, and see what happens. Usually something else more constructive appears in their place.

**Ask what your emotions are trying to tell you**. Get to know your emotions as if they're old friends who have come to visit you. What do your emotions look, sound, feel, and even smell like? Try talking to them.

If you feel silly doing this in public, do it inside your head or find a quiet place to be alone and say something like "Hello, fear. What are you trying to tell me?" Then listen for an answer.

**Take constructive, pattern-breaking action**. Once you acknowledge your emotions and listen to what they're trying to tell you, then it's time to take constructive action. When you feel angry, consider how an American civil rights icon handled anger.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., acknowledged his anger and used it as a catalyst for social change. That broke the patterns of interaction in the United States at the time, when people were expressing their anger about lack of civil rights either violently or not at all.

Instead, King took constructive, pattern-breaking action. He articulated the impact of injustice on his people: "Our civil rights have been violated." He committed himself to the cause of justice. And he made a clear request of every American: to treat all people equally.

Anger—or any other emotion—is not inherently bad. It's what you do with it that can cause it to become a catalyst for either constructive change or destruction. It's up to you.

## Practice 4: Honor Ideal and Shadow Values—Yours and Theirs

Over the course of a lifetime, each of us develops a unique values fingerprint. Unlike our actual fingerprints, our values fingerprint is not fixed. It evolves based on our life experiences and our responses to the values we learn from the people around us.

We learn some values explicitly. If you grew up in a religious home, your parents may have taught you the value of caring for others by quoting the biblical phrase "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Other values are instilled implicitly, without any discussion. With implicitly learned values, we may not always be aware of how important they are to us and why. We may also lack clarity about our values because we've pushed some of them out of our consciousness. With a nod to Carl Jung's notion of the shadow self, these can be called shadow values.

Unlike ideal values, which we're proud to hold openly, shadow values are hard for us to admit, even to ourselves. Because we're in denial about them, we're often unaware that they are leading us to speak and act in ways that exacerbate conflicts. We are typically reluctant to admit to our

shadow values because we are ashamed of them.

The ironic thing is that shadow values differ widely from person to person, and a value that might seem obviously "good" or ideal to one person can be a shadow value for someone else.

### Identify Your Ideal Values

To help you break the conflict pattern of the past in whatever situation you're struggling with, you first need to identify your values. Ideal values are simply the things you are proud to say you care about, such as autonomy or collaboration.

Now search for your shadow values. Think of what you value but are not comfortable *saying* you value. If you're stumped, take a moment to think about a time when you may have felt wrongly accused. If you haven't been owning a shadow value, it is still there; it's just stuffed deep down inside.

Noticing the tensions between our own values is key to freeing ourselves from conflict with other people. Those inner tensions often prevent us from being clear about what we want in any given situation, which makes it impossible to be clear with others.

> We are typically reluctant to admit to our shadow values because we are ashamed of them.

### Honor Your Shadow Values

Honoring a shadow value means to think, speak, or take action in a way that acknowledges its presence. Doing this helps bring the value into conscious awareness, where it can be properly addressed.

Once you've noticed the tensions between your own ideal and shadow values, choose to honor one shadow value of yours that seems most relevant to your situation. First, seek to understand why it became a shadow value for you. Was it implicitly impressed upon you, so you haven't been fully aware of it? What messages did you receive at some point in life that might have led you to suppress it?

Honoring other people's values means to think, speak, or take action in a way that acknowledges their values and their right to hold them (even though you may not like or agree with those values). One practical reason to do this is that doing the opposite—trying to convince others that their values are wrong—tends not to work.

Take a moment to try to identify others' values now. This exercise offers a powerful way to develop empathy for others by suggesting possibilities about their perspectives and behavior that you haven't yet considered.

## PART III: FREEING YOURSELF FROM THE LOOP

## Practice 5: Imagine Your Ideal Future

It's finally time to learn how to exit the conflict loop. There are two forces that will help you do this. You can be pushed out of the loop from the inside, or you can be pulled out of the loop from the outside. In the case of a well-worn conflict loop, you'll need to do both.

The force from the outside that you'll need to pull you out of the conflict loop is your Optimal Outcome. But since we haven't yet determined exactly what your Optimal Outcome is, we'll need to start with something simpler: a prototype of it.

This prototype of your Optimal Outcome can be called your Ideal Future; it is the "beta version" of what will become your Optimal Outcome.

One of the reasons that some conflict situations resist resolution is that we are so focused on what happened in the past and on who is to blame that we don't consider what we would like to happen in the future. We're stuck for reasons that go beyond rational thinking and problem solving. In fact, complex problems involving challenging emotions and deeply held values are typically resistant to rationally derived solutions.

For this reason, do not put on your brainstorming or problem-solving hat. Use your imagination instead. For now, your job is to imagine in as much detail as possible the future you desire for yourself.

### Use All of Your Senses

To gain clarity about your Ideal Future, using all five of your senses and generating the emotions you would like to

experience in the future, imagine what it would look, sound, taste, smell, and feel like (tactilely and emotionally) to be in that future state. Your job is to do this until it seems as if you are experiencing the future before it arrives.

At the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963, to demand civil rights for African Americans, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. drew upon the five senses and emotions to help us imagine the Ideal Future he wanted to create.

This is a powerful practice because the imagined future registers at a different level of our awareness from the intellectual one. We see, hear, feel, touch, and taste the Ideal Future because King not only paints a picture of it but also creates a song, a feel, a touch, and even a taste to it. He uses words to help us imagine the future he would like to create.

For example, he says, "Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood." By describing how the ground will feel beneath our feet, moving from "quicksands" to "solid rock," he distinguishes between where we are now and where he wants us to be.

When he says, "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood," he whets our appetite to taste the food at the feast of fellowship in his Ideal Future.

Now, there is a fine line between a successful "I Have a Dream" speech about a future that inspires you and a pipe dream. The line can sometimes be tough to distinguish. But the only way to distinguish one from the other is to gain clarity about what you're shooting for in the first place.

For now, your work is simply to imagine an Ideal Future without worrying about how feasible it is. We'll come to that work soon enough.

## Practice 6: Design a Pattern-Breaking Path

In Practice 5, you imagined what you'd like to happen in the future; now it's time to plan how you will get there—what you will actually do to turn your imagined future into reality.

A Pattern-Breaking Path (PBP) is a linked yet simple set of action steps to help you exit the conflict loop and move toward your imagined Ideal Future. Successful paths have three characteristics: they involve doing something surprisingly different from what has been done before; they're simple; and each action step builds on the one that comes before it.

Let's think about how you will design the steps in your Pattern-Breaking Path.

**Step one: Start with yourself**. The best way to free yourself is to begin by directing your attention within. Your actions in step one may be so subtle that only you are aware of them. For example, you might incorporate a three-minute pause practice into your daily routine. You may spend your pause time imagining your Ideal Future in detail until you are ready to talk about it with others.

**Step two: Connect with one person**. In step two, consider how to involve one person from your conflict map. This may not always be the most obvious other person on your map. It might be someone on your map with whom you already have a trusting relationship or someone you suspect could be helpful to you.

You might ask them out for coffee (or a beer!) to hear more about their perspective and to share your Ideal Future with them. Or you might make a phone call to apologize to someone or simply to say hello. Remember to keep your actions simple and pattern-breaking.

**Step three: Involve a small group**. In step three, think about whether or how you might involve more people from your conflict map. If appropriate to your situation, maybe you could host a meeting, video chat, or phone call in which you seek to engage with, and gather new ideas and support from, other people on your map.

**Step four: Involve larger groups of people**. In step four, if appropriate, you may now be ready to bring together a larger group of people who have not been seeing eye to eye. For example, one client held a meeting between the people on his research team and the people on the sales team who have not been getting along to discuss ways to collaborate more effectively.

**Steps five and beyond: Extend the work**. Steps five and beyond may be made up of a series of one-on-one conversations or group experiences meant to support and extend the work you did in the previous steps.

Your imagined future plus your Pattern-Breaking Path provide the pull and the push you'll need to exit the conflict loop.

## Practice 7: Test Your Path

No matter how positive our intent, when designing a PBP,

Like theater directors, we script out scenes to bring about our Ideal Future—and then we're caught off guard when the actors go off book.

we often miscalculate the effect of our overtures. Like theater directors, we script out scenes to bring about our Ideal Future—and then we're caught off guard when the actors go off book. The trouble is that our own (starring) role is the only one we've properly fleshed out.

To prevent this, think about how your Pattern-Breaking Path might play out in the future. Consider not only how your own actions (or inactions) will affect yourself today, but also how your actions (or inactions) may impact the other people you identified on your conflict map in Practice 2, now and in the future.

Once you've anticipated any possible unintended consequences of your actions, find ways to mitigate them. You can do this in two ways: You can work to *prevent* unintended consequences from happening in the first place, and you can *prepare* for how to respond if, despite your efforts, unintended consequences do occur.

### Conduct Mini-Experiments

It is often best to test our hypotheses in the lab before testing them in the real world. Your lab can be any place in which you'd feel safe making a mistake.

The defining feature of your "lab" is the people you choose to be in it: ideally, people who care about you and who will forgive you if your experiments don't turn out the way you intend. Your lab is for conducting small experiments in a safe environment, not grand ones.

For example, if your PBP involves voicing an unpopular opinion to your boss, first practice by voicing an unpopular opinion to a friend—someone who will forgive you if your words don't come out exactly the way you intend.

Notice the results of your experiment: How does your friend respond? Are your words helpful or not? How can you improve for next time?

When you conduct mini-experiments, you will gain two things: practice and immediate feedback. If you've got the luxury of having enough time to practice, you can flex your "muscles" by trying new behaviors and even develop the "muscle memory" needed to change ingrained habits.

You'll also learn about the impact of your behavior—how others receive it. You can use that feedback to refine your approach in the situation where it matters most.

## Practice 8: Choose an Optimal Outcome

You may be excited to pursue your Ideal Future and Pattern-Breaking Path, but if you're like many people, you may still feel hesitant. Making a change in your behavior, which your PBP will naturally require you to do, can seem daunting, even scary.

There are four common sources of hesitation. Though each of them is slightly different, they all serve one purpose: to keep you safely within your comfort zone. Unfortunately, staying in your comfort zone keeps you stuck in the conflict loop, which prevents you from achieving an Optimal Outcome.

- Your Ideal Future is not possible, but you fantasize about it anyway.
- Your Walk-Away Alternative is unfeasible, but you fantasize about it anyway. A Walk-Away Alternative is any scenario you can imagine to free yourself from conflict that involves walking away from, or ending a relationship with, people in your situation.
- Your Walk-Away Alternative seems unfeasible, but it's better than your Ideal Future.
- By far the most common reason we hesitate is that the prospect of changing our behavior to pursue an Ideal Future is intimidating or, in many cases, downright terrifying.

### Identify Your Optimal Outcome

To identify your Optimal Outcome, assess the feasibility of your Ideal Future, Staying in Conflict, and any Walk-Away Alternatives. Compare the costs and benefits of all the feasible options with one another. The feasible option with the lowest costs and greatest benefits is your Optimal Outcome.

It is important to note that choosing to pursue an Optimal Outcome does not necessarily preclude you from exploring other options later. But if you want to free yourself from conflict, you do need to choose one option to begin with.

If your Ideal Future emerges as the lowest-cost, highest-benefit option, choose it and refer to it by its proper name: your Optimal Outcome.

If an unfeasible Walk-Away Alternative has been distracting you from your Ideal Future, let the unfeasible fantasy go. Clinging to a fantasy about an unfeasible Walk-Away Alternative is, in effect, the same as choosing to stay stuck in conflict, even if you don't consciously realize that's what you're doing.

So face the hard truths of reality, and let go of your unfeasible Walk-Away Alternative so you can become free by taking a different, more viable path.

If a Walk-Away Alternative is less costly than your Ideal Future, recognize it as your Optimal Outcome. By doing so, you can free yourself from conflict in a way that may happily surprise you.

If you can find ways to lower the costs of any of your options, revise them. Redesign your Pattern-Breaking Path to reflect a revised Optimal Outcome. If you revise any of your options, you will need to update your Pattern-Breaking Path to reflect the changes.

### Be Courageous

If you have found your Optimal Outcome and you're still hesitating, remember that your discomfort is totally normal. In fact, if you didn't experience some discomfort at the thought of taking pattern-breaking action, that would be strange. We human beings naturally experience discomfort when we so much as think about breaking the patterns of the past.

It is not only the discomfort of making change that can be difficult; it is the fear of change itself. But because fear is a natural part of being human, it is not realistic to try to get rid of it. Instead, the best way to deal with fear of change is to muster your courage. As Nelson Mandela put it, "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid but he who conquers that fear."

He also said, "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." Your actions are a contagious form of leadership; when you free yourself from conflict, you help free others as well.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***How to Lead When Your Boss Can't (or Won't)*** by John C. Maxwell
- ***Leading the Unleadable: How to Manage Mavericks, Cynics, Divas, and Other Difficult People*** by Alan Willet



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# Persuasion Equation

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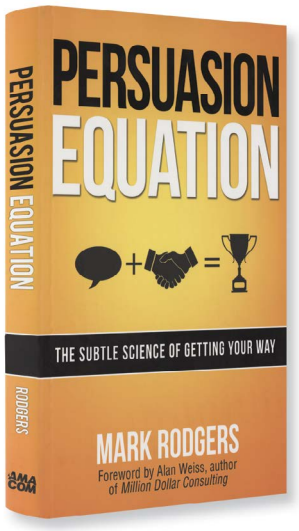
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Career & Self-Development

# Persuasion Equation

## The Subtle Science of Getting Your Way




by Mark Rodgers

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

How do you get people to see things your way? Whether you're trying to secure a promotion, make a sale or rally support for a new idea, the ability to persuade those around you is absolutely essential to success.

Merging research and real-world application, *Persuasion Equation* is an insightful guide that reveals what really drives decisions, and introduces readers to the persuasion equation — a powerful combination of factors proven to speed agreement.

Readers will discover the surprising reasons that people say "yes" and learn how to radiate an aura of expertise; win trust and leverage credibility; build a business case that appeals to both heart and mind; adapt for personality differences; understand technology challenges and persuasion tactics; use language strategically; perfect the five-step persuasion process; generate group buy-in; and be sensitive to the crucial psychology of self-persuasion.

From crafting compelling emails, to convincing a colleague, to nailing the big presentation, *Persuasion Equation* is your personal recipe for success.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three persuasion precepts and how to set your persuasion priorities.
- Key heuristics and biases that influence your decision making.
- To build a convincing business case via quantitative and qualitative reasoning.
- To build credibility and use verbal and nonverbal "power language."
- Why positive self-talk is key to your persuasive efforts.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **PERSUASION EQUATION**

**by Mark Rodgers**

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## Persuasion Fundamentals

To the uninitiated, the term *persuasion* has negative connotations. But persuasion is not coercive, conniving or devious. No one can be persuaded to do something he or she doesn't want to do.

Persuasion is "ethically winning the heart and mind of your target." Let's take a moment to examine this definition word by word. *Ethically* means simply doing something honestly and without trickery or deceit. *Winning* means gaining agreement with your suggestion, idea or position. *Heart* refers to gaining emotional buy-in, *mind* refers to logical buy-in and *target* represents the specific person you are attempting to persuade. Whether you're attempting to persuade or dissuade, you have to be doing it for the right reasons and in the right manner.

There are two fundamental roles of persuasion. The first involves getting someone to say yes to your offer or request — to buy your product, agree to your idea or take you up on your suggestion. Persuasion helps you get someone to willingly *do* something.

The second role of persuasion — and one that many people overlook — is getting someone *not* to do something, to *dissuade* him or her from taking action you feel might be harmful. If you're going to thrive in the eat-or-be-eaten contemporary workplace, you must be able to effectively use both roles.

### Setting Your Persuasion Priority

If, in your professional endeavors, you could flick a switch and convince one person to do just one thing, what would that be? Do you want to get the assignment? Bring a new product to market? Overhaul the Customer Service Department? Win the promotion? Land a big-name client? Each of these is a "persuasion priority." To get to the heart of the matter, ask yourself this: Who is the one person you want to say yes, and to what?

Before you answer the above persuasion priority question, consider the four persuasion priority criteria. Your persuasion priority must be

- **Meaningful:** Important to you and your organization
- **Significant:** Large enough to make a difference in your life and workplace
- **Realistic:** But not so large a request that it's unattainable
- **Others-Oriented:** Because you get ahead by improving the condition of others

In professional settings, wildly persuasive people balance the following attributes: assertive, empathetic, communicative, tenacious and resilient.

### Persuasion Precepts

There are three key foundational ideas on which your persuasive efforts will be built. These ideas are reciprocity (the linchpin of persuasion), a concept referred to as "enlightened self-interest" and the ultimate persuasion principle: congruency.

**Reciprocity:** Reciprocity is a fundamental human condition that means a "cooperative interchange," or the repaying of others in kind, often for a mutually beneficial result. Reciprocity is about surviving — and thriving — within your own organization. Likewise, understanding reciprocity is vital to maximizing your yes success. The first step to doing so involves establishing a healthy give-and-take mindset. There are two planes to consider:

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your willingness to actively do things for others and your willingness to accept assistance from others.

**Enlightened Self-Interest:** If it's positive for you (your increased income, your heightened professional status, your strengthened organization), positive for other parties involved (your target and your target's organization) and positive for the larger whole in which you operate (your industry or your community), then why not do it? Appeal to the enlightened self-interest of others, and prepare to hear yes again and again.

**Congruency:** Your external actions and internal thoughts must be aligned. If you are promoting a product, an idea or an initiative, you need to believe in it from an ethical standpoint. If you want to be convincing, you have to be convinced.

## Decision Making

Heuristics are supportive cognitive shortcuts that help us make good decisions in times of complexity. Biases, on the other hand, impede decision making. Sometimes, biases also are referred to as cognitive illusions because, much like an optical illusion, they twist our thinking about reality. What follows are the heuristics and biases most prevalent in persuasion.

### Cialdini's Six Principles of Persuasion

Robert Cialdini created something akin to a "Unified Field Theory of Persuasion" by categorizing almost every persuasion approach into one of six primary principles: reciprocity, scarcity, consistency, liking, authority and social proof. Cialdini's principles are great examples of heuristics, meaning that when we humans follow them, we typically have a good result. People often use Cialdini's six principles, individually or in combinations, to make decisions.

**Reciprocity**. Reciprocity involves the give-and-take of human exchange. The best way to leverage reciprocity is to enter every situation by asking yourself, "Who here can I genuinely help?"

**Scarcity.** To truly leverage the principle of scarcity, the scarcity must truly be real. There really needs to be "only three days left!" or "limited inventory!"

**Consistency.** We like, trust and want to interact with people who follow through on what they say.

**Liking.** We like those who like us as well as those who are like us.

**Authority.** We defer to experts. If you have a level of expertise and your target is aware of it, you automatically become more persuasive.

**Social Proof.** The best way to leverage social proof in a business setting is through the use of testimonials and referrals, which demonstrate that others have benefited from knowing and working with you.

Next, let's set our sights on understanding the most prominent biases.

**Availability Bias:** We have a tendency to give the most credence to what we can most easily recall. It's imperative to keep the value of your "ask" in front of your target. Sending a reminder email, revisiting a key point casually in conversation, or mailing a communiqué that augments or amplifies your position all work beautifully.

**The Halo Effect:** The Halo Effect occurs when we judge others positively in one aspect of their lives (appearance, wit, charm, industriousness) and then apply positive feelings to them for other, often unrelated, areas (problem solving, leadership, sales prowess). Make a favorable impression early, and you'll dramatically improve the likelihood of hearing yes later.

**Confirmation Bias:** We seek facts, stats and opinions that prove our hypothesis or our preconceptions. If you're attempting to ethically win the heart and mind of your target, you must do your due diligence. Look at all relevant data sets to make sure that what you're proposing is the right thing to do. Once you're convinced that your proposal is the right thing for your target, for you and for the surrounding situation, acknowledge the bias.

## Targets, Technology and Tactics

The people you'll be attempting to persuade — your targets — possess personality, gender and generational differences as well as individual preferences. Understanding and tapping into these differences will be pivotal to your successful persuasion efforts. They will impact how you behave, what sort of case you make, the language you use and the references you choose.

### Personality Differences

In their book *Personal Styles and Effective Performance*, David Merrill and Roger Reid developed four personality styles based on assertiveness and responsiveness: Driving, Expressive, Amiable and Analytical.

*Driving* personalities seek power and autonomy via facts and information. Communicative and competitive best describe people with *Expressive* behavior. Relationships and cooperation are important to *Amiables*.
*Analyticals* want to know not only if something works but how and why and who says. They avoid risk because their desire to be right is almost all-consuming.

Don't treat others the way you would like to be treated; treat them the way they want to be treated.

- Don't small talk a Driver. Also, share facts, not feelings, and use concision to get the decision.
- Make an Expressive the star. Also, resonate fun and high energy, and allow for digressions and stories.
- Form a bond with an Amiable. Also, take a personal interest in him, and ask for his opinion.
- Bring out your research arsenal for an Analytic. Also, use unqualified expert opinions, and leave no question unanswered.

### Technology and Persuasion

It is crucial to understand the role technology plays in making your persuasion priority a success. Take, for example, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), specifically how we use text messaging, email and video-conferencing to be more effective and more persuasive communicators. Keep in mind that your target's attention is fragmented; remember that concision is king; get it right; make it easy; make it fast; opt for synchronous communication; keep up appearances; know text-speak and use emoticons wisely.

### Persuasion Tactics

Persuasion tactics are those approaches deemed to cross the fine line between ethical persuasion and manipulation. That line of demarcation is fine precisely because it's dependent on the target's perspective. What Boomers call "selling out," Gen Xers see as corporate sponsorship and Millennials view as the ultimate objective.

Sometimes people are so afraid of acting unethically in their persuasion efforts that they fail to take any action and, no surprise, manage to not persuade at all. If the means are ethical and the ends are ethical, then you're obviously operating in an ethical manner. The dilemma occurs when the ends are ethical but the means are questionable. Author Daniel Pink offers a powerful rule of thumb for operating ethically: Treat everyone as you would your grandmother.

## Building Your Business Case

Your Persuasion Equation is the combination of factors that will result in a rocket-fueled approach to you getting agreement. Your Persuasion Equation is (A Great Business Case + Your Outstanding Credibility + Compelling Language) × Intelligent Process = Yes Success.

A solid business case requires two primary building blocks: logic and emotion. In business, if you want to appeal to logic, you do so with quantifiable measurements.

### Quantitative Reasoning

You'll never reach your persuasive potential if you are terrified of your calculator. You need to know how to read and understand the basics of an income statement, a cash flow statement and a balance sheet.

**Return on investment** (ROI) by definition is always a ratio. A ratio demonstrates the quantitative relationship between two numbers; ROI establishes the relationship between the return and the initiative's investment. So if a project has a $400,000 return and a $100,000 investment, it can be expressed as a ratio of 4:1.

The **payback period** is the length of time it takes an organization to recoup its costs on an initiative.

**Net present value (NPV)** reflects what your multiyear project is worth in today's dollars. It answers the question, What is this cash stream really worth to the organization?

**Internal rate of return (IRR)** is a measure related to NPV and answers this question: What rate of return will the organization receive on this project? The resulting number can be used internally to compare projects and make informed decisions, such as whether your case is strong enough to convince the organization to say yes.

The **breakeven calculation** answers the question, "How many units do we need to sell to recoup our investment?"

### Qualitative Reasoning

Numbers are important — absolutely. But for many, the real power of persuasion lies on the emotional side of your appeal. Qualitative reasoning becomes just as important as quantitative reasoning.

Here are seven emotional objectives to consider when building your case to persuade or dissuade:

**Provoke**, by causing a reaction, especially an angry one.

**Inspire**, by giving people hope or a reason to agree with you.

**Invoke**, by enabling someone to see a particular image in his or her mind.

**Awaken**, by making someone experience a new feeling or emotion.

**Arouse**, by exciting someone with ideas or possibilities.

**Touch**, by generating a sad or sympathetic emotion.

**Ignite**, by invoking a feeling of success or accomplishment.

Building one or more of these emotional strategies into your business case will materially improve your chances of yes success.

## The Credibility Crucible

Easy to lose and tough to build, credibility ranks as one of the primary characteristics of a successful and professional persuader. A basic determination of credibility can be found in the following descriptors: You do what you say you're going to do; your information is accurate and unbiased; you're not prone to exaggeration or hyperbole; you admit when you're wrong and accept blame; you share the credit when successful; your word is your bond.

The key question is this: What do people say about you when you're not in the room?

### Three Components of Credibility

Credibility cannot be achieved if you don't possess the following three attributes: expertise, track record and respect.

**Expertise:** Expertise means that you actually comport yourself as an expert. Experts' opinions are believed and sought; they are not generally subject to quibbles or arguments. You gain expertise through experiences, education, observations and boldly moving on from both your victories and your defeats.

**Track record:** Nothing succeeds in promoting credibility like results that others can see, touch, feel, hear and smell. In other words, don't just talk the talk; walk the walk. Track records don't require uniform and unblemished successes. In fact, showing variation is preferable. The idea is to constantly improve.

**Respect:** No one respects people who can win only if someone else loses, or who see life as a zero-sum game. You don't have to like everyone, but you do have to remain civil. When you share, you gain respect; you also gain respect when you accept responsibility, when you volunteer, and when you effectively negotiate and honestly resolve conflict.

### Four Ways to Build Credibility

Gaining credibility is easier than you might think. If you currently do any of the following, you're well on your way to creating credibility confidence.

**Publicize your successes.** Demonstrate your triumphs, relate your victories, recount your progresses — but don't boast about them.

**Create a "rational future."** In other words, help people see a future that begins pragmatically in the present and develops logically and persuasively forward along a reasonable path.

**Become clearly accessible and accountable** or, to use contemporary jargon, "transparent." People are less likely to argue with an individual who is clearly available and responsible.

**Hang out with other credibility all-stars.** Find people with impressive credibility credentials within your organization or community and align yourself with them.

## Power Language

The connotations of *rhetoric* have changed in recent years to suggest that it is a pejorative form of discourse, as in "empty political rhetoric." But the original definition is "the art of persuasive speaking and writing, especially using figures of speech." Effective rhetoric involves verbal and nonverbal communication skills, which in turn dictate how persuasive you are by informing others of your intent — overtly and covertly, explicitly and implicitly.

### Savvy Word Choices

Some words are more compelling than others because of their emotional heft. They create powerful mental images to which listeners can readily relate. Consider the following: Our *savviest* customers, the company's *diverse* suite of products, your *compelling* presentation. A *sensitive* situation, an *urgent* response, a *feel-good* solution.

Unpack your trunk of adjectives, and punch up the power quotient. Instead of just saying the team has to make a decision, try describing it as a *crucial* decision or perhaps a *far-reaching* decision or a *key* decision. Judiciously used, well-chosen adjectives can work tremendously; overuse, on the other hand, leads to hyperbole.

When in the process of persuading, remember six powerful words that will force you to link a meaningful target benefit to your ask: "What this means to you is . . ." You can't say it without saying something after it, of course. So when you start to focus on your justification points for why someone should take you up on your offer, liberally use this phrase as part of your rhetoric.

### Nonverbal Communication

What your body language communicates to your target and what your target's body language tells you is the essence of nonverbal power. A message that your target sends to you is a "nonverbal tell" (like in poker when someone has a tendency to, say, look at his watch before he bluffs). Likewise, a "nonverbal sell" is a message you send to your target. Recognizing nonverbal tells (NVT) and nonverbal sells (NVS) can be crucial to your persuasion success.

Following are some of the most common tells to watch for and what you might do in response.

**Solid eye contact.** Response: Don't miss your opportunity to engage.

**Averted eyes.** Response: Proceed carefully — not boisterously, not aggressively. Don't engage in prolonged eye contact. A brief smile is enough.

**Engaged smile.** Response: Smile, acknowledge interest, move your gaze to others and then come back to your smiling target.

**Dissenting squint.** Response: You'll want to bring your target into the conversation.

**Space-saving stance.** Response: Tread lightly. This is a clear signal that now is not the right time to talk.

**Watch glance.** Response: Make your point and get to the ask — quickly.

## Persuasive Processes

Now it's time to master the persuasive process. Here is a formula that governs persuasion success: Yes = E2F3, defined as follows: You get to yes by Engaging your target, Exploring the issue, Forming (and framing) possible options, Finessing any white water and Finalizing (and formalizing) the decision.

**Step 1: Engage Your Target.** Find the time when your target will be most approachable and receptive. And just as important as when is how you approach your target. Persuasion relies on relationships, so a face-to-face encounter is always better than a phone call, while an email shouldn't even be considered when it comes to persuasion. The first aspect of engagement involves building (or confirming) rapport. The engagement aspect is intended to begin a dialogue. Don't take a stance at this point; rather, simply explore the other person's attitudes.

Another key engagement element is understanding your target's level of knowledge. Has he or she been approached by others regarding the persuasion topic?

**Step 2: Explore the Issue.** This means delving into its content, as opposed to navigating the approach. The issue is a multifaceted situation, and each facet needs to be considered in turn. First, you need to determine what the issue means to your target, personally and professionally. Next, explore what the persuasion topic means to the organization. Examine budget parameters. Explore risk, too. With these factors firmly in your mind, explore your target's appetite for the change.

**Step 3: Form and Frame Possible Options.** Having options raises the odds of acceptance exponentially. Instead of providing a binary choice — a take-it-or-leave-it option, which is a 50/50 proposition at face value — offering three options raises your chances of acceptance to about 75 percent. In other words, you now have three shots at hearing yes. Discuss the pros and cons of each option objectively, understanding that they all lead to Rome — that is, your desired outcome.

**Step 4: Finesse any White Water.** Like rafting through grade-five white water, the way in which you navigate resistance to your persuasion attempts will determine your success. Not every target will agree with new ideas (or even old ones). But remember that an objection is a sign of interest; apathy is your real enemy. If your target takes the time to express counterarguments, skepticism or doubt, she is engaged enough to invest her time.

**Step 5: Finalize and Formalize the Decision.** Ask for your target's opinion — not for a commitment. Opinions are nonthreatening: Everyone has them, and most want to share them. Simply say, "What do you think?" If you receive a positive response (" I really like the "best" option you've created"), move boldly forward. If you receive a neutral response (" I'm still not sure"), don't try right away to secure your yes. You have more work to do. If you receive a flat-out no, employ your options.

Finally, never accept a simple yes. Instead, work toward a profound agreement. Then you want to formalize the decision; you want your target to somehow go on record with his decision.

## Persuasion 360

To persuade groups and specific members of groups, the first thing you need to acknowledge is that group decisions don't get made in group settings. Groups hear and discuss, sometimes debate and argue, but they seldom decide as a unit. Rarely will you find a single decision maker. Rather, multiple decision makers — often including but not limited to the budget manager, a hierarchical leader and an informal leader — are involved in the final decision.

Thus, you need to appeal to fiscal prudence, leadership responsibility, charisma or all of the above. You don't need unanimity or an overwhelming mandate to generate group agreement; you need critical mass. Consensus is something everyone can live with, not something everyone would die for. With that in mind, focus on the pragmatism of the numbers.

**Seven Ways to "Influence Up."** Speak the language; deal with evidence, not opinions; find workable approaches; be concise; manage the clock; stand your ground and relish being the contrarian. These best practices to "influ-

ence up" are based on boldness and brevity, which strong senior people tend to appreciate and respond to positively.

**Seven Ways to "Influence Down."** Use your "home field advantage"; avoid condescension at all costs; be brief but not abrupt; leverage honest ingratiation; request input; provide opportunities for contributions and don't micromanage.

**Five Ways to Influence Sideways.** Cultivate favors by doing favors, link agendas, leverage loss aversion, covet your credibility and be fair.

## Persuasion 911

Persuasion turbulence occurs when new information appears, people are influenced by other opinions or X factors are in play. Be it a promotion, a firing or a merger, things happen that change a person's perspective on your request. But just because things get a bit bumpy doesn't mean your flight won't ultimately arrive at your intended destination. You simply need strategies for navigating "assent turbulence."

### Troubleshooting the Seven Most Common Weaknesses in a Pitch

**Lack of trust:** You'll know that trust is missing if your target fails to be forthcoming with information, asks for delays, acts guarded, and is curt and abrupt in responses — or worse, doesn't ask any follow-up questions. Response: Be 100 percent candid with your target, and address the elephant in the room.

**Lack of value:** This is indicated by no clear economic return on investment, no personal benefit for the target and no attempt to link qualitative returns to actual evidence. Value, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder. And the other person's eye is the one that needs to behold the benefits of your pitch. Response: Have your target stipulate what an effective return would be, at least theoretically.

**Lack of clarity:** You'll know your pitch isn't working when you're hit with a slew of questions, insistence on qualifiers, digressions and a lack of focus on what you believe the issue to be. Response: Eschew jargon, and focus on specifics.

**Poor timing:** Sometimes, it's not you; it's the timing. Priorities may be elsewhere. Perhaps it's your firm's busy season, or IT problems in the office are leaving employees distracted and ornery. Response: Try to avoid asking for something that directly conflicts with ongoing demands in the first place.

**Opposing self-interest:** This happens when the company, the department or the individual has a huge economic advantage to do exactly the opposite of what you are pursuing (or to do nothing at all). Response: This is a tough one, but there are ways to combat it, by appealing to corporate values or long-term benefits. Suggest that your pitch will not create a reversal of goals, and attempt to show your targets how a yes would support their private benefits in the longer term.

**X factors:** Suddenly, an unexpected "expert," such as an outside consultant, weighs in on your pitch. Or an unanticipated development, such as an acquisition or company reorganization, occurs. Response: Keep your persuasion priority moving forward, irrespective of the new information. If that's too bold of a move for you, make sure you have a Plan B.

**Machiavellian impulses:** This is when the people who tell you one thing (to keep you happy) then do another (to make them happy). Then they explain their behavior as a misunderstanding (to try to make you happy again). Response: Machiavellian types also hate the bright light because it exposes their dark corners, so keep issues in the light. Contain them, because it's pointless to fight them, and don't attempt head-on (or head-first) assaults.

## Yes Success

We plan for objections and we plan for resistance; but we often don't plan for success. This is a big mistake. Learning to handle this moment with panache will differentiate the Hall of Famers from the also-rans. This is because it is in the moment of yes that you can reassure your target that he or she has made a wise decision. And from there, you can begin to position yourself for even higher levels of persuasion success.

### Five Moment-of-Yes Don'ts

When you hear yes, you've accomplished your objective. So don't blow it by falling into one of the following five traps:

- Don't immediately reply with an incredulous "Really?" You don't want to appear gob-smacked that someone actually believes in your pitch.
- Don't keep trying to make your case. Just stop.
- Don't review your target's concerns.
- Don't be unprepared. If, for example, a purchase order needs to be signed, have it with you and ready to go. If you need to call someone to issue a verbal autho-

rization, have the contact's name and number programmed into your phone.
- Don't bask in the glow of your success. After your target says yes, hit the bases.

### Five Moment-of-Yes Dos

- Immediately shake hands.
- Offer a reinforcing comment. "This is going to be an exciting project." "We will do great work together." "Here's to accomplishing important work."
- Give a "next steps" overview. Here you want to be absolutely clear on what will happen next.
- Make sure your target takes action. Your target should be committed to the decision, not merely compliant. The only way that will happen is if she has something to do.
- Go public. This can take the form of letting just a few people around the lunch table know about the agreement, to distributing a company-wide memo, to alerting the local and national media. Going public makes that yes official by naming those accountable and broadcasting the commitment.

## The Psychology of Self-Persuasion

Whether it's chasing a new job, requesting a plum assignment or making a budget pitch to the board of directors, we all talk to ourselves before we take action. Many psychologists have labeled this ongoing mental dialogue "self-talk." These internal comments impact thoughts, emotions, actions, and ultimately careers and life itself.

If left unchecked, those thoughts often skew negative. Negative self-talk can be disastrous for your persuasion attempts. Here are some examples of what self-doubt looks like in the workplace: You don't apply for the open position; you don't make the pitch; you don't ask for help when you need it; you don't request a customer testimonial; you don't solicit your manager's recommendation or you don't request the sales referral.

All of these manifestations of self-doubt can become problematic for your persuasion efforts. Why? Because persuasion is about taking risks. Because it requires you to put yourself "out there" by taking a stance and asking for agreement. Because persuasion is mostly about taking action, not sitting back hoping the action will occur on account of someone else's effort. And because self-doubt can paralyze you.

### The Ultimate Guide to Self-Persuasion Success

To make the most of your newfound ability to persuade in any professional situation, be sure to practice persuasion by participating in the following activities at least once a day (if not more often):

1. Be cognitively aware of your internal dialogue.
2. Reframe negative thoughts. Don't scold. Fix.
3. Create an honest self-assessment. Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Then add either a piece of positive evidence or a solution after each one.
4. Use success ranges. Create ranges of success: Your threshold success might be that you make a positive impression and set another meeting, while your ultimate success might be that you secure a deal.
5. Understand the physical side of self-persuasion. Without enough rest, you won't be able to form your arguments, look your best and articulate your positions to the best of your abilities.
6. Boost your natural dopamine levels. Exercise can fuel dopamine production in your brain, making you feel good, look good and present your ideas with confidence.
7. Be present.
8. Undergo digital detox. Making digital detox a daily regimen will calm your thoughts and allow you to focus on the present.
9. Be convinced of your own value.
10. Use positive affirmations.
11. Create high-quality options. Never allow yourself to have just one option for your persuasion project. Always have a Plan A, a Plan B and a Plan C.
12. Keep a success journal.

If you want to be convincing, you have to be convinced. The first person who needs to say yes is you.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Persuasion Equation*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Art of Woo* by G. Richard Shell, Mario Moussa.** "Woo" is the ability to win people over to your ideas without coercion, using relationship-based emotionally intelligent persuasion.

2. ***Pitch Perfect* by Bill McGowan, Alisa Bowman.** McGowan offers Seven Principles of Persuasion to use to establish the right tone for the right message to the right person at the right time.

3. ***360 Degrees of Influence* by Harrison Monarth.** Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.

· Book 147 of 269 ·

# Pitch Perfect

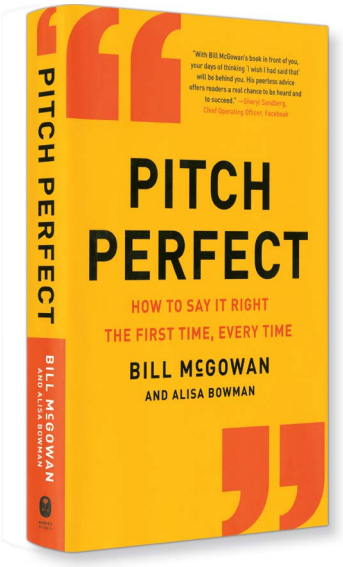
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# Pitch Perfect

## How to Say It Right the First Time, Every Time




by Bill McGowan and Alisa Bowman

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

During the pivotal moments of our lives, results are often determined not only by our actions but by our words as well. Saying the right thing the right way can make the difference between sealing the deal or losing the account, advancing your career or suffering a demotion. During these moments, it's important to be pitch perfect — to use precisely the right tone to convey the right message to the right person at the right time. Such pitch-perfect moments are crucial in our personal and professional journeys.

In *Pitch Perfect*, the renowned media coach Bill McGowan shows you how to craft just the right message and deliver it using the right language — both verbal and nonverbal. *Pitch Perfect* teaches you how to overcome common communication pitfalls by using McGowan's simple Principles of Persuasion, which are highly effective and easy to learn, implement and master.

The right language can make you more confident, persuasive and certain. With *Pitch Perfect* you can harness the power of persuasion and have people not only listening closely to your every word but also remembering you long after you've left the room.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why Pitch-Perfect moments happen in business every day.
- The Seven Principles of Persuasion.
- How to stand out by displaying genuine interest.
- How to create compelling stories, anticipate questions and speak with conviction.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **PITCH PERFECT**

**by Bill McGowan and Alisa Bowman**

**The authors:** Bill McGowan is the founder and CEO of Clarity Media Group and a two-time Emmy Award-winning correspondent with 25 years of experience in television. As a media coach, McGowan trains everyone from corporate CEOs to celebrities to the average job seeker. His clients have included Facebook, Intel, Dropbox, AirBnB and many other technology companies. Alisa Bowman has collaborated on seven *New York Times* bestselling books.

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## The Language of Success

If eloquence were a commodity listed on the New York Stock Exchange, every analyst on Wall Street would issue a buy order. That's because its value constantly rises, and investment in it pays increasingly huge dividends. Great communication skills are your secret to holding someone's attention, making a persuasive point, being remembered, and appearing smart and confident. Every time you speak, it's an opportunity to inform, influence and inspire.

Saying the right thing the right way can make the difference between sealing the deal or losing the account, advancing in your career or stagnating, earning a powerful ally or burning an important career bridge. Get it right, and your reputation will shine from that halo effect awarded to those who are seen as confident, smart, likable and sincere. Get it wrong, and you run the risk of being labeled annoying, tedious, ineffectual or irrelevant.

Pitch-Perfect moments serve as crucial junctures in our personal and professional lives. In business they take place every day, sometimes several times a day. They come up during meetings, presentations, events, parties, in hallways, over coffee, on smartphones and in front of cameras.

We can all remember a few Pitch-Perfect moments. Maybe we muddled through the experience and managed to somehow get it right. Or maybe things didn't go so well. Rather than wow someone, we underwhelmed. We were Pitch Poor, and whenever we think about that experience we cringe, because there's no take two.

The thing is, it's not over. Sure, that one Pitch-Perfect opportunity has passed, but many, many more opportunities lie ahead. It has been estimated that we spend 70 to 80 percent of our waking hours in some form of communication. During many of those hours, we absolutely need to say it right.

### Secrets of Pitch-Perfect Communicators

Great communicators are not genetically predetermined. They are made. Nearly all great communicators have been coached. They also do the following:

**Practice:** Most professionals who make their living in front of audiences and cameras would never dream of ad-libbing. They all decide what they want to say long before they say it.

**Develop Distinctiveness:** Spoken communication today, especially in the workplace, has a numbing sameness to it. Many of us have adopted a monotonous lexicon of meaningless phrases that get delivered the same way. It's nothing more than a conformity zone that denies us the opportunity to develop a personal style that's distinctive.

**Show Crisp Conviction:** Good communicators don't equivocate. They don't start sentences with "I think that ... " They also avoid wishy-washy language, such as *sort of* and *kind of.* They have the courage to say what they mean and confidently state their point.

**Keep It Short:** More is not more. Researchers at Saint Louis University have found that 10 to 18 minutes is the length of time past which you begin a game of diminishing returns on your listener's attention.

**Display Sheer Delight:** Even if you need to fake it, you want to exude a palpable enthusiasm for the chance to get up and speak. If your audience is getting the sense that you're loving every minute of the opportunity, they will see your performance through a more favorable lens. Conversely, if you look uptight and nervous, that anxiety will spread to your audience.

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## The Principles of Persuasion

Holding your audience's attention is like winning a tennis match at Wimbledon. You better have a clearly defined strategy, execute it brilliantly and muzzle any inner voice of self-doubt, or you'll get crushed. And thanks to a number of complicating factors brought on by the times in which we live, winning is getting harder.

For starters, we have a tortoise-and-hare-style speed disparity that exists between our brains and our mouths. Your listener is capable of absorbing 400 words per minute, yet you are capable of voicing only 125.

So what does the human brain do when it is not challenged to its full information-processing potential? It wanders far off the trail you're verbally trying to blaze, which is why your audience is hardwired to contemplate in the middle of your presentation such weighty issues as *I wonder if my son finished his science project. Is this guy kidding with his shirt-and-tie combination?* Perhaps not surprisingly, only about 20 percent of what we say makes a lasting impact.

And the quest for listener engagement is only getting tougher. Research commissioned by Lloyds TSB Insurance shows that 10 years ago, the average person could easily pay close attention for roughly 12 minutes. Now five minutes is more realistic. Why? Pinging, poking, tweeting and Snapchatting have recalibrated our definition of sustained focus, with the average person being exposed to 5,000 messages a day. As a result, our collective attention spans seem to be shrinking faster than the ozone layer.

As attention deficits grow, the techniques we use to keep people's attention need to be more and more effective.

### The Seven Principles

No matter how toned or flabby your verbal communication muscle, the Seven Principles of Persuasion can help you get into game shape.

**The Headline Principle:** Get attention by starting with your best material, especially a grabbing, thought-provoking line that makes listeners think, *I want to know more.*

**The Scorsese Principle:** Hold attention with visual images that illustrate a story.

**The Pasta-Sauce Principle:** Cure boredom by boiling down your message, making it as rich and brief as possible.

**The No-Tailgating Principle:** The speed with which you talk should be directly proportional to how certain you are about the next sentence coming out of your mouth.

**The Conviction Principle:** Convey certainty with words, eye contact, posture and tone of voice.

**The Curiosity Principle:** The best broadcast interviewers earn trust by displaying genuine interest, as if there is nowhere else they'd rather be.

**The Draper Principle:** The best way to stay on point is to make sure the flow and focus of the discussion plays to your strengths. If it strays elsewhere, away from an area in which you can shine, transition it back.

When you use the Principles of Persuasion to your advantage, you'll feel confident and at peace as you win the client, nail the job interview or deliver the best speech of your life.

## The Headline Principle

The first 30 seconds of any conversation or presentation are like the last two minutes of a football game. This is when victory or defeat is determined, the period of time when your audience is deciding whether you are interesting enough for them to continue paying attention. Say just the right thing, and the communication game is yours. Your audience gets hooked, and they're enticed to hear what you will say next. Get it wrong, and your listeners start daydreaming, checking their smartphones or plotting their conversational exit strategy. Unfortunately, more speakers get it wrong than right.

### Talk Like a Journalist

Think of how a journalist writes a news story. Good journalists put their most compelling material in the first paragraph, known as *the lead.* This is the sentence or paragraph that grabs the readers or viewers, enticing them to want more. An effective lead is often surprising — even counterintuitive. It makes the reader think, *What's this about? I want to know more.*

In television, "teases" are short snippets of copy that come just before a commercial break. Teases are meant to discourage viewers from surfing other channels or getting up and leaving the room. The elements of a good tease are the same as a good opening for a conversation or presentation. Good teases generally have three characteristics:

**Short:** Convey it quickly, in just a line or two.

**Suspenseful:** Include an element of intrigue. Beginning your remarks with a story or some declarative, provocative statement works nicely. It gets your audience mentally chewing on something right away, which is what you want to accomplish.

**Surprising:** Make your tease the opposite of a cliche, something that makes your listeners think, *This is new. I've*

*never heard this before.* Do the unexpected, and employ a different style.

Not every opener includes all three traits, but great openers include many of them. Steve Jobs once opened a speech back in 1984 with the line, "Hi, I'm Steve Jobs." It was short, and it was also surprising. You wouldn't expect Jobs to introduce himself, considering that everyone in the auditorium knew him and had come specifically to hear him speak. After laughter and applause faded, he hooked his audience by immediately launching into a story: "It is 1958. IBM passes up the chance to buy a young, fledgling company that has invented a new technology called xerography."

Notice that he did not start by saying, "I want to spend a little time this morning walking you through some of the historical context of the early days of personal computers and illustrate how it relates to Apple's current mission from an innovation perspective."

Don't spend hours trying to force your openers into a three-S box. Just use the three S's as a guide and a source of inspiration that helps you find your best material.

### Where Great Headlines Lurk

Simply put, your headline is your best material. It's the lines that come after "You'll never believe this!" and "Did you know that...?" When coming up with headlines, consider the stories you tell friends and coworkers as an aside. Also look for strong statements, ones that you might be tempted to bury later in a conversation or speech. Many people make the mistake of building up to a provocative statement rather than leading with it. Often they'll be five minutes into their prepared material when I'll stop them and say, "The line that you just said? That's your opener."

They often reply, "Really? You want me to start there?"

Absolutely.

## The Scorsese Principle

Visual storytelling is the sweet spot of good communication. In this way, good communicators are a lot like film directors. They tell stories that paint visual pictures in the minds of their listeners. They provide rich detail but also manage to keep it tight.

According to a recent study, facts are 22 times more likely to be recalled when they are told in stories, and images are 60 thousand times more memorable than words. That's because humans are visual creatures. A movie reel is constantly spinning inside our brains. As a speaker, you want to be the director of that reel. If you illustrate your point with colorful stories your listeners can imagine, you will keep your listeners satiated — and satiated listeners are engaged listeners.

### The Formula for Great Stories

So maybe you don't think you're a good storyteller. Perhaps you feel anecdotes don't come naturally to you. If you've told jokes in the past, only to have the punch lines land with a thud, the traumatic memory now probably puts a crimp in your storytelling style.

The good news is that telling a good joke or story is a product of both nature and nurture. If storytelling is not an innate talent, then for the time being, let's think of it as having a certain formula:

**The Setup:** Resist the urge to forecast or signpost. Many presentations are ruined by the speaker saying, "To illustrate this point, I'd like to share with you an anecdote." Does a Broadway actor stop in the middle of a scene to announce that a dramatic section of dialogue is coming up? Weave stories into your presentations, but don't make them feel like an afterthought that got shoehorned in to an otherwise bland presentation.

**The Build:** Your build sets the scene, introduces key characters, and hints at some tension or conflict to be resolved. It also takes your listeners out of their heads and puts them inside yours, helping them to see exactly what you are visually describing.

**The Reveal:** This is the anecdotal equivalent of a joke's punch line. It's the payoff or the reward to your listener for staying attentive through the buildup. It's even more potent when it's counterintuitive, something your listener is not expecting.

**The Exit:** Once you deliver the reveal, let it sit there for a beat or two. Many people worry that they'll lose the audience when they stop talking. Yet, pausing creates the opposite effect. It allows your story to sink in and ensures that your audience can fully take in the meaning of what you've just told them.

### How to Add Some Scorsese

You might be tempted to think, *Some stories just aren't visual.* Not long ago, an economist was in my office for media training. He wanted to make the point that countries like Brazil had improved their economies immensely in just 30 years. His inclination was to deliver the point as if he were in a Harvard Business School lecture hall: "When you look at a country like Brazil from a short-term historical perspective, the macro view you have is of a country that has transformed itself from one of enormous currency

volatility and hyperinflation to one of stable growth."

That's the kind of point that is begging for visual detail. It's also precisely the kind of point that many people assume can't be made visual.

Except it can. I asked this client to describe what was going on in Brazil back in the 1980s. "If you remember in Brazil 30 years ago, people were loading bags of suddenly worthless cash into wheelbarrows and carting them off to their local bank to trade them in for a mere walletful of the new currency the government had introduced that week ... that's how bad inflation was. It was like showing up at a boutique with a dozen tattered and soiled evening dresses and hoping to exchange them for one new blouse," he said.

Now that's better. Visual anecdote + analogy ≠ boredom.

## The Pasta-Sauce Principle

There are several incredible parallels between cooking and communicating. Two in particular stand out: less is more, and simpler is better. In fact, good communication is a lot like pasta sauce. The more you boil down and reduce a sauce, the more dynamic the flavor. Speaking redundantly and using filler words in your communication is like adding water to the sauce. The result is something bland and forgettable.

Why do people go on too long? Usually they do it for one or more of the following reasons: to drive home a point, to seem smart, to take up the full time that was allotted, poor planning and to exploit a captive audience.

### How to Boil Down a Message

If you struggle with the whole notion of brevity, it might be useful to think of words like calories. Every day you have a set number to play with, let's say two thousand. Exceeding that amount never leads to anything good. If we were all put on a verbal diet, we'd make what we say really matter and become more effective communicators.

Your communication should leave people feeling satisfied, not stuffed and bloated. But being concise is hard to do. It takes practice. If you struggle to boil things down, try this:

**Develop Decisive Starts and Finishes:** Know your opening — the first 60 to 90 seconds of content that will come out of your mouth — and have it down cold. That's when you're going to be the most nervous, so leave nothing to chance. Once you're out of the starting blocks cleanly and smoothly, your confidence will build. The same holds true for your close. It should be a definitive destination you're driving to with a sense of purpose. Make it firm, and give it a little punch.

**Sever Your Emotional Ties to the Content:** Rarely do I come across a client's presentation that isn't improved by cutting it by 25 percent. Don't fall so deeply in love with your own content that you can't see that some of it is excess. Your audience will not miss all the elements that were in the original version.

**Use the Headline Principle:** Get to your point immediately. Don't slowly build up to it.

**Practice, Practice, Practice:** Time yourself each time, continually shrinking your delivery until you've got your message boiled down to its most flavorful essence.

**Don't Commit to a Number:** Do you remember the moment Rick Perry lost his bid for the 2012 Republican nomination for president? It was when he said he would eliminate three departments from the U.S. government, but he could remember only two of them. Forecasting exactly how many points you are going to make is riskier than leaving it more general with "several" or "a few."

**Always Leave Them Wanting More:** Nothing makes people sink down into their chairs more than the line, "So let me just quickly recap what we just went over." Instead, at the end of your presentation, suggest they try something new or adopt a new strategy or way of thinking, and then project the future benefits they'll reap if they heed your advice.

The best way to master the Pasta-Sauce Principle is to pay attention to your words as well as the words of others. Do that, and you'll find that much of what you and others say just isn't necessary and that every point could be made better and clearer with fewer words rather than more.

## The No-Tailgating Principle

Think of your brain and your mouth as two cars traveling down a road. The brain is the lead car, and the mouth is drafting a millisecond right behind, conversationally steering in the direction the brain tells it to go. At any given moment, the brain is choosing which verbal road to travel and the exact words needed to articulate each thought.

The more slowly you drive the rear car (your mouth), the more time you give your brain to carefully decide where the mouth is going next. Likewise, your mouth has more time to smoothly turn in any given conversational direction the brain tells it to go. It's like following a friend who is driving in a separate car in front of you. The more time you give each other to prepare to turn or stop, the smoother and less dangerous the maneuver will be.

The object is to keep your mouth a safe car length from your brain. The more quickly you talk, however, the closer the mouth travels to the brain. I call this verbal tailgating. When this happens, the brain doesn't have enough time to make careful and thoughtful decisions. End result: the brain is forced into choosing the first direction (or thought) rather than the best one. This is why we often find ourselves in a conversational dead end, saying something irrelevant or, worse, inappropriate.

### How to Maintain a Safe Talking Distance

You probably think you talk more slowly and pause more often than you really do. A recording will give you an accurate measure of your vocal pace. It will also help you to hear your fillers, verbal backspacing and other foibles. Modern technology makes recording yourself quite easy. You can use a webcam, a tablet or a smartphone. When you play back the recording, take notice of filler words, verbal fender benders, verbal backspacing, tangents, repetitions and lost trains of thought.

As you work on improving your delivery, use these pointers:

**Mix Up Your Pace:** Feel the freedom to briskly deliver thoughts that are quite familiar to you (ones you've said repeatedly to others), and then slow down to drive home your most important points or content that is less familiar to you.

**Talk Cleanly:** The idea is to eliminate all the obscure jargon, the filler, the showoff vocabulary and the complex, flowery, verbose sentence structure. Keeping it simple, straightforward and clean gives your brain enough time to sort out the next thought, allowing you to progress from one idea to the next in an orderly, focused and persuasive manner.

**When in Doubt, Stop Talking:** The more uncertain you are about your next words, the more slowly you should speak, even coming to a dead stop if needed.

**Focus on What You Want to Say, Not on What You Think the Audience is Thinking:** There is not enough bandwidth in your brain for you to concentrate simultaneously on your point, your delivery, and what you think your listener might be thinking based on his or her facial expressions.

**Listen More, Talk Less:** Listening is one of the most effective compliments we have to offer. It validates others and makes them feel supported, and it also gives us a chance to thoughtfully prepare what we want to say. Attentive listening is becoming an increasingly rare commodity, which is why it is so easy to stand out and make a great impression by demonstrating that the art is not lost on you.

## The Conviction Principle

When you speak, you want to sound filled with relentless conviction, exuding enthusiasm for the value of the information you're sharing. Your words, eye movement, posture, pitch and tone of voice must convey certainty. But demonstrating unshakable self-confidence is a process, especially if deep down you're feeling anything but. I often tell clients there are three stages of public speaking:

**Stage 1: Dread**
**Stage 2: Tolerance**
**Stage 3: Enjoyment**

Just because you may be starting in stage one doesn't mean your audience has to know that. The trick is to simulate your sense of enjoyment until you can actually experience it for real.

### Don't Copy Your Colleagues

One of the worst ways to practice the Conviction Principle? Watch what many of your colleagues do and then try to emulate them. Three bad speaking habits pervade much of the business world:

**Cliches:** In a recent poll, Britons chose the insipid expression "at the end of the day" as the number one cliche infecting the king's English. Another cliche that has infected every corporation in America is referring to a problem as a "challenge" or, worse yet, declaring that "we don't see this so much as a challenge but rather as an opportunity."

**Industryspeak:** Every industry has its jargon — words and phrases that everyone uses but hardly anyone truly understands. Using meaningless corporatespeak is a crutch that obstructs the true depth of your knowledge. To kick the jargon habit, practice your next presentation out loud using the recording device on your smartphone. Then take the audio content and have it transcribed. You see all those red lines under words like *efforting, choiceful* and *incentivization*? That's a gentle reminder from your computer that you are using a made-up word. If it's not real, you shouldn't be using it.

**Oversimplification:** The opposite of industryspeak is what many people call "dumbing it down." I'm all in favor of keeping communications simple and straightforward, but I've seen too many videos of people who think they're great communicators talking to people as though they're four-year-olds. Such verbal pabulum is downright offensive.

### Staying Confident in Rough Conversations

Nowhere is the Conviction Principle more important than during uncomfortable and tense conversations, the kind we all try hard to avoid. When you find yourself amid conversational tension, try these tactics:

**Validate; Don't Bully:** Validating others' opinions, even if they're contrary to our own, is mistakenly thought of as a sign of weakness in this era of cable-news bombast.

**Find a Way to Agree:** Highlighting even the tiniest sliver of common ground is such an outdated notion that it actually is fresh and new again.

**Point Out a Strength:** Acknowledging people's strengths while telling them they've got some issue to resolve is a good way to bring balance to the conversation and avoid making them feel ashamed or embarrassed. Think of adopting the "critique sandwich" model. In it, the critical meat of what you have to say is sandwiched between two acknowledgments of their strengths or something they do well.

## The Curiosity Principle

Have you ever come home from a party and felt exhausted, as if every conversation sucked the life from you like one of those Dementor creatures in Harry Potter? With any luck, those occasions are more than balanced by the social events that leave you feeling invigorated and happy. The key ingredient that makes a conversation truly great is curiosity. Too bad it's an ingredient that's becoming harder and harder to find.

The majority of us have no idea what kind of vibe we give off when we're listening. We may very well be captivated, yet we inadvertently come off as if we're really thinking about something else. The Curiosity Principle will help you to overcome this mismatch between how you feel inside and how you appear on the outside. It will also help you to fuel important conversations, score personal points and take someone's pulse. The more often you listen with curiosity, the more skilled you will be at reading people, an enormously valuable asset to develop and fine-tune.

### The Elements of Curiosity

The art of conversation seems to be going the way of the pay phone. Hardly anybody uses it, so you don't find much of it around. That's because many people mistakenly believe that the most important skill a conversationalist needs is the ability to talk endlessly. So they talk *at* people rather than *with* them.

In reality, the best conversationalists are extremely good listeners, and they display three rare characteristics:

**Interest:** Being a good conversationalist requires attentiveness and enthusiasm. It doesn't mean that you have to create a new BFF. The trick is to listen for some nugget of information that inspires you to want to know more about a particular topic.

**Generosity:** Your likability is central to your success; people will seek you out if you are a generous conversationalist. If you're a selfish hog who talks only about yourself, you'll quickly become known as the crashing bore everyone wants to avoid. But if you include people, ask for their input, seek out their stories, thoughtfully consider their dissenting opinions without bombastic ridicule, you will exude an aura others gravitate to.

**Modesty:** It's easy to trick ourselves into thinking that modesty and humility have no place in today's ubercompetitive business world, where we're all told to advertise ourselves as diligently as Disney markets the magic of its theme parks. But in the art of self-promotion, there's no need to be shameless. It just requires a little finesse. If someone is blathering on about clients who don't pay their bills on time, say, "I also see a lot of that in my work," or "Fortunately, I don't have to contend with that too much in our business." Only somebody thick as a brick would not be lured into asking, "Oh yeah, what do you do?" Self-promotion and modesty are not mutually exclusive.

## The Draper Principle

Don Draper, the main character of the hit show *Mad Men,* spouts advertising advice that's nearly identical to what I tell my clients for public speaking, job interviews, media interviews and just about all high-stakes conversational situations. One Draper mantra has risen above all others: "If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation."

Many people go into job and media interviews disregarding Draper's advice. Rather than steering the conversation away from areas that are not their strength, they obediently answer just the questions the interviewer asks. This is like sitting in the back of a car being taken for a joyride. Will the car end up where you want it to go?

Probably not. Passively allowing others to dictate the content and flow of a discussion takes the steering wheel out of your hands, something you want to avoid.

### How to Talk Like Don

Here are some techniques that might help you to steer any conversation in any direction you choose — without leaving the other participants feeling as though you've hijacked the discussion.

**Get Inside Your Interviewer's Head:** Before heading into any Pitch-Perfect situation, think about the types of questions and topics you might encounter. What will others likely ask you? What material might your listeners want to know about? What is most likely to come up?

**Anticipate the Question:** Curious listening allows you to better plan your response. To get a jump on where a question will go, pay close attention to the very beginning of what someone says. Before someone ever asks you a question, she or he gives you plenty of contextual clues that set up that question. You'll hear opinion or observations that relate to the question someone is going to ask many sentences later.

**Line Up the Pitch-Perfect Triumvirate:** When you develop the new skill of listening to the question with heightened attention to the first sentence or so, you will find that you can identify the topic of the question much earlier. This will allow you valuable time to answer three key questions:

1) What's my point?
2) How will I illustrate it (an example, story or data)?
3) What are the first five words out of my mouth?

This three-step process will keep you from rambling and meandering your way through some long-winded and redundant speech.

## The Seven Principles at Work

Many of my former colleagues wanted help navigating delicate situations: delivering bad news, admitting a mistake and rectifying it, managing a contentious relationship with a rival colleague. It seemed that no matter the specifics of my advice, the basic equation was the same: Fairness + Honesty + Empathy = Good Outcome.

The empathy piece is huge. The value of getting outside our own heads and understanding how a problem looks to the other person cannot be overestimated. In addition, actually validating another person's position, even if counter to your own, is often a powerful part of the mix.

### How Do I Reprimand Employees While Keeping Them Motivated?

Communicating a delicate, sensitive or unwelcome message to someone is the ultimate high-wire act. Too much diplomacy and subtlety might result in your message not coming through. Position it too bluntly and aggressively, and the recipient winds up wounded, defensive and incapable of seeing the merit in your point. How do you find the rare middle ground between these two extremes?

First, don't initiate the conversation with "We need to talk" or mention anything about "paying dues." To turn this problem employee around, blend empathy with concern for his or her well-being. To do so, start off with an empathetic question. Wait for the answer. Then offer the reason for your concern. You want to make it absolutely clear that you are an ally and not an adversary. Put yourself in the role of mentor rather than boss. If your employee is convinced of that, then he or she will be more open and receptive to what you have to say.

### How Do I Apologize for a Mistake?

If you're going to say "I'm sorry," don't make it half-hearted. Don't try to qualify or justify. Don't point fingers or shift the blame. Don't drift into TMI territory, providing endless detailed explanation nobody wants to hear. The more details you offer, the worse you look, and the more you call the authenticity of your apology into question. Think of an apology as a three-part process: own the mistake; couch it as the rare exception — not the norm; and forecast a positive result still ahead. No matter what the situation, no matter what the mishap, people essentially want to be reassured by a calming, confident voice that everything's going to be okay.

You face Pitch-Perfect situations every day. Use them to your advantage. Put the principles into practice everywhere you go.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Pitch Perfect*, you'll also like:

1. ***How to Say Anything to Anyone*** **by Shari Harley.** Learn how to ask for what you want at work, improve relationships, reduce gossip, tell people when you're frustrated and get honest feedback on your performance.

2. ***Well Said!*** **by Darlene Price.** Price presents field-tested techniques, guidelines and checklists to help you present yourself and your message with clarity, credibility and confidence.

3. ***Crucial Conversations*** **by Joseph Grenny, Al Switzler, Ron McMillan, Kerry Patterson.** Learn how to handle crucial conversations that occur when the stakes are high, emotions run strong and opinions vary.

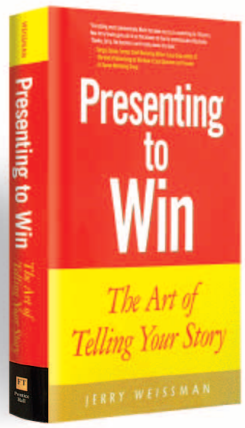
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# Presenting To Win

Jerry Weissman

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER TECHNIQUES




By Jerry Weissman

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### The Art of Selling Your Story

# PRESENTING TO WIN

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Thirty million presentations will be given today. Millions will fail. Millions more will be received with yawns. A rare few will establish the most profound connection, in which presenter and audience will understand each other perfectly, discover common ground, and together, decide to act. If you want your presentation to succeed, you must present to win. Transform your presentations from dry recitals of facts into compelling stories with a laser-sharp focus on what matters most: what's in it for your audience.*

*In* Presenting to Win, *corporate presentations coach Jerry Weissman shows how to create power presentations that will inform and persuade even the most hostile of audiences.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ How you can convince even the toughest audience with techniques that have been proven in hundreds of IPO road shows.

✓ What you must do to tell your story and how you can identify your real goals and message.

✓ How you can use the power of WIIFY — What's In It For You — to stay focused on what your audience really cares about.

✓ How to go about brainstorming what will be included in your presentation, ensuring that no important ideas are left out and no irrelevant ones make their way in.

✓ How to use Opening Gambits and compelling linkages to capture your audience's attention in the first 90 seconds and keeping their attention through the end.

✓ How to create a winning and effective presentation, including making the most of bullets, graphics, charts and special effects.

✓ How to practice your presentation using your prepares slides as your guide.

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# PRESENTING TO WIN

**by Jerry Weissman**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## You and Your Audience

Few human activities are done as often as presentations, and as poorly. How many are truly memorable, effective and persuasive? Probably only a handful. The vast majority of presentations fall prey to the Five Cardinal Sins:

- **No clear point.** The audience leaves the presentation wondering what it was all about.
- **No audience benefit.** The presentation fails to show how the audience can benefit from the information.
- **No clear flow.** The sequence of ideas is so confusing that the audience is unable to follow.
- **Too detailed.** The main point is obscured by irrelevant information.
- **Too long.** The audience loses focus and gets bored.

Every time you make a presentation, you are trying to get the audience to do your bidding. The key to getting them to act is to build a Power Presentation — one that avoids the five cardinal sins.

### *The Power Presentation*

Most people in business are too busy living their stories to focus on telling them. They live, eat, breathe and dream their businesses. They see every single tree, but not the forest. They rarely have the opportunity to step back and see the whole. The remedy is painfully apparent: Focus. Give the audience only what it needs to know.

Whether it is a formal presentation, speech, sales pitch, seminar or jury summation, every communication has as its goal to take the audience from where it is at the start of your presentation (Point A) to your objective (Point B). This dynamic shift is persuasion.

- **Point A** is the inert place where your audience starts. They are *uninformed*, knowing little about you or your business, *dubious*, skeptical and ready to question your claims. They may even be *resistant* and mentally committed to a position contrary to what you're asking them to do.
- **Point B** is what you want them to do. To reach Point B, you must move the *uninformed* audience to *understand*, the *dubious* audience to *believe* and the *resistant* audience to *act*. Point B is the endgame of every presentation.

The only way to create a successful presentation is to begin with the goal in mind.

### *Audience Advocacy*

To get your audience to Point B, you must learn to view yourself, your company, your story and your presentation through the eyes of your audience. This is called *Audience Advocacy.* Everything you say and do in your presentation must serve the needs of your audience. If Audience Advocacy guides every decision in preparing your presentation, you'll be effective and persuasive.

Start by shifting the focus from features to benefits. A feature is a fact or quality about you or your company, the products you sell or the idea you're advocating. By contrast, a benefit is how that fact or quality will help your audience. When you seek to persuade, it's never enough to present the features of what you're selling — every feature must always be translated into a benefit. For people to act on anything, they must have a reason to act, and it must be *their* reason, not yours.

### *The Power of WIIFY*

The key building block for Audience Advocacy is *WIIFY* — What's In It For You. The WIIFY is the audience benefit. In any presentation, before you make any statement about yourself or your company, or the products and services you offer, ask yourself, "What's the WIIFY? What benefit does this offer my listener?"

Some examples of What's In It For You include:

*(continued on page 3)*

**The authors:** Jerry Weissman, the world's number one corporate presentations coach, has a private client list that reads like a who's who of the world's best companies, including Yahoo!, Intel, Microsoft, and many others.

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## You and Your Audience

*(continued from page 2)*

- When an entrepreneurial CEO and his or her management team launch an IPO road show for potential investors, the WIIFY is, "If you invest in our company, you'll enjoy an excellent return for your money."
- When a corporate headhunter makes a job offer to a sought-after young recruit, the WIIFY is, "If you join our firm, you'll be starting an incredible career with great pay, fascinating challenges and the prospect of someday becoming company president!"
- When a partner in a marketing consulting firm makes a new-business proposal to the chief operating officer of a Fortune 500 company, the WIIFY is, "If you hire us, the expertise we'll provide will improve your promotional plans, increase your market share, boost your profits, and your personal stock options will double in value!" ■

For Additional Information on another example of WIIFY, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Avoid the Data Dump: Too Much Information, Not Enough Focus

Too many businesspeople labor under the mistaken assumption that for their audience to understand anything, they have to be told everything. The result is long, extensive presentations that amount to nothing more than Data Dumps.

It goes something like this: "Let's show them the statistics about the growth of the market. Then we've got the results of the last two customer satisfaction surveys. Throw in some excerpts from the press coverage we got after out product launch. Give them the highlights of our executive team's resumes. And don't forget the financial figures, the more the better."

This is a formula for a failed presentation. Your audience will either be overwhelmed by the information or will simply give up and declare, "So what?"

The Data Dump must be part of your preparation, not the presentation. You need a proven system to incorporate it into the development of the story you will tell.

Brainstorming is the ticket. It's a process that encourages free association, creativity, randomness and openness while helping you consider all the information that may or may not belong in your presentation. Later on in the process, you can sort, select, eliminate, add and organize these raw materials into a form that flows logically and compellingly from Point A to Point B.

### *Setting Parameters*

Think of your presentation as a blank canvas within a frame. This is where you will do your brainstorming. To tighten the focus, you will need to set the parameters of your presentation. These parameters include:

- **Point B.** Start with the objective in sight and work toward it. Remember the first of the Cardinal Sins? *Presentations that lack a clear point.* Identify Point B and you won't commit the first sin.
- **The Audience.** Analyze what your intended audience knows and what it needs to know to understand, believe or act on what you are asking. First ask yourself who will be in the audience. Then define the level of their knowledge of your topic. And don't forget the WIIFY. This is the most important factor in your audience analysis. Ask yourself: What does your audience want? How does the subject of your presentation offer it to them? How can you make the benefits to your audience crystal clear?
- **External Factors.** External factors can impact your message. Some will be positive while others will be negative. For example, when making an investment pitch, the fact that there is a rapidly expanding market for your product is a positive external factor while the emergence of new competition in that market is a negative external factor.
- **The Setting.** Keep in mind the physical setting of your presentation. Who will be presenting? When will the presentation take place and how much time is allotted? Where will it take place? Will there be time for discussion or is it a large group presentation where only you will have the microphone and will likely be uninterrupted? And finally, what kind of audiovisual aids will you be using and will there be a demonstration?

### *The Brainstorming Session*

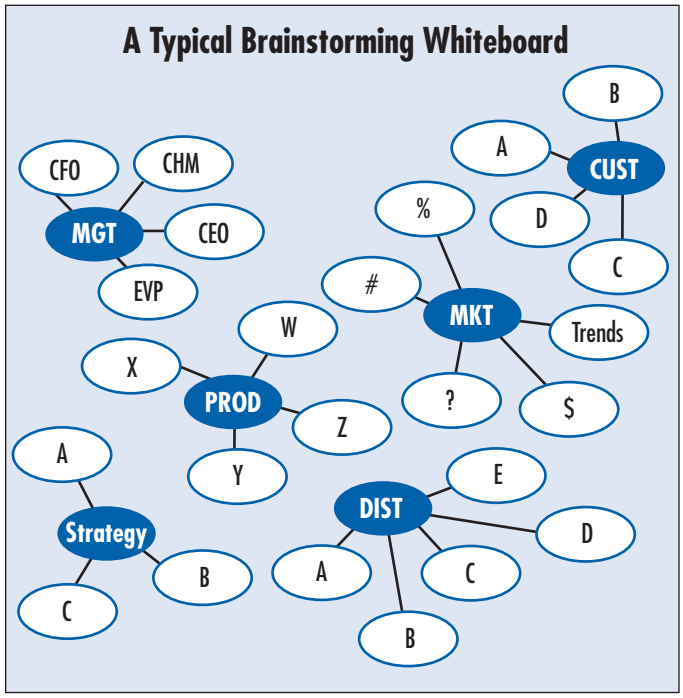
Once you have set the context and the focus, you're ready to begin developing potential concepts.

You can launch a brainstorming session by having someone call out an idea about something that might go into the presentation. Jot down the word on a white board and draw a circle around it. That concept is now a self-contained nugget.

As each new concept comes up, the entire group should help "explode" the concept. Pop up whatever ideas come to mind that are related to the nugget. (Use different colored markers to separate different levels of ideas.)

- Continue the process with new concept nuggets and related ideas. Your whiteboard will have a series of circles connected to other circles.

*(continued on page 4)*




## Avoid the Data Dump: Too Much Information, Not Enough Focus

*(continued from page 3)*

### *Clustering*

Brainstorming generates ideas of varying importance, loosely related to one another. Getting from relative chaos to an organized, clearly focused presentation requires a technique known as Clustering. When you look at your whiteboard filled with ideas, you will find key clusters emerging from the chaos. Examine the whiteboard and use a new colored marker to highlight the most significant ideas — making them stand out visually from the mass of data.

You may be tempted to avoid the messy stage of Brainstorming and simply identify your main ideas. Don't do it. Always start with unloading a "splat" of ideas in whatever order they come in. Do your polish later. You're so close to your business that it's easy to take key ideas for granted. That's why it's so important to get it all out during your presentation. ■

**For Additional Information on how the Ancient Romans used clustering in presentations, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Finding Your Flow

It's time to decide the order in which your ideas will flow. Remember, your audience has only linear access to your content, one slide at a time. Make it easy for them to follow your presentation. Don't make them think!

There are proven techniques for organizing ideas into a logical sequence to create lucid and persuasive presentations. They are called the 16 *flow structures*:

**Modular.** This method presents a sequence of similar parts, units or components in which the order of the units is interchangeable. This option is difficult to follow and should be used sparingly, as in financial presentations.

**Chronological.** This option organizes clusters of ideas along a time line. This format is ideal when your presentation consists of a story that deals with change. Take, for example, the fictitious acquisition by Goliath Software of David Software. To help David software developers feel at home, you might use a presentation that shows Goliath's growth, where it is today, how and why the acquisition occurred, and how the two companies will move ahead in the future. David employees will begin building strong connections with their new employer when they understand the change process.

**Physical.** This flow structure organizes clusters of ideas according to their physical or geographic location. For example, if you are selling the advantages of using your global distribution network, you might organize your presentation around each location, demonstrating how each connects into a global network that can serve customers better than any other distribution company.

**Spatial.** This method organizes ideas conceptually. In this case, ideas are arranged according to a physical metaphor or analogy, such as in a pyramid or inverted pyramid or concentric circles.

**Problem/Solution.** This technique organizes the presentation around a problem and a solution offered by you or your company. Many companies in the life sciences use this format when doing a road show to raise private or public capital. To attract investors, they describe a medical problem and how they can solve it with their unique product or service. Just be sure to spend as little time as necessary on the problem and as much time as possible on your solution.

**Issues/Actions.** This structure organizes the presentation around one or more issues and the actions you propose to address them. Outside the life sciences, the issues/actions variation of the problem/solution presentation may be more effective. Focus on actions. This is often used by companies in turnaround mode. They identify the issues they are facing and the actions they are planning to take to overcome them.

**Opportunity/Leverage.** This format organizes the presentation around business opportunities and the leverage you or your company will implement to take advantage of them. This is most often the format of IPO road shows because it appeals to the investor audience's

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## Finding Your Flow

*(continued from page 4)*

essential interest in growth. It identifies an opportunity and immediately shows how your company can take advantage of it.

**Form/Function.** This structure organizes the presentation around a single central business concept, method or technology with multiple applications or functions emanating from that central core.

**Features/Benefits.** This method organizes your presentation around your product or service features and the concrete benefits provided by those features.

**Case Study.** This technique presents a narrative recounting of how you or your company solved a particular problem or met the needs of a particular customer. In the telling, you cover all aspects of your business and its environment. A pharmaceutical company might tell the story of John Smith, for example, who suffered from a particular disease and was helped by your company. As you tell his story, you also tell your company's story and help the audience see the human side to your business.

**Argument/Fallacy.** This method raises arguments against your own case and then rebuts them by pointing out the fallacies that underlie them. This is a good approach to use with a skeptical or even hostile audience. Raise arguments against your own case and then knock them out of the water by showing they're false. The idea is to pre-empt audience objections.

**Compare/Contrast.** This option organizes the presentation around a series of comparisons that illustrate the differences between your company and others. Focus on what makes your company special.

**Matrix.** This structure uses a two-by-two or larger diagram to organize a complex series of concepts into an easy-to-digest, easy-to-follow and easy-to-remember form.

**Parallel Tracks.** This format drills down into a series of related ideas with an identical set of subsets for each idea. For example, a biotech company might explain one disease, such as an allergic reaction, and call it the *disease mechanism*. This is followed by a description of the company's *drug product*, an explanation of how the company's patented drug treats the disease — the *mechanism of action* — and a description of who is affected by the disease, the *market*. Each drug in the company's stable is described the same way: first the disease mechanism, then the drug product, the mechanism of actions and, finally, the market for the drug.

**Rhetorical Questions.** This technique asks, then answers, questions that are likely to be foremost in the minds of your audience.

### The Four Critical Questions

You have seen how you can begin creating a presentation, starting with the Framework Form, doing Brainstorming and Clustering, and sequencing them into a logical path with a specific Flow Structure. All these steps can be further distilled into Four Critical Questions. They are:

1. **What is your Point B?**
2. **Who is your audience and what is its What's In It For You?**
3. **What are your clusters?**
4. **Which Flow Structure have you chosen?**

**Numerical.** This method enumerates a series of loosely connected ideas, facts or arguments. Think of this presentation style as a David Letterman top 10 list.

Is one flow structure better than another? Not really. But do pick one or two. If you fail to choose, your presentation will drift, your audience will become confused, and you'll never get them to Point B. It's less important which Flow Structure you choose than that you choose one. ■

**For Additional Information on a powerful example of the use of Flow Structure in a presidential speech, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# Capturing Your Audience Immediately

Picture your audience at the start of your presentation. What are they focused on? Chances are it isn't you. If you were to launch into your presentation at full speed, chances are you would vault ahead of your audience and they would never catch up. Remember, *don't make them think!*

The Opening Gambit can overcome this problem. The Opening Gambit is a short statement you can use to seize the attention of your audience. There are seven Opening Gambits from which to choose. They are:

**1. Question.** Direct a question at your audience. A well-chosen, relevant question evokes an immediate response, breaks down barriers, and gets audience members thinking about how your message applies to them.

**2. Factoid — a striking statistic or little-known fact.** The factoid must be closely related to the main theme of your presentation. It can be a market growth figure, a detail about a demographic, or a social trend.

**3. Retrospective/Prospective — a look backward or forward; a "that was then, this is now" approach.** If

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## Capturing Your Audience Immediately

*(continued from page 5)*

you're selling computer chips, for example, start with a look at speeds five years ago, today, and then project them into the future.

**4. Anecdote — a short human interest story, related to your Point B.**

**5. Quotation — an endorsement about your business from a respected source.** Be sure it is relevant.

**6. Aphorism — a familiar saying.** Examples include: "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," "Seeing is believing," and "Easier said than done."

**7. Analogy — a comparison between two seemingly unrelated items that helps illuminate a complex, arcane or obscure topic.** The simpler and clearer, the better.

To make the opening of your presentation most effective, link your Opening Gambit to Point B. You'll need two additional stepping stones to get there — the *Unique Selling Proposition* (USP) and the *Proof of Concept.*

The USP is a very succinct summary of your business, the basic premise that describes what your company does, makes or offers. Think of the USP as the "elevator" pitch of your presentation — the way you'd pitch yourself if you stepped into an elevator and suddenly saw a hot prospect. It should be one or two sentences long. The USP, simply put, is what your company does.

The Proof of Concept is a single telling point that validates your USP. It gives instant credibility to your business. For example, if your USP is that you make the best consumer accounting software, your proof of concept might be that the software won a prestigious consumer award.

Think of your Opening Gambit, your USP, your Proof of Concept, and your Point B as dynamic inflection points. Once you've segued smoothly through each of them at the start of your presentation, your audience will be primed for the heart of your argument. You will have grabbed your audience's attention, and they will be very clear about where you want them to go. Now it's time for you to tell them how you intend to navigate them there.

### *Tell 'em What You're Gonna Tell 'em*

Now that you've caught the audience's attention, are you going to dive directly into the body of your presentation? Not quite yet. Take a moment to give your audience a preview of your major ideas. The technique for helping your audience become oriented is the classic *Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em.* Do this by giving the audience a link forward to your Point B and by telling them how long your presentation will be. ■

## Winning Over the Toughest Crowd

When Jim Flautt, a vice president of marketing at DigitalThink, had to do a presentation to a group of first graders at his son's school, he used all the techniques he had learned would work on executives. He was scheduled to talk to the squirmy youngsters about submarines.

He began with the call-for-a-show-of-hands Opening Gambit. Flautt had three questions: "How many of you know what a submarine is?" All the first graders raised their hands. Then he asked, "How many of you have seen a submarine?" Half the students in the class raised their hands. "And how many of you have ever seen a submarine fly?" Now all the first graders giggled and smiled. He had their attention.

He continued on to Point B: "I'm here today to tell you all about submarines." Then, linking forward from Point B, Flautt told 'em what he was gonna tell 'em — what goes on in a submarine, how to drive a submarine, how to repair a submarine. And then he added, "When I'm done with all that, about 15 minutes from now, I'm gonna show you a submarine that flies!"

He then kept their attention for the whole slide show and finished with a video clip of a submarine surfacing exercise, in which it leaps up out of the roiling ocean looking, for all the world, like a dolphin performing a stunt.

## The Proper Role of Graphics

Think about the last time you were part of an audience and the graphics didn't work. The reason was probably that they were cluttered, there was too much on the slides or they were data dumps. Many presentations suffer this problem because too many businesspeople fail to distinguish between a document and a presentation.

All too often, presenters take the flood of data contained in typical documents — dense text and highly detailed tables and graphs — and reproduce them as presentation graphics.

The better way to use presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint, is as speaker support. The slides and graphics are there to support you, the presenter, not the other way around. To make it work, the guiding principle is *Less is More.*

Effective graphics work to minimize the eye sweeps the audience has to make. For every graphic, keep the number of times their eyes must move back and forth

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## The Proper Role of Graphics

*(continued from page 6)*

across the screen to an absolute minimum. All the bells and all the whistles and all the graphics programs available for business presentations boil down to just four basic design elements:

- **Pictorial.** Pictures, sketches, maps, icons, logos, screen shots, or clip art.
- **Relational.** Tables, matrices, hierarchies and organizational charts.
- **Text.** Bullets and sentences.
- **Numerical.** Numbers expressed in bar charts, pie charts, area charts, line charts, and histograms.

When you choose either pictorial or relational graphics, you achieve Less is More by default. A picture is worth a thousand words and a table makes less out of more. But not all business information can be captured in a picture or table, so most presentations bulk up with text and numerical graphics. This is where the trouble begins.

### *Making the Text Talk*

Text slides come in two options: bullets and sentences. A bullet is used to express a core idea, taking the form of a headline. When you create a text slide containing bullets, you are in effect presenting only the headlines. Where does the body text appear? It doesn't. It's your job as the presenter to put flesh on the bones of the headline bullets. You deliver the value in your discussion.

- The Less is More bullet slide contains one concept, expressed in a one-line title.
- Subtitles, more often than not, confuse matters.
- The actual bullets contain key words only. Don't use articles, conjunctions and prepositions.
- Use a 4 by 4 formula: four lines down, four words on a line — maximum.
- Space the bullets in your slide proportionally.
- Bullets in a list should be grammatically parallel.
- Avoid sub-bullets.

In order to keep the audience with you and help them concentrate on your message, not your slides, you may want to use presentation software features that let you reveal each bullet in the slide one by one. Bring the bullets in from left to right.

Be careful with your choice of fonts. Just because your presentation program comes with hundreds isn't a license to use them all in the same presentation. Stay with one or two to lend a unified look. You may also want to add some interest to your slides by using design features built into your software. You can, for example, use gradient shading or text boxes to add interest. But again, don't go overboard. Stay with the same one or two graphic effects throughout your entire slide presentation.

### *Making the Numbers Sing*

Numbers play a key role in any business presentation. Revenues, units shipped, profits, and market share are the hits, runs and errors of the business scorecard and everyone in business understands their importance. But not everyone feels equally at ease when it comes to interpreting those numbers. When you are in a persuasive situation, you want to win the agreement and understanding of both the number-savvy and the number-shy people in your audience. Well-designed numerical graphics that translate digits and decimals into visual images make abstract relationships concrete and easier to interpret.

Numerical slides also need to live by the Less is More motto. Most can be dramatically improved by ruthlessly eliminating unnecessary words, numbers, scales and legends. Make labels horizontal rather than vertical. This minimizes eye sweeps.

Simplify your pie or circle charts. The most important information is conveyed by the relative size of each wedge. To emphasize the right information, put the percentages inside the wedges and the labels outside. ■

# Making Graphics Help Your Story Flow

Once you've created a set of slides, step back and take a look at the overview. If using Microsoft PowerPoint, choose the Slide Sorter view. This lets you see all the slides at once. When viewed this way, if some slides don't fit your flow, you can reorder them.

The ultimate technique for checking your flow is to read only the slide titles. If you can trace the logic of your entire presentation by reading only those words, you can be sure you have created clarity.

Once your verbal logic is clear, you can turn to graphics to help communicate your flow. Well-designed graphics convey information clearly and establish connections among ideas. Use the following techniques:

- **Bumper Slides.** Bumper slides serve as dividers between sections of your presentation. Their purpose is closure of the outbound section and a lead — in to the inbound section. Bumper slides should contain a single line of text, centered. The line previews the contents of the next section with phrases like "Market Opportunities" or "Business Results." You can also repeat your agenda as a bumper slide, highlighting the bullet that you will discuss next, provided the presentation is at least 30 minutes long.
- **Indexing/Color Coding.** Indexing uses a recurring

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## Leave Out WIIFY and Point B

Never put "Point B" or "What's In It For You" directly into your slides. These should be stated by you. Remember, the slides are there as presenter support — they are not the presentation. It is you, the presenter, who must grab your audience at Point A, navigate them through all the parts, and deposit them at Point B.

### Making Graphics Help Your Story Flow

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object that is highlighted with different colors or shades coded to map the sections of your presentation. For example, a company's four-part business strategy may be represented by a pie icon divided into four different-colored wedges. Show the slide near the beginning of your presentation to describe and discuss your overall strategy. When you move to slides discussing each strategy, move a smaller version of the pie to the upper left corner and highlight only the wedge that represents the strategy you are discussing.

- **Icons.** Icons are symbols that express relationships among ideas of your presentation. Some classic icons include yin and yang, representing two-part harmony. It could be used when discussing mergers or other integration concepts. Another is the pyramid, representing building on a foundation.
- **Anchor Objects.** Use a recurring image in a succession of slides to express continuity. Start with one, add a second in the next slide, and so on.
- **Anticipation Space.** Leave the right half of the slide empty and fill it in the next slide. Fulfill expectations. ■

# Bringing Your Story to Life

Now it's time to think about your presentation as a whole. Use the process of **verbalization** to prepare and practice. Verbalization means turning your outline into a full-fledged presentation by practicing it beforehand. Speak the actual words you will use in your presentation aloud, accompanied by your slides. Do it exactly as you will in front of your audience.

You crystallize the ideas in your mind by talking your way through your entire presentation in advance. As you verbalize, articulate your key points and make logical connections.

Every time you verbalize your presentation and every time you deliver it before a live audience, you should expect the words to vary slightly. The logic of your well-honed outline and your improved comfort level will guarantee that every time you deliver your presentation it will be clear and persuasive.

As you make your presentation, link your ideas. There are 12 internal linkages you can use. These are:

- **Reference the Flow Structure.** Make repeated references to your primary Flow Structure as you track through your presentation.
- **Logical Transition.** Close your outbound subject; lead to your inbound subject.
- **Cross-Reference.** Make forward and backward references to other subjects in your presentation.
- **Rhetorical Question.** Pose a relevant question and then answer it.
- **Recurring Theme.** Establish an example or data point early in your presentation and then make several references to it throughout.
- **Symmetry.** Establish an example or data point early in your presentation and then never mention it again until the end.
- **Mantra.** Use a catch phrase or slogan repeatedly.
- **Internal Summary.** Pause at major transitions and review.
- **Enumeration.** Present related concepts as a suite and count down through each of them.
- **Do the Math.** Put numerical information into perspective.
- **Point B Reinforcement.** Restate your call to action at several points throughout your presentation.
- **Say Your Company Name.** State your company, product or service name often. ■

# Customizing Your Presentation

For your presentation to be fresh, you must create the illusion of the first time, every time. Make a deliberate effort to focus your energy every time you present. The most effective way to accomplish this is through customizing:

- Mention specifically, by name, one or more members of the audience.
- Make reference to a person, company or organization related to both you and your audience.
- Address a question directly to one or more members of the audience.
- Make reference to what is happening on the day of your presentation.
- Make reference to current information that links to and supports your message.
- Start your presentation with a slide that includes your audience, location and the date. ■

**For Additional Information on preparing to present, go to: http://my.summary.com**

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# QBQ! Question Behind the Question

John G. Miller

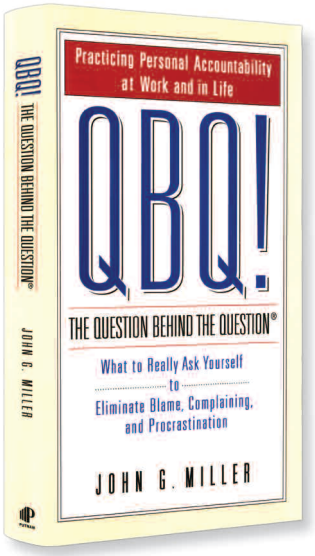
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Career & Self-Development
Business Skills

# QBQ! The Question Behind the Question®

## What to Really Ask Yourself to Eliminate Blame, Complaining and Procrastination




by John G. Miller

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The lack of personal accountability is a problem that has resulted in an epidemic of blame, complaining and procrastination. No organization — or individual — can achieve goals, compete in the marketplace, fulfill a vision, or develop people and teams without personal accountability.

The troubles that plague organizations cannot be solved by pointing fingers and blaming others. Rather, the real solutions are found when each of us recognizes the power of personal accountability. In *QBQ!*, author and consultant John G. Miller explains how negative, inappropriate questions like "Why do we have to go through all this change?" and "Who dropped the ball?" represent a lack of personal accountability. Conversely, when we ask better questions — QBQs — such as "What can I do to contribute?" or "How can I help solve the problem?" our lives and our organizations are transformed.

*QBQ!* provides a practical method for putting personal accountability into daily action with astonishing results: problems are solved, internal barriers come down, service improves, teamwork thrives and people adapt to change more quickly. *QBQ!* is an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to learn, grow and change.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to add tremendous worth to your organization and life.
- How to make personal accountability a core value in your organization.
- How to practice personal accountability at work and in life.
- How to eliminate blame, complaining and procrastination from your life.
- How asking the question behind the question can make a real difference.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **QBQ! THE QUESTION BEHIND THE QUESTION®**

**by John G. Miller**

**The author:** John G. Miller is the author of *Flipping the Switch: Unleashing the Power of Personal Accountability* and *Outstanding! 47 Ways to Make Your Organization Exceptional.* He is also the founder of QBQ Inc., an organizational development firm based in Colorado, and has been involved in the training and speaking industry since 1986.

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## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever heard questions like these?

"When is that department going to do its job?"

"Why don't they communicate better?"

"Who dropped the ball?"

"Why do we have to go through all this change?"

"When is someone going to train me?"

These questions may seem innocent enough, but they indicate a lack of personal responsibility — or "personal accountability" — and go right to the heart of many of the problems we face today.

Conversely, turning our thinking around and asking more personally accountable questions is one of the most powerful and effective things we can do to improve our organizations and our lives.

The Question Behind the Question® (QBQ®) is a tool that's been developed and refined over the years that helps individuals practice personal accountability by asking better questions.

The benefit people enjoy the most about the QBQ is a personal one: Once they start practicing QBQ thinking, things just seem to go better. People have more fun. Life is simply more satisfying and enjoyable for those who choose the way of personal accountability. ●

## A Picture of Personal Accountability

Many people have had thoughts like these:

"Why do I have to do everything around here?"

"When is management going to provide us with more products?"

"Why are we always so short-staffed?"

It's understandable that someone would feel and think that way, especially when frustrated, but the truth is that these are lousy questions. They're negative and they don't solve any problems. Questions like these are Incorrect Questions, or IQs, since nothing positive or productive comes from asking them. They're also the complete opposite of personal accountability, because in each one, the implication is that someone or something else is responsible for the problem or situation.

Unfortunately, though, they're often the first thoughts that come to mind. It's a sad fact that when most of us are faced with a frustration or challenge of some kind, our first reaction tends to be negative and defensive, and the first questions that occur to us are IQs.

The good news is this: That moment of frustration also presents us with a tremendous opportunity to contribute, and the QBQ can help us take advantage of it. The moment the IQs pop into our heads, we have a choice. We can either accept them — "Yeah, when *are* we going to get more help around here?" — or reject them, choosing instead to ask better, more accountable questions, such as "What can *I* do to make a difference?" and "How can *I* support our team?"

This, in a nutshell, is the essence of the QBQ:

**Making better choices in the moment by asking better questions.** Practicing personal accountability makes a difference. Everyone wins: customers, co-workers, the organization, everyone.

### Making Better Choices

Each day, as we journey into the unexplored wilds of our personal and professional lives, we have countless

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

choices to make. And what are we choosing? Not our next action but our next thought. Choose the wrong thought and we're blaming, complaining and procrastinating. But the right thoughts lead us to a richer, more fulfilling life and the feelings of pride and accomplishment that come from making productive decisions.

The idea that we are accountable for our own choices and are free to make better ones is fundamental to the QBQ. Sometimes people think they have no choice. They'll say things like "I have to" or "I can't." But we always have a choice. Always. Even deciding *not* to choose is making a choice. Realizing this and taking responsibility for our choices is a big step toward making great things happen in our lives.

Want to make great things happen? Make better choices. ●

## QBQ! The Question Behind the Question

The Question Behind the Question is built on the observation that our first reactions are often negative, bringing to mind Incorrect Questions (IQs). But if in each moment of decision we can instead discipline our thoughts to look behind those initial questions and ask better ones (QBQs), the questions themselves will lead us to better results.

One of the guiding principles of the QBQ is "The answers are in the questions," which speaks to the same truth: If we ask a better question, we get a better answer. So the QBQ is about asking better questions. But how can we tell a good question from a bad one? What does a "better" question sound like?

For starters, here are the three simple guidelines for creating a QBQ:

1. Begin with "What" or "How" (not "Why," "When" or "Who").
2. Contain an "I" (not "they," "them," "we" or "you").
3. Focus on action.

For example,"What can I do?" follows the guidelines perfectly. It begins with "What," contains an "I" and focuses on action: "What can I do?" Simple. But don't let its simplicity fool you. Like a jewel, the QBQ is made up of many facets. Let's explore these facets and see the powerful effect asking QBQs can have on our lives. ●

## Don't Ask 'Why?'

Ever heard these questions?

"Why don't others work harder?"

"Why is this happening to me?"

Say them aloud. How do they make you feel? When they are said aloud, they can make you feel powerless, like a victim. Questions with a "Why me?" tone to them say, "I'm a victim of the environment and the people around me." Not a very productive thought, is it? But we ask them all the time.

The first QBQ guideline says all QBQs begin with "What" or "How," not "Why," "When" or "Who." Take another look at those "Why" questions and consider what would happen if we asked these instead:

"How can I do my job better today?"

"What can I do to improve the situation?"

### 'Why Do We Have to Go Through All This Change?'

When Stacey was 12 years old, she and her father, a pilot, took off on a Sunday afternoon joyride in their single-engine Cessna. Not long into the flight, and about a mile up over Lake Michigan, the joy of their father-daughter adventure came to an abrupt halt. The engine quit.

Stacey's father turned to her and in a calm, reassuring tone said, "Honey, the engine has quit. I'm going to need to fly the plane differently." Interesting phrase: "Fly the plane differently."

Her father understood that new challenges and changing conditions often require different strategies. Conditions change, markets change, people change. What works one day in a given situation does not necessarily work the next. We need to develop a repertoire of responses so we're prepared when our engine unexpectedly quits.

### Dad's Plan

In order to restart the engine, they needed more air speed. Stacey's father told her he would be hitting switches in the cockpit while he steered the plane downward. Stacey understood, and sensing the gravity of the situation, quickly nodded her approval of the plan.

Her father put the plane into a dive and fiddled with the switches, but nothing happened. He leveled off closer to the water. "Stacey, we're going to try that again," he said. "Hang on!" They dove a second time. He hit the switches again as the plane gained speed, and this

time the engine fired, first with just a few hopeful sputters, but finally with a secure, familiar hum.

About 20 minutes later, they landed safely. At that point, this fearless father turned to his young daughter, lovingly patted her shoulder and said, "Now honey, whatever you do, *don't tell Mom!"*

### Handling Change

When faced with a new situation, Stacey's dad took action and solved the problem. But if he had resisted the change and instead spent his time whining and complaining, having thoughts like "Well, I've never done it that way before!" or asking IQs such as "Why do we have to go through all this change?" things might have turned out much differently.

Are you facing change? Any engines quit in your life lately? If so, ask a better question. Here's one that really works: "How can I *adapt* to the changing world?" ●

## Don't Ask 'When?'

"When will they take care of the problem?"

"When will the customer call me back?"

When we ask "When?" we're really saying we have no choice but to wait and put off action until another time. Questions that begin with "When" lead to procrastination.

Most people don't intend to procrastinate. No one ever gets out of bed and says, "Today, I'm going to procrastinate!" But procrastination is a sneaky problem. We put something off until a little later, and then a little later and a little later again until, before we know it, the action has been postponed so long that it has become a serious problem.

Is any procrastination going on in your life? Most people don't hesitate to admit that procrastination is a problem for them. And if it's a problem for most people, it's also a problem for most organizations. What are the consequences? Putting things off means precious time is lost. Productivity suffers. The team may not progress toward its goal. Deadlines are missed.

### Procrastination Increases Stress

Procrastination also increases stress. As things pile up, we begin to feel overwhelmed, which takes the joy out of our work. Bottom line: Procrastination is costly to all involved.

One solution is to stop asking externally focused questions that begin with "When?" Instead, we need to ask QBQs such as:

"What solution can I provide?"

"How can I more creatively reach the customer?"

"What can I do to find the information to make a decision?"

Remember: The answers are in the questions.

### 'When Will We Get More Tools and Better Systems?'

Most of us have heard the saying "Creativity is thinking outside the box." There's a lot of truth in that, but true creativity is this: Succeeding *within* the box.

Hitting targets, reaching goals, doing the job well and making a difference with what we already have is the QBQ way. Every organization has imperfect systems and finite resources. We may wish we had newer tools, better systems, more people and bigger budgets. But thinking too much about what we'd like to have is another cause of procrastination. Managers, for example, won't take their group through teambuilding until "All the right people are in place." Individuals won't make a decision until they have all the information, or take action until all the questions are answered.

Ironically, succeeding with what we have makes us more likely to get the things we wanted in the first place. Listen to the wisdom of Deb Weber of State Farm Insurance: "I find that every time I do the job with the tools I have, I tend to receive more tools." It's the truth: We sow, then we reap.

Focusing on what we don't have is a waste of time and energy. To really make a difference, let's focus our energy on succeeding within the box. Let's ask the QBQ "How can I achieve with the resources I already have?" ●

## Don't Ask 'Who?'

"Who made the mistake?"

"Who missed the deadline?"

"Who dropped the ball?"

When we ask "Who" questions like these, what we're really doing is looking for scapegoats, someone else to blame. And blame may well be the most pervasive and counterproductive of all the ideas mentioned so far.

### The Circle of Blame

From the smallest group to the largest corporation, from the lowest rung on the ladder to the highest office in the land, there's an epidemic of blame going on — and no one seems immune. The CEO blames the vice president, who blames the manager, who blames the employee, who blames the customer, who blames the

government, who blames the people, who blame the politicians, who blame the schools, who blame the parents, who blame the teen, who blames the dad, who blames the mom, who blames her manager, who blames the vice president, who blames the CEO, and on and on it goes. This is the "Circle of Blame," and it would be kind of funny if it weren't so true.

Blame and "whodunit" questions solve nothing. They create fear, destroy creativity and build walls. Instead of brainstorming and working together to get things done, we *blame*-storm and accomplish nothing. There's not a chance we'll reach our full potential until we stop blaming each other and start practicing personal accountability.

Try these questions instead of the "Who?" questions and see how fast you can break the Circle of Blame in your organization:

"What can I do today to solve the problem?"

"How can I help move the project forward?"

"What action can I take to 'own' the situation?"

### A Gift from Bonita

It was a humid day in Houston. As John boarded the plane, he could feel the heat in the steamy, crowded cabin. The flight was obviously overbooked and every passenger seemed to have three pieces of large carry-on luggage. On top of that, several people had apparently been assigned the same seats and weren't taking it too well. Tension in the cabin was high.

The doors finally closed and they taxied to the runway only to sit for another hour with no explanation from the crew. John couldn't help but think this gave a whole new meaning to the term "pressurized cabin." Mercifully, they did finally take off, and that's when John met one of his QBQ heroes.

Bonita was a flight attendant. When John first saw her, she was prancing down the aisle with an armload of headphones, smiling broadly and having great fun. It was the week before Christmas, and she was wearing one of those red-and-white Santa Claus caps, which draped down her shoulder and off to one side.

As she handed out the headphones, she wasn't saying, "We held you up for an hour, but give me five bucks anyway!" She was offering them at no charge. She turned to a young man and said, "I'm sure you'll enjoy our sports programming, sir."

### 'What Can I Do Right Now to Make a Difference?'

When she got to John, he stopped her and said, "You know, Bonita, I really appreciate your attitude!" As she sashayed away with that big smile on her face and the Santa Claus cap on her head, she said, "Well, whatever you do, don't drug test me!"

John didn't need to test her. He already knew she was high — on life. And that's one of the great things that happens when we make better choices: We get high on life.

It's not about "us" versus "them" or "Why did they overbook the plane?" or "Who dropped the ball?" The better question is "What can I do right now to make a difference?"

With one simple choice, making the best of a bad situation, Bonita made a difference for John and every other person on that flight. That's how personal accountability changes the world: one choice at a time. ●

## Making Accountability Personal: All QBQs Contain an 'I'

Personal accountability does NOT begin with you. It begins with me. That's why it's called *personal* accountability. It is not about you or me holding each other accountable, as a manager does in setting standards, defining consequences, helping set goals and then holding people accountable for their performance. Nor is it a group thing, where people get together, make public professions of commitment then come back a week or a month later to discuss what did or did not happen.

Personal accountability is about each of us holding *ourselves* accountable for our own thinking and behaviors, and the results they produce.

This is why the second QBQ guideline is: All QBQs contain an "I," *not* "they," "them," "we" or "you." Questions that contain an "I" turn our focus away from other people and circumstances and put it back on ourselves, where it can do the most good. We can't change other people. We often can't control circumstances and events. The only things we have any real control over are our own thoughts and actions. Asking questions that focus our efforts and energy on what we can do makes us significantly more effective, not to mention happier and less frustrated.

Accountability groups are great tools. Managers and executives *do* need to define and communicate standards, but the power of personal accountability comes from questions that begin with "What" or "How" and contain an "I."

### I Can Only Change Me

"What's the *one* thing you would change to improve

the effectiveness of your organization?"

People's minds fill with all kinds of ideas when asked what they would change to improve things. But guess what? Nobody ever says, "I would change *me* to make our organization run more effectively." It's not a trick question. Read it again. Our minds simply don't go there. Our thoughts almost always focus elsewhere first. Asking questions that begin with "What" or "How" and contain an "I" bring our focus back to ourselves.

How much better things would be if we all tried to mold and shape our own thoughts and actions rather than those of others. The bottom line is that the QBQ works because it's based on the truth *"I can only change me."* ●

## 'When Will Others Walk Their Talk?'

Up to the mountaintop go the executives for a senior management retreat. For three days they debate the critical issues, filling flip charts with brightly colored ink. Finally, "mission, vision and values" in hand, they return to the valley below where the people wait to receive the stone tablets, which have been magically transformed into little laminated pocket cards for men to sit on and women to stuff in their briefcases.

Not long after, people huddle near a water cooler, pull out their cards and whisper, "Well, I'll practice these values when they do!"

Careful. The easiest thing to spot is gaps of integrity in others:

- The manager who says, "I'm here to help you reach your personal goals," and then dresses people down in front of others.
- The executive who says, "You are all empowered. It's our new program!" and then adds, "But before you do anything substantial, check with me first."
- The teammate who says, "I appreciate my colleagues just the way they are … but if only they'd be a bit more like me."
- The organization that proudly declares on the lobby wall its guiding value, "People are our greatest asset!" yet the training dollar is the last one budgeted and the first one cut.

### Integrity

The definition of integrity is: "Being what I say I am by acting in accordance with my words."

QBQ thinking leads to integrity because integrity begins with me — not others — asking the question "How can I practice the principles I espouse?" instead of asking "When will others walk their talk?" let's walk our own talk first. ●

## An Integrity Test

Here's an integrity test for anyone who's part of an organization: Does what we say about our organization while we're at work *match* what we say at home? If it's positive at work and negative a few hours later at home, we have a choice to make. Here's an idea we should all consider: *Believe or leave.*

Sound harsh? Maybe. But if the organization is no longer a vehicle to help us reach our life goals, why would we stay?

Answering that question honestly is part of practicing personal accountability.

## Practicing Personal Accountability

Our third guideline is: All QBQs focus on action. To make a QBQ action-focused, we add verbs, such as "do," "make," "achieve" and "build," to questions that start with "What" or "How" and contain an "I."

We end up with excellent-sounding questions like "What can I do right now?" and "How will I make a difference today?"

If we don't ask what we can do or make or achieve or build, then we won't do or make or achieve or build. It's that simple. Only through action is anything accomplished.

The practice of personal accountability: We discipline our thoughts. We ask better questions. We take action.

### The Risk of Doing Nothing

Even though there are risks involved in taking action, the alternative, inaction, is almost never the better choice. Here's why:

- Action, even when it leads to mistakes, brings learning and growth. Inaction brings stagnation and atrophy.
- Action leads us toward solutions. Inaction, at best, does nothing and holds us in the past.
- Action requires courage. Inaction often indicates fear.
- Action builds confidence; inaction, doubt.

Decide what to do. Then take action.

### 'Thanks for Shopping at the Home Depot!'

One morning a few weeks into Judy's new job as a

cashier at Home Depot, a young man came through her line, obviously in a hurry. He quickly plunked down a few items and a $100 bill, but the total came to only $2.89. "Do you have anything smaller?" Judy asked. "No, I'm sorry, I don't," he said. At that moment, Judy had a choice to make.

So here's what she did: She handed the young man back his bill, reached for her purse, took out the $2.89, put it in the register and tore off the receipt. She turned to her customer with a smile and said, "Thanks for shopping at the Home Depot!"

### Stunned

The man stood there a few moments before he figured out what she'd done. Finally, somewhat stunned, he thanked her several times and took off. As far as Judy was concerned, that was the end of it.

Two days later, her supervisor, looking both confused and amused, approached her holding an envelope. "Judy, I need to get this straight," he said. "Did you actually buy the merchandise for one of our customers the other day?"

She had to think. "Yes, I guess I did."

"Well, he's sent you a tip," he said, "and as a Home Depot employee, I'm sure you know that you can't accept tips."

"I don't want a tip," she said, then abruptly added, "How much?"

"He wrote you a check for $50."

"Wow! How about if I endorse it and put it in the pizza fund so we can all share it?" she asked.

"OK," he said. "We can do that." So the money went into the pizza fund, and no one thought any more of it.

### Worth the Risk

The next day, though, the young man showed up in her line again. This time, he had his father, Bob Johnson Sr., owner of Johnson Construction Co. with him. Question: What do contractors need? Answer: Stuff! And the better answer from Judy's perspective: stuff from the Home Depot.

The elder Mr. Johnson said to Judy, "I want you to know that because of what you did to serve my son the other day, we've decided to start getting everything we need from you folks."

Never let it be said one person can't have an impact, especially if he or she is willing to take risks. Remember, Judy was in kind of a tight spot. The young man was in a hurry, people were lined up behind him and standard procedure said she'd have to make them all wait while she got change. But she didn't get stressed out, thinking, "Why is this happening to me?" or just say, "Sorry, it's our policy," and make them wait. She kept her cool and decided to take action and serve her customer. That's QBQ service, and it's worth the risk.

### Leaders at All Levels

Are you a leader? Many people wrestle with this question. "Am I a leader or is my manager the leader? Is the company president the leader? The vice president of my division?" Or they think, "Maybe the leader is my peer who was granted the title of 'Team Leader.'"

Too often, we think leadership is about title, position, tenure, or the number of people or dollars we manage. But the number of years one has been around does not automatically equate with being a good leader, any more than does merely having the title of manager or vice president. And, certainly, the things we acquire — fine cars, nice homes — are not measures of our leadership ability.

Leadership, more than anything else, is about the way we think. It's a moment-to-moment disciplining of our thoughts. It's about practicing personal accountability and choosing to make a positive contribution, no matter what our role or "level." A receptionist, an engineer, a salesperson, a temp worker, a cashier: They can all be leaders. Judy certainly was. If we think like leaders, we are leaders. ●

## A Great List of Lousy Questions

Each of us plays many different roles in our lives, and each of those roles has its own particular challenges and frustrations. As you read the following list of roles with IQs and QBQs, think about what IQs *you* might be asking, and more important, what QBQs you could use instead.

**Customer service:**

"Why does the customer expect so much?"

"When will the field do it right the first time?"

"Why don't customers follow the instructions?"

**QBQ:**

**"How can I serve them?"**

**Sales:**

"Why are our prices so high?"

"Why won't the customer call me back?"

"When will marketing give us better brochures?"

**QBQs:**

**"What can I do today to be more effective?"**

**"How can I add value for my customers?"**

**Management:**

"When am I going to find good people?"

"Why aren't they motivated?"

"Who made the mistake?"

**QBQs:**

**"How can I be a more effective coach?"**
**"What can I do to better understand each person on the team?"**

**Executive:**

"Who dropped the ball?"

"When are they going to catch the vision?"

"Who will care as much as I do?"

"When will the market turn around?"

**QBQs:**

**"How can I be a better leader?"**
**"What can I do to show I care?"**
**"How can I communicate better?"** ●

## The Spirit of the QBQ

There's a well-established legal principle that says there's a difference between the "letter" and the "spirit" of the law. The letter of the law refers to the specific words used in the law itself. The spirit refers to the underlying concepts and intentions behind the law. The general idea is that compliance with the letter of the law should be in alignment with the spirit of the law.

Using the same concept in our case, the letter of the QBQ would be the guidelines:

1. Begin with "What" or "How" (**not** "Why," "When" or "Who").
2. Contain an "I" (**not** "they," "them," "we" or "you").
3. Focus on action.

The *spiri*t of the QBQ is personal accountability:

- No more victim thinking, procrastinating or blaming.
- I can only change me.
- Take action!

It's possible to construct a question that follows the letter of the QBQ but conflicts with the spirit. Consider these:

"What can I do to *make you change*?"

"How can I *avoid responsibility* in this matter?"

"What action can I take right now to *do the wrong thing*?"

These questions are clearly not QBQs. The principle is this: If a question conflicts with the spirit of the QBQ, it isn't a QBQ.

When the time comes to construct a meaningful question, remember that the only questions that will help us practice personal accountability are those that follow both the letter *and* the spirit of the QBQ. ●

## The Cornerstone of Leadership

"Servant leadership" is the QBQ way, and it requires a humble spirit combined with a servant's heart. Humility is the cornerstone of leadership.

## A Final Picture

Personal accountability is not blaming, complaining and putting things off, but instead asking questions like "What can I do?" and taking action.

Asking QBQs is the way to start disciplining our thoughts and making better choices.

As we go out now and apply the QBQ in our own lives, let's always remember the real reason we're doing it. We're doing it so we can be more like Stacey's father, the pilot; Bonita, the flight attendant; and Judy, the cashier at the Home Depot.

None of these people knew about the QBQ, but each embodied its spirit. The rest of us, though, need the QBQ. We may not need it every minute of every day, but we need it often enough for it to make a real difference in our lives.

### Make Great Things Happen

We need the QBQ so our organizations can be places where, instead of finger-pointing, procrastinating and we-they-ing ourselves into the ground, we bring out the best in each other, work together the way teams are supposed to and make great things happen.

It's an exciting vision because if more people practiced personal accountability, the world would be a far better place. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *QBQ!*, you'll also like:

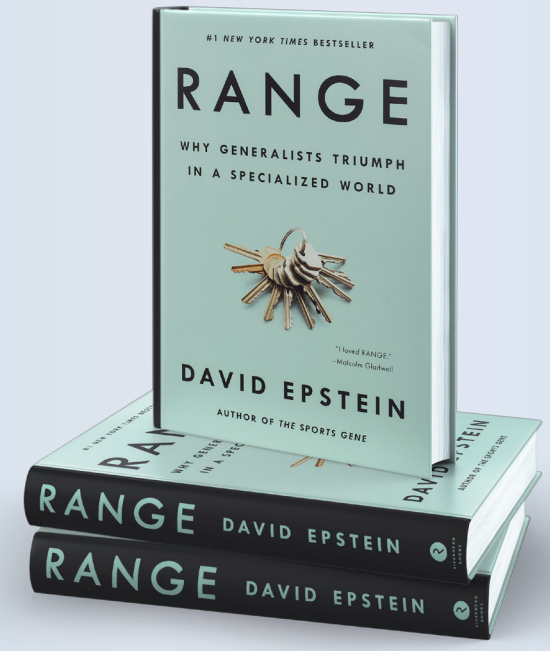
1. ***Fierce Conversations* by Susan Scott.** Learn the methods of positive change through powerful communication. Scott provides the steps to open dialogue between you and others.
2. ***Executive Presence* by Harrison Monarth.** People reach highly influential positions because they deeply understand the power of perception and know how to leverage it in their favor. Monarth provides the key tactics.
3. ***Just Listen* by Mark Goulston.** Veteran psychiatrist and business coach Mark Goulston reveals the secret to how to get through to anyone, even when productive communication seems impossible.

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# Range

David Epstein

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Range
By David Epstein

David Epstein is the author of the New York Times bestseller The Sports Gene. He has master's degrees in environmental science and journalism and has worked as an investigative reporter for ProPublica and a senior writer for Sports Illustrated. He lives in Washington, DC.

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# Broaden Your Horizons and Embrace the Future

From our earliest educational and athletic days, we are pushed to find an art, sport, or skill in which we show potential and to hyper focus in that area until we reach peak performance. We are told that the best way to achieve at the highest level and to be our very best is to spend all of our energies on that one thing, clocking countless hours of practice and conditioning in constant pursuit of near perfection. But what if we have been taking the exact wrong approach?

In ***Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World,*** two-time New York Times bestselling author David Epstein challenges readers to reconsider everything they think they know about how to become great. He lays out a nearly irrefutable case for going against the specialization grain and instead, becoming skilled and adept at any and every thing that is of interest. Achievement through specialization, he argues, is the exception, not the rule. Anchored by the latest research on highly complex and competitive fields such as sports, music, science, and art and bolstered by writing that is nothing short of exceptional, Epstein urges managers, parents, and individuals themselves to broaden their horizons and make themselves happier, more successful, and ready for whatever the future brings.

## Specialization vs. Sampling

There exists a rule of thumb regarding the development of expertise in any skilled pursuit. It spawned from a study of thirty violinists and it states that expertise can be achieved through "deliberate practice" to the tune of ten thousand total hours. Deliberate practice, according to this now-ubiquitous rule, happens when learners are "given explicit instruction about the best method" by an instructor that provides "immediate informative feedback and knowledge of the results of their performance" and they "repeatedly perform the same or similar tasks."

Tiger Woods is a quintessential example of this theory and an accompanying edict that one must start deliberately practicing as early, or young, as possible. As our ability to obtain information and connectivity increased, humans have responded with an "increasingly narrow focus" and "unwavering specialization" that begins at a very young age. This trend extends far beyond

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the world of sports, where it's ubiquity is near complete. We see it in music, art, science, and beyond. However, when the available data on athletes is examined more closely, we see a different story.

"Eventual elites typically devote less time early on to deliberate practice in the activity in which they will eventually become experts. Instead, they undergo what researchers call a "sampling period." They play a variety of sports, usually in an unstructured or lightly structured environment; they gain a range of physical proficiencies from which they can draw; they learn about their own abilities and proclivities; and only later do they focus in and ramp up technical practice in one area."

As it turns out, research showed that a sampling period leads to greater achievement in the tech sector as well as for artistic creators. And further still, Epstein's anecdotal evidence showed the same benefits from "late specializers and career changers" in the "wider world of work." The more Epstein dove into the research, the more evidence he uncovered that it is far more common for someone to develop a personal and professional range over a longer time frame, than for someone equally elite to have started specializing early. It is less efficient and takes longer to get to elite performance this way but the research shows that "it is worth it."

The deeper Epstein looked into this revelation, the more surprised he became. He discovered that people who are highly specialized "become so narrow minded that they actually get worse with experience, even while becoming more confident–a dangerous combination." Most shocking of all was the idea he was led to by cognitive psychologists about how learning itself is optimized. The experts Epstein consulted opened his eyes to a vast body of research that shows that "learning itself is best done slowly to accumulate lasting knowledge, even when that means performing poorly on tests of immediate progress." In other words, learning at its best looks inefficient. A person may appear to be falling behind, but they are actually learning optimally.

Everything we fervently believe about becoming the best just might be wrong. Epstein implores us to embrace "breadth, diverse experience, interdisciplinary thinking, and delayed concentration in a world that increasingly incentivizes, even demands, hyperspecialization." What the world needs now are generalists with a wide array of experiences and perspectives. The world needs "people with range."

## Thinking Outside Experience

The saying "think outside of the box" became so overused in modern work culture that it was rendered trite. Despite the phrase falling out of favor, the spirit behind it remains ever relevant. Epstein recounts the work of a 25-year-old astronomer named Johannes Kepler, who exemplified the then-revolutionary mode of thinking beyond your personal experience.

The year was 1596 and many thinkers of the time had come to accept the theory Copernicus put forth that the planets orbit the sun. Kepler found himself consumed with curiosity over why planets further away from the sun moved more slowly than those close to it. Asking the question itself was "so far outside the bounds of previous thought that there was no evidence in existence for him to work from." Having no experience to draw from, he started making analogies. And he made many, many of them before forming his theory that correctly identified the laws of planetary motion.

Analogical thinking requires us to analyze ideas or objects or scenarios that seem to have nothing in common but that have "ceonceptual similarities" that can be recognized. This way of thinking is a powerful tool that humans can apply to the "wicked problems" of modern life. Relational thinking is, in no small part, responsible for the dominant position humans hold on our planet. "Analogical thinking takes the new and makes it familiar, or takes the familiar and puts it in a new light, and allows humans to reason through problems they have never seen in unfamiliar contexts." It also enables us to comprehend that which we cannot see at all.

For example, students learning about how molecular motion, which cannot be seen with the eye, can begin to understand it through an analogy of how billiard balls collide and bounce off of each other. The basic elements of electricity can be taught with an analogy of how water runs through a plumbing system. These types of surface level analogies are made with some background experience or knowledge. Kepler relied on analogies that did not draw on previous experience and that level of creativity is the kind we need to solve new world problems.

## Being Late to Start is Actually Right on Time

Epstein shares several examples of phenomenally successful people in creative pursuits who got their start in the artistic endeavor of their choosing quite late in life. The likes of Vincent Van Gogh and J.K. Rowling are among them. He acknowledges that one could cherry pick such stories from the annals of history, but he didn't. That is because stories like these, in which the best of the best in any particular profession came to their path with a late start, are the rule, not the exception. Epstein says, "they aren't exceptions by virtue of their late starts, and those late starts did not stack the odds against them. Their late starts were integral to their eventual success."

In a highly relatable analogy of his own creation, Epstein likens professional and educational sampling to dating. Students in higher education who are forced to choose a specialization early on, oftentimes find themselves "divorced" from that career path early on, too. It would be like asking a high school senior to decide before graduation whether or not she would marry her high school sweetheart. She may think that's the best choice at the time, but later on she may realize that they are not the best suited for long term success. In love, like in life, trying out a variety of partners and potential mates with an eventual choice later in life is far more likely to succeed and provide fulfillment than hitching your wagon to the first horse that comes along. "If we treated careers more like dating, nobody would settle down so quickly."

Ideally, people just beginning their careers will pursue a wide variety of interests, including jobs that may seem risky or too

> . . . experts become incredibly worse at making long-term predictions in their own area of specialization."

bold for those more advanced in their profession lives. Newcomers, with less experience to draw on, should go big. They should seek out those big risk, big reward opportunities like we find in arts, entertainment, and entrepreneurship. That is because these experiences have "high informational value."

"Thanks to constant feedback and an unforgiving weed-out process, those who try will learn quickly if they might be a match, at least compared to jobs with less constant feedback. If they aren't, they go test something else, and continue to gain information about their options and themselves." In the long run, people who leap frog around will eventually land on something that is the perfect fit, in which they can leverage that breadth of experience, skill, and knowledge they gained in the process. And that leads to a more fulfilling life as well.

## Fooled by Expertise

One of the biggest problems with our tendency to specialize is that it breeds a very particular kind of thinking. Those who become highly specialized in their field eventually run the risk of missing critical pieces of information outside of the scope of specialization. They become entirely entrenched in their own microworld of focus and when presented with ideas that are contrary to their understanding, which are discovered or invented or progressed towards, they draw worse and worse conclusions and make mistakes. Different specialists in the same field can present "facts" that are "perfetly contradictory to one another and impervious to counterarguments." It is as if they are blinded by "their mental representation of the world" and cannot see the larger forest for their own highly-specialized trees.

This remarkable penchant for poor prediction making peaked the curiosity of psychologist and political scientist Philip Tetlock during the Cold War. He gathered and studied "short- and long-term forecasts from 284 highly educated experts who averaged more then twelve years of experience in their specialities." Over the course of twenty years, he posed predictive questions to this group about international politics and economics, ammassing a collection of "82,361 probability estimates about the future." And the results showed that the average expert was not just slightly off the mark from time to time. They were horrifically bad at forecasting.

Results were equally off regardless of the predictor's area of specialty, years of experience, or even access to classified information. And even more striking, when faced with the failure of their prediction, many would "never admit systemic flaws in their judgment." When their prediction failed to materialize, it was because of one small detail they got wrong, resulting in a "near miss." On the flip side, when they were right, it was entirely because of "their own merits." "Victories were total victories, and defeats were always just a touch of bad luck away from having been victories too." In the mind of the experts, they remained undefeated even though they were, in reality, constantly losing.

Perhaps most quizzical of all, experts become incredibly worse at making long-term predictions in their own area of specialization. Instead of taking in a whole view with all relevant information, old and new, they hold firm to their worldview. The more credentialed, quoted, or interviewed an expert becomes, the more they find any way possible to cram their prediction through "their preferred keyhole." In terms of creating notoriety, this does have a distinct advantage. "Viewing every world event" through their finely-tuned lens makes it quite "easy to fashion compelling stories about anything that occurs" and to tell those stories "with adamant authority." In other words, they make for great television.

Epstein's work in the area of specialization versus generalization began in the sports world. When he would speak to a group of parents about the fallacy of childhood sports specialization, pointing out that the world's elite athletes are more often late starters with wide experience in a variety of athletic pursuits than early-start specialists, he was usually met with disbelief. We are so conditioned to the idea of specialization that we ourselves cannot accept the truth of the facts when presented with hard data that is not in line with our firmly-held beliefs. Time and again parents, reluctantly coming to at least consider Epstein's supposition, would ask Epstein to sum up his advice for the best path forward in one single sentence. "What began as a search for one sentence of advice ended in this book."

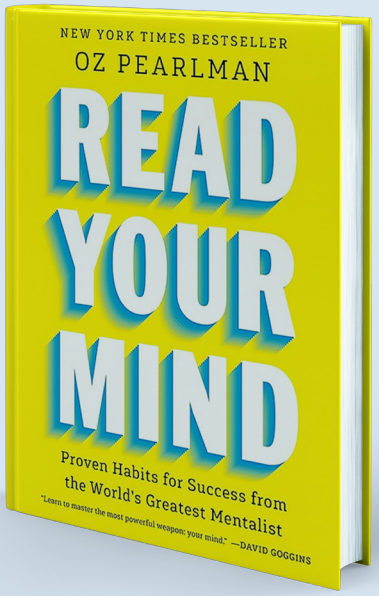
The central question Epstein set out to answer was "how to capture and cultivate the power of breadth, diverse experience, and interdisciplinary exploration, within systems that increasingly demand hyperspecialization, and would have you decide what you should be before first figuring out who you are." In composing that single sentence, Epstein succeeds in perfectly capturing the essence of his book and inspires us to reach wide, rather than deep. But readers can be grateful that he didn't stop there as the entirety of Range is thought provoking, entertaining, insightful, and ridiculously well written. And it can change your life.

· Book 151 of 269 ·

# Read Your Mind

Oz Pearlman

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books




## Read Your Mind

**Proven Habits for Success from the World's Greatest Mentalist**

*By Oz Pearlman*

Oz Pearlman, known as "The Mentalist," is a world-renowned performer celebrated for his extraordinary mind-reading abilities and audience-specific experiences. He rose to national prominence as a finalist on *America's Got Talent* and earned an Emmy Award for his NBC special *Oz Knows*. With three decades of experience studying how people think and decide, Pearlman applies mentalism to performance and personal transformation. He has appeared on hundreds of television programs and been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Forbes*. His elite clients include Fortune 500 companies, professional sports teams, and A-list celebrities around the world.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Channeling Your Inner Mentalist

In ***Read Your Mind***, Oz Pearlman explores how the skills behind mentalism—careful observation, attention, and awareness—can be applied far beyond performance. While he is not capable of reading minds, Pearlman has learned how to read and understand other people, a skill he argues can be developed just as it is possible to better read and understand ourselves. As social creatures, he suggests, humans are already equipped with the foundations of these abilities.

Pearlman began his career as a restaurant magician, a role that did more than simply provide money for magic supplies. It gave him an education in reading people and learning the best ways to garner and hold their attention—skills that would prove useful to him in both his career and his life. He learned the importance of choosing the right time to approach people just as he learned the importance of paying attention to every clue people give off as to their mental and emotional state. He writes that he learned to "anticipate the thoughts of others before they even think them."

He also learned the importance of responding to failure constructively rather than dwelling on it. Not every table welcomed a teenage magician during dinner service, and those rejections became part of his education in resilience and adaptability.

## What Goes on in Our Minds

Pearlman writes that, "Theory of Mind refers to our ability to attribute mental states to ourselves and others, and to understand that the mental states of others may be different from our own." Despite the popular adage against such judgments, people do, indeed, judge books by their cover.

Pearlman points out, however, that with mentalism, a person can design their own cover because the skills of a mentalist help people manage the impressions other people develop of

them. Much of this is done within the first ten seconds of meeting a person.

Part of being a mentalist is learning to both "predict" and "plan" for what will happen next. A crucial step in this is stress testing or trying to assess every eventuality before a high-stakes performance. Equally important is visualization and they must be as detailed as possible because our brains react the same way to them much as it does to real-life events. According to Pearlman, effective visualization builds confidence, helps manage pressure, sharpens focus, reduces anxiety, and creates muscle memory.

Furthermore, it is crucial to account for what could go wrong. This includes recognizing when you may be inclined to give in to temptation or fatigue and preparing a backup plan. While some variables and situations can be controlled, others simply cannot. When uncontrollable situations arise, as they inevitably will, maintaining composure and avoiding panic becomes essential. After all, "your mental controls your physical."

## Managing Fear of Rejection and Failure

One reason people fail to pursue their goals is because they fear rejection. The problem is that when we avoid the possibility of failure, we also avoid the possibility of real success. This fear is deeply rooted: rejection is not merely unpleasant but neurologically painful. Research shows that social rejection activates the same neural pathways as physical pain, a response shaped by evolution, when survival depended on belonging to a group.

Through his work, Pearlman has identified strategies to reduce the emotional sting of rejection. One of his most effective techniques is to silo his emotions by separating his personal identity from his professional role.

He distinguishes between two versions of himself: Oz the Person and Oz the Mentalist. When rejection occurs, it is directed at the character he performs, not at him personally. This form of compartmentalization provides psychological distance, allowing him to manage negative thoughts and emotions without becoming overwhelmed. It allows him to protect his sense of self while still learning objectively from professional setbacks.

Another method Pearlman uses to cope with failure is reminding himself that the intensity of negative emotions tends to fade, particularly within the first forty-eight hours after an event. With this perspective, he focuses on getting through the next minute, hour, or day rather than being consumed by the setback.

While failure is painful, Pearlman emphasizes its role in building resilience, encouraging innovation, and strengthening mental endurance.

## Outward Focus

Pearlman writes that, "The only thing you have to do to be the most interesting person in the room is to be the most interested person in the room. If you want to be fascinating, be fascinated by others."

It is important to pay close attention to others during interactions. Too often, people place themselves on a pedestal, which prevents genuine connection because individuals tend not to feel connected to those they perceive as above them. Conversely, placing others on a pedestal can also hinder connection by making it harder to relate to them as equals. For this reason, Pearlman stresses the value of creating a level playing field in interactions.

One way to make another person feel important is to remember what *they* consider important. This does not require a remarkable memory. Pearlman himself has made it a habit to take notes after meeting with people so he can refer to them the next time he encounters the person. By doing so, he is able to make people feel valued by recalling what matters to them.

It is also important to build empathy, which requires sharing in the feelings of others. This binds people together and can be strengthened by focusing on similarities rather than differences.

## Avoiding Procrastination

Achieving goals requires work. People are so prone to procrastination because our brains are "locked in a battle." This inner battle occurs because the limbic system rewards hedonistic behavior, while the prefrontal cortex drives responsible action.

Often, the limbic system wins out, which is why we procrastinate. This tendency is not inevitable, however. It can be overcome by breaking down large goals into smaller ones. The key is to begin with one small task to spark motivation for the rest of the work. The dopamine produced can help counteract inertia.

When you have a goal in mind, it is most effective to reverse engineer the process by identifying the three areas you want to change and then figuring out the adjustments needed to achieve those outcomes. These changes are then broken down into smaller, actionable steps. This approach requires goals that are quantifiable and well-defined—the more specific the goal, the better. Pearlman advocates for SMART goals, which are specific, memorable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Our brains will try to stop us as we struggle to create new habits to meet our goals. Pearlman maintains, however, that if we remain as consistent as possible, while avoiding beating

> Betting on yourself isn't a gamble; it's the smartest move you can make."

ourselves up after failure, we can create a habit within two weeks. It is helpful to have a backup plan for when progress becomes difficult, especially during this time period. He emphasizes the role of accountability and discipline in creating and maintaining goals. Discipline, he suggests, comes from remembering that long-term goals are ultimately beneficial, while accountability can be reinforced by sharing those goals with others.

## Set Yourself Up for Success

Pearlman writes that, "Betting on yourself isn't a gamble; it's the smartest move you can make." There are steps you can take to make the likelihood of success greater. One of these is to learn to quiet your mind and achieve a state of flow, something athletes have known for a long time. This requires allowing muscle memory to take over as distracting thoughts quiet. Achieving flow depends on two conditions. First, sufficient practice is needed to enable a specialized brain network to perform the task. Second, overthinking must be relinquished so the subconscious can take over.

Another way to stack the deck in your favor is to be proactive and avoid waiting for other people to create opportunities for you. When an opportunity does arise, it must be taken. According to Pearlman, "If you wait for the perfect moment to do something, odds are you're going to wait a long time."

At times people can find themselves getting overwhelmed by the prospect of success. The brain cannot always differentiate between different types of anxiety, so people can feel an increase in tension when they achieve a goal. Pearlman believes it is important to acknowledge this anxiety and walk through any worst-case scenarios you can come up with to be able to put those worries behind you.

If worry persists, it can be used more productively through planning rather than rumination. Pearlman suggests striking a balance between enjoying the present and planning for your future. He also mentioned the value of cultivating a growth mindset—one grounded in self-belief and a willingness to confront challenges.

## Self-Talk and Self-Perception

As Pearlman observes, "No online troll could poke our raw nerves and tender spots like we do when we are trolling ourselves." This tendency towards negative thinking is evolutionarily advantageous as our ancestors needed to anticipate danger in order to survive. The trick these days, however, is to avoid letting negative self-talk convince us that we are not as worthy as we are. If we do, we run the risk of developing anxiety, depression, and a host of other feelings.

Negative self-talk, while sometimes feeling indulgent, is ultimately harmful because it signals a perceived threat to the brain. Negative thoughts and emotions also affect others through emotional contagion. To address this pattern, Pearlman introduces the *Catch It, Check It, Change It* system. This cognitive behavioral technique requires people to first identify their negative thoughts, evaluate their accuracy, and finally replace inaccurate beliefs with more balanced and constructive ones.

It is normal to struggle when you are attempting to learn a new skill or working toward personal growth. Rather than allowing failure to become defining, Pearlman has learned to use other people's successes as motivation, pushing himself to work harder rather than becoming discouraged.

Another way that people undermine their own success is by devaluing their work. This is especially common when individuals enjoy what they do and would continue doing it even without compensation, which can make pricing their services difficult. To help with this, Pearlman recommends considering opportunity cost—what are you giving up in order to perform this service?

Assigning value to one's work takes confidence, particularly since others will often seek to pay as little as possible. Pearlman's silo technique can help manage the negative emotions that may arise in these situations by separating personal worth from personal negotiation.

## Asking For Help and Confronting Weaknesses

At times, everyone needs help, and reaching out is an important part of growth. Many people resist doing so because asking for help requires vulnerability. Pearlman points out that vulnerability is not a weakness, even though it can trigger feelings of shame. This discomfort stems from a basic human need for belonging: people crave connection, and vulnerability is one of the primary ways it is formed. Those willing to be vulnerable are better positioned to build strong

relationships. As Pearlman notes, vulnerability also helps regulate emotions, build resilience, and improve self-esteem by fostering a more positive self-image.

Pearlman moves on to discuss building a team. After all, success requires other people. Pearlman is an ultramarathoner, and as such, he needs a crew to help him through these races. A crew, however, does more than just help individuals endure grueling physical challenges. Pearlman notes that belonging to a group is directly linked to the production of oxytocin, which he describes as "almost like taking a performance-enhancing drug." He encourages readers to identify the people in their own lives who consistently offer support. These relationships, he argues, also contribute to physical health by influencing blood pressure, immune function, and stress regulation.

Pearlman also advocates for finding a mentor. He makes a point of mentoring others himself, having benefited from mentors while learning his craft. Not everyone is willing to take on that role, however, as some believe their own success may be diminished by helping others succeed. Pearlman challenges this assumption, suggesting that one effective way to secure mentorship is by offering value in return. When people feel supported, he argues, they are more inclined to offer support themselves.

Pearlman argues that weaknesses can become strengths if individuals allow themselves room to change and grow. He suggests that confronting weaknesses—rather than avoiding them—and sitting with the discomfort they produce is essential to that process. This is often difficult, as acknowledging weaknesses can trigger fears of rejection.

To move past this resistance, he encourages readers to examine broader patterns of discomfort—situations that may limit personal growth. While these changes can be unsettling, that discomfort is a critical part of learning and development, leading to greater motivation, emotional resilience, and long-term growth.

## Employing Memory and Charm

Pearlman insists that most people do not struggle with memory problems; rather, they struggle with listening. People do not usually forget names; they fail to ever encode them in the first place, often because they are too distracted. To combat this, Pearlman advocates for his *listen, repeat, reply* approach.

When listening, Pearlman underscores the importance of tuning out distractions and giving the speaker full attention. He suggests repeating a person's name after it is introduced and using it naturally during the conversation. Spelling the name or commenting on its spelling can also aid recall. Other memory techniques he discusses include the mansion technique, which involves associating information with objects in a familiar location, and chunking, a method of breaking information into smaller units to improve retention.

Charm is a central theme in Pearlman's work. He defines charm as "getting people on your team," or finding a way to persuade others to root for you. While some individuals are naturally charismatic, he argues that charm is a learnable skill and considers it "the linchpin to success."

He associates charm with honesty, noting that people are drawn to authenticity and that it cannot be faked. Effective listening also plays a key role and involves full engagement, expressing genuine interest, avoiding interruptions that can trigger a fight-or-flight response, asking thoughtful questions, and concluding conversations by summarizing what was discussed.

## From Mentalism to Mindset

In his book, Oz Pearlman demonstrates some of the tactics and lessons he has learned that have allowed him to become a world-class mentalist, earning the attention of corporate heads and billionaires alike. His book is filled with stories of his own journey because he believes that people best learn lessons when they are conveyed through story.

While Pearlman does not give away the secrets to his tricks, he does give away the secrets to his success. He leaves his reader understanding what it takes to be successful in any field. His discussions on self-talk and charm help readers turn difficult situations into more pleasant ones. His job requires solid memory skills and shares useful tactics to not only better encode and remember people's names but also to remember larger pieces of information.

While Pearlman may not literally read minds, his insights offer readers practical ways to become more attentive, perceptive, and intentional in how they engage with others—skills that carry clear value in both personal and professional contexts.

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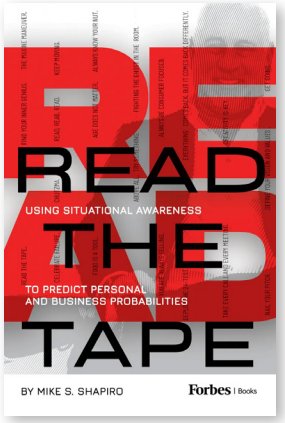
# Read the Tape

Mike S. Shapiro

Executive Book Summaries®

# Read the Tape

## Using Situational Awareness to Predict Personal and Business Probabilities




*by* **Mike S. Shapiro**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Failure is inevitable. But failure is also valuable. Sure, coping with failure isn't exactly fun. But what if you find a way to transform your failures into successes? What impact would that bring to your personal and professional life?

By recounting the success story of Bennett Gates, the book ***Read the Tape: Using Situational Awareness to Predict Personal and Business Probabilities*** unveils a super powerful yet fun guide to overcoming difficult challenges on your way to greatness. Here, you'll taste seven compelling episodes that will help you deep dive into who you are, what you're truly capable of, how you can overcome your limitations, and how you can overcome your limitations to achieve your most ambitious dreams.

By crafting a novelized version of his own journey to excellence, Author Mike S. Shapiro enables us to extract opportunities, deploy situational awareness, and overcome adversity (in both life and business) in a super creative and engaging way.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to truly know yourself.
- How to transform failures into success.
- How not to limit yourself.
- How to find joy in whatever you do.

## Introduction: You Already Can

As Bennett Gates rolled up to the sleek recording studio of his noon session, he caught a glimpse of himself – or rather, a glimpse of his BMW iX reflected in the building's glossy black glass. For a split second, the image startled him. A year ago, he was driving a beat-up truck in the mountains of Virginia, feeling about as lost as he ever had.

For most of his life, a question had haunted him. He had no doubt the Bennett Gates of a year ago would have this question in mind when confronted with a shiny new BMW and the familiar face at the wheel: Who does that guy think he is?

Back then, that question would have made him stick his head in the sand and hide from the world. Because at least when you were hiding, you couldn't fail. Everything is different now. I know exactly who that guy is, Bennett thought, a smile spreading across his face because he's me. He was learning to be comfortable in his own skin. Over the last twelve months, he had failed – spectacularly – but instead of being crushed by that failure, he had laughed and learned from it. The irony, of course, was that only once he embraced failure had Bennett experienced such phenomenal success.

Bennett was a coder and a decent one at that. A coder could always find work. But he had a bad feeling he wouldn't be able to work in video games again, not again after multiple failures he had to face. What in the world happened to my life? He wondered. How is it possible that I have continued to be my own worst enemy, failing time and time again?

But one day, he stumbled across a podcast called Read the Tape by Mike Shapiro. And that was where his wildly successful journey began. The following episodes of Read the Tape reveal the secrets behind Bennett's success!

## Episode 1: What's Your Chutzma?

Welcome to Read the Tape. I'm your host Mike Shapiro, an author, entrepreneur, and venture capitalist. I've developed and created multiple businesses and done lots of things in my life. Honestly, a lot of my success has come from failures I've had before. Today we're going to talk about chutzma. It's one of my favorite Mikeisms. Mikeisms are the things I've learned from a lifetime of experience that I try to quantify in my life and business so you can put them to use in yours.

Chutzma is essentially a combination of two things: chutzpah (or self-confidence) and charisma. When you bring these elements together, chutzma becomes the practice of developing a deep belief in yourself and your capabilities, strengthening that belief, making yourself stronger through that belief, and getting others excited and engaged in you and your cause.

Everyone has an inner genius, something that makes you special, and it's vital to find out what yours is. Ask yourself, "What's easy? In your entire existence, what was just really easy and fun for you? What do you love to do? What brings you joy?"

Now let's talk about self-confidence. It's hard to stop being fearful of putting yourself in the spotlight, but the only way we're going to learn who we are and how to be comfortable with ourselves is by facing those irrational fears head-on. After all, what's the worst that could happen? Chutzpah and charisma are both driven by communication. That communication is effective only when you're yourself around others and not trying to be someone you're not.

## Episode 2: Know Yourself

Welcome to the next episode of Read the Tape. I'm your host Mike Shapiro, and here's one thing I know about myself: I'm confident. In all honesty, confidence is built through success. Every time you have a success, you get more confident. Yes, you're going to fail along the way. But it depends on what you do with those failures. Turn it into something that's successful so that each time you're successful, more confidence comes. Then you're always confident.

Part of knowing yourself is enjoying who you are, what brings you joy and makes you happy. Now, write down five things you're not. If those five things made you feel like a failure, guess what: you're going to fail along the way. There will be failures and your success will depend on what you do with those failures.

Succeeding isn't just about money or notoriety. It's about doing something that gives you purpose. It's about truly enjoying yourself – about being yourself and embracing your inner genius – and finding that, in the process, you're becoming really good at what you do.

No one has the power to change your life circumstances as much as you do. But there are several things you can control that can make all the difference between success and failure. One of them is what we talked about earlier: chutzma (self-confidence + charisma).

For self-confidence to really settle in, you need to build up two more all-too-important traits: resilience and a sense of

humor. While resilience can get you far, having the fearlessness to laugh at the worst that could happen will keep you going. It's easy to know what we're good at. But when we look at what we're not good at, we get a much better sense of who we are because we have to stop and really think about the answer. So, be open to facing your fears, and you may be surprised where it takes you!

## Episode 3: Read the Tape

What does the name of the podcast – Read the Tape – really mean? To "read the tape" refers back to the old practice of using a telegraph to transmit stock price updates. But in the modern world, reading the tape goes beyond staying aware of stock market fluctuation. It's about reading the room, reading the environment, and reading the momentum of what's going on around you. It's also being able to take in visual cues, from the layout of a room to the rise of an eyebrow. It's about paying attention – accurately assessing people, situations, and trends – and using that information to do the right things at the right times to move forward.

Step one is just to be open and real, and let the other person lead. Truly connecting with someone means letting go of that false-perfect narrative and, instead of feeling like you have to prove yourself, being excited about getting to know them. See the people you want to connect with as incredibly and imperfectly human as you. Ask yourself, by focusing on them and not yourself, what can you learn about them that will help you ask the right questions.

Step two is relating. As you take all these observations, what can you ask that could help you relate to someone? What sort of nonverbal communication could help you ask about their day? Do they seem down or excited? Eventually, there will be something they say or something you notice that will lead to that deeper connection. All you have to do is stay open, listen, and ask.

Step three is asking the right questions. Once you've explored the first two steps, you'll already have a sense of how people like to communicate. Regardless of the way they talk, make note of whatever their style is, and adjust your response to complement it. And don't forget to be a good listener.

## Episode 4: Above All, Try Something

I want to start today's episode with a brand-new Mikeism: Everything comes back, but it comes back differently.

When you get good at reading the tape, you start to ask the right questions about how things will come back differently. It's those questions that help you move forward, whether it's by making suggestions for improvement, coming up with new ahead-of-the-curve products in your day job, or launching a new business concept.

Always trying something is also linked to being willing to take a leap when others won't because unlike them, you're reading the tape, watching those trends lines to see what will come back and how different it will be when it does.

But how do you know what to look for? Where to find it? How to know if you're looking for the right thing? The truth is, reading the tape is not like following a clear trail of breadcrumbs. It's about training yourself to take in as much of the data around you as possible – from the nuances of the environment to the flow of human interactions.

At the same time, it's not a step-by-step process. I can't give you instructions on how to read the tape because everyone observes things differently and absorbs data differently. All I can tell you is to be open to it. Always trying something is also about reading your own tape. What's your edge? What makes you tick? What is different in you from the rest of the world? What is your inner genius? It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.

## Episode 5: Don't Limit Yourself

In this episode, we're going to talk about the importance of not limiting yourself. Usually without realizing it, we let our experiences hold us back instead of propelling us forward. We box ourselves in, defining ourselves as what we have done – those lines of "skills" and "previous roles" on our resumes – instead of what we could do.

In doing this, we risk burying ourselves in the tedium and mediocrity of settling for work that we already know, which numbs our minds and souls even if the paycheck is decent. We don't push ourselves, and instead of growing and pursuing new avenues that could spark excitement and reignite our happiness, we instead become complacent, bored, and lost.

But what if, instead of thinking about what our experiences say we can do, we look at what we're capable of doing? While experiences say "I'm able to do X, Y, Z skills, capabilities open up the door for anything we believe we can do. Believing we're capable of something simply means that although we may

have never had the experience or developed the skills to make it happen, we believe we can still try it and learn how to do it – and we may even find that we can do it pretty well.

## Episode 6: Know Your Nut

We'll start this episode with three little words for you: Know your nut. We're going to talk about managing your cash flow and paying attention to financials. You might think, I'll worry about that later, Mike. But if you keep pushing it off to some date in the future, then you won't have a strong foundation to build on, which means your inner genius may never get a chance to spark.

Capital is the fuel for every entrepreneur. It fuels the fire for whatever it is you do, which is why talking about capital is a necessary matter. If you want to be successful, then you've got to ask these questions: What is it that you're trying to pursue? What are you spending? What is your burn rate?

Be it life or business – surround yourself with people who have skill sets you don't. Always have a clear calculation of what your financial statements look like.

## Episode 7: You Are Always Selling

How about a Mikeism that's evergreen? You are always selling. Whether business or personal, that's the truth. That's why you have to look the part to the people you're trying to sell to. It's part of your credibility.

When I was selling real estate in Arizona, it was important to look the part with nice clothes and shoes. In Seattle, it's the exact opposite: I've met with billionaires who have holes in their T-shirts. Compare that to Southern California, where there's so much focus on how you look that it can start to get conflated with who you are.

Everyone has an inner genius. The problem is that, for many of us as we get older, the genius gets clouded over, and we forget. Knowing your limits is not supposed to be a barrier to success. It's about knowing what you're good at, what you're capable of, what you're comfortable with, whether you want to be in front of a screen, and what you can do. It is about self-discovery, personality, and capability, and figuring out how to make your inner genius shine.

## Conclusion: Finding Joy in the Success of Others

"And that's when I realized," Bennett said, bringing his long story to a close, "that maybe I could be successful in more than just business. Maybe it was time to pay as much attention to my personal life as I'd been paying to my professional success."

He was in Mike's recording studio, podcast headphones clamped over both ears, speaking into the microphone. Bennett reflects on the many failures that had led him to where he now sat, in Newport Beach, recording a podcast with his coach, mentor, and hero. Too many to count. And every one of those failures was worthy of being celebrated.

"I can't thank you enough," Bennett said sincerely. "You don't have to, Ben. I love helping young people like you. I don't expect I'll ever stop finding joy in the success of others. Sometimes all you have to do is put your hand under someone and say, 'Here's the net.' That usually allows creativity to happen and for success to blossom very rapidly. I mean, look at you!"



**Mike S. Shapiro** is an entrepreneur, investor, personal development coach, mentor, speaker, author, and podcast host. Mike is also a co-founder and CEO of EQTY | Forbes Global Properties and a co-founder of Plunk, a Seattle-based proptech startup. Mike's system is based on skills he developed as a market maker and trader with the Chicago Board of Options Exchange. There, he learned the value of "reading the tape," cultivating situational awareness to predict behaviors, leverage opportunities, and achieve game-changing results.

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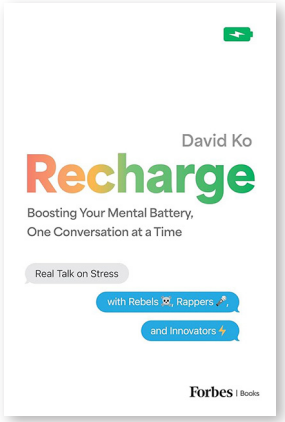
# Recharge

David Ko

Executive Book Summaries®

# Recharge

## Boosting Your Mental Battery, One Conversation at a Time




*by* **David Ko**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We pay more attention to our phone battery than to the inner battery that powers our mind and body. And this is one of the biggest causes of the most widespread disease of our century: stress.

In his book, ***Recharge: Boosting Your Mental Battery, One Conversation at a Time***, David Ko argues that if we paid as much attention to our inner energy levels as we do to our phones, we would be much better, both mentally and physically. Working for Calm, the company behind the well-known mindfulness app, Ko had the opportunity to understand how technology can be both friend and foe when it comes to our mental health.

In this book, Ko argues that we need to give up the stigma of talking about mental health issues at the workplace, and use technology to help us monitor our mental wellbeing, instead of letting it add up to our stress levels.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn to use the battery model to evaluate your level of stress.
- Discover helpful ways to recharge your battery, both at work and at home.
- Understand the dangers of being hooked on social media all the time.
- Learn how to discuss mental health with your family, friends and coworkers.

## Introduction

I had my first panic attack when I was fourteen. I remember taking a shower to see if the water would help the tightness in my chest go away. I couldn't breathe, and all I could think about was trying to "power through."

But now I work for the most mindful company in the world: Calm. Our mission is to help everyone on every step of their mental health journey. I decided to write a book to share my journey to guide and encourage all of us to take care of the batteries that run our lives: our brains.

The mind is the ultimate battery. Traditionally, we think of the brain as a supercomputer, able to handle decisions, calculations, and movements in a fraction of a second. But every supercomputer needs an energy source, and the mind's battery frequently gets overlooked. We take it for granted most of the time.

Until now.

## Chapter 1: Our Batteries Are Depleted

Our world today operates at a hyperkinetic, twenty-four-seven pace. We struggle with anxiety, high rates of depression, addiction, and burnout. But oftentimes, we plaster on a smile and "power through". We don't have the conversations we should be having. When someone asks, "How are you?" our usual response is "Fine."

We need to change that.

It's helpful to think of this in the universally understood context of our phones. We all have these computers in our pocket and—let's be honest—are obsessed with their battery levels. If everyone can check in on their mental health whenever they check their phone or laptop battery, we'd all be better off.

When you see your phone battery hovering around 20 percent, you start to feel a little bit anxious. Yet how often do you check your mental health battery, that battery within that is your power source, if we continue the analogy? We don't check in with ourselves nearly enough, if at all. Especially for busy people, mental health and wellness are often afterthoughts until that battery within is hovering near 5 percent.

The stigma around discussing our mental health adds to the constant cacophony of our twenty-four-seven world. I'm sure we've all heard someone say, "I don't have time for myself; I'm just too busy."

What we don't discuss enough is that mental health challenges are just as "normal" as any other medical concern. They can, and do, happen to anyone—everyone. But talking about it is easier said than done. Sometimes we don't have the vocabulary.

Sometimes it's that sense of stigma or embarrassment. However, when we have these conversations with each other, with our friends, with our families, when we simply are honest and assure ourselves and others, "It's OK to not be OK right now," we are all helping to ease that stigma.

These conversations don't have to be heavy or deep; they can start with a simple question. It's about being open and then listening in response.

Helping someone with their mental health is as easy as asking, "How can I help?" and it comes naturally to many of us. We're happy to ask peers and our families how we can lighten their load.

Keeping our own minds' batteries charged will not just help us with our mental health—it will help with our physical health.

## Chapter 2: The Mind and Body

I am willing to bet that every single person reading this knows the physical manifestations that arise when their mental health is suffering. We'll discuss some of those in more detail, but physical symptoms could include:

- stomachaches and indigestion;
- headaches;
- fatigue;
- muscle tension, muscle aches, and pains;
- clenched jaw and teeth grinding;
- insomnia;
- rapid heartbeat, clammy hands, and chest tightness;
- dry mouth and inability to speak;
- frequent illnesses—colds, swollen glands, sore throat;
- cold or icy hands;
- forgetfulness.

The mind and body are intrinsically linked. If your thinking brain is stressing you out, chances are it's also stressing out your breathing, or other aspects of your involuntary nervous system.

If your thinking brain is stressing you out, chances are it's also stressing out your breathing, or other aspects of your involuntary nervous system.

We all need to learn to listen to our batteries, to listen to our "guts" and our bodies as well. Those signs, like chronic headaches or those dreaded panic attacks, are like the canary in the coal mine, letting you know the signals that all is not well.

### Check Your Battery: Your Mind-Body Connection

How does your body react to your mind's stress? It can look different for everyone. Do you lose sleep? Feel tension in your neck or lower back? Does your stomach tie up in knots? Think about how you personally hold onto stress in your body.

The following sections will offer plenty of suggestions, but as you read, consider how you recharge to keep your mind-body connection healthy and in balance.

### Sleep

Smart sleep hygiene habits include the following:

- Keeping a consistent sleep schedule
- Creating a relaxing bedtime routine
- Creating a relaxing and soothing bedroom environment
- Exercising
- Getting sunlight during the day, if possible.

### Mindfulness

Mindfulness begins with being aware. Being in the now. Being in what we ubiquitously hear people call "the present." Mindfulness can also begin with being aware of the pace you are keeping. It begins with slowing down and just being present.

### Meditation

Meditation can take many forms—from an athlete listening to music to prepare for a game to someone who does yoga first thing in the morning. Meditation does not have to look a specific way or be done perfectly or according to a set of rules in order for you to experience the health benefits of mindfulness, which can include:

- stress reduction, reducing the production of stress hormones;
- improved focus/concentration;
- better sleep;
- reduced anxiety;
- lower blood pressure
- pain management;
- enhanced feelings of well-being.

### Exercise

Exercising—even walking a few days a week—helps to release feel-good hormones for our brains. But it also has positive effects on cardiovascular health, can help prevent osteoporosis, and even lowers the risk of certain cancers.

But in a chapter on the mind-body connection, I wanted to be sure to bring up yoga, tai chi, qigong, and other mind-body forms of exercise and tradition.

While yoga is the most famous practice to Westerners, tai chi is a gentle form of exercise sometimes called meditation in motion. Qigong also coordinates movement and breathing.

### What About the Power of Prayer?

For many people, prayer is a spiritual practice that is especially important to them for taking a moment of gratitude and calming their mind—and hence their body. When it comes to prayer and its battery-charging power, especially in terms of the mind-body connection, I think what works for you is as unique as our own backgrounds.

While I was writing this book, I had an opportunity to sit down with Surgeon General Dr. Vivek H. Murthy. He shared a story about speaking to an audience of high school students. He wanted them all to pause a moment and think of someone in their lives they wanted to thank—and compose a text.

Those gratitude texts may have made a roomful of students feel great, but the science is there—gratitude helps our mental health. It is a way to move through the world that helps us recharge our batteries and face adversity.

### The Care and Feeding of Your Body and Brain

Healthy nutrition is essential for our mind-body connection. We have all heard the phrase "You are what you eat."

Studies have compared "traditional" diets, like the Mediterranean and the traditional Japanese diet, to a typical "Western" diet and have found that the risk of depression is 25 percent to 35 percent lower in those who eat a traditional diet.

## Chapter 3: Mental Health and the Workplace

We are not OK. What our hustle culture created is toxic resilience. True resilience honors your boundaries, understands your human limitations, and celebrates your ability to say no when needed. Toxic resilience, on the other hand, is productivity at all costs.

Even in the busiest workday, there are ways to give your mental battery a boost. Try these quick recharge techniques:

- Walking meetings: Suggest a "walk and talk" for your next one-on-one meeting.
- Tech-free lunch: Step away from your desk and enjoy your meal without screens.
- Desk yoga: Try simple stretches like neck rolls, shoulder shrugs, or seated twists to release tension and increase energy.
- Positive affirmations: Keep a list of encouraging phrases nearby. You can go back and read one whenever you need a quick mental boost.

As a leader, I have spent years—from my time in university—thinking about what kind of leader I wanted to be. Never has it been more important to be an intentional leader.

In my opinion, leadership begins with listening. Listening is about empowering your employees, building trust, gaining insights about what's happening on the ground of your organization. And in this era of an increased focus on mental health in the workplace, active listening is also a building block for empathy.

So what are the traits of active listening?

- Focus. Pay attention to the speaker. Try to be present. Eliminate as many distractions as possible. Put down your phone.
- Make sure your nonverbal clues reflect listening. Don't cross your arms over your chest or appear "closed." Nod. Make eye contact.
- Reflect or mirror. "What I hear you saying is xyz …" Repeating back or mirroring what the other person says (or what you think they said) affords the opportunity to clear up any mis- communications right away.
- Empathize. Try to acknowledge the feelings and perspective of the other person.
- Do not interrupt. Very often leaders are "bottom-line" people. Avoid the temptation to interrupt or finish the other person's sentences.
- Ask appropriate questions. Asking follow-up questions that demonstrate a thoughtful approach to the discussion builds trust.
- Recap. In the workplace especially, it's essential to finish with a recap of what was discussed and next steps.

Over the last few years (and even before that), I started thinking about that question of work-life balance, of mental health, and I started to make some intentional changes as both a leader and a person.

However, outside the pandemic bubble, I've been finding myself wondering if work-life balance is actually achievable. The world has resumed operations, and I can feel the extra travel days creeping back into my calendar. One thing that has helped me bring balance to my postpandemic life is having the vocabulary to talk about where I am and what I need.

What's so interesting to me is once I started talking to people about recharging and the battery, somehow it seemed easier to understand. I am hoping, then, that helps with our next workplace issue—what happens in business when leaders don't address mental health.

In certain professions (medical school residents, Wall Street, hospitality), the long hours and stress are almost the point. They're almost like professional hazing.

However, we are increasingly seeing executives embrace the fact that caring for their employees' mental health and well-being is not only just the good thing to do, but is actually also good for the bottom line. According to Population Health Management, mental health costs US companies $200 billion a year in healthcare utilization and lost productivity.

By ignoring mental health in the workplace, we're essentially trying to run high-performance machines on low power. It's not sustainable, and ultimately, it's not good for anyone— employees or employers.

As diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs gain trac-

> By ignoring mental health in the workplace, we're essentially trying to run high-performance machines on low power.

tion, employers are seeking not only a diverse workforce, including people who literally think differently. There is probably not a person reading this book who does not know someone who is neurodivergent.

The challenge is to make sure that management and employees have empathy and realize that two people will never share the exact same thought process. It's our job as leaders to create empathy throughout the entire organization for one another, rather than trying to choose rigid qualifications and fit square pegs into round holes.

## Chapter 4: Technology and Mental Health

Today, everything from watches to rings to fitness and mental health apps can provide real-time data that measure how we're doing. I see unprecedented potential in what technology can tell us about our health and in what ways it can support us in our mental health journeys.

When I was young, I used to travel to South Korea to visit family, including my grandmother. On one of my visits, I was struck by my grandmother's dining room table. My grandmother's table had become a sea of paper and Post-it notes. They were reminders—what time to take what medication, notes of things to remember to tell the doctor, blood pressure readings.

The sight of the table and the problem it represented rolled around in my head for a while—there had to be a better way. Technology could help; I was certain of it. Why couldn't an app make our healthcare portable and trackable?

When we use tech to gamify healthier habits, then we're making tech work for our lives, and not the other way around.

One of the things technology does is make a service that was hard to come by easier to access. We take for granted if we have a heart problem, we will be able to access a cardiologist relatively quickly. Yet somehow, when it comes to mental health, we see a very broken system.

Overall, financial barriers pose a considerable obstacle to accessing mental healthcare. This often forces individuals to forgo or delay seeking treatment, worsening their mental health conditions over time.

Our latest venture at Calm, a product called Calm Health, takes aim at systemic barriers within the healthcare system. Tools like Calm Health are a first line of defense. More than just making you feel better because it helps you check in on yourself and monitor how you are doing. Calm Health will also let you know if you may need to get professional help.

I always tell my kids to aspire being comfortable enough with yourself that you do not need social validation of who you are and your choices. When we do not do that, technology veers toward toxicity.

Every year, people around the world participate in a "Screen-Free Week." A few benefits of a digital detox include the following:

- Reduced FOMO. For many of us, we've gotten so used to being on top of the news, work, social media, that we have the fear of missing out. A digital detox can slow this down and offer a respite or cure for FOMO.
- Better sleep. Most of us know the blue lights from our cell phones are not conducive to restful slumber. This is why it's wise, even if you think you cannot do a digital detox for a day or week, to certainly do a digital detox for the hour or two before bed.
- Increased productivity. A digital detox can give you back uninterrupted time for better focus and productivity.
- Improved mental health. Relentless scrolling can increase anxiety and depression. A digital detox gives mental health a break from the impacts of blue light, doomscrolling, and the like.

## Chapter 5: Our Biggest Mental Health Challenges

I want to examine some of the big mental health challenges

of our times, common to many of us. To the we.

Some of us thrive on stress. I do know there are different kinds of stress—and not all stress is bad.

There is the stress that wreaks havoc with our bodies. But there is also eustress. It is the "good stress." Think of a new job you are excited to start—you feel a little anxious, elated, stressed, but it's a motivating kind of stress that pushes you forward. Eustress keeps us motivated and working toward goals.

It's when stress becomes chronic that it becomes unhealthy and can have an impact on your mental and physical health. It is the real drain on our mental health battery—like having way too many apps open all at once for a long time.

Burnout is that next level of stress. It is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress.

Just like some stress can be good, sadness is a healthy emotion. It's OK to feel sad. Depression is different. It feels constant. You feel hopeless and worthless.

Recharging from depression requires a multipronged approach that may include medication, talk therapy, or even hospitalization. However, starting the conversation is the first step—remember the "we," not the "they." You do not need to be alone.

Anxiety is a natural response to stress, characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, or fear about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. While occasional anxiety is a part of life, persistent and excessive anxiety can interfere with daily activities and might indicate an anxiety disorder.

The symptoms of anxiety can be both psychological and physical. In terms of recharging, when you suffer from anxiety, you want a go-to technique that can help those feelings to subside.

When we're stressed, we cope. Or at least, we try to. There are good ways of coping, and you already know there are some pretty bad ways too. Consider your coping skills. Some that work against us include the following:

- Substance use or abuse
- Denial (pretending the problem will go away is never helpful)
- Overeating or undereating
- Self-harm
- Isolating and withdrawing from friends and support
- Workaholism
- One of the problems with unhealthy coping skills is they can actually make problems worse. Ways to recharge that can improve your mental health include these:
- Exercise (and it can be as simple as a thirty-minute walk three or four times a week)
- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Good sleep
- Healthy eating (yes, I will advocate for eating a pint of ice cream to nurse a broken heart—but not every night for a month)
- Connections—friends, family, group therapy, support or twelve-step groups, places of worship, etc.
- Pursuing hobbies and other positive outlets for stress
- Therapy
- Talking with trusted friends

## Chapter 6: The Difficult Conversations

Why are the conversations about our mental health so difficult?

We fear offending others. We fear not having the right words. We fear we are unequipped to say the right things.

We've all been on both sides of this equation: not wanting to speak up, for fear of others' reactions, and avoiding the conversation for fear of saying the "wrong" thing.

Another reason we may avoid the conversation is that we may not have the words in terms of our own feelings. For people raised to be stoic, for example, they may not even realize when they are sad because they have been taught not to recognize or acknowledge those feelings. This can be especially common in people who have experienced trauma.

We say to each other, "You good?" We expect the answer to be, "Yeah, I'm good." And then we move on.

What if we offered that space to the person we asked, "How are you?" What if their answer was "good"—and we followed up with "Great, how's your battery level?" Now we may get a different answer. Now we have an obligation. We

might have to engage. We might have to problem-solve. We might simply have to offer compassion. But the conversation now requires something of us.

## Conclusion: The Journey

It is my hope that this book has encouraged you to check your internal battery whenever you check your phone battery.

I hope you have conversations with those you love and care about, or those you lead at work, on how they are doing. Not the "You good?" variety, but with space and grace to truly listen.

And then it is my hope that you encourage those you have conversations with to continue their conversation with others.



**David Ko** is the CEO of Calm, a leading company in mental health and mindfulness. His extensive background in healthcare and technology has equipped him with a unique perspective on mental wellness. David's personal experiences with panic attacks and his professional journey from Wall Street to Silicon Valley have shaped his understanding of mental health challenges. At Calm, he leads a team dedicated to helping individuals improve their mental well-being.

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# Reclaim the Moment

Greg Bennick

Executive Book Summaries®

# Reclaim the Moment

## Seven Strategies to Build a Better Now




*by* **Greg Bennick**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

This book is about amplifying your life, regaining your focus, and transforming your world. You versus the entire world, doesn't offer the best odds. This doesn't mean giving up trying to make improvements to where you work or how you live. But it does mean thinking in terms of better rather than perfect, and working in stages toward making the improvements you want to manifest. This mindset is the "think global," "act local" of personal and organizational development. To reclaim the moment is to regain your focus from a place of feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or underdeveloped, all of which are too common today. These ideas are about getting back on track. The ideas and perspective shifts in these pages are a push in the right direction to regain a sense of clarity amidst a world filled with distractions. That clarity puts us in position to advance with a clear and powerful voice.

In ***Reclaim the Moment: Seven Strategies to Build a Better Now***, Greg Bennick helps people understand what is needed to become a better version of themselves in order to help others on a bigger scale. Through personal stories and proven evidence, Bennick is able to give readers the tools needed to not only understand why changes need to be made, but how to successfully achieve this as well.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Discover new approaches to leadership and how to step into a listening role.
- Strengthen communication and how to reach one another more effectively.
- Juggle priorities and balance these with work demands.
- Manage conflicts and develop better interactions with one another.

## There's a Method to the Madness

This book is about amplifying your life, regaining your focus, and transforming your world. It all starts with being grounded. From there, you can refine what you want, how you want to communicate it, and move forward feeling like that new kind of human. Then you can build a team who will reverberate and transform.

## A World Changer's Guide to Life

You're a creature. Deal with It. This news is good because it's a launching pad, and one people have in common. The bad news gets much worse from there if people let themselves slip in terms of what humans, as insecure and frightened creatures, have the potential to do.

You've got a vast mind, and a powerful voice. Use them to create some good in the world. You, your team,your business, your life, your relationships, depend on you building a better now for yourself and approaching the world with new perspectives.

People need to be telling themselves, rather than listening to themselves, about the changes they want to create. You can learn to disregard the small stuff and focus on the main tasks at hand. You can strengthen your perspectives on relationships, creativity, what it means to be a leader, and how to best listen to and amplify others' ideas.

Imagine the words you tell yourself as an ignition point, sparking potential again and again. People are individual pieces of consciousness, each with a face and a name, all wondering what purpose that face and name is supposed to have. This, while feeling and knowing that you can do better, create more effectively, and expand powerfully.

Power resides in everybody. Authority exists above everybody. Use your voice for empowerment. Power is the sense of strength that emanates from within, and also the ability to inspire that in others. Authority is often different from power. Authority is centered on control.

What you want, you must create. What you risk will be regained. It is deeply troubling to be a creature who can imagine the infinite but be bound by physical imitations from within our outside of ourselves. But being a creature gives us a level playing field from which we can all develop and grow.

We are caught between want or want not, with no easy way out. If you can imagine the infinite, what do you do with your limitations? The answers are found in the act of constant creation and in sharing that with other people.

Not when. Not then. But now. You can use strategies to give yourself the best fighting chance for the future that you want.

## Mickey Mouse, a Thunderstorm, and Anarchy

There is always a way through. What matters most is if you are willing to see it, recognize it, and pursue it.No one is going to give you your voice. You have to find it yourself.

Why not your vision for the world, and why not now? What if you had to speak out to change something for the better and instead chose to be silent?

Silence inhibits progress. When it matters most, it might be up to you to break it. If people want something more, they have to take action. They need to be willing to use their voice when it is needed, and not after the fact. They need to give form to their ideas and motivations and make their words matter.

You can't let life unlived simply pass you by.

- Believe in the possibility of kindness.
- Keep your eyes on the knife.
- Cultivate a revolutionary mindset.
- Leap into the dark.
- Engage with laughter.
- Build relationships that matter.
- Start a reverberation effect.

Don't be the leader who wants to drive but forgot the keys to the car. Be the person and make the choices you will be excited to remember years from now.

When you strive to fill the gap between what you hope for and what you have, or what you aspire to and what you achieve, you can do that work without throwing someone else into the gap along the way.

## Believe in the Possibility of Kindness to Escape the Trap of Pessimism

Hope yields possibility. If you choose to believe in the possibility of kindness, you can start to see others, their

Pessimism destroys everything in its path. Believing in the possibiity of kindness opens up possibilities for connection, teamwork, and growth.

actions, and their potential to do better in newly positive and proactive ways.

Pessimism destroys everything in its path and things that aren't even yet in its path. Believing in the possibility of kindness opens up possibilities for connection, teamwork, and growth.

As is true when you build a better now, a reverberation effect starts with you that impacts and inspires others and leads to additional good things happening.

Be driven by kindness and consider people to be action partners and allies instead of adversaries. When you believe in the possibility of kindness, it gives you hope. It lets you reclaim the moment in a way that embraces and reflects how you want to be treated yourselves.

It bears repeating: Believe in the possibility of kindness to escape the trap of pessimism.

When you believe in the possibility of kindness, you:

- Discover that people around you are also inspired, empowered, and essential.
- Remember that without domination, collaboration becomes possible.
- Expand your ability to serve customers, collaborators, and community members effectively.

What can you do to believe in others more than you suspect or deny them? If human potential is about manifesting and maximizing change,development, and expansion, you have to lead first with that which creates the potential for you to experience growth.

## Keep Your Eyes on the Knife to Resist the Allure of Distraction

Roadblocks can yield possibilities. Be open to them. And ask yourself, "On what do you need to be focused most?" Increasing focus helps you reclaim the moment by being directed, intentional, and grounded.

If you want to build a better now, keep your eyes on the knife. Keeping your eyes on the knife is about keeping your highest priorities clear. When you focus specifically and completely on the task, idea, and the intention of what you have to offer, you can keep the offering directed.

Juggling isn't a distraction from the goal. Juggling is a powerful lesson on the way to the goal. Juggling lets you discover little victories in the midst of a challenge. You will learn how you react to making mistakes and you'll also find a new relationship with control.

Are you even willing to throw a first ball aloft? Mistakes, if we approach them with the right frame of mind, are a roadmap to success.

What is your single juggling ball – the one thing that would impact you most if it dropped to the ground? A drop is a learning point on your way to achieving success. A drop is also an opportunity to increase your focus the next time you try. Do not consider any drop a failure.

Don't be afraid to drop the ball! Get comfortable with making mistakes. Try something beyond the limits of what you think you can do. Don't listen to an internal voice that says you can't do this. Tell yourself that you can.

Would you rather try and fail or never try at all? Keeping your eyes on the knife means that you're paying attention to what matters most even in the midst of chaos. Keep your eyes on the knife to resist the allure of distraction.

When you could use this strategy:

- When you're distracted
- When too much is coming at you too quickly
- When navigating a decision that involves risk and reward
- When you or your team must get back on track together
- When decision-making is a challenge due to having too many choices

We are living in a time where allure is everywhere. It's no

wonder that we are confused and distracted. The life we are living is often a life in response to the spectacle, not a life in pursuit of our own desires and ambitions.

We are overwhelmed by truth, opinions, ideas, and images, and all of them seem to matter. We are creating distractions faster than we can adapt to them. People want there to be an overabundance of truth that they cannot consume. They want to be consumed and they want to try to consume all of this material so that they don't have to challenge themselves to push further.

Liking can make you miserable. If you want to reclaim the moment and build a better now, then you have to rein yourself in from the Allure of Distraction.

What's your excuse for being immersed in distractions? What is your most important task? What's your one blue juggling ball? What are you most focused on? If everything feels like a priority, we still have to make a choice, and to do this requires accepting some degree of sacrifice.

## Cultivate a Revolutionary Mindset to Break Free from the Deception of Defeat

"If they give you ruled paper, write the other way."

During times when you have felt bound by the deception that things were over, constantly be reminded to believe in yourself first and foremost. Believing in yourself is a revolutionary act.

Defeat is a deceptive and challenging adversary because people quickly convince themselves that no forward movement is possible and that they've done everything they can do. When we build a better now, we set ourselves up to be able to do that for others as well.

If you take a step back and do some intellectual work, you might literally change how you see an experience.

You must cultivate a revolutionary mindset to counteract the deception of defeat. You can think beyond the scope of what's in front of you, beyond the scope of your reality.

We need to rethink defeat so that it doesn't immobilize us. People walk a fine line between being afraid to succeed and at the same time afraid to fail.

The perception of defeat is often nothing more than a deception. Beyond the parameters that you've created in your daily work and life so that you feel safe, there is another world waiting. It is a world in which you make different choices when presented with the deception that defeat is absolute.

## Leap into the Dark to Embrace the Possibility of Success

In terms of creative development, moving in any direction is far better than having no movement at all. Direction matters less than action. Sometimes it takes just getting started, failing a little, then setting back on course to show you that you will eventually get to where you need to be.

When we step into the unknown, it can have powerful and even positive consequences. Our brains can be minefields of worry, impacting our ability to get anything accomplished. We can change that reality.

When we leap, we don't know where it could lead, but we definitely know where it will lead if we don't. While defeat or fear of failure is a barrier to creative development, it's essential for people also to not be intimidated by the possibility of success.

Leap into the dark to embrace the possibility of success. People see others having success and they want that, but sometimes they don't believe that it's possible, or if they do, they can think of half a dozen reasons why they can't have that same success.

Embracing courage is the key to overcoming intimidation by The Possibility of Success

Step into the tunnel, even if you don't see light at the end. Humans are the only creatures who can imagine something that doesn't yet exist and then through will and creativity, imagine it, develop it, create it, and infuse it with meaning.

## Engage with Laughter to Connect Amidst the Weight of the World

We can initiate powerful change if we choose, both in ourselves and in the world around us. People have the power to positively shift their mental and group dynamic from one in which individuals bear burdens toward one where shared experience elevates all.

Be willing to laugh, connect, and take joyous risks. Laughter and connection are brilliant engagement tools, and you

When you build and strengthen a team through relationship, the new collective dynamic experienced amidst those involved has never existed before.

don't have to be a comic genius to think in these terms. You just need to be willing to step out from the weight of the world and interact with a different mindset.

Laughter is a powerful thread that binds us together. Engage with laughter to connect amidst the weight of the world. When there are problems, people want solutions, not more process. The way to get there is through positive influence.

Try to not be Michael Scott from The Office. Making everyone feel uncomfortable is not the best way to success, even if that show truly is a riot. If you just hit people over the head with a vision, it will never land the same way as if you get them onboard with the reason for the vision first. Laughter doesn't have to poke fun. It can honor, engage, elevate, and inspire.

Perspective shifts aren't just helpful, they are life-enhancing, problem-solving, and team-developing. You can create the something more you are looking for.

The attempt, the mindset of trying to engage with laughter, humor, or light-heartedness amidst a world weighed down, has value in and of itself. You have to dream impossibly and at the same time act from a mindset of possibility. Taking joyous risks while engaging with laughter will inspire you to embrace vulnerability and courageously try something new.

## Build Relationships to Outsmart the Dread of Isolation

How will you be a driver of relationship culture instead of simply being a passenger? To build a better now, you are going to have to explore connectivity and relationships and how you can strengthen your connections to one another and how you can enhance as an individual.

People need a new kind of listening. Taking the time to really listen changes relationships and helps to build a better now. Listen as if other people's stories are more important than yours. Listen as if who you are is dependent on who they are.

Building relationships is an art form, a solid approach to how you work and live, and is an essential life skill. There's a direct connection between valuing what people have to offer and whatever profit might flow from those relationships.

Making people feel like they matter, matters. When you identify someone and make them feel seen and heard, you give them a sense of belonging.

Let's continually work to make relationships clearer, stronger, and more significant. When you build and strengthen a team through relationship, the new collective dynamic experienced amidst those involved has never existed before. To build a better now, you need to strengthen relationships with those around you, and prioritize their position.

Isolation might be real, and you may indeed dread it, but you outsmart it when you come together with others and pursue a meaningful goal. Strengthening connection to others is at the core of development. While in a relationship, people are continually redefined by the interactions they have, so make them count. When you build connections, you are building a better now for yourself, but you are also building a better now for the people with whom you are connecting.

Build relationships to outsmart the Dread of Isolation. Wanting something more and figuring out how to share and develop it as an idea can be a lonely reality. Relationship is the way through.

We come into being not individually but relationally. When people share power from within, and each person is on a journey that is appreciated and supported and understood as meaningful, then they can truly grow into their potential. We would be very wise to open our minds to new approaches that value people as a priority.

Authority disrupts. Relationships define.

## Start a Reverberation Effect to Build a Better Now

What is a Reverberation Effect? If you want to build a better now, and if you indeed want something more, then you

are reaching beyond yourself to include others in order to maximize potential all around.

Start with you. The clearer your mind, the better you will show up for others and be able to amplify their ideas. Taking the first step sets others up to be reverberation multipliers.

Taking action is very different from simply celebrating that you have a good idea. Keeping your mind clear and your sense of self intact are reverberation multipliers.

Keeping your mind clear will heighten your ability to share reverberations. Improving communication is a reverberation multiplier. If you want to be a better relay, work to be a better communicator.

Try to keep your mind open to alternative points of view. With reactions and intensity in mind, a helpful tool for boosting reverberation is to check your communication style and make sure it is effective, not affective.

No one else's strength should diminish yours. Nor should yours diminish anyone else's. Work to ensure the way you communicate is in line with how, what, and why you communicate. Building teamwork is a reverberation multiplier.

Cultivate engagement skills with the people around you. Engage, listen, respond, and then reverberate and amplify. When people reverberate and amplify ideas, they put themselves on track to build a better now.

Welcome to the beginning. This is where you start. To see yourself as a world changer is one thing, but when you can see yourself as a relay and part of a reverberating team, it is far more generous and inspiring.

So, where do you go from here? The goal of all of this is to create, elevate, and enhance potential. What you want, you must create.

## In Conclusion

Ultimately, when we build a better now, we find what we have been seeking. We create potential. That is the more we have been wanting all along. The potential for more experiences and connection, for more life, and for more space where new ideas can be shared and heard with more confidence. The space we create when we bring ourselves back to center and reclaim the moment is rich with possibility.



Greg Bennick is a world-class speaker, organizational consultant, and global event host whose ideas have inspired tens of thousands of people to take new approaches to productivity, focus, inspiration and personal development. He engages with audiences in conversations that span borders, appearing on stages in 27 countries (and counting). He is the founder and executive director of an international nonprofit in Haiti (onehundredforhaiti.org), which since 2010 has listened to Haitian people to help transform an entire region's relationship with water, education, food, and housing.

***Reclaim the Moment: Seven Strategies to Build a Better Now*** by Greg Bennick. Copyright 2024 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Summarized by permission of the Publisher, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN 978-1394247684. Summary published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®. Copyright 2025 Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. For permissions and reprints, please contact service@summary.com. 4711

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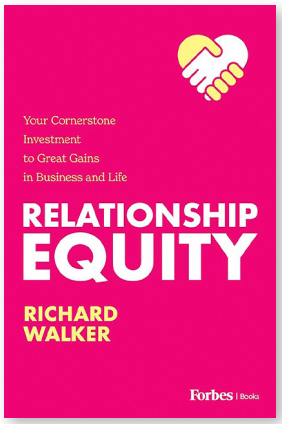
# Relationship Equity

Richard Walker

Executive Book Summaries®

# Relationship Equity

## Your Cornerstone Investment to Great Gains in Business and Life




*by* **Richard Walker**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

"In our families, our businesses, our communities, our world – we need one another. We are not islands unto ourselves."

The book ***Relationship Equity: Your Cornerstone Investment to Great Gains in Business and Life*** takes us on a meaningful journey of realizing why the relationships we build with people are deeply important. It shows us the path toward building meaningful relationships steadily and faithfully.

Through his very own fable of progressing from a small-town bricklayer to the CEO of a successful tech company, author Richard Walker credits the kindness of people as the reason for his success. He says, "If you are a friend who is genuine, you will have genuine friends – and lo and behold – they will want to help you just as you have helped them."

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The philosophy of relationship equity.
- How to cultivate a relationship equity mindset.
- How to build enduring relationships in life and business.
- How to make the most out of your opportunities.

## Introduction: We're All Just People

"Do you think other people are better than you?" my father asked me. "Of course, they are, Dad!" I said after my team lost the football match. "We lost, didn't we? I mean, you saw the score for yourself, right?" He cut me short, "No, they're not better. And if you start thinking others are better than you, that means you're thinking you're better than others, and you're not. We're all just people, Richard. Sure, there's always going to be some who have better skills, but that doesn't make them better people. Never forget that."

And I never have. Half a century later, I realized those were some of the most profound words that I have ever heard. As I advanced into adulthood, I witnessed the power of Relationship Equity firsthand. At so many turns, I met people who graciously gave me attention, advice, and encouragement. They believed in me and I have done my best to return their investment in our relationship – and with interest.

What fascinates me the most is discovering ways to positively influence the lives of others, as others have done for me. This is not so much of a business book as it is a philosophy book. What I offer here is a game plan not only for good business but also for good living. To be best at both, we must develop reliable and authentic connections with others. That's what engenders growth. That's what promotes prosperity. Only by reaching outward and upward can we move onward. We rise, or we fall, on the quality and strength of our relationships.

## Chapter 1: Investing in Humanity

When asked why he scored more goals than everybody each season, Wayne Gretzky, the great ice hockey legend answered, "I don't go to where the puck is. I go to where it's going to be."

I had met a chap who would come to influence me through the years as few others have done. His emphasis consistently was on helping others succeed, and that required more than a set of skills. When we met, I was well on my way, sure, but Bill must have recognized my relative inexperience. Nonetheless, he also recognized something else in me that soon would make him want me as a business partner. He didn't go to where the puck was. He went to where it was going to be. As a result, together we have been successful in building a strong and profitable business.

The bottom line here is the power of relationships. In the business world, as in virtually all human affairs, relationships are of paramount importance. When you show others that you genuinely care and want to help, they often want to reciprocate. Fostering strong, sacrificial, and respectful relationships mutually benefits everyone; this truth is the foundation of Relationship Equity.

Think of Relationship Equity as an investment. It isn't one that, necessarily, will build your bank account, though it quite often does. Rather, the equity you are building is in people. Whether or not it results in dollars, it always makes good sense to get to know people on an equal footing, not expecting a payback but exploring how you can help one another. And when you're open to that, marvelous things tend to happen.

## Chapter 2: The Relationship Equity Mindset

Relationships are not static. They thrive when nurtured, and they shrivel when neglected. Like a master gardener, you must know what needs the most attention, how much, and when.

Relationships require effort. But when Relationship Equity becomes your mindset, when you practice those skills daily until they become reflexes, you can be sure that you will find yourself moving in new circles with opportunities possible at every step.

The Relationship Equity mindset isn't some fancy formula that requires calculations and ruminations. It's about as simple as it gets. It comes down to thinking first about helping others get what they hope to achieve and then letting them help you with what you hope to achieve.

A successful relationship always requires a little give and take. A business relationship can develop into a personal one, and vice versa, and that is all well and good. There should be no barriers between the two, despite the conventional wisdom that suggests otherwise. I have had business relationships develop into lifelong friendships, and I have fostered friendships that led to mutually rewarding business deals.

You must be intentional about creating Relationship Equity and adopting this mindset will be the foundation of your success.

## Chapter 3: Foundations of A Philosophy

Opportunities have a way of multiplying once you get in the habit of accepting them. From working as a bricklayer

Caring about people is central
to both good business and good living.

to graduating at 27 to landing my first job in the IT field – I could journey from opportunity to opportunity with an incredible set of people guiding me along the path. In fact, the people part is why I still am in the IT field today.

I never tire of the dynamics and complexities of human interactions. After all, our business doesn't have a physical product to sell. What we "sell" is a cadre of smart people with an abundance of tech talent who we have taught to excel and to serve.

A business needs to make money to survive. That is about as fundamental as it gets. Business is foremost about service, whether you are offering a better widget or a wiser way. In one way or another, it is about improving lives. Caring about people is central to both good business and good living. That is the foundation of all success – and Relationship Equity is the cornerstone.

## Chapter 4: Links on the Links

Networking is an essential part of building Relationship Equity. A cynic might consider networking to be a calculative use of people for personal gain, but relationships like that would be shallow and devoid of equity with no history of sharing and mutual growth. I'm talking about deeper, lasting relationships that are more than transient and transactional, ones that can enrich your life in ways that are more profound than a big bank account. When you open yourself up to relationships that expand your world, wealth tends to grow organically.

We all have heard the trope that it's who you know, not what you know. Sure, both the who and the what matter immensely, but what makes it all work is how you know. How do you relate to others? How well do you get to know people? Do you regard those you meet as potential friends? And as for what you know, how are you putting it to good use? What you know won't matter if nobody knows you know it. Whose radar are you on? What have you done to put yourself there? Think about that for a moment, and it will make perfect sense.

## Chapter 5: Awakening to Oneself

One thing leads to the next might seem like a silly old saying that states the obvious, but it sums up the connectedness of different points in our lives. There is a catch, though. Nothing leads anywhere unless you act on it. If you shrug, your world shrinks. I chose not to shrug.

As young people mature, they presumably become better able to reconcile their values with their behaviors. They go on to pursue productive and authentic lives. Quite often, though, something disrupts that natural growth. It might be cultural or economic demands, family pressures, or simply the voices in their head saying, I can't do that or I'm not smart enough or it's just too late for me. Limiting themselves before they start, they end up toiling for years in jobs and careers that others might believe are appropriate for them and that bring them little satisfaction. They get stuck and can't see a way out.

Aside from your own self-doubt, there are now societal pressures influenced by social media that can have a profound negative impact on the psyche of today's youth. But, like anything else, it is how you respond that is what matters most. We are all in control of how we respond to any source of information. And I have seen firsthand what you can achieve once you recognize your own value and gain the confidence to move forward.

## Chapter 6: Breaking Down the Barriers

I have a confession to make: I'm about as technical as a pint of Guinness. I do not fit the stereotype of an "IT guy." It can be a struggle for me to even turn on the computer in the morning. Developing relationships, though, is what comes naturally to me.

The IT world as a whole is weighted more toward the introverted end of the continuum. Our industry needs both types – we need those smart analytical minds, and we also need people who are adept at making connections and zeroing in on the needs and wants of individuals and the marketplace. One part is not possible without the other, and

together they can come up with the best IT solutions.

The IT landscape has changed drastically in recent years. Today, the imbalance between supply and demand is the worst I've ever seen, and it appears that it will not be getting better any time soon unless something major changes. Industry leaders must grow a talent pool large enough to meet that demand. The winners will be the companies that use innovative ways to attract and retain top talent.

Strong relationship skills enhance the chance of success in the world of business. A prime example of this in my own career was during the Great Recession. During this time, I organized golf outings, intending to help laid-off executives connect with new opportunities.

A relationship deficit, however, is far from the only reason that some people with the skillset to succeed do not get into the field and build a strong career. Often, the reason is simply education. Let me explain this to you using what I call the socioeconomic pyramid. The peak of this pyramid represents wealthy families whose children have a high probability of attending a four-year college. At the base of the pyramid are families for whom that expense is out of reach or nearly so. The distribution of ability, however, is arguably the same from the top to the bottom of that pyramid. Wealth produces opportunities, but it does not increase brain power or problem-solving skills.

The implication is clear: our society has a broad base of untapped talent. At York Solutions, we are mining for the diamonds in the rough at the base of the pyramid. The Barriers to Entry (or B2E) program that York has developed provides the training needed to begin lifelong careers in IT. The greatest impact we achieved via this program was found in the discussions we had on imposter syndrome.

In any case, the act of reaching out, of seeking a deeper connection, put them a step ahead of their peers. This is how Relationship Equity works. An act of service, an expression of gratitude, a desire to reciprocate – it often starts that way, small and slow, and then it grows. It works on every level.

## Chapter 7: "We're Doing Good Today, Thanks."

When I ask people how they're doing today, most of them tell me they're "doing good, thanks." To which I feel like saying, "Well, that's great! What did you do for somebody today?"

At York Solutions, I preach the philosophy of "doing good while doing well," by which I mean that companies that are doing well should use some of their resources to do good for people so that they, too, have a better chance of doing well. And I also believe in "doing well by doing good," meaning that doing good for others will help us to prosper, too. When we reach out to be helpful to others, they likely will want to return the favor in some way, some time, somehow.

## Chapter 8: For Better and For Worse

When I told my wife, Lisa that one of the chapters in this book on Relationship Equity would include some thoughts on how it works in marriage, she smirked: "Oh yeah? Let me write that chapter!" Today, after three decades of marriage, I have learned two indisputable facts: My wife is always right, and I am always wrong. Those are the two rules, so far as I can see, for how to build a strong and enduring marriage.

All kidding aside, though, the principles of Relationship Equity are of supreme importance in a healthy marriage and family life. As in business, I have learned not to jump right in with my solution to every problem. I have found that the best way to help people get to the truth is to just ask questions. That's how it is in a marriage relationship, too.

As I wake up each day, the first thing I think is, "What can I do to make this day better for my wife?" Even if it's just making the bed or emptying the dishwasher. And when I do those things, I find that she is all the more eager to find ways to make my day better, too. That's the spirit that makes any relationship grow.

## Conclusion: A Wealth of Possibility

In this book, we have examined the elements of Relationship Equity. In my time, I have observed common denominators among people who turn the corner to success:

They approach life not fretfully but expectantly and when possibilities present themselves, they look for how they can say yes to them, not for excuses to say no. They are willing to work hard to make the most of what comes their way. They think in terms of us, not me, and are eager to build enduring relationships, expecting nothing in return.

Those skilled in Relationship Equity know how to launch a relationship and nurture it properly. They have the confidence to fit in wherever they wish, without feeling like an imposter. Finally, they choose kindness and helpfulness as their modus operandi.



**Richard Walker's** transformative career path led him to embrace an opportunity as an IT recruiter in St. Louis, MO, which he initially considered temporary. However, he turned it into a thriving career, making impactful contributions to the IT industry for four years. In collaboration with his business partner, Bill Carr, Richard co-founded York Solutions, a leading IT consulting firm that has been revolutionizing businesses since its inception. The company's headquarters in Westchester, IL, serves as an epicenter for innovative IT solutions.

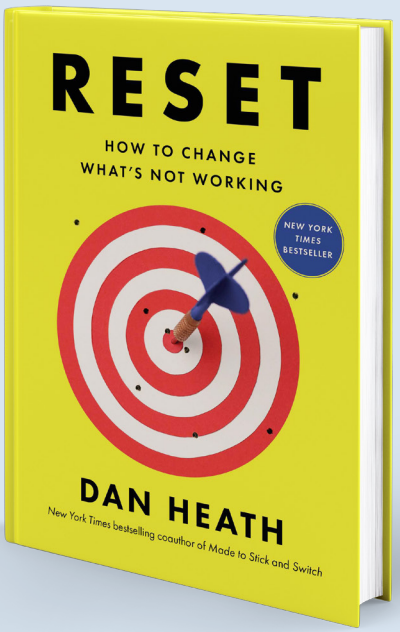
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# Reset

Dan Heath

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Reset

### How to Change What's Not Working

*By Dan Heath*

**Dan Heath** is the #1 New York Times bestselling coauthor/author of six books, including *Made to Stick, Switch,* and *The Power of Moments*. His books have sold over four million copies worldwide and been translated into thirty-five languages. Dan also hosts the award-winning podcast What It's Like to Be…, which explores what it's like to walk in the shoes of people from different professions (a mystery novelist, a cattle rancher, a forensic accountant, and more). A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and Harvard Business School, he lives in Durham, North Carolina.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Unlock Forward Movement

In his book, ***Reset: How to Change What's Not Working,*** Dan Heath quotes Paul Batalden as saying, "Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets." If progress is to be made, then, systems need to be improved. Heath says that the changes needed in any given circumstance are not always self-evident because after a while people start to think that how something is always done is how it should be done. In order to reset a system as quickly as possible, then, people need to recognize what these stumbling blocks are, the leverage points, and then they must use their resources to change those systems.

Heath devotes his book not just to problems that occur within business. His strategies can work also in families, church communities, and any other group of people. They can also work as well within a person's own internal life and the habits that that internal life facilitates. Before Heath gets into the heart of his book, finding leverage points and stacking resources, Heath talks about the importance of noticeable progress. Research has shown how noticeable progress is the most important way to influence people's motivation as well as their perceptions of their work day. "No other work dynamics had as dramatic an effect on employees' inner life." People simply need to believe they are making progress in order to be satisfied in a situation.

## Finding Leverage Points: Observation, Goals, and Questions

The first step to change is to find leverage points, and in order to do this, a person must "go and see the work." Doing this is much more beneficial than merely sitting in a conference room discussing a situation because seeing the work allows people to work within the realm of reality rather than in the realm of guesses. Heath finds that most people do not understand how parts relate to a whole in a system. To illustrate this, Heath discusses how difficult of a time people have drawing parts on a bicycle. Most people have a functional understanding of a bike but could not explain how the system works, even those with in-depth knowledge about cycling. This is true in many situations, and it is not until the time is taken to go and watch a system up close that people can really see where problems occur.

It is usually best to go visit the people on the front lines when seeing the work because they are the ones who really understand how things work. Without seeing the work, people can find that sometimes interventions make things worse. For example, one school had students who struggle take a double class period for math. When shadowing a student to understand the system, an assistant principal noticed just how awful the double class periods were, especially because students who had to take the double class periods were cut short on electives. To improve the situation, the school decided to ensure that all students had an option to take at least one elective. This was a problem quickly mitigated because of the assistant principal's decision to "go and see the work."

Heath then encourages his reading to "consider the goal of the goal." This is important because achieving some goals results in no lasting change or benefit, making them relatively useless. Readers, therefore, need to consider whether the goals they set will achieve the outcomes they desire. One way to do this is with what Heath calls, "the Miracle Question." This question is, "A miracle happened overnight that fixed your critical problem. What are the first things you notice, after you wake up, that reveal the miracle has happened?" This question helps people zero in on quality changes that actually can make a difference. To illustrate this, he discusses a man and a woman in marriage counseling. The two discuss what they want with their therapist, and when the therapist asked the miracle question. The husband said that one thing that would change would be his wife would look at him while he was speaking to her. His wife never knew how important this was. This answer provided a tangible goal his wife could pursue that would make a meaningful difference.

## Finding Leverage: Bright Spots, Constraints, and Mapping

Another way to find leverage points is to look for what is currently working, the bright spots. After all, it does nobody any good to focus on areas where change cannot be made. If change cannot be made, the point is not a leverage point after all. It is not helpful, usually, to look at averages when trying to find leverage points because they are by nature a composite and do not necessarily represent one person or situation. Bright spots, on the other hand, are tasks, behaviors, or outcomes that you know are possible because somebody is already achieving them.

To illustrate this concept, Heath discusses a subscription service. Crucial to the success of a subscription service is for clients to renew their service. Some client partners at this particular enterprise had success with retaining their customers while others had much less success. When the company looked at the top performers versus the lowest performers, they realized that there were areas where individual's tactics were quite different. For example, top performers were over 50% more likely to have a "defined daily process" than the lowest performers were. Because there was such a gap between success and failure, this was a solid leverage point. If the company could get their lowest performers to have their own "defined daily process," it is likely they would start to improve dramatically. On the other hand, the company realized that there was not a huge difference between the follow up processes of the lowest and highest employees, and as such, this would not serve as a solid leverage point. This demonstrates how looking specifically at the brightest spots in any organization or process can help a person determine where the best leverage points are.

On the flip side, it is also possible to find leverage points by targeting the constraint. A constraint is "the limiting factor" or what it is that is holding you back from greater success. Heath states that "what's counterintuitive about constraints is that even smart-seeming investments can be worthless at improving the operations of a system if they don't address the constraint." The constraint will depend on what the actual goal is.

To explain identifying constraints, Heath discusses a hypothetical donut stand where cooking the donuts takes 60 seconds and taking the orders takes 90 seconds. It would not make any sense to purchase a new machine that could cook the donuts in 30 seconds because the cooks would not be in use a large part of the time because they would be waiting on orders which still take 90 seconds. If the owner of this same stand instead hired an extra person to take orders, quickening the order process, they could move the line more quickly. At this point it may make sense to purchase the new machine that could keep up with the faster order taking. It is important to find the constraints.

Finally, it can be helpful to "map the system" when finding new leverage points. People within organizations can get stuck in silos where they do not understand the overall system as a whole, making it difficult to find leverage points. It is the person who stands above the system and determines how it all works together who can find leverage points most easily. It is also important to find inherent assumptions and see if they are, in fact, true.

## Resetting Resources

When resetting resources, it can be incredibly helpful to start with a burst to get everybody off on the right track. Heath is careful to note that a burst is not a time to expect people to do exponentially more work. Rather it is a set time dedicated to the task at hand, limiting distractions. For example, having everyone work on pushing on a specific leverage point for forty hours over the course of one week is an example of a burst. One reason this works is because switching between tasks takes time. When people are able to focus intently on one task over the course of a week, that down time is eliminated or is at least reduced.

It also helps when people are working together. Miscommunication and misunderstandings can occur when people are not working in the same space at the same time. This is eliminated or reduced when everyone is together. Even if people are separated by distance, however, the idea of joint work can become possible when everyone makes themselves available for synchronous communication at the same time over whatever remote systems the group is working with.

Heath discusses the importance of effectiveness over efficiency in bursts by discussing an issue a man had at home with his wife. His wife wanted him to install a hose system that would allow her

## *Motivation is "the very heart of change"*

to more easily water her garden beds. The husband went to the home improvement store and bought everything he needed, but when he got home, he realized that one component was broken. It would have been more efficient for him to put the project on hold and get a new part the next time he went to the store, likely within a couple of days. This way he would not waste time or gas. He knew that this would not be okay with his wife, however, because she was less concerned with efficiency than she was with effectiveness at that moment. She wanted the hose system. He, therefore, went and got the part that day to finish the project. This task served as a burst. He put all of his resources into finishing the task before moving on to something new. It is important to accomplish meaningful work during a burst by focusing directly on the task that needs to be completed.

## Downtime

Another way to focus on resetting resources is to seek out and then to eliminate waste. Heath uses the acronym DOWNTIME to explain waste. With this acronym, he refers to "eight possible categories of waste: defects, overproduction, waiting, non utilized talent, transportation, inventory, motion, and extra processing." This principle is usually used to describe waste in factories, so it can be used in people's personal lives, but it may need to be tweaked a little bit. An example Heath gives of a company using DOWNTIME to eliminate waste involves Sweetgreen, a salad restaurant. At this restaurant, staff would mix salads in large metal bowls, but the bowls constantly had to be washed and were pricey. Adding to the price was the labor and water needed to wash these bowls. If they had customers mix their own salads, they believe people would enjoy the experience less. Therefore, they decided to purchase larger take home bowls in which staff could mix the salad directly in the bowl. Sweetgreen was able to reduce waste without compromising quality by using DOWNTIME, and this was only possible because they first mapped the system to find out where the waste was.

Another way that DOWNTIME can be used is with the concept of shifting right. There are certain tasks that all people can do, and there are other tasks that only one person or only particularly qualified people can do. An example of this is in the world of medicine. Only a doctor can diagnose patients. Therefore, medical systems sought to hire out other steps of the process, such as checking in patients and checking vitals, to other cheaper labor. This made the endeavor cheaper for the organization. Heath uses this example, however, to explain that prudence is also needed when trimming waste as patients consider whether or not the quality of the experience is the same when they see the doctor for such a short period of time. To determine whether such a right shift is beneficial, Heath thinks people need only to ask those affected whether or not the change is worth the cost.

Heath moves on to discuss the necessity of both adding and subtracting to what it is that you do. This often requires people to make tough decisions. He writes about a story that he read about in which a woman sought therapy because she had an exceedingly difficult time getting her children out of the door in the morning. One of her daughters has ADHD and it was particularly difficult for this child. The woman spoke with a therapist who suggested she look at what went well and add on to that. The woman realized that her daughter shines when they have one on one time. She realized that she, herself, works better when she is well-rested. She made some changes, and the situation changed very quickly. At least one of these changes inflicted a cost, however. She had to give up some time with her husband in the evenings in order to wake up early enough in the mornings to have some time to calmly start her day by herself. People should look at what they should add or increase in a situation as well as what they should stop doing or should start doing less of. Heath finds that both individuals and organizations will often spend too much time on some low pay off projects or customers and way too little time on what matters the most. When people look to see what to cut or to minimize, they ought to be looking for those activities that give the least amount of payoff, so they are not wasting resources on less productive tasks or customers.

## Restacking Resources

It is also important to consider people's motivation when it comes to restacking resources. Motivation is "the very heart of change," according to Heath. To illustrate how important motivation is, Heath discusses a man named Ezra Fox who was struggling to get his children to put away their toys. Fox realized that his children simply had no desire to follow his direction, and so he made it a game for them. While the motivation from this game only lasted a short amount of time, he was able to come up with other games that gave the children motivation to promptly clean up their belongings. By tapping into their motivation, he was able to help his children achieve his goals for them.

Obviously motivation extends beyond just children and cleanliness. Tapping into employees' motivation can help everyone become more effective. One method for doing this is to establish swaps where everyone lists out aspects of their jobs that they love and hate. Then if one employee loves working on something another hates, they can switch tasks. It will not always be possible to have people only working on tasks they enjoy, but when possible, it does help increase employee motivation. In this way, you are restacking human resources to work on what it

is each person can most effectively accomplish.

Heath moves on to the importance of giving people some power over their own work in his second to last chapter on resetting resources. He claims that offering people autonomy "instills more accountability… taps higher-order skills, and… reduces waste from micromanagement." Heath describes how dialysis nurses at one center started to train patients to do their own dialysis. Many feared what could happen because successful dialysis is crucial to keeping people alive. They worried about all that could go wrong. In the end, they found out that giving patients control over their dialysis was highly successful and that there were actually fewer patient emergencies. A tactic like this helps redistribute resources as the patients themselves do some of the work, making them feel in control. It also opens up other resources. This all must be done within reason, however. The most successful situations where people are given autonomy happens when the level of autonomy is also aligned to the goals of the organization. In these cases, it is the leaders who decide on the problems but the team members who decide how to solve those problems.

Finally, Heath turns to accelerated learning. In order to work effectively and manage leverage points, ample information is needed, and the quicker people get information, the quicker they can change. In order to facilitate this change, it is important to quickly identify failure and also figure out who is most likely to give effective feedback. Finally, it is also important to locate successes. One organization that effectively captured quick feedback was the 49ers. They desired to know, in real time, what changes they could make to improve the fan experience. They ended up installing terminals throughout the park where people could rate their experience. People interpreting that data in real time could go to sources of problems and solve them immediately. This fast learning allowed them to make quick changes in the areas where small changes could make big differences. This is a key example of leveraging resources.

Heath's book sets out to teach readers how to effectively manage their resources in order to make noticeable improvements in key areas of life. While many of the examples in the book pertain to the world of business, not all of them do. This is because Heath's tactics can be used in families, too, as well as with people's personal goals. This is because the book is all about finding areas where problems exist that can be quickly changed. The concepts are all easy to follow because Heath gives numerous examples for each of his steps, illustrating how the concepts are used in different areas of life. Additionally, he ends each chapter with a summary of key points from the chapter, allowing readers to quickly go back and review information they may have forgotten. All of this comes together to form a coherent and easy to implement plan of action for people looking to use their resources to the best of their abilities and to use leverage points to make improvements.

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# Resonate

Nancy Duarte

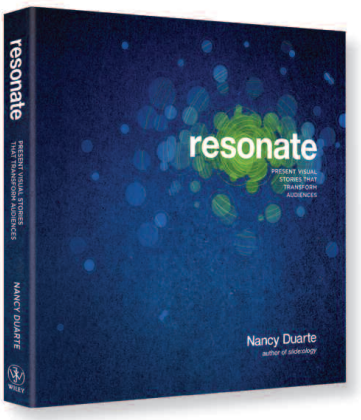
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Career & Self-Development: Communication

# Resonate

## Present Visual Stories That Transform Audiences




by Nancy Duarte

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If great presentations were easy to build and deliver, they wouldn't be such an extraordinary form of communication.

Great presentations are like magic. They amaze their audiences. And great presenters are like magicians. In addition to practicing regularly, both are reluctant to reveal the methods behind their performances. In this summary, presentation expert Nancy Duarte cracks the code on how to orchestrate the invisible attributes that shape transformative audience experiences.

By leveraging techniques normally reserved for cinema and literature, Duarte reveals how you can transform any kind of presentation into an engaging journey. You will discover how to understand your audience, create persuasive content and elicit a groundswell of response.

*Resonate* describes what it takes to be a world-class communicator. It shows you how to evolve information into a story that connects with your audience and rallies them to action.

At the heart of leadership and learning is great storytelling. In *Resonate*, Duarte gives you the tools to teach, motivate and encourage audiences not just to listen, but to change and to act.

Applied with passion and purpose, the concepts in this summary can accelerate your career trajectory or propel your social cause.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to leverage the hidden story structure inherent in great communication.
- How to connect with your audience empathetically.
- How to create captivating content.
- How to craft ideas that get repeated.
- How to inspire enthusiasm and support for your vision.
- How to change the world.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **RESONATE**

**by Nancy Duarte**

**The author:** Since 1988, Nancy Duarte's award-winning design firm has created more than a quarter of a million presentations. Duarte Design is one of the largest design firms and woman-owned businesses in Silicon Valley, and its clients include Adobe, Chick-fil-A, Cisco, GE, HP, Twitter and Google. Duarte is the author of *Slide:ology*.

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com or www.duarte.com.

## Introduction

Language and power are inextricably linked. The spoken word pushes ideas out of someone's head and into the open so humankind can contend with adopting or rejecting its validity. Moving an idea from its inception to adoption is hard, but it's a battle that can be won simply by wielding a great presentation.

Presentations are powerfully persuasive tools, and when packed in a story framework, your ideas become downright unstoppable. Story structures have been employed for hundreds of generations to persuade and delight every known culture.

It's still the dawn of the information age, and we are all overwhelmed with too many messages bombarding us and trying to lure us to acquire and consume information (then repeat the process over and over). We are in a more selfish and cynical age, which makes it tempting to be detached.

Technology has given us many ways to communicate, but only one is truly human: in-person presentations. Genuine connections create change.

Whether you're an engineer, teacher, scientist, executive, manager, politician or student, presentations will play a role in shaping your future. The future isn't just a place you'll go; it's a place you will invent. Your ability to shape your future depends on how well you communicate where you want to be when you get there.

## Why Resonate?

Presentations are mostly delivered to persuade an audience to change their minds or behavior. Presenting ideas can either evoke puzzled states or frenzied enthusiasm, which is determined by how well the message is delivered and how well it resonates with the audience. After a successful presentation, you might hear people say, "Wow, what she said really resonated with me."

But what does it mean to truly resonate with someone?

Let's look at a simple phenomenon in physics. If you know an object's natural rate of vibrations, you can make it vibrate without touching it. **Resonance occurs when an object's natural vibration frequency responds to an external stimulus of the same frequency.**

How many times have you wished that students, employees, investors or customers would snap, crackle and pop to exactly where they need to be to create a new future?

**If you adjust to the frequency of your audience so that the message resonates deeply, they will display self-organizing behavior.** Your listeners will see the place where they are to move to create something collectively beautiful. A groundswell.

The audience does not need to tune themselves to you — you need to tune your message to them. Skilled presenting requires you to understand their hearts and minds and create a message that is tuned to their needs and desires.

### Change Is Healthy

Presentations are about change. Businesses, and indeed all professions, have to change and adapt in order to stay alive.

It takes gutsy intuitive skills to move toward an

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

unknown future that involves unfamiliar risks and rewards, yet businesses must make these moves to survive. Companies that learn to thrive in the chronic flux and tension between *what is* and *what could be* are healthier than those that don't. Many times the future cannot be quantified with statistics, facts or proofs. Sometimes leaders have to let their gut lead them to uncharted territories where statistics haven't yet been generated.

**An organization should make continual shifts and improvements to stay healthy.** That makes even simple presentations at staff meetings a platform for persuasion. You need to persuade your team to self-organize at a distinct place in the future or it could bring the demise of the organization.

Rallying stakeholders to move together in a common course of action is all part of the innovation and survival process. Leaders at every level in an organization need to be skillful at creating resonance if that organization is to control its own destiny.

Rule #1: *Resonance causes change.*

## Lessons from Myths and Movies

Presentations have the potential to hold an audience's interest just like a good movie. You might be thinking that it takes years to write a successful screenplay, and you have a real job to do. But isn't part of your "real job" to communicate ideas well, help people understand objectives and persuade them to change? Building your presentations with some of the attributes from myths and movies will help your ideas resonate with others.

Great stories introduce you to a hero to whom you can relate. The hero is usually a likeable sort who has an acute desire or goal that is threatened in some way. As the story unfolds and trials are met with triumph, you cheer for the hero until the story is resolved and the hero is transformed. As storytelling expert Robert McKee explains, "Something must be at stake that convinces the audience that a great deal will be lost if the hero doesn't obtain his goal." If nothing is at risk, then it's not interesting.

**Your communications follow a similar pattern. You have a goal that needs to be reached, but there will be trials and resistance. However, when your desire is realized, the outcome will yield remarkable results.**

The most simplistic way to describe the structure of a story is situation, complication and resolution. From mythic adventures to recollections shared around the dinner table, all stories follow this pattern.

### Crossing the Threshold

There is one indisputable attribute of a good story: **There must be some kind of conflict or imbalance perceived by the audience that your presentation resolves.** This sense of discord is what persuades the audience to care enough to jump in. In a presentation, you create imbalance by consciously juxtaposing *what is* with *what could be*.

**Clearly contrast who the audience is when they walk into the room (in their ordinary world) with whom they could be when they leave the room (crossing the threshold into a special world).** Drawing attention to that gap forces the audience to contend with the imbalance until a new balance is achieved.

### The Presentation Form

Drawing insights from mythological, literary and cinematic structures, *a presentation form* emerged. Most great presentations unknowingly follow this form.

Presentations should have a clear beginning, middle and end. Two clear turning points in a presentation's structure guide the audience through the content and distinctively separate the beginning from the middle and the middle from the end. The first is the *call to adventure* — this should show the audience a gap between *what is* and *what could be* — jolting the audience from complacency. When effectively constructed — an imbalance is created — the audience will want your presentation to resolve this imbalance. The second turning point is the call to action, which identifies what the audience needs to do or how they need to change. This second turning point signifies that you're coming to the presentation's conclusion.

The middle of the presentation form moves up and down as if something new is happening continually. This back and forth structural motion pushes and pulls the audience to feel as if events are constantly unfolding. An audience will stay engaged as you unwrap ideas and perspectives frequently.

Each presentation concludes with a vivid description of the *new bliss* that's created when your audience adopts your proposed idea.

Presentations are meant to persuade, so there is also a subsequent action (or crossing the threshold) the audience is to do once they leave the presentation.

Rule #2: *Incorporating story into presentations has an exponential effect on outcomes.*

## Get to Know the Hero

The instructions your high school speech teacher gave you about picturing the audience in their underwear is now officially obsolete. Instead, you need to picture them all in colorful stockings and tunics with superhero emblems — because these are the heroes charged with carrying your big idea to fruition.

It's important to know what makes your audience tick in order to connect with them. So how do you get to know them and really understand what their lives are like? What makes them laugh? What makes them cry? What unites them? What incites them? What is it that makes them deserve to win in life? It's important to figure this out.

Though your heroes might be lumped together in a room, you shouldn't view them as a homogeneous blob. **Instead of thinking about the audience as a unified clump when preparing your presentation, imagine them as a line of individuals waiting to have face-to-face conversations with you.** You want to make each person feel like you're having a personal exchange with him or her; it will help you speak in a conversational tone, which will keep the audience interested.

An audience is a temporary assembly of individuals who, for an hour or so, share one thing in common: your presentation. They are all listening to the same message at the same moment; yet all of them are filtering it differently and gleaning their own unique insights, points of emphasis and meaning. If you find common ground from which to communicate, their filter will more readily accept your perspective.

As an option, you might want to create a narrowly targeted message for specific people in the audience so that your presentation comes across as a personal conversation with the highest-priority individuals. Even if only one person gets it — as long as it's the right person — it's worth it!

You need to get to know these folks. You are their mentor. Each one has unique skills, vulnerabilities and even a nemesis or two. The audience must be your focus while you create the content of your presentation. Stop thinking about yourself and start thinking about connecting with them.

When an audience gathers, they have given you their time, which is a precious slice of their lives. It's your job to have them feel that the time they spent with you brought value to their lives.

Rule #3: *If a presenter knows the audience's resonant frequency and tunes to that, the audience will move.*

## Define the Journey

Presentations should have a destination. If you don't map out where you want the audience to be when they leave your presentation, the audience won't get there. You have to set a course, and that means developing the right content. The destination you define can serve as a guide. **Every bit of content you share should propel the audience toward that destination.**

Keep in mind that a presentation is designed to transport the audience from one location to another. They feel a sense of loss as they move away from their familiar world and closer to your perspective. **You are persuading the audience to let go of old beliefs or habits and adopt new ones.** When people deeply understand things from a new perspective to the point where they feel inclined to change, that change begins on the inside (heart and mind) and ends on the outside (actions and behavior). However, this typically doesn't happen without a struggle.

That struggle usually manifests a resistance — something that can be harnessed if you plan for it. When a sailboat is sailing against the wind, the sails are positioned to harness the wind. If done well, the boat sails faster than the wind itself — even though the gusts are opposing it. While you might not be able to control the severity of audience resistance, you can "adjust your sails" (message) and use it to gain momentum. When harnessed properly, the seemingly counterproductive force creates forward progress. However, just like sailing, it needs to move back and forth to get there (just like the presentation form).

**The journey should be mapped out, and all related messages should propel the audience closer to the destination.**

### The Big Idea

A *big idea* is that one key message you want to communicate. It contains the impetus that compels the audience to set a new course with a new compass heading. Screenwriters call this the "controlling idea." It has also been called the gist, the take-away, the thesis statement or the single unifying message.

**There are three components of a big idea:**

**1. A big idea must articulate your unique point of view.** People came to hear you speak; since they want to know *your* perspective on the subject, you should give it to them.

**2. A big idea must convey what's at stake.** A big idea should articulate the reason why the audience should care enough to adopt your perspective.

**3. A big idea must be a complete sentence.** Stating the big idea in sentence form forces it to have a noun and a verb.

Rule #4: *Every audience will persist in a state of rest unless compelled to change.*

## Create Meaningful Content

It's rare that the first, most obvious idea generated is the best one. Tenaciously generate ideas along a theme until you've exhausted all possibilities. Usually, the truly clever ideas appear in the third or fourth round of idea generation.

You will use divergent thinking — the mental process that allows idea creation to move in any direction you imagine. Divergent thinking enables new, original content to emerge. This is a messy phase, so suspend neatness and allow yourself to stay unstructured — you'll be scouting for new ideas and mining existing ones. Broadening the amount of possibilities creates unexpected outcomes, so explore every solution and suspend judgment.

### Generate as Many Ideas as Possible

• **Idea collection:** While you can avoid starting from scratch by collecting presentations from peers, that's not the only type of information out there; and regurgitating someone else's slides is not the best way to connect with your audience. Collect readily available ideas — but more importantly, purposefully mine for inspiration from all other relevant resources. Go both wide and deep. Gather as much as possible about the competitor's messages so you can position yourself differently than they do. Find out everything about the subject, and roam into tangential topics for insights.

• **Idea creation:** Inventing new ideas is a different process from mining existing ones. This is where you need to think instinctively — from your gut. Be curious, take risks, be persistent and let your intuition guide you. Draw from your creative side to generate ideas that have never existed or been associated with your big idea before.

Grab a sheet of paper or a stack of sticky notes and jot down everything you can imagine that supports your idea. The goal is to create a vast amount of ideas. You'll filter, synthesize and categorize all of them and craft a meaningful whole later on.

### More Than Just Facts

Now that you have begun to collect and create content, this first batch you brainstormed might be primarily comprised of facts. Facts are one type of content to collect — but they're not the only type needed to create a successful presentation. You must strike a balance between analytical and emotional content. Yes, emotional. This might not be a step with which you're comfortable, but it's an important one nonetheless.

Stating fact after fact in an hour-long presentation doesn't signal to the audience why these facts are important. Use emotions as a tool to bring emphasis to the facts so they stand out. If you don't, you're making the audience work too hard to identify the decision they are to make. Staying flat and factual might work in a scientific report but simply won't work for the oral delivery of persuasive content.

Rule #5: *Use the big idea to filter out all frequencies other than the resonant frequency.*

## Structure Reveals Insights

A solid structure is the foundation of a coherent presentation and shows the relationship between the parts and whole. It's similar to the couplings on a train or the string of a pearl necklace; it keeps everything connected in an orderly fashion, as if the content were destined to fit together neatly within a given framework. Without structure, ideas are easily forgotten.

Most presentation applications are linear and encourage users to create slides in a sequential order. One slide follows the other, which naturally compels the user to focus on the individual details instead of the overarching structure. To help your audience "see" the structure, move out of the linear format of the presentation application and create an environment where you can look at the content spatially.

There are several ways to do this. You can use sticky notes, tape slides on a wall or lay them on the floor. Any method that pulls your content out of a linear presentation application will work. Moving out of a slide-creation environment helps identify holes and keeps you focused on the bigger picture. This will help move your presentation from being about a bunch of small parts to being about a single big idea.

Clustering your content helps you visually assess how much weight you've given to various portions and how many supporting points you need to get your message across. Use this technique to confirm that you're emphasizing the correct content and allocating appropriate time for each message.

Keep in mind that the structure should accommodate the audience's comprehension needs and should be

assembled in a way that's palatable to them. It's natural for subject matter experts to prepare material linking ideas that are closely connected in their own minds, but remember that the audience might not see these relationships as readily. Connect your messages in a way that your audience can follow. The structure should feel natural and make common sense to them!

Most presentations that fail do so because of structural deficiencies. When the structure works, the presentation works. A good structure helps you work out the kinks and eliminate the extemporaneous.

Everything has inherent structure. A leaf, a building and even ice cream each has a (molecular) structure. Structure drives the shape and expression of everything. The same is true for presentations. How they are structured determines how they are perceived. Changes to the structure, whether grand or small, alter the receptivity of the content.

Structure allows your audience to follow your thought process. If you don't have clear structure then you end up jumping around and making random connections to ideas that are unclear to the audience. Solid structure causes ideas to flow logically and helps the audience see how the points connect to each other.

Rule #6: *Structure is greater than the sum of its parts.*

## Deliver Something They'll Always Remember

Create a moment where you dramatically drive the big idea home by intentionally placing *Something They'll Always Remember — a S.T.A.R. moment* — in each presentation. This moment should be so profound or so dramatic that it becomes what the audience chats about at the water cooler or appears as the headline of a news article. Planting a S.T.A.R. moment in a presentation keeps the conversation going even after it's over and helps the message go viral.

Since you might be presenting to an audience that sees lots of presentations — like a venture capitalist or a customer who is reviewing several vendors — you want to stand out two weeks after you presented, when they're making their final decision. You want them to remember you instead of all the other presenters they encountered.

### Create a S.T.A.R. Moment

The S.T.A.R. moment should be a significant, sincere and enlightening moment during the presentation that helps *magnify* your big idea — not distract from it.

There are five types of S.T.A.R. moments:

- **Memorable Dramatization:** Small dramatizations convey insight. They can be as simple as a prop or demo, or something more dramatic, like a re-enactment or skit.
- **Repeatable Sound Bites:** Small, repeatable sound bites help feed the press with headlines, populate and energize social media channels with insights, and give employees a rally cry.
- **Evocative Visuals:** A picture really is worth a thousand words — and a thousand emotions. A compelling image can become an unforgettable emotional link to your information.
- **Emotive Storytelling:** Stories package information in a way that people remember. Attaching a great story to the big idea makes it easily repeatable beyond the presentation.
- **Shocking Statistics:** If statistics are shocking, don't gloss over them; draw attention to them.

Rule #7: *Memorable moments are repeated and retransmitted so they cover longer distances.*

## There's Always Room to Improve

A presentation broadcasts information to an audience in much the same way that a radio broadcasts programming to listeners. Thus, the signal's strength and clarity determine how well the information is conveyed to its intended recipients. Communication is a complex process with many points at which the signal can break down. Once a message has left its sender, it is susceptible to interference and noise, which can cloud its intention and compromise the recipient's ability to discern the meaning.

Communication has the following parts: sender, transmission, reception, receiver and noise. The message can become distorted at any step of this process. Your top priority is to ensure that the message-carrying signal is free from as much noise or interference as possible.

Presentation development works the same way. Every step of the process either enhances the signal or creates noise that causes the audience to tune out.

### Amplify the Signal, Minimize the Noise

The signal-to-noise ratio is an important factor in how well your message is received, and it's your job to minimize the noise. If the audience receives a message that includes any interference, they receive distorted information.

You must expend energy minimizing the noise in each step of the communication process to ensure that a

crystal-clear message gets through to your audience.

There are four main types of noise that can interfere with your signal:

**1. Credibility noise.** Speaker's believability or likeability creates interference.

**2. Semantic noise.** Language and interpretation create interference.

**3. Experiential noise.** Speaker's delivery or venue creates interference.

**4. Bias noise.** Speaker or receiver filters ideas through bias or dogmatism.

Noise can be reduced or eliminated through careful planning and rehearsing.

### Rehearse and Re-rehearse

There is always room to improve. So be tenacious in preparing yourself ahead of time. Rehearse and re-rehearse. Then, solicit feedback. If the presentation was taped, review the recording and then start the refinement process all over again.

Successful people plan and prepare. To be successful in any profession requires discipline and mastery of skills. Applying that same discipline to the skill of communication will attach the audience to your idea and improve your professional trajectory.

Rule #8: *Audience interest is directly proportionate to the presenter's preparation.*

## Change Your World

If you say, "I have an idea for something," what you really mean is, "I want to change the world in some way." What is "the world" anyway? It is simply all of the ideas of all our ancestors. Look around you. Your clothes, language, furniture, house, city and nation all began as a vision in someone else's mind. Your food, drink, vehicles, books, schools, entertainment, tools and appliances all came from someone's dissatisfaction with the world as they found it. Humans love to create. And creating starts with an idea that can change the world.

Staying passionate and tenacious about your idea requires that some part of you be uncomfortable with the status quo. At times, you must have enough resolve to put your reputation on the line for the sake of advancing your idea.

### Changing the World Is Hard

Ideas are not really alive if they are confined to only one person's mind. Your idea becomes alive when it is adopted by another person, then another and another, until it reaches a tipping point and eventually obtains a groundswell of support.

President John F. Kennedy gave a speech declaring that by the end of the decade, the United States should land a man on the moon and bring him home safely. He wanted support from every American. He said in the speech, "In a very real sense, it will not be one man going to the moon — it will be an entire nation. For all of us must work to put him there." He wanted the entire country to feel responsible for supporting his vision. Later in the 1960s, Kennedy was touring NASA headquarters and stopped to talk to a man with a mop. The president asked him, "What do you do?" The janitor replied, "I'm putting the first man on the moon, sir." This janitor could have said, "I clean floors and empty trash." Instead, he saw his role as part of the bigger mission that was to fulfill the vision of the president. As far as he was concerned, he was making history.

### Use Presentations to Help Change the World

Presentations really can change the world. Who would have thought that a movie about a presentation would win an Academy Award, create global awareness and incite change? Long before *An Inconvenient Truth* was on anyone's radar, former Vice President Al Gore had delivered his presentation hundreds of times to influential audiences around the world.

You might not need to change the *entire* world, but you can definitely change your world using a presentation. To see a systemic adoption of your idea, you may have to deliver multiple presentations. On your way to change the world, there will be key communication milestones that become catalysts for your success. Each milestone is an opportunity to adjust the strategy, collaborate and realign the team. Milestones include product pitches, product launches, board-member updates and keynote addresses.

An understanding of the strategic value of a presentation is important to your career. Make sure your world-changing ideas are in your organization's presentations. If not, you'll inherit someone else's thinking and implement their ideas instead of influencing innovation with yours.

After the ideas are presented and agreed to, work activities are generated from the presentations. Most presentations persuade people to take action, so presentations spawn a lot of activity. Also, after the brilliant thinking in the presentation is solidified, it ripples through and informs other related materials needed to support and spread the idea, like websites, social media, brochures and so forth.

Remember, just because you communicated your idea once doesn't mean you're done. It takes several presentations delivered over and over to make an idea become reality. Well-prepared presentations will speed up the adoption and change your world!

### Gain Competitive Advantage

There's a constant push and pull related to what's perceived as right or wrong, based solely on how it's communicated.

Most communicators are visionaries who can see where to go and how to get there. An executive "sees" where the company needs to go; a manager "sees" how to build a strategy; an engineer "sees" how to construct a product; and a marketer "sees" how to promote it. Your job as a communicator is to get others to "see" what you are saying so your ideas gain traction.

Getting stakeholders to understand your ideas — while the competitor's concepts remain obscure — ensures a victory. If presented well, a smart idea acts as the igniting spark for an explosion of human and material resources. A great presentation gives smart ideas an advantage.

If your presentation is great, it can become a broadly reaching social media phenomenon. Now, more than any other time in history, great presentations transcend the moment in which they're given, because they can be seen by millions of people who weren't there in person. When a presentation is great and is recorded, people will watch it again and again. If your message is clear and worth repeating, it will be repeated. If your message is repeated, you win!

### Be Transparent So People See Your Idea

You must be willing to be you, to be real and to humbly expose your own heart if you want the people in the audience to open theirs. You must be transparent, and this is difficult.

**Being transparent moves your natural tendency of personal promotion out of the way so there's more room for your idea to be noticed. The audience can see past you and see the idea.**

There are three keys to being transparent:

• **Be honest.** Be honest with the audience and give them the authentic you. If you are honest with yourself and your audience, your presentations will have more moments of vulnerability and sincerity. Openly sharing moments of pain or pleasure endears you to the audience through transparency.

• **Be unique.** No two people have experienced the exact same trials and triumphs in life. Though we often tend to conceal our differences in an effort to fit in and be accepted, our unique perspective is what brings new insights to a topic.

• **Don't compromise.** If you really believe in what you're communicating, speak confidently about it and don't back down. It won't be easy to try something no one has done before or speak loudly about a topic that no one has the guts to confront. Call it like it is.

## Give a Positive First Impression

Successful first impressions introduce you and your message in a way with which the audience can identify. It's the nature of all audiences to compare themselves to you and look for similarities and differences. Make these similarities and differences clear as they size you up, so they get over that phase quickly. Create a common identity between you and them.

### You Can Transform Your World

Your ideas may be simple or they could contain keys that unlock unknown mysteries. However, if you don't communicate them well, they will lose their value and add nothing to humanity.

The amount of value you place on your idea should be reflected in the amount of care you take in communicating it. **Passion for your idea should drive you to invest in its communication.**

Your ideas are potent. A single idea from the human mind can change the world. You have the opportunity to shape the future through your imagination. Imagining a future where your idea has been implemented will keep you inspired to communicate your idea passionately. So be flexible, be visionary and go rewrite all the rules.

Rule #9: "*Your imagination can create a reality.*"
- *James Cameron*

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Resonate*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Power Presenter*** **by Jerry Weissman.** Learn why your body language and voice are more important than your words, how to present with poise and confidence naturally, and how to connect with any audience.
2. ***Words That Work*** **by Frank Luntz.** Luntz offers sound advice on how to tactically use words and phrases to get what you want in life.
3. ***The Lost Art of the Great Speech*** **by Richard Dowis.** An in-depth, how-to guide on organizing, writing and presenting a distinctive and potent speech.

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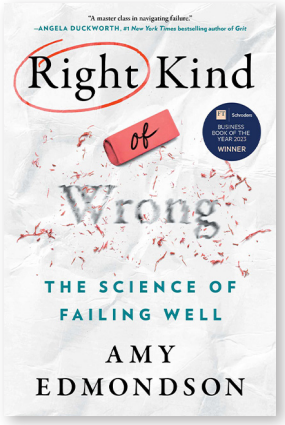
# Right Kind of Wrong

Amy Edmondson

Executive Book Summaries®

# Right Kind of Wrong

## The Science of Failing Well




*by* **Amy Edmondson**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We used to think of failure as the opposite of success. Now, we're often torn between two "failing cultures": one that says to avoid failure at all costs, the other that says fail fast, fail often. The trouble is that both approaches lack the crucial distinctions to help us separate good failure from bad. As a result, we miss the opportunity to fail well.

After decades of award-winning research, Amy Edmondson is here to upend our understanding of failure and make it work for us. In ***Right Kind of Wrong: The Science of Failing Well***, Edmondson provides the framework to think, discuss, and practice failure wisely. Outlining three archetypes of failure–basic, complex, and intelligent–she showcases how to minimize unproductive failure while maximizing what we gain from flubs of all stripes. She illustrates how we and our organizations can embrace our human fallibility, learn exactly when failure is our friend, and prevent most of it when it is not. Edmondson gives us specifically tailored practices, skills, and mindsets to help us replace shame and blame with curiosity, vulnerability, and personal growth. You'll never look at failure the same way again.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three reasons failing well is hard.
- Why you need awareness of context to fail well.
- How system awareness impacts unwanted failures.
- The keys to thriving as a fallible human being.

## Part One: The Failure Landscape

### Chasing the Right Kind of Wrong

In order to fail well, we have to learn how to chase the right kind of wrong. Failing well is hard for three reasons: aversion, confusion, and fear. Aversion refers to an instinctive emotional response to failure. Confusion arises when we lack access to a simple, practical framework for distinguishing failure types. Fear comes from the social stigma of failure.

**Aversion: a spontaneous emotional response to failure**

Failure is never fun, and nowhere is that more starkly true than in hospitals, where life and death are at stake. But even ordinary failures–our mistakes, the unimportant things we do wrong, the small defeats when we hoped for victory–can be surprisingly painful and difficult to come to terms with.

You trip on the sidewalk; a comment in a meeting falls flat; you're the last kid selected for an impromptu soccer game. Small failures, to be sure, but for many of us, the sting is sharp.

Aversion to failure is real. Rationally, we know that everyone makes mistakes; we know we live in a complex world where things will go wrong even when we do our best; we know we should forgive ourselves and others when we fall short. But failure and fault are inextricably linked in most households, organizations, and cultures.

Ironically, our aversion to failures makes experiencing them more likely. When we don't admit or point out small failures, we allow them to turn into larger ones. Our aversion to our failures also leaves us vulnerable to feelings of relief when someone else fails. We're instantly glad it's not us. Worse, we can be quick to judge others' failures.

It's human to feel anger and blame, but it's not a strategy for helping us avoid and learn from failure. One of the most important strategies for avoiding complex failures is emphasizing a preference for speaking up openly and quickly in your family, team, or organization. In other words, make it psychologically safe to be honest about a small thing before it snowballs into a larger failure.

Another strategy is how we frame our failures. Reframing a failure can give us joy instead of regret. How we frame or reframe failure has a great deal to do with our capacity to fail well. Reframing failure is the life-enhancing skill that helps us overcome our spontaneous aversion to failure.

Each of us is a fallible human being, living and working with other fallible human beings. Even if we work to overcome our aversion to failure, failing effectively isn't automatic. We also need help to reduce the confusion created by the glib talk about failure that is especially rampant in conversations about entrepreneurship.

**Confusion: not all failure is alike!**

Although "fail fast, fail often" has become a Silicon Valley mantra meant to celebrate failure, much of the discussion in books, articles, and podcasts is simple and superficial–more rhetoric than reality. For instance, it's clear that no company should celebrate a plant manager whose assembly line fails fast and often. Ditto for today's heart surgeons. No wonder we are confused!

Fortunately, this confusion can be reduced by understanding the three types of failure–basic, complex, and intelligent–and how differences in context matter. In some situations, well-developed knowledge about how to achieve desired results makes routines and plans generally unfold as expected; for example, following a recipe to bake a cake. These are called consistent contexts.

Other times, you're in brand new territory–forced to try things to see what works. These are novel contexts and include things like designing a new product.

Failures are more likely in novel than consistent contexts, so we don't get upset about them, right? Wrong. The small part of your brain responsible for activating a fight-or-flight response detects a threat no matter the context and our negative emotional reaction to failures, regardless of the level of real danger, can be surprisingly similar. But, a simple typology for distinguishing failures can help us make healthy attributions about them, counteracting this emotional hijacking.

In addition to novel and consistent contexts, all of us frequently find ourselves in variable contexts–those moments in life when knowledge exists to handle that particular type of situation, but life throws you a curveball. In our daily lives, we face situations where we have extensive prior knowledge but still face meaningful uncertainty.

The correlation between context type and failure type is substantial but they are not 100 percent aligned. A basic failure can happen in a laboratory when a scientist mistakenly uses the wrong chemical. Similarly, an intelligent failure can occur on an assembly line when a thoughtful process improvement

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suggestion turns out not to work as hoped. Nonetheless, an appreciation for the role of the context helps you anticipate the kinds of failures likely to happen.

Our confusion about failure gives rise to illogical policies and practices. The instinct to exhort people to do their best work in challenging times is understandable. It's tempting to believe that if we just hunker down, we can avoid failure all together. It's also wrong.

The relationship between effort and success is imperfect. The world around us changes constantly and keeps presenting us with new situations. Even when people work hard and are committed to doing the right thing, failure is always possible in a new situation.

Now consider what happens when executives, or parents, for that matter, state that failure is off-limits, that only good results are acceptable. Failures don't stop. They simply go underground. It's human nature to hide the truth when it's clear sharing it will bring punishment, or even just disapproval. Our fear of rejection presents the third barrier to practicing the science of failing well.

**Interpersonal fear: stigma and social rejection**

Adding to our emotional aversion and cognitive confusion is a deep-rooted fear of looking bad in the eyes of others. This is more than just a preference. The fear induced by the risk of social rejection can be traced back to our evolutionary heritage when rejection could literally mean the difference between staying alive or dying of starvation or exposure.

This survival mechanism in our brains that helped us survive in prehistoric times, today often leads us to overreact to harmless stimuli and to shy away from constructive risk-taking.

The fear response, designed to be protective, can be counterproductive in the modern world when it keeps us from taking the small interpersonal risks that are essential to speaking up or trying new things.

Psychological safety–an environment where you don't fear rejection for being wrong–is the antidote to the interpersonal fear that prevents us from failing well. Psychological safety helps us to do and say the things that allow us to learn and make progress in our changing, uncertain world. It reduces the interpersonal barriers to failing well, so people can take on new challenges with less fear, such that we can try to succeed and walk away wiser when we don't. That is the right kind of wrong.

Failures may never be fun, but with practice using new tools and insights they can become less painful and easier to learn from. Failures are an unavoidable part of progress. This is true for our personal lives and for the vital institutions that shape society. This is why it's so important, and rewarding, to master the science of failure.

## Part Two: Practicing the Science of Failing Well

### We Have Met the Enemy

We go about our work and lives hampered by, and partly oblivious of, some well-documented human tendencies that make it difficult to learn the valuable lessons failures offer.

Part of the problem is that we are reluctant to share our failures with others–an old truth, today exacerbated by social media–and this reduces everyone's ability to learn from them. Important information is lost and we become doomed to repeat failures that could have been prevented.

For some, to begin learning from failure takes one large enough to be undeniable. We need to be hit over the head with our wrongness to make us stop in our tracks and start to wonder where we went wrong.

We don't all need a giant fiasco to change how we think to help us better navigate the inconvenience and embarrassment of ordinary, not-so-large failures in our day-to-day lives. We just have to learn a new way of thinking–one that favors learning over knowing.

Learning from failure is difficult for a host of reasons.

Sometimes we miss our failures, sometimes they threaten our self-esteem or don't seem to contain valuable information or we don't speak up about them. These largely cognitive barriers are exacerbated by the unpleasant emotions failure evokes, especially in how we measure up to others.

When we see failures as shameful, we try to hide them. We don't study them closely to learn from them. We can help ourselves learn from failure if we simply reframe a situation from "I was not promoted because I am a failure" to "I failed to get the promotion."

Our relationship to failure improves when we unlearn the belief that "I am a terrible person because I made that mistake" to understand instead that "I made a mistake" and to ask, "What can I take away from it that will help me avoid making the same one in the future?"

We need to choose learning over knowing. At the core of the reframing task lie the words we use to express our thoughts, privately and aloud. Am I failing, or am I discovering something new? Do I believe I should have done better–and I'm bad for not having done so–or do I accept what happened and learn as much as I can from it? Am I okay with the discomfort that comes with new experiences? Will I give myself permission to be human? Permission to learn?

We have met the enemy and he is us. Our distorted, unrealistic expectations for avoiding failures are indeed the culprit. Mastering the science of failing well must therefore start with looking at ourselves. Self-awareness is the first, and most vital, of the three competencies we need to develop.

## Contexts and Consequences

An exercise called the Electric Maze designed more than three decades ago by inventor Boyd Watkins asks teams to successfully cross a rug that is rigged with beeping or non beeping squares without making any beeps.

The only way to find the right path is to step on squares, one at a time, through trial and error, to see if they beep. No one on the team has answers for this task so it can't be solved without experiencing failures (beeps) along the way.

Team performance is time based. Hesitating is costly. Yet, here's what happens. Each teammate seems to freeze because if they step on a beeping square, their team members groan. Or they step on a quiet square and everyone cheers. The team's reactions exacerbate the hesitation: the next person in the maze becomes even more hesitant, and eventually the team runs out of time.

When asked why they hesitated so much and ultimately failed the game, the answer is always the same. They didn't want to make a mistake and feel embarrassed. But stepping on a new beeping square is not a mistake. It's simply information about the path. It's the right kind of wrong.

When something goes wrong in unknown territory, it's a failure but not a mistake. Recall that something is only a mistake if you already have knowledge for how to avoid it. What people don't easily put into practice is that the way to perform well in the maze is to collect as quickly as possible information about which squares beep.

Logically, teams should applaud for discovering both quiet and beeping squares. Both provide vital new information about the path. Instead, people experience the tiny intelligent failure of a new beep as a mistake and feel embarrassed by it–an embarrassment amplified by others' reactions.

It shows lack of appreciation of context. When we face novel contexts in our lives, we must be prepared for failures as we navigate the new terrain. Most of us don't find ourselves standing in front of a literal maze trying to find the right path. But the exercise provides an apt metaphor for our lives.

All of us face uncertainty, which brings both risks and opportunities for discovery. All of us can benefit from pausing to consider the context at crucial and not-so-crucial moments in our day-to-day lives.

Too many failures in life, and in companies, occur because we don't pay attention to context. Practicing the science of failing well requires awareness of two dimensions of context: (1) how much is known and (2) what's at stake.

The first dimension concerns the degree of novelty and uncertainty. The second is about risk–physical, financial, reputational. Roughly speaking, are the stakes high or low? Reflecting on both the uncertainty and the stakes in a situation is a crucial competency for elite failure practitioners.

Situation awareness helps us feel better about experimenting when it's safe to do so and helps us be cautious when warranted to prevent unwanted failures.

## Appreciating Systems

All of us operate in systems in our everyday lives–family systems, ecosystems, and school systems to name a few. This makes system awareness–especially how systems can

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produce unwanted failures–a crucial skill in the science of failing well.

A system's results are less shaped by its individual parts than by how the parts relate to one another. This simple but powerful idea can help you analyze and design various systems in your life to get better results.

The word system refers to a set of elements or parts that come together to form a meaningful whole–that is, a recognizable entity, whether a family, a company, a car, or a baseball team. Systems exhibit synergy: the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Put slightly differently, the behavior of the whole can't be predicted by the behavior of the parts examined separately. Only by considering the relationships between parts can you explain a system's behavior.

Most people's education doesn't prepare them to see systems. We learn to break down problems into parts, which enables focus and progress in many fields of knowledge but blinds us to larger patterns and relationships. Traditional management systems similarly break work down into parts, inhibiting collaboration and innovation in favor of reliability and efficiency.

Systems with interactive complexity and tight coupling are vulnerable to breakdowns. By taking time to consider how a system works, many complex failures can be avoided. Getting into the habit of looking for relationships between elements in a system allows us to anticipate and prevent all kinds of failures and breakdowns and, just as important, allows us to learn more from the failures that do occur.

Think about activities your children want to join. A simple yes today brings multiple consequences for others and for the future. A decision in one part of a family system at one moment often affects other parts and later times. The point is not to say no indiscriminately to any alteration in your family's activities.

Rather, it's to diagnose the most important interrelationships so as to say yes, or no, thoughtfully. What you want is to benefit from the simple act of asking, (1) "Who and what else is affected by this?" and (2) "What might happen later, as a consequence of doing this now?"

Once you start seeing systems you can begin to see ways to alter the most important systems in your life or organization to reduce unwanted failures and to promote greater innovation, efficiency, safety, or other valued outcomes.

System awareness also helps you feel less bad about some of the things that go wrong in your work or personal life. When you start to see systems more clearly, you understand better that you are not wholly responsible for most of the failures that occur. You can feel responsible for your contributions to them–and determine to do better next time–but suffer less from the delusion that you're entirely to blame.

When you undertake systemic thinking it helps you make decisions more mindfully. This can seem distressing because there is no "right" answer. But it is also empowering because you get to choose! The choices you make can expand your opportunities for experimenting and learning.

### Thriving as a Fallible Human Being

A certain freedom comes from learning to live comfortably with who you are. Fallibility is a part of who we are. Self-acceptance can be seen as brave. It takes courage to be honest with oneself, and it's a first step in being honest with others. Because failure is a fact of life, failing is not a matter of if but when and how.

But thriving as a fallible human being also means learning how to fail well: preventing basic failures as often as possible, anticipating complex ones so as to prevent or mitigate them, and cultivating the appetite for more frequent intelligent failures. Learning to recognize and learn from each of the three failure types and strengthen each of the three awareness zones is a lifelong process.

The most important reason to embrace our fallibility is that it frees us up to take more risks. When you take more risks, you will experience more, not less, failure. This is how you get more comfortable with it. But two good things happen.

One, you realize that you don't die of embarrassment. Two, you build muscle so that each next failure stings less. The more you experience failure, the more you realize you can still be okay. More than okay: you can thrive.

The science of failing well is not always fun. It brings good days and bad. It's practiced by fallible human beings working alone and together.

But one thing is certain. It will bring discovery.

Discoveries about what works and what doesn't work in achieving goals that matter to you, along with discoveries about yourself. Practice failing and you will develop the science of failing well.



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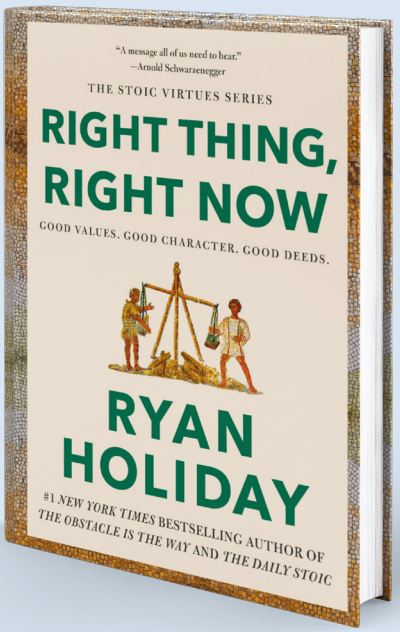
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# Right Thing, Right Now

Ryan Holiday

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Right Thing, Right Now

**Good Values. Good character. Good Deeds.**

*By Ryan Holiday*

**Ryan Holiday** is one of the world's bestselling living philosophers. His books, including *The Obstacle Is the Way, Ego Is the Enemy, The Daily Stoic*, and the #1 New York Times bestseller *Stillness Is the Key,* appear in more than forty languages and have sold over 10 million copies. He lives outside Austin with his wife and two boys ... and a small herd of cows and donkeys and goats. His bookstore, The Painted Porch, sits on historic Main Street in Bastrop, Texas.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Doing What's Right—Even When It's Not Easy

Ryan Holiday ends his book, ***Right Thing, Right Now: Good Values. Good character. Good Deeds***, part of The Stoic Virtues Series, with an explanation of the ways in which stoicism asks of its adherents to consider other people. He writes, "Any philosophy that hardens you to the plight of other people, any philosophy that punches down… instead of up…, any philosophy that rages instead of loves? These ideas are the plagues of our time." Holiday believes that what truly matters in life is how a person treats other people, and his book is an exploration of numerous principles that can help a person live a life of virtue. Stoicism, he explains, teaches people that challenges present opportunities. And these ideas form the basis of his book which is broken into three categories: The Me, The We, and The All.

Before Holiday gets into his three main sections, he explores the idea of virtue. He explains how the ancients believed that virtue could be divided into four components: courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom. He believes that these principles are "the stuff that the door to the good life hangs on." It was not just the ancients who believed in these principles as they have spread throughout Christianity, Western philosophy, Buddhism, Hinduism, and "just about every other philosophy you can imagine." Holiday's book is built around these principles as he writes that "doing the right thing almost always takes courage, just as moderation is impossible without the wisdom to know what is worth choosing. What good is courage if not applied to justice? What good is wisdom if it doesn't make us more modest?" As such, these virtues provide a compass by which people can follow.

While all four components are important, Holiday believes that justice is the most important of the virtues because, in part, there is no other virtue that can counterbalance it. There is never a situation in which justice is disposable. To note, he does not just refer to justice as just that which is administered by the courts. By justice, Holiday refers to fairness, "honesty, give and take, truthfulness, keeping promises." He believes that a solid moral code that takes the virtues into account gives a person something to build their life around. Despite his discussion of virtues, Holiday's book is about action, not merely debating principles but living them. Justice, he claims, is "not a noun but a verb."

## The Me (Personal)

Holiday starts the main section of his book by telling his reader that justice begins in the home, with the individual. It is about making a decision about the type of person you want to be. While some from the outside may consider this to be a restrictive idea, Holiday explains that following one's own high moral code actually gives life meaning and allows a person to make a difference. "We preach the Gospel," he writes, "not with words but with actions."

Holiday refers time and again to Harry Truman's political career. In his section on standing before kings, Holiday explains how Truman was a seemingly ordinary person who was thrust into the spotlight suddenly upon the death of Franklin Roosevelt. While some despaired, worrying that Truman did not have the credentials or experience to lead the nation, one man who knew him well was confident that Truman's character would help him lead the country well. Truman studied the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius as a younger man, and in doing so, learned the four virtues discussed above. He believed that they provided a roadmap to a well lived life, and he used those principles to lead the country in the aftermath of Roosevelt's death. Earlier in his life, Truman proved his dedication to these principles when he decided to serve in World War I. Truman had numerous reasons why he could have secured an exemption from fighting, but he believed it was his duty to fight to try to make the world a safe place for democracy to flourish. He believed that "justice is an awful tyrant" as he led his men in discipline balanced with compassion. In his personal life after the war, he continued to be guided by honor, refusing to succumb to corruption even when his family was poor and those around him were acting without scruples. Holiday commends Truman's behavior further with his statement that "The fact that corruption seems obviously wrong and shameful makes it easy to miss just how remarkable and solitary Truman's honest political life was – it is one thing to try to keep your hands clean, it's another to manage to do it in a den of thieves." For Holiday, you either follow ethical guidelines or you do not. To note, Truman's actions did not bring him widespread support. Holiday states that he left office a very unpopular president, but he believes that with the luxury of time, the world can now see just how great of a leader he was.

Holiday moves on to discuss taking responsibility. He writes, "we evade responsibility because it's hard. Because it comes with risks. Because we have a tough enough time taking care of ourselves. Because we'd rather someone else be responsible. But what kind of world would it be if everyone did this?" He explains that a person cannot take responsibility for another person's life until they have taken responsibility for their own. Character and self-respect stem from this responsibility taken, and Holiday finds this responsibility to be empowering. He believes that most or all people were, due to immaturity, or are in a place where they fear responsibility or avoid taking it. Holiday discusses F. Scott Fitzgerald's story, "The Adjustor." In the play, a woman has an easy life and is indifferent towards her marriage and children because they ask something of her. A doctor comes in and tells her that she now has "to give others what was given to you for so long. You've got to give security to young people and peace to your husband, and a sort of charity to the old. You've got to let the people who work for you depend on you. You've got to cover up a few more troubles than you show." He tells her that she will now be the warmth by which other people will warm themselves. Holiday believes that it is in this responsibility that people can find both "meaning and purpose."

Later in his first section, Holiday discusses integrity and its importance. He demonstrates this through Martha Graham, a woman who was asked to participate in preparing the Olympics in Berlin. Graham turned down the opportunity because the majority of the people in her group were Jewish, and she did not like the message it would send for her to work with the Nazi party. She needed this job at this point in her life, but her needs and desires did not overshadow her own sense of integrity, and she acted in accordance with her principles. Holiday then goes on to discuss Ulysses S. Grant. Poor at this time, Grant was gifted an enslaved person by his wife's family. This made slavery a personal issue, not just a political one for Grant that he could view from a distance. Having legal ownership over this person forced him to make a decision about whether he would bypass with integrity by denying his principles and utilizing the work of the slave that could bring much needed gains to himself and his family. He decided to give the enslaved man his freedom. Holiday explains that "Integrity is living by what you think is right. Not what you can get away with, not what everyone else is doing." Integrity can guide a person when decisions are difficult. It can keep a person afloat. "Integrity ceases to be an abstraction when life presents you the opportunity to act on it. Integrity then becomes real. It is proven." All of this responsibility is rooted in a person's own self-respect. Living with integrity will not be easy, but "somehow we all know that to live without it is the worst fate of all."

Holiday then moves on to discuss the importance of a person realizing their potential. He discusses Buckminster Fuller, a man who decided to take his life one night after experiencing incredibly traumatic life events. As he was prepared to take his life, he suddenly realized that by doing so, he would be evading responsibility for those who rely on him. He heard a voice saying, "You do not have the right to eliminate yourself…. You do not belong to you. You belong to the universe…. You may assume that you are fulfilling your significance if you apply yourself to converting all your experience to the highest advantage of others. You and all men are here for the sake of other men." This principle is part of what progress is based upon. If people refuse to live up to their potential and use the gifts they have been given, progress cannot be made. Stagnation will ensue. It is not just oneself who suffers when a person fails to fulfill this potential. Rather, it is also all the people who would benefit from what that individual has to offer. Because of this, people have a responsibility to do what they do best. He explains how Angela Merkel was talented in science, but she learned that there are many talented scientists around. There were not as many talented politicians, and since she excelled in this area, it was best for the world for her to pursue this path. This illustrates the economic law of comparative advantage which states that everybody does best if each works at what they are best at. He does not want it to be said about anybody that he or she could have done more.

*"It's not about you. It never has been. Discipline is a me virtue. Justice, one might say, is a we virtue."*

## The We (Sociopolitical)

Holiday opens the second part of his book by stating that "It's not about you. It never has been. Discipline is a me virtue. Justice, one might say, is a we virtue." Holiday discusses Thomas Clarkson. He was a college student tasked, in 1785, with writing an essay about the ethics of owning enslaved people. At that time, his arguments against slavery were novel, but he was less concerned with ethics than he was with winning the essay contest at Cambridge. He won the contest, and he found himself now plagued by the notion of slavery. While society at the time believed the institution of slavery was just, he could not easily dismiss the arguments he formulated in his essay. Clarkson became convinced that if slavery was wrong, someone needed to stop it. He took it a step further and started to consider whether that person should be him. Holiday thinks that even without Clarkson's convictions and work to end slavery, society would have eventually ended the evil practice, but Holiday prefers to think that this idea is actually disempowering. What he finds more inspiring and empowering is the idea that one person can make a difference and can change the tides of history even if he or she must join with many others and even if the work continues well past his or her lifetime.

One principle involved in helping the sociopolitical situation is seeing how other people live. Holiday discusses the well-to-do British woman, Beatrice Webb. Because of her social position, she had the best that was offered to women at the time. In her twenties, she became involved in a charity project whereby she pretended to be the daughter of a farmer and went to work with relatives of much lower status. Prior to this experience, Webb had no knowledge of the other classes because society was specifically designed to keep the wealthy sheltered from those living in poverty. Because of this experience, Webb's belief that those in poverty were there because they were immoral and deserved that life was shattered. This experience changed the course of Webb's life as she then dedicated herself to developing safety nets for people in British society. She worked to make conditions better for the working people. Holiday believes that "most social change is a result of a similar kind of rude awakening. Someone sees something and decides to do something." He quotes activist Jacob Riis as saying "what are you going to do about it… is the main question of the day." It is much easier for people to avoid the problems that plague other people, to stay firmly ensconced in one's own bubble. It is also difficult for people to take on the task of helping others when they face problems in their own lives. Holiday does not believe we should hide from reality, however. He believes it is our responsibility to open our eyes to both history and to the unpleasant facts of today. He writes, "we must wake up. We must seek out the experiences that will change us, we must seek out an understanding of how the world works and lives."

When discussing growing a coaching tree, Holiday writes that "In sports, a coaching tree is defined by the coaches and players and executives that a coach has discovered, hired, and mentored and what they go on to do in their careers." Holiday asks his reader to consider their career and the people they have helped. He thinks that people can learn even more about the extent to which they helped other people by looking at how many of those they have helped are different from them. He thinks that people too often pay more attention to how to get other people to help them than they are in helping other people get a chance at their dreams and opportunities. Holiday writes, "Not all of us have the power to change or improve the world within our own lifetimes. By supporting, encouraging, and influencing others – including our own children – our efforts can live on."

## The All (Is One)

In his final section, Holiday opens with a discussion of greatness. This greatness goes beyond mere caring or compassion. He believes that all cultures have their own saints, and these are people who go above just helping others; "they embrace an expansive, radical connection to everyone and everything to ever live, expanding 'we' to conclude everyone, to include all of us, even generations yet unborn." These people do the right thing even if they stand to lose everything. They have a commitment to righteousness that enables them to achieve the greatness they do, and this level of righteousness is possible in each one of us. For Holiday, Gandhi's work to help the untouchables is a prime example of this righteousness and greatness. Of Gandhi, a British scholar said, "Be careful in dealing with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasures, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believed to be right." In the end, Gandhi's work to help those less fortunate took his own life when he was assassinated.

Holiday then discussed climbing "your second mountain." Here he opens by discussing Lou Gehrig, the professional baseball player whose name has become synonymous with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. Gehrig could have comfortably retired with the money he had saved up, and he was offered lucrative contracts. He turned these down, however, to work for a parole board. Gehrig is quoted as saying that when you are young, it is good to be seen as a sports hero, but it is sad if that is what a person is most known for at forty years old. Writer David Brooks says that people get to the top of a mountain by conquering worlds like business or the arts, and this is good. But these people often also realize eventually that there is more than this to life. At

that point the question becomes "Will we just go back to how we've always done things? Or will we find another mountain, one that is much higher, much less a monument to our ego? One that challenges us to reach our potential in a fuller sense, a less self-interested way, a more generous and community-minded way." This is the second mountain. This second mountain is more spiritual, and we help others when we begin to climb it.

Author Ryan Holiday's last principle in his book is to pay it forward. He opens this section discussing Ralph Ellison's realization, in Harvard's Memorial Hall, that the names of the men carved into the wall are of men who gave their lives to help free Ellison's ancestors from slavery. Ellison's life was not one of ease. He still suffered under Jim Crow and racism of all stripes. Yet still, in this moment, he experienced a moment of indebtedness when he realized all of the people who gave their lives so that the future could be better. "They crossed oceans. They rotted in prisons. They stepped willingly, shaking with fear, onto great battlefields. They waited. They accepted. They hoped. They endured." It is not just in the giving of one's very life that these sacrifices are made for the benefit of others. People only need to look to their own caregivers in childhood to find people who gave of themselves so that their children could be cared for and be provided for. All around us there is evidence of people who worked for the betterment of others. This is a free gift in Holiday's estimation, and each person must decide what they will do with that gift This work we do with our lives will also be what gives meaning to our lives. Holiday's entire book, *Right Thing, Right Now: Good Values. Good character. Good Deeds,* catalogs the different Stoic principles upon which he believes a good life is lived. His book asks something of its reader. It asks the reader to live for something greater than himself or herself. He ends with the simple words, "The future depends on" what we do with our lives.

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# Sparked

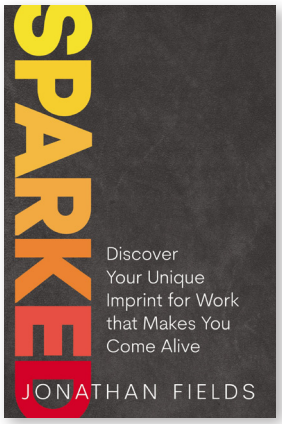
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# Sparked

## Discover Your Unique Imprint for Work That Makes You Come Alive




*by* **Jonathan Fields**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We're all born with a certain "imprint" for work that makes us come alive. This is your Sparketype®, your DNA-level driver of work that lets you know, deep down, you're doing what you're here to do. Work that motivates you, fills you with purpose and, fully expressed in a healthy way, becomes a mainline to meaning, flow, performance, and joy. Put another way, it's work that sparks you.

Drawing upon years of research, experimentation, more than 25 million data-points generated by over half a million people, hundreds of deep-dive conversations with luminaries from science to art to industry and well-being, author Jonathan Fields and his team at Spark Endeavors developed the Sparketype imprints and methodology that are the basis of ***Sparked***.

***Sparked*** takes you deep into the world of the Sparketypes, revealing an entirely new depth of insights about what makes you come alive in work life, along with what empties you out and trips you up, so you can avoid those life-drains. It's a comprehensive guide to help you discover what you are meant to do and how to get started.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What it means to be Sparked and the 10 Sparketypes.
- The difference between your primary, shadow, and anti-Sparketypes.
- To recognize and avoid what trips up the Sparketypes.
- How the Sparketypes can translate to career success.

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## What Should I Do With My Life?

When most of us ask, "What am I here to do," we're thinking about work. "What is my unique contribution? To my life. To the lives of those around me. To society. Whether it's the thing I get paid to do, or the thing, once discovered, I can't not do, simply because it's the air that breathes me."

This is a state called "being Sparked." Being sparked exists at the sweet spot between five domains:

- **Purpose**. Knowing you're moving toward something you believe in.
- **Engagement**. Excitement, energy, and enthusiasm for the pursuit of that something.
- **Meaningfulness**. The feeling that what you do and who you are matters.
- **Expressed potential**. The sensation of being fully you and not having to hide, bringing all of your potential to the experience, and leaving nothing untapped.
- **Flow**. The blissful experience of getting lost in an activity, losing time, and becoming absorbed in the task.

### Sparketypes

Early in life, we begin to exhibit a certain unique imprint or affinity—an intrinsic impulse—for work that makes us come alive. This work gives us the feeling of being Sparked. These imprints not only determine what type of work or effort we're drawn to (and repelled from), they also tend to come with a host of common behaviors, quirks, and attachments. These imprints are Sparketypes®, which is an easy shorthand for the source code-level driver of work that makes you come alive.

Finding your Sparketype equips you with insight that immediately rings true, a sense of direction, and the freedom to finally lead from a place of truth and potential. How many Sparketypes are there? The quick answer is 10: maven, maker, scientist, essentialist, performer, sage, warrior, advisor, advocate, and nurturer.

We're all a blend of a number of different Sparketypes, but every person has a distinct Sparketype Profile that is made up of three key components:

- **Your Primary Sparketype**. Think of your Primary Sparketype as the thing that generates the strongest impulse to exert effort for no other reason than the fact that it makes you feel alive.
- **Your Shadow Sparketype**. Your Shadow Sparketype is also a big part of you, sometimes even a close second behind your Primary. It is not, however, your strongest impulse. Think of it as your Primary Sparketype amplifier.
- **Your Anti-Sparketype**. Your Anti-Sparketype is the type of work that is the heaviest lift for you. It takes the most out of you and requires the greatest amount of recovery even if, objectively, it's not that hard.

When you know your full profile, all three elements, it helps you decide not only what to run toward but also what to run from. The online Sparketype Assessment (Sparketype.com) allows anyone, anywhere to rapidly discover their Sparketype.

Let's now look at six of the 10 Sparketypes. You'll learn how each Sparketype is nourished and stifled, what you need to feel fulfilled, where you tend to get tripped up and why, how each type tends to find an outlet, and how that outlet can lead to a career and generate an income.

## The Maven

### Slogan: "I live to learn."

Mavens are all about learning. Often on a level that goes beyond curiosity and lands as fascination, even obsession. As a Maven, you're fueled by a near-primal drive to know more, even if there is no end beyond simply scratching your often misunderstood and sometimes maligned "that is insanely cool, I must know more" itch. The thing that gets you out of bed in the morning is the opportunity to go to sleep knowing more than you did the day before. You view learning as an almost sacred pursuit, one you easily get lost in.

In fact, because the opportunities to learn are often so abundant, internal, and unimpeded, Mavens drop more readily into that blissed-out, time-fugued state of flow than other Sparketypes. They sink into an 800-page biography, follow a Google search about the mating patterns of dinosaurs, or tear through a bingeworthy lineup of documentaries on a Sunday morning only to look up and wonder if it's time for breakfast . . . at 11:00 p.m.

When working in a way that allows them the resources and control to spend the greatest amount of time immersed in the process of learning, deepening into a broad or narrow fascination, focused on a topic they feel innately drawn to, Mavens feel most alive. They become fully expressed. Sparked.

Own the fact that learning is your work oxygen. Often, this simple acknowledgment creates a shift that leads you to start seeing and creating opportunities.

### What Trips You Up

In the early head-spinning days of any pursuit, for Mavens, there is generally a lot to learn, from discrete knowledge about a topic, field, or area of expertise to the culture, mission, and social dynamic of an organization. But here's the strange thing. While those fueled by other Sparketypes may be happiest once the "new information overload dust" settles, Mavens tend not to be. Why? Because Mavens gotta learn.

These experiences often hit a crisis point when, months or years in, Mavens find themselves in a position where there's little left to learn. Or so they think. For Mavens, this is death. They feel trapped.

How do you get Sparked again? Understand you are a Maven. Own the fact that learning is your work oxygen. Often, this simple acknowledgment creates a shift that leads you to start seeing and creating opportunities. Reimagine your current work. What might you do, even if it lies outside the confines of your job, that would unlock the learning gates for you?

### Show Me the Money

Mavens often turn to their Shadow Sparketypes as conduits to cash, or as a "funding mechanism" for their Maven impulse. Neil Pasricha is an international best-selling author of books like ***The Book of Awesome***, ***The Happiness Equation***, ***You Are Awesome***, and many others. His books and talks are meticulously crafted, deeply vulnerable, and generous expressions of his Maker Shadow, and also highly effective mechanisms to fund his life and his continued ability to spend inordinate amounts of time learning.

Mavens often function well on teams, where they play the role of domain expert, contributing to the collective efforts of others who then apply that expertise to the creation of a product, service, idea, or outcome that becomes the source of compensation.

## The Maker

**Slogan: "I make ideas manifest."**

Makers gotta make. Creation is your call; it's the thing that gets you out of bed in the morning. You are most alive and engaged when you start with an idea, then turn it into something that exists in the world. Something that reflects the taste, sensibility, and notion of possibility you have in your head, the vision of what could be. And, now . . . it is. Because of you. Even if it's brutally hard, you know you're doing the thing you're here to do.

Makers are very heavily driven and also satisfied by process. When you are working in a way that allows you to spend the greatest amount of time immersed in the process of creation, you feel most alive. When the thing you are making is a true reflection of your vision, your unique ideas, lens, values, and sense of taste, you become Sparked.

When you have control over the resources, steps, decisions, and ultimate vision and are in charge of all of the elements that allow you to work toward that idea you see in your mind's eye and know is possible, you come alive.

### What Trips You Up

While certain circumstances allow you to come fully alive, others shut you down. For example, decision by committee, followed by creation by committee, can be the bane of your existence, especially when those involved have different values, visions, and sensibilities. For Makers, with a strong sense of identity tied to a specific idea or ideal of what the process and outcome should look like, being constrained, hindered, or having your vision diluted by the input of others can be incredibly frustrating.

Healthy, well-aligned, and harmonized collaboration is great, but it often works better when each person has their own "creation domain" within a larger context or project. Or when there is a clear and agreed-upon "lead Maker" who largely sets the vision and approach, then brings in others to make it real.

It's important to choose carefully, negotiate wisely, and be clear about where your line in the creation sand is. Get a clear understanding of what the decision-making process will be for any endeavor before you say yes to it.

### Show Me the Money

Makers have a sometimes-complicated relationship with making, service, and money. On the one hand, it's a beautiful thing when you can sell what you make, be compensated on a level that sustains you, and not have to do anything else. On the other, you sometimes feel the pressure of making what you know will sell (or earn an income), rather than what you're called to create. It's always a bit of a dance. There is no universally right answer beyond the balance that makes you feel fully expressed while also comfortably sustained.

Makers may earn their living not by selling what they create but by guiding others in the process of creation. This can be incredibly rewarding, especially when your Shadow is the Sage or Advisor or one of the more service-driven, outwardly satisfied Sparketypes. Your Maker impulse satisfies the desire to turn ideas into things, but the process of doing what you do has value to others, so you share it in the form of anything from a course or class to workshops, mentoring, and more.

## The Scientist

### Slogan: "I figure things out."

Scientists are all about the pursuit of burning questions, wicked problems, puzzles, riddles, and quandaries. The more involved and complex, the better. You also tend to be very process-driven. Sure, solving the puzzle, finding the solution, or figuring out the answer feels great, especially if it ends up helping others in a way that matters to you.

But it's the hunt, the process of discovery—or what Richard Feynman, Nobel Prize-winning physicist, described as "the pleasure of finding the thing out, the kick in the discovery"—that is equally, if not more, enlivening. You feel a sense of excitement, energy, and purpose not only when you arrive at an answer but through the simple experience of searching for it.

When the question, problem, or puzzle you are pursuing is tied to an area, topic, person, or community you feel some personal connection to, or innate pull toward, even if you have no idea why it feels so compelling, you become even more drawn to the work, and the feeling may well rise to the level of not just a devotion but a calling. In the Scientist's mind, even well-answered questions are ripe for better solutions and answers that are just waiting to be discovered by them.

### What Trips You Up

Just like every other Sparketype, Scientists are prone to certain circumstances that hold the potential to trigger them and take them to a dark place. Interestingly enough, the triggers for Scientists are the exact opposite of what triggers so many other Sparketypes.

For example, the air that Scientists breathe is the unknown. It's that place where something's not quite right and there's a better way out there, but what exactly that is, well, it's anyone's guess. Uncertainty is the soil in which they plant their seeds and grow their solutions. It represents possibility.

As they work their Scientist magic, over time, answers start to come, solutions take form, and what was once the great unknown starts to come into focus. A specific, certain answer emerges. While this is the end-state we're taught to spend our lives working toward, Scientists love the process of getting there, and they love the fact that they figured the thing out. But they don't love being there.

If they dwell in it for too long, they get intensely uninterested, frustrated, and maybe even a tad cranky. They lose the ability to come alive and, instead, find themselves trapped in the process and slowly flatlining.

### Show Me the Money

In the world of business or work, there are really only two ways to get paid. Deliver a delight or solve a problem. The latter approach is what the vast majority of businesses and jobs center around. Because of this, Scientists tend to find themselves in demand and well paid, especially in domains where the stakes are high and the impact is vast.

That said, when Scientists find themselves innately drawn to a problem, question, or puzzle that is of deep interest to them and maybe even to society, but offers no clear, predefined path to income or economic value to others, they may find themselves torn.

In order to resolve this tension, Scientists may find themselves pursuing more of a blended path. They'll earn a living through work that both taps and financially rewards their impulse to solve, albeit in an area that is not of great interest, then unleash that same impulse "on the side" in relation to problems or questions that may not provide meaningful financial compensation but do strongly interest them.

## The Performer

### Slogan: "I turn moments into magic."

Performers come alive when animating, enlivening, and energizing—breathing life, emotion, and sensation into an experience, interaction, engagement, moment, role, or pursuit in a way that makes it come alive with energy, emotion, and understanding.

Performers are among the rarest and most misunderstood Sparketypes. Many bounce between feelings of shame when they go full-on Performer and repression when they stifle this impulse that family, friends, colleagues, and society in certain domains exalt and revere, yet in others, disdain and even punish. It is also one of the most misdirected Sparketypes, in no small part because it is so often artificially constrained by the notion that it can only be expressed in the world of the performing arts.

Like all other Sparketypes, Performers tend to most fully access the feeling of being Sparked when the thing they are breathing life into is also a true reflection of a strong interest, vision, values, and a sense of taste.

### What Trips You Up

On occasion, when people discover their Sparketype is the Performer, they'll share how they dislike the term "Performer." Performer, they've come to feel, is about being "a fake." Even worse, it's about playing up the drama to bring unwarranted attention to yourself. It's about wanting undue attention and praise.

But the most effective Performers are not actually the ones who dial up the drama for the sole purpose of ego gratification, attention, and reaction or those who put on a facade. Rather, they're the ones who dial up the authenticity, integrity, trust, and craft in order to enliven an experience, moment, or interaction in a way that opens others to emotion, trust, connection, transference—and, at times, understanding, transcendence, even revelation. The intention is for the experience to land more as a gift that invites, connects, and elevates than a demand for adulation or adoration.

### Show Me the Money

The work of the Performer, like the work of so many of the Sparketypes, tends to have what most would consider a conventional outlet and then a universe of nonconventional ones. The interesting thing here is that, while most of the other Sparketypes find the easiest path to a comfortable living when pursued along those more conventional paths, for the vast majority of Performers, it's the opposite.

The vast majority of Performers who pursue their impulse in the most conventional way, often performing arts, struggle to earn a comfortable, full-time living.

That said, all is not lost, because the impulse and skills of the Performer are incredibly valuable, in demand, and often very well compensated when they find an outlet in the exponentially larger array of nonconventional opportunities. Performers in business-development or sales roles can create and enliven an interaction or presentation in a way that leads to exceptional outcomes and substantial compensation.

Speakers, facilitators, leaders in hospitality, recreation, and beyond find countless opportunities to bring the impulse to their work in a way that makes them come alive and translates into revenue. This impulse and skill, in fact, is both rare and incredibly differentiating in the world of business.

> Performers are among the rarest and most misunderstood Sparketypes.

## The Sage

### Slogan: "I awaken insight."

For Sages, illumination is your call. You live to share insights, ideas, knowledge, and experiences with others in a way that leaves them in some way better, wiser, and more equipped to experience life differently—and maybe sparks something in them that makes them want to learn more.

While there is definitely a process-fulfilled side to the work that makes you come alive, you tend more often to find your fullest expression and get your greatest reward when focused on the impact you have on those you seek to help illuminate and elevate. It's rarely enough to just know your topic well or have command over your craft. You can't just stand in front of a room, or write a book,

give a talk, or produce a podcast and feel like you've done what you came to do. Sages want to know what you share actually lands in a way that is understood, integrated, and embodied.

When the body of knowledge you are teaching and the people you seek to impact are a reflection of topics and communities, visions, interests, ideas, values, and process that you feel intrinsically called to, you become Sparked.

### What Trips You Up

Because Sages tend to be more externally service-focused, they can find themselves "over-giving" and becoming physically, psychologically, and emotionally depleted. The risk rises when the system you work within is demanding or all-consuming. It also requires you to devote great amounts of time to both the process of teaching and managing many outside factors, which tend to compound the experience of depletion.

If you are a Sage, be aware of this potential drain on your ability to give. Commit to filling your tank along the way, if not in the name of taking care of yourself, then in the name of being as effective as possible in your ability to illuminate. If you've done all you can to optimize your well-being and the circumstances under which you teach and still are left empty, you may want to explore a different approach to expressing your Sage call.

### Show Me the Money

The skills and abilities of the Sage—the desire and capacity to illuminate, to turn the lights of awareness, understanding, and insight on—are forever in need in a vast array of industries, organizations, and fields. Salespeople who are great at illuminating features, benefits, points of differentiation, and reasons why the thing they're offering is exactly what is needed tend to generate high levels of sales, be well compensated, and are also appreciated by customers and clients who get their problems solved and often leave with deeper insights.

Sages in positions of leadership and management often tap their impulse not just to inspire and motivate but also transfer insight, information, and turn the light of understanding on, cultivating knowledge, autonomy, and competence, along with a greater capacity to deliver outcomes more independently. This often leads to a bump in performance, engagement, and retention that is reflected in opportunity, demand, and compensation.

## The Warrior

### Slogan: "I gather and lead people."

There is, and has always been, something inside Warriors that yearns to gather people, organize them, harness their collective energy, assume responsibility, make decisions, and lead them on some form of meaningful, fun, or challenging (sometimes all three) quest, experience, mission, or adventure. For you, it's not just a skill, position, or title as a leader or community organizer; it is a DNA-deep impulse. It is the work you're here to do, even when it's personal, social, and fun.

You might express this through a deeper connection to a specific industry, field, group, or community. It might find an outlet at home, with friends or family. Some Warriors become attached to a particular area of focus, mission, or pursuit for long windows of time. Maybe you lead a faculty of teachers to raise graduation rates, or a team to invent and launch a new product, service, or company.

A certain fierce devotion to people and path must be present in order to do the deeply rewarding, yet sometimes difficult, work of gathering and leading. That ferocity is, in fact, where the moniker Warrior comes from. It's not about dominance, force, or pecking order but, rather, a willingness to stand in a place of enduring conviction and support, even when things get hard—which, when the stakes rise, they often do.

### What Trips You Up

Confidence is generally a good thing, but for Warriors, it can be a double-edged sword. Warriors tend to believe they're right. A lot. This can show up constructively as strength and conviction in the face of challenge.

When you are right and are willing to hold the vision long enough for the efforts of those you lead to prove its potential, the impact can be transformative. Problem is, that same instinct can easily tip from good intentions to ego preservation, from possibility into delusion. It can show up destructively as an arrogant and dogged attachment to a wrong point of view or belief in potential, even long after the assumptions and vision that launched the endeavor have been disproven.

The difference between these two expressions of decisiveness often comes down to those two Warriorship touchstones, openness and vulnerability. Stay perpetually open to and in search of the truth, allow yourself the grace to be wrong, and accept the invitation to change course. Own decisions and all that comes with them. You and those you sought to lead may not arrive at the place you

Viewed as trusted guides and catalysts who accelerate outcomes and add value, often in measurable ways, capable Advisors tend to be highly sought after.

hoped, but at least you'll land in the place you are with your dignity and their trust intact.

### Show Me the Money

Warriors in conventional roles and industries are often highly sought after and exceptionally well paid. They are viewed as the ones who make things happen and often sustain their efforts even in the face of hardship. They are in demand because of their skills and clarity of purpose but also because they gather and lead, not just because it's their job but because it's a pure expression of who they are and what they do. The very existence of that primal impulse often sustains them where others who are fueled more by obligation and skill fall down or step away.

In business, this can lead to roles in management and leadership. They are easily able to rise up the rungs of the leadership-centric, aspirational ladder so many want to climb, finding new opportunities and higher value and compensation along the way. While this impulse and skill set is deeply valued in nearly every domain, industry, and pursuit, it may not be as well compensated in non-business areas.

## The Advisor

### Slogan: "I guide to grow."

For the Advisor, the work of coaching, mentoring, and advising fills you like nothing else. You're the person who swoops in, develops sustained, personal relationships, most often with individuals or small groups, cultivates trust and confidence, and creates the safety needed to guide people in a hands-on, engaging way toward a desired end.

It's all about wisdom, trust, confidence, curiosity, presence, and guidance. Whoever you work with, their win is your win.

While you see yourself as someone who is wise and skilled, for you, it's less about illumination or teaching a particular body of knowledge the way a Sage might be drawn to do, and more about the interactive experience of walking people through a process of problem-solving, application, achievement, and, ultimately, growth.

It's also not just about the outcome. The aspiration is not just to get them to the place they yearn to be. More important is the depth of connection, the nature of the relationship between you and your advisees, the joy of the trust that you cultivate, and knowledge that you're making a genuine difference. For many advisors, it is also about helping others develop their own inner trust, competence, confidence, and self-reliance so that, when the time is right, you can step away and watch them soar.

### What Trips You Up

Advisors often become deeply attached to those they advise. To the extent this helps provide the insight necessary to be more effective advisors, that's not a bad thing. But without proper boundaries, it can lead to a level of clouded vision, emotional empathy, or transference that diminishes the objectivity needed to do the work you're there to do.

There will always come a time in the Advisor/advisee relationship where the Advisor needs to have a tough conversation in order to effectively do the work they've been tasked to do. The closer you are, the harder the hard conversations become and the greater the risk of ineffective or even harmful guidance that, inevitably, leads to the demise of the relationship.

Whenever possible in a professional setting, establish clear boundaries, be explicit, and even write them out and have all parties agree to abide by them. Expectation setting is critical and gives you both the authority and permission to identify and address boundary crossings if and when they happen.

### Show Me the Money

Viewed as trusted guides and catalysts who accelerate outcomes and add value, often in measurable ways, capable Advisors tend to be highly sought after. Everyone wants them by their side or in their organizations. That does not, however, always translate into high-level compensation.

In domains like business, competitive sport, and entertainment, the monetary rewards can be extraordinary, whether in a leadership role in an organization, consulting, coaching, or serving as an outside advisor. The same mix of

insight and advisory ability is equally necessary everywhere from the nonprofit world to middle schools, to clergy, social work, or other domains where the rewards tend toward some blend of "livable" wage, along with the satisfaction of knowing you're doing the thing you're here to do and making a difference in the lives of people you truly care about.

## Spark Your Work: Putting Your Sparketype to Work

What does the Sparketype actually look like in the real world? How do you Spark your current work to make it feel a lot better? How do you find something different that is more likely to make you come alive?

Let's explore briefly the three Activation Keys. One is about getting expressive, one is about getting imaginative, and one is about getting expansive. Together, they're the Activation Trifecta.

**Express**. This involves creating a living inventory of the specific ways you've expressed your Sparketype in the past. This will give you strong hints at what you might want to look for, do more of, and shy away from in the future. For example, if you think about the categories of paid work, leisure/fun/craft, roles you've played, and classes or courses of study, you can ask this question:

"What three experiences/roles/jobs, under each category, made me feel most alive, most myself, like I was at my best most often, where I felt a genuine sense of purpose, like it mattered and I mattered, where I lost time because I was so engaged, when I felt most energized and excited, fully expressed, like I was accessing my true potential?"

**Reimagine**. Turns out, once you discover your Sparketype, then understand how to express it in work and life, it's not unusual to realize you're not doing many of the things that make you come alive. But do not make big, likely painful, changes out of the gate. Do not blow up your career, business, or life in the name of getting all the "emptying" stuff out of your life and chasing all the "good, Sparky stuff."

Consider a different first step. Instead of blowing up what lies outside, break open what lies within you. Before burning down your so-called malignant work experiences, first hit pause and take the time to look inside.

**Expand**. Your final exploration focuses on how you define work. It's about the possibility of expanding your understanding of what actually counts as work, bigger picture, in the name of broadening your options for becoming Sparked through a vastly larger set of life experiences. This can be especially helpful when the thing you call your "job," even reimagined, redefined, and optimized, doesn't quite get you there.

This can be a great time to explore expanding your definition of work beyond simply what you get paid to do, and looking at a blend of paid full-time or part-time and nonpaid experiences that, together, may well hold the potential to let you come alive.

Whether you do it as your living, on the side, or as an ingredient in some blend, your Sparketype is not just about coming alive; it's about coming home.

This is bigger than us. It's time for a reclamation of work as a source of meaning, energy, purpose, joy, and potential. Together we can spark the world! One lit-up human at a time.



Jonathan Fields is a dad, husband, award-winning author, executive producer, and host of one of the top-ranked podcasts in the world, Good Life Project®, which has been featured everywhere from the *Wall Street Journal* to *Oprah Magazine* and even Apple's iconic annual product event. He is also the founder of a number of wellness companies. His current focus is on being founder and CEO of Spark Endeavors and lead architect behind the Sparketypes®.

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# Speak Easy

Lou Diamond

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# Speak Easy

## Connect with Every Conversation




*by* **Lou Diamond**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Sometimes, that promising lead turns out to be a bust. The sales pitch fails to land the client. But what if you knew the steps to "set up" each conversation to increase the likelihood that you connect, engage and win? Lou Diamond, a storyteller, podcaster, and professional speaker, wrote his book, ***Speak Easy: Connect With Every Conversation***, to address the questions above and more. He has analyzed, edited, and broken-down thousands of interviews and great conversations.

Through him, you now have exclusive access to proven strategies, tactics, and lessons to make more of your conversations lead to great connections.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Some of the best-kept secrets of some of the world's elite interviewers and conversationalists.
- The mindset you should strive to be in before, during and after you have a conversation.
- How to prepare, maximize, and continue a great conversation.
- How to utilize a conversation to connect with prospects, engage with partners, clients, and colleagues.
- How to win the sales, deals, and relationships you need to get your business to thrive

## Introduction

In Speak Easy, you will learn the skills and develop the tools you need to increase the likelihood that more of your conversations lead to great connections. Speak Easy will address the mindset you should strive to be in before, during, and after you have a conversation, as well as how to prepare, maximize and continue a great conversation. Speak Easy will show you how to utilize a conversation to connect with prospects, engage with partners, clients and colleagues, and win in business and in life.

At the end of each chapter is a section titled "Connect, Engage & Win," in which you will find tips, techniques, and best practices utilized by some of the world's greatest communicators and leaders. The suggestions in these sections are specifically geared toward connecting with business prospects and targets. You will receive tips for engaging your audience to win the sales, deals, and relationships you need to get your business to thrive. Think of Speak Easy as your playbook to tap into the unlimited potential that lies in every conversation.

## Conversations Matter

Too often, sales professionals, team leaders, and CEOs approach their sales and client meetings as business presentations.

By approaching a meeting with the mindset that you need to present who you are and tell them what you do, you're more focused on delivering a performance than establishing a connection and engaging with them. Rather than approaching a business meeting as a dog and pony show, try to engage in a conversation. Asking questions, viewing reactions, and listening to what your prospects have to say will create a more stimulating environment for your meeting. It also will create a more engaging, vibrant environment that is way more enjoyable than having to watch the uninviting and uneventful "PowerPoint march of death."

Remember that we all love and need more conversations in our lives. Ditch the slides and the scripts. Take the initiative and have a conversation in all your business meetings.

## What Makes A Conversation Engaging?

As you think about an engaging conversation, whether personal or for business, review your approach ahead of time to see if the Seven Cs resonate with the audience you are about to connect to.

Are you going to speak about familiar content within a relatable context? Even though you are familiar with what you're going to talk about, are you going to communicate your thoughts and message in a clear, easy-to-understand manner? Will you share content through an authentic lens that demonstrates the creativity within you that is unique to your specific circumstances? Can you speak with a continuous flow and a familiar cadence that will keep your audience engaged? Will you find a way to connect your thoughts and ideas, which in turn will establish a connection with whom you are speaking?

The more of the Seven Cs you're able to incorporate as you converse, the more likely you'll achieve an engaging conversation.

## Sound Check

Utilize prep time by running through a thorough sound check. Before group presentations, have a member of your team role-play a prospect or client. That individual should ask the really tough questions, and the team should work on the most common Mock Tales that are applicable to the situation.

Examples of these might be why your company was founded, what problem your product solves, what your team specializes in, and what you can expect if you choose to hire us. In addition, this is the opportunity to work on engaging in a conversation versus sticking to the presentation deck.

After the sound check, talk amongst the team and discuss if the session felt more like a presentation or an organic conversation. The more your responses come across as natural, the more prepared you are to engage in a business conversation.

## Show Prep

Let's demonstrate how you can connect your V.O.I.C.E. by walking through a popular business activity: an initial sales meeting.

V. Visualize how you will go about connecting with your target or prospect. This might entail asking questions to learn about the individual, what they do, what their needs are, and where they need help. In turn, you might be asked exactly the same questions. You then could visualize sharing some of the ways you could potentially help this target. You could also envision that this will be the first of many subsequent conversations.

O. Be appreciative that you'll get an opportunity to learn about this individual's role within their business. Another great thing that will happen is that you will get a chance to better understand this person themself. Regardless of making a sale, this opportunity to connect is what you should be most interested in.

I. In most initial sales meetings, the role of "question asker" is the identity you'll take on. You are trying to gather as much information within this conversation as is needed to be helpful to your target

C. "You do you." Don't be afraid to show charisma by adding in some of your personality, humor, interests, and the things that make you unique. Be prepared to be open when sharing, including in your physical stance.

E. People love to connect to others with high energy. Gauge the individual you're with and try to raise the energy level a little above where they are at. Try to rev your engine when asking your questions and learning about your target prospect. It's sometimes tempting to show more excitement when you are talking about your own work or your offering. Keep in mind that in trying not to overpower the prospect, you might come across as not excited about them. Balance your energy and embrace this opportunity to learn about another person. That is where your connection will be strongest and where the conversation will appear to flow the smoothest.

## Set The Stage

Be excited and enthusiastic about the opportunity to have a conversation. Make everyone involved in the conversation feel comfortable and at ease. Provide a clear path toward what you plan to talk about. Give a heads-up as to how you'd like to conclude the conversation.

If you are providing a literal agenda, make it concise. Use one-word descriptors representing the topics that need to be covered (sales, marketing, operations, and so on). Next to each agenda item, list the names of the individuals that will address that specific topic within the meeting. The simpler the agenda is, the more likely the meeting will head down a path toward being a connecting conversation.

## Show Up

The major message for top sales professionals around the globe when it comes to showing up is to aim to be the "host" versus being the "guest" in prospective business conversations. Every talk show host or podcast interviewer is tasked with asking great questions that the guest answers, which creates an engaging conversation. Your goal should be to do the same—ask great questions as if you were the host—in a business meeting, conversation, or presentation.

While both parties in a business conversation are learning about one another in an initial meeting, the one asking the questions is the one driving the conversation. The more questions you ask, the more you can cater your answers to your target.

When you show up in a business conversation, you need to authentically demonstrate that you are appreciative of the time you've been given to converse. When you show up, you need to demonstrate that the way you are in this conversation is how you always will aim to be.

## Fun Street

The Thrive LOUD podcast has a dedicated segment toward the end of each episode that's called "Fun Street." Within this segment, the guest is presented with a set of rapid-fire questions where the answers are all about things that make them feel good about themselves and things they love and truly enjoy. You can use these suggestions as icebreakers to start conversations or as a way to close meetings on a high note.

"Share something fun." Whether in introductory meetings, weekly team huddles, or board meetings, kick-start your conversation by having at least one person share something fun they have planned. Whatever it is, hearing what others like to do establishes a happy, upbeat tone.

"What are your favorite things to eat?" A large sales team of a Fortune 500 company concludes every weekly sales call with one person sharing a recipe for something they love to prepare. This feature became so popular that the company created a special blog section on its corporate website with a new recipe each week.

"Tell us about an activity you wish you did more of." Too often, work gets in the way of our getting to do the things we really love. Asking and sharing what activities you love to do helps you to connect. It's fun to learn what people like and even more fun when there's an overlap of interests.

"Talk about an activity you wish you did less of." On the flip side, learning what people don't like doing can also be enjoyable because you can commiserate with each other.

Find some shared joy when you learn someone else dislikes doing what you dislike. That's called making "unfun" fun.

"If you could go anywhere in the world . . ." While we may not all love to travel, we all have a favorite place. Learning where that spot on this planet is for each of us is always intriguing. In addition, you'll be amazed at how many people have been to some of your favorite places. It is always fun to share common experiences.

## Last Call

There is nothing more gratifying in the sales process than to see a conversation within a meeting begin to establish a genuine connection. However, many times the conversations within the meeting can run longer than the allocated time, and the meeting must come to an abrupt halt with no clear next steps or action items. To be clear, in a business setting, the meeting cannot end until you've had "last call."

To make certain everyone's needs are served within a meeting, every meeting should have a designated timekeeper. This individual's primary job is not only to make sure the meeting stays on track but also to allocate time for your last call with a few minutes to spare to summarize key action items and immediate next steps.

The importance of summarizing the meeting and what needs to happen next cannot be overstated. A well-defined last call session with clear "calls to action" can transform an initial conversation into an ongoing business relationship. In prospective sales conversations, ideally, these next steps could entail flushing out the specifics for a proposal to share how you can work together and help one another.

## Outro (Conclusion)

We live in very busy times, and we have a lot of things to do every day. Time is one of the most valued resources we have. We don't ever really want to waste it. Understanding the importance of brevity in this fast-paced world is about appreciating the time we have with others. Recognize that it is truly a privilege to make the time to sit down and have a great conversation with another busy human being. Make the most of the time you have and be respectful of it by optimizing and being "straight and to the point" within your conversations.

The connection made through a great conversation is a "win" for everyone involved in the conversation and everyone connected as well. Because when we move onward and upward, we thrive.



**Lou Diamond** is a highly sough-after speaker, sales and marketing consultant, leadership and performance mentor and podcaster. Author of Master the Art of Connecting and CEO of Thrive, Lou has made it his life's work to help businesses, leaders and brands thrive through the power of connecting. His innovative connecting tactics have helped hundreds of companies across the globe explode their sales, retain their clients and build a thriving culture.

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# Stronger

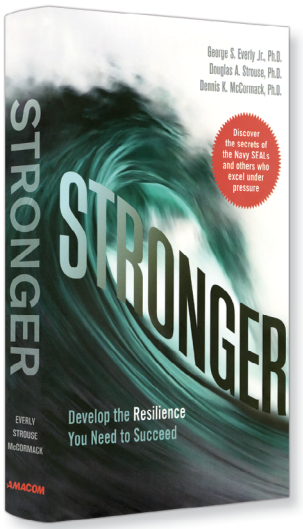
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# Stronger

## Develop the Resilience You Need to Succeed




by George S. Everly, Jr., Ph.D., Douglas A. Strouse, Ph.D. and Dennis K. McCormack, Ph.D.

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Professional athletes, surgeons, first responders — all perform remarkable feats in the face of intense stress. Why do they thrive under pressure, while others succumb? What separates the two is attitude. Resilient people meet adversity head-on and bounce back from setbacks. They seem to naturally exude an inner strength — but studies show that resilience is something that anyone can build.

Analyzing the heroic exploits of U.S. Navy Seals and others who succeed against all odds, *Stronger* identifies five factors that combine to unlock deep reserves of personal power: active optimism — believe that you can change things for the better; decisive action — you can't succeed if you don't take the leap; moral compass — face any challenge with clear guiding principles; relentless tenacity — try, try again; interpersonal support — gain strength from those around you.

Drawing on the unique perspective of a standout team of authors (a stress-management expert, a skilled entrepreneur and a Navy SEAL), *Stronger* explores the science behind resilience and explains how you can develop this vital trait for yourself. Whatever your profession, today's demanding world calls for a special kind of strength. *Stronger* holds the key.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The five sequential factors of personal resilience.
- The difference between active and passive optimism.
- The elements of a strong moral compass.
- How to be tenacious and gain support for your efforts.
- Frameworks and prescriptions for practicing the factors of personal resilience.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: STRONGER

**by George S. Everly, Jr., Ph.D., Douglas A. Strouse, Ph.D. and Dennis K. McCormack, Ph.D.**

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## Active Optimism and the Self-Fulfilling Prophesy

Everyone has faced adversity, and each has failed at least once in life. The issue is neither adversity nor failure per se but what happens in the wake of adversity when you find yourself in the dark abyss of despair. Successful people fail. Happy people fail. The key doesn't lie in the nature of the adversity. What really matters is the degree of personal resilience you possess in the wake of the adversity.

Personal resilience is your ability to bounce back, to pick yourself up and try again, and again and again, until you either succeed or decide on a more productive direction. Resilience is your ability to see yourself in the dark abyss of failure, humiliation or depression — and bounce back, not only to where you were before but to even greater heights of success, happiness and inner strength. Resilience helps you withstand adversity. Think of it as a form of immunity that helps you make good decisions under pressure, motivates you for the achievement of peak performance and allows you to bounce back quickly and effectively.

### Five Factors of Personal Resilience

Successful people share a set of five core factors that equip them with personal resilience. Just as a suit of physical body armor protects the wearer from physical injury, a suit of psychological body armor can protect you against psychological distress and emotional injury. In psychologically toxic environments, they enable us to grow stronger.

The five factors of personal resilience are

1. **Active Optimism.** Optimism is more than a belief; it's a mandate for change. It's the inclination to move forward when others are retreating. This mandate can be so strong that it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. But to do so it must lead to . . .
2. **Decisive Action.** Optimism is not enough. You must be decisive and act in order to rebound. You must acquire the courage to make difficult decisions. Making hard decisions is easier when it is based upon a . . .
3. **Moral Compass.** Use honor, integrity, fidelity and ethical behavior to guide your decisions under challenging circumstances. Once your decisions have been implemented, employ . . .
4. **Relentless Tenacity, Determination.** Persistence can be omnipotent. Be persistent, while at the same time knowing when to quit. To find hidden opportunities and aid in physical and psychological energy, rely upon . . .
5. **Interpersonal Support.** Who has your back?

### Active Optimism

Optimism is the tendency to take the most positive or hopeful view of matters. It's the tendency to expect the best outcome, the belief that good will prevail over evil. But the value of optimism is much greater than just the good mood that can accompany a rosy outlook. The optimist always has the capacity to look forward to another day. Not surprising then that optimistic people are more likely to persevere. They are not only more resilient than pessimists but better able to tolerate adversity, more task oriented and committed to success.

Passive optimists *hope* things will turn out well and *believe* that they will. But those who merely hope and

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believe are surrendering control of their circumstances to someone or something else. Active optimists, on the other hand, *act* in a way that increases the likelihood that things will indeed turn out well.

Navy SEALs seem to share the characteristic of a strong positive mental attitude — an expectation of personal success. For SEALs, the difference between success and failure is often the difference between life and death. From the SEAL perspective, success doesn't just happen by chance; it happens because you make it happen. The optimistic expectation of success occurs because of relentless preparation, understanding only too well the meaning of sacrifice, coupled with dogged determination. The SEALs' success begins with active optimism — a positive attitude and a mandate to change the world.

Of course, not all active optimists think in such emphatic terms; but all active optimists do believe they can make a difference.

### The Self-Fulfilling Prophesy

The most powerful source of active optimism appears to be the experience of success itself. Success begets success. The more successes you have, the better you'll understand what it takes to be successful — which will generate more successes — and the more you will tend to expect success. This also sets the stage for the emergence of self-fulfilling prophecy, which promotes active optimism even further.

Victory always starts with a state of mind. It then spreads with such radiance that destiny can do nothing but obey. The self-fulfilling prophecy can be a tremendous competitive advantage. It is the embodiment of the notion that any prediction about a human behavior actually affects the behavior itself. Your state of mind really matters!

If you think you will succeed at something, you are likely to attempt the task with greater effort, enthusiasm and tenacity. You are less willing to accept initial rejection or failure. You are more likely to see those occurrences as exceptions to the rule and simply precursors of your inevitable success. You are more likely to be physically healthier. And your positive beliefs affect your performance.

### Prescriptions for Building Active Optimism

Here are some specific methods, or prescriptions, for achieving active optimism.

**1. Harness the Power of Optimism and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.** Your optimism increases with each success you have. You must program yourself to be successful. The mistake that most people make is to choose a challenge that is initially too difficult to manage. There are four ways you can leverage the success-building model in this first prescription:

- Break down large tasks into smaller and more manageable parts.
- When a task is too big for you to manage, ask for assistance.
- Rehearse your responses.
- Visualize success.

**2. Build Active Optimism Vicariously.** The best way to build active optimism is by first having success and then applying a self-fulfilling prophecy based on that success. But there's another road to achieving active optimism in the absence of your own success: Watch others be successful at what you want to achieve. The key is that you must perceive those you observe as either being somehow similar to you or possessing a key to success that you are realistically capable of acquiring.

**3. Build Active Optimism Through the Encouragement and Support of Others.** Evidence suggests that interpersonal connectedness and support are powerful determinants of resilience. In the military, unit cohesion is critical. In the social and business worlds, sometimes it really is whom you know that counts, and the strength of the bonds of affinity.

**4. Build Active Optimism Through Self-Control.** The ability to control oneself becomes a powerful determinant of subsequent behavior. When you can control your actions, thoughts and even bodily reactions, it conveys self-confidence and active optimism. Your ability to delay impulsive actions will prevent overreacting. Learning how to control both self-defeating thoughts and overarousal can be powerful sources of active optimism.

## The Courage to Be Decisive and Take Personal Responsibility

Having the courage to be decisive in the context of resilience really means the ability to effectively narrow a myriad of options and make the difficult decision to take action in the wake of adversity or in the face of extraordinary challenges.

For many, taking decisive action and then accepting personal responsibility for decisions are self-evident virtues. What might not be self-evident is why. Decisive action appears to be capable of (1) mitigating adversity, (2) helping you rebound from adversity and (3) promoting growth in the wake of adversity.

**Decisiveness Mitigates Adversity.** Think about your own life. Have you ever wasted valuable time, money or energy because you were unsure what to do? Have you ever waited so long trying to make a decision that the opportunity itself was lost? So how does decisiveness help you? Those who are first to act most often reap the rewards that life has to offer. The saying "The early bird catches the worm" refers not only to early risers but also to those who are first to act. Opportunities in life seem to benefit those who act upon them more than those who merely recognize them.

In business, being decisive often leads to creating trends rather than following them. A visionary trendsetter, Steve Jobs was once referred to as the "Father of the Digital Revolution." Jobs, who co-founded Apple Computer Inc. with Steve Wozniak in 1976, shaped the fields of computing, personal-communications devices, music and modern movie-making. But his greatest strength was his ability to make a decision and follow it through to fruition.

His ability to understand future markets, think beyond current limitations, create nontraditional business models, assemble a team of technical experts and guide (some would say push) the company to creative excellence is what really made Apple (and almost everything else that Jobs touched) successful, according to Jobs' biographer Walter Isaacson.

At a Macworld conference, Jobs once said, "There's an old Wayne Gretzky quote that I love: 'I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been.' And we've always tried to do that at Apple. Since the very, very beginning. And we always will."

**Decisiveness Helps You Rebound from Adversity.** Depression and feelings of hopelessness often follow in the wake of hardship. Psychologists have long known that if these feelings are allowed to persist, they can become paralyzing forces that dramatically reduce the likelihood of resilience.

Conversely, acting quickly and decisively has been shown to be of benefit in reducing stress and empowering people to rebound from adversity. The most powerful way of helping yourself in the wake of adversity appears to be resisting the pressures of psychological avoidance and paralysis by doing something to help yourself or others. Take action. Gain strength by identifying and actively pursuing a goal. Taking that first step is empowering and tends to result in other successes. To borrow from the principles of physics, an object in motion tends to remain in motion, and an object at rest tends to remain at rest.

**Decisiveness Promotes Growth in the Wake of Adversity.** In the process of bouncing back from adversity, you can not only completely recover, but you can become stronger and happier than you were before the adversity ever occurred. Steve Jobs' success didn't come easily, despite the great immunity to pressure he demonstrated early in his career. In 1985, Jobs was forced to resign from the company he and Wozniak had founded.

In a Stanford University commencement address in 2005, Jobs recalled that getting "fired" was one of the best things that ever happened to him. "The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything," he said. "It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life." Jobs went on to say he was "pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful-tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it." After leaving Apple, Jobs went on to pioneer in arenas previously untouched by Apple, including digital movies.

## Taking Personal Responsibility for Your Actions Empowers You

At this point you can see there is a resiliency advantage that accrues from decisive action. The next step is to take responsibility for your actions.

Taking personal responsibility requires courage, perhaps more courage than being decisive. After all, most of us believe that mistakes are who we are rather than what we did. We're quick to seek other people or things to blame should the outcome of a decision not be as desirable as hoped. In doing so, we abdicate responsibility for failure and forfeit the potential benefit to be gained from rebirth. Only by taking responsibility for our actions can we then learn to take credit for our successes.

Taking responsibility for your actions aids in gaining empowerment. Your resiliency advantage accrues not only from the fruits of opportunities pursued and the empowerment of success in the wake of adversity, but from the fact that many people will view your decisiveness before, during or after adversity as evidence of courage, strength and desirability that extends to your entire persona.

Taking responsibility for your actions will be interpreted as evidence of honesty and trustworthiness. Consequently, you'll often be given opportunities that others will be denied. And since your failures will be seen as uncharacteristic exceptions to the rule, you'll likely be given greater leniency in the wake of failure and more chances to succeed.

## The Moral Compass: Honesty, Integrity, Fidelity and Ethical Behavior

To resiliently bounce back when life has knocked you down, you must be decisive and act. Nevertheless, decisive action is often very difficult in the wake of adversity. Your ascent from the darkness of the abyss is made easier when you use the guiding light of the moral compass.

When you find yourself in the darkness of the abyss of despair, when the temptation is to bend the rules, use deception, take advantage of others and even cheat, the compass will help you choose the right direction, make decisions you will not have to apologize for later and ultimately find your way from the darkness of the abyss to the light of success. The term *moral compass* may be thought to denote any tool that serves to guide or direct your system of virtues.

The moral compass for resilience consists of four points — honesty, integrity, fidelity and ethical behavior — which collectively can help you navigate in the direction of virtue no matter how turbulent your journey in life may be. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, we believe there are important differences and that one builds upon the other.

Honesty, integrity, fidelity and ethical behavior tend to remove the risk from business and personal relationships. They offer interpersonal predictability; predictability engenders safety; and safety fosters trustworthiness. When you deal in business or personal relationships, others will never have to worry who "has their back" because their back will never be in danger. An amazing thing happens when you are perceived as trustworthy: You will be given greater responsibility that will lead to more opportunities.

### Honesty

Honesty may be thought of as being truthful. Honesty may be thought of as being genuine. It is the absence of deception, fraud or deliberate misrepresentation.

Dishonesty, on the other hand, is the presence of disingenuousness. If your intention is to deceive so as to harm another or to achieve personal gain or advantage, then that is dishonesty. Cheating (taking unfair advantage) is dishonest. Any advantage that is gained through dishonesty seems brittle and short-lived. Dishonesty is often born of urgency, impulsivity and greed. For most people, dishonesty seems most associated with situational stress and a lack of personal resiliency. For this reason, so-called honesty tests are generally poor predictors of dishonesty.

### Integrity

While integrity is sometimes defined as honesty, it is actually a virtuous reliability and consistency that is built on a foundation of honesty. Integrity may be thought of as reliable incorruptibility and uncompromising sincerity.

Warren Buffet is one of the world's richest men, having built, from relatively meager beginnings, an international investment empire. He is, for many, a paragon of business success. On the issue of integrity, he offers a personal imperative as well as an organizational admonition: "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." From the organizational perspective, he notes, "In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you."

### Fidelity

The third point on the moral compass is fidelity, which means faithfulness and dedication. The Latin phrase *semper fidelis* — adopted by the U.S. Marine Corps as its motto in 1883 — means always faithful. The concept of fidelity as a core attribute dates back at least 200 years earlier in England, where it was a motto for aristocratic families and even entire cities. Fidelity is a precious commodity.

### Ethical Behavior

The most complicated aspect of the moral compass is ethical behavior. Ethics often refers to a code of conduct that is pro-social. Simply said, ethical behavior supports and enhances a society and serves the greater good. Ethics is often linked to morality. Ethical behavior may be thought of as acting harmoniously within prescribed values of fairness as well as simply doing what is "right" and "just." Ethical behavior, acting pro-socially, may be the most complex but important element; it serves as an action-oriented collective term for the other three points on the compass. Honesty, integrity and fidelity must culminate in ethical behavior if they are to serve as psychological body armor.

Why is the moral compass an important aspect of psychological body armor? When you see honesty, integrity, fidelity and ethical behavior in others, it creates a compelling atmosphere. They serve to create a role model for others. They immediately create a sense of predictability. Predictability creates a sense of safety. Safety inspires trust. For leaders of groups, organizations, societies and even

nations, trust creates compliance. Conversely, deception, duplicity and dishonesty erode trust. They erode organizational, social and even national effectiveness. People will be inclined to act to protect themselves and defend their actions, rather than thinking outside the norm and taking risks that could rapidly and significantly advance the group toward its goal.

## Relentless Tenacity: Try, Try Again

What is tenacity? Think of it as perseverance, as steady persistence in a purposeful course of action, especially in spite of difficulties, adversity or discouragement.

Despite temptations to the contrary, the course you choose to rebound from adversity should be one that is plotted using a moral compass. It makes addressing difficult decisions easier. Once the decision to act has been made, armed with an optimist vision and a moral compass to guide you, you must be persistent.

### The Best Plan for Successful Resilience: Tenacious Defiance

Failure is simply not an option, resilient people will say. So when we speak of tenacious defiance of failure, no name in world history resonates more than Winston Churchill, prime minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955.

On September 1, 1939, the army of Nazi Germany invaded Poland, initiating World War II. Great Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Following the resignation of Neville Chamberlain on May 10, 1940, Churchill became prime minister. At that time, the war was not going well. According to Jon Meacham's 2003 best-seller, *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship*, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt was concerned about the resolve of the British as they faced an impending German invasion. Churchill was aware of his concern and in spring 1940 sent Roosevelt a telegram in which he stated, "Our intention is, whatever happens, to fight on to the end in this Island . . . but in no conceivable circumstances will we consent to surrender."

Shortly thereafter, the British future dramatically darkened. More than 300,000 troops were evacuated from Dunkirk, France, to avoid annihilation at the hands of advancing German forces.

By October 29, 1941, the military forces of Nazi Germany had control of Europe but not Great Britain. Churchill visited his alma mater, the Harrow School, to give an address. In one of his most memorable speeches, he underscored the theme of tenacious defiance once again. "Never give in," he said. "Never give in. Never, never, never, never — in nothing, great or small, large or petty — never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

Indeed, because of Great Britain's stubborn resistance in the face of unrelenting bombing campaigns, the German commanders soon abandoned the planned invasion of Great Britain. At that point, the tide of war changed.

When some people are told they cannot succeed, they give up. When others are told they cannot succeed, they become tenaciously defiant.

When is tenacity no longer useful? The answer appears to be, when the tenacious effort toward any goal becomes more of a liability than an asset, when resources dedicated in one direction are better reallocated in another.

When does tenacity become self-defeating? The answer is, when continued tenacious effort creates more problems than can be resolved once a successful outcome is achieved.

### Prescriptions for Building Personal Tenacity

**Choose a Goal and Practice Tenacity.** Tenacity becomes self-sustaining when perseverant actions are rewarded. Success in the wake of tenacity is rewarding. It says all of the tenacious hard work can pay off. Choose a goal for which the best predictor of success is simply tenacious adherence to a plan of action. Mobilize the one thing over which you have complete control: how hard you will work to achieve your desired goal. Then go for it.

**Observe Tenacious Role Models.** Tenacity is increased when we see or read about others who overcame great barriers to be successful using tenacious defiance. Find tenacious role models. Study history; it's full of examples of tenacious defiance of failure.

**Find People to Support Your Tenacity.** Churchill needed the support of the United States if Britain was going to survive the war with Nazi Germany. In his book *Franklin and Winston*, Jon Meacham quotes Churchill's son Randolph's recollection of a conversation with his father in which Randolph asked how Britain could possibly defeat Germany. The elder Churchill replied, "I shall drag the United States in."

## Gain Strength From the Support of Others

Interpersonal cohesion refers to the tendency of the members of a group to identify with other members,

share values and provide support in times of distress. Interpersonal support is believed to be the single best predictor of human resilience. It really is whom you know that counts when you are making your comeback from, or even avoiding a descent into, the abyss, psychologically or physically.

### Why Do People Help Other People?

If you are to generate a network of social support, it will be useful to understand why people might be willing to provide assistance. This will help you construct your interpersonal support system. Mathematical biologist Martin Nowak has identified five foundations of interpersonal reciprocity. According to Nowak, people will provide you assistance for one or more of these reasons:

- **Direct Reciprocity.** It's the principle of quid pro quo. I will help you now if you will help me at some later date.
- **Spatial Selection.** I will be more likely to help you if I know you via some mechanism of proximity. For example, we are neighbors, co-workers, attend the same gym or participate in the same recreational activities.
- **Genetic Selection.** I am likely to help you if we are related.
- **Indirect Reciprocity** (the most powerful). I am likely to help you if you are seen as a desirable person to me, for example, you have a positive reputation, celebrity or outstanding achievement.
- **Group Selection.** I am likely to help you if I'm altruistically inclined or if I believe that helping you will be acting on behalf of the "greater good."

### Prescriptions for Building Interpersonal Support

Here are some suggestions on how to build supportive relationships.

**Homophily × Proximity.** Begin to seek out and develop sources of social and professional support. The formula for doing so is quite simple: homophily × proximity. First identify individuals whom you believe are likely to share attitudes and values of compassion and mutual support (homophily). Then frequent places where you are likely to encounter such people. Go there on a regular basis (proximity). Proximity is the best predictor of relationship formation.

**Show Appreciation.** If you want to be appreciated, show appreciation. As philosopher and psychologist William James said, "The deepest craving of human nature is the desire to be appreciated." Here are some guidelines for how to best show appreciation:

- Regarding children, provide safety and compassionate guidance.
- To the elderly, show respect and gratitude.
- Regarding your employer, earn your income.
- To those who rely on you, provide presence and unwavering support.
- To a friend, show loyalty.
- To your spouse, show honor and fidelity.

**Be Patient.** Control impulsive urges. Be patient with yourself and others.

**Hanlon's Razor.** Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity. In other words, don't take things personally. People really are inconsiderate at times, and it has nothing to do with you.

**Listen to Others, Especially Before You Speak.** People who possess extraordinary interpersonal skills are good listeners. In even the briefest of encounters, they can make you feel important. When you listen to people, truly listen. Look at the other person with interest. Do not multitask. Any time you have to say, "Go ahead, I'm listening," you're really not.

**Practice the WAIT Principle.** WAIT is an acronym for Why Am I Talking? Pause before you speak. Most important, ask yourself two questions: (1) Where are my words likely to direct the conversation? and (2) How would I feel if someone said that to me?

**The Power of the Paraphrase.** When someone has finished making a point, use that person's name, and then paraphrase in your words the essence of what you understood that person to say. Then ask a follow-up question.

## Lessons Learned About Human Resilience

What are the most significant lessons learned about human resilience as taught through history, personal reflection, scientific inquiry and case-study empiricism? The answer is to learn to be resilient in the wake of adversity, rejection, unfairness and failure. Develop your own variation of psychological body armor derived from the five factors of human resilience discussed. But as you consider how these five factors are applicable to your own life, here are a few things to keep in mind.

**Simplicity Matters.** The science of human resilience can be paralyzingly granular and abstruse. The quest is not intended to be definitive but to offer a user-friendly, heuristic and prescriptive formula.

**The Five Factors Are Sequential.** Ideally, the five factors of personal resilience are a sequential prescription.

**Resilience Can Be Learned at Any Age.** Of course, some things are best learned at a young age. This is because of the enhanced neural plasticity, or malleability, of the young brain. Ironically, according to new research, extreme adversity, stress and traumatic events can cause the release of a cascade of neurological and neuroendocrine events that mimic, if not temporarily replicate, the neural plasticity of youth and, in doing so, actually facilitate learning. A key phenomenological characteristic of many life-changing events is the fact that the memories of those events are easily recalled, often in vivid detail. They reside for a lifetime just beneath consciousness, ready to surface at a moment's notice.

**Self-Efficacy Is a Useful Framework by Which to Learn Each of the Five Factors of Human Resilience.** Albert Bandura's brilliant model for acquiring self-efficacy and personal agency (the optimistic belief that you can be an effective agent of change) is a useful tool for learning each of the five factors of human resilience. Bandura offers four learning prescriptions for the acquisition and maintenance of self-efficacy that are generically applicable to *each* of the five factors of personal resilience:

- Seek to successfully demonstrate and repeatedly practice each of our five factors of personal resilience.
- Observe resilient people. Use them as role models. Human beings learn largely by observation.
- Vigorously pursue the encouragement and support of others.
- Practice self-control. In highly stressful times, myriad physiological and behavioral reactions occur.

**Study the Past: Resilience in Their Own Words.** Extraordinarily resilient people can teach us a great deal.

- **On Active Optimism:** Abbey-Robin Tillery, Ph.D., psychologist, says, "Finding a way to imagine a better life for oneself is the first step in making it happen; telling people to never give up does not last if people can't even imagine a better life. Believe in yourself. Believe you are destined for something better. There is a strong intuitive sense in us all that screams out against all odds, 'I will make it!'"
- **On Decisiveness:** Ben Carson, MD, Johns Hopkins University neurosurgeon, says, "What happens with your life is up to you. Growing up, when I read books about successful people, I found out that many didn't start out that way. I began to understand it's not the environment. It's you and your attitude ... I ignored the pessimists from the time I was a teenager throughout my entire career. My adviser wanted me to drop out of medical school. When I started performing surgical procedures that others had failed to perform or that had never been tried before, people said, 'You can't do that.' Because of our successes, those procedures are now being done routinely all over the world." When asked to summarize his concept of resilience, Carson said, "When adversity strikes, simply refuse to be a victim."
- **On Using a Moral Compass:** Dutch Ruppersberger, U.S. congressman, says, "Just do the right thing, and everything else will take care of itself. Make your legacy tenacity and integrity. When you get knocked down, get up . . . You want to be respected for who you are and what you've done. In the final analysis, your legacy will be your deeds, not your words."
- **On Tenacity:** Patrick Rummerfield was given 72 hours to live after a terrible car crash. Having beaten those odds, but as a quadriplegic, he was sent to a nursing home to slowly die over the course of four or five years. As living testament to the fact that success begets success, he noticed his big toe move in response to thinking about driving a race car. Against his physician's advice, he entered intensive rehabilitation. Over the course of 17 years, he recovered the use of his arms and legs and has run a marathon. Rummerfield said, "No one can predict the future. Where there is life, there is hope. Where there is hope, there can be tenacity. Where there is tenacity, all things are possible."
- **On Interpersonal Support:** Erika Brannock, survivor of the Boston Marathon bombing, refuses to be a victim. "Yes, I lost my legs, but I am still here. I can still do all that I did before. I just have to get used to doing them a different way. You have to choose to focus on the positive, not the negative." Erika credits her mother, her students and the supportive health professionals who cared for her as the key to her recovery.

Never forget the words of the Brazilian writer and journalist Fernando Sabino: "In the end everything will be OK. If it's not OK, then it is not yet the end."

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Stronger*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Adversity Paradox* by J. Barry Griswell, Bob Jennings.** How can you use the very experiences that would stall or tumble a career to build uncommon success? Griswell and Jennings have the answer.

2. ***Clutch* by Paul Sullivan**. Do you choke under pressure, or are you "clutch"? Learn how to successfully perform under extraordinary pressure.

3. ***Leadership and the Art of Struggle* by Steven Snyder**. Snyder shows how to navigate intense challenges to achieve personal growth and organizational success.

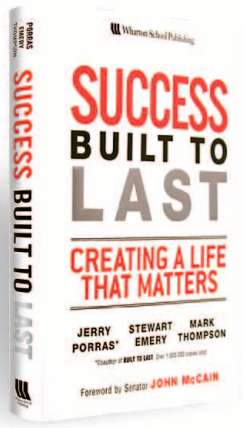
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# Success Built to Last

Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery, and Mark Thompson

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER




By Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson

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### Creating a Life That Matters

# SUCCESS BUILT TO LAST

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Imagine discovering what successful people have in common, distilling it into a set of simple practices and using them to transform your company, your career and your life.*

*Authored by three nationally acclaimed thought leaders in organizational development and self-improvement — including* Built to Last *co-author Jerry Porras —* Success Built to Last *challenges conventional wisdom at every step.*

*It draws on face-to-face, unscripted conversations with hundreds of remarkable people from around the world, including billionaires, CEOs, presidents of nations, Nobel laureates and celebrities. Meet unsung heroes who've achieved lasting impact without obvious power or charisma. Famous or not, almost all started out ordinary.*

*The authors' use of interviews helps set this book apart from others in the field. So does their reliance on original independent survey data rather than third-party sources. The authors' survey shows that whether respondents perceived themselves as successful or not, "The traditional dictionary definition of success no longer describes what success means to them." Their book is an engaging effort to demonstrate both the varied ways of interpreting success and the varied paths that lead to it, unburdened, they write, "by the need to believe or disbelieve."*

*Above all, this book describes how successful people stay successful and how you can too.*

*In addition, this summary will show you:*

- ✓ ***Why leadership is pointless without an understanding of what success means.***
- ✓ ***Why it's so hard to do what matters, and what you can do about it.***
- ✓ ***Why it's dangerous not to do what you love.***
- ✓ ***Why you don't have to be charismatic to be successful.***
- ✓ ***How to overcome adversity and tackle what are known as "Big Hairy Audacious Goals."***
- ✓ ***How to apply positive thinking to mistakes.***

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# SUCCESS BUILT TO LAST

**By Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## From Great to Lasting — Redefining Success

When you feel pressure to pursue the elusive outcomes of traditional success, it's often driven by the burden of making a living, pleasing others or achieving status. Ironically, it appears that success often will fade, vanish or become the dungeon of your soul unless it is not your primary objective.

*Builders* — enduringly successful people — tell us that when success just means wealth, fame and power, it doesn't last and it isn't satisfying. Builders insist that success may never come without a compelling personal commitment to something you care about and would be willing to do without counting on wealth, fame, power or public acceptance as an outcome.

Builders mostly toil with every ounce of their energy and persistence, with heart and soul, for their whole lives. They become lovers of an idea they are passionate about, creating something that continually seduces them into obsessing over every detail and losing track of the passage of time. In a real sense, it's something that they'd be willing to do for free, for its own sake. They do it because it matters to them.

For Builders, the real definition of success is a life and work that brings personal fulfillment and lasting relationships and makes a difference in the world in which we live. ■

## PART ONE: MEANING – HOW SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE STAY SUCCESSFUL

## Love It or Lose

It's dangerous not to do what you love. The harsh truth is that if you don't love what you're doing, you'll lose to someone who does.

### *All You Have Is Personal Capital*

You may have noticed that we now live in a global economy where job security is a contradiction in terms. All you have is your personal capital, and that's not your money. It's your talents, skills, relationships and enthusiasm. Making success last takes a level of tenacity and passion only love can sustain. Making a life is as important as making a living. Builders do both.

"The job of leadership today is not just to make money, it's to make meaning," said John Seely Brown, who presided over research for two decades at Xerox Park. "Talented people are looking for organizations that offer not only money, but … spiritual goals that energize … [and] resonate with the personal values of the people who work there, the kind of mission that offers people a chance to do work that makes a difference."

Be warned: The relentless irritation of not loving what you do makes you a pain to be around and has been clinically proven to chip away at your health. "We spend our health building our wealth," said author and financial adviser Robert T. Kiyosaki, paraphrasing the old proverb. "Then we desperately spend our wealth to hang onto our remaining health."

### *Rational Optimism or Irrational Exuberance*

No one can tell you what risks you should take. Instead, you must choose a path that you love, for better

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**The authors:** Jerry Porras co-authored *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, which has been translated into 25 languages and sold more than 1 million copies. He is also known for a number of lectures he has presented to senior management audiences.

Stewart Emery is considered one of the fathers of the Human Potential Movement and co-founded Actualizations. Emery has led seminars in dozens of countries and has coached more than 12,000 people in the last three decades.

Mark Thompson captured the insightful stories that formed the foundation for *Success Built to Last* from hundreds of personal interviews with enduringly successful people around the world.

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## Love It or Lose

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or for worse, because only then will you have the good-hearted stubbornness to stretch for your full potential and survive the inevitable slings and arrows that await you on your journey.

You've got to love what you're doing or you can be sure there will be someone else who will. Falling in love with all the rational and irrational exuberance that is involved is the only way you have a prayer of creating success that lasts. ■

For additional information about focusing on the opportunity of every experience, go to: http://my.summary.com

# Portfolio of Passions

Although one passion usually dominates Builders' lives and defines their successes in the eyes of the world, it's a mistake to believe there is just one passion that must be pursued at the expense of all others.

Builders may look like race horses sprinting with blinders on, but most live large and complicated lives filled with many different personal and professional passions. The myth that there is only one thing to do with your life is not an idea that many would endorse.

### *It's Not About Balance*

Ironically, at the same time society insists that you do one thing with your life, those same cultural norms pressure you to have a "balanced" life split into neat little slices. The problem here is thinking there's a right answer — the notion that balance can be defined by a time-allocation pie chart representing work, family, community and, if you're lucky, you're included in there somewhere, too.

If you define balance in the sense that it requires equal proportions of life partitioned into four or five politically correct parts, then CEOs and presidents don't have balance, nor do most Nobel laureates. The Dalai Lama doesn't either, nor does Nelson Mandela or Bono. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa did not have balance.

Enduringly successful people, many of whom live a life that's a gift to the world, don't raise balance as a major issue — not because they had it masterfully handled, but because they were all busy doing what mattered to them.

It's a struggle for everyone at some point. If you're feeling a twinge of guilt about balance, there is a probability that you don't want more balance, but need more of something that you can't admit you want. The balance you're seeking is a meaningful portfolio, not a balanced one.

The reason that balance is so painful and elusive is because that's not what you really want. What you hunger for is a place for all of your passions — not balance as culturally defined. ■

## Maya Angelou's Portfolio of Passions

Maya Angelou has become the first best-selling African-American author (*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*), one of the most popular living poets of our time, an Emmy Award-winning actress and producer, a university professor, a mentor to Oprah Winfrey, a civil-rights activist and Martin Luther King Jr.'s protégé and the first African-American woman admitted to the Directors Guild of America. If there is a secret to her success, it was that she found many ways to feed her soul. "You can't simply sit on the sidelines and bemoan one's outcast state; it's not enough," she told Mark Thompson. "This experience, this life, is our one time to be ourselves."

# Integrity to Meaning

Endeavors are not things from which these remarkable people can ever fully retreat or retire. That's why they stay successful for so long. To ask them why they're still "working" is to dismiss their passions as trivial pursuits.

That mistake is often made in interviews; it seems like an innocent question, but only tends to indicate that the interviewer doesn't get it. Their passions create meaning in their lives that is nothing short of a lifelong obsession from which they seek no escape.

People become fascinated by the lifestyles of the rich and famous, perhaps longing for the adulation, glamour and imagined self-satisfaction in those lives. It may be tempting to believe you can find success by studying their stories and assuming that whatever she or he did is a road map you can follow. But that's a dead end. That's not what billionaires or the best CEOs do. That's not what heroes like Mother Teresa or Mahatma Gandhi did. That's not what the world's enduringly successful people do.

If there is one thing they all do consistently — one value they all share in common — it is integrity to what matters to them, and that makes a difference in their lives and work. It is integrity to what they believe will make a difference overall.

Whenever they are faced with a decision, they look to find meaning in that opportunity that is very personal to them. They do not waste their time if it doesn't matter.

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### Integrity to Meaning

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#### *One Value That Builders Have in Common*

Although Builders keep their lives and careers on track by placing high value on personal meaning, individual interpretation and expression of "what matters" vary enormously.

As it turns out, all of the stories of enduringly successful people have some improbable quality to them. What helps successful people stay successful is their stubbornness about sticking with their own journey based on their own values, not a magic path followed precisely by everyone else.

The lesson here is that you can't — or shouldn't — hijack someone else's value system. To do so would be a violation of integrity to what matters in your life. There is no more personal decision than to discover what is meaningful to you. ■

## Overcoming Failure

Jimmy Carter grew up in relative isolation outside Plains, Ga., a community of only 500 people. No one in his family had ever finished high school before and this fellow goes to college to study nuclear physics, jumps in politics and ends up the 39th president of the United States. He would have to reinvent his definition of success, however, after his first term.

"When I left the White House, I was in despair," Carter said. "I think everybody has to be prepared in life for failures or disappointments or frustrated dreams or even embarrassments," he said. "You have to accommodate changing times but cling to unchanging principles. If you do have an extreme change in your life that is unpleasant, what are the principles that don't change, on which you can build a new life, an expanded life, a better life, a more adventurous life?"

## PART TWO: THOUGHTSTYLES – EXTREME MAKEOVERS START IN YOUR HEAD

# The Silent Scream

Happy endings come from listening to that little voice inside your head — some call it a whisper — about what matters to you. It is a voice that echoes through every cell in your body, straining to be heard like a silent scream. It's a nagging, often irritating "need" craving a response.

The tragedy for most people is that there is a gaggle of other voices trying to drown out the whisper. Whether it's the ranting of your own self-doubt or the concerns of loved ones and business partners, there are many forces vested in seeing you not change. These forces would be more comfortable if risky notions — like following your passion — were locked silent in the basement of your soul.

Builders plow ahead despite self-doubt, delusional bosses, desperate spouses and outlaw in-laws who have high control needs. And builders ignore or overcome those incoming hostiles — media messages proclaiming that without consuming the right stuff, you cannot be successful or happy. ■

# You Don't Have to Be Charismatic to Be Successful

Due to hardship, genes or both, many of the Builders that are often interviewed lack the kind of confidence you might expect in a leader. Many can be tentative, even nervous, introverts. But when they talk about what really matters to them, it's like watching shy, mild-mannered Clark Kent step into a phone booth and, a moment later, leaps out a super hero. Despite the way social worker Norma Hotaling feels about herself at any given moment, her cause gives her the charisma she needs to keep her going through hard times, helps her magnetize and motivate a strong support community and unlock barriers such as low self-esteem and limited knowledge.

"It came down to this," Hotaling insisted. "I will do this and make a difference or I'll commit suicide. It's just that simple and just that hard." What could the rest of us accomplish with a fraction of that clarity?

#### *The Cause Has Charisma*

Many Builders will tell you that breaking away from the boundaries set in their own minds — despite the realities of their tortured past — was one of their most difficult, necessary and rewarding achievements.

"You must release yourself from the repression of your mind," noted Roberta Jamieson, who became chief of the Six Nations of the Grand River and CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation in Toronto. "You are no longer a prisoner. You are not that person. You are a part of a long and great history. You are entitled to make decisions. You have gifts to share that belong to your people. It is your responsibility to share your talents with others. Throw off the shackles that keep you down — stop tearing at yourself and others because you don't feel good about yourself."

Your personality is not what determines enduring success. It's what you do with your personality that counts. The personalities of Builders come in all sizes. Some

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## You Don't Have to Be Charismatic to Be Successful

*(continued from page 4)*

are painfully shy and others seem in-your-face and aggressive. The essential difference with Builders is that they've found something to do that matters to them and are so passionately engaged that they rise above the personality baggage that would otherwise hold them down. Whatever they are doing has so much meaning to them that the cause itself provides charisma and they plug into it as if it were an electrical current.

Enduringly successful people — whether they're shrinking violets or swashbuckling entrepreneurs — serve the cause and it also serves them. It recruits them and they are lifted up by its power.

Builders cling to a personal commitment that's so compelling to them — something so important to them that they would actually do it for free — that they must do it despite popularity, not because of it.

### *Trust Your Passion*

Life takes "passion, determination and skill," said Condoleezza Rice, the current U.S. Secretary of State. You can't skip any of those three and expect to enjoy success built to last.

One of the best ways to unleash the charisma that Builders feel for a cause, calling, career or other major objective is to see whether or not they're really willing to immerse themselves in it. Opportunity comes from expertise, not just luck, talent and passion. If you find it impossibly tedious to become an expert about what you think matters to you, then you're not chasing a dream, you're just daydreaming. You can't claim the buried treasure if you aren't willing to dig for it.

That is not to say that it's easy or that you won't suffer frequently. But if you find you can't or won't persist in learning more about it, then it's going to be very tough to hang on when inevitable obstacles get thrown in your way. This isn't earth-shattering news. Being the best at what you do is essential. ■

**For additional information about finding your passion, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# The Tripping Point — Always Make New Mistakes

There is rarely a person who doesn't have a pile of embarrassments or stunning defeats in his or her portfolio. Most highly accomplished people described themselves as so proficient at making mistakes that, if you didn't know better, you might think they were losers. If there were just one thing that every enduringly successful person had in common, it is that they are all really great at failure.

Life is short, but some days are really long. Many Builders face lifelong adversity, phobias or flaws that they never overcome. But builders always find a way to manage and refuse to let their goals and dreams be held ransom by their feelings in that awful moment when everything has gone wrong.

### *When Positive Thinking Doesn't Work*

It's not that enduringly successful people keep a "positive attitude" regardless of the situation. Most Builders have a hard time choosing an attitude when they first hit a setback. It hurts. What makes Builders different has to do with having a *ThoughtStyle* that moves them from negative emotion to constructive action quickly. Builders go to work dealing with a problem directly instead of struggling to put a smile on their face. They don't pretend to be happy when things go wrong and they refuse to completely surrender to the current disappointment. It's not that they feel good; they just harvest what they can from the setback and keep taking action.

"It's natural to feel like hell when things turn out badly," laughed Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning archbishop. "But don't let that stop you. Emotions are a storm that sweeps through your life." The defeat you've had matters less than what you ultimately want to create.

Builders don't try to "fix" that they feel badly; they believe that learning from the experience and getting on with their goal is the fix. They feel the pain but cherish what they're building more than the misery of the moment. They believe their dreams deserve to be created and that they have an essential role in it, no matter how awful they feel today.

Builders always shift their focus back to what they want to ultimately achieve — that thing they are committed to building. Instead of struggling to choose their attitude, they focus on what works, and when they do that, their attitude improves. In a culture that seems bent on perfection, entitlement and instant gratification, it is often forgotten that most overnight successes require decades of failure to achieve their dreams.

### *Persistence and Perfectionism — The Dark Side*

Two of the tripping points that make the adventure particularly difficult for people is what Builders describe as an overly self-critical tendency toward perfectionism and persistence for its own sake. Of course, both attributes are necessary and noble aspirations for which high achievers strive.

It's true that you can't get much of anything done without perseverance. Stories of persistence making the vital difference are legendary and the pursuit of perfection is something to which many high performers aspire.

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### The Tripping Point — Always Make New Mistakes

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While an obsession for perfection is typically listed in leadership and success literature as your worst enemy and persistence as your greatest asset, both can be addiction. People persist at all sorts of bad habits — like believing they must be perfect. The answer is neither perfection nor persistence, but what to persist at.

#### *You've Paid the Tuition, Collect Your Paycheck*

Every Builder said that it is crucial to search setbacks for lessons. At a minimum, the lesson may be not to do the same thing again, or at least do it differently. Perhaps what becomes clear is how committed you are to doing what you're doing, allowing you to see different options that you wouldn't have recognized otherwise.

Builders don't use a weakness or a setback as a reason to distrust themselves. They don't marginalize themselves or the problem. If you fail to dissect the problem to see what is working and what doesn't — if you keep throwing away the experience — you may be doomed to repeat it. Builders put the content to work for them.

The question is not whether they won or lost this round, but what they will do with the feedback. Innovation is failure sped up. ■

## Wounds to Wisdom

Builders don't deny their flaws, nor do they allow them to paralyze action. They might feel embarrassed or overwhelmed by them at times, but they still don't marginalize themselves or the problem. They don't even "overcome" their "disability." They manage it, include it, cope with it and don't let it stop them. In many cases, so called "disabilities" become embraced as the building blocks of greatness.

It's a difficult and nonintuitive step to think of the adversity that you are facing as an opportunity to actually find a way to make the challenge or flaw itself somehow useful. There is a much bigger prize awaiting you. The perceived disadvantage may hold the seeds of your genius.

By embracing their pain, Builders gain something more powerful than just the ability to learn from mistakes or harness the value of persistence. The special knowledge and skill you can gain from painful personal experience seem to transcend even empathy.

Some builders who were once thought to have lost the genetic lottery and suffered learning disabilities have instead found that they won a prize: discovery of a special talent and a novel way to break out of the pack.

#### *Letting Go of What Doesn't Work*

At its highest and best level, perhaps that horrible thing in your life — that failure or disability or source of outrage — is the genius. Gandhi could not have found his voice without pain. CEOs Charles Schwab and Richard Branson could not have built their companies without their dyslexia. By their nature, Builders are obsessed with creating or building something and are on a never-ending quest for something of value they can use. When it comes to their flaws, nothing goes to waste.

One of the things that Builders do discard quickly is blame. When you talk with them, what is clearly missing is the natural human tendency to dwell on blaming other people and things for their problems. Builders may explode, grieve and privately blame everything and everyone, but most appear to drop it quickly. Instead, they look at what they can change and deal with that directly without prolonged whining. Wallowing in blame of yourself or others doesn't actually deal with the problem or allow progress toward the goal.

They don't try to rewrite history or to wipe the slate clean. They don't pretend it didn't happen. They simply decide to dismiss the case and move on. Obsessing on a grudge only fuels the conflict and pain; letting it go allows you to get back to business.

"Dismiss is a very strong word," said Rev. Deborah Johnson. "When something is dismissed, it's over. When it's dismissed, you don't keep going back to it." That's what successful people do. They don't necessarily call it forgiveness. But they do abandon blame. ■

## PART THREE: ACTIONSTYLES – TURNING PASSION INTO ACTION

## Earning Your Luck

The overwhelming majority of Builders claim that their success has been a serendipitous journey and the luck they enjoyed was usually earned, often at great cost. They have done that by focusing on doing work that is meaningful to them and going deep to discover relevant clues along the way. They set big goals and engaged completely in the work at hand.

As a consequence, Builders are better prepared to turn things that may seem bad or useless into opportunities. What may appear to be brilliance, heroism or passive good luck is actually a saga of passion, depth and skill. Because they love what they do, Builders invest the time to acquire detailed knowledge about things that matter.

It is focus and knowledge, more than brains and brawn, that allow them to observe the subtleties of their path and then take advantage of serendipitous events.

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## Earning Your Luck

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Builders describe their path as adventures filled with bad breaks and unplanned good fortune. Only a prepared mind and open heart prevail.

### *Big Hairy Audacious Goals*

Are Builders saying goals and plans are pointless? No, they are often essential. In fact, Builders use planning and goals — often big goals — to put themselves into a serendipitous position. Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs) don't just exist in parallel to your ideology; they are a manifestation of it. They are an extension of who you are and what matters to you.

A BHAG engages people, reaching out and grabbing them in the gut. It is tangible, energizing and highly focused. It takes little or no explanation, and people get it right away. It has a clear finish line, so the organization can know when it has achieved the goal; people like to shoot for finish lines. These BHAGs involve a consistent pattern of making bold risky investments in audacious projects in order to stimulate forward progress while still preserving core values and ideology.

BHAGs give you something tangible to be authentic about. Much has been said about the need for leaders to be authentic, but Builders will tell you to be careful about what that means. Your BHAG must be real, but the world doesn't want to know everything you're thinking. Your behavior has to match your words. And your words should take the form of personal stories rather than clever quotes from heroes you've never met.

For Builders who stay true to what they know and what matters to them, things actually have a knack of turning out better than they imagined. This is one of the more subtle, but critical, powers of BHAGs. They instantly capture your heart and head. They deliver clear direction.

Don't confuse direction with a road map, however. Builders have the former, but not the latter. Take the race to the moon, for example. What is often forgotten is that when the BHAG of "a man on the moon and back before the end of the decade" was conceived, America had no clue how to actually accomplish this.

### *Bold Risks Measured in Small Steps*

Most people don't do well with ambiguity. Builders do. Ambiguity is the enemy of audacity and innovation. It strikes fear in our heart and doubt in our heads. When was the last time you were able to sell an idea to your boss, your partner or your team without an exact battle plan for getting it done? Did they not want a detailed process for getting there and certainty about the outcome?

It's human nature to crave certainty and repudiate ideas that don't have guarantees. And yet, very few things do. Great ideas and great careers don't have perfect plans before launch dates.

### *Responsible Chutzpah*

Builders exercise an odd mixture of accountability and audacity. It's tough to find the right word for this leadership quality. The Yiddish dictionary gets close: We're talking about a responsible form of chutzpah — the nonconformist gutsy audacity to create something despite all odds, for better or for worse.

The difference here is that long-term Builders are accountable — they are people who deliver for themselves and the outside world at the same time. Accountability means "to stand and be counted, as a part, a cause, an agent, or a source of an event or set of circumstances." Audacious accountability means you consider your life from the point of view that how it goes and what happens is up to you.

You may or may not be to blame for what happens to you, but either way, you are responsible for doing something about it. Builders don't claim to feel in total control, but they do have the audacity to embrace the idea that they alone are building this life for a reason, rather than life being something that happens to them while they're making other plans.

Very few Builders give their work an intimidating label like a mission, calling, cause or higher purpose. Such a pedestal can develop as an unnecessary torment. Indeed, Builders describe their objectives as essential — that they must be done and that they deserve to happen.

### *Measuring What Matters and Keeping Score*

Without feedback, you cannot adapt or improve. Measurement provides that feedback. And every time you get more information about how to do better, you are making a deposit in your personal capital account.

Measuring things helps you take account of progress on your long hike toward your goal, but it won't tell you if you're headed in the right direction. It's important to start with the end in mind, but it could be a dead end if you hurry to set a goal without first finding a meaningful passion in life.

The goal-setting process is both powerful and dangerous because it can make you effective at achieving objectives without any assurance that it's the right mountain for you to climb. Goals, by their nature, don't necessarily require focusing on inspiration as much as they do on perspiration and the sheer pragmatic effort of getting things done.

It's important to curb the rational impulse to set goals too soon on your journey. Goals become a barrier to success and satisfaction when they're not really yours.

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## Earning Your Luck

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This is what we call the *Secret Life of Goals* — when the milestones themselves take on a life of their own. Goals can dictate success for its own sake or by someone else's definition, not necessarily success that matters to you and the stakeholders you care about. ■

# Naked Conversations — Harvesting Contention

It might not sound intuitive, but the best thing you can do about contention is throw fuel on the flames. One of the oddly inspiring *ActionStyles* of enduringly successful people is that contention is something they actually seek out. This is gloves-off, brutally frank dialogue. It's what some pundits call naked conversations.

Many entrepreneurs light up when you raise the topic. It's something they look forward to and many claim their team saw contentious meetings as a "perk" for working with them. These naked conversations are not intended to be personally abusive. The focus is on issues, not people. What Builders ignite is actually a sort of controlled burn. The purpose is to encourage contention in a very precise way to draw out the best, most passionate and creative ideas from their team.

### *Struggle With the Issue and Not Each Other*

Builders don't fend off contention; they manage it as a source of inspiration. If you foster a safe place to air issues, you constructively unleash power that will otherwise become toxic — infecting things later. In addition, creative contention can help your team avoid its own delusions of grandeur and dangerous self-agreement.

Many companies hold "workout" sessions where it's required to get all the issues out on the table. When people really commit themselves to frank discussion, these meetings can be an effective way to create an appropriate politically correct environment to do what's usually politically incorrect at work.

These meetings can be used to shift the focus from personality conflicts to the actual problems that need to be solved by providing a safer, more honest dialogue without as much whining and name-calling. It provides a place to share the facts behind your worst fears and greatest hopes, rather than allowing them to continue to collide by accident.

The sooner you can do this, the better. Encouraging contention in the early stages of an initiative helps you discover where the problems are and fix them while they are small. Without a forum or time and place to attack and resolve the issues, relatively small problems can become counterproductive obsessions. ■

# Creating Alignment — The Environment Always Wins

Builders have this odd notion that many of the people they meet are potential members of their community or team — as recruits, customers, vendors, volunteers, friends, you name it.

If you want success that lasts, then you're better off if you think about your relationships as being built to last with people whose roles change — sometimes they work for you, sometimes you work for them, sometimes they leave your organization and become customers or vendors or regulators or competitors. But if you consider them on your virtual "team," the only thing that changes is their role. You still have the relationship.

The thing that matters is meaning. It drives everything. Builders align their attention to the things that matter to them and they know a lot about that stuff. They are experts on what matters to them — their portfolio of passions. They talk responsibly in the domains of their expertise; otherwise they say, "I don't know." Seconds later, they tell you what they do know about their passion or goal.

Builders are fanatical about framing what they say in terms of their goals and values. Their answers to most questions end with a segue back to the goal or mission with which they are passionately engaged.

Intuitively, they are always pushing and shoving the three circles — Meaning, Thought and Action — into alignment. Everything that has meaning gets organized in a ThoughtStyle, which then is turned into words and deeds, ActionStyles, that support what matters to them. They use every possible opportunity to reaffirm goals and meaning.

The only thing that provides lasting success is the day-by-day practice and struggle to move the three circles toward alignment in your life and work. It's an adventure that you are better off embracing with all of your heart and soul because it is a challenge that never ends. ■

### SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**If you liked *Success Built to Last,* you'll also like:**

1. ***Crucial Conversations*** **by Kerry Patterson, et al.** The authors provide readers with tools for talking when the stakes are high.
2. ***Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*** **by Patrick M. Lencioni.** Specific, practical guidance is supplied to leaders, managers and facilitators in this breakthrough guide.
3. ***Vital Friends*** **by Tom Rath.** Employees who have a best friend in the office are more productive, more likely to engage positively with customers, share new ideas and stay longer in a job.
4. ***The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book*** **by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves.** Emotional intelligence is now widely accepted, not only within the psychological arena, but within the business world.
5. ***The Power of an Hour*** **by Dave Lakhani.** What if by devoting just one hour a week, you could make big improvements in your professional life?

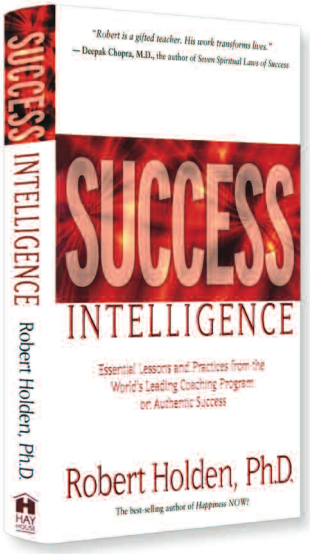
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# Success Intelligence

September 2010

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Career & Self-Development: Change & Advancement




# Success Intelligence

## Essential Lessons and Practices from the World's Leading Coaching Program on Authentic Success

by Robert Holden, Ph.D.

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

There are many so-called successful people who have not learned how to enjoy their success. True success should not have to cost you your joy, your health or your relationships. On the contrary, true success is about enjoying these things.

*Success Intelligence* examines how to enjoy real, soulful success while living in a manic, busy and hyped-up world. Author Dr. Robert Holden describes his unique coaching program — called Success Intelligence — which is used worldwide by artists, writers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and global companies and brands.

Holden shares some the experiences and techniques he uses to coach success with talented people from all walks of life. He also presents the key principles and exercises he teaches in his Success Intelligence presentations.

The name "Success Intelligence" emphasizes the need to think wisely about success. Practicing Success Intelligence helps turn any true personal success into a valuable gift for others.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to create a vision for your life, work and relationships that doesn't get lost in the rush.
- How to identify what the real you really wants and discover the real purpose of your life.
- How to free your mind, liberate your talent and attract more effortless success.
- How to conduct a Busyness Audit, give up Destination Addiction, release dysfunctional independence and overcome your fear of success.
- Why happiness is the key to greater inspiration, creativity and meaningful success.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **SUCCESS INTELLIGENCE**

**by Robert Holden, Ph.D.**

**The author:** Robert Holden, Ph.D., is the director of Success Intelligence and The Happiness Project — two pioneering projects that work closely with leaders in business, health care, education and politics. He is the author of 10 best-selling books, including *Happiness NOW!* and *Shift Happens!*

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com or www.successintelligence.com.

## Prologue

What is Success Intelligence? Simply put, it is about applying wisdom to success.

We live in a "Success Culture." Many people pursue success as a primary goal in life and are often obsessed with it. They judge their entire lives on whether or not they are a success. They secretly attack themselves for not being successful enough. But how much success is enough? People crave success because they hope it will deliver salvation from the ego's self-attack.

Success Intelligence challenges you to apply your best thinking to success.

## Vision

The pace of life for many of us has accelerated past fast to manic. In the Manic Society, we speed ahead, on fast-forward, and the danger is that we leave behind the truth. Winston Churchill said, "Men stumble over the truth from time to time, but most pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened."

In the Manic Society, we propel ourselves so fast that we often exceed the speed limit of intelligence and common sense.

Of particular concern is how our relationships suffer in the Manic Society. Our frantic schedules cause us to skim across the surface of each other's lives without ever really connecting. The pressure to work harder is relentless, and we often end up emotionally unavailable and socially isolated.

In the Manic Society, our nonstop speed ethic can easily blur our vision. We are living faster, but for what? What is the vision? Without vision, we may simply be attempting to win prizes that aren't worth winning. We may be "getting there" faster, but we may also be missing what is "here, now," within us and before us. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "There is more to life than increasing its speed."

In the Manic Society, we are changing faster, succeeding faster and failing faster. The challenge is to make sure we do not blur the vision, blur the goals, blur what's important.

Cultivating a strong vision, in which you learn to "see" not only with your eyes but also with your mind and your heart, is essential for success. Make time for vision.

### The Busy Generation

Permanent busyness is not intelligent. In fact, permanent busyness is often a major block to success in work, relationships and life.

The Busy Generation has to learn that *it is not enough to be busy*. A busy life is not necessarily a life well lived. A busy work schedule is not evidence of any great accomplishment. Being busy neither guarantees success nor equates to success.

Permanent busyness is mainly compensation for a lack of clarity about true success.

The value of regular coaching is that it creates a space that helps you to punctuate your business. Space is a restorative that helps people breathe deeper, clear their minds, connect to their wisdom, remember what is important and be open to new possibilities.

White space refers to thinking time for vision and re-evaluation. White space is the 20 minutes you take each

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

day to make sure you are living and working wisely. Without these moments, life is just more busyness as usual.

### The Hyperactive Workplace

The Hyperactive Workplace is a modern tragedy where people work without vision and joy.

An increasing number of people report that they are generally unhappy with their jobs. One recent work survey interviewed 5,000 households and found that job satisfaction has decreased by 10 percent overall in the last few years. In another survey, three out of four people said they did not trust the CEOs of large companies. Relationships rarely prosper in a hyperactive climate.

In the hyperactive world of work, more computers, more printers and more photocopies will not save us. Prayer can. Vision can. And so can courage.

### The Joyless Economy

Economist Tibor Scitovsky wrote a landmark book in the 1970s titled *The Joyless Economy*. It is considered by many thinkers to be one of the most important books written in the late 20th century. Scitovsky argued that the reason why so many people are successful and unhappy is not because there is not enough to accumulate; it is because we have not figured out what we really want.

In our consumer society, which has so much to offer, it is essential to know what you value and what you really want. Otherwise the distractions and disappointments can be endless.

The key to feeling successful is not only more stuff, money, credit or more shops, but also *more vision*. Before you ask yourself "How much more can I get?" you first have to ask "What do I really want?" This simple question is the key to feeling truly successful. ●

## Potential

Success Intelligence begins with an awareness of and respect for the vast potential inside us all.

William James, author of *The Principles of Psychology*, wrote: "Most people live, whether physically, intellectually or morally, in a very restricted circle of their potential being. They make very small use of their possible consciousness and of their soul's resources in general, much like a man who, out of his whole bodily organism, should get into a habit of using and moving only his little finger."

Realizing our potential, and using it in intelligent ways, is our purpose and our salvation.

### Authentic Success

Self-knowledge is a primary key to Success Intelligence. The better you know yourself — what you value, what inspires you, what you are made of — the more effectively you will live, work and relate to others. Self-knowledge is the jewel in the crown of success. It enables you to be inner-directed, self-referring and true to yourself.

Without self-knowledge there can be no authentic success, no authentic happiness and no authentic living. The failure to be true to oneself, to be faithful to core values and to listen to innate wisdom leaves even the most accomplished person feeling unsuccessful and as if something is missing.

### The Self Principle

The "Self Principle" has an enormous influence on how every person experiences his or her life. It is an essential key to potential and talent, transformation and growth, success and happiness. The Self Principle states unequivocally: The quality of your relationship with yourself determines the quality of your relationship with success, happiness, love, God, money, time, health, luck and everything.

The better you know yourself, the better you can live and work with authenticity and authority. Your self-knowledge is what helps you discern between true purpose and pointless goals. Self-knowledge also teaches you about your inner strengths and true values. The better you know yourself, the better you can trust your wisdom, follow your joy and liberate your talent.

When you change the way you see yourself, you change your experience in the world.

### The Success Contract

By learning how to "read" and "rewrite" their Success Contracts, people can experience more happiness in their relationships and more success in their life.

The Success Contract is a metaphor, but its effects are very real. The Success Contract is a personal agreement drawn up by you and your ego (your self-image) that states — in categorical terms — how much success is possible and how much is impossible. The Success Contract is your guide to potential success. It is full of conditions and rules that are, essentially, your beliefs about success. These beliefs are very influential and may fully determine your relationship with success if you let them.

When you become aware of your Success Contract and re-author it, it can unlock your potential for success, often in immediate and dramatic fashion.

### Inner Dialogue

People talk to themselves constantly. Psychologists call this behavior inner dialogue or sub-vocal speech. They estimate that you speak to yourself at a conservative average of 50 words per minute, 3,000 words per hour. If you listen to your inner dialogue, you will notice an assortment of observations, judgments, commentary, beliefs, doubts, hopes, fears, anxieties, chatter and general nonsense. Fortunately, it takes only one great thought — one inspired piece of inner dialogue — to create some success.

The most important conversations you hold in life are the ones you hold with yourself. Your own inner dialogue is an important key to success.

Set aside some time to listen to your inner dialogue. See if you can discern between "learned thoughts," "everyday chatter" and "inner wisdom." What are your wisest thoughts about success? What is your wisdom trying to teach you?

Let yourself be inspired.

## Wisdom

Wisdom is a lifesaver in a Manic Society, where so many people complain that they have no time to stop and think. Wisdom is what will save the Busy Generation from a life of meaningless busyness. Wisdom is the key both to authentic success in the Hyperactive Workplace and to genuine happiness in the Joyless Economy. There is never any shortage of wisdom, only the confidence to use it.

Success Intelligence is about recognizing inner wisdom and using it to good effect in your relationships, your work and everything you give yourself to.

### Wisdom Is Not an MBA

"Character Goals" (i.e., *being* a good leader and *being* confident) are different from "Achievement Goals" (i.e., *doing* an MBA). Too often, the language of goal-setting is about "doing," "having" and "getting" and not about "being." Without some focus on "being," there is no true way to test if a goal is right for you or not.

Set aside time to review your goals. Identify your criteria for setting your goals. How do you decide if a goal is important or not?

Reflect on how you evaluate your success. Review your Spiritual Goals, your Character Goals, your Achievement Goals, etc. Think wisely about your true goals in work, relationships and life.

### Success Is Not Always Up

Too often people throw success ahead of them, into the future, and hope to bump into it someday. In the meantime, their lives are full of Destination Goals and no Present-Time Goals.

Success Intelligence is about allowing your inner wisdom to teach you what success is *today*. It is the ability to live life well *now*. Too often, our up-goals are nothing more than a self-serving, desperate cry for significance, attention and approval. These up-goals will get us nowhere if we do not learn how to be happy and successful along the way. A successful life can only ever be the one you are living now.

### Happiness Is Not an It

The language of happiness is important because how we talk about happiness influences how we encounter happiness. For example, when we talk about happiness as something "to have," the danger is that we reduce happiness to an "it" and a possession. Thereby, we externalize happiness, and we end up *pursuing* happiness instead of *being* happy. It is the same with success. In the Manic Society, we are busy trying "to achieve" success instead of cultivating a deeper sense of inner success.

Success Intelligence recognizes the value of happiness. It knows happiness is an important goal because happiness is a great teacher. True happiness is an inner guide that teaches a person how to live well. In particular, happiness can teach a person a lot about success.

### Money Is Not Your Purpose

The "Money Trap" is about waiting to have enough money before you commit to what is true, to what you love, to your real purpose. Money, by itself, cannot make you secure. Money, by itself, cannot heal fear. Money, by itself, cannot give you faith. And money does not make someone more intelligent.

What is money anyway? Money does not define you. Money has no vision. Money does not have your talent, nor your wisdom. Money cannot guarantee you success. Money cannot buy happiness. Money can't even prevent unhappiness.

Never put money first. The key to success is to commit first to your purpose, and let the money follow after you.

### Love Is Not Just an Emotion

Love is not just an emotion. Love is an intention. Love is a purpose. Love is our true power. It is what inspires us and what evolves us. "We are all born for love. It is the principle of existence, and its only end," said British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

Love is the heart of success. Any life goal that is not somehow about love is not really a goal; it is just compensation or a distraction. Love is the ultimate goal and the only real goal.

If your definition of success has little or no measure of love in it, get another definition.

Success Intelligence is the wisdom to keep putting love first in your life. ●

## Relationships

German physicist Werner Heisenberg took a small subatomic building block of life, called a photon, and showed that it has a dual nature, which is both a "particle" and "wave."

If a scientist observes a photon with a particle detector, he or she finds that a photon looks like a particle — a small, fixed, singular object that has hard boundaries and is separate from all else.

However, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle found that if a scientist observes a photon using another device, called a wave detector, the photon no longer looks like a separate particle floating through space on its own. Now the photon appears as a wave that has momentum and is in connection, flow and dialogue with everything else. Heisenberg said, "The world thus appears as a complicated tissue of events, into which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole."

Thus, the photon may look like a separate, independent entity, but it is never really separate. The Uncertainty Principle is one of many breakthroughs in quantum physics to establish that *relationship* is the basic building block of life — on every level.

Relationship is the heart of physics, the heart of life and the heart of success. Our personal challenge is to be both particle-like and wave-like; in other words, we have to embrace our apparent uniqueness and also realize our deep connection and oneness with all. We have to learn how to live for ourselves *and* for everyone else.

### The Broken Community

Excessive individualism and the lack of deep intimate attachments is not a formula for success. It breaks up communities and people's lives.

The spiritual imperative of every human is to overcome his or her perceived aloneness. Separation — the optical delusion — is the mental virus that causes so much fear, pain and disease. Intimate relationships are the basic building blocks of true success and well-being. Positive relationships promote strength, resilience and happiness. The heart of success is about living for ourselves and for others.

### The Independence Myth

A dogged insistence on independence — "my way or the highway" — is a very common block to success in work, life and relationships. Total independence makes everything more difficult than need be. Excessive individualism cuts us off from our team. Absolute self-sufficiency is unnecessary and egotistical.

Albert Einstein extolled the virtues of independence, but he balanced this beautifully with his praise for community and his experience of connectivity and oneness with life. In *The World As I See It*, he writes: "A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received myself and am still receiving." Independence is part of a greater picture that leads to interdependence and wholeness.

### The Competition Block

One of the biggest obstacles to success is "the competition block." A common characteristic of dysfunctionally independent people is that they make everything into a competition.

When people's only strategy for success is to compete, they often block all sorts of opportunities for mutual support, potential for shared learning and possibilities for creative collaboration.

The Tao of competition is about knowing when to compete (which is *yang*) and when to cooperate (which is *yin*). It is also about knowing how to compete. A true champion will work with his or her competitive instinct to achieve a personal best. He or she will also keep his or her primary focus on his or her own personal vision and values so as not to let the competition urge distract or derail him or her. Ice-skating champion Katarina Witt said, "When I go out on the ice, I just think about my skating. I forget it is a competition." Herein lies the Tao of success.

### Thin Conversations

The faster we go, the more we specialize in thin conversations. When we are busy, we communicate mostly on the run, using cell phones, BlackBerrys and e-mail. Occasionally we stop, and we wish our lives could be better than this.

Social literacy is an important key to success in work, happiness in relationships and well-being in life. The

positive news is that communications surveys agree no one is too old to learn how to be a better communicator. Also, most of us already know how to communicate well; where we fail is that we don't make time to put our wisdom into practice.

### A Better Balance

The story goes that word-champion boxer Muhammad Ali was invited to give a talk to the Harvard Business School shortly after his famous victory over George Foreman in the "rumble in the jungle" fight in Zaire. An eager audience member asked Ali to recite a poem. Ali stood up, pointed to himself and said, "Me," and then threw his arms wide open to the audience and said, "We." Ali said that "Me We" represents his whole philosophy of success.

"Me-we" thinking offers a crucial way forward for the individualistic cultures that fail to teach us that we can access higher levels of success when we live for ourselves and each other.

Healthy relationships are vital for "me-we" balance and work-life quality. To enjoy sustainable success you cannot keep putting your relationships on the back burner. ●

## Courage

The word *courage* is derived from a French word meaning "from the heart." There are many men and women of great courage. These people have often experienced the worst in life, such as personal heartbreak, major illnesses and financial disaster. They distinguish themselves because they have faced their personal hell, survived their dark nights and chosen to live. Often, these people seem extra alive; they live from their heart and inspire everyone they meet.

### Shift Happens

Change can often be a deeply unsettling process that tests our faith and our resolve. Yet, if we learn to handle change well, we can open ourselves up to new levels of creativity and success.

Shift happens when we are willing to make the inner shifts that create more success. The world does not change because business changes, society changes or our relationships change; it changes because we do. When we show up differently, the world responds differently to us. When we give the world another chance, our chances for success and happiness improve. Furthermore, until we put our whole hearts into our lives, we will not know what is truly possible, nor will we reach the hearts of others.

### A Failure Policy

To be successful, a person must have a "Failure Policy" that is honest and effective. A Failure Policy is a similar idea to the "Success Contract." Both your Success Contract and your Failure Policy sit in the back of your mind beneath a pile of thoughts. Both are metaphors, of course. The Success Contract represents your philosophy and beliefs about success, and your Failure Policy represents your attitude and approach to failure.

A Failure Policy usually has three main parts to it:

- **Definition of Failure:** Often by asking "What is failure?" a person is better able to answer the question "What is success?"
- **Meaning of Failure:** An effective Failure Policy can help a person adopt the best possible attitude of failure. Attitude creates meaning, and meaning points the way forward.
- **Uses of Failure:** An intelligent Failure Policy can help a person decide how best to use failure.

### Further Education

Success requires an intelligent balance between making the fewest possible mistakes *and* the best use of mistakes. A person who is good at relationships is probably very mindful and is also willing "to go to school" on any mistakes he or she makes. A person who has a great talent for something often has what is commonly called "a natural ability" (translation: courage) to risk learning by trial and error. A person who is a great leader has often made "every mistake in the book" *and* has learned how to capitalize on them.

Success Intelligence includes the wisdom to avoid making unnecessary mistakes and the courage to accept the necessary education when mistakes are made.

### Higher Learning

A true definition of success must embrace a profound truth about life: There is suffering. Literally every moment of the day, somebody, somewhere, is coming to terms with pain and loss.

The power of inner alchemy describes a person's innate ability to transform setbacks into lessons, problems into opportunities and pain into wisdom. Alchemy happens when we are prepared to look with new eyes, think new thoughts, make better choices and act differently than before. Every problem has a message for us. Each adversity hides some gift. Every conflict points to a better way.

True success is about growing your awareness of who *you* are and what your *strengths* are. It is also about placing your faith and your power in what will help you to grow beyond the mistakes, failures and setbacks you encounter by seeing them as opportunities, not blocks. It fashions everything into a gift. ●

## Grace

Grace has something to do with the universal dialogue between all things. People who believe in grace believe that life is a collaborative adventure and a joint effort. Grace is the meeting point between an open-minded individual and the whole of Creation. It is the experience of being moved or inspired by something bigger than your ego.

### Destination Addiction

In the Manic Society, people exhibit a frantic, neurotic behavior called "Destination Addiction." This addiction is a major block to success. People who suffer from Destination Addiction believe that success is a destination. They are addicted to the idea that the future is where success is, happiness is and heaven is. Each passing moment is merely a ticket to get to the future.

If only we could stop a while and let wisdom and grace show us a better way. "One's destination is never a place but rather a new way of looking at things," wrote novelist Henry Miller.

Success Intelligence is knowing when to go fast and when to take things slowly. The ability to go fast becomes counterproductive when you try to do *everything* fast. The joy of slow teaches you to discern between busyness and wisdom, effort and grace, progress and truth. Slowing down can help you to stay true to your vision during the fast times. In fact, going slow can help you go fast better.

### Insane Busyness

Most of us are either very busy or insanely busy. Our busyness eats up our space. There is no space in our schedule. Our schedule is a never-ending to-do list.

Excessive efforting hides compensations that block success. For example, maybe people over-effort because they are dysfunctionally independent and never ask for help. Or maybe they over-effort because they are trying too hard to control a situation. Sometimes effort is just fear.

Success requires commitment, particularly the commitment to balance effort with grace.

Great dancers, like Rudolph Nureyev, and great singers, like Maria Callas, found a way to balance effort with grace. So too did great artists, like Leonardo da Vinci, who believed in the need for work and rest. They know how to give their best and also make space for grace and inspiration.

Greater simplicity helps to avoid excess busyness and unnecessary effort. It increases effectiveness and it welcomes grace and inspiration. It also preserves your sanity. Take time to reflect on how you could simplify your life and work to enjoy greater success.

### The Failure of More

Social psychologists have amassed a large body of research on the "failure of more" to make us happy and fulfilled. One study, "Happiness of the Very Wealthy," found that millionaires in the *Forbes* 100 (with a net worth of $125 million plus) reported only a slightly higher average of happiness than people on average incomes. In fact, 37 percent of the millionaires were *less happy* than the national average. One very wealthy millionaire reported that he could never remember being happy. It seems that even the "winners" feel like "losers" in the culture of more.

Success Intelligence encourages you to think wisely about what it is you really want. It teaches you to distinguish between an "illusory more" that has no permanent value and a "real more" that is in alignment with your values and success.

### The Energy Crisis

Many people suffer from a personal energy crisis. They are either exhausted or at the edge of exhaustion. Their permanent tiredness inhibits success and intelligence. Chronic exhaustion often traps us in an ineffective "effort economy" in which we keep on trying harder and doing worse.

Success Intelligence encourages a wise balance between adrenaline and grace.

Success Intelligence interprets exhaustion as a vital lesson in how to care for ourselves better. Exhaustion is a call to be wiser. ●

## Renaissance

Success Intelligence is a journey that can be mapped over three distinct stages of consciousness: Determinism, Adaptation and Renaissance.

**Determinism** is the Dark Ages of the human consciousness. A formula for this stage is: the world = my life = me. In Determinism, we believe we have no choice in our lives.

**Adaptation** is the New Dawn of the human consciousness. It opens us up to a world of choice. A formula for this stage is: the world + me = my life.

**Renaissance** is the Creation Song of the human consciousness. It opens us up to our true being and identity. A formula for this stage is: me + the world = my life.

Success Intelligence teaches that we create the world on three levels: our actions, our thoughts and our *being*.

First, if we act differently, we create new outcomes. One new action can rearrange the world around us.

Second, if we think differently, we create new possibilities. We learn that by choosing our thoughts, we can choose our lives.

Third, on a level of being, we change the world by choosing *to be what we want*. For example, our lives change when we stop searching for happiness and we decide to be happy.

## Be the Goal

The real challenge of leadership is to "be the goal." This means that leadership is about *bringing into being* what you most value. Thus, if you want honesty, you have to be honest. And if you want trust, you have to be trusting. Ultimately, if you want any change to happen, you have to think about how you can "be the change" you want.

Success Intelligence is about finding the authenticity of each moment. The value of authenticity is that it encourages true authority, i.e., wisdom and inspiration. In every situation, ask yourself, "What is my true goal here?" and listen. And in every conflict you are in, ask yourself, "How can I be more honest?" and listen. And in every relationship, ask yourself, "How can I be a true friend?" and listen. More authenticity enables greater effectiveness.

## The Big Fear

People often hold themselves back in life because they will not face their fears. They will do anything to avoid fear, including keeping busy, working harder, playing small and generally increasing the noise of their lives. Their fear of fear prevents them from following their passion, realizing their talent and finding their voice.

Success Intelligence recognizes that if you want to be your best self and contribute fully to life, you have to reach beyond your fears. These fears sometimes include the fears of success.

When you next review your major goals, uncover any unresolved fears of success. Think deeply about each goal and ask yourself, "What are my fears of success here?" Check thoroughly.

Hidden fears (i.e., the fears you hide from) will interfere with your best efforts to succeed.

## Service

Albert Schweitzer said, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Service helps to transcend your ego, evolve your gifts and realize your potential. When you dedicate your success to the good of others, it activates all manner of inspiration and help.

## Happiness

Scientists have traditionally overlooked happiness because, in terms of evolution, it was judged to have only "entertainment value" compared with the survival value of emotions like fear or anger. Recently, however, thanks to psychologists like Barbara Frederickson, there is growing evidence that happiness plays a big part in our growth and development.

Happiness is not now dismissed as just a pleasurable emotion; it is valued more as a creative power that can help you evolve and thrive. Today leaders are learning that happiness, talent and success work together.

## Saying Yes

Success Intelligence has to take into account that our adventure on Earth is both transient and temporary. Therefore, an intelligent question to ask is, "Knowing I will die, how shall I live?"

Success is not about driving yourself harder; it is about letting go of what blocks your heart. Think deeply about what you most want to say "Yes" to. Be willing to let go of old heartbreaks and wounds to which you still cling. You didn't come into this world to shrink and play small. Nor are you here to play dead. You have gifts to share and a contribution to make. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Success Intelligence*, you'll also like:

1. ***Mojo* by Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Reiter.** In his follow up to *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, top executive coach Marshall Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get — and keep — our Mojo.
2. ***The Next Level* by Scott Eblin.** For every rising executive, Scott Eblin's practical coaching — interwoven with frank mentoring advice from top executives — is invaluable in achieving success at the next level.
3. ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey.** Stephen R. Covey offers a holistic, integrated, principle-centered approach for solving personal and professional problems.

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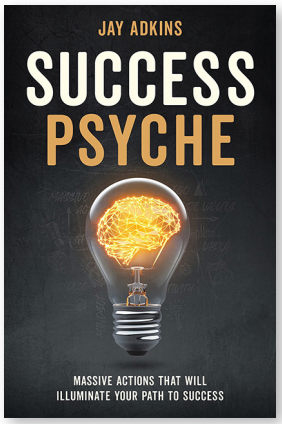
# Success Psyche

Jay Adkins

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# Success Psyche

## Massive Actions That Will Illuminate Your Path to Success




*by* **Jay Adkins**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everybody wants to be successful, but a few put in the conscious effort to get there. Success looks glamorous on the outside. But nobody wants to acknowledge the amount of struggle that goes on behind the curtains. Success takes work. It takes thoughtful action. But most importantly, it takes cultivating a robust "success psyche."

***Success Psyche*** spins a real-world web of tried and tested methods that offer a realistic approach toward success. It helps the readers uncover the right actions and habits they need to achieve their goals.

Through his life story and several insightful personal experiences, author Jay Adkins takes us through a realistic journey of success, uncovering several "success myths' along the way. The author urges the readers to first find out the "why" and then craft a robust gameplan to eventually find their very own version of success.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To define your very own version of success.
- To design your path toward success.
- To create and implement a Goal Planning System (GPS).
- How to break free of every myth associated with success.
- To be successful.

## Introduction

What exactly is Success Psyche? It is a mindset, a philosophy, and a way of living that attracts your unique definition of success and allows you to be happy as long as you continue taking massive actions towards your goals. Your Success Psyche is the lightbulb that won't dim. It's the part of your brain that is trained to view failure as progress. When you focus on every massive action you design for yourself, you develop your very own Success Psyche. This book lays out twelve massive actions you can translate into long-term habits, to succeed both in business and life as a whole.

## Part One: Unlocking The Path To Success

### Learn That Success Is A Snowflake

My story of struggle and success started at a very young age. My parents made barely enough to pay the bills. But I quickly learned that the only way to respond to difficulties was by working through them rather than running away from them or playing the victim card. The mentality of "do just enough" doesn't get anyone anywhere. If you're not happy in your life, it's no one's fault but yours.

Remember, Usain Bolt didn't magically wake up one day and become the fastest man in the world. Jeff Bezos wasn't born with the business plan for Amazon taped to his baby crib. The result—the big success stories—all involve countless steps we never saw.

Success is like a snowflake. Yours and someone else's will never look exactly the same. We'll learn more about it, one element at a time, and as you progress through the book, your every step would be a success all on its own.

### Outline Your Terms Of Success

The entire foundation of your success lies on this golden rule: Unless you define your success, you will not be able to shape your life in a way that leads you there. The five steps to outlining your terms of success include:

Step 1: Envision the kind of life you'd like to have. This could include the type of career you want to have, the type of people you want to allow into your life, the destinations you want to travel to, and anything you would be happy to include in your life.

Step 2: Perform some reverse engineering to detect what it will take to help you reach your goals. What sacrifices and actions are required? What will make you uncomfortable? What do you NEED to do for success? What is it that you DON'T NEED to do for success? This is the hardest part of it all but once you cross this, you eventually get closer to your goals.

Step 3: Ask the big question, "Am I willing to do whatever is necessary to reach my goal?" Your willingness to do something can be the greatest deciding factor for your success.

Step 4: Deploy deadlines. As cliché as it may sound, a goal without a deadline is a dream that will never live outside your head.

Step 5: Let it loose outside your head. This is when you take accountability for your action and bring your dreams to reality.

Remember, you can't look at someone's success but behind it. That's how you'll understand that every success story had to travel a jagged journey of tough lessons and bad choices.

### Realize You Are Programmed To Fail

The truth is, failure is inevitable. The world expects you to admit defeat and trek on down that mountain with your tail tucked between your legs and fall back in line with the rest of the dissatisfied masses. Unfortunately, many of us believe the world is right. We give up and wonder why we ever tried at all. The goal here is to undo the programming that "failure is our inevitable conclusion,"

Failure might be inevitable but the story doesn't end here. You must fail and keep going several times until your goals begin to appear on the horizon. Remember, it is failure that brings out the light-bulb moments in our life. They can be your biggest teachers. Inventions like airplanes, the internet, and even computers were a result of multiple failures.

### Define Your Why As Your Legacy

There are only two ways to approach goal setting and journeying towards success – analyzing everything that seems wrong with your personal and professional life and hunting down the "why" behind it. When you focus on the "why", it allows you to reframe failure as progress.

It also allows you to observe others' mistakes and translate them into your learning opportunities. When you determine your why, the "there's not enough time" excuse vanishes. For example, if the answer to your "why can't I finish my work on time" is "because of social media" – you grasp a clear solution to be more productive, that is, "to not waste

time on social media." Use your why-led focus to craft a "Whatever it takes" attitude and you'll begin to untangle how the sky is the only limit for your success.

### Schedule Success Or Live In Regret

Human bodies are designed to avoid tasks that are not immediately rewarding. Nobody likes to wake up early or exercise. At that moment, it's difficult to realize the amount of positive impact good habits can make in your life. But the creation of good habits demands thorough systems and processes within in your daily routine. To make sure your entire day remains productive, start your day right. Wake up early in the morning with any positive self-talk like meditation or prayer. Remember, you're only as tired as you think you are. Once you get the start of the day right, design a detailed schedule for the rest of the day and stick to it.

### Use A GPS For Vision And Values

Making your mornings valuable is great. But how to get the rest of the day in order? Create a clear, visually clean collage and set it as a screensaver on your devices, and in places like your bathroom mirror and refrigerator door. I like to call it the GPS or Goal Planning System. Just like how we use a GPS to find directions in real life, your life's GPS will guide you toward the precise goals (or destinations) you want to reach. Once you create your GPS, set a time frame that will help you get real results. For example, "By the end of the year, I want to accomplish this goal." Make sure you cover both personal and family goals. Finally, review your vision board throughout your weekly routine. To help you create your detailed GPS system, I've included a GPS template in my book.

### Respect The Power Of Ego In Accountability

Sometimes, the ego can act as a powerful tool to accomplish things. When Freud used the term "das Ich," he was referring to the conscious, decision-making part that humans regard as "I." Ego is the person you think of when you take ownership of anything. (i.e., I want to quit my job, or I love my kids).

In other words, ego is "I" – no negative terms attached. This is exactly why you can use "ego" to cultivate accountability. You can do this by giving other people permission to keep you on track. For example, if your goal is to get fit, discuss your workout plan with your friend and make them your accountability partner. When you're held accountable for things, you tend to take them more seriously.

### Find Mentors Or Settle For Good

Mentors and coaches are the best catalysts for your success. They provide you with a unique vision, offer you impartial and objective advice to work on your mistakes, provide you with the right perspective so you don't end up making expensive mistakes, and are the best source of encouragement. When looking for a mentor, make sure they have qualities like mastery of the niche you want to become an expert in and absolute honesty, and find out if they can give you the freedom to set your own expectations, and if they fit your style.

### Discover The Dangers Of Goal Myths

There are nine goal myths that block success. As the chapter title indicates, these myths can be dangerous when they are not dispelled through conscious effort.

Myth 1: Setting goals is the key.

Myth 2: I failed because the goal was too hard.

Myth 3: Dreams are goals.

Myth 4: Comparison is motivating.

Myth 5: Praise is motivating.

Myth 6: There are shortcuts.

Myth 8: Motivation comes from outside inspiration.

Myth 9: Some failures are outside my control.

### Practice The Nine Be's Of Networking

Successful networking requires outside-the-box thinking. Networking needs to be a process. It also needs to be extremely intentional. Perhaps the most valuable thing that you will get from your network is a constant stream of referrals.

- Be curious, care about people, and ask questions that go beyond "how are you."
- Be relatable by finding conversation points that people will engage in or find interesting.
- Be creative when networking with someone on social media. For example, instead of simply "liking" someone's picture, contribute something useful to their posts.
- Be systematic by creating a digital journal of people you need to reach out to regularly.
- Be authentic, be yourself.
- Be open-minded and embrace others' true feelings or passions even when they seem different from yours.

- Be genuinely caring to build lasting trust or relationships over the years.
- Be valuable by contributing your knowledge to your growing network.
- Be patient and remember your efforts will pay off.

### Embrace Uncertainty Or Accept Complacency

It's easy to get complacent once you think you've arrived. If you forget the struggle, it means you're destined to repeat them. Make it a point to recognize both struggles and triumphs. There is a chance you'll fail several times, and your self-doubt might come in the way of your persistence and determination. When things seem uncertain, the only thing you can do is to keep moving with your goals in mind.

### Gain The Happiness Advantage

Don't fall into the trap of, "If I work hard, I will be successful, and once I am successful, I will be happy." Remember, we become more successful when we are happier and more positive, not the other way around. It doesn't depend on a dollar amount or how the economy is doing. Happiness is directly linked to how positive your attitude is.

## Part Two: Take Charge Of Your Success

### 90-Day Massive Action Plan (Compress Everything)

Sometimes, the most challenging part of a journey is the first few steps. So, let's talk about those critical steps for a moment. Ask yourself, "what does my success snowflake look like?" Once you know the answer, ninety days is all takes to craft the mindset and routine that fosters a Success Psyche.

- Make the daily decision that you will do everything to cultivate a success psyche
- Implement a morning routine
- Become comfortable being uncomfortable
- Lose the victim mentality
- Don't set unrealistic expectations for others
- Define your success snowflake
- Recruit some accountability partners
- Lean into failure
- Define your core values
- Define your why

## Conclusion

Success doesn't simply come knocking at your door because you call it. Success takes conscious effort. It takes patience and unbreakable faith in yourself. No two people would experience a similar success story. But know that every human already has what it takes to succeed, the only questions that matter are: Have you found your success snowflake yet? If yes, are you ready to become your very own version of success?



**Jay Adkins** is a mentor, speaker, author, and the proud owner and Founder of ProVest Insurance Group. He has six exclusive Allstate agencies in three regions of the United States - FL, NC, and TX. As Co-founder and President of one of the largest sales training platforms, Agency Sales Academy, Jay has led a bright and continuously evolving career, winning him many awards. He performs a variety of consulting services for diverse industry clients including mergers, acquisition of insurance agencies, and structuring and negotiation. Jay also consults individual agency owners on effective agency operations.

***Success Psyche: Massive Actions That Will Illuminate Your Path to Success*** by Jay Adkins
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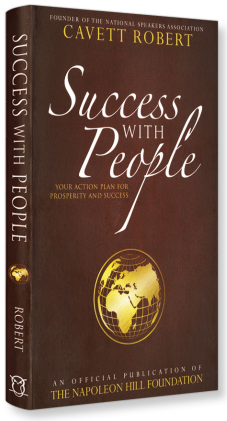
# Success WIth People

Cavett Robert

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# Success With People

## Your Action Plan for Prosperity and Success




*by* **Cavett Robert**

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## The Summary In Brief

In ***Success with People,*** author Cavett Robert demonstrates that personal success as well as financial success in life depends on your ability to get along with other people.

Regardless of the business, industry or profession we're in, we are all involved to some extent in human engineering. Human engineering, in its simplest form can be defined as the science of dealing with people–understanding their responses, their vulnerable spots, and their "hot-button"issues.

***Success with People*** outlines steps for how to manage and influence people in ways that align with your life goals.

No one is completely divorced from dealing in some fashion with other people. Follow the six principles identified by Cavett Robert and you will find the way to more personal power and income.

## In This Summary, You Will Learn:

- The What, the Why, and the How dimensons of human engineering.
- The Six Principles that must become a part of you.
- Why people love to buy and what you need to know.
- Why it's critical to make people feel important.

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

## Introduction

Your success in life will be determined by your ability to get along with other people. One of the important lessons in life is discovering how to sell yourself to others and get them to help you in anything you many want to attempt.

Human Engineering is the science of knowing how to deal with people. This is not discounting the importance of knowing and understanding the nature of our business, industry or profession, which is a necessity. Human engineering is the PLUS factor.

The human engineer must go to the heart of an individual's existence and understand their ambitions, aspirations and goals in life — even their yardstick of values. These are the qualities which cause the attitudes, tendencies and idiosyncrasies which eventually result in the behavior pattern of an individual.

There are three dimensions of human engineering. The human engineer's concern is in WHAT people do and WHY they do it. These are important because they lead to the third dimension — the HOW.

For example, in sales, a person may know WHAT a prospect's buying habits are. They may even know WHY the prospect follows these buying habits. But the salesperson will never be anything but an order taker until they enter the magic world of creative selling by learning HOW to cause the prospect to change their attitudes and buying habits. The salesperson can only do this when they have learned the art of motivation.

There are six principles of Human Engineering that will not only help you discover a whole new way of influencing others, but you will also come to a better understanding of yourself.

## (Principle #1) People Love To Buy But They Hate To Be Sold

The great desire to acquire, the compulsion to possess, is one of the deepest human impulses known to man. Since we acquire things by paying for them, we know that people love to buy. But we also need to move to the second dimension and know WHY people love to buy.

Psychologists have told us for years that this great compulsion springs from the fact that it makes us feel important to acquire and own things, whether we need them or not.

No one is exempt from the necessity of being able to influence others. When a person begins to feel important and optimistic, they want to buy and acquire. They immediately enter their maximum buying mood.

To sell something, the first step is to create this buying mood. This is where we enter the creative world of Motivation. This is how we get action.

We all, at all times, wear a big sign, "Make Me Feel Important — Don't Rain on My Parade — Please Don't Blow Out my Candle." If you could imagine seeing this sign on a person you are addressing and make full use of it by making them feel important before attempting to persuade them, you would be far more successful in moving them to action.

When we have mastered this first great principle of human engineering, that people who have been made to feel important and optimistic enjoy accepting our ideas and buying our products, life itself will take on a new meaning.

## (Principle #2) We First Must Sell Ourselves

Before selling a person an idea or product, we first must sell ourselves. Until a person first accepts us, they will not accept anything we offer. This is why that first impression is so important.

There are several basic qualities which a person must recognize in us if they are to accept us.

**First, be yourself.** Remember that if you can't make a good impression being yourself, you certainly will "louse it up" trying to be something you are not. Above all else, in our dealings with others, we must be natural.

**Second, have a happy approach.** Never forget that everybody loves to be around an optimist. Don't tell people your troubles. Take time to enjoy people. No one enjoys the company of someone who seems too busy to converse in a relaxed manner.

**Third, be truly interested in the other person.** Anyone who talks only in the field of their own particular interest will find that only a few doors of conversation are open to them. Convince the other person that you are genuinely interested in all that concerns them.

Never forget that before any person will accept your ideas, products, or service, they must first accept you. While you must know your product or service, you must still think people.

## (Principle #3) People Are Persuaded Not By What We Say But By What They Understand

Much of this world's trouble is due to the fact that in our communications with others, we do not take the time to be sure that we are making ourselves clear.

When we first approach a person on any idea, at the beginning they will give us only about 10 or 15 percent of their attention. Our explanation must be so elementary and direct that it will challenge even this small percent of attention. Finally, as the person begins to understand us, and even begins to like us, they will become interested and consequently will give us a larger percentage of their attention.

Not only must we be simple and explicit in our dealings with others, but we must relate our explanations and stories to the understanding of the person to whom we are presenting our ideas. Different words have different meanings to different people. For example, the word "strike" expresses the ultimate aim of a bowler. To a baseball player, it's a nightmare. To the head of a labor union it signifies one thing; to the manager of a large factory it undoubtedly stimulates a different emotion.

Finally, in order to be sure that we are understood, we must also be dramatic. Throughout all history, the story has been the best vehicle to transport our ideas in an understandable and convincing way. Anytime we relate an example or a "for instance" we are, in reality, presenting a drama. Generously use stories in illustrating your points.

## (Principle #4) How Does It Benefit Me –– Not You, But Me?

Our ideas, products or services are acceptable to an individual only to the extent that they feel they will benefit. This is why the human engineer never mentions features unless they follow up their remarks by translating the features into benefits.

Benefits are determined primarily by time, place and circumstances. If your timing is off, value is immediately lost. You might hear, "How I wish you had spoken to me sooner about this."

Place and circumstances, also, are just as important when considering benefits and values.

Something might be extremely valuable to us at one time and under certain circumstances, and yet absolutely worthless to us on some other occasions. It is important for us to consider first the individual and all elements of their situation before even thinking of the ideas, products and services we might intend to offer. This is the very basis of human engineering.

Until you and the person you approach have first agreed completely upon what their problem is, you are not talking to anyone except yourself. You may be able to make a brilliant presentation on the unsurpassed qualities of a certain service or product, but until you first have fixed a need in someone's mind, your brilliance falls upon deaf ears.

Nothing that is offered has any value within itself if divorced from someone's needs. Only to the extent that it solves someone's problem has it any value at all. As a human engineer, first concentrate on the individual — his needs — his problems, then the door is open to present your ideas, your product or your service.

## (Principle #5) Wants, Not Needs, Cause People To Act

Needs move a person only when they are in a state of desperation. Wants are a magic ingredient. They are emotional, sentimental; they have no ceiling, no limitation. Wants alone bring out the best within us.

Making a person want what he Needs, more than what he Wants to gratify a temporary desire is often not easy. Maybe I need more insurance for my family's protection, but can you make me want it more than I want a trip to Honolulu?

It is a great challenge to the human engineer. It's a real character sale. Everyone will respond to at least one of the five motivating factors: pride, profit, need, love, or fear. Our responsibility is to find, by testing, just which one of these factors motivates an individual most strongly.

When you have found the one responsive note, you should concentrate on this one alone. Most people are moved to action by one persuasive point.

Assume, for example, that you are attempting to interest an individual in purchasing a home. As you present an advantage directed to each of the motivating factors, you are

holding the prospect's mental pulse, watching them carefully to detect any response. As soon as you get the response, you ignore the remaining motivating factors and concentrate on the one responsive note.

A bargain is measured, not in terms of dollars and cents, but rather by how nearly something comes to solving a problem. Show me something which is tailor-made to my needs, and I begin wanting it. We pay more for a tailor-made suit, a custom-made house, because we WANT it enough to be willing to pay more.

Before people will buy, they must be encouraged to WANT what they NEED — and WANT it more than something else — even more than they want the money it takes to buy it.

## (Principle #6) Emotion Opens The Door But Logic Locks It Tightly

Approximately 85 percent of the decisions in life are made by a person while they are in an emotional frame of mind and only about 15 percent are made based purely on logic. But emotion is not enough alone to ensure that a decision will be permanent. Emotion is a transitory thing — it comes and goes. As the emotion subsides, there is nothing to support the decision and hold it up. It comes "unglued."

In the field of human engineering, every day we weigh logical reasons against emotional reasons in making decisions. You want to feel justified in buying something, for example. You begin looking for a logical excuse to do the thing you emotionally desire to do.

It is important that we are able to appraise this balance between emotion and logic, whether we are attempting to sell an idea, product or service or we are considering the acceptance of such.

## Remember This...

Persuasion is converting people — no, not to our way of thinking, but to our way of feeling and believing. The most persuasive person in the world is the person who has a fanatical belief in an idea, a product or a service.

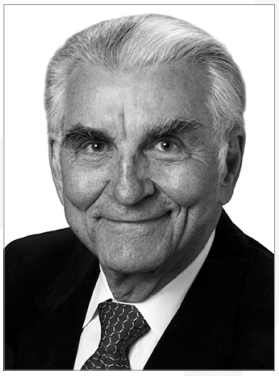
The person who completely buys into the idea they are presenting, can be practically hypnotic in their persuasive powers. That person projects enthusiasm for the idea and radiates belief in it.

The one common denominator of all great people in history is that they believed in what they were doing. The only chains and shackles that prevent any of us from realizing our life's dream are those we ourselves forge in doubt and lack of belief in what we say or do.

In 1935, Will Rogers spoke at a luncheon and offered a model blueprint for success:

"If you want to be successful, it's just this simple — Know what you are doing. Love what you are doing. And believe in what you are doing."

The greatest principle of human persuasion is that people are persuaded more by the depth of your conviction than by the height of your logic — more by your own enthusiasm than any proof you can offer.



Cavett Robert (1907-1997) is considered by many to be the founder of the modern professional speaking industry. He graduated from Ole Miss in 1929 and obtained his law degree from Washington and Lee University. After practicing law in New York, he moved to Arizona in 1937 and established himself as a successful lawyer and insurance and real estate salesman. He began his career as a platform speaker in his early sixties and in 1972 he won the coveted Golden Gavel Award from Toastmasters International. In 1973 he founded the National Speakers Association.

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# Summary

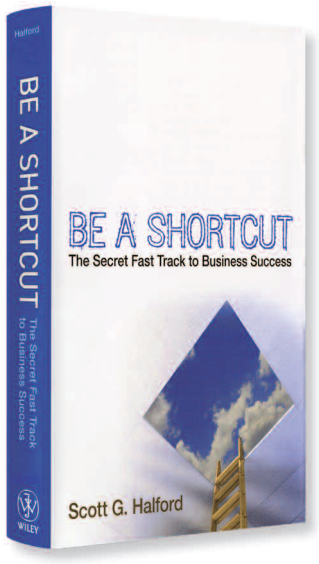
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Career Development: Business Skills

# Be a Shortcut

## The Secret Fast Track to Business Success




by Scott G. Halford

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Emotional intelligence expert Scott Halford makes it easy for all professionals to think, act and work in a way that makes them indispensable to their employers. During tough economic times, you must distinguish yourself or your product to secure your job or your organization's future; you must be remarkable. More than just another guide to career success, *Be a Shortcut* demonstrates how you can gain influence, earn respect from co-workers, accrue value, develop particular professional strengths and fulfill professional goals.

Shortcuts are individuals and companies that function like lifelines to the people and organizations that most depend on them. They are available when needed; they humbly perform tasks without complaint; they are masters of their own specific skill; and they always present a positive attitude. Halford demonstrates how shortcuts can command immeasurable influence by consistently and happily performing above and beyond the standards in their chosen fields or tasks.

You might be hanging out in the middle of the career pack or trying for a more senior job, but somehow the next rung remains elusive. You want to know what to do to get yourself the attention and influence that will allow you to take better control of your future. By utilizing Halford's case studies, personal anecdotes, exercises and lessons, you can excel in your field and be the go-to person for your colleagues.

On the road to professional success, there are no shortcuts to excellence. But when you become a shortcut in the workplace, you carve out the straightest path between you and your ultimate goal.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How the winners in financial, personal and spiritual endeavors use shortcuts.
- The shortcut goal: Make it easier, make it better, make more money.
- The shortcut role: Delight the customers while getting them what they need.
- How to become a superstar shortcut with the 21-day training model.
- What areas your organization can focus on to create a Shortcut Culture.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **BE A SHORTCUT**

**by Scott G. Halford**

**The author:** Scott G. Halford is a speaker, consultant and expert in emotional intelligence and professional mastery. He is the owner of Complete Intelligence™ LLC a consultancy with clients such as Molson Coors, Medtronic, Microsoft and Ingersoll Rand.

*Be a Shortcut: The Secret Fast Track to Business Success* by Scott G. Halford. Copyright © 2009 by Scott G. Halford. Summarized with permission of the publisher, John Wiley & Sons Inc. 237 pages. $24.95. ISBN 978-0-470-27036-3.

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com.

## Preface: What a Shortcut Looks Like

### The Rescuer on the River of Life

Early one summer while white-water rafting down the Arkansas River in the Royal Gorge Canyon of Colorado, at the midpoint of the journey the guides had to decide whether to close the river because the rapids were swelling above the level that even advanced rafters could navigate. They chose not to close the river, instead selecting only two of eight boats to continue into the most difficult water.

One of the rafts flipped within three seconds of entering the Sunshine Falls, a narrow rapid that fell under the 5.5 classification — the most advanced class of rapid before the river is closed to rafting. Close to dry land and battling the white water, a rescuer yelled for the author to clutch the rope strung overhead. That rescuer was a lifeline, a buddy, a savior.

Here are some things that a shortcut — like the rescuer — embodies. Shortcuts:

- Are there when you need them.
- Humbly do their jobs so that others can "survive" and thrive in their jobs.
- Don't complain about having to sometimes carry the weight of others.
- Are happy to make you successful.
- Don't waste time trying to convince you how good they would be doing something else.
- Are experts in their own little corner of the world.
- Command respect, admiration, even affection from those who use them as a shortcut.

## Part One: The Know-Why

### The Shortcut Way

A *shortcut* (according to the trusty dictionary) is:

- A shorter way to get to the same place.
- Any way of saving time, effort, expense and so on.

Shortcuts take the time to be experts so that we don't have to. As a result, we're willing to pay for their artistry, their mastery and know-how. The relationship between the user of a shortcut and the shortcut is magical — and you can create that magic in your life by both being a shortcut and availing yourself of the shortcuts you select to go on your journey with you.

### Back-Road Basics

As with most shortcuts, it doesn't make any sense to take the long road unless the shortcut is unethical, is illegal or leads to shoddy work. Look around you and you will see that the winners in financial, personal and spiritual endeavors — to name a few — all use excellent shortcuts:

- We can now do more things more rapidly, but because more is now expected of us all the time, those technological wonders that make life easier actually make it more complex as well.
- We now need to use shortcuts because they are valuable to our well-being and success.
- Using products and services as shortcuts is not a cop-out.
- Great shortcuts don't require you to give up quality, but they might require you to give up some money.
- The same value and payment equation applies to you when you become a shortcut.

If you're not a shortcut, you're taking up too much space. When layoffs loom, business leaders must figure

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew B. Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Paula Ezop**, Contributing Editor

out who goes and who stays. Managers will then look around and ask themselves some simple questions:

1. Who is "high maintenance"?
2. Who gets things done without having to be told, or at the very least, not told twice?
3. Who pre-empts my very thoughts and needs?
4. If I did away with a certain position, would it negatively affect the organization?
5. Do I have shortcuts in my organization who are so good that they can pick up the relatively minor shortcuts a person in question is providing?

### Are You a Shortcut or a Bottleneck?

When the Denver International Airport (DIA) first opened in October 1995, it was the most modern airport in the world. Its avionics were hailed as state of the art; it was one of few airports in the world that could simultaneously land three jumbo jets side by side; its concourse boasted a layout excellent for travelers; and it was visually stunning, if not at least an architectural oddity. All this was lost on the flying public because of a major bottleneck that plagued the airport's opening: the baggage system.

The lessons from this botched-up shortcut-turned-bottleneck are many:

- First, be careful if you brag about your shortcut abilities. Make sure it works before you trumpet the shortcut to others.
- Second, the DIA story is an excellent example of how easily you can tarnish the image you worked so hard to earn and, conversely, how difficult it is to restore a good reputation.
- Once you've promised or unleashed your service or product as a shortcut, people will hold you to the high standard you espouse and punish you if you don't deliver.

### Anatomy of a Bottleneck

Tom is a traffic engineer, which is basically an expert on flow. There was a particularly troublesome segment of I-25 in Denver that was being re-engineered because of its nightmarish traffic jams. The area is referred to as "the Narrows of I-25."

Tom was asked why it slowed to a crawl every rush hour. He explained, "A few small things can slow down and impede traffic flow, even when there are no accidents on the highway. The Narrows were built with a reduced shoulder space of about a foot on each side of the highway, in order to fit between the neighborhoods through which it cuts. It also had several badly spaced exit and entrance ramps, one after the next. The last thing is that the highway was not straight. It curved through the Narrows. All these things added up to one of the worst man-made traffic problems anywhere in the country."

When a multibillion-dollar reconstruction of I-25 was carried out in the years between 2000 and 2007, the Narrows was one of the first items on the drawing board. The highway has become what it was intended to be in the first place: a rapid way to get from one point to another through the city. It's now a marvel to travel.

Like the highway, human beings are seemingly wired to look for and respond well to shortcuts. It's part of an evolutionary process to save us time so that we don't have to think of every step and every detail in a more chaotic environment. One thing is certain, however: A good shortcut gives you the greatest gift of all — time.

There is an easy formula to think about to become a shortcut. It's useful to think about it in terms of giving a persuasive presentation. No matter what field of work you toil in, chances are you have had to do some sort of presentation — some persuading, convincing or informing, in order to get your business done. Regardless of the situation, when it comes to making your proposal, your goal as a shortcut should be to answer "yes" to the following three questions:

1. Will what you're proposing make your listener's life or job *easier*?
2. Will what you're proposing make your listener's life or job *better*?
3. Will what you're proposing make your listener *more money*?

Another piece of the formula is to think in terms of your services or product in regard to need and cost. The lower the cost and the higher the need to others, the more frequently a shortcut will be used. That demand

## Take the Shortcut Quiz

The Shortcut Quotient Inventory (SQI) will help you learn about being and becoming a shortcut. It is designed to provide you a place to start improving and to heighten your awareness about ways to change your behavior. It is only by being honest with yourself that you'll get a true idea of your areas of strength, as well as those of growth opportunity. The 27 SQI questions are listed in the introduction of the book; the answers are in the appendix with explanations and a scoring evaluation. You can also take the quiz online at www.BeAShortcut.com.

leads to a good deal of influence in pricing and negotiations. Cost is measured in both time and money. If it costs me a lot of time to work with you because of your attitude or lack of skill, your value goes down, and so does your influence.

## Part Two: The Know-What

### How to Be a Shortcut

Six Sigma (the process perfection system), Total Quality Management (TQM) and many other efficiency processes are being employed by countless companies in order to find shortcuts. The black belts of Six Sigma are the icons of this process improvement movement; but wise people don't wait for one of these programs to be adopted by their companies to be or find the shortcuts. They keep the process going on a daily basis in their own jobs. They ask themselves how they can make every step of their job easier, faster and more efficient.

We need people who are willing to become the shortcut because of the information explosion. It's said that scientific and technological information is doubling every six to eight years. After that, much of the current affairs and technological information you learned becomes obsolete. Figure out a better way to pull data together more usefully; discover how to communicate it to a broad audience; and make it easily accessible. The result will be a profitable venture.

The other thing all this information leads to is overload and paralysis. We all need people who can become our shortcuts in different areas of our lives.

Here's a valuable exercise to examine the shortcuts you use:

1. Make your own personal and professional lists and insert the names of people who do these things for you.
2. If you do them for yourself, ask if it is time for you to find someone else to do them for you.
3. Start out small if your budget doesn't allow another big expenditure.

Shortcuts can be found in all walks of life and at every level of an organization. You don't have to have an important title or a glamorous job.

Consider *DoodyCalls*. It is a Virginia-based pet waste removal company started in 2000 by Jacob and Susan D'Aniello. It's now a franchisor bringing in a startup fee of around $25,000 per franchise and growing at a rate that would make any small-business owner bay at the moon.

The more you are willing to become an expert at something no one else wants to do — and do it with a great attitude — the more influential and valuable you become.

Shortcuts are confident about what they do. Think about what you know hands-down, which jobs you are confident you can do as well as or better than others. If someone is going to be selected to do the job; it might as well be you. So raise your hand and assert yourself. Remember, as a self-aware shortcut, you create your own future.

### The Washed-Up Shortcut

We have all heard stories of people who came up with a brilliant, cost-saving product or marketing idea and made their companies a lot of dough. Subsequently, they ride on the reputation of that innovation for a long time, until wham! The top executive asks what this person has done for the company lately.

Even at the very top, you have to be a shortcut, for the street, to investors, to the board of directors, to everyone. People often look at CEOs and wonder why they are so driven. It is because they know the road to long-lasting success lies in being or finding the next shortcut. They live for it. They look for it. And when they find it, they are on to the next one, because this latest, greatest shortcut they just found is already yesterday's news.

### Get Some Screen Time

In TV, screen time is the most important asset it owns. To get some screen time as a shortcut, let's go back to basics: it's a relatively simple acid-test that many individuals and organizations forget as they begin to add frills to their offerings. Shortcuts get back to basics by asking on a regular basis, "What are we really doing here? Does the extra frill add to my value or distract me from being a shortcut?" Ask the questions and the answers may surprise you. Ask yourself: Is your frill ending up "on the screen" of your customers or your boss? Put your money where the shortcuts can be seen and felt by your customer "on the screen."

So, shortcuts ask a lot of questions, and they have a particular approach to rules as well. First, take time to think about the rules of your organization. Here are three rules for this shortcut about policies:

1. Shortcuts don't get bogged down in rules and procedures that impede forward progress.
2. Shortcuts understand the spirit and intent of a policy and its rules.
3. Shortcuts understand that their role is not to teach customers how to behave properly according to the

rules, but to delight the customers while getting them what they need.

### Find the Flow

An influential psychological researcher in the area of human performance is Mihaly (pronounced ME-high) Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced CHEEK-set-me-HIGH), who introduced a revolutionary concept while at the University of Chicago. His theory on flow — the study of optimal performance — is key to understanding how to become a master shortcut.

Csikszentmihalyi studied people in demanding pastimes that provided no direct obvious reward. He initially chose those who spent a good deal of time in physically and mentally challenging activities, such as amateur athletes and artists, rock climbers, composers and chess players. These things were universal in his subjects' experiences:

- They described a sense of timelessness — a feeling that time had become distorted and had caused them to lose track of it altogether.
- The skill felt simple.
- Self-consciousness faded away and the individual concentrated only on the moment at hand.
- There was a general sense of euphoria and joy in the person completing the task.

Csikszentmihalyi labeled this experience "flow" and wrote a book about it, appropriately titled *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.

Typically, the more mastery you achieve, the rarer you and your talents become; and with that, the more valuable you become. Do not ignore your strengths. It's where you'll find mastery. If you find yourself in the situation where you're overworked, and it is indeed true that you are *the* resource, it's time to negotiate.

Mastery has its privileges, but sometimes you have to ask for them. Expertise accounts for only a portion of what makes a shortcut a shortcut. If you're lacking in know-how, your negotiations might not go as well as you would like.

### Incite Your Insights

The insightful person is a much-praised and coveted shortcut because he or she offers that quick assessment, uncanny observation or revolutionary thought that brings corporations billions of dollars in revenue or cost containment.

The competitive edge you have is neither the result of the data you have nor your experience alone, but both combined and seasoned with reflection. They give you something no other living person on the planet has: your distinctive insight. Trust yourself. Practice insight. Practice verbalizing it to others. Practice allowing others to improve upon it. Practice pushing the elevator to the top floor. That's where your seat is awaiting you, at the table with those who are providing priceless insight.

By properly using your insights, you can stand out with just a little bit of creativity. Shortcuts are so good at what they do that they have the time to be more creative and add spice to their skill, whatever it is. And they look forward to it. They know they don't necessarily have to have the next big idea; but thanks to their mastery, they can visualize and utilize the little things that make a big difference in even the simplest thing.

### Use the White Space

Shortcuts are also good at seeing what might be missing, and then filling it in. They notice something in the white space around the image, not just the image itself. In other words, they look beyond the obvious to find answers. Shortcuts ask enough questions to help them see the white space, and they are rewarded for it accordingly. When they deliver, they give not only what is requested but anything else that might be needed as well. When you're an expert, you're more able to see the white space because you have broader experiences.

Framing, or reframing, is one of the single most important things we can do to be a shortcut in expressing important thoughts. Not only is it essential to communicating our ideas, it's a shortcut's greatest tool for getting to the heart of a matter quickly and effectively. It demonstrates the shortcut principle of "I'm good enough at what I do that I can frame my work in myriad different ways so that people can understand it, no matter what their experience with my area."

In addition to framing, influence plays a key role. Influence is not about getting something you want in any particular instance, simply because you were able to, for example, use the right combination of words at the right time. Instead, influence can be defined with one five-letter word: "trust." The most successful shortcuts are influential. ●

## Part Three: The Know-How

### The Quickest Personal Shortcut

There are few things that will help you in your life and your job as much as likeability.

What constitutes likeability? Probably it's different for each of us, but most people, including social scientists, would agree on a number of common attributes:

- Physical attractiveness.
- Similarity.
- Recognition and complimenting.
- Cooperation.

You become likeable when people like being around you; and they like being around you because they feel good about themselves when they are with you.

### Image: Your Status Is Not Quo

Your status changes when your audience changes. The more mastery you achieve in a particular area, the less significant the change in perception will be about you from situation to situation; but there will still be a shift.

None of us is exempt from what is called "status shift." It happens to the president of the United States when he goes from a press conference in the Rose Garden to a meeting with heads of state or to ask Congress to approve his budget. It happens to the carwash guy, who behaves differently in front of his customers than when he's addressing his crew.

The point is that the image we have of ourselves is, in part, shaped by our audience; and shortcuts are expert when it comes to this status shift, and when it comes to reading their audience.

Once you've gotten your network together and have the image you want within it, it's important to nurture your network. LinkedIn.com is like Facebook.com or MySpace.com, but for professionals who want to nurture their shortcuts. You go online, sign up and begin linking to college friends you haven't spoken to in a long time. You link to former co-workers, no matter how long ago you lost track of them and no matter where they are.

When you're in a pinch and need something right away, if you have a nice list of shortcuts that you have been nurturing, you'll be able to rely on them to get you what you need.

Successful shortcuts want to increase their value by becoming the resource that people think of every time. It does matter how people feel about you. Think of two questions: How do you leave people feeling after you've "served" them and do they feel as if it was your honor to be able to serve them?

### Emotional Intelligence: The Must-Have Trait

Dr. Reuven Bar-On is one of the world's seminal researchers on emotional intelligence. His layperson definition of emotional intelligence is that it is the measurement of street smarts, of experiential wisdom.

Shortcuts pay attention to the subtleties of emotion to make experiences successful. They're not just enamored with their own knowledge; they recognize intuitively emotional factors as well — that everyone wants to be around people who make us feel good, smart, validated — and like we're not going crazy for having asked a question.

Shortcuts have a good attitude. They make it easy to be around them. They make others *want* to be around them. They don't require the extra time to deal with them that bottlenecks do. Having and keeping a good attitude is a lot more difficult than you might think, however. But when people are relying on you every day, unless something is catastrophic, they're too busy with their own "stuff"to have to deal with yours too.

### Focus: Finding What Motivates You

Frederick Herzberg and David McClelland were research psychologists whose theories and studies have been incorporated into nearly all of the most successful leadership and personal growth approaches over the last 50 years.

The shortcut is a "motivation seeker." Herzberg says workers who fall into this category are driven primarily by internal motivators, such as:

1. Achievements/accomplishments at work.
2. Earned recognition (the feeling of pride is internal).
3. The work itself.
4. Personal growth.
5. Advancement in the organization (paired with achievement).
6. Responsibility.

These motivational factors should lead you to ask yourself if what you do currently is little more than a way for you to earn a paycheck. If it offers little or no long-lasting fulfillment, then you have an opportunity to start taking inventory of your life, to discover whether you can find work that will also bring meaning to your life.

### Why 'Yes' Is Usually the Right Answer

There are many ways to say yes in your own work.

- The shortcut isn't always responsible for making the decision, but he or she is always there to serve as a resource to help the person making the decision.
- The best shortcuts have a yes-attitude and proceed to pull together enough resources and information to help someone else arrive at a decision.
- Shortcuts do not only look for information to corroborate their idea.
- Shortcuts do not scold requestors into agreement, if they happen to disagree with the request.

### Choices: The Rewards of Offering Them

Shortcuts practice behaviors that put control where most people want it: in their own hands. Shortcuts use their considerable expertise and resources to advise rather than make decisions for others, demand or pass judgment.

Most of us want to have choices, and most of us also seek advice and maybe a little hand-holding from a shortcut to help us decide; but, ultimately, *we* want to be the ones who choose. The degree to which you, as a shortcut, can present well-informed choices is the amount by which your stock as a shortcut goes up.

### Create Stickiness

David Smith, an American sculptor, once noted, "Anytime you can expand your network and users in this market, it's significant. The goal is to make it 'sticky,' make users come back to it."

Successful shortcuts *are* sticky. They make their companies piles of money and keep the customers coming back. They create stickiness by doing many small things very well. They also find ways to make every part of every transaction seamless and easy for their clients. They pay attention and think a step ahead; the result is a fully satisfied, greatly impressed and permanently sticky customer.

### Responsibility: If You Take It, You'll Make It

Responsibility is an issue that has plagued both business and society for generations. The German playwright, poet and novelist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "Let everyone sweep in front of their own door. Then the whole world will be clean." Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to sweep around their own door. Shortcuts can, and should, be the first to pick up their brooms and show others the way.

Surprisingly, many employees of large corporations — from the top down — refuse to take responsibility for the mood and morale of their workplaces; for the way things are going for their companies in general; even for their own careers.

In the author's conversations with these employees, they say, it was always somebody else's fault — management made a stupid decision; *they* did the wrong thing; *they* didn't treat people fairly; *they* didn't care about anyone. The implication being: The woes of the organization are always the fault of others, and if others are at fault, why should the employee do the right thing, treat people fairly or care about others?

Shortcuts take responsibility for all their efforts, even the crummy ones. They are prepared to learn from their first drafts and not cast blame on the "theys" of the world.

## Train Your Brain for 21 Days

The first step toward achieving excellence in any field is having the desire or motivation. Select a focused goal that you can practice or address every single day for 21 days. The more often you repeat the behavior, the more your brain will reward you by thickening the neural pathway that leads to your performance of the behavior more easily and comfortably. The basic model is:

- See, hear about, witness and/or visualize the accomplishment of a skill.
- Try (practice) the skill.
- Think about how the skill worked for you.
- Adjust to improve the skill.
- Reward your improvement and repeat.
- Do it every day for 21 days.

### Feelings: The Halo Effect

All feelings — good or bad — produce a "halo effect." It has long been known that humans are conditioned to assign positive thoughts and feelings to products associated with people we like or admire, who endorse the products.

As a shortcut, the halo effect likewise applies to you and/or your product; that is, the feeling part comes into play. People have a tendency to forget what you say, and they might even forget what you did for them. But they will always remember how they felt when you or your product or service reappears on their radar screen.

Shortcuts are a true win/win. Everyone likes to be a winner, and when the shortcut makes you feel like you win — even when they take your money — that sensation continues long after the shortcut service is complete. We return over and over again to our shortcut, even if the rest of what they do is not really out of the ordinary. Now who's the big winner? The shortcut, once again.

### Context: Make Things Right

Skilled professionals manage the context of each interaction to increase its appeal; and their sales quotas and general success prove the wisdom of doing so. You must:

1. Determine what the mood is. This requires empathy and an ability to see things through the eyes of anyone else involved.
2. If the mood is negative, ask questions and listen carefully to what you're being told. Take care not to interrogate a person in a negative state. He or she will close down even further. Focus your questioning

on finding out whether you should even be there.

3. Ask, sincerely, if it would be better to reschedule the appointment. If now is the only time the client can and wants to talk, tread lightly, be brief and speak in high-level bullet points. Remember, the client will be doing little actual listening if he or she is in a bad space.
4. Look for any sign of light in the dark mood and build on it. If a client says he or she likes something, for example, take time to give more information about it. This is your opportunity to get a little chattier and to bring the context into a more positive place.
5. Once you've maneuvered the context into a more positive position, you can negotiate and sell — but not a moment before. ●

## Part Four: The Shortcut as a Company

### The Shortcut Organization

Creating an organizational Shortcut Culture is, to be sure, a major undertaking. But it can be done. The organizations that have already accomplished this shift are notable, and their customers are generous with both praise and loyalty — which translates into revenue. Those that have not, have a tendency to overlook many of the small things that result in a first-rate customer service reputation.

There are four distinct areas your organization can focus on to create a Shortcut Culture:

- Executive buy-in (from the "C-level" execs) of the need for the Shortcut Culture.
- Education of the top 10 percent of senior leaders in the organization and their subsequent practice of what they've learned.
- Education of all employees at all organizational levels.
- The hiring process.

### Shortcuts Transform

With regard to creating shortcuts, all the same rules apply to corporations that pertain to individuals. If your company is not providing a shortcut to someone or something, it won't be viable for long.

Shortcuts are creative. Looking for more revenue streams in your company? What are your customers doing to adapt and customize your products to their specific needs? Do it for them, only better. Shortcuts are excellent at spotting the trends because they are experts in their area. They are trendsetters, not trend-getters.

It's useful to complete this exercise to see what you offer as a shortcut.

1. Ask your friends and colleagues about your service or product. Do they need it and, if so, how much would they be willing to pay for it?
2. If someone were thumbing through a shortcut catalog and came across you and what you have to offer, would they say, "You've got to be kidding me! Is this a joke?" or, "Cool! I need one of those"? ●

## Part Five: The Long and Shortcut of It

### The Lessons Have Always Been There

Being a shortcut is about the positive or negative energy you choose to bring to every situation. Those with emotional intelligence *choose* the positive. Emotionally intelligent living requires a mindful effort; and it's the more difficult part of being a shortcut. If you don't want to read all the studies of emotional intelligence, simply ask yourself this shortcut question: Do people feel good or bad when they are with you? Whichever reaction you evoke in others is due to the energy — good and bad — that you emit. Shortcuts are aware of their energy.

The shortcut proposition is simple:

- Get shortcuts. It's the single easiest thing you can do to make your life more enjoyable and your success more attainable. Find experts and use them.
- As a shortcut yourself, you write your own ticket when you focus on mastering a service or product and then offering it with positive energy and a good dose of emotional intelligence.
- Enjoy the process.
- Life is sweet because of the journey we choose to take, not because we get to the end of it. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Be A Shortcut*, you'll also like:

1. ***Influencer*** **by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler.** From the authors of *Crucial Confrontations* comes a thought-provoking look at how individuals — no matter who they are — can become the type of influencers who are bringing about change in the world today.
2. ***The Speed of Trust*** **by Stephen M.R. Covey.** While corporate scandals, financial meltdown and broken relationships have created low trust, the ability to establish, grow, extend and restore trust is essential. Stephen M.R. Covey gives insight into this critical skill.
3. ***You've Got to Be Believed to Be Heard*** **by Bert Decker with Jim Denney.** A master communicator shows you how to appeal to a listener's emotions to gain immediate acceptance for your message, product or idea.

# Summary

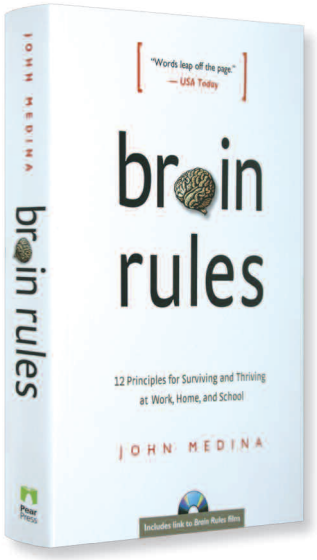
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Career & Self-Development: Business Skills

# Brain Rules

## 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School




by John Medina

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Most of us have no idea what's really going on inside our heads. Yet brain scientists have uncovered details every business leader, parent and teacher should know — such as the brain needs physical activity to work at its best.

How do we learn? What exactly do sleep and stress do to our brains? Why is multitasking a myth? Why is it so easy to forget — and so important to repeat new knowledge? Is it true that men and women have different brains?

In *Brain Rules*, molecular biologist John Medina shares his lifelong interest in how the brain sciences might influence the way we teach our children and the way we work. He introduces 12 "Brain Rules" — which cover what scientists know for sure about how our brains work — and then offers ideas for investigating how each rule might apply to our daily lives, especially at work and school.

Medina identifies "the brain's performance envelope" and looks at subjects that relate to this envelope, including exercise, survival, wiring, attention, memory, sleep, stress, vision, gender and exploration.

In the end, you'll better understand how your brain really works — and how to get the most out of it.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why our brains need physical activity as much or more than our bodies.
- Why you've got seconds to grab someone's attention and only 10 minutes to keep it.
- How taking a nap might make you more productive and mentally agile.
- Why those in neuroscience, education and business need to work together to develop improvements in both teaching and management methods.
- Why the differences between men's and women's brains start with how they got that way in the first place.

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January 2010 • Order #32A-TFS

# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **BRAIN RULES**

**by John Medina**

**The author:** John Medina is a developmental molecular biologist and research consultant. He is an affiliate Professor of Bioengineering at the University of Washington School of Medicine. He is also the director of the Brain Center for Applied Learning Research at Seattle Pacific University. Medina's books include: *The Genetic Inferno; The Clock of Ages; Depression: How it Happens, How it Heals; What You Need to Know About Alzheimer's; The Outer Limits of Life; Uncovering the Mystery of AIDS;* and *Of Serotonin, Dopamine and Antipsychotic Medications.*

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com and http://www.brainrules.com.

## Introduction

Go ahead and multiply the number 8,388,628 x 2 in your head. Can you do it in a few seconds? There is a young man who can double that number 24 times in the space of a few seconds. He gets it right every time.

There is a boy who can tell you the precise time of day at any moment, even in his sleep. There is a girl who can correctly determine the exact dimensions of an object 20 feet away. There is a child who at age 6 drew such lifelike and powerful pictures that she got her own gallery on Madison Avenue. Yet none of these children could be taught to tie their shoes. Indeed, none of them have an IQ greater than 50.

The brain is an amazing thing.

To accomplish the miracle of reading, for example, your brain sends jolts of electricity crackling through hundreds of miles of wires composed of brain cells so small that thousands of them could fit into the period at the end of a sentence.

What's equally incredible, given our intimate association with our brains, is that most of us have no idea how our brains work.

### Strange Consequences

This has strange consequences. We try to talk on our cell phones and drive at the same time, even though it is literally impossible for our brains to multitask when it comes to paying attention. We have created high-stress office environments, even though a stressed brain is significantly less productive. Our schools are designed so that most real learning has to occur at home.

Blame it on the fact that brain scientists rarely have a conversation with teachers and business professionals, education majors and accountants, superintendents and CEOs. ●

## EXERCISE — Rule #1: Exercise Boosts Brain Power

From an evolutionary perspective, our brains developed while working out, walking as many as 12 miles a day. The brain still craves that experience, especially in sedentary populations like our own. That's why exercise boosts brain power.

Exercisers outperform couch potatoes in long-term memory, reasoning, attention, and problem-solving tasks. Integrating exercise into our eight hours at work or school would only be normal.

There are two compelling business reasons for such radical ideas. Business leaders already know that if employees exercised regularly, it would reduce health care costs. And there's no question that cutting in half someone's lifetime risk of a debilitating stroke or Alzheimer's disease is a wonderfully humanitarian thing to do.

But exercise also could boost the collective brain power of an organization. Fit employees are capable of mobilizing their God-given IQs better than sedentary employees.

For companies whose competitiveness rests on creative intellectual horsepower, such mobilization could mean a strategic advantage. ●

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Paula Ezop**, Contributing Editor

## SURVIVAL — Rule #2: The Human Brain Evolved, Too

The brain appears to be designed to solve problems related to surviving in an unstable outdoor environment and to do so in nearly constant motion. The brain adapted this way as a survival strategy to help us live long enough to pass our genes to the next generation.

Ecosystems are harsh, crushing life as easily as supporting it. Scientists estimate 99.99 percent of all species that have ever lived are extinct today. Our bodies, brains included, latched on to any genetic adaptation that helped us survive.

There are two ways to beat the cruelty of the environment: You can become stronger or you can become smarter. Humans chose the latter. It seems most improbable that such a physically weak species could take over the planet not by adding muscles to our skeletons but by adding neurons to our brains.

But we did, and scientists have spent a great deal of effort trying to figure out how.

Judy DeLoache, a researcher at the University of Virginia, has studied this question extensively. She is especially interested in how human cognition can be distinguished from the way other animals think about their respective worlds.

### Symbolic Reasoning

One of DeLoache's major contributions was to identify the human trait that really does separate us from the gorillas: the ability to use symbolic reasoning. When we see a five-sided geometric shape, we're not stuck perceiving it as a pentagon. We can just as easily perceive the U.S. military headquarters or a Chrysler minivan. Our brain can behold a symbolic object as real all by itself and yet, simultaneously, also representing something else.

DeLoache calls it Dual Representational Theory. Stated formally, it describes our ability to attribute characteristics and meanings to things that don't actually possess them. Stated informally, we can make things up that aren't there. We are human because we can fantasize.

Symbolic reasoning is a uniquely human talent. It may have arisen from our need to understand one another's intentions and motivations, allowing us to coordinate within a group.

### Meet Your Brain

The prefrontal cortex is only the newest addition to the brain. Three brains are tucked inside your head, and parts of their structure took millions of years to design. (This "triune theory of the brain" is one of several models scientists use to describe the brain's overarching structural organization.)

Your most ancient neural structure is the brain stem, or ***lizard brain***. This rather insulting label reflects the fact that the brain stem functions the same in you as in a gila monster. The brain stem controls most of your body's housekeeping chores. Its neurons regulate breathing, heart rate, sleeping and waking.

Sitting atop your brain stem is what looks like a sculpture of a scorpion carrying a slightly puckered egg on its back. The ***Paleomammalian brain*** appears in you the same way it does in many mammals, such as house cats, which is how it got its name. It has more to do with your animal survival than with your human potential.

Several parts of this "second brain" play a large role in

## Jack LaLanne: Godfather of the American Fitness Movement

A man was handcuffed, shackled and thrown into California's Long Beach Harbor, where he was quickly fastened to a floating cable. The cable had been attached at the other end to 70 boats, bobbing up and down in the harbor, each carrying a single person. Battling strong winds and currents, the man then swam, towing all 70 boats (and passengers) behind him, traveling 1.5 miles to Queen's Way Bridge. The man, Jack LaLanne, was celebrating his birthday. He had just turned 70 years old.

LaLanne, born in 1914, has been called the godfather of the American fitness movement. He starred in one of the longest running exercise programs produced for commercial television. A prolific inventor, LaLanne designed the first leg-extension machines, the first cable-fastened pulleys, and the first weight selectors, all now standard issue in the modern gym.

To hear him in an interview, your biggest impression would be not the strength of his muscles but the strength of his mind. LaLanne is mentally alert, almost beyond reason. His sense of humor is both lightening fast and improvisatory. He is hyper-energized, opinionated and possessed with the intellectual vigor of an athlete in his 20s. So it's hard not to ask: "Is there a relationship between exercise and mental alertness?" The answer, it turns out, is yes.

the Brain Rules. The claw of the scorpion, called the amygdale, allows you to feel rage, fear or pleasure, or experience memories of rage, fear or pleasure. The amygdale is responsible for both the creation of emotions and the memories they generate.

The leg attaching the claw to the body of the scorpion is called the hippocampus. The hippocampus converts your short-term memories into longer-term forms. The scorpion's tail curls over an egg-shaped structure like the letter "C" — as if protecting it.

This "egg" is the thalamus, one of the most active, well-connected parts of the brain — a control tower for the senses. Sitting squarely in the center of your brain, it processes signals sent from nearly every corner of your sensory universe, then routes them to specific areas throughout your brain.

Arching above like a cathedral is your ***human brain***, the cortex. Latin for "bark," the cortex is the surface of your brain. It is in deep electrical communication with the interior.

This "skin" ranges in thickness from that of blotting paper to that of heavy-duty cardboard. It appears to have been crammed into a space too small for its surface area. Indeed, if your cortex were unfolded, it would be about the size of a baby blanket.

## WIRING — Rule #3: Every Brain Is Wired Differently

The human brain, only partially constructed at birth, will not be fully assembled for years. The biggest construction programs aren't finished until you are in your early 20s, with fine-tuning well into your mid-40s.

When babies are born, their brains have about the same number of connections as adults have. That doesn't last long. By the time children are 3 years old, the connections in specific regions of their brains have doubled or even tripled. This doubling and tripling doesn't last long, either. The brain soon takes thousands of tiny pruning shears and trims back a lot of this hard work.

By the time children are 8 or so, they're back to their adult numbers. And if kids never went through puberty, that would be the end of the story. In fact, it is only the middle of the story.

At puberty, the whole thing starts over again. Quite different regions in the brain begin developing. Once again, you see frenetic neural outgrowth and furious pruning back. It isn't until parents begin thinking about college financial aid for their high schoolers that the children's brains begin to settle down to their adult forms (sort of). It's like a double-humped camel. From a connectivity point of view there is a great deal of activity in the terrible twos and then, during the terrible teens, a great deal more.

Whether examining toddlers or teenagers, different regions in different children develop at different rates.

### Ideas

Given these data, does it make any sense to have school systems that expect every brain to learn like every other? Does it make sense to treat everybody the same in business, especially in a global economy replete with various cultural experiences? The data offer powerful implications for how we should teach kids — and, when they grow up and get a job, how we should treat them as employees.

**Smaller Class Size** — All else being equal, it has been known for many years that smaller, more intimate schools create better learning environments than megaplex houses of learning. Given that every brain is wired differently, being able to read a student's mind is a powerful tool in the hands of a teacher.

Theory of Mind, defined as the ability to understand the interior motivations of someone else and the ability to construct a predictable theory of how their mind works based on that knowledge, gives teachers critical access to their students' interior educational life.

**Customized Instruction** — To create more individualized instruction within a grade level, a three-pronged research effort between brain and education scientists is suggested:

1. Evaluate teachers for advanced Theory of Mind skills, using one of the four main tests that measure empathy. Determine whether this affects student performance in a statistically valid fashion.
2. Develop adaptive software for a variety of subjects and grade levels.
3. Test both ideas in various combinations. Add to the mix environments where the student-teacher ratio is both typical and optimized, and then compare the results.

The reason to do this is straightforward: You cannot change the fact that the human brain is individually wired. Every student's brain, every employee's brain, every customer's brain is wired differently.

What you do and learn in life physically changes what your brain looks like — it literally rewires it.

## ATTENTION — Rule #4: We Don't Pay Attention to Boring Things

The more attention the brain pays to a given stimulus, the more elaborately the information will be encoded and retained. This has implications for your employees, your students and your kids.

But peer-reviewed studies confirm that before the first quarter-hour is over in a typical presentation, people have usually checked out. The brain seems to be making choices according to some stubborn timing pattern, undoubtedly influenced by both culture and gene. This fact suggests a teaching and business imperative: Find a way to arouse and then hold somebody's attention for a specific period of time.

The messages that do grab our attention are connected to memory, interest and awareness.

In everyday life, we use previous experience to predict where we should pay attention. Different environments create different expectations. The brain continuously scans the sensory horizon, with events constantly assessed for their potential interest or importance. The more important events are then given extra attention.

Emotionally arousing events tend to be better remembered than neutral events. Studies show that emotional arousal focuses attention on the "gist" of an experience at the expense of peripheral details.

Of course, at work and at school, detailed knowledge is often critical for success. Interestingly, our reliance on gist may actually be fundamental to finding a strategy for remembering details.

Whether you are a waiter or brain scientist, if you want to get the particulars correct, don't start with details. Start with the key ideas and, in a hierarchical fashion, form the details around these larger notions.

### The Brain Cannot Multitask

Multitasking, when it comes to paying attention, is a myth. We are biologically incapable of processing attention-rich inputs simultaneously. We must jump from one thing to another. It is time-consuming and it is sequential. That's why people find themselves losing track of previous progress and needing to "start over," perhaps muttering things like "Now where was I?" each time they switch tasks.

The best you can say is that people who appear to be good at multitasking actually have good working memories, capable of paying attention to several inputs *one at a time.*

## SHORT-TERM MEMORY — Rule #5: Repeat to Remember

Hermann Ebbinghaus was born in 1850 and is famous for uncovering one of the most depressing facts in all of education: People usually forget 90 percent of what they learn in a class within 30 days. He further showed that the majority of this forgetting occurs within the first few hours after class. This has been robustly confirmed in modern times.

Ebbinghaus's work was foundational. It was also incomplete. It did not, for example, separate the notion of memory from retrieval — the difference between learning something and recalling it later.

There are two types of memories: memories that involve conscious awareness and memories that don't. This awareness distinction gradually morphed into the idea that there were memories you could declare and there were memories you could not declare.

Declarative memories are those that can be experienced in our conscious awareness, such as "this shirt is green," "Jupiter is a planet," or even a list of words. Nondeclarative memories are those that cannot be experienced in our conscious awareness, such as the motor skills necessary to ride a bike.

This does not explain everything about human memory. It does not even explain everything about declarative memory. But the rigor of Ebbinghaus gave future scientists their first real shot at mapping behavior onto a living brain. Research shows that the life cycle of declarative memory can be divided into four sequential steps: encoding, storing, retrieving and forgetting.

### Cracking the Code

Despite their wide reach, scientists have found that all encoding processes have common characteristics. Three of these hold true promise for real-world applications in both business and education:

- The more elaborately we encode information at the moment of learning, the stronger the memory.
- A memory trace appears to be stored in the same parts of the brain that perceived and processed the initial input.
- Retrieval may best be improved by replicating the conditions surrounding the initial encoding.

What does it mean to make encoding and retrieving environments equivalent in the real world of business and education? The most robust findings occur when the environments exist in dramatically different contexts from the norm. But how different from normal life does

the setup need to be to obtain the effect?

It could be as simple as making sure that an oral examination is studied for orally, rather than by reviewing written material. Or perhaps future airplane mechanics should be taught about engine repair in the actual shop where the repairs will occur.

## LONG-TERM MEMORY — Rule #6: Remember to Repeat

We now suspect that short-term memory is actually a collection of temporary memory capacities. Each capacity specializes in processing a specific type of information. Each operates in a parallel fashion with the others. To reflect this multifaceted talent, short-term memory is now called working memory.

Working memory is known to be a busy, temporary workspace, a desktop the brain uses to process newly acquired information.

The process of converting short-term memory traces to longer, sturdier forms is called consolidation. At first, a memory trace is flexible, labile, subject to amendment and at great risk for extinction. Most of the inputs we encounter in a given day fall into this category. But some memories stick with us. Initially fragile, these memories strengthen with time and become remarkably persistent.

Memory may not be fixed at the moment of learning, but repetition, doled out in specifically timed intervals, is the fixative.

The relationship between repetition and memory is clear. Deliberately re-expose yourself to the information more elaborately, and in fixed, spaced intervals, if you want the retrieval to be the most vivid it can be. Learning occurs best when new information is incorporated gradually into the memory store rather than when it is jammed in all at once.

Long-term memories are formed in a two-way conversation between the hippocampus and the cortex, until the hippocampus breaks the connection and the memory is fixed in the cortex — which can take years.

Perhaps learning in the long view should be thought of the same way one thinks of immune booster shots, with critical pieces of information being repeated on a yearly or semi-yearly basis.

## SLEEP — Rule #7: Sleep Well, Think Well

In 1965, 17-year-old Randy Gardner decided that his science-fair project would involve not sleeping for 11 straight days and observing what happened. To the astonishment of just about everyone, he accomplished the feat, setting a world record that year for sleep loss. The project attracted the attention of scientist William Dement, who was given permission to study what happened to the teenager's mind during the week and a half he was awake. What happened to Randy's mind was extraordinary.

To put it charitably, it started to malfunction.

In short order, he became irritable, forgetful, nauseous and, to no one's surprise, unbelievably tired. Five days into his experiment, Randy began to suffer from what could pass for Alzheimer's disease. He was actively hallucinating, severely disoriented and paranoid. He thought a local radio host was out to get him because of his changes in memory.

In the last four days of his experiment, he lost motor function, his fingers trembling and his speech slurred. Curiously, on the final day, he still was able to beat Dement at pinball, doing so 100 consecutive times.

So we know bad things happen when we don't get any sleep. But we still don't know why we need to sleep.

### Sleep Loss = Brain Drain

When you look at all of the data combined, a consistency emerges: Sleep is rather intimately involved in learning. It is observable with large amounts of sleep; it is observable with small amounts of sleep; it is observable all the time.

Some kind of offline processing is occurring at night. Is it possible that the reason we need to sleep is simply to shut off the exterior world for a while, allowing us to divert more attentional resources to our cognitive interiors? Is it possible that the reason we need to sleep is so that we can learn?

Here's what we do know:

- The brain is in a constant state of tension between cells and chemicals that try to put you to sleep and cells and chemicals that try to keep you awake.
- The neurons of your brain show vigorous rhythmical activity when you're asleep — perhaps replaying what you learned that day.
- People vary in how much sleep they need and when they prefer to get it, but the biological drive for an afternoon nap is universal.
- Loss of sleep hurts attention, executive function, working memory, mood, quantitative skills, logical reasoning and even motor dexterity.

## STRESS — Rule #8: Stressed Brains Don't Learn the Same Way

You can feel your body responding to stress: Your pulse races, your blood pressure rises and you feel a massive release of energy. That's the famous hormone adrenaline at work. The overall effect is called the fight or flight response. But there's a less famous hormone at work, too — also released by the adrenals, and just as powerful. It's called cortisol. It's the second wave of our defensive reaction to stressors and, in small doses, it wipes out most unpleasant aspects of stress, returning us to normalcy.

Stress hormones can do some truly nasty things to your brain if boatloads of the stuff are given free access to your central nervous system. That's what's going on when you experience chronic stress.

Under chronic stress, adrenaline creates scars in your blood vessels that can cause a heart attack or stroke, and cortisol damages the cells of the hippocampus, crippling your ability to learn and remember.

Three things matter in determining whether a workplace is stressful: the type of stress, a balance between occupational stimulation and boredom, and the condition of the employee's home life. The perfect storm of occupational stress appears to be a combination of two malignant facts: a) a great deal is expected of you and b) you have no control over whether you will perform well.

To detect stress-related problems, one might simply examine the situations where an employee feels the most helpless. The next step would be to change the situation. This might change the absentee rate of employees, cut down on the number of trips to the doctor and reduce insurance overhead.

As well as money saved, a great deal of creativity may be engendered simply by routinely giving employees a way out — not from their jobs, but from the stress they experience in them.

## SENSORY INTEGRATION — Rule #9: Stimulate More of the Senses

External physical inputs and internal emotional inputs all are presented to your brain in a never-ending fire hose of sensations. As in a normal morning in Manhattan for example, your brain perceives the screech of the taxis, the pretzels for sale, the crosswalk signal and the people brushing past. Snapshots like these illustrate the incredible amount of sensory information your brain must process simultaneously.

We absorb information about an event through our senses, translate it into electrical signals (some from sight, others from sound, etc.), disperse those signals to separate parts of the brain, then reconstruct what happened, eventually perceiving the event as a whole.

There is no question that multiple cues, dished up via different senses, enhance learning. They speed up responses, increase accuracy, improve stimulation detection and enrich encoding at the moment of learning.

Our senses evolved to work together — vision influencing hearing, for example — which means we learn best if we stimulate several senses at once.

## VISION — Rule #10: Vision Trumps All Other Senses

We do not see with our eyes. We see with our brains. What we see is only what our brain tells us we see, and it's not 100 percent accurate. We actually experience our visual environment as a fully analyzed *opinion* about what the brain thinks is out there.

The visual analysis we do has many steps. The retina assembles photons into little movie-like streams of information. The visual cortex processes these streams, some areas registering motion, others registering color, etc. Finally, we combine that information back together so we can see.

If you think the brain has to devote a lot of its precious thinking resources to vision, you are right on the money. It takes up about half of everything you do, in fact. Vision is probably the best single tool we have for learning anything.

### Pictures — Worth a Thousand Words

When it comes to memory, researchers have known for more than 100 years that pictures and text follow very different rules. Put simply, the more visual the input becomes, the more likely it is to be recognized and recalled. The phenomenon is so pervasive, it has been given its own name: the pictorial superiority effect, or PSE.

Text and oral presentations are not just less efficient than pictures for retaining certain types of information; they are *way* less efficient. If information is presented orally, people remember about 10 percent, tested 72 hours after exposure. That figure goes up to 65 percent if you add a picture.

One of the reasons text is less capable than pictures is that the brain sees words as lots of tiny pictures. Even when we read, most of us try to visualize what the text

is telling us. Pictorial information may be initially more attractive to consumers, in part because it takes less effort to comprehend. Because it is also a more efficient way to glue information to a neuron, there may be strong reasons for entire marketing departments to think seriously about making pictorial presentations their primary way of transferring information.

We learn and remember best through pictures, not through written or spoken words. ●

## GENDER — Rule #11: Male and Female Brains are Different

There is a great deal of confusion regarding the way men and women relate to each other, and even more about why. The differences between men's and women's brains start with how they got that way in the first place.

### The X Factor

If you have two X chromosomes, you go into the ladies' locker room all your life; an X and Y puts you forever in the men's. The Y can be donated only by sperm (the egg never carries one), so the male determines the sex.

Labs have found differences in the front and prefrontal cortex areas of the brain that control much of our decision-making ability. This cortex is fatter, in certain parts, in women than in men.

Women are genetically more complex, because the active X chromosomes in their cells are a mix of Mom's and Dad's. Men's X chromosomes all come from Mom, and their Y chromosome carries less than 100 genes, compared with about 1,500 for the X chromosome.

Men's and women's brains are different structurally and biochemically — men have a bigger amygdale and produce serotonin faster, for example — but we don't know if those differences have significance.

Men and women respond differently to acute stress: Women activate the left hemisphere's amygdale and remember the emotional details. Men use the right amygdale and get the gist.

Dealing with the emotional lives of men and women is a big part of the job for teachers and business professionals. They need to know:

1. Emotions are useful. They make the brain pay attention.
2. Men and women process certain emotions differently.
3. The differences are a product of complex interactions between nature and nurture. ●

## EXPLORATION — Rule #12: We Are Powerful and Natural Explorers

Babies are the model of how we learn — not by passive reaction to the environment but by active testing through observation, hypothesis, experiment and conclusion. Specific parts of the brain allow this scientific approach. The right prefrontal cortex looks for errors in our hypothesis ("The saber-toothed tiger is not harmless"), and an adjoining region tells us to change behavior ("Run!").

We can recognize and imitate behavior because of "mirror neurons" scattered across the brain. Mirror neurons are cells whose activity reflect their surroundings. Cues that can elicit mirror neural responses are remarkably subtle. Classic imitative behavior is when you stick your tongue out at a baby and the baby imitates you. Other neurons mirror a variety of motor behaviors.

Researchers have shown that some regions of the adult brain stay as malleable as a baby's brain, so we can grow new connections, strengthen existing connections and even create new neurons, allowing all of us to be lifelong learners.

For little ones, discovery brings joy. It is a straight-up reward system that, if allowed to flourish, will continue into the school years. As children get older, they find that learning not only brings them joy, but it also brings them mastery. Expertise in specific subjects breeds the confidence to take intellectual risks.

### The Sense of Wonder

The greatest Brain Rule of all is the importance of curiosity. Classrooms and businesses should be designed with the brain in mind. If we started over, curiosity would be the most vital part of both demolition crew and reconstruction crew. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Brain Rules*, you'll also like:

1. ***Sway* by Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman.** We are all prone to irrational behavior, but understanding why it occurs can help us to become more aware of it. This book helps you resist the pull of irrational behavior.
2. ***Buyology* by Martin Lindstrom.** Lindstrom presents the astonishing findings from his groundbreaking neuromarketing study that peered inside the brains of two thousand volunteers.
3. ***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink.** Right-brain thinking controls the more artistic, creative side of the mind and is becoming more important to business. Learn the six essential aptitudes you'll need in order to excel.

# Summary

June 2010

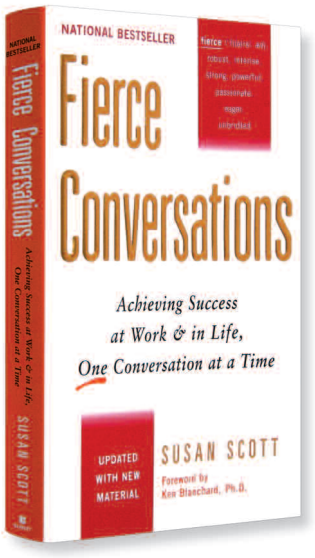
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Career & Self-Development: Communication

# Fierce Conversations

## Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time

Bonus Summary




by Susan Scott

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Business is fundamentally an extended conversation — with colleagues, customers, partners and the unknown future emerging around us. Unfortunately, many conversations fail.

Conversations are the work of a leader and the workhorses of an organization. While no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a career, a company, a relationship or a life — any single conversation can.

Practicing and championing fierce conversations company-wide enhances employees' capacity to serve as effective agents for strategic success, structuring the basis for high levels of alignment, collaboration and partnership at all levels within the organization.

Whether it's coming up with a big idea, transforming a company into a great place to work, improving customer-renewal rates, enhancing cross-boundary collaboration or providing leadership development and the healthier financial performance that goes with it — success occurs one conversation at a time.

We effect change by engaging in robust conversations with ourselves and others.

Each conversation we have with co-workers, customers, significant others and children either enhances those relationships, flattens them or takes them down.

In *Fierce Conversations*, executive development expert Susan Scott explores principles and practices that will help you engage in conversations that interrogate reality, provoke learning, tackle tough challenges and enrich relationships, no matter how sensitive the topic.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to overcome the barriers to meaningful communication.
- How to expand and enrich conversations with colleagues, customers, friends and family members.
- How to increase clarity and improve understanding.
- How to handle strong emotions — on both sides of the table.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **FIERCE CONVERSATIONS**

**by Susan Scott**

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## Introduction: The Idea of Fierce

In *Roget's Thesaurus*, the word *fierce* has the following synonyms: robust, intense, strong, powerful, passionate, eager, unbridled, uncurbed, untamed. In its simplest form, *a fierce conversation is one in which we come out from behind ourselves, into the conversation, and make it real.* While many people are uncomfortable with "real," it is the unreal conversations that should scare us because they are incredibly expensive for organizations and for individuals. Every organization wants to feel it's having a real conversation with its employees, its customers, its marketplace and with the unknown future that is emerging around it. Each individual wants to have conversations that are somehow building his or her world of meaning.

If you are a leader, your job is to accomplish the goals of the organization. How will you do that in today's workplace? In large part, by making every conversation you have as real as possible.

### Getting Started

Begin by listening to yourself as you've never listened before.

Begin to overhear yourself avoiding the topic, changing the subject, holding back, telling little lies (and big ones), being imprecise in your language, being uninteresting even to yourself. And at least once today, when something inside you says, "This is an opportunity to be fierce," stop for a moment, take a deep breath, then come out from behind yourself, into the conversation, and make it real. Say something that is true for you.

When you do, whatever happens from there will happen. It could go well or it could be a little bumpy, but at least you will have taken the plunge. You will have said at least one real thing today, one thing that was real for you. Something will have been set in motion, and you will have grown from that moment. Once you master the courage and the skills and begin to enjoy the benefits of fierce conversations, they will become a way of life. ●

## Principle 1: Master the Courage to Interrogate Reality

No plan survives its collision with reality, therefore, whether you are running an organization or participating in a committed relationship, you will find yourself continually thwarted in your best efforts to accomplish the goals of the "team" unless reality is regularly and thoroughly examined. Describing reality, however, can get complicated because there are multiple realities existing simultaneously on almost any and every topic.

Most leaders have learned from experience that until the multiple — sometimes conflicting — realities of key individuals and constituents have been explored, implementing a plan can be a decidedly tentative endeavor. To the degree that you resist or disallow the exploration of differing realities in your workplace and at home, you will spend time, money, energy and emotion cleaning up the aftermath of plans quietly but efficiently torpedoed by individuals who resent the fact that their experience, opinions and strongly held beliefs are apparently of little interest to the organization.

### Three Stages

There are three stages of interrogating reality. The first step is to identify the issue on the table and, if you have a

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solution in mind, make a proposal. Be clear and concise. "This is the issue. This is what I propose, for these reasons."

An alternative approach is to withhold your ideas until others have shared theirs; however, conversations are best launched when there is a well-defined idea offered as a jumping-off place for everyone's thinking and discussion. If you don't have a proposal, simply identify the issue and proceed.

When you are in the presence of knowledgeable but cautious individuals, once you've made your proposal or described the issue, don't just ask, "What do you think?" Invite questions. Check for understanding. Say, "Before we go any further, please ask any clarifying questions you may have." If you notice someone who is silent but looks puzzled or concerned, ask, "Alison, what questions do you have?"

### Check for Agreement

Once you are certain that everyone understands what you are proposing, check for agreement. For example: "I believe this is the right way to go, the right course of action. But I suspect some of you may see it differently. If you do, I'd like to hear it. I know that my enthusiasm may make it hard to challenge me, but my job is to make the best possible decisions for the organization, not to persuade you of my viewpoint. So please speak up." Then proceed to call on every individual at the table. "Mike, what's your perspective on this? I invite you to push back on what I've said."

This kind of invitation will get people to open up because you publicly, openly and actively encouraged them to share opposing views. You've shown that you are open to rational influence.

Do the same thing following the sharing of others' ideas. "Jim, what is your perspective on Mike's idea?"

### The Right Sequence

Thus, the sequence in interrogating reality is:

1. Make a proposal.
2. Check for understanding.
3. Check for agreement.

What's the payoff for interrogating multiple realities? Original thinking and innovation becomes possible. Most importantly, the best decisions will be made and implemented.

### Mineral Rights

The "Mineral Rights" conversation model is based on the idea that, "If you're drilling for water, it's better to drill one 100-foot well than 100 one-foot wells." This conversation interrogates reality by mining for increased clarity, improved understanding and impetus for change.

Mineral rights will help you drill down deep on a topic by asking your colleague, customer, boss, direct report, spouse, child or friend a series of questions. This is a natural exploration that accomplishes all four purposes of a fierce conversation:

1. **Interrogate reality.**
2. **Provoke learning.**
3. **Tackle tough challenges.**
4. **Enrich relationships.**

The questions asked during a Mineral Rights conversation help individuals and teams interrogate reality in such a way that they are mobilized to take potent action on tough challenges.

The questions are:

1. What is the most important thing we should be talking about today?
2. What is the core, underlying issue?
3. What current results is this creating?
4. If nothing changes, what's likely to occur?
5. Where are your fingerprints on this issue?
6. What is the ideal outcome you envision?
7. What is the next most potent step you need to take?

And throughout this conversation, probe for emotion. "When you consider those results, what do you feel?" "When you consider that possible outcome or scenario, what do you feel?" Emotion gives the lit match something to ignite. ●

## Principle 2: Come Out From Behind Yourself, Into the Conversation, and Make It Real

You are an original, utterly unique human being. You cannot have the life you want, make the decisions you want or be the leader you are capable of being until your actions represent an authentic expression of who you really are or who you wish to become.

In the context of fierce conversations, authenticity requires that you pay attention to Woody Allen's first rule of enlightenment: "SHOW UP!"

You must deliberately, purposely come out from behind yourself, into the conversation, and make it real — at least *your* part of it.

How real are any of us if we do not share our doubts and dark days with those closest to us, if we do not claim our failures as well as our successes? Authenticity is not something you have; it is something you *choose*.

### Healthy Selfishness

Even individuals who wield significant power at times withhold their real thoughts and feelings from those central to their success and happiness. It has much to do with the underlying impulse to survive by gaining the approval and support of others (boss, customer, co-worker, family member, significant other) who we imagine hold the keys to the warehouse wherein is kept everything we want and need. To ensure that such power brokers are on our team, we aim to please. While the desire to please is not a flaw, at crucial crossroads we sometimes go too far. *Way* too far. When faced with a so-called moment of truth, we find ourselves chucking the truth over the fence or tucking it behind the drapes in exchange for a trinket of approval.

Some fear that becoming authentic is a form of selfishness, and unknowingly limit the possibilities within their relationships, feeling it's inappropriate to put their own interests first. After all, what would people think?

Consider this: Successful relationships require that all parties view getting their core needs understood and if possible, met as being legitimate. You won't articulate your needs to yourself, much less to your work team or life partner, until and unless you see getting your needs met as a reasonable expectation. So pry the permission door open just far enough to consider that you have a right to clarify your position, state your view of reality and ask for what you want.

### Individuation

Coming out from behind yourself is part of the search, whether born of panic or courage, for that highly personalized rapture of feeling completely yourself, happy in your own skin. It is a reach for authenticity — a process of individuation — when you cease to compare yourself with others and choose, instead, to live *your* life. It is an opportunity to raise the bar on the experience of your life. It is a deepening of integrity — when who you are and what you live are brought into alignment. No more damping down your soul's deepest longings in order to get approval from others. As André Gide wrote, "It is better to fail at your own life than succeed at someone else's."

The principal job at hand is to intertwine addressing your current business and personal issues with self-exploration and personal development, building a bridge between yourself as a person and yourself as a professional.

Our companies, our relationships and our lives are mirrors accurately reflecting us back to ourselves. The results with which we are pleased reflect parts of ourselves that are working well. The results that disappoint and displease us reflect aspects of ourselves — beliefs, behaviors — that simply aren't working.

We can see an organization, department or relationship with clarity only when we look ourselves full in the face.

### Rewards

What are the rewards for coming out from behind yourself, into your conversations, and making them real? You will find yourself abandoning the safety of confusion for the juice and motivation of clarity. You will nurture your own deepening authenticity and the emergence of healthier, more effective qualities and behaviors. Your desire to control others will be balanced with the willingness to surrender. As a result, you will move toward what you desire — a happier marriage, personal freedom, professional accomplishment, a life that simply fits you better. A lot better. The experience of being awake, alive and free. ●

### The Seven Principles of Fierce Conversations

1. Master the courage to interrogate reality.
2. Come out from behind yourself, into the conversation, and make it real.
3. Be here, prepared to be nowhere else.
4. Tackle your toughest challenge today.
5. Obey your instincts.
6. Take responsibility for your emotional wake.
7. Let silence do the heavy lifting.

## Principle 3: Be Here, Prepared to Be Nowhere Else

Being truly present in a conversation is, sadly, a rare experience often because we are multi-tasking, eyeing our emails or thinking about something other than the conversation that is right in front of us, the one that wants and needs to take place. But it is only when we genuinely "see" the people who are important to us, that we can hope to succeed as agents for positive change.

Having ignored, misheard and misread many individuals throughout our lifetime, however, we often find that

discovering someone else's authentic self can be complicated by our increasing cynicism.

Yet we must learn to rebuild the links that connect people and that provide an effective antidote to cynicism and disaffection. We must transform the way we speak, the way we ask, the way we listen. How do we get to know another person? How do we get past "How are you? I'm fine."?

By really asking and really listening. By being with someone, even if only for a brief moment, prepared to be nowhere else.

### The One-on-One

For both personal and professional relationships to move forward or upward, you must have fierce affection for the other person. You must have genuine curiosity about what is going on with that person at any given time. You must have an insatiable appetite for learning more every day about who he or she is. Occasionally set aside all of the topics ping-ponging inside your own head and simply be with this other person, here and now.

All this *being present* stuff does not involve listening endlessly to someone telling you more than you ever wanted to know about a series of boring topics.

The conversation is the relationship. One conversation at a time, you are building, destroying or flatlining your relationships. It is possible, however, to create high-intimacy, low-maintenance relationships — one relatively *brief* conversation at a time.

### Soft Eyes and Ears

One of the basics of being present is eye contact. Being here, prepared to be nowhere else, does not require maniacal eye contact during your conversations. Many people want to back away from an avid individual whose eyes seem to drill through us and out the other side. Better to have "soft eyes."

Instead of trying to focus on any one thing, if we soften our eyes and allow the world to come to us, we will see a great deal more. We will catch subtle motion. Our peripheral vision will become acute.

The same thing happens with our listening. We may succeed in hearing every word yet miss the message altogether. There is so much more to listen to than words. Listen to the whole person.

When we listen beyond words for intent, for the scaffolding on which a story hangs, clarity and character emerge. We need to listen this way to ourselves, not just to others. ●

## Principle 4: Tackle Your Toughest Challenge Today

Hand in hand with the courage to interrogate reality comes the courage to bring to the surface and confront your toughest, most often recurring personal and professional issues.

Remember, enriching relationships is one of the purposes of a fierce conversation.

Below is a model that can be used when you need to confront someone's behavior or coach someone else to do so. If you wish to craft conversations that moderate our worst conversational tendencies, you should:

- Advocate your position clearly and succinctly.
- Illustrate your position by sharing the thinking behind it.
- Publicly test your views, and invite and encourage others to do so as well.
- Inquire into the views of others and actively explore their thinking.

Challenging conversations can be broken down into three distinct parts: opening statement, interaction and resolution.

### The Opening Statement

Preparation of your opening statement is essential. Do your homework. Write down your opening statement and practice saying it out loud. There are seven components to an opening statement:

1. **Name the issue.**
2. **Select a specific example that illustrates the behavior or situation you want to change and the negative results it is currently creating.**
3. **Describe your emotions about this issue.**
4. **Clarify what is at stake if nothing changes.**
5. **Identify your contribution to this problem.**
6. **Indicate your wish to resolve the issue.**
7. **Invite your partner to respond.**

You have 60 seconds to do it all.

### The Interaction Phase

The next part of the confrontation model is the interaction phase:

**Inquire into your partner's views.** If your partner says something with which you violently disagree, resist the temptation to build a stronger case. Simply listen so that your own learning may be provoked. Ask questions. Dig for understanding. Use paraphrasing and perception checks; don't be satisfied with what's on the surface. For example: "May I tell you what I'm hearing? I want to

make sure I've understood you."

Rather than jump back in and start talking as soon as your partner says something you feel is off base, focus on examining your partner's reality and his or her filters.

Finally, when your partner knows that you fully understand and acknowledge his or her view of reality, move toward resolution, which includes an agreement about what is to happen next. This is the longest part of the conversation.

### The Resolution

Throughout the interaction phase of confrontation, reality is interrogated, learning is provoked and relationships are enriched. Now it's time to come to an agreement about what happens next. After all, you said your intent was to resolve the issue, and the following questions will help you accomplish this:

**What have we learned? Where are we now? Has anything been left unsaid that needs saying? What is needed for resolution? How can we move forward from here, given our new understanding?**

How do you end the conversation?

**Make an agreement and determine how you will hold each other responsible for keeping it.**

When we confront behavior with courage and skill, we are offering a gift. And it goes both ways. While it may be difficult to hear others' truths about ourselves, there is likely to be a vein of gold worth mining.

## Principle 5: Obey Your Instincts

How does an intelligent human being make poor decisions? When President Kennedy got the idea to invade Cuba, only one person, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., questioned this decision; however, other advisers talked Schlesinger out of bringing up his concerns. The invasion was a disaster.

### Listen to Your Internal Voice

Obeying your instincts requires that you listen to your own internal voice, acknowledge your internal reference point, rather than rush to embrace the myriad references and voices of others. Most of us allow ourselves to be influenced or persuaded that the voice within us is mistaken, flawed, at best a distraction. And if we are intent on gaining others' approval, we are quick to discard our insights, commanding the voice inside us, "Shut up and go to your room."

In fierce conversations there is neither a struggle for approval nor an attempt to persuade. There is, instead, an interchange of ideas and sentiments, during which you pay attention to and disclose your inner thoughts while actively inviting others to do the same.

Listen to both sides of your brain as if you were hearing two conversations at the same time. One conversation is the literal conversation that is visible, audible. The other conversation is the one going on inside your head — what you are thinking and feeling.

### Perception Testing

Bring some of your private thoughts and feelings into the neutral zone between your private thoughts and your public thoughts by noticing them without attachment. They aren't right or wrong. They just exist. Become interested in them as phenomena in the world, as if they were interesting shells you found on the beach. When you are ready you can bring these thoughts into the public conversation. If you like, you can use these words: "While you were speaking, I had a thought that I would like to check out with you …"

This is called "perception checking." It lets your partner in on what you have been thinking and feeling, but it doesn't invite defensiveness because you didn't interject your thoughts as the capital-T Truth.

Another approach is to ask a question to open up a willingness on another person's part. For example, you might ask, "Would you like to hear something I'm feeling [or thinking or wondering] right now?" Then, assuming your partner is willing and interested, share your thought.

### What Is Appropriate?

And what if your instincts occasionally miss the target?

Consider this possibility: *Your confusion is an asset; in fact, your search for clarity may blaze a path for others.* In working to express what you do not understand — but long to understand — you invite the kind of conversations for which others are searching. If you begin to wonder what others will think of you, you won't be able to pursue original avenues. Look for the deepest issue that engages or troubles you. Familiarity with the unknown and with the fluidity of the world is essential. Speak your way toward it.

## Principle 6: Take Responsibility for Your Emotional Wake

For a leader, there is no trivial comment. Something you might not even remember saying may have had a devastating impact on someone looking to you for guidance and approval. By the same token, something you said years ago may have encouraged and inspired some-

one who is grateful to you to this day. Everything each of us says leaves an emotional wake. Positive or negative. Our individual wakes are larger than we know.

An emotional wake is what you remember after I'm gone. What you feel. The aftermath, aftertaste or the afterglow.

### Your Stump Speech

A leader's long-term performance is profoundly affected by the long-term spin the organization puts on him or her. Our emotional wake determines the story that is told about each of us in the organization. It's the story that's told when we're not in the room. It's the story that will be told about us after we're gone. It can be a wonderful story that makes us smile or a painful story with a bad ending.

If you are a leader, taking responsibility for your emotional wake requires that you have a stump speech that you are prepared to give anytime, anywhere to anyone who asks or who looks the least bit confused. Your stump speech must be powerful, clear and brief.

*This is where we're going.*

*This is why we're going there.*

*This is who is going with us.*

*This is how we're going to get there.*

Great leaders share their stump speeches with their teams and with their customers repeatedly, not only to convey a clear and compelling story but also to leave a positive emotional wake by providing such clarity that it is difficult to put a negative spin on their words.

### Your Legacy

What is *your* story? How would you like to be interpreted? What is the legacy you want to leave? If the people in your organization could tell one story about you, what would you want it to be? What is the message you wish to deliver to *your* customers? What wake do you wish to leave following each conversation? The conversation is the relationship. In the workplace, this translates to your ongoing dialogue with all those essential to your success and that of your organization.

Many great leaders sustain a love affair with their work and their lives. They place their attention at the service of deep, long-term concepts and convictions in the workplace and the home. They possess a groundedness that comes from having wrestled core problems to the ground and lived to tell about it. They have become sensitized to the effect they have on others. They have become increasingly aware of the wake caused by their words and actions. Their perspective and goals have shifted as they recognized that leadership must be for the world, for the greater good, rather than for narrow personal interests. ●

## Principle 7: Let Silence Do the Heavy Lifting

Many people attempt to forge relationships exclusively through words. Lots of words. However, the best leaders talk *with* people, not *at* them.

Talking at people is a common affliction. Did you know that eight out of 10 sales proposals fail? And 50 percent of those eight fail because we spend too much time talking about ourselves or the features and benefits of our product, and not enough time listening to the customer before we explained how wonderful doing business with us would be.

### So Many Words, So Little Substance

Fierce conversations *require* silence. In fact, the more emotionally loaded the subject, the more silence is required. And, of course, this carries over into our homes, into our personal relationships. Often we are simply trying to intuit something about ourselves, our companions or the topics themselves. Sometimes we need silence in which to make a decision about the closeness we feel for our companions or the distance we feel from them.

Once in a precious while, silence is merely abstinence from self-assertion. For many work teams and couples, however, it is easy to fall into a conversational pattern that contains so many words, so much white noise, that it leaves all parties deaf to any comments of substance that could have been interjected into the conversation. Our habitual ways of talking with (or *at*) each other prevent us from allowing silence to help us get in touch with what we really want to say.

### Slow Down

Sometimes a dramatic intervention is required to stop the words in order to start a conversation. There are issues that our colleagues and customers will ignore every time they come up. If we are not alert, we will walk with others right past the issue. We may sense that something is there, but the conversation is moving too fast. Or, because we are so invested in playing the role of "expert," we fill the air with words, missing the real issue entirely.

Silence is the greatest tool to slow down a conversation. As we talk with people, as we sit with them in silence, what is in the way — anger, numbness,

impatience, manipulation, rigidity, blame, ego, cruelty, ambition, insensitivity, intimidation, pride — may fall away. It is in silence that such attributes, emotions and behaviors reveal themselves as unnecessary.

### The Space Between Thoughts

Deepak Chopra refers to the space between thoughts as the place where insight can occur. The trouble is, for most of us, there is no space between thoughts.

While the occasional stream of consciousness can be illustrative, important conversations require moments of silence during which we may reflect on what someone has said and consider our responses, before opening our mouths. Otherwise, our knee-jerk responses may not reflect our highest and best thoughts. How could they? We haven't had a moment to consider what they might be.

How do we let silence do the heavy lifting? Provide it. Allow silence to fill in the greater meaning that needs to be there. Perhaps if I close my mouth, you'll open yours.

During company meetings, the best responses, the most brilliant solutions, often come from the person who has sat silently listening for a very long time while the rest of us filled the air with debate. Even when called upon, such an individual often appears reluctant to speak, sitting in reflective silence for agonizing moments while others click ballpoint pens and glance at their watches. Then he or she speaks, and everyone else in the room is compelled to shift to a broader, wiser perspective, with the result that elegant, complete answers begin to emerge. ●

## Embracing the Principles

Fierce conversations are not a form of showing off or parading a rich vocabulary. Fierce conversations are an effort to understand — first of all, for yourself — something that is worthy of your pondering. They are deeply probing explorations. Speak about the things you want to understand. Most people want to share journeys of this kind. Forget about being clever or impressive. What is called for now is quiet integrity.

The secret is for you to show up — fully. You may be among people who don't support you. You may be among people who, loving or unloving, are simply not equipped to support the ambition of engaging in fierce conversations. This is not an unusual experience. The courage to show up is both simple and daunting. Once you show up, people can see you. They can judge and criticize and gossip. Some safety and comfort are lost when an ambition or strongly felt emotion is expressed. Perhaps, if you have become impatient with the false identity you have created for yourself, life is inviting you into much larger worlds than you have imagined.

Intimacy is required in conversation now — at home and in the workplace. We must answer the big questions in our organizations: What is real? What is honest? What is quality? What has value?

### How to Effect Change

We effect change by engaging in robust conversations with ourselves, our colleagues, our customers, our family, the world. Your ability to effect change will increase as you become more responsive to your world and to the individuals who are central to your happiness and success.

*Change the world — one conversation at a time.* The world will be well served if each of us makes a strong personal choice to pay fierce attention to every conversation that we have.

It is not enough to be willing to speak. The time has come for you *to speak*. Be willing to face mutiny everywhere but in yourself. Your time of holding back, of guarding your private thoughts, is over. Your function in life is to make a declarative statement. Sit beside someone you care for and begin. ●

### Never Mistake Talking for Conversation

- Talk *with* people, not *at* them.
- The more emotionally loaded the subject, the more silence is required.
- Use silence to slow down a conversation.
- Allow silence to fill in the greater meaning that needs to be there.
- Allow silence to teach you how to feel.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Fierce Conversations*, you'll also like:

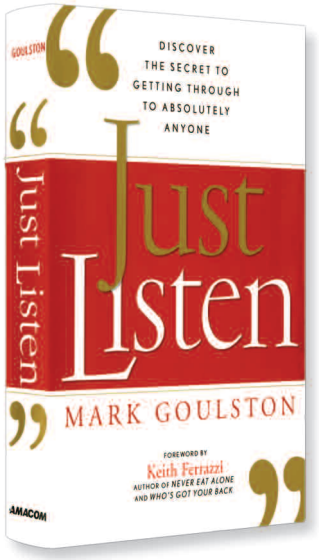
1. ***Transparency* by Warren Bennis, Daniel Goleman and James O'Toole.** Digital technology makes transparency all but inevitable in this era. Three essays offer leaders practical advice on how to embrace transparency as a good thing, even if it's not an easy one.
2. ***Winning With People* by John C. Maxwell.** Good relationships provide the substance we need to live successful and fulfilling lives. Maxwell offers the tools that can help improve your existing relationships and cultivate strong new ones.
3. ***The Speed of Trust* by Stephen M.R. Covey.** The one thing that is common to every individual, relationship, team, family, organization and nation is trust. The ability to establish, grow, extend and restore trust is the key leadership competency of the new global economy.

# Summary

February 2010

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®
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Career & Self Development: Communication




# Just Listen

## Discover the Secret to Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone

by Mark Goulston

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Right now, there's someone in your life you need to reach. But you can't and it's driving you crazy. You've tried everything — logic, persuasion, forcefulness, pleading, anger — but you've hit a wall every time. You're mad, scared or frustrated. And you're thinking, "What now?" In *Just Listen*, veteran psychiatrist and business coach Mark Goulston reveals a simple, quick set of techniques he has discovered on his own or learned from mentors or colleagues that can be used to get through to anyone, even when productive communication seems impossible.

As Goulston describes it, "People have their own needs, desires and agendas. They have secrets they're hiding from you. And they're stressed, busy and often feeling like they're in over their heads. To cope, they throw up barricades that make it difficult to reach them even when your goals are in sync with their own."

Goulston discloses that there are simple ways to break down the walls that keep you from getting through to the people you need to buy into your ideas and goals. *Just Listen* presents effective tools and strategies you can use whenever a job, a sale or a relationship hangs in the balance.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to reach people and get them to do what you want them to do.
- How to get the attention of a total stranger who you need to know.
- When to use the "Magic Paradox" to turn a negative person into an asset.
- How to master the art of breaking through barricades that separate people.
- How to move from transactional relationships into meaningful relationships.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **JUST LISTEN**

**by Mark Goulston**

**The author:** Mark Goulston, M.D. is a business advisor, consultant, trainer and coach trained as a clinical psychiatrist who honed his skills as an FBI/police hostage negotiation trainer who increases people's ability to get through to anyone. He was named one of America's Top Psychiatrists for 2004-2005 and again in 2009 by Washington, D.C. based Consumers' Research Council of America.

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## The Secret to Reaching Anyone

You probably don't find yourself in the types of situation that hostage negotiators handle. But on any given day, who are you trying to persuade to do something? The answer is: nearly everybody. Almost all communication is an effort to get through to people and cause them to do something different than they were doing before. Maybe you're trying to sell them something. Maybe you're trying to talk sense into them. Or maybe you need to impress them that you're the right person for a job, a promotion or a relationship.

People have their own needs, desires and agendas. They have secrets they're hiding from you. And they're stressed, busy, and often feeling like they're in over their heads. To cope with their stress and insecurity, they throw up mental barricades that make it difficult to reach them even if they share your goals, and nearly impossible if they're hostile.

Approach these people armed solely with reason and facts, or resort to arguing, encouraging or pleading, and you'll expect to get through — but often you won't. Instead, you'll get smacked down and you'll never have a clue why.

The good news is that you can get through simply by changing your approach. All persuasion moves through the steps of the Persuasion Cycle. To take people from the beginning to the end of this cycle, you need to speak with them in a manner that moves them:

- From *resisting* to *listening*
- From *listening* to *considering*
- From *considering* to *willing to do*
- From *willing to do* to *doing*
- From *doing* to *glad they did* and *continuing to do*.

The secret of getting through to absolutely anyone is that you get through to people by having them "buy in." Buy-in occurs when people move from resisting to listening to considering what you're saying. The key to gaining buy-in and then moving people through the rest of the cycle is not what *you* tell *them*, but what you get *them* to tell *you* — and what happens in their minds in the process. ●

## A Little Science: How the Brain Goes from 'No' to 'Yes'

When you understand something about how the brain moves from resistance to buy-in, you'll have a huge edge — because no matter what your message is, you need to talk to the brain.

Your brain has three layers that evolved over millions of years: a primitive reptile layer, a more evolved mammal layer and a final primate layer. They all interconnect, but in effect they often act like three different brains — and they're often at war with each other.

Here's how each of your three brains behaves:

- The lower reptilian brain is the "fight-or-flight" part of your brain. This region of your brain is all about acting and reacting, without a lot of thinking going on. It can also leave you frozen in a perceived crisis — the "deer-in-the-headlights" response.
- The middle mammal brain is the seat of your emotions. It's where powerful feelings — love, joy, sadness, anger, grief, jealousy, pleasure — arise.
- The upper or primate brain is the part that weighs a situation logically and rationally and generates a con-

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Tom Moore**, Contributing Editor

scious plan of action. This brain collects data from the reptile and mammal brains, fits it, analyzes it and makes practical, smart and ethical decisions.

What does all of this have to do with getting through to people? To reach someone, you need to talk to the human upper brain — not the snake brain or the rat brain. You're in trouble if you're trying to gain buy-in from someone who's feeling angry, defiant, upset or threatened because, in these situations, the person's higher brain isn't calling the shots. If you're talking to a boss, a customer, a spouse or a child whose lower brain or midbrain is in control, you're talking to a cornered snake or, at best, a hysterical rabbit. In this situation, your success hinges entirely on talking the person up from reptile to mammal to human brain.

## Move Youself from 'Oh F#@&' to 'OK'

Getting your emotions under control is the most important key to reaching other people in stressful situations, especially in times of stress or uncertainty. It's why a cool and controlled hostage negotiator can get through to someone who seems unreachable — and, conversely, why a person who's crying, whining or yelling will turn off even a calm and empathetic listener.

One of the most powerful things you'll learn is how to be in control of your own thoughts and emotions — because most of the time, that's where successful communicating starts. Mastering the art of controlling yourself will change your life because it'll keep you from being your own worst enemy when it comes to reaching other people in stressful situations.

It doesn't matter what the crisis is, you go through these steps in more or less the same order each time you're upset:

- *"Oh F#@&" (The Reaction Phase):* This is a disaster. I'm screwed. What the hell just happened? I can't fix this. It's all over.
- *"Oh God" (The Release Phase):* Oh my God, this is a huge mess and I'm going to get stuck with cleaning it up. This stuff always happens to me.
- *"Oh Jeez" (The Recenter Phase):* Alright, I can fix this. But it's not going to be fun.
- *"Oh Well" (The Refocus Stage):* I'm not going to let this ruin my life/my career/my day/this relationship, and here is what I need to do right now to make it better.
- *"OK" (The Reengage Phase):* I'm ready to fix this.

### Mirror Neurons

Years ago, scientists studying specific nerve cells in macaque monkeys' prefrontal cortices found that the cells fired when the monkeys threw a ball or ate a banana. But here's the surprise: these same cells fired when the monkeys watched another monkey performing these acts. Humans, just like macaques, have neurons that act as mirrors. In fact, studies suggest that these remarkable cells may form the basis for human empathy. That's because, in effect, they transport us into another person's mind, briefly making us feel what the person is feeling.

These cells may prove to be one way nature causes us to care about other people. We constantly mirror the world, conforming to its needs, trying to win its love and approval. And each time we mirror the world, it creates a little reciprocal hunger to be mirrored back. If that hunger isn't filled, we develop "mirror neuron receptor deficit."

In today's world, many people feel that they give their best, only to be met day after day with apathy, hostility or no response at all. This deficit explains why we feel so overwhelmed when someone acknowledges either our pain or our triumphs. Understanding a person's hunger and responding to it is one of the most potent tools you'll ever discover for getting through to anyone you meet in business or your personal life.

## Rewire Yourself to Listen

The instant judgments we make about people build on the past. That doesn't mean they're entirely wrong. (In fact, an initial "gut instinct" is often spot-on). But it means they're not entirely right, either.

The problem is that while we think our first impressions of people are grounded solely in logic, they're not. In reality, they're a jumbled mix of conscious and unconscious truth, fiction and prejudice. Thus, from the very start, we're dealing with a fictitious creation — not a real person. Yet that first impression will color our feelings about another person for months or years to come. It'll also affect how we listen to that person, because we'll distort everything he or she says to fit our preconceived notions.

The solution? Think about what you're thinking. When you consciously analyze the ideas you've formed about a person and weigh these perceptions against reality, you can rewire your brain and build new, more accurate perceptions. Then you'll be communicating

with the person who's really in front of you — not the fictitious character conjured up by false perceptions. ●

## Make the Other Person Feel 'Felt'

Making someone "feel felt" simply means putting yourself in the other person's shoes. When you succeed, you can change the dynamics of a relationship in a heartbeat. At that instant, instead of trying to get the better of each other, you "get" each other and that breakthrough can lead to cooperation, collaboration and effective communication.

One explanation for the effectiveness of making a person "feel felt" lies in the mirror neurons. When you mirror what another person feels, the person is wired to mirror you in return. Say "I understand what you're feeling," and the other person will feel grateful and spontaneously express that gratitude with a desire to understand you in return. It's an irresistible biological urge and one that pulls the person toward you.

When people feel felt, they feel less alone, and when they feel less alone, they feel less anxious and afraid — and that opens them up to the message you're trying to send. They shift from defensiveness to reason, and they're capable of hearing your message and weighing it reasonably. ●

## Be More Interested Than Interesting

You're not just held hostage by the people who resist, bully, annoy or get upset with you. You're also held hostage to your own mistakes when you fail to break through to people who either don't know you at all or don't act like they care to know you well.

Do you ever think in frustration, "I could get somewhere if only I could get this person interested in me?" Embodied in your statement is the reason you're not getting through. Why? Because you're focusing all your attention on what you can say to make that person think you're cool or smart or witty. And that's your mistake, because you've got it backward.

The only way to truly win friends and influence the best people is to be more interested in listening to them than you are in impressing them. ●

## Make People Feel Valuable

When you make people feel important, you give them a gift that's beyond price. In return, they'll often be willing to go the ends of the world for you. That's why, if your emotional IQ is high, you'll find ways to show the people you value — parents, children, a partner, a boss, a key co-worker — how much they matter. You'll find ways to tell them that they make your world happier, funnier, more secure, less stressed, more entertaining, less scary or just all-around better.

But this was the easy part. Something you might have trouble believing is that it's smart to go out of your way to make the annoying people in your life — the complainers, kvetchers, and obstructers — feel important too. You're probably thinking, "Are you nuts? Why would I want to make the people who screw up my life feel valuable, when they aren't?"

The answer is simple. One thing most of these high-maintenance, easy-to-upset, difficult-to-please people have in common is that they feel as if the world isn't treating them well enough. In essence, they don't feel important or special enough in the world, usually because their awful personality has gotten in the way of success. These people are driving you crazy for a simple reason: They need to matter. Want them to stop driving you crazy? Then you'll need to satisfy that need. ●

## Help People to Exhale Emotionally and Mentally

Stress isn't bad. It causes us to focus, become determined and tests our mettle. It's when stress crosses over into distress that we lose sight of our important long-term goals and instead look for what will relieve us now. At that point, we're too busy looking for an emergency exit from our pain to be either rational or reachable.

In these situations, the first step is to move people out of this state and into a state where their brains are capable of listening to you. Only *exhaling* enables people to experience and express their feelings — like draining a wound — in a way that doesn't attack others or themselves. It's the only response that relaxes stressed-out individuals and opens their minds to solutions from other people. That, in turn, offers an opportunity to resolve the source of the stress and prevent it from recurring.

When you give a distressed person breathing room — a place and a space to exhale — you don't just get the situation back to normal, you actually improve on it. That's because, in addition to getting a person to calm down, you build a mental bridge between the person and yourself. And when you build that bridge, you can communicate across it. ●

## Check Dissonance at the Door

Dissonance occurs when you think you're coming across in one way but people see you in a totally different way. For instance, when you think you're coming off as wise, but people see you as being sly. Or when you think you're coming off as passionate, but other people think you're "over the top." When that happens, the result is buy-out.

Dissonance works the other way around, too. It occurs when you think you perceive someone else accurately, but the other person doesn't agree. There's hardly anything more annoying to another person than hearing you say, "I know where you're coming from," when you don't really have a clue. Often this happens when you aren't listening deeply enough to know what the other person is trying to communicate.

Dissonance keeps you and another person from connecting — or, from a neurological point of view, achieving mirror neuron empathy — because you're not sending the message you think you're sending. People can't reflect your confidence if it looks like arrogance. They can't mirror your concern if it sounds like hysteria. They can't mirror your calmness if they interpret it as apathy. And if you're misperceiving them — for instance, if you mistake their legitimate grievances for hysteria — the results can be fatal to a relationship.

How can you know how other people perceive you? Ask the experts — your friends or relatives. This isn't fun, and you'll need to have thick skin. But the quickest way to pinpoint your issues with dissonance is to identify two or three honest people who know you well and whose judgment you trust, and ask them to describe your worst traits. ●

## When All Seems Lost — Bare Your Neck

Many people believe that earning respect means never showing weakness. Instead, it's better to reach out for help before you mess up. When you wait until you mess up and then ask for help, others may see it as a way to get out of being punished. Even so, it's better to reach out after a screw-up than to avoid reaching out at all.

When you're scared or hurting or humiliated, but you're still in cover-up mode because you're afraid of losing another person's respect, your own mirror neuron receptor deficit widens. You don't feel understood because you can't be understood. That's because nobody has a clue what's going on with you. It's a self-inflicted wound and you're on your own.

The person whose respect you're worried about losing can't mirror your distress and understand it. Instead, the person will mirror the attitude you're using to mask your distress. If you're using a "screw you" attitude to hide your feelings of helplessness, you'll get back "fine — screw you too." ●

## Steer Clear of Toxic People

Some people don't want to make your life better. Instead, they want to destroy it. Some of these people want to suck you dry, while others want to con you, thwart you, bully you or make you the scapegoat for their mistakes. To save yourself, you need to strip these people of the power to hurt you.

There are three ways to do this. The first is to confront these people directly. The second is to neutralize them. The third is to walk away and make sure they don't follow you.

Sometimes you're so entangled financially or emotionally that it's tough to do a "jerkectomy." But painful or not, handling these people (or getting them out of your life entirely) is critical to your success and your sanity. Here's how to spot them — and how to defend yourself against them:

• **Needy people.** Pathologically needy people can gut you emotionally or financially, or both. These are the people who send the messages: "I need you to solve all of my problems." "I can't function without you." "My happiness depends totally on you." "If you leave me, I'll die." Unlike needful people — who ask for help only when they need it and appreciate it when they get it — needy people demand constant help and attention, use emotional blackmail to get it, and offer gratitude only if it keeps you on the hook.

• **Bullies**. When a bully tries to intimidate you by verbally attacking you, do this: Make eye contact. Act perfectly polite but ever-so-slightly bored, as if your mind is elsewhere. Let your body language transmit the same message: stand up straight, be relaxed and cock your head as if you're listening but not very hard. Let your arms hang causally, instead of folding them defensively across your chest. Often, this response makes bullies feel uncomfortable or even foolish and causes them to back down.

• **Takers.** You know these people. They're the ones who hit you up every day for a favor. Strangely, however, they never seem to have time or energy to help you in return. These people usually won't ruin your life, but they can ruin your day. Avoid takers if you can, but if that's not possible, neutralize them. How? It's the easiest

trick in the book. The next time a taker asks you for a favor, follow this scenario:

*Taker:* Hey, could you do the graphs for my PowerPoint presentation? I know I should do them, but I'm swamped.

*You:* Sure. No problem! And you can help me out by taking over the intern orientation on Thursday?

*Taker:* Uhhh …

*You:* I assume you don't mind doing a favor for me in return, right?

*Taker:* Uhhh …

Do this once or twice — and insist each time on a *quid pro quo* — and the taker will move on to an easier touch.

• **Narcissists:** These people aren't out to hurt you, but they don't give a damn about you either — except as an audience for their own wonderfulness. If you can't change a narcissist, should you reach out or back away? It depends, because narcissists can be exciting partners in a personal or business relationship. Nearly all politicians are narcissists. (Who else would put their families through all that?) So are most actors, and many hard-driving lawyers and CEOs. Narcissists often are huge successes in life, but don't expect a 50/50 relationship.

## The Impossibility Question

Now that you know the core rules for reaching people, you're ready to arm yourself with some powerful tools for moving people through the Persuasion Cycle.

The Impossibility Question works with a person who's somewhere between resisting and listening, but not ready to move to considering. If you're lucky, there might be a flicker of interest in there somewhere. But without a shove, your idea is going nowhere. That powerful shove is the Impossibility Question. Here's how it works:

*You:* What is something that would be impossible to do, but if you could do it, would dramatically increase your success?

*Other Person:* If I could just do _____. But that's impossible.

*You:* OK. What would make it possible?

What's so powerful about those two questions? They move a person from a defensive, closed position or a selfish, excuse-making stance into an open, thinking attitude. And they make the person picture your vision as a reality and cooperate in thinking strategically about reaching that reality.

## The Magic Paradox

This technique lets you break through to people in the most difficult part of the communications cycle: at the very beginning, when you need to shift them from resisting to listening and then to considering. It's a classic first step in hostage negotiation, and it's equally powerful in a business crisis.

Consider a co-worker with personal issues who is late on an important project. Here's what you *don't* do if you're smart. You don't go to him or her and say something like, "Look, I know things are tough but you need to get your act together. You know how to do this job and I know you can pull it off. Just set some targets and I'm sure you can get caught up in time. All of us are under pressure and we're counting on you."

If you do this, odds are he or she will get defensive, lash out angrily or even quit. That's not what you need. And it's not what the co-worker needs. So instead, do what he or she least expects. Empathize with his or her negative thoughts. For example, say, "I'll bet you feel that nobody knows what it's like to be scared that you can't pull this project off. And I'll bet that you're upset because you think we're all feeling let down by you. What's more, I'll bet you feel that nobody can possibly understand how hard it is to deal with all the stuff that's happening in your life."

Now watch the magic. Because you're empathizing with the co-worker's emotions, you will eliminate his or her mirror neuron receptor deficit and cause the co-worker to feel understood by and connected to you. By saying explicitly that you know he or she feels that nobody understands, you'll make him or her realize that you do understand.

## 'Do You Really Believe That?'

When a person launches into an out-of-control rant about how awful the problem is and how it's the end of the world, simply ask, calmly, "Do you really believe that?"

This is a highly effective question because when you ask it in a calm way, it causes most people who use hyperbole or exaggeration to recant and restate their position. Typically, they backpedal, saying something like, "Well, not really, but I am very frustrated about things." Then you can respond, "I understand that, but I need to know what the truth is, because if what you say is totally true, then we have a serious problem and need to address it." By this time, they're in retreat and the power has shifted to you.

The trick to this approach is to ask the question not in a hostile or degrading manner, but very calmly and in a straightforward way. Your intent is not to antagonize the other person, but rather to make the person stop and realize, "I really am making a mountain out of a molehill. I must sound like a jackass." ●

## The Power of 'Hmmm …'

"Hmmm …" is a tool to use when you're facing a person who's angry, defensive and sure you're the bad guy. It works in a wide range of settings — everything from a hostage crisis to an angry customer scenario — because it rapidly turns a potential brawl into cooperative dialogue. Here's why:

Most people do exactly the wrong thing when confronted by an angry or upset person. They say well-intentioned things, such as "OK, just calm down," or they lose it and get angry themselves. Both of these approaches generally have disastrous results. Make the other person angry and you'll get into a shouting match. Ask the person politely to calm down, and you'll send the condescending and infuriating message, "I'm sane and you're a flaming nutball." The response, in either case, will be a dramatic shift to resistance on the other person's part.

"Hmmm …" conversely, is a potent de-escalator. When you use this approach, you're not trying to shut someone up; instead, you're telling the other person, "You're important to me and so is your problem."

The goal isn't to solve the specific problem you're facing (though it sometimes happens). Instead, it's to avoid talking *at* each other, move beyond talking *to* each other, and with luck, end up talking *with* each other. ●

## Side by Side

Sitting people down and lecturing them rarely works, because it makes them defensive and when they're defensive, they hide things from you. Work side by side with them in a cooperative activity, however, and you'll lower their guard and get them to open up.

One advantage of the side-by-side technique is that it doesn't focus on things a person did wrong in the past. Instead, you can use it to explore ways to make things go right in the future. So instead of delving into a person's past screw-ups, you give him or her a chance to avoid future ones.

The side-by-side technique is easy to use, but it comes with three cautions. The biggest one is when you get people to lower their guard, don't violate their trust. Do not use this technique to troll for negative information or people will feel like you're trying to spy on them or trap them rather than trying to learn from them. Also, don't argue with the person you're talking with. If he or she says something you disagree with, resist the urge to explain why you're right. Instead, deepen the conversation by asking another question. ●

## Fill in the Blanks

When you and a prospective customer or client first meet, the playing field is level. As soon as you sell or try to convince the other person of anything, the power shifts to the client. The key is to keep clients pursuing you right out of the gate.

The secret to this is to invite these people into a conversation rather than asking questions that put them on the defensive — and that's where the fill-in-the-blanks approach comes in.

When you ask direct questions, you're hoping to communicate a sincere interest. The people on the receiving end of your questions, however, can feel challenged, like a schoolchild being put on the spot by a teacher or coach. Sensitive questions posted at the right times can powerfully transform a relationship. But hitting a new client with a transactional question like "What do you want?" or "Can I show you why our product is better?" can create immediate resistance.

The fill-in-the-blanks approach has the opposite effect: it draws a person toward you. You don't come off as a demanding teacher or coach; instead, you sound like a trusted uncle, aunt, grandfather or grandmother who's saying, "C'mon. Let's talk this out and find a solution."

Try this yourself and see if you sense the difference between the two techniques. First, picture Mark Goulston sitting across from you and saying, "So, what do you expect to get from this book?" A little intimidating, isn't it? Now picture him saying in an encouraging way, "You are reading this book because you want to learn how to _____. And the reason it's important for you to learn how to do that now is _____." If you're like most people, you'll feel willing and, in fact, a little eager to open up and share your thoughts with him. ●

## Take It All the Way to 'No'

Ask managers or salespeople, "What's the biggest mistake you can make?" and often they'll say, "Asking for too much." But they're wrong, because in reality, the biggest mistake you can make is to ask for too little.

A better approach is to keep pushing for what you

want until you receive a "no." This will tell you that you're in range of getting the most that's possible from the other person. More importantly, it will be one of your best opportunities to demonstrate poise and close a sale or a deal. To get from no to yes, however, you need to make the right moves.

Let's say you're trying to get a client, "Ned," to buy a product, hire you as a consultant or retain your firm for a project. But after you lay out the deal you're hoping for, Ned says no.

When Ned does this, he's feeling a little edgy and defensive because he expects you to be frustrated or angry or upset — or to start in with a hard sell. If you do any of these things, you're not going to win Ned over. Instead, take a breath and then, as earnestly as possible, say something like this: "I either pushed too hard or failed to address something that was important to you, didn't I?"

After Ned recovers from his momentary shock at your self-awareness and humility, he'll nod in agreement or even say, "You sure did." At that moment, the advantage shifts to you. Why? Because Ned is mentally agreeing and aligning himself psycologically with you. Without knowing it, he's actually beginning to say yes.

Once you score this agreement, it's time to use the fill-in-the-blanks approach to build on the moment saying, "And the point where I went too far and the deal points I failed to address were _____." If Ned is like most people, he'll respond honestly to these questions. As he elaborates on his points, he'll do two things: he'll get his frustration at you off his chest, and he'll tell you what he needs from you. Both of these will give you the power to go from "no" to "yes." ●

## The Power Thank You & Apology

Clearly, there's nothing wrong with simply saying "thanks" when someone helps you out. In fact, that's usually the right thing to do. But if you stop there, your communication is merely transactional (you did something nice for me, so I'll say something polite to you). It doesn't touch the other person or strengthen the relationship between you.

That's why, if you're deeply grateful to someone who's done an exceptional favor for you, you need to express that emotion by going beyond the plain words "thank you" and instead offer a Power Thank You. When you do this, your words will generate strong feelings of gratitude, respect and affinity in the other person. It consists of:

- Thanking the person for something specific that he or she did for you.
- Acknowledging the effort it took for the person to help you by saying something like: "I know you didn't have to do _____" or "I know you went out of your way to do _____."
- Telling the person the difference that his or her act personally made to you.

The Power Thank You doesn't just make the other person look good. It also makes you look good to everyone involved by showing that you have empathy and humility and that you care. It also shows that you can be trusted to give credit where it's due.

### The Power Apology

Somewhere along the line, you'll screw up. When this happens, understand that merely saying "sorry" will patch over the wound, but it won't heal it, because your screw-up wasn't just a blunder. It was also a suggestion that the other person doesn't matter (creating a huge mirror neuron receptor deficit), and you're responsible for proving otherwise. If the situation warrants it, offer a Power Apology. That consists of the "4 Rs":

- ***Remorse:*** Demonstrate to the other person that you know you caused harm and you are truly sorry. When you're doing this, allow the other person to vent and don't become defensive even if the person is over the top. When you encourage people who are furious to get their anger off their chests, it speeds the healing process.
- ***Restitution:*** Find some way to make amends, at least partially.
- ***Rehabilitation:*** Demonstrate through your actions that you've learned your lesson.
- ***Requesting forgiveness:*** To truly earn forgiveness, you need to sustain your corrective actions until they become part of who you are.

If someone doesn't forgive you even after you've done all you can to make amends, don't assume that you're unforgiveable; instead, realize that you may be dealing with someone who's unforgiving. Just let it go. If your Power Apology works, on the other hand, make good use of your second chance — and recognize that this approach only works once. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Just Listen* you'll also like:

1. ***The Art of Woo* by G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa.** "Woo" is the ability to win people over to your ideas without coercion using relationship-based emotionally intelligent persuasion.
2. ***The Speed of Trust* by Stephen M.R. Covey.** The ability to establish, grow and restore trust is the key leadership competency of the new economy.
3. ***Sway* by Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman.** Understanding why the sway of irrational behavior is so alluring can make us less likely to fall victim to it.

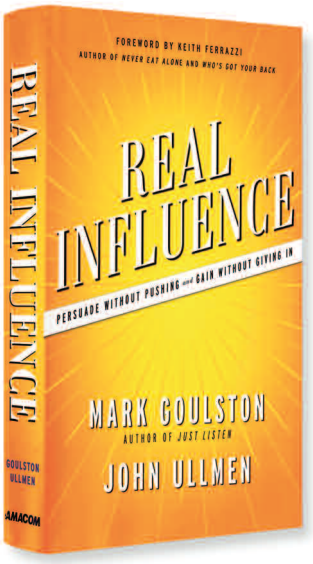
# Summary

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# Real Influence

## Persuade Without Pushing and Gain Without Giving In




by Mark Goulston and John Ullmen

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In this post-pushing, post-selling world, influence can no longer be viewed as something you do to someone to get what you want. In fact, real influence isn't even about what you want. It's about forging strong connections by focusing on *other* people's viewpoints and, quite simply, giving before asking for anything and always striving for win-win outcomes.

Now master communicator and best-selling author Mark Goulston teams up with esteemed executive coach John Ullmen to show why this kind of "connected" influence is the secret to achieving not only short-term gains but also long-term success. Goulston's popular book *Just Listen* offered insights into getting through to hard-to-reach people, and it laid the groundwork for the more far-reaching scope of *Real Influence*. Here the authors provide a blueprint for getting buy-in, agreement and enduring loyalty from anyone by using authentic communication, empathy and engagement.

Packed with enlightening stories from the authors' extensive interviews with high-level influencers — people in business, government, nonprofits, sports, the arts and more — *Real Influence* shows the remarkable power of real influence and offers insights for tapping into it. Its message has the power to transform your outlook, your relationships, your career and ultimately your life.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to get past the "blind spot" in our brains that makes connecting and influencing impossible.
- The simple four-step model that will help you connect with people you thought were unreachable.
- How listening with a real motive to learn and understand will change a relationship instantly.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **REAL INFLUENCE**

**by Mark Goulston and John Ullmen**

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John Ullmen, Ph.D., is an acclaimed executive coach whose clients include dozens of leading international firms. He oversees MotivationRules.com, conducts popular feedback-based seminars on influence in organizations and teaches at the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

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## Introduction

Are you frustrated because you fail to get people to buy into your great ideas, can't close the deal on tough sales or constantly hit the wall when you try to influence people?

If so, you're not alone. As executive coaches, we know that it's harder than ever to influence people, because the old rules of persuasion no longer work.

Today we live in a post-selling and post-pushing world. As people grow more aware of manipulative tactics, their guard goes up. The Internet, television advertising, and wall-to-wall marketing have made us cynical about deceptive tricks and hard-sell approaches.

We call this outdated strategy *disconnected* influence. It's a shortsighted strategy that sometimes creates momentary "buy-in" but often at the expense of your relationships and reputation. When you make the transition to connected influence, you'll set the stage for strong, sustained influence by becoming the kind of person other people are eager to follow.

Connected influence pays off — and it pays forward. ●

## The Problem: Why Are You Struggling to Influence People?

Disconnected influence doesn't earn you the commitment you need to achieve great things. Why? Because when you're stuck in *your here*, you can't get to *their there* — and that's where you need to be in order to persuade people effectively.

### The Dangers of 'Disconnect'

You tried your best, but they didn't budge. What's far worse is when it happens over and over again. And for millions of smart, caring and creative people just like you, it does. Even when these people are right — when they have brilliant ideas, inspiring goals or the best of intentions — they can't get through.

Most people most of the time aren't motivated to do what you want them to do. They don't feel your urgency, they're busy with their own priorities and crises, or they have hidden reasons for rejecting your ideas. To break down these walls, you need to create powerful connections that make people *want* to do what you're recommending.

On the surface, disconnected influence makes perfect sense. You've got to get things done. Important priorities are at stake. You size up a situation and see gaps that need to be filled and mistakes that need to be fixed. Maybe your project team is making a foolish decision. Or your boss needs to allocate more money to your project. Or your daughter is dating someone who isn't good for her. But when you view influence as "getting people to do what I want," you actually reduce your influence. That's because you're viewing the person you're trying to influence as a target, an object, something to be pushed or pulled. You're not hearing the other person's message. And the other person either recognizes this immediately or — even if you get temporary compliance — resents it later. You're dangerous

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when you're blinded by your own point of view.

When you practice disconnected influence, you're stuck in what we call *your here*. You can see *your* position, *your* facts and *your* intentions clearly. But to connect with the people you're trying to influence, you need to communicate from a perspective we call *their there*. You need to see *their* position, *their* facts and *their* intentions clearly.

To reach people and win their long-term support, you need to stop pushing. Instead, you need to influence them in ways that spark a genuine connection.

### Four Traps That "Disconnect" You

As you master the elements of the connected influence model, you're going to start freeing yourself from four "bad influence" habits that keep you disconnected. We call them *human nature traps*, and they're hardwired into your brain — but you can avoid them more successfully when you can spot yourself falling into them. Here's a look at all four and why they're so dangerous:

• **The Fight or Flight Response:** Your reptile brain focuses on *fight or flight*, your mammalian brain on *emotion* and your human brain on *reason*. The problem is that sometimes your three brains can get in the way of each other — especially when you're under stress. At times like this, an emotional sensor in your brain called the amygdala can become overly activated and it's as if your three brains have disconnected and are all functioning independently of each other. When you're focused on your own fears, your own stress, and your own anger, you're continually reagitating your amygdala.

• **The Habit Handicap:** We do what we're used to doing. We do what usually works. Whatever pattern we fall into, we go there because that's where we're on familiar ground. Ingrained habit combined with the stress response of our system put us at the mercy of our own dysfunctional default settings. We're stuck in a pattern of ineffective behavior. We're stuck at our here.

• **Error Blindness: It Feels So Right to Be Wrong:** While we're being wrong, we're like the cartoon coyote in midair before he looks down. We think we're OK, even though what we're doing isn't working, because we don't know it yet. We're tempted to make a sequence of assumptions about our counterparts: they don't know and it needs to be explained to them, they're not smart enough, and it needs to be explained again; and the evil assumption — they're working against us. Each keeps you locked into *your here*.

• **The Double Curse of Knowledge:** Being right also has its own dangers and shortcomings. When we're failing to persuade and finding it difficult to get things done with people — what we "know" can change from asset to obstacle. Why? Because it's very difficult to "unknow" what you know. And this can create enormous gaps between *your here* and *their there*.

When you discover how to go beyond the limitations of your brain's hardware by writing new software that lets you move from *your here* to *their there* in every important relationship, you can create new habits that set the stage for you to have more genuine, lasting influence with other people.

### The Four Steps to Connecting and Influencing

The connected influence model isn't a collection of strategies for manipulating people. Instead, it's a new way of acting every day. And it won't just change your business relationships; it will change all of your relationships by allowing you to overcome your blind spots and human nature traps so you can connect with the people who matter to you. The four core steps to moving from *your here* to *their there* and becoming the powerful influencer you want to be are:

**1. Go for great outcomes.** This isn't just a once-a-year exercise in setting ambitious goals. It's about standing for something noble and worthwhile, and it's about going beyond where people want to be and showing them where they could be.

**2. Listen past your blind spot.** To exert real influence, you need to have a willingness to learn, an open mind and sometimes the insight to discover that you're wrong.

**3. Engage them in their there.** Engaging strengthens the connection that comes from listening. It's about "getting" your audience — not using "gotcha" techniques to manipulate them into compliance.

**4. When you've done enough … do more.** Doing more isn't just about the transactions you have with other people right now. It's about committing to making their great outcomes happen. ●

## STEP #1 Go for Great Outcomes

To become a master at connected influence, you need to inspire people by going for what's possible — and then looking beyond that for what still might be possible. It's a determination to focus on the three "R's" of a great outcome: results, reputation and relationships.

### The First "R": Go for a Great Result

If you're going to influence others, go for something

grand. Go for a great outcome. It's ambitious. It's nearly impossible. It's energizing. It often triggers a response of "Do you think that's possible?" or "Could we really do that?"

*Reverse cognitive bias* means that most people wait for things to happen and then react to them. Fewer people have a *forward cognitive bias* — a willingness to engage the challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead. These people ask, "Why settle for an opportunity when you can create and realize a possibility?"

When you take the bold step of going for a great outcome, you'll get people to think into their futures. You're not just trying to "trick" them into doing something that's good for you. Instead, you're showing them a path to a better *their there*. That leads to creative solutions, great results and stronger connections with the people you want to influence.

A great outcome doesn't need to be large in scope, but it needs to be rich in meaning. And it needs to be great for everyone involved.

### The Second "R": Go for a Great Reputation

Connected influence requires you to prove that you're worthy of people's long-term commitment. To get people to support their great outcomes, you need to support them even when it's not in your best short-term interest.

They need to know that you're committed to *their* success as well as yours and that if they're in trouble, you'll stand up for them, even if the cost is high. In short, you need to be a hero. The actions you take to help others — or the actions you decline to take — can make or break connections forever.

Over and over, people tell us that the men and women who influenced them the most weren't the ones who persuaded them to do things. Instead, they were the ones who deeply cared about them and showed it. As one man put it, "This person was committed to not letting me fail." Commit to standing up for everyone who helps make your dreams a reality.

No matter how you build your own good reputation — through public gestures or behind-the-scenes support — it will empower you to wield positive influence both with the people you help and with the people they influence.

A strong reputation will make people want to work with you, deal with you, listen to you and help you. Because of what they've heard and learned about you, even before they meet you they will anticipate that good things will happen.

### The Third "R": Go for Great Relationships

Disconnected influence steers us into thinking solely about getting results. But when that keeps us from thinking about building relationships, we often get worse results.

Relationships aren't always evident, but they always have an effect. If you damage your relationships, people will be less willing to support your great outcomes and might even work to undermine them.

Most influential people think about long-term implications even in their short-term actions. They drive for results, but they care about how they get those results. They don't make trade-offs between getting things done and earning trust and confidence with every interaction. The people around them know that they're not merely the means to the influencer's ends but are crucially important ends in their own right.

It's extremely easy to fall into focusing on results at the expense of the other two "R's". In fact, this is the core mistake that disconnected influencers make. And it takes mindful effort to break this bad habit.

## STEP #2 Listen Past Your Blind Spot

To practice connected influence, you need to break down the barriers that keep you from knowing what other people really think, want and need. You do that by "hearing the music" of other people's words, mastering the fourth level of listening and being influenceable.

### To Discover Their There, Listen to the Music

In the sort of listening we're talking about — we call it *listening to learn* — there is an energetic, determined humility. Listening to learn implies we don't know already. It implies there is work to do in order to connect with people on their own terms, with as little distortion as possible from our own biases. It involves not surrendering our judgment but suspending it.

When we master this type of listening, we draw others in and invite genuine buy-in. Listening with a strong personal motive to learn and understand more leads to real alignment and commitment rather than creating resistance or the mere appearance of going along.

Listening this way is a fully involved experience. It's an immersion in understanding. It's looking, hearing and feeling *into* another person's perspective and learning from it. Effective listening is an empathic exploration. It's an expedition into others' thoughts, feelings, mindsets and attitudes.

Listen to them as if you're listening to music. Experience the tone, tempo, rhythm, harmony and emotion. Listen not just for the words being said but also for how the words are said and (very important) for what's *not* being said.

### Master Level-Four Listening

To practice the kind of connective listening that increases influence rather than destroying it, you need to train yourself to listen at a higher level. And to do that you need to understand what happens at each level of listening. Here are the four levels of listening from the worst to best:

- **Level One: Avoidance Listening = Listening Over:** This is more the avoidance of listening than listening. Listeners who listen over others say, "Uh huh," while clearly showing no interest in what the other person is saying. The person who's talking usually feels ignored.
- **Level Two: Defensive Listening = Listening At:** This is listening with your defenses up. It's being quick to react and slow to consider. Listeners who listen at others take issue with everything they're saying. Rather than taking things seriously, they take everything personally.
- **Level Three: Problem-Solving Listening = Listening To:** This is listening to accomplish things. It's problem-solving listening. Problem-solving listeners listen for the facts in order to move forward. In the correct circumstances, this is the right approach. But people will feel frustrated if they're hoping for something more than a solution to a problem.
- **Level Four: Connective Listening = Listening Into:** Connective listeners strive to understand in the fullest sense. It's important for them to feel where people are coming from so they can establish genuine rapport. You're listening with the intention to understand the other person and forge a stronger connection. Connective listening is listening into other people to discover what's going on inside them. It's listening from *their there* instead of *your here*.

### To Influence, Be Influenceable

When you're influenceable, it's possible to get buy-in for your ideas even if you think or feel very differently than another person does. That's because you'll lean into each other rather than resisting each other. When that happens, you'll nearly always be able to find common ground.

To demonstrate to other people that you're influenceable, you'll need to practice the following two types of openness:

- *Intellectual openness:* Being open to other people's logic, data, analysis and ideas. It means genuinely taking an interest in how others think and acknowledging how their ideas are influencing you. Intellectually open influencers say things like "You've really changed my thinking on this" and "I haven't thought about it that way before."
- *Emotional openness:* Being open to other people's feelings, passions, values, drives, motives, beliefs and convictions. You'll actively work to understand what other people are experiencing and why they feel the way they do. Emotionally open influencers say things like: "How are you feeling about the situation?" and "What's at stake for you here?"

You need to master one additional essential skill: the art of "shutting up." The next time someone's speaking with you and you feel yourself becoming angry or defensive, do not say the next thing you want to say — no matter how much you want to say it. Instead, stop and ask yourself "Why am I pushing back at what this person is saying?"

## STEP #3 Engage Them in *Their There*

Once you understand where other people are coming from, it's time to connect with them in a way that makes them want to support you.

### Use the Three Gets of Engage

The secret to reaching people in *their there* is to use what we call the "three gets of engage." By keeping these in focus, you'll be able to shift quickly and effectively from your own to another person's perspective.

- **Situational Awareness — You Get "It":** You show that you understand the opportunities and challenges a person is facing. You grasp that person's reality and you offer ideas that work in the person's there. When you do this, you'll hear comments like "You really get it!" or "You really understand what I'm dealing with here."
- **Personal Awareness — You Get "Them":** You show that you understand other people's strengths, weaknesses, goals, hopes, priorities, needs, limitations, fears and concerns. You demonstrate that you're willing to connect on a personal level. You'll hear people say things like "You get me!" or "You really understand where I'm coming from on this."
- **Solution Awareness — You Get Their Path to Progress:** You show people a positive path that enables

them to make progress on their own terms. You give them options and alternatives that empower them. You show them possibilities for making things better. You'll hear comments like "I see how that would help me."

Consistently, the three gets will take you to *their there* and then help you get them to where they want to be and could be.

### Push Their Buttons — Positively

Engaging people in *their there* takes you outside your comfort zone. Now we're going to suggest something that will take you way, way outside your comfort zone. Think of it as "extreme engagement." This isn't something you need to do all the time. In fact, choose your moments very, very carefully. You can turn an encounter that's going nowhere into a memorable moment that leads directly to a great outcome.

In this approach, you won't just engage the other person. You'll provoke the person. It's a risky approach, but sometimes it's the only way to get through to a person who's completely disengaged.

Real engagement is hard work, and we sometimes need to make other people work at it by shaking them out of their inertia. The goal in this case isn't to force people to move to *our here* but rather to open their eyes to *their there* so they can see how they can make their own situation better.

Provoking people is a powerful approach that can quickly turn negative situations around. Use it carefully and sparingly. The key is not just to provoke but to provoke in specific ways that evoke the three gets of engage. So prepare before you provoke, by focusing clearly on the people you want to engage, what their situation is and what solutions they need. Go to *their there* and identify the real reasons for their disconnect. And then confront them with the intent of helping them move forward.

### Engage Across Cultures

Brian Adams, the director of the Griffith University Multi-Faith Center in Brisbane, Australia, is an authority on how to engage with others and collaborate across cultures. Adams says that if you can master just seven words or phrases in a language, you can create an immediate connection:

- Say the person's name properly in his or her native language.
- Say hello.
- Offer a proper greeting.
- Say thank you.
- Say, "I appreciate your time with me."
- Offer a proper farewell when your interaction comes to a close.

Follow Adams' four guidelines for engaging across cultures: First, have courage. Many are hesitant to reach out to someone from another culture because they don't want to look foolish or cause offense. Second, show respect. You don't need to agree with everything the other person says, but assume you have as much to learn from the person's culture as that person has to learn from yours. Third, be curious. Show that you're interested in the other person's history, job, relationships and life. Fourth — and perhaps most important of all — exhibit humility and a good sense of humor. Apologize in advance for any inadvertent cultural slips you might make, and then join in the laughter if you screw up. In the process, you'll strengthen bonds with people who may still be trying to learn a new language or adapt to a new culture themselves. While they may chuckle, they'll admire you for reaching out to them in *their there*.

The cultural challenges aren't the only ones you'll encounter when you want to exert positive influence. While 70-year-olds, 40-year-olds and 20-year-olds may work together and share the same recent events, they have very different pasts, and in effect they come from very different cultures. As a result, they often wind up misunderstanding or resenting each other.

Connecting across cultures and ages isn't difficult if you're willing to take the first step. At work and in your personal life, make it a point to seek out relationships with people from other countries and backgrounds and with people who are older or younger than you. When you connect with people from different backgrounds and ages, they'll offer you new perspectives and new ideas. You'll learn from their successes and sometimes avoid their mistakes. Many times they'll show you an entirely different way of solving problems or approaching life. They may forever change the way in which you view your own world. ●

## STEP #4 When You've Done Enough … Do More

Real influence doesn't just mean meeting people's expectations. It means going so far beyond them that you make yourself unforgettable.

### Do More Before, During and After

To connect in a way that makes you unforgettable, you need to do more, a lot more. You automatically do

more for the people you care about deeply, but you can go beyond what's expected in *any* relationship. When you do, you make a statement about who you are as a person and as a professional. "Overdelivering" makes you stand out in the moment and makes people remember you later. The response will be gratitude, respect or even awe.

Doing more isn't just a one-time thing but an ongoing practice. For maximum effect, you'll want to focus on three distinct times when you can do more: before, during and after an interaction.

• **Doing More Before:** When you do more before you even begin a relationship, you're immediately telling people that you're not just in it for yourself. When you begin interactions by doing more, sometimes even taking a risk in the process, you form instant bonds with people who are tired of being ripped off, manipulated or given the bare minimum of service. It's about
a mindset that starts not with results but with relationships. You may not have any clue where those relationships will lead ... but that's part of the excitement of real influence.

• **Doing More During:** It's crucial to succeed at the task you're undertaking. But there's doing the task and 's turning that task into something greater. When you do the latter, people remember you and want to give back to you. Think about every project you are involved in right now, and ask yourself, what can I do to bring a little more value? What can I do that's a little more than what people usually do in this situation? To help the people around me, is there something else I can do, say, bring, offer or commit to? Then offer your help fully and generously without thinking about what you might get in return. You can make a lifelong impression by doing more in an interaction.

• **Doing More After:** Doing more doesn't end when an interaction does. In fact, you can often add tremendous value long afterward. And one of the most powerful ways to do that is simply by expressing your gratitude. Even when people know we're grateful, telling them is a gift of great value. Thank the person for something specific, acknowledge the effort it took and tell the person how his or her action made a difference in your life.

When you find ways to help other people learn, grow, gain, avoid problems, make progress and achieve their goals, you form the basis for ongoing results, enriched relationships and an integrity-based reputation. And that will lead to real, lifelong influence.

### Do More in All Three Value Channels

The most powerful ways to do more in a business relationship usually don't involve writing a check or donating to charity. And in personal relationships, they don't involve giving your children bigger allowances or buying an expensive gift.

The best way to create real influence is to do more in ways that touch people's hearts and minds. Here are three ways to do this:

• **Expand their thinking ("the insight channel").** Find ways to help them see new insights, reframe their situation, gather new information and find new meaning in their lives.

• **Make them feel better ("the emotional channel").** Find ways to help them feel energized, capable, supported, empowered, successful, happier or valued.

• **Take effective action ("the practical channel").** Find ways to help them take action for themselves or for people they care about. Help them resolve issues, solve problems, build relationships, get projects done or accomplish tasks.

Your goal is to make things better for them in ways that will make you memorable.

### Ask Other People to Do More

But don't do too much. To exert real influence, don't insist on doing more all on your own. Instead, open your arms to other people who want to help. Just as you've invited them to join in your great outcome, allow them to make it even greater by adding value.

When you do this, these people will contribute ideas you'd never think of on your own. By bringing them into the picture, you increase the chances that a great outcome will succeed, and in turn you increase your own positive influence.

When you look for other people to add value, be careful not to limit yourself to "experts" or people with the same experience and background as yours. Instead, look for people from different backgrounds who've done and experienced things you never have. These are the people who can often *do more* in unexpected and compelling ways. ●

## Taking Real Influence to the Next Level

When you practice connected influence, you can transform vulnerability into triumph, create a lasting legacy and repair even the most damaged relationships.

## Let Adversity Lead You to Great Outcomes

Millions of people fail to achieve great influence because they're stuck in "I can't." They have a host of highly persuasive reasons why they can't create great outcomes and get others to buy into them.

But the truth is that our own setbacks or tragedies often lead us to missions that change our lives or even the world. An injured soldier and his friends and family started the Wounded Warrior Project. The Susan G. Komen Foundation raises millions in honor of a young woman who died of breast cancer. A First Lady who triumphed over substance abuse founded the Betty Ford Center.

One common thread in the stories of positive influencers who have been able to turn adversity into great outcomes is their determination to bring something positive from their experiences. A second common thread is that they were able to get out of *their there* and move to the there of other people in need. And the third is that many of them took a powerful first step: They shared their vulnerability openly. When you're in a vulnerable position, realize that you're not alone.

If you have endurance, tenacity and resilience — along with a big dose of courage — you have the tools you need to survive. You also have the power to wield positive influence and to turn setbacks into successes.

## Influence by Getting out of the Way

The time may come to let someone else continue your legacy. This can be wrenching, because — like leaving home when you reach adulthood — it means letting go of a part of yourself.

But if you're strong enough to get out of the way so others can take over, you can ensure that your great outcome lasts forever. That's why letting go is a challenge that power influencers are willing to face head-on.

By stepping aside gracefully at the right time, you actually expand your influence.

Here's something else to think about if you reach a point when it's time to hand off a great outcome. John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth, later became a U.S. senator. John Grisham had a successful career as a lawyer before he became a best-selling fiction writer. So when it's time to say farewell to one great outcome, consider this: Maybe you're just opening the door to the next one.

## Influence Positively After You've Made Big Mistakes

In an ideal world, we'd all be ideal people. We'd never act stupidly, say hurtful things, lash out blindly or behave unethically. Of course, that world doesn't exist. All of us screw up occasionally. To repair the damage, we need to learn how to make things right after we've made them wrong.

The first step is the toughest one: facing your mistakes head-on. Often we shy away from doing this because we're too defensive or too ashamed to look honestly at the stupid things we've done. But mistakes don't make us weak or bad — they simply make us human.

Be brave enough — and humble enough — to make amends to the people you've hurt. Spell out what you did or failed to do, and say, "I'm sorry, and I was wrong." Describe how your mistake harmed the other person. State your commitment to avoiding this mistake in the future. Ask the person what you can do to make up for your mistake, and then do it.

Take a hard look at why you made each mistake in the first place. Real influence isn't about dwelling on the negative. Instead, it's about learning from mistakes.

## Let Gratitude Magnify Your Influence

Gratitude is one of the themes we heard most often from our group of power influencers. Dozens of influencers eagerly shared their stories about people who'd helped them advance in their careers and become better people. These stories made us feel grateful to the people who shared them with us.

Interestingly, there's even a scientific reason for this. It's called "mirroring." The human brain contains "mirror neurons" — specialized cells that cause us to respond to other people's actions and emotions as if we're experiencing them ourselves. Thus, when you perform an act of gratitude, the person who's listening to you feels a strong sense of gratitude as well. And that immediately creates a stronger bond between the two of you.

So if you want to magnify your influence, share your appreciation whenever you can. And if you find yourself trapped in a cycle of negativity, actively break out of it and start a brand-new cycle of appreciation instead. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Real Influence*, you'll also like:

1. ***360 Degrees of Influence* by Harrison Monarth.** Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.
2. ***Just Listen* by Mark Goulston.** A veteran psychiatrist and business coach, Goulston reveals the secret of how to get through to anyone, even when productive communication seems impossible.
3. ***The 360 Leader* by John C. Maxwell.** According to Maxwell, you can learn to develop your influence from wherever you are in the organization by becoming a 360-degree leader.

# Summary

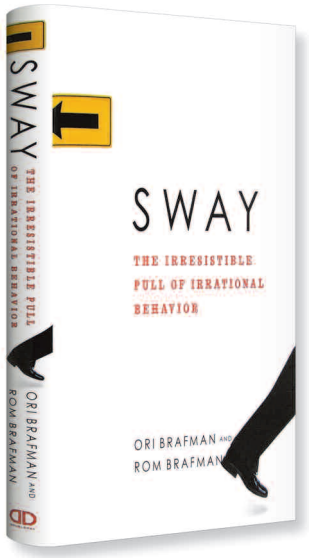
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Career & Self-Development: Communication

# Sway

## The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior




by Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Although most of us think of ourselves as rational, we're much more prone to irrational behavior than we realize.

What psychological forces underlie our own irrational behaviors? How do these forces creep up on us? When are we most vulnerable to them? How do they affect our careers? How do they shape our business and personal relationships? When do they put our finances, or even our lives, at risk? And why don't we realize when we're getting swayed?

In *Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior*, brothers and authors Ori and Rom Brafman explore several of the psychological forces that derail rational thinking. Wherever they looked — across different sectors, countries and cultures—the authors saw different people being swayed in very similar ways. We're all susceptible to the sway of irrational behaviors. But by better understanding the seductive pull of these forces, we'll be less likely to fall victim to them in the future.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How the natural aversion to loss leads many people to ignore the facts, put on blinders and chase a loss in the hopes of recovering something often unrecoverable.
- What happens when you can't navigate the swamp of commitment.
- How looks can be deceiving, especially when they assign an inaccurate value to something or someone based on an initial impression.
- Why interviews are often like first dates, and how hiring managers need more structure in their interviews in order to truly find the right-fit candidate.
- Why every individual is a psychological chameleon.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **SWAY**

**by Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman**

**The authors:** Ori Brafman is the coauthor of *The Starfish and the Spider* and a renowned organizational expert who regularly speaks before Fortune 500, governmental and military audiences. Rom Brafman holds a Ph.D. in psychology and has taught university courses in personality and personal growth.

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

## Dealing With Loss

A growing body of research reveals that our behavior and decision making are influenced by an array of psychological undercurrents that are much more powerful and pervasive than most of us realize. The interesting thing about these forces is that, like streams, they converge to become even more powerful. Charting these psychological undercurrents and their unexpected effects, we can see where the currents are strongest and how their dynamics help us understand some of the most perplexing human mysteries.

### Oversensitive Egg Shoppers

Professor Daniel Putler, a former researcher at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has spent more time thinking about eggs in a year than the rest of us spend in a lifetime. He carefully tracked and studied every aspect of egg sales in southern California. Looking at the data, he found some interesting patterns. Egg sales were typically higher during the first week of each month. Not surprisingly, they were abnormally high in the weeks leading up to Easter, only to experience a sharp decline the week after. Poring over cash-register data that reflected egg-price fluctuations, Putler identified what is referred to in economics as an "asymmetry."

Traditional economic theory holds that people should react to price fluctuations with equal intensity whether the price moves up or down. If the price goes down, we buy more. If the price goes up, we buy less. Economists wouldn't expect people to be more sensitive to price increases than to price decreases. But Putler found that shoppers completely overreacted when prices rose.

It turns out that, when it comes to price increases, egg buyers are a sensitive bunch. If you reduce the price of eggs, consumers buy a little more. But when the price of eggs rises, they cut back their consumption by *two and a half times*. The feeling of dread over a price increase is disproportionate — or asymmetric — to the satisfaction felt when a good deal arises.

We experience the pain associated with a loss much more vividly than we do the joy of experiencing a gain. Putler's research illuminates a mystery that economists have been grappling with for years. For no apparent logical reason, we overreact to perceived losses.

### So Long, Martha's Vineyard

According to Columbia Business School professor Eric Johnson, the more meaningful a potential loss is, the more loss averse we become. In other words, the more there is on the line, the easier it is to get swept into an irrational decision.

If anyone knows about having a lot on the line, it's Jordan Walters of the Silicon Valley branch of investment house Smith Barney. He remembers one client in particular, whose biotech startup purchased by a public company. The client had it made and was planning to retire on Martha's Vineyard.

But Walters pointed out to his client that investing the vast majority of his wealth in his former biotech company's stock would be putting all his eggs in one basket. It would have made more sense to diversify, and Walters came up with a plan to sell a predetermined percentage of his client's holdings every quarter in order to "take the emotion out of the decision."

But the client wanted to ride the stock even higher. He had just sold his company and made it big. Why stop

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now? "What happened," Walters recalled, "when he came in and the stock was at $47, we sold maybe 10 percent of his total position." Shortly after that, the stock began to drop and hit $42. The client said that if the stock went back to $47, he would sell.

Sensing that money was starting to slip through his fingers, the client developed an aversion to loss. Walters realized that his client was so eager to make up for a loss that he was becoming oblivious to the risks he was taking. From Walters' rational perspective, there was nothing magical about the $47 stock price, and there was no guarantee that it would get back up there. On the flip side, the stock was liable to slip even further. But for the client, selling at anything less than $47 represented a loss.

The stock dropped to $38, and the client decided he would sell if it went back up to $44. Stock traders call this kind of behavior "chasing a loss" — when investors ignore the current data, put on blinders and proceed with the singular purpose of recovering as much of their loss as possible.

Walters explained to his client that holding on to the position in hopes that the stock price would recover was risky. But the client ignored Walters' advice and kept his stake. The stock ended up at 12 cents, and the only value the client got out of it was the initial 10 percent he sold up front. Painful as it may have been, the client could have sold at $42, perhaps giving up the dream of a fancy yacht but keeping the majority of his assets and realizing his plan to retire to Martha's Vineyard. ●

## The Swamp of Commitment

We've all experienced the pervasive pull of commitment in some form or another; whether we've invested our time and money in a particular project or poured our energy into a doomed relationship, it's difficult to let go even when things clearly aren't working. As difficult as it can be to admit defeat, however, staying the course simply because of a past commitment hurts us in the long run.

Independently, each of these two forces — commitment and aversion to loss — has a powerful effect on us. But when the two forces combine, it becomes much harder to break free and do something different.

### The $20 Auction

It's precisely because of the compounding effect of commitment and aversion to loss that students in Max Bazerman's negotiations class at Harvard Business School would do well to hold on to their wallets when he introduces his "$20 auction."

On the first day of class, Bazerman announces a game in which he offers up a $20 bill for auction. Everybody is free to bid; there are only two rules. The first rule is that bids are to be made in $1 increments. The second rule is a little trickier: The winner of the auction wins the bill, but the runner-up must still honor his or her bid while receiving nothing in return.

At the beginning of the auction, the hands shoot up quickly, with a flurry of bids following. As Bazerman described it, "The pattern is always the same. The bidding starts out fast and furious until it reaches the $12-to-$16 range."

At this point, it becomes clear to each of the participants that he or she isn't the only one with the idea of winning the $20 for cheap. Everyone but the two highest bidders drops out of the auction, and without realizing it, those two students are locked in. Up to this point, the students were looking to make a quick dollar; now neither one wants to be the sucker who paid good money for nothing. This is when the students become committed to the strategy of playing not to lose.

Like a runaway train, the auction continues, with the bidding going up to $18, $19 and $20. From a rational perspective, the obvious decision would be for the bidders to accept their losses and stop the auction before it spins even further out of control. But the students are pulled by both the momentum of the auction and the looming loss if they back down — a loss that is growing greater by the bid. The two forces, in turn, feed off each other: Commitment to a chosen path inspires additional

### Kahneman on Loss Aversion

Nobel Prize-winning economist Daniel Kahneman, who, together with Amos Tversky, first discovered and chronicled the phenomenon of loss aversion, offers a telling reflection of our psychology during such situations. "To withdraw now is to accept a sure loss," he writes about digging oneself into a deeper hole, "and that option is deeply unattractive." When you combine this with the force of commitment, "the option of hanging on will therefore be relatively attractive, even if the chances of success are small and the cost of delaying failure is high."

Aversion to loss, on its own, is strong. But when it converges with commitment, the force becomes an even more powerful influence in shaping our thinking and decision making.

bids, driving the price up, making the potential loss loom even larger.

And so students continue bidding: $21, $22, $23, $50, $100, up to a record $204. Over the years Bazerman has conducted this experiment, he has never lost a penny (he donates all proceeds to charity). Regardless of who the bidders are — college students or business executives attending a seminar — they are always swayed. ●

## The Value of the Stradivarius on the Subway

To understand how value attribution works, we must journey beneath the streets of Washington, D.C. On a January morning in 2007, L'Enfant Plaza subway station was about to be filled with music. At exactly 7:51 a.m., during rush hour, an ordinary-looking man dressed in jeans and a baseball cap nonchalantly took out his $3.5 million Stradivarius violin and got ready to play. The man was Joshua Bell, one of the finest violinists alive, who regularly performs to sold-out crowds in the best concert halls. Unbeknownst to any of the commuters, Bell was taking part in an undercover field study conducted by *The Washington Post*.

Over the next 43 minutes the concert continued, but on that morning there was no thunderous applause. Here was one of the best musicians in the world playing in the subway station for free, but no one seemed to care. Of the 1,097 people who walked by, hardly anyone stopped. One man listened for a few minutes, a couple of kids stared, and one woman, who happened to recognize the violinist, gaped in disbelief.

Now, the commuters might have been in too much of a hurry to pay attention to Bell. But think about how Joshua Bell appeared to the subway riders. He wasn't dressed in formal attire; he stood on no stage. For all intents and purposes, Bell looked like your average street performer. Even though he didn't *sound* like a mediocre violinist, he looked the part. Without realizing it, the commuters attributed the value they perceived — the baseball cap, jeans, subway venue — to the quality of the performance. As they passed Bell, most subway riders didn't even glance in his direction. Instead of hearing an outstanding concert, they heard street music.

### Value Attribution

It's easy to understand why the subway riders reacted the way they did. Value attribution acts as a mental shortcut to determine what's worthy of our attention. When we encounter a new object, person or situation, the value we assign to it shapes our further perception of it, whether it's our dismissal of a curiously inexpensive antique at a flea market or our admiration of a high-priced designer bag in a boutique. Imagine stumbling upon a discarded armoire on the street. Do you see it for the rare treasure it might be? Or is it your knee-jerk reaction that *something* must be wrong with it? In the same way, value attribution affects our perceptions of people. We may turn down a pitch or idea that is presented by the "wrong" person or blindly follow the advice of someone who is highly regarded.

That is not to say that a person's title doesn't count for anything or that a product's price usually fails to give you a good idea of its true value. But when we apply that price tag (be it real or metaphorical) too broadly, we compromise our rationality. ●

## The First-Date Interview

Here's where value attribution meets up with a sway called the *diagnosis bias* — our propensity to label people, ideas or things based on our initial opinions of them — and our inability to reconsider those judgments once we've made them.

When you think about it, the standard job interview is a lot like a first date. As Professor Allen Huffcutt explained, "You don't have a clear format to follow and you just let the interview go as it will." It's easy to understand why companies would be so drawn to the "first-date" interview format. After all, managers will spend a lot of time with the person they hire; they want to make sure the person is a good fit.

### Standard Interview Questions That Don't Cut It

The standard job interview questions are familiar to all of us, but they make Huffcutt cringe. He shared a list of the top 10 most commonly asked questions during an interview. You'd think that, given the frequency with which they're asked, at least *some* of them would be useful. But from the whole list, Huffcutt gave a passing mark to only one question.

1. Why should I hire you?
2. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
3. What do you consider some of your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
4. How would you describe yourself?
5. What college subjects did you like the best

and the least?

6. What do you know about our company?
7. Why did you decide to seek a job with our company?
8. Why did you leave your last job?
9. What do you want to earn five years from now?
10. What do you really want to do in life?

When we look at these questions more closely, we see that they cluster around specific themes. The first group (questions 1, 3 and 4) is taken from the Barbara Walters school of interviewing. The second group (questions 2, 9 and 10) requires the candidates to gaze into the future. But unless they're applying for a job at a psychic hotline, their predictions carry little weight. The final cluster (questions 5, 7 and 8) takes the opposite approach and turns the interviewer into a historian. The thing is, when people revisit the past, they often reconstruct it. That leaves question No. 6, "What do you know about our company?" as the winner. "That can actually be a decent question," explained Huffcutt. "That gets into whether they took the time to research your company, which can be a good sign — at least better than the previous questions."

### Does a Good Interview = Good Job Performance?

When researchers conducted a meta-analysis — a broad study incorporating data from every scientific work ever conducted in the field — they found there's only a small correlation between first-date (unstructured) job interviews and job performance. The marks managers give job candidates have very little to do with how well those candidates actually perform on the job.

It all comes back to the dating analogy. "How many people go on a first date," Huffcutt reflected, "get a certain impression; keep dating the person; and then, over time, see the reality of the person? That first impression can be totally wrong. You later wonder, 'What in the world was I thinking? How did I not see these things?' The same thing happens in the interview. You've got a very limited time exposure, applicants put on their best show and — not surprisingly — you don't see the realities of the person in 20 minutes."

When it comes to interviews, managers need to restrain themselves from delving into first-date questions (i.e., What do you see yourself doing five years from now?) and focus instead on specific past experience and "job-related hypothetical scenarios," said Huffcutt. The idea is to focus on relevant data and squelch any questions that invite the candidate to predict the future, reconstruct the past or ponder life's big questions. It's all about the important information. What kind of accounting software are you familiar with? What experience do you have running PR campaigns?

But even then, interviews aren't that great as a predictive tool, because some people simply know how to sell themselves better than others. As counterintuitive as it sounds, you don't need interviews at all. Research shows that an aptitude test predicts performance just as well as a structured interview.

The point is, when we're in the position to make a diagnosis, we all become overly confident in our predictive abilities and overly optimistic about the future. ●

## The Chameleon Effect

To look at another trap of diagnosis, let's head to Israel, where 105 soldiers were about to participate in a grueling 15-week commander training program. It was a rigorous and intense process, requiring harsh physical training, mental concentration and 16-hour workdays.

The would-be commanders didn't know it, but this particular course was going to be different from any previous to that date. Before this session's classes started, psychologist Dov Eden informed the training officers leading the program that the army had accumulated comprehensive data on each of the trainees.

Based on this information, Eden told the officers that each soldier had been classified into one of three "command potential" (CP) categories: high, regular and unknown (due to insufficient information). Trainees from each classification were divided equally into four trainee classes. "You will copy each trainee's CP," Eden told the

### The Chameleon Effect in the Workplace

This kind of phenomenon is by no means limited to the military. A meta-analysis conducted by psychologists at SUNY Albany suggested that these same diagnostic effects operate in the workplace. If you've ever been fortunate enough to work for a boss who values you, you'll know that you tend to rise to meet the high expectations set for you. On the other hand, there's nothing that will make you feel more incompetent and demoralized than a supervisor who is convinced you don't have what it takes.

officers, "into his personal record. You are requested to learn your trainees' names and their predicted CP by the beginning of the course."

The trainees had no idea that any of this was going on. And the officers didn't know that the so-called command potential, along with the supporting data, was bogus. Scores were randomly assigned to the trainees and had nothing to do with their intelligence, past performance or ability.

When Eden returned 15 weeks later, he discovered something remarkable. At the end of the course, the soldiers took a paper-and-pencil test that measured their new knowledge of "combat tactics, topography, standard operating procedures, and such practical skills as navigation and accuracy of weapon firing." This test wasn't rigged; it was part of the normal procedure. But this is where the effects of assigning soldiers to the different command potential categories became apparent.

### The Results

The soldiers who the training officers *thought* had a high CP score performed better on the test (scoring an average of 79.98) than their "unknown" and "regular" counterparts (who scored 72.43 and 65.18, respectively). Simply being labeled, however arbitrarily, as having high leadership potential translated directly into actual improved ability — improved by a staggering 22.7 percent. Remember, neither the trainers nor the trainees had any idea what was going on. Without realizing it, the trainees had taken on the characteristics of the diagnoses ascribed to them.

This molding process becomes self-perpetuating: When we take on the characteristics assigned to us, the diagnosis is reinforced and reaffirmed. Take a look at what happened with the Israeli soldiers and officers. When Eden informed the trainers that the command potential scores had actually been fabricated and assigned randomly, they staunchly disagreed. In an attempt to prove their point, they offered up evidence that the high-potential soldiers indeed performed better on their exit exams. This, of course, is circular logic. The exit tests confirmed the initial diagnosis; the trainees had merely molded their abilities to the diagnoses ascribed to them.

When we brand or label people, they take on the characteristics of the diagnosis, displaying the chameleon effect. We're constantly sending and receiving cues and subtle messages to and from one another — swaying and being swayed, even if our rational brain hasn't been let in on the secret. As this study illustrates, we can't help but take on the characteristics others ascribe to us. There's a hidden dance at work within even the most seemingly straightforward interactions — and in this way, we're all psychological chameleons. ●

## What's Fair Is Fair

Researcher Joseph Henrich decided to test the cultural universality of fairness. To begin with, Henrich replicated a money-splitting experiment among UCLA graduate students. He decided to use a dollar amount that he knew would be significant to students and came up with $160, which translated to 2.3 days' worth of work at the grad students' standard university wage of $9 an hour. Participants were randomly paired with strangers in separate rooms. Each participant was told that he or she had been paired with a partner whose identity would not be revealed. The pair would be given the combined sum of $160 — but it was up to them to decide how to split it. The catch, though, was that the students couldn't talk to each other, flip a coin or enter into negotiations. Instead, one person was randomly chosen to decide how to split the money. The splitting participant could divvy up the money any way he or she wanted. The receiving partner was then presented with the offer and had to decide whether to accept it or not. If the receiving partner accepted, both participants would collect their shares. If he or she rejected the offer, *both* parties would leave empty-handed.

### Playing the Game

The most common split offered in the UCLA study was 50/50, which the receiving partner always accepted. After the game was over, Henrich interviewed the participants to see what they had been thinking as they considered their offers. The same word came up again and again: fairness. Most thought that if they offered less than half, their partners wouldn't accept the offer. It turns out they were right. Asked whether they would have accepted an 80/20 split — an offer of $32 — virtually all the partners scoffed. "That would be unfair," they protested. They'd rather go home empty-handed. Some even went so far as to say that they would have rejected *any* offer less than 50 percent.

We don't typically think of fairness as an irrational force, but it dramatically affects our perceptions and sways our thinking. We've all been in situations where we had to negotiate a position. From an objective, logical perspective, it would make sense to focus strictly on the issue at hand: the offer we're presenting or the price we're asking for. As it turns out, because of these fairness sways, it's not always true that what's fair is fair. ●

## Motivation Through Compensation

Managers are always looking for ways to better motivate people; they have long operated under the assumption that monetary incentives increase motivation. But psychologists are beginning to discover that the connection between the two is trickier than it first appears.

Economists can debate the reasons that financial rewards backfire. But researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have been able to pinpoint the neurophysiology behind this paradox. In an experiment, the NIH researchers placed participants in a specially modified MRI machine fitted with a computer monitor and a simple joystick. Lying inside the machine, the subjects played a video game reminiscent of the Atari era.

At the start of each round of the game, a circle, square or triangle would appear on the screen. Each shape held a unique meaning: A circle meant that if you succeeded in completing a task — zapping a figure as it appeared on the screen — you'd earn a monetary reward. However, when subjects saw a square instead of a circle, they braced themselves for bad news. The object of the game would be the same — zap the figure — except that failing to do so would result in a monetary penalty. If the participants saw a triangle, it meant that no money was on the line; whether they hit the target or not, they would neither lose nor gain any money that round.

While the participants were playing the game, they were shown a running tab of their earnings and losses. Meanwhile, the scientists monitored their brain activity and noticed that every time a circle or square appeared — that is, every time there was money to be gained or lost — a certain part of the brain lit up. This region, which remained dormant when the triangle appeared and no money was at stake, is called the *nucleus accumbens*. Evolutionarily speaking, the nucleus accumbens is one of the most primitive parts of the brain — one traditionally associated with our "wild side." Scientists call this region the pleasure center because it's associated with the high that results from drugs and gambling.

At its most extreme, the pleasure center drives addiction. The MRI study surprised the researchers because it revealed that the pleasure center is also where we react to financial compensation. And the more money there is on the line, the more the pleasure center lights up. A monetary reward is — biologically speaking — like a tiny dose of a drug.

### Pleasure Versus Altruism

Now compare this reaction with our neurological reaction to altruistic behavior. In 2006, after the NIH study, Duke scientists asked subjects to play a similar game, but instead of earning money for themselves, the participants were told that the better their score, the more money would be donated to charity. In the MRI images, the pleasure center remained quiet throughout the game, but a different region of the brain, the *posterior superior temporal sulcus*, kept lighting up — the altruism center. This is the same part of the brain responsible for social interactions — how we perceive others, how we relate and how we form bonds.

Considering the two studies, scientists discovered that unlike the parts of our brain that control movement and speech, the pleasure center and the altruism center cannot both function at the same time. It's as if we have two "engines" running in our brain that can't operate simultaneously. We can approach a task either altruistically or from a self-interested perspective. The two different engines run on different fuels and also need different amounts of those fuels to fire up. It doesn't take much to fuel the altruism center: All you need is the sense that you're helping someone or making a positive impact. But the pleasure center seems to need a lot more.

Everywhere we look, we see efforts to provide concrete financial incentives: from compensating star teachers whose students do well on standardized tests to giving tax credits to people who house Hurricane Katrina refugees. Of course these individuals deserve recognition for their efforts. The problem with offering incentives, though, is that they carry a lot of baggage with them. For many, throwing money into the mix diminishes altruistic motivation and introduces unexpected behavior. ●

## Dissenting Justice

In a study conducted by Solomon Asch to observe group dynamics, each participant was placed in a room with several other people. The participants were told they would be tested for visual acuity. It was pretty straightforward; the lengths of the lines they were shown were so glaringly different that you didn't need a magnifying glass or a ruler to tell the difference.

But what the participant didn't know was that the

other "subjects" in the room were actors, and they had all been instructed to give the same wrong answer. As the actors called out their wrong answers one by one, the real participant was bewildered. But something strange happened: Rather than stick to their guns, most participants began to doubt themselves and their lone dissenting opinion. Time and again, they figured that it was best to go along with the group — 75 percent of the subjects joined the actors in giving the wrong answer in at least one round.

### Ferris Bueller and Group Dynamics

Within every group dynamic, there are four distinct roles. The first role is that of the *initiator*: the person who always has the ideas, likes to start projects and advocates new ways of moving forward. Think of someone like Matthew Broderick's character, Ferris Bueller, in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. The entire movie is about Ferris' creative ideas for something fun to do: ditch school, take a vintage car for a joyride, sneak into a restaurant, attend a baseball game and star in a parade. When you're in the same room with an initiator, it's hard not to get excited about whatever new project — or idea he or she has in mind.

If initiators are represented by Ferris, their opposites — *blockers* — are like Ferris' friend Cameron. Ferris wants to take a joyride; Cameron is afraid of getting caught. Whatever new idea the initiator comes up with, the blocker finds fault with it. If hanging out with Ferris makes us want to go out and do something fun, spending a minute with Cameron makes us reluctant to do anything. Of course, it's easy to think of blockers as pure curmudgeons. But they play a vital role in maintaining a balance within a group.

Initiators and blockers are bound to lock horns, which is when the *supporter* steps in, taking one side or the other. If there's a decision to be made, the supporter will side with either the initiator or the blocker. The fourth role, that of the *observer*, stays fairly neutral and tends to merely comment on what's going on.

Most of the tension in the group lies between the initiator and the blocker. Initiators are all about making new things happen. They have a wealth of fresh ideas. In contrast, blockers question the merit or wisdom of new decisions. It's easy to see why people and organizations are naturally attracted to initiators.

Whatever the situation, a dissenting voice can seem, well, annoying. And yet, as frustrating as it can be to encounter blockers, their opinions are absolutely essential to keeping groups balanced. It's natural to want to dismiss a blocker's nay-saying, but a dissenting voice can often act as the dam that holds back a flood of irrational behavior. ●

## Epilogue

Jordan Walters, the financial adviser from Smith Barney mentioned earlier, offers an example that illuminates his perspective on overcoming the psychological force of our irrational aversion to loss: "Let's say you're traveling on a long trip and you have a flat tire," Walters begins. After fixing the tire, you have two choices: You can look for shortcuts to make up the lost time and completely rearrange your trip, or you can continue on your way and accept that you're running behind schedule. Walters advocates the latter, "long-view" method: You might be a little late, but "you're on your way again and you still know where you're going." Rearranging your trip on the fly, on the other hand, can get you lost.

When things go wrong, we can either apply a short-term Band-Aid solution or remember that in the grand scheme of things, it's only a minor misstep. Having a long-term plan — and not casting it aside — is the key to dealing with our fear of loss.

Living in a time when we can predict hurricanes, treat diseases with complex medical interventions, map the universe and reap the benefits of systemized business approaches, it's easy to forget that under the surface we humans are still influenced by irrational psychological forces that can undermine a logical perspective on the world around us. The fact is, all of us are swayed at times by factors that have nothing to do with logic or reason. From managers looking to hire a job applicant to trained psychiatrists studying why we act the way we do, each of us brings a variety of different experiences, emotions and perceptions to our thinking. It is only by recognizing and understanding the hidden world of sways that we can hope to weaken their influence and curb their power over our thinking and our lives. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Sway*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Art of Woo* by G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa.** "Woo" is the ability to win people over to your ideas without coercion, using relationship-based emotionally intelligent persuasion.
2. ***Influencer* by Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, Joseph Grenny, Al Switzler and Ron McMillan.** Individuals - no matter who they are - can become the type of influencers that are bringing about change in the world.
3. ***How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie.** The classic book on achieving success through the greater use of our abilities. There are 30 principles given that will change your personal and business life.

# Summary

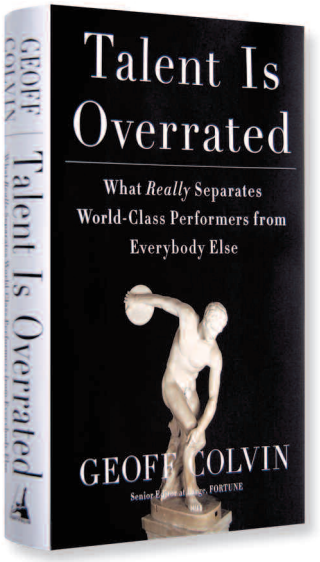
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Career & Self-Development: Business Skills

# Talent Is Overrated

## What *Really* Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else




by Geoff Colvin

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Few people are truly great at what they do. But why aren't they? Why don't they manage businesses like Jack Welch or play golf like Tiger Woods?

Asked to explain why a few people truly excel, most of us offer one of two answers. The first is hard work. Yet hard workers aren't always great. The other possibility is that the elite possess an innate talent for excelling in their field. The trouble is, scientific evidence doesn't support the notion that specific natural talents make great performers.

So what's the real solution to the mystery of high performance? According to author Geoff Colvin, both the hard work and natural talent camps are wrong. What really makes all the difference is a highly specific kind of effort called "deliberate practice."

Based on extensive research, *Talent Is Overrated* shares the secrets of extraordinary performance and how to apply these principles to our lives and work. Colvin explains cutting-edge research and eye-opening facts that debunk the myth of innate talent. Most profoundly, Colvin shows that great performance isn't reserved for a preordained few. The price may be high — but it is available to us all.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The real source of great performance.
- Why innate abilities are not necessarily indicative of great performance.
- The true role of intelligence and memory in high achievement.
- Why "deliberate practice" is the real method for achieving great performance.
- How to apply the principles of great performance in your life.
- How to apply the principles of great performance in your organization.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **TALENT IS OVERRATED**

**by Geoff Colvin**

**The author:** Geoff Colvin, senior editor at large for *Fortune* magazine, is one of America's most respected journalists. He lectures widely and is the regular lead moderator for the *Fortune* Global Forum. A frequent television guest, Colvin also appears daily on the CBS Radio Network, reaching 7 million listeners each week. He co-anchored *Wall Street Week* on PBS for three years.

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For additional information on the author, go to http://wwwsummary.com.

## The Mystery

The odds are that few if any of the people around you are truly great at what they do — awesomely, amazingly, world-class excellent.

Why — exactly why — aren't they? Why don't they manage businesses like Jack Welch, or play golf like Tiger Woods, or play the violin like Itzhak Perlman? The hard truth is that virtually none of them has achieved greatness or come even close, and only a tiny few ever will.

This is a mystery so commonplace that we scarcely notice it, yet it's critically important to the success or failure of our organizations, the causes we believe in, and our own lives.

Extensive research in a wide range of fields shows that many people not only fail to become outstandingly good at what they do, they frequently don't even get any better than they were when they started.

Hundreds of research studies have converged on some major conclusions that directly contradict most of what we all think we know about great performance. Specifically:

- The gifts possessed by the best performers are not at all what we think they are.
- Even the general abilities that we typically believe characterize the greats are not what we think.
- The factor that seems to explain the most about great performance is something the researchers call "deliberate practice." Exactly what that is and isn't turns out to be extremely important.

Understanding where extraordinary performance comes from is crucial. The 19th-century humorist Josh Billings famously said, "It ain't so much the things we don't know that get us into trouble. It's the things we know that just ain't so." The first step in understanding the new findings on great performance is using them to help us identify what we know for sure that just ain't so. ●

## Talent Is Overrated

If it turns out that we're all wrong about talent, that's a big problem. Our views about talent, which are extremely deeply held, are extraordinarily important for the future of our lives, our children's lives, our companies and the people in them. Understanding the reality of talent is worth a great deal.

A number of researchers now argue that giftedness or talent means nothing like what we think it means, if indeed it means anything at all.

When researchers have looked at large numbers of high achievers, at least in certain fields, most of the people who became extremely good in their field did not show early evidence of gifts.

No specific genes identifying particular talents have been found. The most one could say is that if genes exert any influence, it would seem to be much less than the whole explanation for achieving the highest levels of performance.

### What About Tiger?

Researchers on great performance sometimes call Tiger Woods the Mozart of golf, and the parallels do seem striking. Woods' father, Earl, was a teacher, specifically a teacher of young men, and he had a lifelong passion for sports.

Here's the situation: Tiger is born into the home of an expert golfer and confessed "golf addict" who loves to teach and is eager to begin teaching his new son as soon as possible. Earl gives Tiger his first metal club, a putter,

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Christine Wright**, Senior Graphic Designer; **Barry Silverstein**, Contributing Editor

at the age of seven months. Before Tiger is 2, they are at the golf course playing and practicing regularly.

Neither Tiger nor his father suggested that Tiger came into this world with a gift for golf. Tiger has repeatedly credited his father for his success. Asked to explain Tiger's phenomenal success, father and son always gave the same reason: hard work.

### In Search of Business Talent

The overwhelming impression that comes from examining the early lives of business greats is that they didn't seem to hold any identifiable gift or give any early indication of what they would become.

Jack Welch showed no particular inclination toward business, even into his mid-20s. He majored not in business or economics but in chemical engineering and earned a master's and a Ph.D. in that field. At 25, he decided to accept an offer to work in a chemical development operation at General Electric.

If anything in Welch's history to that point suggests that he would become the most influential business manager of his time, it's tough — in fact, impossible — to spot it.

Bill Gates is a more promising prospect for those who want to explain success through talent. He became fascinated by computers as a kid and says he wrote his first piece of software at age 13: It was a program that played tic-tac-toe.

It's clear that Gates' early interests led directly to Microsoft. The problem is that nothing in his story suggests extraordinary abilities.

In surveying the world's business titans we find Welch-like stories more often than Gates-like stories, lacking even a hint of inclination toward the fields or traits that would one day lead to fame and riches.

For most of us, the critical point is that, at the very least, these talents are much less important than we usually think. They seem not to play the crucial role that we generally assign to them, and it's far from clear what role they do play.

## How Smart Do You Have to Be?

Everywhere we see hypersuccessful companies seemingly filled with people who got perfect scores on their SATs.

So it's definitely surprising, at least at first, to find that research doesn't support the view that extraordinary natural general abilities are necessary for high achievement. In fact, in a wide range of fields, including business, the connection between general intelligence and specific abilities is weak and, in some cases, apparently nonexistent. As for memory, the whole concept of a powerful memory is problematic, because it turns out that memory ability is very clearly created rather than innate.

A wide range of research shows that the correlations between IQ and achievement aren't nearly as strong as the data on broad averages would suggest, and in many cases there's no correlation at all.

Many of the most successful people do seem to be highly intelligent. But what the research suggests very strongly is that the link between intelligence and high achievement isn't nearly as powerful as we commonly suppose. Most important, the research tells us that intelligence as we usually think of it — a high IQ — is not a prerequisite to extraordinary achievement.

### How's Your Memory?

The evidence is similar when it comes to that other general ability we often associate with hypersuccessful people, an amazing memory. A large mass of recent evidence shows that memory ability is acquired, and it can be acquired by pretty much anyone.

The widespread view that highly accomplished people have tremendous memories is in one sense justified — they often astound us with what they can remember. But the view that their amazing ability is a rare natural gift is not justified. Remarkable memory ability is apparently available to anyone.

It may seem surprising that off-the-charts general abilities, especially intelligence and memory, are not necessary for extraordinary achievement, but it becomes less surprising when we consider the qualities that highly successful companies and business leaders look for in employees, or rather what they don't look for. It's striking to notice the companies that don't put extreme cognitive abilities at the top of the list, or sometimes even on the list.

The message from these companies raises an important question: Even if superior intelligence and memory aren't the critical factors for success, are the traits the companies seek — team orientation, humor, confidence and so on — reliably related to success across companies, and if so, are they innate traits that you either have or you don't? Research suggests that some personality dimensions do match up with success at certain types of work.

At this point you can't help but wonder if there's anything at all (a) that makes a significant difference to whether you achieve extraordinary performance, and (b) that you can't do anything about it. The answer is yes, of course there is.

What's surprising is that when it comes to innate, unalterable limits on what healthy adults can achieve, anything beyond basic physical constraints is in dispute.

That fact is profoundly opposed to what most of us believe. We tend to think that we are forever barred from all manner of successes because of what we were or were not born with.

But what we'd really like to know is not what does or doesn't stop us, but what makes some people go so much further than others. And what we have discovered so far is not what makes some people excel but rather what doesn't. Specifically:

- It isn't experience.
- It isn't specific inborn abilities.
- It isn't general abilities such as intelligence and memory.

In short, we've nailed down what doesn't drive great performance. So what does?

## A Better Idea

Consider a critically important and highly rigorous scientific study conducted in the early 1990s in Berlin that examined music. The objective of the study was to figure out why some violinists are better than others.

There were three groups of test subjects — we'll call them best, above-average and good. All three groups were spending the same total amount of time on music-related activities.

The violinists were quite certain which activity was most important for making them better: It was practicing by themselves. They all knew it, but they didn't all do it. Though the violinists understood the importance of practice alone, the amount of time the various groups actually spent practicing alone differed dramatically.

The advantage of practice was cumulative. All the research subjects were asked to estimate their weekly practice hours for each year of their violin-playing lives. The results were extraordinarily clear. By age 18, the violinists in the first group had accumulated 7,410 hours of lifetime practice on average, versus 5,301 hours for violinists in the second group and 3,420 hours for those in the third group.

What the authors of the research study called "deliberate practice" makes all the difference. Or, as they stated it with stark clarity in their scholarly paper, "The differences between expert performers and normal adults reflect a lifelong period of deliberate effort to improve performance in a specific domain."

This position was highly significant for two reasons. First, it explicitly rejected the you've-got-it-or-you-don't view. Second, it resolved the huge contradiction in the body of scholarly research on performance and high achievement as well as in our everyday experience. On the one hand, we see everywhere that years of hard work do not make most people great at what they do. On the other hand, we see repeatedly that the people who have achieved the most are the ones who have worked the hardest. How can both sets of observations be true?

The problem, observed the researchers, is that "the current definition of practice is vague." Their framework is not based on a simplistic "practice makes perfect" observation. Rather, it is based on their highly specific concept of "deliberate practice."

Precisely what this means turns out to be critically important. An understanding of it illuminates the path to high achievement in any field, not just by individuals, but also by teams and organizations.

## What Deliberate Practice Is and Isn't

The concept of deliberate practice is quite specific. It isn't work and isn't play, but is something entirely unto itself. What we think of as practice frequently isn't what the researchers mean by deliberate practice.

Deliberate practice is characterized by several elements, each worth examining. It is activity designed specifically to improve performance, often with a teacher's help; it can be repeated a lot; feedback on results is continuously available; it's highly demanding mentally, whether the activity is purely intellectual or heavily physical; and it isn't much fun.

What we generally do at work is directly opposed to the first principle: It isn't designed by anyone to make us better at anything. Usually it isn't designed at all; we're just given an objective that's necessary to meeting the employer's goals and are expected to get on with it.

As for the second principle, the activities that would make us better are usually not highly repeatable. Even in jobs where we do the same few things, we face few (if any) incentives to get better at them by exceeding our limits and discovering what we can't do well.

Feedback? At most companies this is a travesty, consisting of an annual performance review dreaded by the person delivering it and the one receiving it.

Work is often not fun, because getting anything accomplished in the real world is a grind.

If that's life in most companies, then the opportunities for achieving advantage by adopting the principles of great performance, individually and organizationally,

would seem to be huge. In fact they are. Indeed, what's especially surprising about the cluelessness of most organizations with regard to deliberate practice is that the principles are not counterintuitive or hard to grasp.

### What We Need to Know Next

Deliberate practice does not fully explain high achievement — real life is too complicated for that. We're all affected by luck. But more significantly, a person's circumstances, especially in childhood, can powerfully affect his or her opportunities to engage in deliberate practice.

It turns out that deliberate practice can extend one's ability to perform at higher levels far longer than most people believe. In addition, even though performance seems to improve with increased deliberate practice in a wide range of research studies, it must also be true that the relationship cannot be simple and direct in every case.

Regardless of how well practice is designed, another important variable is how much effort a person puts into it.

Frequently when we see great performers doing what they do, it strikes us that they've practiced for so long, and done it so many times, they can just do it automatically. But in fact, what they have achieved is the ability to avoid doing it automatically.

Great performers never allow themselves to reach the automatic, arrested development stage in their chosen field. The essence of practice, which is constantly trying to do the things one cannot do comfortably, makes automatic behavior impossible. Ultimately the performance is always conscious and controlled, not automatic.

## How Deliberate Practice Works

What makes deliberate practice work? It turns out the answer is the same whether we look at business or sports or any other field, and it isn't what you might expect.

Indeed, the most important effect of practice in great performers is that it takes them beyond — or, more precisely, around — the limitations that most of us think of as critical. It enables them to perceive more, to know more and to remember more than most people.

### Perceiving More

Top performers can figure out what's going to happen sooner than average performers by *seeing more.* Sometimes excellent performers see more by developing a better and faster understanding of what they see.

The superior perception of top performers extends beyond the sense of sight. They hear more when they listen and feel more when they touch.

When excellent performers look further ahead than average performers do, they are literally looking into their own future. Knowing what lies ahead for them, they prepare for it and thus perform better. They may be looking only one second ahead, but for them that extra moment makes all the difference.

Much of the power of looking further ahead comes from the simple act of raising one's gaze and getting a new perspective, and doing it not once or occasionally, but using practice principles to do it often and get better at it.

### Knowing More

Top performers in a wide range of fields have better organized and consolidated their knowledge, enabling them to approach problems in fundamentally different and more useful ways.

Many of the best-performing companies explicitly recognized the importance of deep knowledge in their specific field, as opposed to general managerial ability.

Building and developing knowledge is one of the things that deliberate practice accomplishes. Constantly trying to extend one's abilities in a field requires amassing additional knowledge, and staying at it for years develops the critical connections that organize all that knowledge and make it useful.

### Remembering More

How can great performers in every realm recall more than would seem possible? Researchers find that excellent performers in most fields exhibit superior memory of information in their fields. What's the explanation?

All these people have developed what we might call a memory skill, a special ability to get at long-term memory in a fast, reliable way.

Top performers understand their field at a higher level than average performers do, and thus have a superior structure for remembering information about it.

Practice exerts an additional, overarching influence that in a way is even more impressive: It can actually alter the physical nature of a person's brain and body.

Endurance runners have larger-than-average hearts, an attribute that most of us see as one of the natural advantages with which they were blessed. But no, research has shown that their hearts grow after years of intensive training.

We've all had the powerful feeling, when watching or contemplating an extraordinary performer, that in some deep way this person is simply not like us. Great performers really are fundamentally different. Their bodies and brains are actually different from ours in a profound way. But we're wrong in thinking, as

many do, that the exceptional nature of great performers is some kind of eternal mystery or preordained outcome. It is, rather, the result of a process, the general elements of which are clear.

## Applying the Principles in Our Lives

Step one to applying the principles in our lives is knowing what you want to do. Because the demands of achieving exceptional performance are so great over so many years, no one has a prayer of meeting them without utter commitment. The first challenge in designing a system of deliberate practice is identifying the immediate next steps. In a few fields those steps are clear. But in the great majority of careers, and in the advanced stages of all of them, there is no published curriculum, no syllabus of materials that must be studied and mastered.

From this perspective we can see mentors in a new way — not just as wise people to whom we turn for guidance, but as experienced masters in our field who can advise us on the skills and abilities we need to acquire next and can give us feedback on how we're doing.

The skills and abilities one can choose to develop are infinite, but the opportunities to practice them fall into two general categories: opportunities to practice directly and opportunities to practice as part of the work itself.

### Practicing Directly

What separates the great musicians from the rest is how well they perform music. In business we find many analogous situations. The most obvious involve presentations and speeches, and these form the one element of corporate life that is commonly practiced. Yet for most people, practice consists of perhaps a few run-throughs.

Many other important elements of business life can be practiced. One of the most dreaded tasks for many managers is giving job evaluations to their direct reports. The message can be broken down into pieces and each piece analyzed for intent, then practiced repeatedly with immediate feedback from a coach or by video.

The chess model has been used widely in business education for 80 years, but under a different name: the case method. You're presented with a problem, and your job is to figure out a solution. The process of focusing on the problem and evaluating proposed solutions is powerfully instructive.

The practice of top athletes falls into two large categories. One is conditioning. The other category is working on specific critical skills.

Conditioning in business means getting stronger with the underlying cognitive skills that you probably already have. It can mean reviewing the fundamental skills that underlie your work.

Specific skill development is based on focused simulation, and that concept can be applied widely in business. Try to improve a specific aspect of your performance, achieve high repetition and get immediate feedback.

### Practicing the Work

We all face a different way to practice business skills, and that is by finding practice in the work itself. These activities, called self-regulation, are done before, during or after the work activity itself.

## Applying the Principles of Great Performance in Our Organizations

Organizations that apply the principles of great performance follow several major rules:

- Understand that each person in the organization is not just doing a job, but is also being stretched and grown.
- Find ways to develop leaders within their jobs.
- Encourage their leaders to be active in their communities.
- Understand the critical role of teachers and of feedback.
- Identify promising performers early.
- Understand that people development works best through inspiration, not authority.
- Invest significant time, money and energy in developing people.
- Make leadership development part of the culture.

### Applying the Principles to Teams

Turning groups of great individuals into great teams is a discipline in itself, which also operates on the principles of great performance. That's why the best organizations follow one additional rule:

- *Develop teams, not just individuals.* Organizations that are the most successful at building team performance are especially skilled at avoiding or addressing potential problems that are particularly toxic to the elements of deliberate practice, such as the following:
  - Picking the wrong team members.
  - Low trust.
  - Competing agendas.
  - Unresolved conflicts.
  - Unwillingness to face the real issues.

Self-regulation begins with setting goals. The best performers set goals that are not about the outcome but about the process of reaching the outcome. The next prework step is planning how to reach the goal. The best performers make the most specific, technique-oriented plans. The best performers also go into their work with a powerful belief in their ability to perform.

During the work, the most important self-regulatory skill that top performers use is self-observation. They are in effect able to step outside themselves, monitor what is happening in their own minds, and ask how it's going. Researchers call this metacognition — knowledge about your own knowledge, thinking about your own thinking.

The practice opportunities that we find in work won't do any good if we don't evaluate them afterward. Excellent performers judge themselves differently from the way other people do. They're more specific, just as they are when they set goals and strategies.

As you add to your knowledge of your domain, your objective is not just to amass information. You are building a mental model — a picture of how your domain functions as a system. This is one of the defining traits of great performers: They all possess large, highly developed, intricate mental models of their domains.

For anyone, a rich mental model contributes to great performance in three major ways:

- A mental model forms the framework on which you hang your growing knowledge of your domain.
- A mental model helps you distinguish relevant information from irrelevant information.
- Most important, a mental model enables you to project what will happen next.

## Performing Great at Innovation

The greatest innovators in a wide range of fields all have at least one characteristic in common: They spent many years in intensive preparation before making any kind of creative breakthrough.

The most eminent creators are consistently those who have immersed themselves utterly in their chosen field, have devoted their lives to it, amassed tremendous knowledge of it, and continually pushed themselves to the front of it.

### Making Organizations Innovative

Since organizations are not innovative — only people are innovative — it follows that the most effective steps an organization can take to build innovation will include helping people expand and deepen their knowledge of their field. Creating innovation networks within the organization is one step.

Organizations can take two other steps that are especially effective in light of how innovation really happens: telling people what's needed and giving them freedom to innovate.

## Great Performance in Youth and Age

Becoming world-class great at anything seems to require thousands of hours of focused, deliberate practice. For an adult facing the responsibilities of a family and a career, devoting that kind of time to purely developmental activities would be exceedingly tough. Only in childhood and adolescence will the time typically be available.

That reality creates another advantage to starting early. In any field where people can start early, starting late may put one in an eternal and possibly hopeless quest to catch up.

### Should We Create Business Prodigies?

Early training can produce high achievers who are surprisingly young. Traditionally, however, training in business skills doesn't start early. There isn't intensive, focused development of business skills in young people that's anything like what happens with swimmers, artists and mathematicians, for example. The question then arises whether it's even possible.

The answer is clearly yes. Beyond general domain knowledge, it would be possible to train quite young people in more specific business skills.

Our society has very little problem with children being directed toward fields other than business at early ages. If similar techniques were applied to early training in business, and similar results were produced, would the same effect follow?

Continued deliberate practice enables top performers to maintain skills that would otherwise decline with age and to develop other skills and strategies to compensate for declines that can no longer be avoided. We've seen business people performing at the highest levels at advanced ages. Warren Buffett continues to run Berkshire Hathaway brilliantly in his late 70s.

The perspective of both youth and age raises a profound question about great performance. If it's all about the punishing demands of deliberate practice, the continual, painful pushing beyond what's comfortable, then why does anyone do it?

## Where Does the Passion Come From?

The central question about motivation to achieve great performance is whether it's intrinsic or extrinsic.

Most of us believe the drive must be ultimately intrinsic. Much of the research supports this view.

The consistent finding reported by many researchers examining many domains is that high creative achievement and intrinsic motivation go together.

The great majority of the research in business motivation has focused on what motivates employees generally, not on what drives the top performers. The drivers are almost never extrinsic. Long after executives and entrepreneurs accumulated more money than they could ever use and more fame than anyone could hope for, they keep working and trying to get better.

Yet that can't be the whole story. Intrinsic motivation may dominate the big picture, but everyone, even the greatest achievers, has responded to extrinsic forces at critical moments.

### The Multiplier Effect

In our search for the source of the motivation that sustains people through the trials of getting better, the evidence is pushing in a clear direction. The passion doesn't accompany us into this world, but rather, like high-level skills themselves, it develops. World-class achievers are driven to improve, but most of them didn't start out that way.

If the drive to excel develops, rather than appearing fully formed, then how does it develop? Several researchers have separately proposed "the multiplier effect." The concept is simple. A very small advantage in some field can spark a series of events that produce far larger advantages. This multiplier effect accounts not just for improvement of skills over time but also for the motivation that drives the improvement.

The concept of the multiplier effect is embedded in the fundamental theory of deliberate practice. A beginner's skills are so modest that he or she can manage only a little bit of deliberate practice, since it's highly demanding. But that little bit of practice increases the person's skills, making it possible to do more practice, which increases the person's skill level more.

### What Do You Believe?

We've seen that the passion develops, rather than emerges suddenly and fully formed. We've also seen hints that childhood may be especially important in how the drive's development gets started.

What would cause you to do the enormous work necessary to be a top performer? It depends on your answers to two basic questions: What do you really want? And what do you really believe?

## How Organizations Blow It

Most organizations seem to be managed brilliantly to prevent people from performing at high levels.

How often is feedback at most companies constructive, nonthreatening and work-focused rather than person-focused? Evaluations at most companies are exactly the opposite. As for rewards, at most companies they almost always entail more responsibilities and less freedom. Extrinsic motivators may be, by definition, the only type that a company can offer employees, but most companies do it about as poorly as they can.

What you want — really, deeply want — is fundamental because deliberate practice is a heavy investment. What would you want so much that you'd commit yourself to the necessary hard, endless work, giving up relationships and other interests, so that you might eventually get it? Whatever it is that the greatest performers want, that's how much they must want it.

The second question is more profound. What do you really believe? Belief is tragically constraining. Everyone who has achieved exceptional performance has encountered terrible difficulties along the way.

What you really believe about the source of great performance becomes the foundation of all you will ever achieve. Regardless of where our beliefs in this matter originated, we all have the opportunity to base them on the evidence of reality.

The evidence offers no easy assurances. It shows that the price of top-level achievement is extraordinarily high. Perhaps it's inevitable that not many people will choose to pay it. But the evidence shows also that by understanding how a few become great, anyone can become better. Above all, what the evidence shouts most loudly is striking, liberating news: that great performance is not reserved for a preordained few. It is available to you and to everyone. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Talent Is Overrated*, you'll also like:

1. ***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink.** A new age has emerged and right-brainers — artists, inventors, caregivers, designers — are leading the pack. Learn the six essential aptitudes you'll need to excel in this new business environment.
2. ***Talent Is Never Enough* by John C. Maxwell.** Leadership expert Maxwell outlines 13 crucial things you can do to maximize your strengths and become a "talent-plus" person.
3. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith.** Goldsmith details the 20 habits that may be holding you back and provides solutions.

# Summary

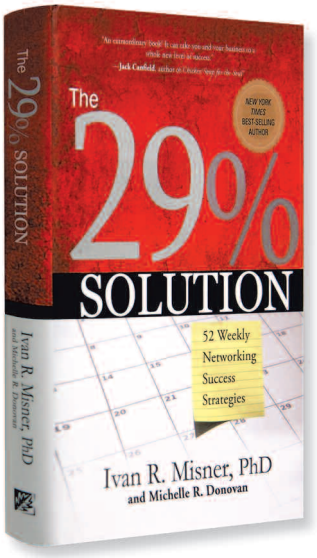
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Career & Self-Development: Business Skills

# The 29% Solution

## 52 Weekly Networking Success Strategies




by Ivan R. Misner, Ph.D., and Michelle R. Donovan

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Most people understand that networking is important to their success — they just lack a step-by-step process to get the results they want. Very few individuals implement a comprehensive methodology that will build a business through networking.

In many ways, success at networking is the uncommon application of common knowledge. The 29% Solution is that "uncommon application" — the development of the methodology required for becoming a master networker. Best-selling author Ivan R. Misner, founder of the world's largest business networking organization, and co-author Michelle R. Donovan, known to her colleagues as "The Referability Expert," provide 52 weekly networking strategies to ensure success.

Misner and Donovan believe that, with reading, training and coaching, people can develop their networking skills, increase their connections and become part of the roughly 29 percent of people who are, in fact, separated from the rest of the world by just six degrees.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to create your own future by setting networking goals and profiling your preferred client.
- Why "Givers Gain" should be your networking mantra.
- How to master the top 10 traits of a master networker.
- How to break out of the "cave dweller" mentality.
- How to get the maximum value for the time you invest in networking.
- How to gain success from doing what others don't.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE 29% SOLUTION**

**by Ivan R. Misner, Ph.D., and Michelle R. Donovan**

**The authors:** Ivan R. Misner, Ph.D., is the founder and chairman of BNI, the world's largest business networking organization. He has written nine books, including *The New York Times* best-seller *Masters of Networking* and his No. 1 best-seller *Masters of Success*. He is a monthly columnist for Entrepreneur.com and is chairman of the board of the Referral Institute, a referral training company with trainers around the world.

Michelle R. Donovan is known as "The Referability Expert" in Pittsburgh. She is the owner of the Referral Institute in western Pennsylvania and founder of Pinnacle Training Services. Michelle has served as guest faculty for Penn State's Beaver campus and the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Center for Executive Education.

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

## Introduction

You've heard that there are "six degrees of separation" between you and anybody else on Earth whom you would like to meet. Right? Ain't true.

But with reading, training, and coaching, people can develop their networking skills, increase their connections, and become part of the roughly 29 percent of people who are, in fact, separated from the rest of the world by just six degrees. ●

## Section One: Create Your Future

### Week 1: Set Networking Goals

One way to systematize and organize your approach to networking is to set measurable networking goals. Each goal you create should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timed with a deadline. You have to set your goals before you can design a plan for meeting them.

### Week 2: Block Out Time to Network

Make a written commitment to yourself and your business by blocking out time on your calendar for networking activities.

If sales are only part of your job responsibility, then eight hours a week seems appropriate. On the other hand, if sales represent most of your job responsibility, you need to be spending much more than eight hours a week on networking activities.

### Week 3: Profile Your Preferred Client

Profiling your preferred client means taking a hard look at what makes that organization or individual a perfect fit for you.

You can be much more effective at networking your business when you're able to profile your preferred client to the people who are listening to your message. This gives the listener more information and opens the mind's eye to his personal Rolodex, visually matching the people he knows against your specific profile. When a listener identifies a match, there's a good chance you'll get a referral.

### Week 4: Recruit Your Word-of-Mouth Marketing Team

Once you understand and can describe for others your preferred client, you can begin to pursue that prized catch with the help of your own personal word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing team.

Who constitutes your strongest WOM team? They are influential people whose recommendations and testimonials carry great weight with your preferred clients and, of utmost importance, they are willing to establish a reciprocal referral relationship with you.

Most important, the members of your word-of-mouth marketing team are in touch with your preferred client on a regular basis — but for a different reason than yours.

### Week 5: Give to Others First

*Givers Gain.* We believe that no other two words in the English language capture so vividly, accurately and simply the power and potential of networking at its best.

By giving to others first, you take the initial step in building two-way, win-win networking relationships. You're leading by example, modeling the behavior you hope others will adopt.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Christine Wright**, Senior Graphic Designer; **Barry Silverstein**, Contributing Editor

### Week 6: Create a Network Relationship Database

You need a way to maintain contact information on your clients, prospects, vendors, word-of-mouth marketing team members and anyone else whose path you hope to cross again — especially those people who are most likely to be able to refer you business.

You need to keep more than just contact information. Record every word-of-mouth referral that you receive from your network ... who gave you the referral, how it developed and whether it led to any further business.

### Week 7: Master the Top 10 Traits

1. Timely follow-up on referrals
2. Positive attitude
3. Enthusiasm/motivation
4. Trustworthiness
5. Good listening skills
6. Commitment to networking 24/7
7. Gratitude
8. Helpfulness
9. Sincerity
10. Dedication to working one's network

These traits impact your ability to get into the 29 percent of the population and your overall networking success. They all tie in to proactive, long-term relationship building.

## Section Two: Expand Your Network

### Week 8: Diversify Your Contacts

A major key to success in building a powerful business network is diversity. Think about the untapped world beyond the security of your circle of close contacts.

When it comes to business networking, you never know who people know. In networking, someone you don't have a lot in common with could be a connector between you and a whole world of people you might not otherwise be able to meet.

### Week 9: Meet the RIGHT People

It's not what you know, or even who you know — it's how well you know them and how well they know you that really counts in building a powerful network.

At networking events, who are the right people to meet? Consider two types of individuals: those serving your preferred clients and those who have the potential to help you meet your business goals.

## Worksheet for Profiling Your Preferred Client

This is an abbreviated list that will help in creating your specific profile. This list can be expanded, depending on the preferred client profile that you design.

| Business-to-Consumer Clients | Business-to-Business Clients |
|---|---|
| Gender | Location |
| Family Structure | Number of Employees |
| Marital Status | Years in Business |
| Household Income | Specialty or Type of Business |
| Location | Size of Company (Revenue) |
| Education | Number of Departments |
| Children/No Children | Industry |
| Homeowner or Renter | Public or Private |
| Other | Other |

### Week 10: Reconnect With People From the Past

Are there people from the past that you haven't contacted in a while? These people obviously mean something to you, because otherwise you wouldn't stay in touch with them, or they with you. It's time they knew more about what's going on in your business, because you never know who they might know and how they might be able to help you. But here's a key point: Always offer them something in return for their help.

### Week 11: Talk to Your Family

Suppose you have two brothers and two sisters. Of those four siblings, three are huge fans of yours. They know you; they love you; they trust you. So why wouldn't they refer their friends and colleagues to you? Often it's because they don't know how.

It's time to tell your family what you do. Schedule lunch (or a telephone call, if distance provides a challenge) with a family member. During your lunch (or call), shift your assumptions and begin to consider the person in front of you as a potential business resource with a broad network of people you don't know.

### Week 12: Stop Being a Cave Dweller

Cave dwellers will always remain in the 71 percent of the population who are unsuccessful networkers because they become prisoners of their routine.

Breaking out of your cave-bound routine will take commitment on your part. It's going to require you to venture outside your comfort zone and — take a deep breath — network!

With your renewed commitment to networking your business, it's in your best interest to practice smart networking. Smart networking is focused and strategic. Smart networking reaps a high return on its investment of time, money and energy. Smart networking is no longer an option for the success of your business — it's a prerequisite.

### Week 13: Join a Web-Based Networking Group

If you harness the power of the Internet wisely, the result can be something like putting your business networking efforts on steroids. Today, online social networking forums are being used more and more for business purposes.

It's not enough just to join and get your name on the membership list. You must focus on building relationships (turning contacts into connections) with other members of the community. Networking is all about building good relationships — even online.

### Week 14: Become Magnetic

Becoming a center of influence makes you a living magnet for your business. A magnet's strength is related to the composition of the magnet — not necessarily the size.

When you arrive at a meeting, be "ready to engage," with conversation topics, questions and stories in the back of your mind. Focus on "CPI," Common Point of Interest, an essential element in every conversation and interaction. ●

## Section Three: Go the Extra Mile

### Week 15: Be a Value-Added Friend

When you help someone meet a goal, you instantly become a "value-added" friend — an asset to this individual's life and business.

Start by giving. Let your mantra be not "What's in it for me?" but "What can I do for you?" This is perhaps the most powerful technique for deepening and widening your networks, as well as for adding value.

### Week 16: Become a Catalyst

In networking, there are three kinds of people: those who wait and watch for things to happen, those who make things happen, and those who wonder what the heck happened.

A catalyst is one who makes things happen *(see sidebar)*. Without a catalyst, there is no spark and nothing much gets done.

### Characteristics Shared by Catalytic People

- **Initiative.** Catalytic people don't sit still — they make things happen in all aspects of their lives. As networkers, catalytic people learn the goals of others in order to help people get where they wish to be.
- **Confidence.** Catalytic people have confidence in themselves and in the players on their team. Their confidence is contagious, and they tend to bring out the best in others.
- **Motivation.** Catalytic people are not only motivated themselves, but they can also motivate others to perform at their highest potential.

### Week 17: Find an Accountability Partner

Why not find an accountability partner for networking your business? That way, every time you commit to a strategy, your accountability partner can keep you to the task.

Accountability in the context of a strong referral network can create excellence within the network. Fostering friendships while insisting on accountability requires a balancing act that rests on the fulcrum of a Givers Gain philosophy. We must both develop friendships and expect accountability.

### Week 18: Volunteer and Become Visible

Volunteering can position you to meet key people in your community. It instantly expands the depth and breadth of your network. People who are getting to know you will not be experiencing you in the "customer" mindset.

Volunteering is not a recreational activity; it's a serious commitment to help fulfill a need. To find an organization or cause that aligns with your interests, you need to approach volunteerism with a healthy level of thought and strategy.

### Week 19: Send a Thank-You Card

The old-fashioned, personalized, handwritten thank-you card has been largely replaced by e-mail. A handwritten card of thanks now carries even more cordiality than when it was the norm.

Most people enjoy receiving the handwritten card, but few actually do it themselves for other people. When someone goes the extra mile for you, send him a card.

### Week 20: Follow Up TODAY

We believe that follow-up is the lifeblood of effective networking. Your ability to follow up on what you say you are going to do — when you say you're going to

do it — is critical for building credibility and ultimately networking your business.

The key to good follow-up is a system for keeping track of your networking partners, your meetings and appointments with them, and their professional needs and personal interests. It's also important to follow up in a timely manner.

## Section Four: Get Value for Your Time

### Week 21: Be "ON" 24/7

To be a master networker, you have to be like a broadband connection: always on.

Building your "social capital" hinges on the development of relationships with other people. Rather than constantly direct selling, the best way to build meaningful relationships is to help someone whenever possible. Ultimately, the key is to be "on" 24/7 while honoring the place and the occasion for networking at all times.

### Week 22: Learn to Play Golf or Something

Golf outings can be good for forging relationships, but not everyone likes to play golf. Other activities can be used to engage with people beyond the boardroom.

Whatever activity you prefer, you can use it as a "catalyst event." Catalyst events bring people together in situations that are conducive to forming symbiotic relationships.

How do you capitalize on the potential of your catalyst events to generate referrals for you? By inviting the right people to these events. Catalyst events must have an element of exclusivity in order to work. The people attending are investing in their social capital too.

### Week 23: Have Purposeful Meal Meetings

A purposeful meal meeting is nothing more than a meeting that includes a meal and a specific, meaningful purpose. And our purpose happens to be networking.

These meetings are strategic and results-oriented. They provide high value for your invested time.

Realize the potential that exists for a substantial amount of networking over meals. Learning about each other, helping one another with problems and giving of ourselves — that's what defines a purposeful meal meeting.

### Week 24: Make First Impressions Count

You get exactly one chance to make that all-important first impression. In seven short seconds, you are being predefined, prejudged and precategorized as deserving more time — or not.

Every time you connect with someone new while networking, the seven-second clock begins its countdown. You must create a powerful, positive first impression with your appearance and your body language.

Before leaving the house, ask yourself, "What message am I sending to those who are meeting me for the first time?"

### Week 25: Seek Out a Referral Networking Group

How much would it benefit you to have several dozen salespeople working on your behalf to bring you new business? That's what referral networks can do.

This book's co-author, Dr. Ivan Misner, founded BNI. It has become the world's largest business networking and referral organization. BNI's purpose is to enable professionals to develop lasting relationships that lead to future business.

### Week 26: Join a Chamber of Commerce

Diversifying where you spend your time is a sound business networking strategy. There is a professional association for just about every field you can imagine. Trade associations, like professional associations, offer plenty of networking opportunities.

Another venue to consider: your local chamber of commerce. Membership in this chamber of commerce would give you an opportunity to meet more than one prospect for your word-of-mouth marketing team.

You'll get the most value out of your networking by belonging to one chamber, one referral group and one professional association.

### Week 27: Sponsor Select Events

How many times have you been asked to be a sponsor? How many times have you offered to sponsor a select event in order to help out someone in your network? Both situations have the potential to give you huge exposure if done well.

Choose carefully when you're thinking about sponsoring an event. Is it a good investment of your time and money?

### Week 28: Host a Purposeful Event

Purposeful events don't need to be elaborate. For example, you might choose to organize a weekly happy hour each Friday to give colleagues an occasion to build relationships. You could make it more strategic by focusing on your word-of-mouth marketing team.

## Section Five: Control Your Communication

### Week 29: Ask Your Own Questions

In business, you can usually count on reciprocity and be assured that the time and effort you give someone will come back to you. The law of reciprocity even has an impact on our conversations when we're networking. If you want someone to ask you a specific question, ask her the same question first. After she answers, she'll probably ask you the same question in return.

### Week 30: Talk About Benefits, Not Features

The features are simply the bare-bones facts — the elements or significant parts — of the product or service. The benefits are its value to customers — how it will solve their problems, eliminate their pain and make life glorious.

Most businesspeople, without thinking about it, talk in terms of features. In formulating the message you want your networking partners to convey, your challenge is to put yourself in the customer's place.

### Week 31: Become a Profiler for Your Business

Your success in marketing your business by word of mouth rests mostly on your skills as a communicator. Here are three common ways people miscommunicate:

1. They talk too much.
2. They use jargon.
3. They speak in generalities.

A surefire way to avoid talking too much is to practice delivering your message. Then identify jargon words that you've been using in your networking. Finally, write out a specific referral request before presenting it to the people in your network.

Becoming an effective profiler for your business not only helps you clarify your messages, but also helps ensure the success of your word-of-mouth marketing efforts.

### Week 32: Become a Motivational Speaker for Your Business

The message begins with you. It's your choice: Will the message come from your head or from your heart? When the message comes from your head, it's intellectual and unemotional. But a message from the heart is filled with emotion and passion.

Your personal challenge in networking is to have an extraordinary message that not only captures but also highlights your unique selling proposition (USP). Your USP is what sets you apart from your competition. Your message needs to be filled with passion. If you are not excited about what you do, no one else will be either.

### Week 33: Leverage Your Smallest Billboard

An effective business card is an integral part of a good marketing plan. For its size and cost, it's probably the most powerful marketing tool you own.

The best way to use your business card is not to give it out if people don't ask for it. If you practice this rule while networking, you'll be amazed at the impact you'll have on others. You are now assured that people who ask for your card actually want your card.

So, you may be asking yourself, what happens if I want to give someone my card, but she doesn't ask me? It's simple. First, ask her for her card. As she hands you her card, she will probably ask you for yours as well. ●

## Section Six: Become the Expert

### Week 34: Give a High-Value Presentation

Getting speaking engagements is a great short-term approach to building your business. And it fits well with your long-term process of word-of-mouth marketing, because educating your referral sources takes time.

But a glorified sales pitch won't cut it. Instead, we've got two words for you: high value. If your presentation gives your audience something they can use, that's a high-value presentation.

### Week 35: Create an Informative Newsletter

If you wish to be seen as an expert, consider writing an informative newsletter. Whether printed on paper or contained in an e-mail, your newsletter needs to reflect your brand and image.

Publishing a newsletter week after week or month after month is time-consuming and requires a strong commitment, but it can be a powerful networking and marketing tool.

### Week 36: Write a Press Release

Next to word of mouth, publicity is the most cost-effective strategy you can use to market your business. The main objective of publicity is to announce or inform.

Publicity is usually free; in most cases, you don't have to pay to get your press release into the paper. Your ability to write a compelling, newsworthy press release helps to determine whether your announcement gets noticed and ultimately considered for publication.

Professionals recommend that your business generate a press release once per quarter to remain visible in your industry and community.

### Week 37: Write Your Own Identity

You can derive identity-building, brand-boosting benefit from writing articles. Editors and reporters need good story ideas and will use them wherever they can find them.

Either by phone or by letter, tell an editor why readers will be interested in the feature idea you have or why it is newsworthy. What are you doing in your business that strikes a chord in the community? Editors need hooks, angles, ways to relate to a distracted, overworked, frenzied readership.

## Section Seven: Capture Your Success Stories

### Week 38: Ask for Written Testimonials

Before people come to your firm for a particular product or service, they often want the comfort of knowing what others have said about you. Testimonials carry a level of credibility because they come from someone who has direct experience with your product or service.

Have you ever asked a satisfied client for a written testimonial? We recommend making this standard practice for your business. Review your testimonial file or binder at least every two to three years to identify testimonials that are no longer valid or credible.

### Week 39: Write Down Two Success Stories

You can empower your network with success stories about your business — as long as those success stories are truthful, substantive and compelling. First, however, you need to write them down so they can be told to other people. The key is to capture a truly compelling story. The best story is one that profiles your preferred client so that more people like him will find their way to you.

By writing these stories down, you can swap them with your referral partners. Top off your success story with a written testimonial by the perfect customer!

### Week 40: Write a Personal Introduction

When you're getting ready to make a presentation and someone is introducing you, you've got a captive audience — even before you begin speaking. Your personal introduction is something you can — and should — control.

A typical personal introduction lasts a minute or two. It should tell the audience who you are, what your business is and how you help people. You can liven it up and pique the audience's interest by including a brief success story or anecdote.

### Week 41: Toot Your Own Horn

Don't confuse horn tooting with bragging. Bragging is being arrogantly or pompously boastful. Horn tooting is simply making positive, factual statements about your business in a way that highlights your successes while leaving the door open for new clients.

When someone asks about your business, respond in a way that (1) informs the person of your accomplishments in a positive manner; (2) provides information that can be repeated by someone on your behalf; and (3) lets people know how they can help you with your business.

## Section Eight: Do What Others Don't

### Week 42: Ask for Feedback

Asking for feedback is a simple way to gather information for improving our business, but many of us never take the time to ask. Whether positive or negative, feedback should be considered constructive.

As difficult as it can be to receive, negative feedback is actually a gift. It's a reality check; it reminds us that no matter how good we are, we can always improve.

### Week 43: Adopt a Host Mentality

Wouldn't it be great to stand out positively at a networking function? There's a way you can achieve this: Behave like a host. If you adopt a host mindset, people will naturally seek you out.

You arrive early so that you can learn the schedule for the event. You scan the list of attendees to find out who you can expect to see. You study the layout of the room so you can direct people to the coat closet, bathrooms and food. You introduce people to each other and help them feel at ease. In other words, you take the initiative.

When you act this way, people are drawn to you. You seem to know everything about the event. You demonstrate one of the most important traits of a master networker: helpfulness.

### Week 44: Follow the Money Trail

For some businesses, you not only may have been a customer — you may also have recommended them to other people. When was the last time those businesses returned the favor and helped your business succeed? This strategy — following the money trail — shows you how to leverage the law of reciprocity with the businesses you have financially supported.

Are you willing to approach your favorite businesses and ask them to support your business in some way?

Most people, once it is pointed out to them, understand that the law of reciprocity goes both ways. As a client, you're giving a lot to someone else's business. It's not unreasonable to ask for something that supports your business in return.

### Week 45: Write a Letter of Support

One of the strategies that you can use to further develop a relationship is to write a letter of support that will help someone on your word-of-mouth marketing team in some way. This is not a testimonial letter, but a letter that provides influence and support on someone's behalf.

When you hear about an issue that affects your clients, show your support by getting involved on their side. Make sure others in the industry know it too — especially those you would like to have on your networking team or roster of clients.

### Week 46: Ask for Referrals

The more specific you are in your request for a referral, the more likely it is that a specific person will come to mind.

By listing specific examples of your target market, you help your referral prospect do a mental sort that is far easier than the general question "Do you know anyone who needs my service?" The easier you make it for people to understand what you do, sort through their contacts and think of a referral for you, the more referrals you will get.

### Week 47: Read the Paper, With Referral Intent

Read the paper differently — to look for opportunities for referral. The paper is a tremendous source of leads — information and resources that could be beneficial to you or to someone in your network. A lead should never be confused with a referral; however, with the right approach, a lead can be turned into a referral.

### Week 48: Conquer Fear of Public Speaking

Networking your business is going to involve public speaking. We have a few tips from our experiences that might help reduce your stress:

1. Prepare, prepare, prepare! Prepare an outline of what you want to say, and practice it.
2. Be specific, and talk about the things you know best.
3. Use handouts, visuals or PowerPoint slides to support your presentation.
4. Remember, you're the expert. If you focus on what you know best, you will feel more confident and be more credible.
5. Be creative. Find a way to communicate that makes you comfortable.

### Week 49: Become the Hub Firm of a Power Team

To capture the image of a hub firm, imagine the spokes of a wheel, with one business positioned in the center — the hub — surrounded by other businesses with which it has very strong collaborative relationships. These businesses are your power team.

To become a successful hub firm, you must base the selection of your power team on the quality of your relationship. The key is finding the right businesses to surround you. You need not activate all the businesses in your team for each project; instead, bring in selected businesses based on what you, as the hub firm, identify as the needs of the client.

### Week 50: Become a Networking Mentor

It's common knowledge that if you want to improve your skill, then you should teach someone else. Sometimes mentoring and coaching others gets us to focus on the basics and apply them better ourselves.

Reach back to someone stuck in the 71 percent of the population who are disconnected and begin to connect them to your network. This will definitely improve your networking skills by acting as a refresher.

### Week 51: Recruit an Advisory Board for Your Business

Many successful businesspeople recruit an advisory board to keep them up to speed on fixing problems and running the business smoothly. When you consult with an advisory board, you are truly exhibiting one of the key traits of a master networker: You are working your network.

When you set up an advisory board, you are creating a web of contacts who know and understand what you must do to achieve success in your profession or business and who have the experience to help you achieve your goals.

### Week 52: Commit to Lifelong Learning

Networking is something you can train for on the job — in fact, that's the best way. By putting it into practice, you not only learn how to apply and fine-tune your approach, but you also build your business at the same time.

Becoming a master networker is a journey, not a destination. In your never-ending journey toward perfection, how do you improve on the basic networking plan?

First, keep reading. Second, Practice! Third, seek out reputable training programs on networking. Lifelong learning continually sharpens and hones your skills. Would you trust the growth of your enterprise to someone who's not skilled in one of the most effective ways to grow your business? ●

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The 29% Solution*, you'll also like:

1. ***Words That Work* by Frank Luntz.** To effectively obtain the power of communication, you must learn that it's not what you say, but *how* you say it.
2. ***The How of WOW* by Tony Carlson.** Carlson explains an experience-tested process for creating and delivering great speeches that get your message heard and remembered.
3. ***How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie.** *The* classic on achieving success through the greater use of our abilities. These 30 principles will change your personal and business life.

# Summary

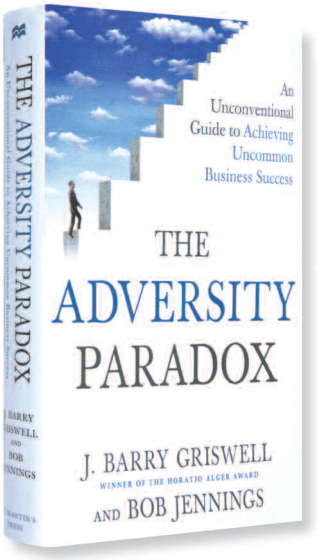
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Career & Self-Development: Change & Advancement

# The Adversity Paradox

## An Unconventional Guide to Achieving Uncommon Business Success




by J. Barry Griswell and Bob Jennings

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Obstacles and setbacks are inevitable parts of life, especially in today's harsh and volatile economy. How can you use these to build success? The answer lies in firsthand knowledge of the "adversity paradox." Working to overcome humble beginnings, lack of knowledge, unexpected setbacks or any manner of misfortune can be the foundational step in a path to incredible achievement.

Those who have benefited from the adversity paradox all relate similar experiences. The knowledge they gained from overcoming obstacles played such a crucial role in their success trajectories that they now consider adversity to be an invaluable friend.

While you may not experience the extreme forms of adversity described in *The Adversity Paradox*, it's inevitable that each and every one of us will encounter adversity at some point in our careers. The lessons here are practical and inspirational, and they can be applied at any stage of your career.

J. Barry Griswell and Bob Jennings offer concrete steps that can be taken to increase your own business savvy. Their intent is to embolden you to take action or refocus your determination in your career path. The paths to success are diverse, but *The Adversity Paradox* identifies patterns that anyone can study and learn from.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to take your own business-savvy inventory.
- How to use the skill of introspection to find your level of moral development.
- How to ignite your thirst for knowledge.
- How to have the confidence to do what others see as impossible.
- How to build endurance of character the same way we build physical strength.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ADVERSITY PARADOX**

**by J. Barry Griswell and Bob Jennings**

**The authors:** J. Barry Griswell is former chairman and chief executive officer of The Principal Financial Group. He is a 2003 recipient of the Horatio Alger Award, given to individuals who have achieved great success while overcoming difficult backgrounds. Bob Jennings is president of Lean Management Group, a consulting company focused on senior management methods and execution. *The Adversity Paradox* by J. Barry Griswell and Bob Jennings. Copyright © 2009 by J. Barry Griswell and Bob Jennings. Summarized by permission of the publisher, St. Martin's Press. 257 pages, $25.95, ISBN 0-312-38555-2.

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For additional information on the authors, go to http://www.summary.com.

## What Is Business Savvy, Anyway?

**business savvy:** ***n.*** **1.** *proficiency in the realm of business; the unique ability to consistently meet and surpass one's business goals.* ***adj.*** **1.** *those who are proficient in business and consistently achieve outstanding success.*

**the adversity paradox:** ***n.*** **1.** *the phenomenon of building outstanding success upon the lessons learned in overcoming serious difficulty or misfortune.*

You always have a choice. No matter how terrible the setback, you can make the choice to lie back and let adversity consume you, or you can face the situation head-on and work to make adversity your friend. Befriending adversity means not shying from it, but learning from it.

The business leaders who've benefited from the adversity paradox are the ones who use the diagnostic skill of introspection to conduct honest self-assessments so as to make trajectory adjustments whenever necessary. These folks have found a purpose they're passionate about and have found a way to take the work out of work. They're the employees who nurture a thirst for knowledge that keeps them constantly abreast of the ever-changing world of business.

Given such commendable core competencies and practices, it isn't surprising that those who've learned their lessons the hard way often go on to achieve enormous wealth as a result of their prodigious business savvy.

## The Individual Human Capital of the Business Savvy

Individual human capital (HC) is an individual's portfolio of assets in which he or she has invested that can produce future positive outputs. Garry S. Becker, the foremost expert on human capital, states, "Economists regard expenditures on education, training, medical care and so on as investments in human capital. They are called human capital because people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health or values in the way they can be separated from their financial and physical assets."

Business leaders who have benefited from the adversity paradox have tended to build their success upon the same five components: introspection, values behavior, work character, purpose and passion, and thirst for knowledge. This is "the business-savvy framework."

### The Individual Human Capital Profile

J. Barry Griswell has successfully put all the components of the business-savvy framework together and built a rags-to-riches kind of success. His industry, associates, competitors, company board, employees and friends see him as a very business-savvy person. To get to this point in his life he has defied all the odds. As a youth his family was poor, his home broken and learning was difficult. As an adult he fought medical issues and the occasional career setback. But he learned early on to persevere despite all the odds, and that ability has facilitated both personal and career success. His comments about each of the individual human capital components are incorporated in the following descriptions.

***Introspection: HC Component No. 1.*** Introspection is the practice of observing one's self — one's personality, strengths and weaknesses, overall performance, motivations, goals, ideas and capabilities — and conducting honest self-assessments.

"Introspection allows us to look deep within and

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer

analyze our motives and priorities, and to measure our progress toward goals. Most important, introspection allows us to get an accurate measure of purpose, passion, and commitment to dreams and goals. To truly know oneself can be daunting, but it's essential in order to experience one's personal success."

Our self-understanding needs to be 100 percent accurate. We need an accurate read on our weak areas so we can direct our efforts to focused self-improvement and maintaining an upward success trajectory.

***Values Behavior: HC Component 2.*** Values do not have to be compromised to get ahead. Good values, and behavior that matches those values, are paramount to maintaining a positive trajectory over long periods of time. Compromising values may get someone ahead in the short run but will always bring him or her down in the long run.

"I do not believe for a second that you can be a bad person — a dishonest or cruel person — and have true success … I firmly believe that honesty and integrity are the foundation for any type of success — honesty with others and, more important, honesty with oneself."

***Work Character: HC Component 3***. In being business savvy there is no substitute for hard work. "If you buy into the theory that success is about reaching your personal potential, about achieving stretch goals and doing it 'right,' there must be hard work."

***Purpose and Passion: HC Component 4***. If hard work is critical, then we need to find a way to really enjoy our work so that it's no longer work, but rather something we're passionate about. The trick is to view work as a means to far greater benefits or enjoyment.

"I never forgot how badly we needed insurance after my father died suddenly, and how burdensome it was to be left with so much unexpected debt. What a noble cause it was, I thought, to help families protect themselves if the breadwinner were to die prematurely, to have an income should a disability occur, or to help someone plan for a secure retirement. Was selling life insurance boring? No way. I had a strong and exciting purpose."

Purpose can keep you going in the face of any challenge.

***Thirst for Knowledge: HC Component 5***. The power of knowledge and lifetime learning is transformative.

"While it took me almost 20 years to catch up, my grades in college eventually became good enough to get an academic scholarship to supplement my athletic scholarship. I even managed to get into graduate school and earn an MBA while loading trucks at night. But, I learned the power of knowledge and how to acquire it. … Lifetime learning and an ongoing curiosity have been absolutely essential to my success."

## The Power of "And Then Some"

Those who choose to make adversity their friend don't enjoy hardships any more than the next person. But there is a world of difference between those who befriend adversity by overcoming it and learning from the experience, and those who give up at the first sign of an obstacle.

Adversity is going to happen, and usually in ways you never could have foreseen. Knowing this, make a choice right now to look at adversity in a new light. Realize that adversity is an ally and that it's here to teach you something of crucial importance.

### The Key to Befriending Adversity

You are the agent of change. In other words, the power to act, to positively change your own circumstances, lies with you. No matter how difficult the circumstances, relying on and harnessing the power of "and then some" ensures that you're never helpless in the face of adversity. Because "and then some" is a universal principle, you can apply it to any manner of adversity you encounter.

Have you been laid off? Start with a goal of targeting five companies a day and then find five more, and don't rest until you follow through by contacting the person in charge of hiring or by sending your resume. Are you weak in a particular area, such as public speaking, making cold calls, team leadership or even a software program? Do whatever it takes to gain not only competency, but proficiency in whatever area is holding you back from reaching your potential.

If you're truly meeting your goals and then surpassing them, the amazing results you'll achieve will be an extremely powerful motivational force. Success breeds success. If you habitually use the power of "and then some" to build your human capital, you'll find that the positive results will surpass all your expectations.

And if you're lucky enough not to have experienced full-scale adversity, you can start by applying the power of "and then some" to all the setbacks, obstacles and even daily nuisances that will always arise in business.

To apply the basic principle of "and then some" to everything you do, put in the extra effort above and beyond others at work, and then expand the principle into a full cycle of self-improvement.

Positive thinking is integral to befriending adversity

and harnessing the power of "and then some." Face adversity with a relentlessly positive frame of mind, even if at first it feels artificial or unnatural. Allow no other thought to enter your mind than "I will face this adversity head-on and I will learn from it." You can either wallow in self-pity and pessimism or you can treat adversity as the clarion call to institute needed change.

## Just Add Introspection

Most businesses absolutely stink at assisting employee development through formal appraisal processes. It's a major missed opportunity.

Business leaders or managers do have good intentions when implementing appraisal processes. They aim to facilitate honest self-assessment so as to maximize employee potential but, more often than not, their execution destroys the intent of growing the human capital within their organizations.

Many appraisals are based upon subjective one-to-five rating systems for performance issues like quality of work, cooperation and relationships, and problem analysis. They call for one person's subjective opinion, and if your performance issue doesn't show up on the form, tough luck.

Then there are the not-so-unusual cases where a change in supervisors produces a large change in a person's appraisal score — no change in performance, just a change in who's doing the appraising.

There is no substitute for real introspection, for an honest and critical examination of one's own thoughts, feelings and motivations, and by extension, one's strengths and weaknesses. Introspection provides an accurate personal appraisal process that enables one to analyze motives and priorities, and to measure progress and commitments toward goals. The process of introspection allows one to make constant — and accurate — trajectory adjustments.

Critical to successful introspection is that it is conducted with *frequency* and with *accuracy*. Frequent but inaccurate introspection gets one nowhere and can even be self-destructive. Accurate but infrequent introspection just places a person on a low trajectory, as trajectory corrections don't occur often enough.

### Satellites and Mirrors

When we were young we were surrounded by mirrors that told us what we were doing right, what we were doing wrong and what we could do differently. Parents, teachers, test scores, coaches, counselors, sports successes and failures all gave us rapid feedback. We could get a pretty accurate read on who we were and in what areas we might be able to excel.

As we age, many of our mirrors disappear; some are replaced, but the average person is left with far fewer means to obtain accurate and frequent reflections. Just as the key to the Global Positioning System (GPS) is having multiple satellites and accurate signals at all times, the key to good introspection is having multiple mirrors and accurate reflections at all times. In both cases, one needs to be able to triangulate.

Harvey Mackay, a successful business owner, may demonstrate the value of multiple mirrors best. To this day he relies on what he calls 18 coaches — (for various disciplines) from marathon, writing, and language and speech coaches to a humor coach. He learned the value

## The Power Resides in All of Us

Out of high school, Gene Postma gave community college a shot before being lured away by the attractive hourly wages of a construction job. The job became a career and, after 10 years, Gene found himself running a crew and remodeling a building in New York City. The remodel included removing several layers of shingles on a steeply pitched roof. Gene was exasperated with his crew's slow progress and uneasiness on the roof, so he decided to demonstrate that there was nothing to worry about.

Starting at the roof's peak, Gene started ripping and tearing when, all of a sudden, one of his toeholds broke loose, sending him sliding down the steep slope and off the edge into a 25-foot fall. On the way down he shattered his arm on a balcony, and when he landed he incurred compression fractures in his back. The doctors told him he would never be able to swing a hammer or run a trowel again. He was married with a two-year-old son and was unable to continue with his career.

Gene accepted the unexpected turn in his life and went back to school, put in extra effort with the books, and he and his wife both worked throughout his education. He graduated second in his class in less than four years with an engineering degree. He is now president of Western States Fire Protection Company, which has 1,500 employees and more than $200 million in annual sales. Like so many, Gene had the power of "and then some" before his fall, but adversity put it to work to grow his human capital well beyond that which he'd originally thought himself capable.

of multiple mirrors early when he bought his struggling company when he was 26. Back then he called each of his mirrors "old grizzly" as his lawyer was 60, his accountant 58, and his banker over 70. His was a professional team, but mirrors need not cost money.

"There are a lot of qualified advisors out there," Mackay said, "who are just waiting for us to ask them. Try it sometime." His success has little to do with luck and everything to do with the science of setting up mirrors (satellites) and conducting accurate and frequent introspection (triangulation).

The Mackay approach stands in stark contrast to many in business today. Take the competent businessperson who relies solely on his or her boss as his or her performance and trajectory gauge. As a GPS receiver cannot provide an accurate fix on location with a single satellite, neither can the businessperson conduct accurate introspection with only one mirror.

Mentors of all types are extremely important for increasing both the accuracy and frequency of your introspection. The term "mentor" can apply to any person who is offering you feedback for forward thinking and positive adjustments. The more mentors, the better the triangulation and, more often than not, mentoring is free for the asking.

## What Does Behavior Have to Do with Values? Everything!

Possessing business savvy isn't just about superior business skills or proficiency in a particular area of business. It's also about having the right values and bringing those values to bear on the way one does business.

Creating and fostering a culture of integrity and ethical behavior is not only the right thing to do, it's critical to business success. The culture of integrity and ethical behavior must start at the top. Leaders need to set and live out the example for their organizations, and it's all too obvious how one corrupt manager can bring an entire company down.

At the end of the day, the most effective tool anyone has is his or her own behavior, and behavior is always ultimately predicated upon an individual choice.

### Kohlbergian Theory

Lawrence Kohlberg was a psychologist and professor at the University of Chicago and Harvard University. His research holds that moral reasoning, which is the basis for ethical behavior, has six identifiable stages.

**Stage 1** is simply the rules and punishment trade-off. Thinkers using Stage 1 moral reasoning believe that there is an external and fixed set of rules, and that there is only one right or wrong answer to every moral dilemma.

In **Stage 2**, individuals lock into a "What's in it for me?" perspective. All behavior comes from serving one's own needs.

Those in **Stage 3** base moral choices on the expectations of others in their proximity, such as family, friends, peers and the community. Likewise in business, an employee bases his or her behavior upon the expectations of superiors, co-workers and subordinates.

**Stage 4**, however, brings us into all-new territory. Individuals at this stage have expanded their circle of thinking enough to see the society or the business they are in as a whole. The emphasis is on obeying laws or rules, respecting authority and handling one's duties so that the social order, or business rules and processes are maintained.

**Stage 5** thinkers want to do what is best for society or for all parties that touch the business. It is crucial for those in a leadership role to reach this level. At Stage 5 one must not only be driven by principle but also understand and balance the interests of everyone.

Few people reach the level of **Stage 6** moral reasoning, but those with prodigious business savvy always strive for it. This is the stage of universal human ethics. Behavior is predicated upon actions and decisions that demonstrate an equal respect for all.

For the long-term growth and health of any business it is crucial to hire ethically sound people and to foster an environment in which employees can develop morally and only the ethically sound are rewarded.

So how does one climb the hierarchy of moral development, advancing from one stage to the next? One advances in moral reasoning by actually encountering a moral dilemma, finding that one's current level of moral reasoning is inadequate and then grappling with that dilemma to the point that one comes to a more comprehensive viewpoint. The more comprehensive our viewpoint, the more robust our moral development and the farther we advance up the hierarchy of moral development.

### The Gray Zone

The truth is that the business world is full of moral dilemmas and, even with sound moral reasoning, matters will arise that fall into the so-called Gray Zone, a space rife with adversity. The Gray Zone encompasses not only those dilemmas that do not have a definitive right answer, but also those in which almost all decisions come at the detriment of someone or something else.

There's no end to the number of Gray Zone issues the businessperson will face, especially those in leadership positions. Gray Zone dilemmas are rarely published, as they're often troubling or embarrassing, but companies routinely face them.

## Sorry, But There's No Substitute for Hard Work

People with a fully developed work character are qualitatively different from their peers: Their excellent work habits and the success they earn distinguish them from the pack. The idea of work character as used here is rooted in this distinguishing quality and encompasses a person's attitude and ability. People with an outstanding work character habitually work hard, think hard and lead well — and because they're pursuing what they love, they enjoy their work.

### Physical Work Ethic

People with a well-developed physical work ethic have the ability and the willingness to put in the requisite hours and effort to do a job to their fullest potential.

The fact is, any of you who are trying to move up the corporate ladder will be required to put in whatever extra hours and effort are necessary in order to distinguish yourself from the pack. If you're not physically up to the task, or if you're operating at half speed, you're going to be at a significant disadvantage from the beginning.

Those in leadership roles may have even more of a responsibility to develop a strong physical work ethic. Good leaders know that their team members will emulate them; it's their job to set the standard for productivity.

### Cognitive Work Ethic

A cognitive work ethic is engagement of the mind to learn, solve problems, find opportunities, develop solutions or successfully execute the tasks a job requires.

The need for a fully developed cognitive work ethic for any type of success is growing more pronounced every day.

Over time, unemployment in America has remained relatively unchanged, but much of the work force has been required to move from employing their physical work ethic to their cognitive work ethic to earn a living.

In today's business work, a robust cognitive work ethic is required simply to stay in the game, much less excel.

## What Would You Do in the Gray Zone?

In one case a leading sales representative got caught falsifying hotel receipts. Your recourse is simple, right? You just fire him. Problem is, he is a top producer, and firing him will hurt the bottom line and the stockholders. He is also well liked, so if he goes, you run the risk of losing some key customers. What's more, he's a friend, a company veteran who's been through thick and thin with you. If you fire him, what are you saying to other employees? That you had an unwritten "one strike and you're out" policy? That you don't value years of loyal and trusted service? But if you don't fire him, are you tacitly telling employees that it's okay to cheat? Now take it a step further: It turns out the employee was falsifying the receipts not for the money but to hide an affair he was having in another city. His behavior, while clearly unethical, hasn't cost the company a dime. So is business now to be concerned with and penalize a person for his conduct outside of work? What would you do in the face of this kind of adversity? How do you find your way through the Gray Zone and arrive at the right decision? In this case, the employee was fired, and the outcome was quite costly; some sales were lost, as were some customers. But in the long run making the extremely difficult decision to fire the employee preserved the company's ethical standards, and it showed employees that management would abide by its principles. The long-term gain exceeded the short-term pain, and again we see the adversity paradox in action.

### Skills to Lead

Even with the most highly developed physical and cognitive work ethics, one person can only do so much on his or her own. "Skills to lead," the third part of work character, brings us into more specialized territory. It can uniquely combine any number of skills. It can involve things like effective public speaking, communication, team selection, team building, an ability to motivate others, delegation and having good vision.

"Skills to lead" is an adaptable concept. That is, one's skills to lead will depend on the people one is leading, the business one is in and the corporate culture.

### Working Not Just Harder but Better

We can have the best of intentions, but if we have no idea how to start or follow through on them, we're stuck at square one. So here are three proven processes

that have worked to promote positive change:

**1. Motivation/Visualization.** If you ask most people what gets them out of bed and to the office every morning, they'll have a quick answer: the paycheck. More dollars might bring you a bit more spending power, a few new things, but those are temporary highs. More money isn't likely to be a permanent motivating factor.

A recent Gallup study found that recognition of one's efforts has the largest impact on worker engagement and performance. Other huge motivating factors include a sense of self-worth, a feeling of accomplishment, the satisfaction of taking part in meaningful work, the sense of being a part of a vibrant and accomplished team, or pursuing a more challenging role with greater responsibility. Maybe your biggest motivating factor is getting out of one job and into another that provides the kind of long-lasting intangible rewards that have been listed.

What you need is something powerful enough, something meaningful enough, that it gets you working and thinking at such a level that you won't rest until you attain your goal.

The most powerful motivating factor of all arrives when you've found a purpose you can pursue with passion and bring to fruition through your career.

**2. Adding "And Then Some" to Everything You Do.** Apply the power of "and then some" to literally everything you do and you're guaranteed to get positive results. Set your goals higher than what is expected of you and find ways to achieve them.

If you're completing your tasks *and then some*, if you're putting in the extra effort required to distinguish yourself from your peers, there's no way you can't advance. The trick is to make "and then some" a lifelong habit.

The difference between employing *enough to get by* and *and then some* may be hardly visible within a given task or in a day's work, but over a lifetime it can be the largest separator between a life of mediocrity and a life of success.

**3. Successful Habits.** The third way you can make positive change is about making hard work not just a short-term means to reach a short-term goal, but a lifetime modus operandi.

Whereas forming habits that make you successful may seem like drudgery, once they become habits they are no longer a grind, especially when you start enjoying the rewards of the success you have created with them. ●

## Purpose and Passion: You Really Can Take the Work out of Work

Recognizing the importance of the connection between purpose and passion, businesses try to foster corporate statements that help develop and engage employee passion. The business leaders who get their mission statements right are the ones who know how to align purpose and passion.

Wal-Mart's mission is "To give ordinary folk the chance to buy the same thing as rich people." Did this mission statement work? Did they foster and cultivate employee passion? The answer is in the results. So many "ordinary folk" purchased Wal-Mart goods that it's become one of the most profitable businesses in America.

The true measure of a stated business purpose is its ability to get its employees excited and engaged. True purpose, no matter where it is found or how modest it may seem from the outside, is immeasurably powerful. Having the right purpose, the purpose that specifically works for you and your business, is central to creating passion that impacts results.

Passion is the enthusiasm you feel as a result of your purpose. Your purpose generates your passion. Finding passion in your work doesn't mean everything is perfect, but it means you have the ability and vision to see beyond the imperfections.

### Clay Jones: Take Serendipity and Run With It

Clay Jones is the president and CEO of Rockwell Collins, a company engaged in the design, production and support of communications and aviation electronics worldwide. When asked how he got from zero interest in flying to a career in aviation and becoming a leader of one of the most recognized aerospace companies in the world, he said "serendipity."

He didn't mean simple luck. Rather, the Jones application of serendipity is about encountering the numerous forks in the road of life — most of which are entirely unforeseen and many of which come about through no conscious choice of our own — and then making a conscious choice to pursue a direction with vigor and perseverance.

"You find yourself in certain positions in life where you have to make a decision," Jones said, "and the fact is, each of these decisions has a profound effect on your future direction in life, which is something most of us underappreciate at the time … each of those decisions builds upon a new direction … And that," concludes Jones, "is how I eventually found my purpose." ●

## The Transformative Power of a Lifelong Thirst for Knowledge

What is the value of knowledge and education for the business-savvy professional? Business-savvy professionals absolutely thrive on the thirst for knowledge.

Knowledge enables you to:

- Formulate a vision and execute it successfully.
- Think on your feet, and act quickly and judiciously when problems or opportunities arise.
- Switch back and forth from systems to linear thinking, from seeing the big picture to scrutinizing the details.
- Synthesize mountains of data into salient, useful information.
- Inspire your team's confidence in your leadership.
- Select, train and inspire business-savvy teams.
- See your lack of knowledge.

This fifth and final component of human capital alone has worked wonders in people's success trajectories; but added to the full business-savvy framework, it's guaranteed to transform not only your career but your life.

### Formal and Informal Learning

We're all familiar with formal learning: It's the learning that takes place within a structured teacher-student relationship. Informal learning then, encompasses the balance of our learning. Much of informal learning results from what we do and experience in daily life.

What is surprising, and terribly sad, is the statistics (about formal learning) for the country at large. The U.S. Census Bureau reveals that one in three Americans drops out of college and, according to the latest government figures, more than 50 percent of college freshmen do not receive a degree within six years.

Over a lifetime, most people spend far more time on and gain far more knowledge from informal learning. But while informal learning is clearly critical to success, without the skills the formal learning environment provides, the informal learner has little chance of accumulating the quantity and quality of knowledge needed to gain business savvy and be successful.

So let's review the benefits of a formal education. We've got job qualifications, increased confidence, a way out of humble beginnings, a way out of a stalled career or life situation, and a statistically better chance of greater earning power. The most important advantage — no matter what discipline the business-savvy professional studies — is learning how to learn. If your formal education has taught you how to learn, your path to success will be all the smoother.

Your success is significantly impacted by the foundation of knowledge you have or will possess. If you haven't already found a thirst for knowledge, it's not too late. Enroll in a class, subscribe to a new journal, read as much as possible, and keenly observe successful people and emulate them. You never know when something will ignite your thirst for knowledge. ●

## Using the Adversity Paradox to Triumph Over Unexpected Trajectory Changes

Even though the business savvy are recognized for their ability to see around corners, no one can predict the future with 100 percent certainty. The good news is that most adversities or career catastrophes leave a person's human capital substantially intact. Trajectories may be shaken by the unpredictable, but they can be re-established — sometimes with far superior results.

### Practicing the Paradox

So often, the most powerful catalyst for change lies in the place we'd least expect or want to find it, in adverse circumstances. Failure has a way of making us take stock of our careers and our lives — our progress toward dreams and goals, our strengths and weaknesses, our motivation and our daily work habits — in a way that success does not. It can also force us to take quick, decisive action without benefit of the usual safety nets, which can often reveal inner resources and abilities we wouldn't have otherwise known we possessed. At the very least, overcoming difficult circumstances always causes growth and the development of your human capital. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Adversity Paradox*, you'll also like:

1. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith.** In the corporate world, few will ever reach the top. Goldsmith details 20 habits that may be holding you back.
2. ***Success Built to Last* by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson.** Discover what successful people have in common and use their simple practices to transform your company, career and your life.
3. ***Never Eat Alone* by Keith Ferrazzi with Tahl Raz.** Here's a proven mind-set and skill-set to establish a community of colleagues, mentors and super-connectors who can help you achieve your goals.

# Summary

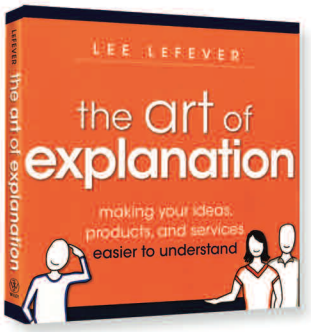
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Career & Self-Development

# The Art of Explanation

## Making Your Ideas, Products, and Services Easier to Understand




by Lee LeFever

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You've done the hard work. Your product or service works beautifully — but something is missing. People just don't see the big idea, and it's keeping you from being successful. Your idea has an explanation problem.

*The Art of Explanation* is built on Lee LeFever's years of experience in creating explanations for organizations and educators. His company, Common Craft, is known around the world for making complex ideas easy to understand in the form of short videos. No brand is better known for explanations.

*The Art of Explanation* is for businesspeople, educators and influencers who want to improve their explanation skills and start solving explanation problems. Tools, tactics and techniques are presented that will help you consistently inspire audiences to fall in love with your ideas, products or services through better explanations in any medium.

*The Art of Explanation* is your invitation to become an explanation specialist and see why explanation is now a fundamental skill for professionals.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Explanation basics, what causes them to fail and how to diagnose explanation problems.
- To create an explanation strategy using simple elements that builds confidence and motivates your audience.
- To produce remarkable explanations with visuals and media.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ART OF EXPLANATION**

**by Lee LeFever**

**The author:** Lee LeFever is the chief explainer, illustrator and the voice of Common Craft LLC and is widely credited for inspiring the video explanation industry. Since 2007, the company has won numerous awards and has created explanations for the world's most respected brands, including Intel, Google, Dropbox and Ford Motor Co. Common Craft's mission is to make the world a more understandable place to live and work by inspiring and equipping professionals to become explanation specialists.

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## Preface

Chances are that you explained something recently — why dinner tastes the way it does, why you were late for a meeting, what an article means to your company. We explain so many different things so frequently that we take the art of explanation for granted. This is a tragedy because a great explanation can make our ideas come to life, invite people to care and be motivated to learn more. However, we lose the opportunity to do this unless we recognize that explanation is an essential skill we can learn and master.

## PART 1: PLAN

## Learning to Run

Six months ago Trevor picked up running again after his doctor said he needed to get more exercise. He set a goal of completing a half marathon within a year. But it didn't seem like this was going to happen — not the way things were looking. He joked with his friends that he felt like an old man at 45.

Trevor had recently been enjoying a drink with a friend and mentioned that he was having a difficult time preparing for the race. His friend asked, "Have you tried changing how you run?" Perplexed, Trevor replied, "I'm not sure what you mean. I run how I run." His friend asked again, "Seriously, have you ever thought about how you run — and what you could do to run better?"

Trevor had always taken his running style for granted. "Nah, the way I run is fine. And anyway, aren't we born with the ability to run?"

His friend replied, "Of course we can all run. But like anything, there is an art and skill to running, and part of getting what you want out of it is knowing how to run correctly."

"What could possibly make my running better?"

"Look it up." And that is just what he did.

The more he researched, the more he saw running as a skill that he could improve. He learned about proper posture, stride and how a foot strikes the surface, and he discovered tactics that professional runners use to stay healthy. As he trained for the race, he began paying attention to his form and movements. His knee and back pain began to fade, and his endurance seemed to jump, which gave him the energy to run longer.

We all take *explanation* for granted. Because it is a natural part of how we communicate, the thought may never occur to us that explanation is a skill we can improve and put to work in achieving our goals. In this way, running and explanation have much in common:

- We have the ability to do it.
- We may do it so frequently that we never think about it.
- We think the way in which we do it is normal.
- We never consider that we could improve the way we do it.
- Improvement *is* possible and creates positive results.

Explanation is a skill that we can apply to nearly every part of our lives. ●

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Corbin Collins**, Contributing Editor

## What Is an Explanation?

Most of us take explanation for granted. For many people, it's just something that happens. Someone asks a question, we answer it in the form of an explanation. We do not often step back and think about what makes an explanation an explanation or how we could approach it differently.

An explanation is an act or process that makes something known, plain or understandable. Explanations make facts more understandable. Creating a great explanation involves stepping out of your own shoes and into the audience's. It is a process built on empathy, on being able to understand and share the feelings of another.

Great explanations often do not come from rigorous research and testing; they come from someone's unique approach to communication. Two people could have profoundly different ways of explaining a single idea and still achieve equal levels of understanding. Explanation thrives on being unique and novel; it succeeds when it helps people see ideas from a new perspective. Explanation is a creative act that turns facts into useful, informative and memorable ideas.

Science has helped us make sense of the world by showing that there is a reason things are the way they are. There is a reason that water freezes at 32°F and airplanes can fly. The laws of our universe have been tested and are proven: They explain *why*. Unfortunately, many of the facts and ideas we see on a day-to-day basis cannot be defined by the laws of the universe. We cannot explain Twitter's popularity in terms of gravity or inertia. We need explanations to tell us why Twitter is so popular. Explanation is the art of not just packaging facts but also presenting them in a way that answers the question "why?" — as in why does it make sense to do this?

Explanation is the art of showing why the facts, laws and specifics make sense. Explanations present an idea in a way that makes people *care*. Explanations help people feel confident in choosing to learn more because they care about the idea. People who care about an idea are often motivated to learn more. ●

## Why Explanations Fail

Every day, many companies, homes and schools are filled with blank stares and discouraged explainers. We all struggle to find the best way to communicate our ideas, and we sometimes fail.

Blank stares often appear when someone has lost confidence that they can grasp — or should even care about — the idea you are communicating. It can be easy to discern when an explanation is failing with a one-person audience. However, it can be more difficult to determine in a group meeting or classroom setting where you have no way of knowing each person's level of confidence in the material. When you're faced with this, you must make assumptions about the confidence of the overall group, and inevitably your assumptions will not match reality.

We can look at our decisions through the lens of *the curse of knowledge*, described in *Made to Stick,* written by Chip and Dan Heath. When we know a subject very well, we have a difficult time imagining what it is like *not* to know it. Our level of knowledge interferes with our ability to see the world from another person's perspective and to gauge their confidence level accurately. The curse of knowledge is an underlying cause of numerous problems in explanations.

But what about the other side of the coin? Knowing too little is an obvious problem when it comes to explanation. Approaching an explanation without sufficient understanding is a quick way to dig yourself into a hole. If you understand a subject and are prepared to answer questions, you are set up for success. But if you lack the understanding needed to converse about the subject and frame your ideas as an explanation, your lack of knowledge can easily be discovered and cause your explanation to fail. ●

## Planning Your Explanations

How often do we sit down and focus on how we will explain an idea? An explanation problem is related to how we choose to communicate ideas. A great idea poorly explained ceases to appear great, and the cost is tremendous. Without a way to explain something effectively, we limit its ability to spread.

We can use the "explanation scale" to develop a plan for solving explanation problems. This model provides a way to visualize the audience, account for their needs and move them from misunderstanding to understanding via a carefully crafted explanation. The simple A-to-Z continuum will be our guide to planning explanations. "A" represents less understanding, and "Z" represents more understanding. Our goal is to move from left to right on the scale.

This scale serves as a way to think about almost any explanation problem that people encounter. Think about your own situation. Ask yourself the following:

- Where are you on the scale regarding a specific idea?
- Where is your audience?

- What assumptions are you making about their level of understanding?
- Are your current explanations accounting for everyone on the scale?
- Should they?

These questions are important because they frame perhaps the biggest problem in communication: We make poor assumptions about what people already know, and these assumptions limit the potential of our explanations. By using the explanation scale, we have a simple way to think about, talk through and plan our explanations. ●

## PART 2: PACKAGE

# Packaging Ideas

Packages have limits. Only so many things can fit into a package, and this is true of explanations as well. By packaging ideas into explanations, we define the package's contents by what we include or exclude. This gives our explanation form, shape and limits. The idea is to identify an explanation problem and build a package that will solve it through explanation.

Packaging ideas is a simple process that requires the person presenting ideas to account for the audience's needs. And because every audience and idea is different, there are innumerable ways to package ideas. However, they all focus on a few important elements:

- **Agreement:** Agreement builds confidence from the very first sentence. It is accomplished through big-picture statements that most people will recognize, such as "We can all agree that gas prices are rising."
- **Context:** Context moves the points we have agreed upon into a specific place. It gives the audience a foundation for the explanation and lets them know why it should matter to them. You could say, "More of your hard earned income is going to pay for transportation."
- **Story:** Story applies the big ideas to a narrative that shows a person who experiences a change in perspective and the emotions that accompany that change. "Meet Sally; she's tired of paying so much for gas and needs alternatives. Here's what she found."
- **Connections:** Connections often accompany a story and are analogies and metaphors that connect new ideas to something people already understand. "Sally could see that taking the bus was like multitasking because she could work and commute at the same time."
- **Descriptions:** Descriptions are direct communications that are more focused on how versus why. "Sally found that she could save more than $20 a week by taking the bus three times weekly."
- **Conclusion:** Conclusion wraps up the package with a summary of what was learned and provides a next step with a focus on the audience. "The next time gas prices get you down, remember …"

Think about these elements as stepping stones in an explanation, with each step moving the audience from "A" to "Z" with confidence. ●

# Context

Context is a foundational element of communication — it provides a place for people and ideas to come together. Context allows ideas to come alive and to be applied in new ways. Unfortunately, context is often forgotten or limited. This makes our ideas appear to be inside jokes in which the punch line requires previous knowledge.

You have probably heard the saying "You are missing the forest for the trees." Taking the time to build context means talking first about the forest and then about the trees.

In most cases, developing context can be a simple matter of making a few declarative statements. We want the audience to feel that they agree with the statements and are confident that the explanation is heading in a direction that they can grasp. As my friend Boris Mann said recently regarding product pitches, "You want to keep everyone's head nodding."

An explanation that builds context can be very compelling. The context then becomes the person's feelings, which can be very powerful.

Done well, context makes it possible to invite experts and beginners alike to see ideas from a new, helpful perspective. ●

# Story

Storytelling, especially a specific kind of storytelling, represents an untapped resource when we are trying to make ideas easier to understand.

Stories, in the context of explanations, need facts. And facts can be explained much more effectively in the form of a story. Facts give stories *substance*. Stories give facts *meaning*. Substance and meaning are two of the most powerful factors in any explanation. However, we rely on fact telling more than ever and forget the power of storytelling. We focus so tightly on facts that story

falls by the wayside — and with it, our ability to give those facts the context and meaning that make them attractive to our audiences.

Award-winning journalist Al Tompkins wrote: "The difference between fact telling and storytelling is the difference between watching a stock ticker and hearing a story about an elderly woman who lost every dime she needs for shelter and medicine because the market just tanked."

By adding a person to a narrative, we make the facts more meaningful and interesting. Tompkins also wrote that "Viewers remember what they feel." That is the goal — to create an explanation people remember because it made them feel something.

Many of the stories we tell in Common Craft videos follow a very simple format that goes something like this:

- Meet Bob; he's like you.
- Bob has a problem that makes him feel bad.
- Now Bob found a solution, and he feels good!
- Don't you want to feel like Bob?

The simple inclusion of a human can make a huge difference and invite people to see your ideas from a new, more natural perspective. ●

## Connections

Dan O'Bannon and Ron Shusett pitched their movie using three simple words: "*Jaws* in Space." Their idea became the Oscar-winning movie *Alien*. O'Bannon and Shusett were able to connect their idea to something the audience already understood.

If we can connect an old, easily understood idea to something new, we can help the audience feel confident that they can understand the new idea.

Let's say you find yourself trying to explain cloud formation to a 10-year-old named Jasmine:

- Option 1 — Explain Clouds by Establishing New Ideas: With this approach, you might assume Jasmine needs to understand the basics of evaporation, condensation, and weather to understand clouds. You would need to introduce some new ideas, such as: clouds form when the water in oceans, lakes and rivers evaporates; clouds are made of tiny droplets of water; clouds are part of the atmosphere that surrounds Earth.
- Option 2 — Explain Clouds by Connecting Ideas: With this approach, you would look for ideas Jasmine already understands and use them as a foundation. The question then becomes, what does Jasmine currently understand that could connect her to cloud formation? The answer hits you — boiling water. With this in mind, you start at a level that allows her to feel confident. You ask, "You've seen boiling water, right? Have you ever noticed the steam that comes from the pot? When water gets hot it changes, and some of it turns into drops that are so tiny they float in the air. The steam that rises is like a little cloud. Earth has oceans, lakes and rivers. All that water slowly turns into tiny drops that are lighter than air, and when it does, clouds form in the sky."

By connecting clouds to something she already knows, we can help her see the big idea and give her confidence from the start that she can understand it.

Analogy compares two ideas for the purpose of outlining a connection between them. When two ideas connect, they are analogous. In explanation, the use of analogy is a key to making ideas easy to understand. Analogy represents an explanation strategy and an approach to connecting ideas. ●

## Description

The elements of context, storytelling and connections are most important and appropriate when the audience is near the "A" end of the scale, where they are trying to establish why an idea makes sense. But some explanations must account for people near the other end of the scale, which means approaching explanations from a different perspective.

For example, a team of mechanics who are learning to use a new tool are unlikely to benefit from a discussion of the importance of repairing cars or from stories about someone using the tool to solve problems. Their level of understanding is near the end of the scale — maybe at "U." Because they already understand the big idea, they need an explanation that focuses more on the details of *how* than on *why*.

We published a video in early 2012 called "Web Browsers Explained by Common Craft." Because the concept of the browser was likely clear, we started to account for the actions one must take to use a browser. We spent a few sentences on context by establishing that we were referring to software on a computer. We used a quick connection to explain the idea of a browser extension by transforming the concept of tabs into a short story about movie times. Then we wrapped it up with a reminder about the browser being a window to the online world. We were still using the principles of explanation, but the elements were more compressed and focused.

When people already feel comfortable with a concept and need an explanation that focuses on *how* more than on *why*, we may be prone to falling back on a recipe approach and focusing solely on the specific tasks that will produce the desired outcome. In some situations this may be appropriate. By thinking about these steps in terms of explanation, however, we may see opportunities to present the ideas in a form that interests the audience and motivates them to learn more. This may mean building context, making quick connections and using short stories to show not just how to complete a task but also why the task makes sense. ●

## Simplification

One of the most profound products of the curse of knowledge is the inability to simplify. The knowledge we bring to the table inhibits our ability to predict what will appear simple for others, which then makes our explanations overly complex.

When an idea seems unattainable, it has an impact on how experts explain the idea. The curse causes explanations to be accurate yet incomprehensible, detailed to the point of being ineffective, filled with unfamiliar words and presented without context or application.

However, when we consider simplification, we focus on transforming that complex bundle of details into big, understandable ideas that serve as stepping-stones to future understanding. Here are some guidelines:

- Do not make assumptions about what people already know.
- Use the most basic language possible.
- Zoom out and try to see the subject from the broadest perspective possible.
- Forget the details and exceptions and focus on big ideas.
- Trade accuracy for understanding.
- Connect the basic ideas to ideas the audience already understands.

Inside that big bundle of details and ideas is a single notion that will make the overall concept easier to understand. To get to that core, you can use the guidelines like a machete to hack away at all the extraneous knowledge that causes complexity. Soon enough, you will find any complex idea can be made simple. It just takes a new approach. ●

## Constraints

As much as we think we *want* a large number of choices, too many can become a problem and prevent us from feeling happy with any choice. We encounter this same decision making process when we're thinking through explanations. Our myriad choices can seem overwhelming and prevent us from feeling confident that we choose the correct analogy or story, for instance.

Since creating the first Common Craft video, we've worked under a very specific set of constraints that give our videos a specific shape, form and intent. By agreeing on a set of constraints, we can start to evaluate ideas from the context of what is possible within them. Although these constraints limit, they also liberate. We intentionally create a container that allows us to evaluate quickly what's in or out, which frees up our attention to focus on other things. Constraints help us focus on connecting what will fit.

Perhaps you're not sure where to begin, and you need to give your explanation a shape to move forward. One way to do this is to think about the explanation in terms of constraints and eliminate all the ideas and data blocking your view. Start by using the constraints that we encounter in making a video:

- **Timeline:** When do you need to have the explanation ready?
- **Duration:** How long should it take to explain?
- **Location:** Where will the explanation be presented?
- **Format:** How will the information be presented?
- **Idea volume:** How many ideas can you explain in the defined duration?
- **Language:** How technical is the language that the target audience speaks?

A common process for brainstorming and organizing ideas is to use sticky notes, each of which contains one idea. You can think about all the themes and ideas that could be part of your explanation and then put them all up on a wall. Next organize them into groups and start filtering them by removing the ones that don't fit with the big idea groups that emerge.

Only by considering a specific situation's limitations can we identify the right combination of factors that work to achieve the outcomes we want. ●

## Preparing for and Writing an Explanation

The best path to solving explanation problems and making ideas easier to understand is to have explanations in writing, where they can evolve before being presented. Written explanations become living documents that

provide a means for sharing and developing ideas and concepts. Although explanations may be effectively presented in text form, it is the *process* of writing that clarifies an explanation and gives it a form that can be presented in many ways.

Our focus before any presentation is writing. All Common Craft videos follow the same basic process prior to the storyboard phase:

**1. Big idea:** "We are going to make a video about X." If you intend to solve explanation problems, it is essential that you identify the right problem or big idea. Scan the environment of your work or home and look for explanation problems. Look for gaps in understanding that, if filled, would give people a way to see a big idea from a new perspective.

**2. Research and discovery:** "What main points do we need to make?" Our research and discovery are not only focused on the facts themselves but also on how they have been communicated or explained in the past. Approaching the research in this broad way will increase your chances of identifying major points and finding ways to make your explanations more useful and remarkable.

**3. Script writing:** "How will we make it easy to understand?" The script is the foundation of any explanation. The secret to crafting a great explanation is learning to recognize when people can't grasp an idea and developing a script that solves the problem.

## PART 3: PRESENT

## Common Craft's Lessons Learned

People often ask us what makes Common Craft video explanations work. We've identified lessons we learned that go beyond writing and focus on presenting explanations in a manner that befits our audience:

• **State your intentions early:** Perhaps the first chance we have to build context is the title we give our work. This prepares the audience for the presentation and sets expectations. The title shows that the video's intention is to accomplish a specific goal.

• **Solve a problem:** People in any situation — a classroom, business or social setting — are anxious about falling behind on information. If you can create an explanation that solves a problem and helps them feel confident about an idea, it will make an impression and create demand for more.

• **Keep it short:** People are busy. This is why we always keep our videos under four minutes long and why they are designed to relate only a handful of ideas. This is one of the constraints that matters most. We embrace the fact that we cannot include every detail.

• **Reduce noise:** People are surrounded by noise all the time. That's why experiences designed to reduce noise stand out and attract our attention. We make a concerted effort to reduce visual noise. Nothing appears on the whiteboard that isn't there for a purpose.

• **Use visuals:** Many people are visual learners. The combination of text and visuals can be greater than the sum of the parts. Visuals have the potential to captivate the audience in a way that words alone cannot.

• **Embrace imperfection:** Common Craft videos are inherently imperfect. They feature hand-drawn characters on hand-cut paper. Our videos show that we are more concerned about substance and understanding than about polished design and perfection.

• **Slow down:** The first few Common Craft videos were presented with minimal practice, and looking back, it's obvious they were too fast. We now approach our current work with an emphasis on a consistent, low-intensity pace that appeals to a very wide audience and accounts for a variety of viewers, such as older people and those for whom English is a second language.

• **Be timeless:** We want our explanations to be valuable today and years into the future. If we use an example that changes six months later, the video becomes outdated and less relevant. Some refer to this as shelf life. Our explanations can have longer shelf lives if we focus on big ideas and themes.

• **Be accessible:** In whatever medium you choose, consider the implications for those who might face challenges in experiencing your medium, then try to find a way to make it accessible to them as well.

• **Have fun:** Gentle humor and informality are among the true hallmarks of a Common Craft video. We make it a priority to not be too stuffy. Informality helps us be remarkable, and we hope it causes people to smile.

## Right Medium for the Message

Have you ever wondered about the lack of cooking shows on the radio? Radio is an auditory medium, and cooking is best when it's visual or, even better, live. Medium matters. One of the keys to getting the most out of an explanation is being deliberate about the media in which you choose to present it.

Your audience and access to tools are unique to you

and the explanation you're crafting. To be truly effective, you'll need to consider how to transform your explanation into forms that fit with your audience and their needs. There is a range of options for doing this:

- **Media options:** The various forms of communication: text, image/graphic, audio and video.
- **Presentation modes:** The platform that presents the forms: documents, presentation/slideshow, website, webinar, video and web-based presentation apps.
- **Recording and distribution options:** How we make the resulting explanation shareable.

Instead of defining the perfect tool for every situation, it's more powerful to think at a higher level about the basic options we have and to learn to use constraints to help us decide what will work best. Two types of constraints are media constraints (these focus on the explainer's access to media) and audience constraints (these focus on the audience's need and situations).

We can't use a simple formula to find the right combination of media for every situation; however, we can use constraints to help give our explanation a form. By thinking in terms of audience and media constraints, we can narrow the choices to a manageable few that fit our needs. ●

## Visuals

Only after we introduce a visual do some ideas easily make sense to the average person. The visual becomes the embodiment of the idea, something memorable and reproducible. And that is the goal of visuals in the context of explanation: They make ideas memorable and reproducible.

Visual thinking focuses not only on representing ideas but also on solving problems. According to Dan Roam, author of *Back of the Napkin*, you can classify any problem into six problem clusters:

- **Who and what problems:** Challenges that relate to things, people and roles.
- **How much problems:** Challenges that relate to measuring and counting.
- **When problems:** Challenges that relate to scheduling and timing.
- **Where problems:** Challenges that relate to direction and how things fit together.
- **How problems:** Challenges that relate to how things influence one another.
- **Why problems:** Challenges that relate to seeing the big picture.

Much of *Back of the Napkin* is related to solving these problems with pictures. The six problem clusters are associated with specific kinds of hand-drawn pictures that best relate that information and solve problems.

Visuals are an incredibly important part of the Common Craft experience; however, our videos are more focused on the script than on the visuals. The visuals support the script, not the other way around. Common Craft videos are designed to be a noise-free experience. The figures don't have faces because faces would represent unneeded noise — something for your brain to perceive and understand. And this is our goal: to have people see themselves in the characters we use in the videos. By eliminating faces, we can invite people to do just that.

Keep viewers' attention on the ideas that are the focus of the explanation. Ask whether the words, faces, buttons, features or ideas support the big idea or make it more difficult to see. Work to remove noise from your message, giving people a way to experience your ideas without distractions. ●

## Explanation Culture and Your Life as an Explainer

By thinking about your own life and work in terms of explanation, you can start to develop and evolve stories and connections that are more powerful than any answers you've given before.

You don't have to wait around for the perfect explanation problem — your first explicit explanation may be right in front of you. If you seize the opportunity, you may find that it takes on a life of its own.

Once explanation becomes a part of your communication toolbox, you'll start to see all the ways you can use it. Explanation represents an amazing opportunity to make your ideas more understandable. If you choose to pursue it, it could change your life for the better. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Art of Explanation*, you'll also like:

1. ***Resonate* by Nancy Duarte.** Learn how to transform any presentation into an engaging journey by discovering how to understand your audience, create persuasive content and elicit a groundswell response.
2. ***Well Said* by Darlene Price.** Face-to-face communication proficiency has become increasingly important in efforts to increase business. Price offers guidelines to help you present yourself and your message with clarity, credibility and confidence.
3. ***Snap Selling* by Jill Konrath.** Konrath offers four SNAP rules to win more sales, and she teaches us that sales is an outcome, not a goal. Today, you actually will be more successful if you make fewer calls, meetings and presentations.

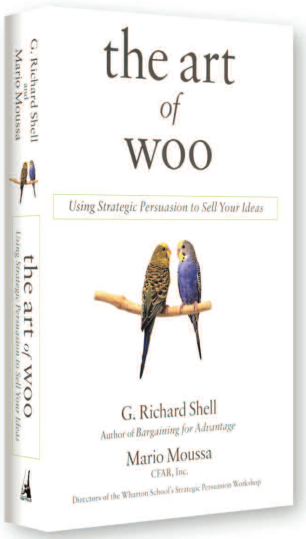
# Summary

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# THE ART OF WOO

## Using Strategic Persuasion to Sell Your Ideas




by G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

When Napoleon was a young officer at the Siege of Toulon, he established an artillery battery in an extremely exposed, dangerous location. His superiors thought he would never get troops to man it. But instead of ordering or threatening his soldiers, Napoleon created a large placard and placed it next to the cannons: "The Battery of Men Without Fear." The position was manned night and day.

That's Woo: the ability to win people over to your ideas without coercion, using relationship-based, emotionally intelligent persuasion. It's the secret of success with colleagues, clients and customers.

Authors G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa know what it takes to deal with difficult bosses and drive new initiatives through complex organizations. They have advised thousands of executives and have studied the greatest persuaders in history — from John D. Rockefeller Jr. to Andy Grove, to name only a few. Their four-step process, called Woo, is a systematic, repeatable strategy for putting your ideas across.

Emphasis falls on building relationships and communications techniques. The authors draw on their experiences while teaching seminars on negotiations to business and nonprofit executives and the problems they faced when needing to persuade people in their work and personal lives.

*The Art of Woo* does not suggest high-level strategies to defeat opponents in a competitive world. It delivers a process to win people over rather than defeat them.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What makes up the four steps of Woo.
- What the six channels of persuasion are and the appropriate times to use them.
- How to determine your personal persuasion style.
- How the eight best practices for managing organizational politics can help ensure that your idea gains the commitment needed.
- How to use the PCAN model to make a case for selling your idea.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ART OF WOO**

**by G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa**

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

## Selling Ideas: How Woo Works

Companies sell their products and services. People in organizations sell their ideas. Your success depends on how well you sell. The president and chairman of the board of a large bank in the Northeast was once asked how he thought about his job. "I am a salesman," he replied. "I have to sell policy changes and new ideas. I sell to the board of directors, the stockholders, the branch managers, the tellers, the cleaning crew and the customers all at the same time."

But selling ideas — especially the kind that make organizations work — is a skill shrouded in mystery. Classical geniuses from Aristotle to Cicero considered the idea of selling (they called it "rhetoric") to be one of the most critical subjects an educated person could learn. Yet two thousand years later, most schools have stopped teaching it. Rhetoric is seen as something practiced by those in the realm of political spin, while selling is viewed as something people can learn once they start work.

### The Four-Step Woo Process

You will discover that relationship-based persuasion follows a distinct, repeatable four-step process of Woo that you can master to achieve your goals:

**Step 1: Survey Your Situation** by developing your idea into a polished concept; mapping the decision process by understanding the social networks within the organization; assessing your persuasion styles; and confirming your own level of passion for the idea.

**Step 2: Confront the Five Barriers** including negative relationships, poor credibility, communication mismatches, contrary beliefs and conflicting interests. Then transform these five barriers into assets.

**Step 3: Make Your Pitch** by presenting solid evidence and arguments for your idea and giving it a personal touch.

**Step 4: Secure Your Commitments** by dealing with politics both at the individual level and within the organization.

To start using this process, you must master the main influence channels people use at work — and gain a sense of your own biases in communicating in these channels. Are you a soft-spoken relationship manager or a hard-driving taskmaster? Woo starts with a look in the mirror.

## Start With You

In persuasion, you are trying to win people over, not defeat them. Where do you start on this journey toward others' perspectives? With self-awareness. Unless you are aware of your own needs, emotions and communication impulses, you have little chance of seeing other people clearly — much less anticipating their feelings and crafting a message that will appeal to them. Thus, Woo starts with you.

### The Six Channels of Persuasion

Extensive research on how people influence one another in work settings has revealed that they return over and over to a relatively limited number of persuasion moves. Although communication scholars have labeled as many as 16 separate and identifiable strategies, there are six main persuasion channels that dominate when people are selling ideas.

**1. Interest-based persuasion** takes place every time someone frames a sales pitch in terms of the other party's self-interest. The essence of this persuasion channel is inducement, not trading.

**2. Authority** is usually used in a "top-down" situation, but even a secretary can use this channel if he or she has jurisdiction over expense accounts or other procedures. Effective appeals using authority are almost always accompanied by independent justifications to help persuade the audience that the authority is legitimate.

**3. Politics**, the use of coalitions, pressure tactics and

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor In Chief; **Melissa Ward**, Managing Editor; **Athena Nicolaides**, Graphic Designer; **Carol Celeste**, Contributing Editor

other power moves, is not limited to government. You are using the political persuasion channel whenever you acknowledge that appearances may be as important as substance, work through coalitions or lobby.

**4. Rationality-based persuasion** tries to influence someone's attitudes, beliefs or actions by offering reasons and/or evidence to justify a proposal on its merits.

**5. Inspiration and emotion** includes any appeal to an audience's overriding sense of purpose, values or beliefs as the foundation for selling your ideas.

**6. Relationships** that are positive predispose an audience toward your message. Negative relationships, however, distort almost everything an idea seller says. You are accessing the relationship channel whenever you use similarity, liking, rapport and reciprocity, or rely on your existing network of contacts to open doors.

## Personal Persuasion Styles

Some acts of persuasion are specially tailored to appeal to specific audiences, while others are more akin to blunt announcements of the speaker's point of view. The former are called *other-oriented persuasion* and the latter are called *self-oriented persuasion*.

When you are working from the audience's point of view, you are focused more on social considerations — existing relationships, political environment, other people's interests. You then harness these insights to make your message especially appealing to that target audience.

By contrast, when you are working from your own frame of reference, you focus on your internal perspective — the authority you want to assert, the need you want to express or the evidence you want to demonstrate. Then you put your message out there with less attention to "spinning" it for a particular audience.

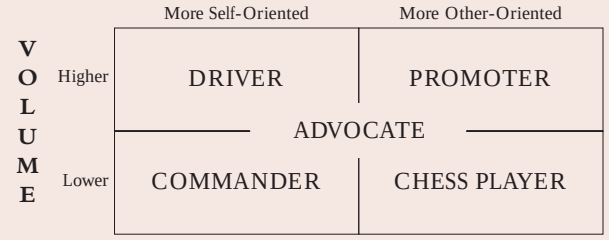
Of course, persuasion events often consist of a seamless combination of moves that are both internally and externally focused. But if your preferences run strongly toward one of these orientations, that can define your overall communication style.

## Volume Control

A second important variable that goes into the persuasion styles people display is the "volume" they give to their message. At work, you may also have noticed people who speak up right away and those who prefer to listen and quietly give their views when asked.

One of the more important variables in how you come across to others in persuasion moments is the rapidity and ease with which you can escalate from a normal conversational tone to a tough or enthusiastic insistence on your point of view. Some people find this quite a natural transition. Others prefer to maintain a more even tone and are not as prone to wide swings in emphasis. Such people are no less passionate about their ideas, but they are quieter by disposition. If you have a strong inclination toward communicating one way or the other, this will affect your choice of persuasion roles.

## Five Persuasive Styles




## What's Your Personal Style?

Five persuasive styles factor into the self-oriented versus other-oriented dimensions. The more other-oriented roles are the **Promoter** and the **Chess Player**. The more self-oriented roles are the **Driver** and the **Commander**. The **Advocate** role is a balance of both and a moderate tone or "volume." The chart above gives you a sense of how the five roles relate to one another.

## The Driver: Andy Grove

Drivers are fond of saying things like "Do this my way or hit the highway." In an ineffective persuader, this comes across as overbearing. But by conveying a sense of self-awareness and showing true dedication to the organization's mission, this strong style can be effectively persuasive.

As head of Intel, Andy Grove was notorious for his blunt style of communication. But he knew this about himself and compensated by making his style the cultural norm within Intel. An example of how this culture worked comes from an incident between Grove and his secretary, Sue McFarland. During McFarland's first performance review, Grove told her she lacked ambition and deserved no raise. She went home that night and put together an airtight case refuting each of Grove's charges. The next day she confronted Grove, and walked out of his office with not only a raise but permission to hire an assistant.

## The Commander: J.P. Morgan

You don't have to be aggressive like the Driver when you want people to know exactly what you think. A quiet, understated demeanor can often be much more effective. People listen when you speak your mind from a position of quiet confidence and credibility.

In 1895, a financial panic set off a run on the gold reserves that served as the basis of the U.S. currency. President Grover Cleveland called a meeting of advisers, including the nation's most powerful financier, J.P. Morgan, to address the crisis. Morgan sat silently as leaders from Congress and Cleveland's cabinet offered plans that Morgan knew would fail. When asked for his suggestion, Morgan laid out a plan to save the Treasury. He offered to repatriate 3.5 million ounces of gold he controlled in Europe and agreed to take, in return, $65 million worth of 30-year government bonds. Morgan then produced a legal memorandum showing that the government had authority to act as he proposed based on a little-known emergency law passed just after the Civil War.

Morgan's proposal was adopted. His message gained power from the quiet way he communicated both his authority and expertise. Playing the Commander with finesse, he saved both the American and his own financial empire from a fiscal catastrophe.

### The Promoter: Andrew Carnegie

When played ineffectively, the Promoter is all glad-handing and no substance. But when played well, this role features an outfront style and a gift for gaining and maintaining a wide circle of relationships.

In 1883, steel mogul Andrew Carnegie faced one of his first labor crises. He adopted a politically sophisticated negotiation strategy designed for delivery on the Rationality, Interest and Relationship channels. He and his management team prepared a document that displayed the trade-offs between forcing layoffs and reducing wages. This analysis demonstrated that if wages were reduced 13 percent, the plant could remain in operation without layoffs — a key interest of the unions. He offered to open his books so union leaders could see the financial constraints the steel market was forcing on the business. He mobilized them as his allies. The union leaders accepted the deal and sold it to their members.

### The Chess Player: John D. Rockefeller

In 1865, John D. Rockefeller found himself trapped in a partnership with four other men: Maurice, James and Richard Clark (all brothers) and Samuel Andrews. Rockefeller favored leveraging the partnership's assets to invest in the oil business, but the Clarks repeatedly vetoed his ideas. Rockefeller wanted to end the partnership, but the firm could be dissolved only if all partners consented. Therefore, Rockefeller went to work behind the scenes, lining up support from some banks, and then he provoked another quarrel over an oil industry investment. Maurice Clark barked, "If that's the way you want to do business, we'd better dissolve." Catching his partners in their bluff, Rockefeller placed a formal notice in the morning paper stating that he and his partners had unanimously agreed to part ways.

By communicating in a moderate tone and appearing to play to his partners' interests, Rockefeller arranged the situation so that his partners gave him exactly what he wanted.

### The Advocate: Sam Walton

As Wal-Mart's founder, Sam Walton could have ordered people to do what he wanted. But part of his genius was that he rarely forced an idea. By protecting the self-esteem and autonomy of his executives, he was able to win their cooperation.

Take the idea of using "greeters." Walton got this idea when visiting a Wal-Mart in Louisiana. He was met by an elderly man who said, "Hi! How are ya? Glad you're here." He discovered the store had experienced a shoplifting problem. Rather than offend the 99 percent of customers who were honest by posting a guard to check bags, the manager placed a friendly-looking older man out front to put shoplifters on notice that someone was watching.

Walton went back to Bentonville and told everyone about placing greeters in every store. A lot of people thought he'd lost his mind. Walton immediately gave credit for the greeters program to the people in the field who conceived it. Through his skilled advocacy, the greeters program has become an enduring, signature part of the Wal-Mart shopping experience.

### The Problem of Authenticity

The need in persuasion to adapt to audiences raises an important ethical issue: authenticity. Your personal credibility provides the foundation for influence. The authenticity paradox diminishes when you see that you cannot help being a somewhat "different person" depending on who you are interacting with. And your awareness of these various roles gives you a range of "authentic selves" to display in persuasion. ●

## Connect Your Ideas to People

As you plan your idea-selling strategy, you will need to set persuasion goals for each stage of the process. In some encounters, your goal will be to obtain introductions to key influencers; in other meetings, you will be looking for endorsements; eventually you will be asking for decisions.

### It All Begins With Ideas

Inside or outside an organization, you need to bring lots of energy to the process of developing and promoting new concepts. The Netflix concept got its start one day when Reed Hastings had a huge late fee for a copy of *Apollo 13* he had rented. As he was driving to the

gym, he began to think about the video store's business model. The store charged customers for each rental and penalized those who were late returning movies. The gym charged a flat fee and did not keep score on his usage. Would it be possible to run a movie rental business the way the gym worked? He worked on the idea until he developed a full-fledged profit model.

### From Ideas to Action: Deciding Who to Woo

Once you have a well-polished idea, you are ready to map the influence you will use to sell it. Even the most unlikely ideas can be pushed through the most difficult environments if you act methodically — one idea, one ally, one e-mail, one conversation, one meeting and one presentation at a time. And sometimes you can get to the decision maker and make a sale in one move — even with a very big initiative.

One-move idea sales can work even better with lower-level decision makers, provided you have taken the trouble to form good relationships with them. As Peter Drucker once noted, it is a "dangerous mistake" to think that only those at higher levels make important decisions.

### Setting Specific Persuasion Goals for Each Encounter

The stepping-stone process for selling ideas requires you to persuade different people to do different things at different stages. Thus, you will need somewhat different goals as you move from one encounter to the next.

Early on, you may simply be trying to introduce your idea and get key people thinking about it by floating "trial balloons." Later, you may be seeking input to help shape your idea into a final product. Finally, you may be asking for specific forms of cooperation as you work through your social network toward the ultimate decision makers.

**For additional information on persuasion goals, go to http://my.summary.com**

## Build Relationships and Credibility

Managing relationships plays a crucial role in selling ideas. Relationships give people a level of trust and confidence in each other, facilitating communications and making it easier to cooperate. Three social psychological foundations form the basis for relationships: similarity, liking and reciprocity. Add these ingredients to a history of positive interactions and you get a crucial idea-selling asset: trust.

### Similarity and Liking

Selling ideas to colleagues is seldom the same as conventional salesmanship. But in the area of relationships, there are common features. First, "face time" matters. The more you work with people, the more familiar they become with you, laying the groundwork for functioning relationships. The second trigger for the liking response is a perception of similarity between two people.

Even something as elusive as personal style can be enough to strike a chord of similarity. Early in his battle to get a casino license in Atlantic City, Donald Trump needed to hire a local lawyer to help him drive through his application. A young man named Nick Ribis was recommended to him. Ribis won Trump over in their opening conversation by showing he could match Trump, ego for ego.

"I'm not sure a lawyer as young as you are can handle a big project like this," said Trump after being introduced.

Ribis did not miss a beat. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Trump, I've never had a client as young as you who could afford my bill." The two men hit it off and worked closely on a successful legal strategy to get the casino license.

### Reciprocity

Reciprocity means that we tend to do things for people who do things for us. It can be observed at the bargaining table when people take turns making concessions. Reciprocity can also take the form of mutual exchanges of resources, services, emotional support, status and information.

You can benefit from the reciprocity system even when nobody owes you any personal favors. All you need are allies and champions who are willing to use their networks and associated reciprocity systems to advance your cause.

### Relationship Builders

In the world of electronic communications, there are a dizzying number of choices for building relationships. When practicing the Art of Woo, there is no substitute for meeting face to face. However, this is bad news because in today's multitasking world, convenience usually trumps judgment when it comes to developing relationships.

When you want to build a relationship with an important person on an idea-selling campaign, take the time to meet face to face. If conflicting schedules or distances make this impossible, spend some time composing a careful message. Research shows that e-mail messages are more likely to be successful if you personalize your note and build some rapport, forecast the agenda, and then get to the heart of your communications. Don't send until you reread your message and edit it with an eye to how it will be seen when received.

### Credibility

Credibility comes down to audience perceptions of three key things: competence, expertise and trustworthi-

ness. Thus, your credibility resides *in your audience's mind*. This means you can lose it in a single moment of poor judgment, miscalculation or misconduct.

Whereas people give you competence-based credibility when they think you have accomplished something worthy, they give you expertise-based credibility when they think you have specialized knowledge. If you are respected enough, expertise can overcome even the most socially awkward presentation. But no matter how slick your presentation, you will lose your audience if you show a lack of expertise.

When it comes to data, your credibility will depend on the reliability of your sources as well as your expertise. You should try to find out what sources *your audience* considers reliable. By showing reliability and integrity in everything you do — not just when everyone is watching — you build the foundation for people to trust you.

## Respect Their Beliefs

The people you are selling your idea to will have their own individual, sometimes quirky way of processing information and concepts. It will help you to gather as much information as you can on the thought processes, values and preferences of each person in your stepping-stone strategy.

Sometimes you can gain insights into people's preferred language by finding out how they speak when they are selling ideas. Search for the special words that your audience will find familiar and that can convey your idea in the most user-friendly way. Be ready to shift strategies based on your audience's real-time feedback.

### Using a Common Language

Bono is more than a well-known singer and front man for the band U2. He is also an authentic social activist with a bold agenda for helping the world's poorest people. And he has a gift for turning would-be enemies into fervent allies by selecting the right language and saluting the right values.

On September 20, 2000, Bono walked into the office of arch-conservative U.S. Senator Jesse Helms to recruit allies for Jubilee 2000 — a program to get governments to forgive the debts of African countries so more local resources could be directed at the AIDS epidemic.

As Bono launched into his litany of statistics he saw that he was losing his audience. So he switched to a different "language." Bono, himself a student of the Bible, knew that Helms was a religious man. So he started speaking of Jesus' concern for the poor and afflicted. By the end of the conversation, Senator Helms was visibly moved and expressed a desire to help Bono with his cause. With Helms' support, Congress appropriated $435 million.

### Beliefs as Barriers to Persuasion

The very power of your audience's beliefs creates hidden barriers to persuasion. Ideas that violate basic beliefs will simply be rejected. If you can communicate on the right persuasion channel and show how your idea furthers your audience's core purposes, you are well on the way to successfully wooing any group.

## Give Them Incentives to Say Yes

When you approach people in your stepping-stone strategy, you must not only use their language and honor their beliefs — you must frame your idea in terms of their needs and problems. People tend to favor ideas that benefit them and oppose those that will force them to shoulder significant costs. Here are important questions to help you think about your audience's interests.

**1. Why might it already be in the other party's interests to support my idea?** What problems, hopes, needs, fears, desires, and goals do they face that your idea might help them with?

When Donald Trump was starting off as a New York City real estate developer, one of his projects was to take an old, boarded-up hotel and turn it into the Grand Hyatt. Many people thought that lenders would charge extra-high interest rates for loans on such a risky property. But Trump did not target lenders. He targeted public officials whom he could address in terms of their interest in rejuvenating the city and their cravings for positive publicity. When he got approval, he made sure that all involved were seen as the people who had "saved" New York City.

**2. What do other parties want that I can give them to gain their support?** A key point to remember is that people's self-esteem and pride can be rich sources of low-cost trade-offs.

When Andrew Carnegie was a boy, his mother let him keep pet rabbits. He persuaded children in his neighborhood to gather food by promising he would name baby rabbits after them. In today's world, fundraisers follow the example, selling ideas by promising to place donors' names on them.

**3. Why might they say no?** When there is a strict conflict of interest that cannot be overcome, you will have to accept that no sale is possible. When you hear unanticipated objections, probe for any way you can work around them. If the people who will win with your new idea outnumber or outrank the people who will lose, you might still succeed.

## State Your Case

In the end, the two most reliable ways to persuade people are the most traditional: offer them solid reasons to say "yes," and back up those reasons with evidence. The soundness of reasons required and the depth of evidence, however, vary with circumstances. When people don't care much about the issue, are unqualified to evaluate it or are already inclined to agree based on their own beliefs and interests, arguments need not be rigorous. Often, the simplest statements, such as "I think this is a good idea because ... " may be enough to make a sale if you say it with conviction and credibility.

### The PCAN Model

One template for making a tight idea-selling case to an involved audience is the PCAN model (Problem, Cause, Answer and Net Benefits). This model concentrates people's attention, producing sharp, practical recommendations.

• **Define the problem.** By providing a crisp answer to the question "What is the problem?" you establish the context in which your idea will be evaluated.

• **Explain the cause of the problem.** An investigation into causes usually points toward solutions. You may sometimes need to do this in a way that avoids assigning blame, especially if your audience helped to create the situation.

• **What is my answer to the problem?** Here you outline your proposal, show how it will solve the problem and demonstrate that it could work in the real world.

• **Does my answer provide net benefits compared with alternatives?** You must prove that your idea is better than the current situation and alternative solutions. Solid evidence may be hard to come by. Proposals for pilot projects and market tests are popular methods for concluding a good policy-based idea pitch.

### Using the PCAN Model With Maximum Credibility

You must balance two important credibility factors: (1) your need to come across as a committed advocate and (2) your objectivity as an expert who has considered all sides. If you come to an argument with an obvious conflict of interest, address this conflict up front.

You gain credibility by acknowledging the possible weaknesses in your own arguments before presenting them, whereas you lose credibility if you present a weak argument and your audience punches holes in it. If you are assuming that the audience shares your belief about the nature of a problem, say so. If they do, you get credit as someone who advances his case only with his audience's permission. ●

**For additional information on PCAN's evidence, go to http://my.summary.com**

## Make It Memorable

In every persuasion event, there are two parts to the audience: its *rational calculator* and its *intuitive decision maker*. You must present arguments and evidence to the former, but unless you also make your ideas easily accessible to and actionable by the latter, you will lose the sale.

There are eight specific pathways that lead to the intuitive decision maker — techniques for grabbing your audience's attention and keeping it firmly focused on your idea.

**Pathway No. 1: Make it vivid.** Vividness can trigger belief even when no proof is available. Before grabbing just any visual image, make sure it is an image your audience will respond to in the way you intend.

**Pathway No. 2: Use demonstrations and symbolic actions.** Nothing is more vivid than an object your audience can see and touch, or an experience they can feel.

**Pathway No. 3: Put your heart into it.** People will be more inclined to believe your arguments if you show that you believe in them yourself. What convinces is conviction, especially if that conviction is backed by genuine feeling.

**Pathway No. 4: Tell a story.** When you tell a good story, the audience starts wondering what plot twists lie ahead. If you have integrated your idea pitch into the story in a compelling way, the intuitive decision maker will be listening.

**Pathway No. 5: Personalize it.** Talk about specific things a customer or employee shared with you about the problem your idea addresses. Give people names, and place the story in a specific location.

**Pathway No. 6: Make it a puzzle.** Look for puzzles embedded within the problems you are trying to help solve. The puzzle device works best when the solution is exactly what you want the audience to remember about the idea you are selling.

**Pathway No. 7: Build bridges with analogies and metaphors.** When you are talking about something the audience does not know much about, you need to start with something it does know. The simpler and more widely understood the image, the greater its hold on the imagination.

**Pathway No. 8: Force your audience to think.** You can get people thinking about old issues in new ways when you question the obvious. Ask your audience to consider what an upside-down world might look like. Make a radical assumption and get the audience to explore what the world might look like if it were true. Ask the audience to rethink the purpose or mission as part of your idea sale. ●

## Close the Sale

Your first job in closing a sale is often the hardest: overcoming the natural inertia that keeps people locked into the tried and true. Scientists have a name for this phenomenon: the "status quo" bias. Change requires effort, so people maintain the status quo, provided it works "well enough" to satisfy their interests.

### Gaining Individual Commitment

Unless you can take an individual's word to the bank, you need to close your sale by asking for performance-based rather than promise-based commitments.

Psychologists claim that to engage the commitment process, you need the other party to take concrete action that requires effort, is freely chosen, and is observed by or known to people other than you. The action the other party takes can be as simple as sending an e-mail to a group list endorsing your idea or as complex as allocating millions of dollars and hundreds of staff to your initiative. Either way, you can count that person as an ally.

### Organizational Commitment: Managing Politics

Organizational momentum can carry your idea a fair distance once you get decision makers to take concrete action. Unfortunately, there are also many countervailing forces that can slow or stop this momentum. If you want your idea to succeed, you must remain an active and energetic advocate.

Selling ideas sometimes sparks large-scale disputes between organizational units. When this happens, serious issues of corporate strategy, resources, careers and turf can stop an initiative. Of course, you can expect people who disagree in good faith over the merits of a proposal to do battle over it. The solution to such disputes lies in your making the best possible case to the most influential people: essentially using the four steps of Woo.

But often battles are less about the merits of an idea and more about the effects your idea will have on the existing distribution of power, resources and status. When this happens, political strategies become paramount.

### Best Practices for Managing Politics

Winning political battles within organizations is not all that different from winning traditional political fights. Here are some time-tested tactics that can help you win.

**1. Find a simple theme that captures your idea.** The bigger the group you need to communicate with, the larger the payoff from having a theme that captures the essence of what you want to get done. To succeed in politics, you need a slogan.

**2. Get your idea on the agenda — create a sense of urgency.** Deadlines, external threats and mandates from higher authority can be useful ways to make your idea a priority.

**3. Score small wins early and broadcast them widely.** When people see positive results from their actions, their commitment deepens.

**4. Form key alliances to broaden your base.** Form alliances with the people who have three key powers: to decide, to fund and to implement.

**5. Create a snowball effect.** As the number of people who back the idea increases, the pressures build on opponents to get out of the way.

**6. Be flexible — respond and adjust.** Your ideas will take on a life of their own as more people become involved. When this happens, you need to show flexibility if you and your idea are to survive politically.

**7. Lock it in.** Once you have generated momentum, you need to lock the idea into the organizational matrix through budget lines, job descriptions, incentives and other procedures.

**8. Secure appropriate credit.** The secret of gaining appropriate kudos centers on relationships. If you cannot blow your own horn, you will need others to blow it for you. And the people who will sing your praises are generally the ones who know you, like you, owe you or trust you.

## Woo With Integrity

Like any powerful force, persuasion skills can serve many purposes — some good and some not so good. With these tools now in your hands, you confront the ethical problem of how you will use them. If you could not defend your actions on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*, then you should rethink your strategy.

You need persuasion skills no matter what kind of organization you work for. And the higher you go, the more these skills matter. The typical organization may have many traffic lights and stop signs. Learning the Art of Woo will provide a road map for working your way through these dangerous intersections to safety and success.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Art of Woo*, you'll also like:

1. ***Influencer*** by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler. This book shows readers how seemingly "insignificant" people are making incredibly significant improvements in solving problems others would think impossible.
2. ***Words That Work*** **by Frank D. Luntz, Ph.D.** To effectively obtain the power of communication, you must learn that it's not always what you say, but how you say it.
3. ***Success Built to Last*** **by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson.** Through interviews with 300 successful individuals, the authors uncover the secrets of their accomplishments.

# Summary

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# The ONE Thing

## The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results

by Gary Keller
with Jay Papasan

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You want less. You want fewer distractions and less on your plate. The daily barrage of emails, texts, tweets, messages and meetings distract you and stress you out. The simultaneous demands of work and family are taking a toll. And what's the cost? Second-rate work, missed deadlines, smaller paychecks, fewer promotions — and lots of stress.

And you want more. You want more productivity from your work. More income for a better lifestyle. You want more satisfaction from life and more time for yourself, your family and your friends.

With *The ONE Thing* by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan, now you can have both — less and more. *The ONE Thing* delivers extraordinary results in every area of your life — work, personal, family and spiritual.

The ONE Thing shows up time and again in the lives of the successful because it's a fundamental truth. Applying the ONE Thing to your work — and in life — is the simplest and smartest thing you can do to propel yourself toward the success you want.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- About the six lies standing between you and success and how to beat them.
- That willpower is not always on will-call and how to use it as effectively as possible.
- How to construct a Focusing Question.
- How to navigate the path to great answers by using the Great Question matrix.
- How to time block.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ONE THING**

**by Gary Keller with Jay Papasan**

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For additional information on the authors, go to www.summary.com or The1Thing.com.

## Introduction

Considered one of the funniest movies of all time, *City Slickers* sprinkles in unexpected doses of wisdom and insight. In one memorable scene, Curly, the gritty cowboy, and city slicker Mitch leave the group to search for stray cattle. Curly reins his horse to a stop and turns to face Mitch.

Curly: Do you know what the secret to life is?

Mitch: No. What?

Curly: This. [Holds up one finger.]

Mitch: Your finger?

Curly: One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else don't mean sh★t.

Mitch: That's great, but what's the "one thing"?

Curly: That's what you have to figure out.

Out of the mouth of a fictional character comes the secret of success. Whether the writers knew it or unwittingly stumbled on it, what they wrote was the absolute truth. The ONE Thing is the best approach to getting what you want.

### Going Small

If everyone has the same number of hours in a day, why do some people seem to get so much more done than others? The answer is they make getting to the heart of things the heart of their approach. They go small.

"Going small" is ignoring all the things you could do and doing what you should do. It's recognizing that not all things matter equally and finding the things that matter most. It's realizing that extraordinary results are directly determined by how narrow you can make the focus. When you go as small as possible, you'll be staring at ONE Thing.

### Getting Extraordinary Results

Toppling dominoes is pretty straightforward. You line them up and tip over the first one. In the real world, though, it's more complicated. The challenge is that life doesn't line everything up for us and say, "Here's where you should start." So instead, every day you should line up your priorities anew, find the lead domino and whack away at it until it falls.

This approach works because extraordinary success is sequential, not simultaneous. The domino effect applies to the big picture, like your work or business, and it applies to the smallest moment in each day when you're deciding what to do next. Success builds on success. The key is over time. Success is built sequentially. It's one thing at a time. ●

## PART I: THE LIES: THEY MISLEAD AND DERAIL US

Over time, myths and mistruths get thrown around so often that they eventually feel familiar and start to sound like the truth. Then we start basing important decisions on them.

The challenge we all face when forming our success strategies is that success has its own lies, too. If we're going to maximize our potential, we're going to have to make sure we put these lies to bed.

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## Lie No. 1: Everything Matters Equally

Equality is a worthy ideal pursued in the name of justice and rights. In the real world of results, however, things are never equal. No matter how talented people are — no two are ever equal. Equality is a lie.

Not everything matters equally, and success isn't a game won by whoever does the most. Yet that is exactly how most play it on a daily basis.

Although to-do lists serve as a useful collection of our best intentions, they also tyrannize us with trivial, unimportant stuff that we feel obligated to get done — because it's on our list. Achievers operate differently. Achievers always work from a clear sense of priority. Instead of a to-do list, you need a success list — a list that is purposefully created around extraordinary results. If your to-do list contains everything, then it's probably taking you everywhere except where you want to go.

### Applying Pareto's Principle

Pareto's Principle, also known as the 80/20 Principle, states that the minority of your effort (20 percent) leads to the majority of your results (80 percent). It points us in a clear direction: the majority of what you want will come from the minority of what you do. Extraordinary results are disproportionately created by fewer actions than most people realize.

Depending on the circumstances, it can play out as 90/20, where 90 percent of your success comes from 20 percent of your effort. Or 70/10 or 65/5. Just understand these are all working off the same principle. The insight is that not everything matters equally; some things matter more than others — a lot more. A to-do list becomes a success list when you apply Pareto's Principle.

To go further to an extreme, start with as large a list as you want, but develop the mindset that you will whittle your way from there to the critical few and not stop until you end with the essential ONE Thing. ●

## Lie No. 2: Multitasking

Multitasking is a lie because nearly everyone accepts it as an effective thing to do, but when you try to do two things at once, you either can't or won't do either well. Multitasking is an effective way to get less done.

The term "multitasking" emerged in the 1960s to describe a computer's ability to quickly perform many tasks. However, the term is inherently deceptive. Multitasking is about multiple tasks alternately sharing one resource (the CPU), but over time, the context was flipped, and it became interpreted to mean multiple tasks being done simultaneously by one resource (a person).

People can do two or more things at once, such as walk and talk, but we can't focus on two things at once. Our attention bounces back and forth. This is fine for computers, but it has serious repercussions in humans.

When you switch from one task to another, two things happen. The first is nearly instantaneous: you decide to switch. The second is less predictable: you have to activate the "rules" for whatever you're about to do. It always takes some time to start a new task and restart the one you quit, and there's no guarantee you'll pick up where you left off.

So why would we ever tolerate multitasking when we're doing our most important work? Just because our day job doesn't involve bypass surgery doesn't make focus any less critical to our success. Your work deserves no less respect. ●

## Lie No. 3: A Disciplined Life

Contrary to what most people believe, success is not a marathon of disciplined action. Achievement doesn't require you to be a full-time disciplined person where your every action is trained and where control is the solution to every situation. Success is actually a short race — a sprint fueled by discipline just long enough for habit to kick in and take over.

You can become successful with less discipline than you think, for one simple reason: success is about doing the right thing, not about doing everything right.

The trick to success is to choose the right habit and bring just enough discipline to establish it. That's it. As this habit becomes part of your life, you'll start looking like a disciplined person, but you won't be one. You'll be a person who used selective discipline to build a powerful habit.

### Sixty-Six Days to the Sweet Spot

The right discipline goes a long way, and habits are hard only in the beginning. Over time, the habit you're after becomes easier to sustain. Habits require much less energy and effort to maintain than to begin.

In 2009, researchers at the University College of London asked the question, "How long does it take to establish a new habit?" The results suggest that it takes an average of 66 days; the full range was 18 to 254 days, but 66 represented a sweet spot — with easier behaviors taking fewer days and tough ones taking longer.

Super-successful people aren't superhuman; they've just used selective discipline to develop a few significant habits — one at a time, over time.

## Lie No. 4: Willpower Is Always on Will-Call

Most people assume willpower matters, but many might not fully appreciate how critical it is to success. Willpower is so important that using it effectively should be a high priority. Unfortunately, because it's not always on will-call, putting it to its best use requires you to manage it. Willpower is a timing issue; when you have your will, you get your way.

Willpower has a limited battery life but can be recharged with some downtime. You must monitor your willpower fuel gauge. Full-strength willpower requires a full tank. Never let what matters most be compromised due to underfueling. Eat right and regularly and get plenty of rest.

How do you put your willpower to work? You think about it. Pay attention to it. Respect it. You do what matters most first each day when your willpower is strongest. Maximum strength means maximum success.

## Lie No. 5: A Balanced Life

The idea of balance is exactly that — a grand yet not very practical idea. In your effort to attend to all things, everything gets shortchanged, and nothing gets its due.

When we say we're out of balance, we're usually referring to a sense that some priorities — things that matter to us — are being underserved or unmet. The problem is that when you focus on what is truly important, something will always be underserved. There will always be things left undone. Leaving some things undone is a necessary tradeoff for results. But you can't leave everything undone, and that's where counterbalancing comes in. You must counterbalance your work and personal life buckets.

**1. Counterbalance your work bucket.** View work as involving a skill or knowledge that must be mastered. This will cause you to give disproportionate time to your ONE Thing and will throw the rest of your workday, week, month and year out of balance. Your work life is divided into two areas: what matters most and everything else. You will have to take what matters to the extremes and be OK with what happens to the rest. Professional success requires it.

**2. Counterbalance your personal life bucket.** Acknowledge that your life has multiple areas and that each requires a minimum of attention for you to feel that you "have a life." Drop any one, and you'll feel the effects. This requires constant awareness. You must never go too long or too far without counterbalancing them so that they are all active areas of your life. Your personal life requires it.

The question of balance is really a question of priority. When you change your language from balancing to prioritizing, you see your choices more clearly.

When you're supposed to be working, work, and when you're supposed to be playing, play. It's a weird tightrope you're walking, but it's only when you get your priorities mixed up that things fall apart.

## Lie No. 6: Big Is Bad

This is possibly the worst lie of all, for if you fear big success, you'll either avoid it or sabotage your efforts to achieve it. No one knows their ultimate ceiling for achievement, so worrying about it is a waste of time. When you allow yourself to accept that big is about who you can become, you look at it differently.

Thinking big is essential to extraordinary results. Success requires action, and action requires thought. But here's the catch — the only actions that become springboards to succeeding big are those informed by big thinking to begin with. Make this connection, and the importance of how big you think begins to sink in.

Everyone has the same amount of time, and hard work is simply hard work. As a result, what you do in the time you work determines what you achieve. And because what you do is determined by what you think, how big you think becomes the launching pad for how high you achieve.

Don't fear big. Fear mediocrity. Only living big will let you experience your true life and work potential.

# PART 2: THE TRUTH: THE SIMPLE PATH TO PRODUCTIVITY

Success comes down to this: being appropriate in each moment of your life. If you can honestly say, "This is where I'm meant to be right now, doing exactly what I'm doing," then all the amazing possibilities for your life become possible.

## The Focusing Question

How we phrase the questions we ask ourselves determines the answers that eventually become our life. The

challenge is that the right question isn't always so obvious. Most things we want don't come with a road map or a set of instructions, so it can be difficult to frame the right question. Clarity must come from us.

To get the answers we seek, we have to invent the right questions — and we're left to devise our own. So how do you come up with uncommon questions that take you to uncommon answers?

You ask one question: the Focusing Question. Anyone who dreams of an uncommon life must find an uncommon approach to live it. The Focusing Question is that uncommon approach.

### Anatomy of the Question

The Focusing Question collapses all possible questions into one: "What's the ONE Thing I can do / such that by doing it / everything else will be easier or unnecessary?

- **Part 1: "What's the ONE Thing I can do …":** This sparks focused action. It forces you towards something specific. The last phrase, "can do," is an embedded command directing you to take action that is possible. Not should do, could do or would do. Action you "can do" beats intention every time.
- **Part 2: "… such that by doing it …":** This tells you there's a criterion your answer must meet. It's the bridge between just doing something and doing something for a specific purpose.
- **Part 3: "… everything else will be easier or unnecessary?":** This is the ultimate leverage test. It says that when you do this ONE Thing, everything else you could do to accomplish your goal will either be doable with less effort or no longer even necessary. This elevates the answer's potential to change your life by doing the leveraged thing and avoiding distractions.

The Focusing Question asks you to find the first domino and focus on it until you knock it over. Once you've done that, you'll discover a line of dominoes behind it either ready to fall or already down.

## The Success Habit

Habits can be hard to break and hard to create. But we are unknowingly acquiring new ones all the time. When we start and continue a way of thinking or a way of acting over a long enough period, we've created a new habit. The choice we face is whether or not we want to form habits that get us what we want from life. If we do, then the Focusing Question is the most powerful success habit we can have.

Obviously, you can drive yourself nuts analyzing every little aspect of everything you might do. Instead, start with the big stuff and see where it takes you. The Focusing Question can direct you to your ONE Thing in different areas of your life. Simply reframe the Focusing Question by inserting your area of focus. You can also include a time frame — such as "right now" or "this year" — to give your answer the appropriate level of immediacy, or "in five years" or "someday" to find a big-picture answer that points you toward outcomes to aim for.

Here are some Focusing Questions to ask yourself:

- For My Spiritual Life: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to help others?"
- For My Physical Health: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to achieve my diet goals?"
- For My Personal Life: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to improve my skill at _____?"
- For My Key Relationships: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to improve my relationship with my spouse/partner?"
- For My Job: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to ensure that I hit my goals?"
- For My Business: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to make us more competitive?"
- For My Finances: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to increase my net worth?"

To make your ONE Thing part of your daily routine, you must first understand and believe it. If you don't, you won't take action. Then you need to ask yourself the Focusing Question each day. When you do this, your direction will become clear. Once you make the Focusing Question a habit, you fully engage the power to get the results you want. To help yourself out, leverage reminders, such as putting up a sign that says, "Until my ONE Thing is done — everything else is a distraction." And be sure to recruit support — research shows that those around you can influence you tremendously.

This one habit can become the foundation for many more, so keep your success habit of using the Focusing Question working as powerfully as possible.

## The Path to Great Answers

The Focusing Question helps you identify your ONE Thing in any situation. It clarifies what you want in big areas of your life and then drills down to what you must do to get it. It's a simple process: Ask a great question, then seek out a great answer.

### Ask a Great Question

Great questions, like great goals, are big and specific. Consider the Great Question matrix:

Quadrant 1: Big and Specific

Quadrant 2: Big and Broad

Quadrant 3: Small and Broad

Quadrant 4: Small and Specific

When applying the Great Question matrix to an issue such as increasing sales, you get the following breakdown:

**Quadrant 4 (Small and Specific): What can I do to increase sales by 5 percent this year?** This aims you in a specific direction, but there's nothing truly challenging about this question. For most salespeople, a 5 percent bump in sales could just as easily happen because the market shifted in your favor. Low goals don't require extraordinary actions, so they rarely lead to extraordinary results.

**Quadrant 3 (Small and Broad): What can I do to increase sales?** This is not really an achievement question at all. It's more of a brainstorming question. It's great for listing your options but requires more to narrow your options and go small. Unfortunately, this is the kind of average question most people ask and then wonder why their answers don't deliver extraordinary results.

**Quadrant 2 (Big and Broad): What can I do to double sales?** Here you have a big question, but nothing specific. It's a good start, but the lack of specifics leaves more questions than answers. There are still too many options, and without specifics, you won't know where to start.

**Quadrant 1 (Big and Specific): What can I do to double sales in six months?** Now you have all the elements of a great question. It's a big goal, and it's specific. You're doubling sales, which isn't easy, and you have a timeframe of six months, which is a challenge. You'll need a big answer. You'll have to stretch what you believe is possible and look outside the standard toolbox of solutions.

So if "What can I do to double sales in six months?" is a Great Question, how do you make it more powerful? Convert it to the Focusing Question: "What's the ONE Thing I can do to double sales in six months such that by doing it, everything else will be easier or unnecessary?"

### Find a Great Answer

Answers come in three categories: double, stretch and possibility. High achievers understand these first two routes but reject them. Unwilling to settle for ordinary when extraordinary is possible, they've asked a Great Question and want the very best answer.

The research and experience of others is the best place to start when looking for your answer. Armed with this knowledge, you can establish a benchmark. With a stretch approach, this was your maximum, but now it's your minimum. It's not all you'll do, but it becomes the hilltop where you'll stand to see if you can spot what might come next. This is called *trending*, and it's the second step. You're looking for the next thing you can do to head in the same direction as the best performers, or, if necessary, an entirely new direction.

Because your answer will be original, you'll probably have to reinvent yourself in some way to implement it. A new answer usually requires a new behavior; so don't be surprised if along the way to a sizable success you change in the process. ●

## PART 3: EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS: UNLOCKING THE POSSIBILITIES WITHIN YOU

There is a natural rhythm to our lives that becomes a simple formula for implementing the ONE Thing and achieving extraordinary results: purpose, priority and productivity. The most productive people start with purpose and use it like a compass.

## Live With Purpose and by Priority

Who we are and where we want to go determine what we do and what we accomplish. A life lived on purpose is the most powerful of all — and the happiest.

Happiness happens on the way to fulfillment. We all want to be happy, but seeking it isn't the best way to find it. The surest path to achieving lasting happiness appears when you make your life about something bigger, when you bring meaning and purpose to your everyday actions.

### The Power of Purpose

Purpose is the straightest path to power and the ultimate source of personal strength — strength of conviction and strength to persevere. The prescription for extraordinary results is knowing what matters to you and taking daily doses of actions in alignment with it. Knowing why you're doing something provides the inspiration and motivation to give the extra perspiration needed to persevere when things go south.

Discover your purpose by asking what drives you. Purpose is why you're excited about your life. Pick a direction, start down that path, and see how you like it. Time brings clarity, and if you find you don't like it, you can always change your mind.

### Goal Setting to the Now

We need a simple way of thinking to save us from ourselves, set the right priority and move closer toward accomplishing our purpose. Goal Setting to the Now will get you there. By thinking through the filter of Goal Setting to the Now, you set a future goal and then methodically drill down to what you should be doing right now. It can be a little like a Russian matryoshka doll in that your ONE Thing "right now" is nested inside your ONE Thing today, which is nested inside your ONE Thing this week, etc. Essentially, you're lining up your dominoes.

Understanding and completing Goal Setting to the Now trains your mind how to think, how to connect one goal with the next over time until you know the most important thing you must do right now. You're learning how to think big — but go small.

## Live for Productivity

The most successful people are the most productive people. Productive people get things done, achieve better results and do so because they devote maximum time to being productive on their top priority, their ONE Thing. They time block their ONE Thing and then protect the time blocks with a vengeance.

### Time Blocking

Most people think there's never enough time to be successful, but there is if you block it. Time blocking is a very results-oriented way of viewing and using time. It's a way to make sure what has to be done *gets* done.

So go to your calendar and block off all the time you need to accomplish your ONE Thing. If it's a one-time ONE Thing, block off the appropriate hours and days. If it's a regular thing, block off the appropriate time every day so that it becomes a habit. Everything else — papers, email, calls, — must wait. When you time block, you're creating the most productive day possible in a way that's repeatable every day for the rest of your life.

If disproportionate results come from one activity, then you must give that one activity disproportionate time. Each and every day, ask this Focusing Question for your blocked time: "Today, what's the ONE Thing I can do for my ONE Thing such that by doing it, everything else will be easier or unnecessary?" When you find the answer, you'll be doing the most leveraged activity for your most leveraged work. This is how results become extraordinary.

Once you've done your ONE Thing for the day, you can devote the rest of it to everything else. Just use the Focusing Question to identify your next priority, and give that task the time it deserves. Repeat this approach until your workday is done. Getting "everything else" done may help you sleep better at night, but it's unlikely to earn you a promotion.

To achieve results, time block these three things in the following order:

**1. Time block your time off.** Successful people launch their year by taking time out to plan their time off because they know they'll need it and that they'll be able to afford it. By planning your time off in advance, you're managing your work time around your downtime instead of the other way around. Resting is as important as working.

**2. Time block your ONE Thing.** Yes, your ONE Thing comes second. Why? Because you can't happily sustain success in your professional life if you neglect your personal "re-creation" time. The key to making this work is to block time as early as possible in your day. Aim to block four hours a day, minimum. If you can do more, then do it.

**3. Time block your planning time**. This is when you reflect on where you are and where you want to be. Block an hour each week to review your annual and monthly goals. Ask, "Based on where I am right now, what's the ONE Thing I need to do this week to stay on track for my monthly goal and for my monthly goal to be on track for my annual goal?" You're lining up the dominoes. There is magic in knocking down your most important domino day after day.

### Protect Your Time Block

For time blocks to actually block time, they must be protected. The best way to do this is to adopt the mindset that time blocks can't be moved. So when someone tries to double-book you, just say, "I'm sorry, I already have an appointment at that time," and offer options.

## The Three Commitments

Achieving extraordinary results through time blocking requires three commitments. First, you must adopt the mindset of someone seeking mastery. Mastery is a commitment to becoming your best. Second, you must continually seek the very best ways of doing things. And

last, you must be willing to be held accountable to doing everything you can to achieve your ONE Thing.

### 1. Follow the Path of Mastery

When you see mastery as a path you take rather than a destination, it starts to feel accessible and attainable. A healthy view of mastery means giving the best you have to become the best you can be at your most important work. The path is one of an apprentice learning and relearning the basics on a never-ending journey of greater experience and expertise.

### 2. Move from "E" to "P"

The path of mastering something is a combination of not only doing the best you can, but also doing the best that can be done. It's called moving from "E"— the Entrepreneurial Approach — to "P" — the Purposeful Approach. Our natural approach is entrepreneurial; it's seeing something we want to do or that needs to be done and racing off to do it with enthusiasm, energy and our natural abilities. However, our natural abilities have a ceiling of achievement, a level of productivity and success that eventually tops out.

Highly productive people don't accept the limitations of their natural approach as the final word on their success. When you bring the "P" to the same ceiling of limitation, things look different. The Purposeful Approach says, "I'm still committed to growing, so what are my options?" You then use the Focusing Question to narrow those choices down to the next thing you should do. It could be to follow a new model, get a new system or both.

### 3. Live the Accountability Cycle

Taking complete ownership of your outcomes by holding no one but yourself responsible for them is the most powerful thing you can do to drive your success. Therefore, accountability is most likely the most important of the three commitments. Without it, your journey down the path to mastery will be cut short as soon as you encounter a challenge, and you won't figure out how to break through the ceilings of achievement you'll hit along the way. Accountable people absorb setbacks and keep going; they're results oriented and never defend actions, skill levels, models, systems or relationships that aren't getting the job done.

When life happens, you can either be accountable or unaccountable. When life happens, the accountable person seeks and acknowledges reality, owns it, finds a solution and gets on with it. The unaccountable person avoids and fights reality, blames, makes personal excuses, and waits and hopes. ●

## The Four Thieves

Our best intentions can be undone. Just as there are Six Lies that will deceive and mislead you, there are Four Thieves that can hold you up and rob you of your productivity.

**1. Inability to say "No":** It's one thing to be distracted when you're trying to focus; it's another to be hijacked before you can even get to. The way to protect what you've said yes to and stay productive is to say no to anyone that could derail you. So here's a simple rule: A request must be connected to your ONE Thing for you to consider it.

**2. Fear of chaos:** Messes are inevitable when you focus on just one thing. While you whittle away on your most important work, the world doesn't sit and wait. It's important for you to accept this instead of fighting it.

**3. Poor health habits:** Personal energy mismanagement is a silent thief of productivity. It's key to exercise, make some time for meditation, and be sure to get eight hours of sleep. Don't sacrifice your health by trying to take on too much.

**4. Environment doesn't support your goals:** Your environment is simply who you see and what you experience every day. The right people in your life and the right physical environment on your daily path will support your efforts to get to your ONE Thing. ●

## The Journey

As satisfying as succeeding is, as fulfilling as journeying feels, there is actually an even better reason to get up every day and take action on your ONE Thing: No regrets. Life is too short to pile up woulda, coulda, shouldas.

Success is an inside job. When you put yourself together, the world falls into place. You know what to do. You know how to do it. Your next step is simple. You are the first domino. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The One Thing* you'll also like:

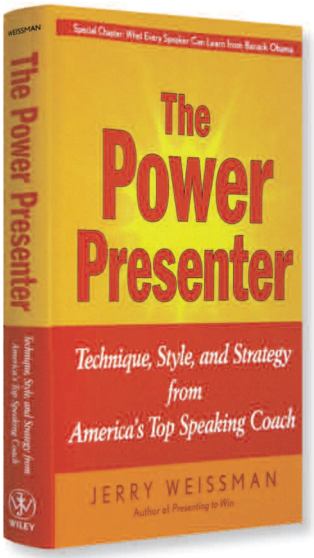
1. ***The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg.** Duhigg shares the scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed.
2. ***Extreme Productivity* by Robert C. Pozen.** Pozen explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you actually spend your time.
3. ***One Piece of Paper* by Mike Figliuolo.** Through a series of simple questions, readers will create a living document that communicates their values, passions, goals and standards to others, maximizing their leadership potential.

# Summary

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®
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Self-Development: Communication

# The Power Presenter

## Technique, Style, and Strategy from America's Top Speaking Coach




by Jerry Weissman

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Presentation coach Jerry Weissman has spent 20 years teaching CEOs and other executives how to deliver successful, profitable IPO road shows. Weissman's strategies have worked for dozens of top business leaders, including Yahoo! founder and CEO Tim Koogle, Intuit founder Scott Cook and Netflix founder and CEO Reed Hastings.

*The Power Presenter* introduces the same effective technique, style, and strategy that executive teams from more than 1,000 companies have used to raise financing, sell products, propose partnerships or seek approval for projects. Supported by examples of famous presentations, this summary describes how to deliver a winning speech or presentation that will engage your audience from beginning to end.

Weissman offers a seven-step plan for crafting your content into a compelling story as well as advice on how to conquer your fear of public speaking and to present naturally with force and conviction. You'll also learn how to speak with your body language, create empathy with your audience, and integrate your graphics design and animation with your delivery.

For anyone who has to stand up and deliver, *The Power Presenter* is a master resource filled with proven techniques, practical tools, insightful wisdom and inspiring examples.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to handle the Moment of Truth: when the presentation begins.
- How to strengthen your presentation with the correct way to organize, develop, and think through your content.
- How to take charge of your content with The Seven Steps of Story Development.
- What every speaker can learn from Barack Obama.
- How to integrate presentation skills, tools and slides with a unique new skill called Graphics Synchronization.
- The five essential elements of every presentation.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE POWER PRESENTER**

**by Jerry Weissman**

**The author:** Jerry Weissman is America's leading corporate presentations coach with a client list that includes top executives at Yahoo!, Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Intel, Netflix and many others. He is the founder of Power Presentations, Ltd., and has helped over 1000 firms develop and deliver their mission-critical business presentations.

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For additional information on the author, go to http://www.summary.com. For more information about Power Presentations, visit http: www.powerltd.com.

## Introduction

*Cisco originally expected to get $13.50 to $15.50 per share for its stock. But during the road show the company was so well-received that it managed to sell 2.8 million shares at $18.00 apiece, Don Valentine, chairman of the Board of Cisco Systems, said. He attributed at least $2 to $3 of the increase to Weissman's coaching.*

*— San Francisco Chronicle, July 9, 1990*

When a business offers shares of its stock to the public for the first time, the company's senior management team develops a presentation that they take to the road to potential investors. It's the most demanding and high-stakes presentation any executive will ever make.

Because only a few hundred companies go public in any given year, you are more likely to win a national lottery than to launch an IPO. But you'll almost certainly have to give a presentation or to make an important speech at some point during your lifetime. And whether you are a businessman or businesswoman or an ordinary citizen, your challenge is to be as "well-received" as the Cisco Systems IPO road show.

## Your Actions Speak Louder Than Your Words

Audience Advocacy is a viewpoint that asks you, the presenter, to become an advocate for your audience. Put yourself into your audience's place and think about their hopes, fears and passions. Consider what your audience knows about you and your message or cause, and what they need to know in order to respond favorably to you.

Think of the presenter and the audience as the beginning and ending points of all interpersonal communications; then think of the presenter as a transmitter and the audience as a receiver. The presenter transmits a set of dynamics — human dynamics — that can be summed up in three Vs:

**Verbal.** The story you tell.

**Vocal.** Your voice, or how you tell your story.

**Visual.** Your body language, and what you do when you tell your story.

Your audiences are affected by these dynamics to varying degrees. Interestingly, body language has the greatest impact, the voice next, while the story has the least impact.

Surprised? You're not alone. Given the amount of time and effort that most presenters and speakers expend scribbling on yellow legal pads, pounding away at their computers, or shuffling their slides in preparation for their mission critical presentations, they assume that content is paramount; but at the moment of truth, the story takes third place behind the body language and the voice.

## The Crucial Task: Creating Audience Empathy

In addition to the Visual, Vocal, and Verbal forces that influence your audience, they are also impacted by another dynamic: empathy. Evolved from the Greek word for emotion or affection, empathy refers to shared or vicarious feelings. In the presentation environment, the empathy is the shared feelings between the audience and the presenter, but the sharing on the audience's part is involuntary.

To illustrate, let's consider the example of the presenter who stands up and freezes like a deer in the headlights.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Paula Ezop**, Contributing Editor

Although you may not know this stressed presenter, when you are in the audience and see that person's nervousness, you are most likely to feel similar, vicarious feelings. That is the power of empathy.

Empathy also works positively. For a case in point, let's go back to July 27, 2004, at the Democratic National Convention. Barack Obama, a then-unknown, 42-year-old state legislator from Illinois, stood and delivered a stirring keynote speech. Obama spoke of the energy, urgency, and passion that he felt for America, and he expressed it with great energy, urgency, and passion in his voice and body. What was the result?

- The delivery system lifted the payload into orbit and the convention delegates at the packed Fleet Center in Boston rose in unison to give Obama an enthusiastic ovation.
- Three months later, he swept into office as a first-term U.S. senator by 70 percent, the widest margin ever in an Illinois Senate race.
- Four years later, his momentum unabated, Barack Obama became, the 44th President of the United States — all launched by just one 16-minute, 25-second speech. ●

## The Butterflies in Your Stomach

Every living being on the planet, from one-celled organisms to four-legged animals to two-legged humans, responds to imminent danger by standing its ground and fighting or fleeing for its life. To enable either of these reactions, the body releases a sudden spurt of adrenaline and activates the sympathetic nervous system. This vast internal emergency network then sets many parts of the body into accelerated motion:

- **Eyes:** Pupils dilate to increase the field of vision.
- **Heart:** Pumps faster to send blood to the extremities to flail in defense or to run to safety.
- **Blood pressure:** Elevates due to increased blood flow.
- **Blood sugar levels:** Elevate to generate more energy.
- **Lungs:** Increase respiration rate to put more oxygen into the blood.
- **Sweat glands:** Activate to avoid overheating.
- **Salivary glands:** Shut down to suspend digestion.
- **Limbs:** Primed to Fight-or-Flight.

When a two-legged presenting animal is faced with the daunting task of standing exposed before an audience, the solitary focus of attention for dozens, if not hundreds or thousands of watchful eyes, it responds with the flight reaction: pacing the platform like a caged tiger.

1. The eyes sweep the room frantically in search of escape routes.

2. The heart pumps faster to rush blood to the extremities.

3. The hydraulic system screeches into reverse: The palms, usually dry, get clammy from perspiration, cooling the rush of warm blood, and the mouth, usually moistened by the salivary glands, goes bone dry.

4. The nerve synapses fire off more rapidly to heighten alertness.

### Audience Perception

All of the preceding involuntary presenter behavior gathers momentum in a rolling chain action that impacts audience perception.

Rapid eye movement makes you as the presenter appear shifty-eyed or furtive. Sweeping your head back and forth makes you appear harried. Wrapping your body with your hands and arms appears defensive.

The defensiveness immobilizes your features, which makes you look fearful and also makes your posture rigid. Moreover, by pressing your arms against your rib cage, the air supply in your lungs is constricted, which in turn impacts your voice creating low volume, which sounds weak, and narrow inflection, which sounds monotonous.

Your vital organs, also impacted by adrenaline-driven behavior, can affect audience perception. The heart, lungs, and synapses accelerate into time warp, which impacts your cadence so that the tempo of your presentation sounds rushed. Words are crammed into a steady flat line pattern, which results in a data dump that makes it difficult for the audience to separate the ideas you are presenting. And the steady pattern also causes the repetition of unwords, such as "um" or "ah," which makes you sound uncertain.

### The Moment of Truth

All these powerful forces surging around inside your body and your mind — and reverberating throughout your audience — occur at the critical juncture of the Moment of Truth. But that moment is preceded by many other moments that stretch all the way back to another important moment: when the date and time for your mission-critical presentation is set.

As the clock starts ticking down to D-day, you think, "How will I ever find the time to get it done?" Suddenly, you ignite a state of high anticipation that builds in intensity until the Moment of Truth; and then the sight of your live audience kicks your adrena-

line flow even higher.

Diminish your anxiety by taking charge of your content in its preparation. ●

## How to Prepare Your Content

Many presenters and speakers, pressured by the demands of business and daily life, often beg, borrow, or steal a colleague's material or put off their own preparation until the eleventh hour. Your presentation will be much stronger if you spend enough time to organize, develop, and think through your content. During the preparation, clear your mind by eliminating all the superfluous material and identifying the essential.

### The Seven Steps of Story Development

**1. Establish the framework of your presentation.** Define your objective. What is your call to action? What does your audience need to know in order to respond to your call to action?

**2. Brainstorming:** Consider all the possibilities. Distill all your ideas into a few main themes.

**3. Roman Columns:** Find a mnemonic device for your main themes. If you visit Rome today and tour the ruins of the great Forum, you are likely to hear your guide talk about the classic Roman orators who spoke in the Forum for hours on end without any notes. To help them remember what to say, the orators used the stately marble columns of the Forum as prompts. The object of your brainstorming is to develop the Roman columns of your own story; about five or six in all is optimal.

**4. Flow Structure:** Provide a road map for your audience and for you. Give the individual components of your story a meaningful, orderly flow. Two of the simplest and most common flow structures are *chronological* (track your story along a timeline) and *numerical* (Combine all your Roman columns and assign them a number, then count down for your audience as you discuss each column). Think of David Letterman's Top Ten.

**5. Graphics:** Use visual aids, but give your graphics their proper role as support for your narrative.

**6. Ownership:** Take charge of your own presentation. Become a hands-on presenter and supervise your presentation's development at pivotal points.

**7. Verbalization:** Practice the right way. In your rehearsals, speak the actual words of your presentation or speech aloud, just the way you will do it when you are in front of your intended audience. Verbalization crystallizes ideas. ●

## Charisma Not Required

"Good speakers are born, not made," and its extended variation, "That person has natural charisma" are often said about a presenter's delivery skills. The corollary implication of this view is "Change is impossible." You either have it or you do not. For some unearthly reason, many people cling to this preconception, and recite it, almost as a pledge of allegiance. Change is possible for anyone.

### A Case in Point — President Bill Clinton

Bill Clinton, with his usual rhetorical flair and an established reputation as a superstar of the keynote circuit, seemingly did not need any makeovers. But Clinton was not born with this capability. He admits as much in his autobiography, calling his first speech effort while in high school "unremarkable." He was still far less than remarkable in 1988 when, as the governor of Arkansas, he gave a nominating speech for Michael Dukakis at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. Clinton rambled on for so long that the delegates began to chant, "We want Mike!" And when he finally said, "In closing …" the crowd roared their approval. In his autobiography, Clinton confessed, "It was 32 minutes of total disaster." ●

## The Mental Method of Presenting

Control of the mind, or concentration, is essential in every activity in the human experience. Even relaxation requires you to clear your mind of extraneous thoughts and focus on one tranquil image. Think about your sport of choice, be it skiing, tennis, golf, swimming, basketball, or soccer; in each of them, concentration is fundamental. Well, it happens to be the very same mind and the very same body that you use when you stand in front of an audience to present or to make a speech. Use concentration to conquer your adrenaline rush — and your audience.

### What Was Going Through Your Mind?

During coaching sessions at Power Presentations, each participant is asked to stand and deliver a brief presentation to the other participants in the room — their colleagues — while the presentations are recorded on a digital video camera, an intentionally adrenaline-inducing scenario. As each person concludes they are asked, "What were you thinking? What was going through your mind as you were speaking?" All of their responses have a least-common denominator: "How am I doing?" They were thinking, "Uh-oh! They're all looking at

me!" "I'd better do well!" This mind-set serves only to heighten their — and your — fear of public speaking.

Do a sharp U-turn. Change the mind-set. Think instead, "How are you doing?" How is your audience doing? Shift the focus from yourself to your audience. This shift will not only reduce your anxiety, it will also heighten the effectiveness of your presentation or speech. That is the essence of the Mental Method of Presenting.

### Concentration & Conversation

The pivotal factor in this shift is concentration. In sports, concentration ranks higher in importance than conditioning, muscle mass, nutrition, hydration, or stamina. Universally in sports, the mind is used to control the body. It is the very same mind and the very same body that you use in presentations and speeches, so use your mind to control your body when you stand in front of an audience.

The foundation of the Mental Method of Presenting is person-to-person conversation. The challenge when you are in front of an audience is to recreate the conversational mode, the very mode in which most human beings are comfortable. To do this, let's first analyze the key dynamics of conversation.

In any person-to-person exchange, the two parties:

1. Make eye contact.
2. Use their hands and arms to express themselves.
3. Use their voices to punctuate their words.
4. Interact by asking questions and exchanging ideas.

In presentations and speeches, the adrenaline rush causes drastic changes in each of those core elements. But does the interaction really stop? If you see a person in your audience smiling at you in knowing appreciation, that's an interaction. So there is indeed interaction with your audience, but at the Moment of Truth, the interaction suddenly switches from verbal to nonverbal. The challenge then is to focus on that pivotal instant, and make the nonverbal interaction work for you, rather than against you. And the way to do this is to shift from presentation mode to person-to-person conversation.

### Person-to-Person

Whenever you step up to the front of a room to present or speak, regardless of the size of the audience — four, 40, 400, or 4,000 — pick one person. For an instant in time, set a new default: Presume that you and that individual are the only people present and, for that instant, disregard everyone else in the room. Make that person the object of your concentration. Then, as if the two of you were across a table or a desk, strike up a conversation. After a moment in time, move to another person and strike up another conversation; after another moment, another person and another conversation. Continue around the room in a series of person-to-person conversations. ●

## The Four Stages of Learning

If you've ever taken up the study of a physical activity, such as a sport, you've gone through a process known as the Four Stages of Learning. The stages also hold true for the physical aspect of presenting or speaking before a group.

- Stage One: Unaware of what to do, you perform poorly and are unconscious about your incompetence.
- Stage Two: The instructor tells you what you did wrong and you become conscious about your incompetence.
- Stage Three: The instructor tells you what to do and you become conscious about your competence. But the first time you try to follow the instructor's advice it feels unnatural. Your Stage Three, then, is actually self-consciousness about your competence.
- Stage Four: You perform your skill without thinking about it; you are unconscious about your competence.

## Learn to Speak with Your Body Language

Negative behavior, driven by the fear of public speaking and its attendant instinctive reaction, the Fight-or-Flight syndrome, creates negative perceptions in the audience.

How do we change the behavior to create a positive perception? The key is to approach our challenge from the 35,000-foot view. Accept that there is a difference between the way it feels to you as a presenter and the way it looks to your audience.

In the Power Presentations program, participants are asked to stand up in front of the room and gesture with their arms open wide. Because the new behavior feels uncomfortable to them, they inevitably resist. As soon as they are told that their discomfort will diminish over time, they accept and are able to make significant improvements.

Eventually, opening your arms will feel comfortable to you and continue to look comfortable to your audience. You will look poised, confident, and ready to take on the world. Whatever behavior you have been practicing

until this point in your life is behavior you have been reinforcing. To develop new habits you need repetition. Repetition over time will move you from self-conscious to unconscious competence.

### Qualitative vs. Quantitative

Each of the following instructions describes the quality of your engagement with the one person with whom you are having a conversation:

- Your eyes hold until they connect.
- Your features reflect your enthusiasm.
- Your head nods to create involuntary agreement.
- Your balanced posture appears poised.
- Your hand and arm reaching out replicates a handshake.
- Your voice conveys your message with conviction and punctuation.

All of the preceding is summed up by the acronym E.R.A: Eye Connect, Reach out and Animate. This single instruction brings all the elements of your delivery system into play. ERA also happens to be what you do when you have a conversation. So, whenever you step up to the front of the room to present or speak, have a conversation with each person in the audience. As you do, use the Mental Method of Presenting. Read the reaction of each person you address and be prepared to adjust your content. ●

## Control Your Cadence

Cadence in speech is the equivalent of rhythm in music. For our speech metric, we turn to our three presentation dynamics and focus now on the Verbal, or the content. In text, the written form of the Verbal, that metric is a sentence. Spoken language, however, is different. When we speak, we don't form full sentences; we speak in partial sentences or phrases. Therefore, use the phrase as the metric for your cadence. This will give your speech a clear rhythm. When you speak in a clear and coherent cadence, you will make it easy for your audience to follow you. Here's how it all works together in a presentation or speech: When you step up to the front of the room, pick one person in your audience, the one with whom you're going to have a conversation. Then:

- Deliver one phrase to that person.
- Pause.
- Move to another person and deliver one phrase to that person.
- Pause.
- Move to another person and deliver one phrase to that person.
- Pause.
- Continue around the room, delivering one phrase to one person at a time.
- Pause between each phrase and each person.

### Complete the Arc

Stay with one person for the entire logic of the phrase — regardless of its length — and then drop your voice. Stay with that one person for the full trajectory of meaning. The length of each unit is measured logically rather than numerically. Dropping your voice at the end of every phrase is called Complete the Arc.

1. Stay in Eye Connect all the way through the full phrase, "The key to winning presentations is the Mental Method," and then drop your voice at the end.

2. If you do not drop your voice at the end of your phrase, if you let it hang in midair, you convert your statement into a question.

### The First 10 Seconds

The moment you stand up in front of that room the adrenaline will start coursing through your body. It will cause your eyes to sweep the room in search of escape routes. You will not be able to hold back that sweep. You will barely be able to think of what to say. Your eyes will go into motion, searching for the exits.

- Go with it. Let the sweep happen. Let your eyes take in the entire room; but make the sweep work for you rather than against you.
- Accompany your continuous eye movement by speaking to the entire group, and be gracious about it: "Good morning. Welcome. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with all of you." These simple amenities will make your rapid eye movement appear sincere rather than frantic.
- Once you have swept the room with your welcoming remarks, stop. Turn to one new person, set on both of that person's eyes, and get ready to speak the first phrase of your presentation. ●

## Masters of the Game

### The Great Communicator

Ronald Reagan was known as the Great Communicator, and deservedly so. To see what makes him so effective, let's look at his delivery of his final State of the Union message.

On January 25, 1988, in the House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol Building, Ronald Reagan stood poised on the historic dais, looking out at the sea of faces in a joint session of Congress. He spoke *with* — not *at* — the men and women of the Senate and House of Representatives and he did so as if he was having individual conversations. The warm tone of his voice reflected the intimate human-interest words of the text. The vast, packed chamber watched and listened in hushed awe, drawn in by the hypnotic long, looping rhythms of his cadence.

As the speech reached its climax, Reagan displayed all the dynamics once described by a Pulitzer Prize-winning television critic "… his physical presence begins to eclipse his words… when you begin watching more and hearing less… feeling more and thinking less. Look and mood completely take over. That presence on TV: just the sight of him cocking his head with his sincere grin and lopsided hair, is still worth a thousand words and millions of votes."

### Conversation and Empathy

Contrast Ronald Reagan's conversational style to that of Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Billy Graham. These orators used their hands and arms with dramatic gestures that approached choreography. They had rich, resonant, nearly operatic voices. Moreover, Churchill and Kennedy were national leaders who spoke from on high, down to their audiences, and asked them to come up to their lofty level. The latter two, King and Graham, were religious leaders who also spoke from on high, and asked their audiences to go up to a higher authority.

Ronald Reagan, on the other hand, spoke to his audiences at their level. The essence of Reagan's style was his uncanny ability to be completely at one with his audience in every setting, across every dimension. He projected his gentle persona into the living rooms of America. ●

## What Every Speaker Can Learn from Barack Obama

On October 2, 2002, at the very same time that President George W. Bush and Congress were announcing their joint resolution to authorize the invasion of Iraq, Obama, then an Illinois State senator, spoke at an antiwar rally in Federal Plaza in Chicago. *The New Republic* reported an eyewitness account:

> *Jesse Jackson was to be the day's marquee speaker. But it was Obama, wearing a war-is-not-an-option lapel pin, who stole the show. Obama's 926-word speech denounced a "dumb war. A rash war. A war based not on reason but on passion, not on principle but on politics." The electrified crowd knew that a political star was born.*

Barack Obama is, by any standard, a very good, if not a great speaker. But his talent did not spring from birth or from mystical magical powers. Obama uses a set of accessible techniques that you, too, can use.

**1. Verbalization:** Obama practices verbalization. In a *Washington Post* story he was quoted as saying, "My general attitude is practice, practice, practice … Besides campaigning, I have always said that one of the best places for me to learn public speaking was actually teaching — standing in a room full of 30 or 40 kids and keeping them engaged, interested and challenged."

**2. Person-to-person, head nods, read the reaction/adjust your content.** A *New Yorker* magazine profile of Obama gave an example of his campaign for his Illinois Senate seat. When speaking to a group of AFL-CIO building tradesmen who had supported his opponent in the state primary, Obama adjusted his content to include a pro-labor message. The result: "Heads began nodding slowly, jaws set, as he drove home his points."

**3. Think "You."** Obama used that persuasive word strategically throughout his campaign for the Democratic nomination: on his Web site and in his speeches.

**4. Speak with your body language.** *Eye Contact:* Obama's strong eye contact is apparent in every type of speaking situation. *Reach Out*: *Time* magazine reported,"Physically, he is uncommonly restrained: He keeps his hands close to his head, and his shoulders are always tight and squared." *Animation:* In all settings, large and small, Obama is always animated, his face expressive, breaking into a ready smile or expressing the meaning of his words with passionate emphasis.

**5. Control your cadence and complete the arc.** Emulating Reagan, Obama rolls out his words in long arcs, like a ship riding the waves on the high seas, completing each arc by dropping his voice, and punctuating each point forcefully. The pauses between the arcs allow his listeners to absorb the meaning of his words, if not to become captivated by his compelling rhythm. ●

## Graphics Synchronization

Graphics Synchronization is a close cousin of graphics design. Design is what you *show*, or what your audience sees displayed by your PowerPoint slideshow; synchronization is what you *do* (your eyes and body language) and *say* (your voice) when you show what you show. Graphics Synchronization is the integration of your slides with your Visual and Vocal components. All these factors exist in a teeterboard relationship. The classic skill set to adapt is: Tell 'em What You're Gonna *Show* 'em; *Show* 'em; and Tell 'em What You've *Shown* 'em.

There are many tools of the presentation trade: screens, microphones, lecterns, projectors, computers, and remote control devices. All six (tools) must be carefully integrated with each presenter's or speaker's Graphics Synchronization skills.

**Presenter and Screen**

- Present with the screen at your left.
- Present in the screen plane.
- Present at the edge of the screen.
- Avoid the projection beam.

**Presenter and Audience**

- Face front.
- Illuminate for Eye Connect.
- Present at the eye level of the audience.
- Check sightlines. ●

## Graphics and Narrative

Start your discussion of every slide with a Title Plus. (When you look at a new slide, look at it in its entirety. This overview is called Title Plus. The title serves as the headline for the whole slide.) It will make the rest of your narrative flow more smoothly and enable your audience to stay with you. After the Title Plus, however, different types of slides have different narrative follow-throughs.

- Simple slides start with a Title Plus.
- Complex slides also start with a Title Plus, but then you must help your audience understand your slide by guiding them through the image.
- Very complex slides also start with a Title Plus, but then they become the exception to the rule. Certain slides require a level of detail that is irreducible: for example, financial charts, architectural diagrams, or flowcharts. You can build the slide in stages.

Alternatively, you can display all the information on the screen at once and then, rather than try to make Eye Connect, turn to the screen and become a Voice Over narrator.

All the concepts must work together inseparably. Any one element can impact the others, as well as the fate of your entire presentation.

For example, you can develop a persuasive story, illustrate it with dazzling graphics, present it with poise and confidence in a presentation environment with all the trappings of a first-class, modern theater and have your audience listen to you in hushed awe for the full length of your presentation. But if, when you open the floor to questions, you react to the first tough question defensively, evasively, or contentiously, everything that went before will be negated. ●

## The Power Presentations Pyramid

The five essential elements of every presentation can be viewed as tiers of a pyramid beginning with the base of the pyramid — story, graphics, delivery, tools, and Q&A. The foundation of the pyramid, as it is for every presentation, is a solid story that is illustrated by the graphics of the slide show. In turn, these elements are delivered by the presenter's body language and voice, all supported by the tools of the presentation trade. The entire presentation is then subject to the scrutiny of the audience's questions, which the presenter must handle with complete assurance and credibility.

The ultimate conclusion is that a presentation does not exist on the screen alone, in the presenter alone, or in the audience alone. A Power Presentation combines all these dynamic elements into a living entity that changes every time you present.

As Cindy Burgdorf, former CFO of SanDisk Corporation, commented after concluding the last of four intensive days of the Power Presentations program, "This isn't just about presentations is it? This is about communicating in any situation. It all applies everywhere." ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Power Presenter,* you'll also like:

1. ***The How of WOW*** **by Tony Carlson.** Carlson describes experience-tested process for creating and delivering great speeches that get your message heard.
2. ***Sway*** **by Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman.** The Brafman brothers help executives understand the sway of irrational behavior and how to keep from falling prone to it.
3. ***The Speed of Trust*** **by Stephen M.R. Covey.** While many threats have caused low trust in society, Covey shows you how to rise above.

# Summary

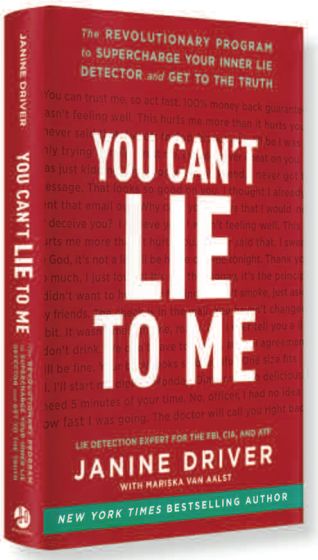
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Career & Self-Development

# You Can't Lie to Me

## The Revolutionary Program to Supercharge Your Inner Lie Detector and Get to the Truth




by Janine Driver

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

No machine built to date has proven more effective than a well-trained human lie detector, says world-renowned body language expert Janine Driver, a former federal law enforcement investigator who has trained agents at the ATF, CIA and FBI. In *You Can't Lie to Me*, she teaches people like you to supercharge your internal BS Barometer quickly and accurately so you can protect yourself from liars and manipulators.

*You Can't Lie to Me* will change the way you look at job applicants, coworkers, dates, salespeople, money managers — anyone from whom you want and deserve the truth — while simultaneously strengthening and deepening your relationships with your siblings, children, friends and lovers. Driver distills nearly two decades of behind-the-scenes knowledge, cutting-edge science and relatable case studies into a simple five-step program.

Whether you are communicating face-to-face or through phone calls, emails, texts, Facebook posts or handwritten notes, you will have the tools and confidence you need to spot deception. More important, you will recognize the truth as you build the caring, authentic connections that make life worth living.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to outsmart disloyal coworkers — and beat them to plum promotions.
- How to protect your children from predators and guard aging loved ones — and their nest eggs — from unscrupulous con artists.
- How to hire honest employees whose résumés and experience you can trust.
- How to say yes to honest partners and avoid lying cheaters.
- How to get your boss's attention with these little tips.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **YOU CAN'T LIE TO ME**

**by Janine Driver**

**The author:** A world-renowned body language expert, Janine Driver is the founder and president of the Body Language Institute. She is a highly sought-after keynote speaker and the go-to expert in lie detection and body language for the media, FBI, CIA, ATF and International Chiefs of Police. She also wrote the *New York Times* best seller *You Say More Than You Think*.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or www.lyintamer.com.

## PART I: POWERING UP YOUR BS BAROMETER

## The Truth About Lying

Sometimes we lie to protect other people's feelings. (Delicious fruitcake, Aunt Suzie!) But sometimes we lie solely to benefit ourselves. And because you're an honest human being, you probably feel guilty about this kind of lying — which is what makes you so bad at it.

But chronic liars don't have that problem. Nor do sociopaths. Nor, it turns out, does your boss.

You've heard the expression "Power corrupts," right? Well, you might be surprised to learn how easy it is for people in powerful positions to lie straight to our faces. Not just those folks who sit in the corner office: Anyone who holds power over you — whether his or her grip is on your paycheck, your mortgage rate or your heart — can lie to you as easily as tell you the truth.

Here's how it works: When people in power lie, they focus on rewards more than on costs — they spend much more energy thinking about what they stand to gain than what they stand to lose. This laser focus on rewards protects them from anxiety and makes it easier for them to lie through their teeth. All the physical and mental benefits that come with power can make unscrupulous people in power almost immune to guilt, allowing them to lie all the time without ever getting caught.

Researchers are finding more and more evidence that power appears to give its owners a physical and cognitive high that completely blunts and disguises any negative effects of lying.

Now on the flip side — for those without power — what motivates them to lie?

Simple. What they have to lose.

Lying, cheating, stealing and manipulating are definitely not the sole purview of the powerful. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and, for many, these are quite desperate times. When your job or your relationship is on the line, lying can sometimes feel like a necessary act of survival.

### Common Myths About Lying

People tell lies for a million personal reasons, but most boil down to one of three essential needs:

1. To protect ourselves.
2. To avoid tension and conflict.
3. To minimize hurt feelings.

Now, if everyone lies, and we all know we all lie, why is it still not easy to detect these lies? Again, there are many individual reasons, but they, too, boil down to three realities:

1. Many of us don't want to know the truth.
2. Many people are really good at covering up lies.
3. Most are looking for the wrong deception signals.

We are able to investigate and identify probable lies with a fairly high degree of accuracy if we know the correct process to follow. But before we learn how to use the BS Barometer, we have to understand what may have kept us from seeing the lies all these years. Here are some of the common myths standing between us and the truth:

- **The Myth: Liars have shifty eyes**.

**The Reality: Not so fast.** Twenty-three out of 24 peer-reviewed studies found that eye behavior is not a

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positive indicator of deception. The biggest thing we must look for in a person's eye movement is a deviation from normal behavior.

• **The Myth: Liars never make eye contact.** (Alternate: Liars make constant eye contact.)

**The Reality: They're both correct!** And of course, they're both wrong. Again, what's important is that we watch patiently for a change in a person's normal behavior.

• **The Myth: Liars scratch their noses.**

**The Reality: Rather than a foolproof sign of deception, this nose itch reaction can reflect a basic human response to acute stress, the fight-or-flight reaction.**

• **The Myth: Liars tend to squirm and jiggle.**

**The Reality: Most likely, nothing's up.** These "pacifier" actions do just that: They pacify and soothe unconscious nervous energy.

• **The Myth: Liars skip words.**

You: "How was your guys' night, Bobby?"

Bobby: "Eh. Just went to dinner. Burger was good. Then to the club. Then back home."

**The Reality: This absence of details — and even pronouns — is nothing alarming if Bobby is typically pretty tight-lipped.** However, if Bobby usually shares enthusiastic stories of his escapades, with no detail left undivulged, then you may have an issue here as he departs from his norm. ●

## How the BS Barometer Process Works

Everyone lies. Everyone. We cannot escape lying, nor would we ever want to, really. Society would cease to function. Marriages would fall apart. Fights would break out in grocery store checkout lines. You get the picture. There are good reasons to lie to people. What we need instead is a way to quickly sort the healthy lies from the toxic ones. Let's start by looking at where lying begins — for all of us.

Lying is always about helping us get what we want. Sometimes what we want is selfish; sometimes it's kind.

Lying is a totally normal part of human development. Learning to lie goes hand in hand with the moment when babies realize they are individuals. We don't grow out of the desire to "get what we want, when we want it" as we get older. Yet despite how useful lying is in this regard, brain imaging has proven that the baseline default for humans is to tell the truth. When we kick this default to the curb, we demand that our brains suppress our natural truth response, which is not comfortable for most people, especially the novice fibber. And the more we tell the truth, the harder it is for us to lie.

When you look closely at it, becoming a good liar is a learned skill — one that, when mastered, has a nearly unlimited potential to be positively reinforced. The more often you attempt to lie and are successful at it, the more easily your brain and your body can adapt to the stress that comes with doing it and the more convincing you are to the outside world. You continue to get what you want, when you want it. And your lying becomes more automatic.

### A Liar Is Caught

A recent meta-analysis report by the FBI found that the most effective approach to lie detection is a combination of tools. These tools are meant to capture "leakage" (unintentional communication) across multiple channels: facial expressions, gestures and body language, voice, verbal style, and verbal statements. Further, the researchers found that it's not simply this combination of signals but also their deviation from the baseline and how they are combined with each other that make them an accurate reflection of deception.

The most critical part of detecting deception is that both parties — both the liar and you — must have something at stake. Begin the process first by asking yourself, "Why do I care if this person is lying? What is at stake?" Imagine the worst-case scenario for getting this encounter wrong. Emotional investment is essential for accurate deception detection; it's the biggest predictor of your success. You must have as much skin in the game as the liar does. *Why* you want to know is just as important as *what* you want to know. ●

## When to Use the BS Barometer

While there are, of course, no surefire signals that someone is lying to you, we can point to a few indicators that might prompt you to dig a bit deeper. Some of these signals are logical — but some may shock you.

**1. You hear answers that seem a bit "off."**

• Your teen tells you that she's sleeping over at Becky's house, and you don't know why, but you feel she's not being straight.

• Your boss shrugs, looks over your head and changes the subject when you ask him about rumored layoffs.

• Your new employee brushes off your questions about the petty cash reconciliation, saying, "I'll get to it — I have the receipts around here somewhere."

Please remember, as a generally trusting person, you are a great gauge of honesty. You just have to give yourself permission to pursue those whiffs of suspicion and to investigate further.

**2. You feel off-balance after talking with the person.** Practiced liars are uniquely able to distort reality and make us feel like the floor is shifting underneath us, that something odd is afoot, but we just can't put our finger on it. This particular type of manipulation is called "gaslighting." A gaslighter spouts false information as if it is fact with such conviction that it makes the victim start to question his or her own recollections of the same incidents. Standard gaslighter lines include, "I never said that — stop making things up," "How come you are always accusing me of horrible things?" and "Wow, what is wrong with you? You are so paranoid." Gaslighters make you question yourself and reality as they slowly drive you crazy.

**3. Your gut tells you there's something to fear.** When you're walking by an alley and you have a bad gut feeling, it may not be because you're a Nervous Nellie — it may be because your subconscious picked up on something odd. Whatever causes that prickle on the back of your neck, trust it — your brain has likely registered something potentially dangerous that your conscious mind just can't "see" yet. Researchers talk about this phenomenon as "thin slices" — our brain's ability to notice details much more quickly than our conscious awareness is capable of doing.

**4. You really, really like someone.** Have you ever felt an instant magical connection with someone who you couldn't wait to hang out with? But when you have the "This person just gets me" feeling right away, be warned. The most effective liars are charismatic and downright charming — but at their root, they are manipulators. Take a cold, hard look at potential motives. Instead of saying, "Wow, that person is so charming!" make it your first instinct to ask, "*Why* is this person trying to charm me?" ●

## PART 2: MASTERING THE BS BAROMETER PROCESS

# Step 1: Gathering Intel

Everyone has a "norm" — a basic pattern of behavior under normal amounts of stress: everything from how often they blink to which way they cross their legs or don't to what words they tend to use with their friends.

For now, getting to know the person's baseline will help you determine three key elements:

1. How does this person normally speak and act?
2. What words does this person use and how does he or she act under stress?
3. When do I see the most dramatic differences between those two instances?

### First Things First: Establish Rapport

When my mentor and dear friend J.J. Newberry, a retired ATF agent and president of the Institute of Analytic Interviewing, once interviewed a possible suspect in a bombing case, even he was surprised at how smoothly he was able to get a confession. When J.J. asked the man, "Joe, what would you say if I told you your fingerprints were on the bomb?" Joe responded, "J.J., you wouldn't, because I wore gloves."

In less than an hour J.J. was able to build up enough comfort, and ultimately trust, with this suspect to get to the truth. How? Rapport. Rapport helps you establish a person's comfortable, relaxed baseline so that you can spot lies later on. Here are a few ways to establish the rapport that's essential for gathering an accurate baseline:

- **Set your intention and your body language will follow suit.** More than anything, you want your body language to be open and welcoming. Aim for steady (but not oppressive) eye contact.
- **Lead with empathy.** To detect deception, you must learn to think like the other person. You need to see how that person views you from his or her perspective — what are the things you want to hear?
- **Listen to their stories.** Hostage negotiators know that the first thing you do in a high-stress situation is to let the person tell his or her story. The shooter, liar or other bad person needs to regain his or her equilibrium for you to get to the truth.
- **Mirror their movements — but very subtly.** You can mirror someone's posture, but be extremely cautious — obvious mirroring can turn the other person off, and the other person might believe that you are not an honest person and clam up right away.
- **Allow transparency to create an atmosphere of trust.** "Confess" to something that might be slightly embarrassing and see what happens. By appearing more human, you're simultaneously less threatening, which immediately lowers others' guard around you. The first impression you give determines how much another person will trust you.
- **Always err on the side of their relaxation.** Your mantra for obtaining a baseline is "How do I lower the stress in this situation?" Because how you confront any situation can change the outcome.

### Ask Open-Ended Questions

The real secret behind detecting deception is asking questions. But you're not out to win the Pulitzer in this interview — you just want to get an accurate read on the person. For right now, your primary objective is to get him or her talking.

Believe it or not, you can baseline people with just one or two very simple open-ended questions. The trick is to keep it light. Bring yourself into the conversation in a way that disarms the subject and takes the focus off of him or her.

For example, "I'm so excited to get home this afternoon — I'm buying my 5-year-old his first bike. Man, that brings back memories, huh? Tell me about the first bike you had as a kid."

The key to crafting these sentences is to share a bit about yourself, so that you can then pose an open-ended question about personal information the other person has no reason to fabricate.

### Follow the Baseline Checklist

Body language is where I typically start with my baseline. This checklist works equally well whether encountering strangers for the first time — car salesmen, other parents on the playground, new doctors — or people you've known forever but whom you've just started to suspect of lying. As you go through this list, keep in mind two baseline rules to live by: Keep your communication simple, and sometimes what's *not* there is the most important clue.

• **Is he a space invader?** First you'll determine how "big" the person is. How much space does this person take up, both while he is stationary and while he is moving? Is he becoming as large or as small as he possibly can be? We are looking for the baseline, so we'll notice when we see a change. He might still be making a hand gesture, but now all of a sudden instead of being up at shoulder height his gestures are really low. Why? What's going on here?

• **What is his face factor?** What's his chin positioning? Does he tend to have his chin pulled in, level headed, or is his chin up? Is her head generally straight or is it tilted? Tilted right or left? **Facial touches.** Does he typically touch his face? How often is he touching his face? **What is his voice saying?** Where does your target's baseline fit into this spectrum? Tonal differences: soft, medium or loud talker. Pitch differences: low, medium or high pitch. Speed differences: slow, medium or fast. **What are his words saying?** Statement analysis is an incredibly useful tool — once you start to notice the little language idiosyncrasies, you'll be amazed at how much information you'll get from them. Is she using pronouns? Dropping pronouns has definitely been tied to deception. Some people never use pronouns; some use them without fault. You have to know which is normal for her. Is she using verbal fillers? Once the lies start flowing, the ums, ahs, ers are likely to follow. Is she using absolutes? "I always do that," "I never do that." Sounds like overselling but only if it's not her baseline. For now, absorb what you can about the person's norm. ●

## Step 2: The Wiretap

No matter whether you are turning on your BS Barometer at a distance or in person, you'll be able to hear the verbal indicators of deception in the words people choose and in the changes in their speech rates, volume and pitch that naturally occur in most deceptive statements.

Vocal tone is a powerful indicator of emotion. Research has shown that a person's vocal tone will waiver from baseline in up to 95 percent of all deceptive statements — it's one of the most reliable indicators of deception. Whether it goes up or down depends on the emotions involved.

Vocal tone rises when we're angry or excited. If your friend denies that she has the hots for your husband, listen for her tone of voice when she talks with him. An article in the *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* found that the pitch of women's voices will shoot up when they are speaking to a man they find attractive.

Vocal tone lowers with sadness and shame. We saw this with Britney Spears when she was being interviewed about divorce rumors, insisting everything was great in her marriage to Kevin Federline — you couldn't even hear the words coming out of her mouth.

### Taking Care of Business: Teeter-Tottering, Convincing-Not-Conveying and Backsliding

Get this mental picture in your mind: Liars are all tightrope walkers. They want to get from where they are now, talking to you, all the way across the canyon of your skepticism and doubt, to the other side — freedom, the moment at which you've been convinced of their lie. Their task is to remain upright and make steady progress through the lie and not fall off the rope before they get to their destination. And their brains are carrying an awful lot of weight on this journey:

• The truth: the facts about what really happened.

- The "facts" in their own lie: the whole story they're trying to convince you of.
- What they've already told you in every conversation up until now.
- The new information they may not yet know — but once they learn, they will have to instantly assimilate without slipping up.
- Your reaction to their tale — positive or negative.
- Their own visible and audible reactions to the stress of telling the lie.

**Teeter-Tottering.** A teeter-totterer will leak inconsistencies in many of her statements or will try to make everything seem like "sunshine and roses." Her language is garbled and she may even blurt out clues midsentence — all signs of an off-balance, klutzy liar. As long as it's a deviation from her baseline, it's cause for a closer listen. Remember, our default is to always tell the truth. Our brain doesn't want us to lie, so we teeter-totter and say things in a weird way.

**Convincing-Not-Conveying.** Honest people convey information. Liars, on the other hand, try to convince us that their story is the truth. While a truthful person expects that you believe him or her, a liar will fight to be believed. Some phrases that liars love are:

- What kind of a person do you think I am?
- I'd have to be stupid to do something like that.
- I knew this was going to happen to me.
- You think I'm lying to you?

**Backsliding.** Backsliders' primary mission is to get away from being found out. The backslider is a master of obscurity and camouflage, usually using ways to distract you or distance himself or herself from the lie. Whether with sneaky statements or overwhelming politeness and self-deprecation, the backslider would love nothing more than for you to forget the entire incident ever happened. ●

## Step 3: The Stakeout

Now it's time to focus on the stakeout and learn how to decode the facial signs that are likely indicators of deceptive hot spots. Although facial findings won't give you all the information you're looking for — for example, whether or not the person is actually lying — spotting them gives you potential areas to later probe.

Before you get started looking for nonverbal hot spots, ask yourself if the person you're about to do the stakeout on is in one of the following wildcard categories. A few factors that might make suspects' nonverbal behavior an untrustworthy source of information are:

- **Their intelligence.** The smarter the suspect, the more likely his or her body language "makes sense" and mirrors his or her thinking. But when people are not the sharpest tools in the shed, their body language might reflect confusion or misinterpretation of the questions instead of anxiety about lying.
- **Their emotions.** When people are unstable, so are their body language signals. You can never know where the emotions are coming from or what they relate to.
- **Their age.** Kids and teens may not have matured enough to appreciate the consequences of their actions — so they may not feel fear even when they should!
- **Their culture.** Some cultures consider the direct eye contact favored by Americans to be rude — so a person's averted eyes would be a sign of respect rather than disrespect or guilt.
- **Their partying status.** Drinking and taking drugs dramatically alter behavior. Don't look at a drunk person and think you can gauge his real baseline — he's far from it.

Above all, with this process you have to trust your eyes. Your BS Barometer is helping your brain absorb and process more than you can ever consciously know.

### The Teeter-Tottering Face

We spend our entire lives gathering information from other people's faces, so we don't have to work that hard to get the basics down. The special motor neurons in our brains, called "mirror neurons," react immediately to subtle signs of true emotion on others' faces — a flash of a genuine smile or a tiny hint of sorrow can trigger that same emotion within us.

All humans share seven universal emotions: happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise, anger and contempt. These can be seen in microexpressions that are universally hardwired into us. These automatic expressions are the same whether you are male or female, black or white, young or old. Everyone who is surprised makes the same expressions.

These microexpressions may leak out for only one-fifteenth of a second. While these micromovements can be a challenge to spot, learning to see these fleeting emotions is incredibly useful because each of these emotions registers with very distinct patterns that are almost impossible to fake. Consciously faking emotional response patterns (which can involve moving any of the more than 40 intricate muscles in our face) is hard to do,

hard to manipulate, hard to disguise — for everyone. We still can't know for sure what sparks the wobbly leakage on the tightrope of those emotions (she says she's sad, but we spot happiness; he tells us he's happy, but we decode disgust and surprise). But if we see the microexpression, the person is *definitely* feeling that emotion, which, for a liar, makes these moments of emotional leakage the face's version of teeter-tottering.

The big gun for convincers is consciously faking emotions. They try very hard to convince you just how honest they are. But often they miss very key, subtle differences in the movement of the forehead, eyes, cheeks and eyebrows. So a great way to bust a liar is to really focus on some key differences between genuine and fake emotions.

Also, like changing the channel on the TV, the speed of a switch in emotions is, in itself, a telling sign. If someone can go from sad to happy or from fear to anger to happiness in the time it takes to switch the station, that's the big red flag of the convincer.

## Step 4: The Full Body Surveillance

As a channel of communication, some experts say that full body surveillance contains more than 50 percent of the true message behind our words.

Bearing in mind that people tend to mirror one another, it's in your best interest to present honest, open body language. Remember, we're not looking for the lie; we're looking for the truth. Anything you can do to help other people be honest will help you too. Honest people tend to:

- Point their toes and body toward you.
- Lean forward with casual interest.
- Be somewhat casual and at ease but not artificially, so they shift their body posture fluently, without any nervous tics.
- Keep their throat, neck dimple, belly button and "naughty bits" all open and pointed toward you.
- Use a wide, solid, powerful stand ("short fat candle") versus a tight, wobbly stance ("tall skinny candle").
- Uncross their arms and keep their hands down at their sides or on their chairs.

The biggest teeter-tottering red flag you might see during your full body surveillance will be obvious discomfort or unconscious incongruence of a liar's gestures with what's coming out of his or her mouth.

Shoulder shrugs indicate uncertainty, so when a shrug shows up with a definitive statement, it could indicate deception. The often less noticeable hand shrug is very similar to the shoulder shrug. The palms typically stay facing down on the lap or table, and all of a sudden, they face up. The meaning is the same as a shoulder shrug: ambiguity and uncertainty.

## Step 5: The Interrogation

The real secret of detecting deception is to know that you have to ask lots of questions and to continue doing so until you get what you need. Start with an easy one. Ask an innocent question that you already know the answer to or one that you know won't arouse any suspicion: "What are you doing this weekend?" And move slowly up to the more heavy-duty ones: "Why is there a tan line on your ring finger — did you recently get divorced?"

Ask open-ended questions. An interrogation is not a true/false test — it's more like an essay. Yes-or-no questions are typically dead ends. For now, get the basics down: who, what, when, where, why, how. Then, keep going just for sheer quantity:

- What is it about …?
- You said … Tell me more.
- What do you mean?
- Tell me what happened …

The more questions you ask — 20, 30, 40 — the more information you gather, the wiser you become. And as you ask, keep your eyes open.

This is where the baseline comes in. You're looking for those deviations that come when people seem slightly uncomfortable. Anytime anyone deviates from that nonverbal baseline, say to them something like, "Maybe I'm wrong here, but it seems like there's more to the story" or "Maybe I'm wrong here, but you seem a little anxious about your meeting later." And then you WAIT. Silence is interrogation gold. People don't like awkward silences, so they will do almost anything to fill them up. A truthful person believes you will believe him or her, but a liar will immediately think the worst.

# PART 3: YOUR BS BAROMETER IN THE BIG PICTURE

## Putting It All Together

In general, people with power experience fewer restrictions while simultaneously having greater access to money, information and connections. People with less power have the opposite — more rules to govern their behavior, fewer resources to draw from.

Breaking the rules can signal to others that you have power. Research has shown that powerful people are more likely to:

- Take more cookies from a common plate.
- Eat with their mouth open and spread crumbs.
- Interrupt conversations.
- Be "close talkers."
- Stereotype.
- Exhibit more aggression toward other people (and have it tolerated).

You don't have to be a boor just to prove that you have power. The trick with interrogation is to display supportive, appropriate power. Your task is to walk the fine line between cheerful supplicant and angry overlord — you want your employee (or any person from whom you want the truth) to feel that you have the upper hand but not so much power that he or she is unwilling to work with you.

### Getting Back to Trust

Sometimes we may have distrusted someone and called him or her out in a lie — and found out we were dead wrong. In those situations, it will take a while to repair the relationship — but the good news is, it can be done. Research shows a simple apology can restore trust — so that's always worth a try. But one study found that just a short series of cooperative acts can restore mutually cooperative behavior.

The important thing to remember is, when you are doing this to intentionally repair your relationship, you must let the other person take top billing. Allow your husband to pick the seats at the game, what to plant in the garden, or even where to place the bike rack in the garage — and then agree with him. If it's your colleague, go out of your way to praise his or her ideas both when you work as a pair and when you present the project to others. ●

## The Self-Exam

Do you find that you frequently encounter deception by almost everyone in your life? Whether there is one liar or many in your life right now, it might be time to take a peek in the mirror. What mistakes are you making in your life that are stopping you from spotting that friendly phony? Why are cheating partners, lying bosses and "frenemies" even in your world?

Let's turn the BS Barometer around and take a good long look at your degree of honesty with yourself. Do you always give people second and third chances and expect a different result — and then blame *them* when they betray you again? Have you been turning a blind eye to suspicious behavior of your longtime trusted advisor and friend? Or are you so busy that you have given someone too much power over the most important areas of your life — and you just assume that he or she has your back?

Many people who are looking to tune up their ability to detect deception and improve their communication skills skip the most important step: setting a positive and authentic intent, such as success, love or truth. Instead they often set a negative one, such as "The next guy better not be a cheater!" or "I hope I don't appear nervous" or "I hope people don't think I'm a liar!" When people focus on what they *don't* want to happen, it's as if their ability to honestly communicate and genuinely connect with other people just deflates.

As we do the self-exam, we need to take a good hard look at all the deceptive lenses we use to view the world and how they can block us from creating genuine, authentic relationships with ourselves and others.

Every aspect of communication begins with intention. You can choose whether that intention is positive or negative. Negative intentions break down relationships, opportunities and self-esteem. Positive intentions create possibilities, growth, confidence and love.

### Epilogue

I hope that by tuning up your BS Barometer you're creating the courage and the confidence to do what's right and get to the truth of the matter faster, and more directly. Because, ultimately, I want you to fight not only for yourself — but also for the other people who might need you even more: your student, who needs you to confront him about drugs; your mother, who needs you to watch out for a dishonest caregiver; your young son or daughter, who needs you to stay vigilant about the predators in your midst.

I want you to have open, trusting relationships; to enjoy genuine connections with people who deserve your respect and your love; and approach the world with confidence and without fear. ●

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *You Can't Lie to Me*, you'll also like:

1. ***Speaking as a Leader* by Judith Humphrey.** Casual elevator conversations, phone calls or one of many brief interactions in work life — Humphrey shows you how to make the most of your daily communications.
2. ***Win* by Dr. Frank I. Luntz.** Luntz examines how top performers win in all areas of human endeavor by utilizing superb communication skills.
3. ***Well Said!* by Darlene Price.** Price presents field-tested techniques, guidelines and checklists to help you present yourself and your message with clarity, credibility and confidence.

· Book 181 of 269 ·

# Tackle What's Next

Eric Wood

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# Tackle What's Next

## Own Your Story, Stack Wins, and Achieve Your Goals in Business and Life




*by* **Eric Wood**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Now is the perfect time to get prepared for what's next. If you're going through a rough transition in life right now, this could be the perfect packaged discomfort to prod you to make a shift in your life to make things better. If you're feeling pretty on top of your game and cruising through life right now, maybe now is the time to go to the next places you only imagined. No matter how comfortable or uncomfortable you are, or what the circumstances of your life might be, no matter where you are in the world or what you have done or not done, now is the perfect time to get prepared.

You're right where you need to be right now, even though it may not make sense. The truth is, everyone can prepare to win in any endeavor, but not everyone does. Eric Wood, accomplished podcaster and former NFL player, wrote ***Tackle What's Next: Own Your Story, Stack Wins, and Achieve Your Goals in Business and Life*** to give you some proven tools that will help you prepare for the next, best chapter of your life. Your day is today, and by following the principles of this book, your what's next will be your best yet.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Four questions to examine your gifts.
- How to create a vision for your future.
- How to set a routine for maximum success.
- The importance of preparation.

## Examine Your Gifts

You're here on earth with a full slate of natural gifts that you've used all your life, gifts that will continue to serve you as you get to the next step. If you're having a hard time imagining what those gifts are, it might be because you use them instinctively without thinking about them.

When you find yourself down, you may have trouble seeing your attributes and resources. You have more tools in your utility belt than you give yourself credit for. To find out what you're going to do next, you need to begin by examining your gifts. You can do this by answering four questions.

**Question 1: What Are You Good at Naturally?**

Don't overthink this. These are things you seem born to do or were born with by luck.

**Question 2: What Have You Learned to Do Well?**

Sometimes we learn to be very good at something that started as a natural knack or talent and then we honed it into something special.

**Question 3: What Do People Who Love You Say Your Gifts Are?**

Sometimes your gifts are obvious to everyone but yourself. The people who love you and know you the best are keenly aware of your qualities and attributes.

**Question 4: What Are You Resisting?**

When we resist certain things, it can be a clue where our head is, and that can tell us where we need to go. Sometimes what we resist is a gift we have to offer the world.

Using your gifts to serve others and affect their lives will lift you up and make you more successful as well. One of the biggest challenges in life is to see beyond the adversity that life throws at us from nearly the moment we start breathing. Adversity is a gift in and of itself that can reveal more of your other gifts.

Having a greater sense of perspective and learning how to interpret and use adversity in a positive way will fundamentally improve your quality of life. Success is nearly impossible without this skill.

## Create a Vision for Your Future

As part of professional NFL training, the Bills brought in a performance coach who introduced specific visualization exercises that demonstrated the power of visualization. If you can create a vision and break it down into smaller steps, really seeing it in the mind's eye, there is a better chance of actualizing it on the field or in life. Many celebrities who rise to the top of their fields in sports, entertainment, and the arts all say essentially the same thing: visualization works.

Visualization is an incredible thing. If you practice visualizing an action, you get almost the same benefits as if you are actually doing it. It's important to adopt a greater perspective before you start to visualize. If your thoughts are too negative, they will tax your mind and body as if they had physically happened. Are you practicing failing and fear over and over again in your mind? Or are you practicing the best outcomes?

Your thoughts become your actions, and your actions become your habits, and your habits create your future. So, you have to be incredibly careful with your thoughts. You can shift your whole reality just based on the thoughts that you're intentionally creating. Our brains are incredible gifts with power that we are only beginning to understand.

There are so many benefits to visualization. It is incredible how much more calm and in control you feel when you find yourself in situations you have already visualized in advance. You can make better and more effective decisions about what to do and not get caught like a deer in the headlights. Your future is bigger than your past! If you're not actively creating a future, you may not like where your future takes you.

## Examine Your Core Values

Ever had that uneasy feeling that you are totally off course? You know you're headed in the wrong direction, and maybe you're not even sure how you know that. But you feel it deep in your gut, and that uncomfortable feeling tells you something needs to change.

Compare that to the opposite feeling, when everything seems right. You feel like you have the wind at your back and you're sailing in the right direction. You may have challenges that come up. However, you feel you are entirely equipped to handle them. The difference between these two vastly different feelings goes to the very essence of your own *core values* and whether you live your life aligned with them.

Having a strong, unshakeable sense of your core values dramatically affects how you deal with life's pivot points, at

The things you do at the beginning of the day can help you seize control of your life and get intentional about the future.

which you must change direction completely. You will find yourself more resilient and able to withstand the impact of an unexpected emergency or disaster. If you do get knocked off course, it won't be for long because you have such a fundamental sense of yourself.

You also develop higher confidence in yourself. People who know their core values know precisely how to optimize their life to live within them. When they live aligned with their core values, they tend to be more successful, too. It's almost impossible not to be.

When you don't have a firm grasp on your core values, you're in for a tough time. You may find yourself hanging out with people you don't like, doing things you don't really want to do, and feeling a ton of anxiety about it. You may feel stuck, or in a downturn, or angry or disgusted with yourself. You probably won't be performing anywhere near your best at any given task or vocation. The price of not being true to who you really are is outright misery.

The good news in this situation is that you can always shift course. You can adopt a new set of core values that more accurately reflect who you want to be, or you can finally start following the excellent set of core values that may have been there all along. It's never too late to turn around.

When we find ourselves in a spot where we don't feel right, one of the first places to look is whether or not we are aligned with our core values. When you already have a reinforced and clear sense of your core values, it makes being resilient and strong at difficult points so much easier. It doesn't stop the storms in life from coming; you're just better prepared to weather the storm.

## Get into a Routine that Sets You Up for Success

You are creating your future by the things you do every day. Your morning routine is where the rubber hits the road. If you have a particular vision about what you want from life, how are you putting that into practice today and every day? The truth is you already have a morning routine. Most of the time, you do the same things every morning and then later into the day. So the question then becomes–is your routine intentional? Is it supporting your future? Or is your routine just something that you do every day without really thinking about it?

The things you do at the beginning of the day can help you seize control of your life and get intentional about the future. Even the seemingly most minor things can make the most significant difference over time. Little things, like making your bed, are all the actions and micro-actions that add up to the totality of your day. Those days turn into weeks and those weeks into months and years.

The little things have a cumulative effect over time, adding up to an enormous benefit. If every little thing you do matters…what are you doing? That may be one of the most critical questions of your life.

Most people are not intentional about their routine. Although that is not a recipe for disaster, not being intentional won't move you forward. Chances are if you stick with a typical, unintentional routine, whatever you are experiencing now, you're just going to get more of the same.

Some people are happy staying where they are and not advancing. But if you want to break out of that, and help fulfill the future you've set for yourself, then you've got to switch it up and get intentional. It all starts with what you do in the morning, which leads you into the rest of the day.

Many people were thrust into an unfamiliar routine during the pandemic–they had either too little or too much time on their hands. Neither is good for you. And I think that's a struggle for many people, especially when the situation forces them to be home when they have been used to going to the office or a job where everything is structured. You supposedly have all this free time, but when are you able to be productive?

In studying highly effective people's morning routines, a set of common features came to the surface.

- Gratitude practice: Some people write down the things

they are grateful for, speak them aloud, or record them on a device. The point is to actively recognize the things you are grateful for in your life.

- Morning reading: This could be a biblical verse, self-development material, or some kind of nonfiction where you are learning something new. It's a way of feeding the mind with positive content to give a significant boost.
- Extended moment of silence of some kind: Meditation is a common choice in this area but it could also be breathing exercises or simple silent reflection. It could be silent prayer or simply time away from all screens and devices. It is incredibly healthy to quiet the mind and free yourself from toxic distractions.
- Some kind of exercise: Some people start with a swim or run, and others might prefer lifting, yoga, or tai-chi. Anything that gets your blood pumping and helps you get in touch with your body is excellent and has tremendous positive long-term impact.

The combination of gratitude, morning reading, working out, and silent reflection helps people take control of their morning and start the day on their terms. They don't start in a frantic state, reacting to all stimuli thrown at them as soon as they open their eyes. They don't let their phones or other devices bully them around and force them into a place of fear or anxiety. Instead, they feed their minds and souls calmly and intentionally, helping to prepare themselves for the day ahead.

## Starting Your Day with Wins and Building Momentum

Ever had one of those days when you feel unstoppable–a day you seem to rack up win after win after win, and nothing is slowing you down? Each success seems to fuel the next one, and before you know it, you have an unrestrainable momentum that takes on a life all its own.

In football, we strive for that kind of momentum, and we recognize that feeling on the field when it happens. It's not any single moment–it's when one team is successful in several events in a row, which leads the crowd and team to believe that more winning events are about to occur.

Just like in football, our life momentum comes from a series of events stacked up on top of each other over time. When you start racking up wins through your consistent morning routine, you inevitably build positive momentum in your life. That routine you devised set you up for success and is a promise you keep to yourself.

The momentum from all those actions will build in your life. Practiced long enough, you'll hit the "hockey stick effect"–a term often used in finance to record results over a long period. They call it a hockey stick because, on a graph, it looks flat for a long time, and then results rise dramatically in a very short time, creating the shape of a hockey stick. Little micro-actions build up cumulatively over time until you break out with incredible results. Some success stories reflect the hockey stick effect in a short time, and others are years in the making.

However, there is a vital ingredient to maximize the potential of each win, no matter how big or small. You must record and recognize the win so that you can add it into your collective energy and the greater momentum of your life. To do that, you have to start recognizing wins in your day-to-day life.

A win is an accomplishment that makes you feel better about yourself or makes you progress toward a stated goal, even if just a little bit. You are producing wins every day, and you might not even know it if you don't notice what's happening. For example, did you pay the bills? Go to work? Get some exercise? All wins!

You are losing out on enormous potential if you don't stop and measure your wins as progress in the overall goals of your life. Moreover, you're robbing yourself of momentum and joy that can get you there faster and be exciting and fun along the way.

## Fill Your Mind with What You Want to Show Up in Your Life

"What are you putting into your mind?" That question may be the most significant thing you ever ask yourself. People who deliberately choose what they think about and fill their minds with positive thoughts that spark growth will be successful in all the buckets of life. Conversely, someone who lives their life on autopilot and fills their mind with whatever captures their attention is bound to have mediocre results. Just as you are what you eat, you also become what you think.

How? It all sources from the mind. Your thoughts become your behavior, your behavior becomes your actions, and your actions become your future. It's as simple as that. Of course, there's always a catch. To harness the power of

Filling your mind with negative self-talk will cause negative things to show up in your life.

your mind, you have to become disciplined and know how to steer it. And the entire world is full of obstacles that can easily knock you off course.

One of the biggest obstacles is your own mind's incredible processing power and capacity for information. You are capable of thousands of thoughts every day. There is an incredible amount of noise created by our own minds that could be dangerous to our long-term future. If left undirected and open to any influence that comes along, distraction becomes inevitable.

What would it look like if most of those thoughts were constructive, conscious, and sending you in a positive direction? To do that, we have to consciously place a focused thought that we control and purposely curtail thoughts that send us astray. It is the idea of letting your intentions guide you throughout the day.

One of the challenges all of us face are negative thoughts sourced from inside our minds. Some of the most common ones are: I'm not good enough, I'm a failure, I can't do anything right, I'm weak, dumb, or inept. There's another word for all this negative self-talk–self-limiting beliefs. Because that is all they are: beliefs, not facts, even though they may seem like facts.

They only seem real and they don't serve you–you can just as easily replace them with more productive beliefs. And just like your self-limiting beliefs, positive beliefs about yourself increase potency with repetition. If you tell yourself "I'm a success" often enough, you will find a way to construct that future instead.

Filling your mind with negative self-talk will cause negative things to show up in your life. The good news is the reverse is also true. Practicing positive self-talk can turn things around.

## Examine the People You are Spending the Most Time With

Just as you have to be intentional with what you are thinking, you also must be mindful of the people you are spending the most time with. All the time you spend with them makes an impact. Over time, you become more and more like the people you spend the most time with. It's inevitable.

So then the questions become, "How are you being guided and influenced by the people with whom you spend the most time?" Are they making you better? The same? Or worse?" Most people would rather keep things the same than risk uncomfortable change. However, when we take that risk and consciously curate the people who can add the most value to our lives, we enter into a community that uplifts each other and supports us to succeed in ways we may not have thought possible.

There is indisputable value in having close friends in our lives or having regular social interaction. It's part of what it means to be human. However, with that engagement comes influence. You are influencing your circle of friends, and they are influencing you. Some researchers call this a network and others compare it to an ecosystem. The gist is that you are all influencing each other inside the circle for better or worse. And that influence can have surprising impacts on your psychology.

Strong-willed friends might rub off on you and help you conquer habits that you wish to replace. This is part of the idea of having an accountability partner, someone to help you stick to your goals and manage your self control.

Seeking out people with strengths in areas where you have weaknesses is a great way to enrich your team of friends. In short, they help round you out. Together, a circle of friends with different strengths and backgrounds can be an ideal group to help each other earn and maintain success in all the buckets of their life.

Everyone has access to genuine and helpful groups of people who can fill in the gaps and give you much needed perspective. You can create groups or join existing groups of people to enhance your learning at a high level. No matter what your goals, you can find a group correlated to those goals, whether it's through social media or any other community resource. You don't have to limit yourself by your recent experience–connecting

with others, asking advice, and getting involved with something greater than yourself can help you learn and upgrade yourself at an exponential level.

## Control What You Can Control

The best of the best prepare their mind and body, and they do it every day. Preparation processes can be seemingly mundane process goals that make up a more significant overall product goal. For example, preparing your clothes the night before, planning meals and prepping supplements for the week, and preparing for the day with your morning routine are all ways to make you as prepared as possible. Control the elements that you can control every day.

The hardest part about preparing is that it takes intentionality and willingness to change. And let's admit it, change is hard for a lot of people. You win success on a daily basis by what you do every day. Once you can create the proper habits that prepare you every day for success, you can evolve to where it doesn't take the same kind of willpower each day to prepare. It becomes second nature.

The work-life balance isn't easy in football, with massive amounts of preparation leading to only a few moments of high-stakes game play per game. Those moments are hard-won. There are only minutes of game play, but those minutes take hundreds of hours of practice. And the preparation is what makes those minutes the best they can be. It's no different from how you prepare for other things in your life–hundreds of hours of preparation for high-performance moments that make a difference.

Here's the hard truth, too. We all have every morning and every day to prepare, either intentionally or unintentionally. If you're unintentional and undisciplined about how you prepare, or if you're not preparing at all, then you're going to have an unintended and unprepared future. Trust me–you don't want that. Successful people get intentional about what they're preparing, get disciplined about it, and put in the hard work. There is simply no substitute for solid preparation.

When you are the most prepared, the most practiced at whatever you are doing, you don't have to think about techniques so much. Instead, your mind and body simply know what to do. It's muscle memory. As a result, you develop a level of consistency that is only possible with diligent experience, drilling, and discipline. When that happens, you can focus on the tasks at hand without consciously worrying about your technique and skill. Essentially, you can perform at an optimal level.

When you're backed in a corner in life, quit thinking and take action. Think about making a slight improvement first. Then, think about your next step and how you can better prepare for the one after that. And so on. Leave no stone unturned as far as preparation goes. When God puts those opportunities in your life, you want to be completely prepared to run with them.



Eric Wood was a first-round NFL draft pick by the Buffalo Bills in 2009. He played nine seasons with the Bills, which included a Pro Bowl and two Walter Payton Man of the Year nominations. In 2018, he suffered a career-ending neck injury that has led him on a journey to find out what's next for him. Eric is currently the radio analyst for the Buffalo Bills and the host of the podcast "What's Next with Eric Wood," where he interviews high achievers in a variety of fields. Eric is a keynote speaker, author, and performance coach who is driven by a passion to help others achieve the best version of themselves.

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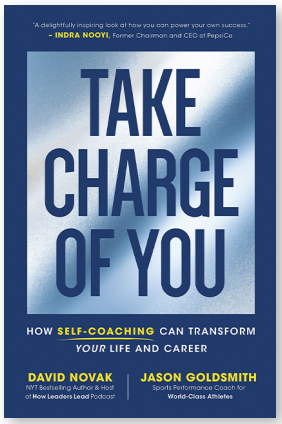
# Take Charge of You

David Novak, Jason Goldsmith

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# Take Charge of You

## How Self-Coaching Can Change Your Life and Your Career




*by* **David Novak and Jason Goldsmith**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone wants to find success in their life and career. The question is how to get there. Many coaches won't tell you that you can actually *coach yourself* to success. The importance of good coaching has been studied and written about for some time now. It can help people see themselves and their experiences more clearly, respond to situations more effectively, expand their knowledge and capabilities, and help them define what they need to do and stay on track. Good coaching can help them reach more of their potential and become the best they can be. Yet, despite all the known benefits, good coaching doesn't seem to be practiced all that much.

The need is clear. There are a lot of people out there that don't like their jobs, are launching their own businesses, opting for freelance and gig work more often, and working remotely. All of this means many are without a manager or mentor on hand to act as their coach. In ***Take Charge of You: How Self-Coaching Can Transform Your Life and Career***, David Novak and Jason Goldsmith show you how to take the responsibility for coaching into your own hands and give yourself what you need to succeed, grow, and lead a more fulfilling life. It's time to *take charge of you* and learn how to self-coach.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- 4 key questions to ask yourself to start a self-coaching conversation.
- How to develop a self-coaching mindset.
- Transformational insights for your self-coaching plan.
- 3 strategies to keep you committed to your Single Biggest Thing.

## The Self-Coaching Conversation

### Ask Yourself Some Key Questions

If you are interested in this topic, it probably means that you are searching for something. Perhaps you are not fully satisfied with how things are going in your career or your life. Maybe there's a goal you'd like to reach or an issue you'd like to resolve, but you're not quite sure how to get there. Or maybe you're pretty happy but want to continually up your game.

It's situations like these where a good coach can really come in handy–to help you gain perspective, develop a plan, work through the inevitable hurdles, and provide inspiration and motivation to see things through. So that the growth and change you're looking for can become more than just a hope or desire. So that it can take shape and become reality.

If you're going to coach yourself through all that, where do you start? Coaching starts with a conversation. You have to get to know the person you're coaching–about who they are, what they want, what they believe is getting in their way.

With that in mind, you will be guided through a kind of conversation with yourself so we can begin to do two important things that will be key to your self-coaching journey:

1. Gain a better understanding of how best to coach the unique individual that is you.
2. Figure out what we will be coaching toward.

### Key Question #1: What's Getting in the Way of Your Joy?

Many of us are in the habit of ignoring or pushing past our feelings, especially when they are unhappy ones like misery, or even feeling stuck or uninspired. But we can also look at feelings as simply a source of information about ourselves.

They can help us gain insight into what's going wrong or what's going right in our lives, whether we're on the right track or headed in the wrong direction. With that in mind, we will start with the particular feeling of *joy*.

Why start with joy?

It may sound like an impractical or unsubstantial word, but think about the difference between doing something *because you have to* and doing something *because you want to*.

Those *have-tos* are the things we often complain about, rush through, get to only after a lot of procrastination, or avoid altogether when possible. The *want tos* are the things we willingly make time for, can't wait to do, and put our best effort towards because we enjoy them so much.

In terms of an organizing principle for continual growth and development, pursuing joy will lead you to be more successful.

You need to find your Joy Blockers.

### Key Question #2: What Would Grow Your Joy Personally and Professionally?

You probably have a natural sense of what joy means to you. Researchers who study joy generally define it as an intense positive feeling. It's high energy and exuberant. People who love what they do feel energized by it. People who don't feel the opposite.

Joy has an energy to it, one that can snowball, leading to more and more things you find yourself driven to do. So as you explore this second question, keep the definition of joy in mind. It's not just about what makes you happy, but what makes you feel energized and alive. You need to find your Joy Builders.

### Key Question #3: What's the Single Biggest Thing You Can Imagine That Would Grow Your Joy Personally or Professionally?

This question is about choosing a destination that we will be coaching you toward. To answer it, you are going to use the work you have done examining your Joy Blockers and Joy Builders.

And then, when considering all those joy related things, this question becomes about focus and selection: Which one thing will bring you the most joy–that's your **Single Biggest Thing** (**SBT**). That's the destination we will coach you toward.

Your SBT should feel big, important, impactful, even aspirational. There is a difference between setting a goal and choosing a destination.

A goal might be to lose five pounds or get into the habit of exercising five times a week. The destination might be to improve your overall health to the point where you feel like you're living your best life.

So allow yourself to think big, think boldly, and see where it takes you.

### Key Question #4: What Would It Mean if You Accomplished Your Single Biggest Thing?

It is so important to love what you do and to show that each

People think of a coach as the person with all the answers, but a good coach is really more of a seeker.

and every day. How much better would life be if you did? Create a picture of your own that describes what it would be like to achieve what you want most in life.

## The Self-Coaching Mindset

### Open Yourself Up to Growth

Self-coaching requires adopting a new way of thinking that we call the *coaching mindset*. A *coaching mindset* is when your mind is open to whatever is going to drive your growth or performance. That means avoiding the trap of preconceived notions of prejudging what's going to happen.

Instead, you want to be continually searching for the next insight that's going to move you forward and closer to your destination.

People think of a coach as the person with all the answers, but a good coach is really more of a seeker. Seeking knowledge to better understand the people you coach (even when it's you) and the things that impact them is how coaches come up with new ideas, insights, and innovations that can help.

In many ways what you're trying to do as a coach is keep your mind open enough to continue that conversation you started with yourself earlier. You want to be flexible in your thinking and ready to explore, rather than believing you already have the answers to how you're going to accomplish your Single Biggest Thing–or even if it's possible.

When we set out to achieve something, especially something big, there are a lot of things that can get in the way or send us off course. Our own minds may be the biggest culprit. That's why adopting a coaching mindset early in this process is crucial to your success going forward.

There are four key aspects of a coaching mindset. To be a good coach, you have to know how to draw on your capacity for:

1. **Belief:** knowing you can do it, even if you've never done it before
2. **Neutrality:** belief paired with an ability to suspend judgment long enough to search for the insights you need to make good decisions
3. **Awareness:** an ability to become conscious of what your mind is focused on at any given moment and an ability to shift that focus where you want it to go
4. **Self-knowledge:** knowing yourself is crucial to your growth and development

## The Self-Coaching Plan

### Uncover Transformational Insights

Having a destination is not the same as knowing how to get there. What do you do first? What do you do next? What could stand in your way? These are the kinds of insights you need in order to figure out how to get from where you are now to where you want to go.

### Make Sure Your Destination is Purposeful

First things first, take another look at your SBT and see how it holds up against the values and purpose you defined for yourself. If it doesn't hold up, that should provide some insight into where you have work to do.

The key thing here is to make sure–to the best of your abilities with what you know right now–that the destination you will be working toward is worth your time and effort.

Sometimes we set our sights on something because it's what we think we should be doing or because someone else thinks it's what we should accomplish. That kind of destination is going to be a lot harder to reach than one that feels purposeful and brings your joy along the way.

### Learn to Ask for Insights

One of the best tactics you can use to start gaining insights into how to reach your destination is to ask for them from people who have done something similar or simply from people you admire and respect. Collecting outside opinions is a great place to start when you're not sure what to do next.

### What to Do with Unwanted Insights

Just because you ask someone for their insights doesn't mean you have to take their advice or adopt their opinions. No one except you can decide whether the advice is good or worth following.

If you find yourself having doubts or even getting upset about an insight someone has shared, remember your coaching mindset and take some time to become more aware.

Be curious about your reaction rather than just rejecting the insight outright. Are you feeling that way because it wasn't the right advice for you? Or is there something else getting in the way of accepting sound advice?

### Become an Avid Learner

You can still gain insights from others even when you can't ask them directly for advice. Avid learners who are constantly on the lookout for new ideas and insights and consult a wide range of sources to find them.

### Understand How Your Mind Might Not Be Helping You Succeed

To reach your destination, you also need insight into how to tackle any roadblocks that stand in your way. The roadblocks are going to be different for everyone, but no matter what you encounter, the signal that something could be getting in your way will often begin as a feeling. Or it may come to you as a kind of voice in your head. These are roadblocks and know that they are coming.

### Learn to Listen to Yourself

The clue that something in your head is getting in your way will sometimes be obvious and other times be quite subtle.

The first thing to do when you pick up one of these clues is simply to pause and accept it. This can be challenging, but it's also essential to building the kind of self-knowledge needed to discover how and when your own mind might be getting in the way.

When we are aware and intentional about our thoughts and actions, it is possible to change our perspective about what's getting in our way.

## The Self-Coaching Journey

### Take Insightful Action

The path to achieving something new will always be a question mark until we walk it. So what do we do with that question mark?

We can start by admitting we won't have all the answers up front and we don't need to. It's not a reason to get stuck or hold ourselves back. Instead we can take action to move ourselves forward, step by step, in spite of not having all the answers.

But that doesn't mean taking action for action's sake. It's an important distinction. We want to take *insightful actions*; that is, actions that are both informed and inspired. As you take action toward achieving your Single Biggest Thing, strive for a balance between the two: information and inspiration.

That balance is about having your feet on the ground and your head in the clouds at the same time. You can't achieve anything new unless you have some of both.

### Define Your Current Reality

Before you start plotting your journey, make sure you have a clear view of where you're starting from–your current reality. Some steps on your path will be more joyful than others, but doing big things takes hard work and sometimes requires trade-offs.

When you know where you are and you know where you want to go (that's your SBT), then the task becomes about plotting the route from here to there.

### Bring Your Focus Down to What to Do Next

Setting an SBT can be overwhelming. Your list of goals and the roadmap you have begun to create may feel long, incomplete, and even messy at this point.

If you try to think about all the things you have to do all at once, it can lead to confusion, distress, or even cause a shutdown because there's too much to consider.

A more effective approach is to simplify focus on the process. Focus on the next step you need to take to move closer to your destination.

### Track Your Progress

As a self-coach, you're going to have to track progress for yourself. The process is going to be different depending on the kind of destination you're aiming for, but it's crucial for two very important reasons:

1. Tracking progress shows you what's working and what isn't so you can course correct or take more

It's not difficult to do some real damage to our belief in ourselves if we don't learn to manage those negative voices in our heads.

effective actions in the future.

2. Tracking progress provides inspiration and motivation because when you can see yourself making progress, it makes your far-away destination feel more real and attainable.

### Learn How to Talk to Yourself

Inspiration is essential to helping sustain yourself on what could be a long and challenging journey. That's why it's important to be conscious of how we talk to ourselves about what we do and our efforts to be successful.

We can send ourselves off course more easily than many of us realize. It's not difficult to do some real damage to our belief in ourselves if we don't learn to manage those negative voices in our heads.

## The Self-Coaching Habit

### Commit to Constant Improvement

No process is worth very much if it isn't sustainable. You need to keep yourself motivated, on track, and moving forward as you continue to coach yourself to your Single Biggest Thing, and then on to greater and greater heights.

Making a consistent effort so often makes the difference in our success. Even the best-conceived ideas, dreams, goals, plans, and strategies mean very little if you don't follow through with them.

### Build in Positive Motivation

Too many people leave their motivation up to chance. They wake up in the morning, think about how they're feeling, and act accordingly. But guess what? If you do that, there are going to be days when you just don't feel like it–whatever it is to you in that moment. Leaving your motivation up to chance guarantees there will be times when you don't follow through.

That's because motivation doesn't just happen. Contrary to popular belief, it isn't something you just wake up and will yourself to have. If you have trouble staying motivated from time to time, that doesn't make you weak–it makes you human.

If you want to stay motivated, it works best if you build that motivation into your process. That way you can't help but feel motivated to keep pursuing your SBT, even when things get tough or when your energy or belief wanes.

There are three strategies you should put in place before you need them to help sustain your motivation. Don't wait until you have a bad day or a setback to do these. Do them now so that when rough patches come–and they will come–you have strategies in place to turn to.

### Strategy 1: Remind Yourself What Matters

It can be really easy to get caught up in the day-to-day minutia of what we need to do and where we need to go, thereby losing track of big-picture things like our SBT, our purpose, and the values that really matter to us. That's why, wherever and whenever possible, we believe it's important to surround ourselves with reminders of these things.

Take charge by building a motivational space. Pick a spot that you look at often and place there a card with your SBT written on it, as well as ones with your purpose and values. That will keep these things top of mind. Pictures, awards, notes, and anything that holds value to you works, too. Visit this place often, not just on difficult days when motivation needs a boost.

### Strategy 2: Connect with Your Future Vision

Paint a picture for yourself of what it would mean to accomplish your SBT. Visualize what your future would look like if your SBT happened and imagine how it would make you feel. Pay particular attention to what you think it will feel like to succeed. Then ask yourself how you can bring a bit of that feeling into your life on a daily basis.

Despite the fact that our culture tends to prioritize our logical side over our emotional one, it is our feelings that tend to motivate us more often than facts. So pay attention to your feelings, and make an effort to be more intentional

about cultivating the positive ones that will keep you motivated over the long term.

Take charge by choosing how you want to feel today. First thing in the morning, ask yourself, "How do I want to feel today?" Maybe the answer is similar to feelings such as joyful, playful, connected, or grateful. You get to decide with whatever comes to mind.

Set an intention to bring that feeling into your day as much as possible. To get started, ask yourself: What's one thing I can do today to feel this way? Make an effort to do that one thing. And then do another and another after that.

Keep coming back to your intention throughout the day, and look for ways to cultivate that feeling. Make this a daily practice, every morning, and see what happens.

### Strategy 3: Go Public

Going public is a tactic that makes your goals, large and small, feel more urgent and keep them top of mind. You can go public by telling people what you want to do and asking them to hold you accountable for doing it.

It changes our thinking when we know someone is watching our progress. And when our belief or energy wanes, drawing on others can help us get it back.

It does matter, however, who you share with.

While it's not always possible to anticipate people's reactions, it's best not to share with someone who is going to undermine your intentions or someone who researchers describe as "lower status"– meaning their opinion isn't that important to you.

This is a good place to draw on that self-knowledge you've been developing throughout this process and consider what you need most to get and stay motivated. We are not all the same and we do not have the same motivational needs, so remember that as you consider who to confide in. What would resonate most for you? Ask yourself what you really need to sustain your motivation.

Take charge by sharing your intention. Identify at least one person you can confide in about your SBT. Consider what you now know about the subject, as well as your self-knowledge, and make sure you choose someone who is likely to be motivating to you personally. Reach out today and ask the person to check in with you regularly about your progress as you work toward your SBT.

### A Word About Procrastination

We all have a tendency to procrastinate at some point or another. Procrastination is often thought of as a time-management issue, but research suggests it's more often an emotional-management issue.

Some of the most common reason people procrastinate are:

- **Confusion:** You are not clear about what you need to do or how to do it.
- **Discomfort:** What you need to do feels scary, boring, difficult, or unpleasant in some way that makes you want to avoid it.
- **Distraction:** Perhaps because you are feeling confused or uncomfortable, or simply because of the overstimulated way in which most of us live our lives today, what you need to do gets lost or buried under a mountain of other things.

The more you can avoid the feeling of procrastination, the better off you will be. Of course, that's not always possible, so the following tip will help you when you find yourself already in a procrastinating state of mind.

It's called the Five-Second Rule, and it's adapted from a bestselling book of the same name by Mel Robbins. It's pretty simple: If you notice yourself procrastinating, then you must act on what you're procrastinating about within five seconds. Count 5-4-3-2-1-GO! And then start doing whatever you have the instinct to do first.

Choose the first thing in mind and then start doing it. Not only does this help move you from procrastination, but it also helps build momentum–because action tends to lead to more action!

As a final word, here is something that can take your success to a new level: *Coach others the way you have learned to coach yourself.* You can get even more out of the coaching skills you practice by applying them to more than just yourself.

Knowing how to coach yourself is invaluable for your own growth, but it is also the first step in being able to provide wisdom and inspiration for others to succeed. As you take charge of you, use what you have learned in service of others.





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# Target

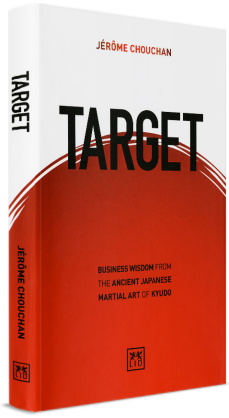
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# Target

## Business Wisdom from the Ancient Japanese Martial Art of Kyudo

*by* **Jérôme Chouchan**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Mention the word ***target***, and several visuals may come to mind. In business, a target may be number on spreadsheet or a highly desired customer. For others, sports goals come to mind—touchdown, hole-in-one. When presented with a target, people have an irrepressible desire to take aim and hit it!

Author Jérôme Chouchan, a successful French businessman in Japan, aims for success. As a master of Kyudo, he utilizes a bow and arrow. In ***Target***, he applies lessons learned from Kyudo to modern business. Kyudo, a traditional martial art governed by strict rules, has as its core purpose self-development and a pursuit of the perfection of the human being. Business may focus on the brutal chase for profits. Chouchan, through Kyudo, moves us deeper.

***Target*** shows that business can be successful from a conventional standard of metrics, as well as spiritually meaningful when it is practiced with a mindset that has a deeper aim than solely sales and profit. In this modern age, where there is a pressing need for meaning and fulfilment in the work place, let ***Target*** challenge you to a different path.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to discover and aim for the heart of the customer.
- The Kyudo lesson: Right shooting always results in a hit.
- How decision-making affects every part of business.
- Habits to improve your business AND your life.

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At first glance, archery and business seem to be worlds apart. Surprisingly, learning the spirit and wisdom of traditional Japanese archery helps the modern businessperson navigate through today's challenges.

## Principles for Hitting Your Target

People are born with an irrepressible desire to aim for and hit the target. In archery, this means hitting your target with your arrow. Kyudo literally means 'the Way of the Bow." Let's explore this Way.

### You Don't Reach a Target; A Target Reaches You

This saying teaches the importance of "right shooting," which results in a natural hit, instead of constantly striving to hit the target. In business, the "target" is the customer. The secret of business success is not reaching the target, but the target reaching you. For this to happen, the feelings of the customer and the actions of the company have to become one. When you become one with the feelings of the customer, the distance between the business, the product, and the customer disappears, and success is achieved.

### A Pure Heart

The secret to producing a hit is for managers and employees to forget about themselves and face the customers with "a pure heart." It is beneficial to train oneself to listen to what customers have to say without thinking of personal gain and to tackle work with a selfless heart. Everyone takes pride in the way they do their work and the way they think; it is a natural urge. Don't let those ideas become an obstacle to the vital task of listening to the feelings of the customers or understanding the opinions of others. Chouchan relates this story of leading the luxury brand, Godiva, to make its brand more accessible to the Japanese customer. "When we decided to sell Godiva chocolates at 7-Eleven, some people were opposed to the idea because they felt that it would damage the brand's image. But, without this step, customers who lived in an area without access to Godiva shops could only buy the products through the internet. We wanted those customers to have easier access to the brand and enjoy a sense of luxury. Godiva made an arrangement so that the customers at convenience stores could receive the product in the same Godiva shopping bags provided in the Godiva shops. This made it a more luxurious experience for the customers. For convenience stores, this arrangement was unheard of, but they accommodated the request, resulting in sales growth of the Godiva brand.

### Right Shooting Always Results in a Hit

Chouchan once asked a sales director at Godiva, "What do you look at first when you visit a shop?" She replied, "I check if the shop is nice and clean." Most sales people look at sales, profit, traffic, and conversion rate." This director not only looked at the numbers, but also paid attention to how the products were being sold and the process of it all. She saw the shops that were clean – and therefore appealing – also had good sales performance.

The philosophy underpinning the art of Kyudo is all about placing value on the process, the correct spirit and form, not just the outcome. During a Kyudo exam, archers are observed by the judges from the moment they enter the Kyudo practice hall until they leave. This includes their posture and movement as they wait and walk, and how this is performed in a harmonious rhythm with other archers.

The principle of "right shooting always results in a hit" encourages the employees to be creative, cheerful, and positive because they don't have to worry about their sales results, which can be very unstable. They are free of stress and can take more initiative at work. Instead of worrying about results, they are able to put their best effort into performing, resulting in better engagement of employees.

### Right Shooting Results in a True Hit

In the Kyudo examination, you can fail even if the arrow hits the target. For example, at the moment of releasing the arrow, by looking at the movement of the hands and the body, the judges can see if the archer is in the proper state of mind and energy or if he has been overcome by the desire to hit the target. The world of business can follow the same process. As Kyudo instructs us in the art of correct shooting, we must think about "correct" management in business.

What constitutes the right posture in business? This seemingly elusive goal can be achieved by thinking about the customer, the employee, and by performing business tasks with a high morale.

Are your products of good quality? Are they priced appropriately? Are they being sold in the right places? Is proper service being given? These are questions to ask yourself and your employees.

## Lessons from Kyudo and Japan

In the world of Kyudo in Japan, the correct approach entails a fight against yourself. It has nothing to do with your

> . . . if the company has a meaningful mission, and you are in agreement with their values and purpose, then you can feel joy in your work.

competitors or the circumstances you are in. The focus is upon you and

the target. You are fully responsible for the outcome. In this thought lies the wisdom to establish and develop oneself and the key to improving your relationship with others.

### There is No Such Thing as a Perfect Shot

A Kyudo archer aims for a perfect shot but knows there is no such thing. This is the difference with modern Western archery, where a bull's-eye shot is perfect in itself. In Kyudo, the aim is for better form and a purer spirit in shooting. This endless quest is the soul and spirit of Kyudo.

The key to success for any new project is to move it forward, in small, incremental steps. In Kyudo, through one shot at a time the archer gradually builds form. Shooting is an iterative process, learning from each shot, and shooting each new shot with a higher aspiration than the previous one. This learning and growing process is as relevant in business as it is in archery.

### The Moment the Arrow Leaves the Bow

Kyudo teaches about the importance and the quality of the moment. The entire outcome of the shooting is dependent on the instant of the release of the arrow. The proper timing cannot be planned, and archers may fall into the trap of two types of weakness: ***hayake***—releasing too soon or ***motare***—releasing too late.

These weaknesses can also be experienced in business and in making decisions. For example, hayake is when you rush to a decision without taking the time to get the required information and input from your team, and motare is when you look for certainty and consensus and procrastinate, missing the right timing for making a decision. Motare is frequent in large organizations, and the delay of the moment of decisions is a strong barrier to innovation.

In Kyudo, the release of the arrow is followed immediately by a hit or a miss, so it is a natural process to understand the importance of good and accurate timing. However, in the office, there is no such single moment of seeing the immediate effect of the decision. The effect—the fruit of the decision—happens in the marketplace a long time after the decision has been. As a result of this cycle (decision and effect), managers put much more priority on the content of the decision rather than on its timing, whereas in principle, when making a decision, the timing is as critical as the decision itself.

## How to Make Your Work Meaningful and Enjoyable

In work, in hobbies, and in life, knowing why we are doing what we are doing is very important. The answer to this "why" is what we call our mission. In Kyudo it's said, "The bow builds the man." The great mission of Kyudo is not to hit the target or to get better at shooting, but to perfect the human nature in learning to shoot an arrow. And this mission is what provides deep meaning and joy to the art of Kyudo. It is the same with work: if the company has a meaningful mission, and you are in agreement with their values and purpose, then you can feel joy in your work.

### The Right Inner Intention

Right intention means that to shoot and hit the target, the inner and outer man should be in harmony. You must first of all have your inner intention right, straighten out your outward appearance, and treat the bow and arrow with care. Applying this to a company means that in order to make those outside the company—the customers—happy, you should try to make sure that the workplace is a happy environment and that the workers are happy too. There is a saying in Kyudo, "The bow builds the man." The great mission of Kyudo is to cultivate people through training and practice. The mission of all businesses should also be to cultivate people.

### The Important Things are Sensed

In Kyudo there is another saying, "The bow is understood through personal experience." The first level of experi-

ence is with the mind; this is where you understand what has to be done. The second level is with your body when it reaches some understanding and can perform the shape that the mind had asked of it. The third level, which is called "Chi" (knowledge), is when the mind and the body work regularly in harmony, and because of the stability of the shooting, the desired form is yours. This level can be achieved only through intensive practice and repetition of the same movements.

Training for the corporate environment is the same as in practice for martial arts: the critical factors are repetition and content to bring forth the form in the body of the organization. When training activation reaches a certain level, we can see the staff naturally exhibit the desired behaviors in their daily actions. The leadership team of the company is the spirit of the organization. Its influence permeates the whole body of the organization, in the same way that the archer directs his mind and vital energy to his whole body to perform a proper shooting. The Japanese proverb, "fish start to perish by the head," is often quoted to describe the responsibility of the top management for sustaining a healthy organization.

## How to Live a Fulfilling Second Life

In Kyudo, it is fundamental that the left and right arm work in balance to draw the bow and then release the arrow with the hands moving equally in a straight line to the left and the right. Applying the metaphor of this balance to the workplace, it can be said that these two forces between work and life should complement each other harmoniously, just as the left and right arm do in Japanese archery. In so doing, we can expect the individual to lead a fulfilling life, grow into their full potential and perform better at work. Today, work-life balance is still an issue for many companies. Chouchan relates, "At Godiva Japan, we support our employees in having a good work-life balance, and they are very grateful for this. For example, Fridays are called 'Happy Fridays.' After two o'clock, the employees go out and visit our shops or do something fulfilling for their personal life. Through this practice, we encourage them to feel and experience the importance of activities outside the office. As we are in the business of providing happiness, this is a beneficial practice for both the individual and the company. It is often by walking around in town that new ideas and services for the consumer can pop up."

For those who are on a path of self-development, as we have seen with Kyudo, every obstacle should be seen as an opportunity to perfect the character and grow. In a fast-moving, globalized world, inspiration from ancient wisdoms and arts has relevance to business now more than ever. This is a journey that each of us can embark upon with sincerity and determination. Progress along the Way will improve the man, the company, and society as a whole.



Jérôme Chouchan is the President of Godiva Chocolatier for Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, India, Australia and New Zealand. He has extensive management experience in Japan and Asia, having worked for premium global brands such as Lacoste, Hennessy and Lladro. He has a master's degree in management from the Grand Ecole HEC Paris. Chouchan has practiced Kyudo in Japan for more than 25 years and holds a Kyudo Renshi (instructor license) and a 5th dan degree. He is also a Board Director of the Kyudo International Federation, the body governing the development of Kyudo globally. He published Target in Japanese in 2016.

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# Tell Me More About That

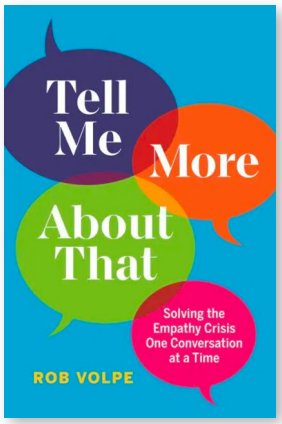
Rob Volpe

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# Tell Me More About That

## Solving the Empathy Crisis One Conversation at a Time

*by* **Rob Volpe**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone is born empathetic, but it is the combination of genetics, parenting, and lived experiences that help one develop a strong ability for cognitive empathy. This strong gift of cognitive empathy allows Rob Volpe the ability to see from another person's perspective, walk a mile in their shoes, and provided the perfect foundation for his book, ***Tell Me More About That: Solving the Empathy Crisis One Conversation at a Time***.

With empathy becoming a new catchphrase in leadership, this book provides the fundamental outline on the five steps to empathy that every person in leadership needs to conquer – dismantling judgment, asking good questions, actively listening, integration of understanding, and using solution imagination.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify empathy, even when it eludes you as a leader.
- Why it is important to identify empathetic scenarios and change perspective.
- How to utilize the five steps to that every leader needs to conquer.
- Why empathy as a leader is more important than the product or service you provide.
- The solutions necessary to move forward in an empathy-empowered environment.

## Introduction

With a focus on empathy today, this book empowers leaders to gain the first-hand insight necessary to overcome the digital technology dominated society and create success that is not determined by the product but by the leader's ability to be efficient in operations. To truly succeed and stand out in the crowd, leaders need to be able to respond to the needs, wants, and desires of their customers, employees, and fellow leaders.

No matter what our role is, we encounter millions of people in our lives. As a leader, you may encounter some more than others. Having an empathetic character can go hand-in-hand with expanding your operations and creating an environment that flourishes. Using empathy and storytelling, you are able to connect with people and understand where they are coming from.

Everyone has a unique worldview that is made up of individual factors creating their perspective – empathizing allows you to tap into this and connect on a level that doesn't exist otherwise.

Right now, the US is suffering from a shortage of empathy skills as a whole, determined by a University of Michigan Institute for Social Research study. When there is a lack of empathy, it generates tensions and the breakdown results in an empathy crisis. Leaders, to be effective in their roles, must learn the proper ways to overcome the crisis and instill the right empathetic practices within their organization.

## Part One: When Empathy Eludes Us

### It's Like Christmas Morning

Meeting people and learning from their stories is one way to help build the "empathy muscle," which has spent years atrophying due to lack of use. Thinking about it and approaching it from the Christmas morning perspective can change the way we think about empathy as a whole. Everyone loves Christmas morning – mainly the presents. When you approach the day as an opportunity to receive a new gift, it changes the perspective. Each story, each recollection of how others have been treated poorly by their peers is an opportunity to build upon the empathetic character you want to create.

Getting to know and listen to others is a gift, one that you can use toward good or one you can just store away in a vault. Think about your own story – have you felt misunderstood by others? How did that make you feel? Reflecting on your own personal encounters can help you determine where to focus your empathy training.

### The Hazards Of The Job

The biggest mistake most people make is confusing sympathy for empathy. Empathy is a powerful tool that requires you to connect with someone and their experience, whereas sympathy results your having feelings for someone and their situation – two completely different sides of the spectrum. We often don't realize that this happens until we are in the middle of it. Judgment pushes us into bring more sympathetic than empathizing (truly connecting) with the situation. Being sympathetic instead of empathetic in the workplace can be a leadership landmine.

When confronted with situations that are uncomfortable – how did you approach it? Taking a look at how you approach various situations in your role (whether sympathetic or empathetic) can help you nurture the right environment and create real connections based on a more general understanding.

### Turning Perspective Around

Although many of us have the same viewpoint, the points of view we have are different. There are two perspectives to every conversation and experience. Think of it as listening with your eyes, although the view is the same, we are processing it differently.

Our brain is processing the view based on our past experiences and often our own bias. We have to create the connections that help us see things from the other perspective. Effective leadership requires the ability to take the current perspective you might have and view it from the perspective of someone else.

## Part Two: Following The 5 Steps To Empathy

### Defining The 5 Steps To Empathy

Mastering the five steps of empathy does not require taking the first step, mastering it, and building upon it with the subsequent step. Instead, it is situational. You may need to use one step more than another in any given situation – the goal is to determine which step is necessary at any given time.

The steps to consider include dismantling judgment, asking good questions, actively listening, integrating what you hear into real understanding, and using that to create a solution based on imagination.

### Step 1: Dismantle Judgement

Dismantling judgment is the hardest step of empathy. Judgment is second nature within society, and we use it as a measure of protecting ourselves, which only sabotages making a true connection. Think of judgment as a "frenemy." We need to use judgment to make decisions in our lives (friend), but when we find ourselves being judgmental, that perverts us from getting to the empathy we need to connect. To properly combat this, we have to stop and evaluate how we come across. Are we using judgment to make a decision or to build a wall between ourselves and others? Understanding what prompts the wrong kind of judgment can create pathways for empathy, which are expressed in the scenarios throughout the next four chapters and how to rethink perspective – The Moldy Pancake, Crawling Away, Mother Would Never Do That, and Fear.

### Step 2: Ask Good Questions

Context is everything in building up empathy. A good question is one that is open-ended and exploratory. There is no judgment in it and good questions produce good answers that you can build a connection over. How much context do you get from "yes" and "no"? Think back to all the recent conversations you have had – were questions asked? Were they good questions? Implementing the word "why" can change the direction of the answer you receive from your question.

Instead of relying solely on the word "why," implementing who, what, when, where, and how, can uncover more emphasis on the situation and create a better understanding of the answer. Using the next two chapters provide context and understanding as to why asking good questions bring about results.

### Step 3: Active Listening

It is not enough to ask the questions, if you aren't going to listen to the answers. Without listening, it is impossible to achieve any level of empathy. Listening is more than just the sounds – it is everything we hear, see, touch, smell, taste, and sense. The intuit we gather become data points and stimuli that are then processed and synthesized into meaning for that very moment. When we are present and pay attention, we pick up on transmitted signals – the true definition of active listening.

Using active listening skills make us present in the moment – when present we pick up on the verbal and non-verbal cues being given to us. Look back at the situations you have been in – what did you miss when you weren't paying attention to what wasn't being said. Over the next few chapters, the scenarios presented create a better understanding of how being active and present in the conversation can change the entire outcome – an empathetic one.

### Step 4: Integrate Into Understanding

Step four is where things really start to come together. Pushing aside your own perspective to welcome someone else's doesn't mean you abandon yours – only that you are accommodating someone else. For example, you can prefer chocolate ice cream, but at the same time acknowledge that vanilla might be preferable to others. It doesn't mean that you abandon your bowl of chocolate, you just make room at the table for someone enjoying a bowl of vanilla. You are entitled to your opinion, others are entitled to theirs – but when you remove the judgment that only your opinion matters, you can begin seeing the true reflection of the other person's point of view.

Have you tried sharing your feelings but holding your preference to accommodate the ones of others? The next couple of chapters will explore how altering your perspective and changing your language can help you integrate more of an understanding.

### Step 5: Use Solution Imagination

Step five is the moment you have been working toward with steps one through four. Your training has brought you to the moment where you step into someone else's shoes – the entire meaning of empathy. To do this, you have to take off your own shoes and say, "I can see your point of view; tell me more about that?" At this time you have to push back the clouds of judgment that may come rolling in, obscuring your ability to truly see.

Using the right solution imagination, you can begin creating change and promoting empathy by literally putting yourself in their shoes. The scenarios of life experiences in the next three chapters will show you just how important it is to truly get into someone else's perspective.

## Part Three: Embracing Empathy In Everyday Life

### A Work In Progress

An empathetic approach is also useful when trying to achieve forgiveness. Taking past traumas or childhood experiences that shaped us and looking at it from the other

perspective can change how we approach specific situations. Maybe the one doing the bullying in your life was bullied in their own home – which you might not see if you weren't looking at it from their perspective. It does not condone the experience you went through, but it can help you create your own type of closure by putting yourself in their shoes.

The best part? The five steps of empathy can be used in your everyday life and in any situation where you must interact with another person. Empathy is important and it increases the quality of the relationships in your life – whether work, leadership, or everyday encounters.

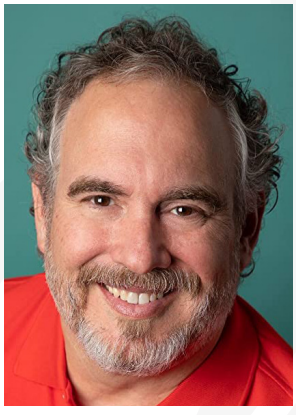
## Conclusion

Empathy is a touchy subject for most, but it is a crucial skill to master when working in a leadership role. Misunderstood employees leave – understood and empathized ones join your mission to excel your business.

Through the viewpoints expressed within this book, you can begin to put yourself in the shoes of someone else within your organization – or even your daily life. Empathy is not something we are all experts at, but with the right amount of work, we can pursue expert status.

With the five steps of empathy, mastery is within reach. Making sure to keep judgmental opinions and thoughts at bay can help you begin asking questions and step inside of someone's shoes. Just because an opinion is different than yours, doesn't mean that it isn't valid to someone else. Being able to acknowledge and ask questions about a viewpoint different from your own can allow you to truly see where the other person is coming from.

As a leader, this perspective can change how efficient you are in that role. Using empathy, in a world where empathy has declined, can change how others perceive you and how you perceive others – a chance at true success in life and in the organization.



**Rob Volpe** is an astute observer of life and a master storyteller who brings empathy and compassion to the human experience. As CEO of Ignite 360, he leads a team of insights, strategy, and creative professionals serving the world's leading brands across a range of industries. As a thought leader in the role of empathy in marketing and the workplace, Rob frequently speaks on the topic at conferences, corporations, and college classes. He is a graduate of Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and lives in San Francisco with his husband and three cats.

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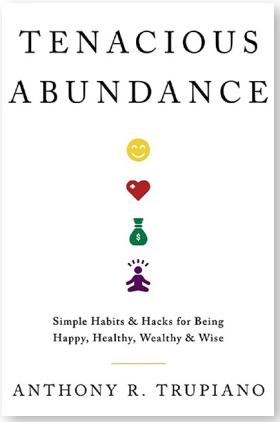
# Tenacious Abundance

Anthony R. Trupiano

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# Tenacious Abundance

## Simple Habits & Hacks for Being Happy, Healthy, Wealthy & Wise




*by* **Anthony R. Trupiano**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You can have it all. Happiness, health, wealth, and wisdom-you do not have to compromise any one of these for the other. You can build a life of abundance. In ***Tenacious Abundance: Simple Habits & Hacks for Being Happy, Healthy, Wealthy & Wise***, Anthony Trupiano breaks down all the key beliefs, habits, and hacks necessary for you to thrive in all areas of your life. Between his financial journey from being broke to being a millionaire, his happy marriage of thirty-one-plus years, and his own robust physical health, Anthony shares what has helped him build his life of abundance.

For over three decades, Anthony's tested guidance from countless seminars, books, and life coaches to discover the best methods for success. Through their teachings, Anthony identified two vital traits: tenacious habits and a mindset of abundance. Consider this your handbook for growing these two traits within yourself. If you can be tenacious and pursue abundance, your quality of life will grow past comfort and contentment. Anthony's tactics and techniques will help you seize the life you want without any compromise.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Key beliefs, habits, and hacks necessary to thrive in all areas of life.
- How to grow the two vital traits for success within yourself.
- Tactics and techniques to help you seize the life you want.
- Simple, actionable, and proven ways to experience a richer, more abundant life in all key areas.
- The 3-Anchor Method to create your perfect day.

## Introduction

Most of us want to change something about ourselves. We have things in our lives we want to improve, but we struggle to find clear and effective solutions. This book was written to give readers simple, actionable, and proven ways to experience a richer, more abundant life in all key areas.

The goal is clear: to become abundant in all the key aspects of your life. Happiness. Health. Wealth. Wisdom. And then put it all together and live a blessed life. But just because the goal is clear, that does not mean we know the path to it. Without a conscious commitment to intentionally working on your happiness, health, wealth, and wisdom, you'll always default to just chasing daily problems, whether it be in your family, your business, your career, or any other key areas.

This book is about real, practical things you can do to invite the overflowing gift of abundance into your life. It is for everyone because anyone who wants more in their life can receive it. I'm here to tell you that abundance really is possible in all key areas of your life. And even though you can't create it instantly in every area all at once, you can begin to turn things around right away by implementing a few simple habits, hacks, or beliefs in each area.

The habits and hacks I recommend need to be done consistently for at least a few months before you can call them your own (which doesn't mean you won't start feeling benefits right away—you will). Realistically, habits take a minimum of ninety days (and often more) to get wired into your system, much longer than the twenty-one to thirty days that the self-help industry touts as long enough to establish a new habit.

This book is purposely designed for easy reading. I wrote it for busy people who do not have time for a lot of fluff or padding. This book also does not have to be read all the way through from beginning to end to get tremendous benefit from it. It is structured so you can start with any chapter and get something out of it immediately. This book is to help you discover and implement your key habits and hacks for tenacious abundance in all areas of your life, using the same twenty-four hours that everyone has.

## Chapter 1: I Am Happy

### Three Key Habits/Hacks

Use a superhero pose in the mirror every morning and tell yourself any/or all of the following: "I am enough, have enough, and do enough." "I love my life and have no strife." "I am a great husband/wife, I am a great father/mother, I am a great son/daughter, I am a great brother/sister, I am a great friend, I am great at [whatever your occupation is]," and then finish with "I am a great person and I unconditionally love myself."

Start your day with a sincere compliment or a way to help someone else have a great day. Helping others helps you. Surround yourself with people who give you energy and add value to your life. It is very important that you are reciprocating.

### Three Key Questions

Whom do I love, who loves me? What in my life is going great right now? Who could I sincerely compliment today via a text, email, or phone call?

## Chapter 2: I Am Healthy

### Three Key Habits/Hacks

Drink plenty of water each day, especially upon rising (see chart in this chapter). I recommend using a twenty-six-ounce Yeti with a straw to increase water consumption throughout the day. Also, scrape your tongue with a spoon upon rising and before bed at night. Use the Lose It app to understand daily caloric intake; it will give insights on how many calories you should be eating each day. The most important thing is to choose quality whole foods, especially foods that are high in fiber. Stop eating after 8:00 p.m. until 8:00 a.m. (a twelve-hour fast is great for your digestive system). Try to move every day, either exercise, walking, breathing, and/or my two-minute exercise or ten-minute isometrics. Get outside when possible to get sun on your skin and sweat out toxins.

### Three Key Questions

What would be a healthier choice to eat today? How could I make exercise more fun? Who could I model that is leading a fit and healthy lifestyle?

## Chapter 3: I Am Wealthy

### Three Key Habits/Hacks

Find a true fiduciary advisor that, by law, must place your interest ahead of their own. If you don't do that, at least use a role model who has created the kind of results you want and then replicate what they do. Build a team of professionals around you. Take a percentage of what you earn and place it

in an investment with limited access so it can compound and grow over time (3 percent, 5 percent, or 10 percent, whatever you can do—just start). This habit will serve you well. When starting and running a business or a new job, your deepest level must come before the how (strategy) of your business. Always start with why it is important to you.

### Three Key Questions

Who could I model now that is getting the results I would like to achieve? How could I create multiple sources of income in my life? What one action could I take today to create more wealth or success in my life?

## Chapter 4: I Am Wise

### Three Key Habits/Hacks

Do your most important or hardest task of the day first. I promise you, this will change your life. Keep your vision board in sight, too. Keep a book on your nightstand and read at least a page or two each night, which creates the habit of becoming a reader. Or listen to a podcast every night to become a learner. Join a program like MindValley where you can have access to some of the most successful people at a very reasonable cost. Most of their programs are broken out into small time frames each day, so they are very simple to fit into your daily life. There are other amazing resources you can benefit from like Ed Mylett podcasts, James Clear's weekly newsletter or blinklist for a synapsis of over 5,000 books.

### Three Key Questions

How can I make learning something new both simple and fun? Who could I model knowing the shortest path to success is finding a role model? In what ways would my life improve by learning something new each day?

## Chapter 5: Create the Perfect Day, Then Live Your Perfect Life

The most abundant people create their own days, and they do not spend them in reactive mode putting out fires. They carefully and intentionally think through the day's top priorities and then get them completed first.

People who create their own days are tenacious about it and, at a minimum, always use the three anchors to have a good and productive day.

You will always struggle to maintain consistent abundance in all areas of your life unless you learn to master your own daily schedule. Remember, you are the boss of your life!

## Chapter 6: Tenacious Thought Leaders

What follows is my curated list of content that delivers value that is off the charts. For each video, I give you a very brief synopsis of why it is worth your time and provide the runtime so you'll know how much time to set aside to watch any particular video. None of the videos are longer than twenty minutes and many are much shorter. I encourage you to do a short reflection after viewing and give yourself at least one actionable item to implement from what you learned. The stars of each video are the following:

Sean Stephenson was one of the most respected members of the Genius Network and was always a shining light.

Marisa Peer is the British equivalent of Tony Robbins and certainly no beginner in living an abundant life.

Joel Osteen talks about the power of "I am" and how important it is for us to make sure whatever follows "I am" is self-empowering and not negative.

Coach Lou Holtz gives some priceless advice on leadership and life.

Coach John Wooden is the definition of leadership and a life teacher.

Bo Eason has a unique style of captivating the listener and delivering the message in a way that you will not forget it.

Admiral William McRaven is the real deal. To become a Navy SEAL is ridiculously tough, and his delivery and content in this video reflects that.

Tony Robbins is clearly the king of motivation and, in my eyes, the most effective human being on the planet for helping others change.

Tucker Max, founder of Scribe Media, is just a straightforward person who tells you like it is. His story and advice are spot-on—and his humor is great.

Evan Carmichael is simply a wonderful person who wakes up every day truly passionate to help others.

Ed Mylett has become a podcast star because of his great interviewing skills, and it has attracted some of the most sought-after high performers on the planet.

Mike Rowe, in his witty and well-spoken manner, shares his

thoughts on the next generation and gives an extraordinarily candid interview about life and work.

James Clear is the modern-day master of habits, and trust me – habits maketh the man!

Dave Asprey is known as the founder of Bulletproof Coffee, but he is also the creator of biohacking.

Ken Honda, Japan's best-known secret, has written over fifty books on money.

Bob Proctor is known as the grandfather of motivational speaking, and that moniker is well-earned.

Dr. Wayne Dyer's last video message, and he clearly saved the best for last.

## Chapter 7: Music – The Healthy Wonder Drug

This is the shortest chapter in the book, but do not let that mislead you about its importance. Music is one of the most powerful tools in our toolkit when we consciously use it. To put it another way: Music is one of the most undervalued resources for motivating us, for making us happy, and for serving as anchors for moods and moments of our lives.

What I want to do in this chapter is convince you that music is a powerful aid in bringing more abundance in our lives, and if we use it tenaciously and intentionally, we will get more value out of it. I think we should all create a playlist for our own lives and break it up into major categories.

## Chapter 8: I Am Blessed

### Three Habits/Hacks

Write down at least three to ten things you are grateful for each morning and then think of at least one to two great things that happened during the day before you go to sleep so it is last on your mind. Realize there is always someone in the world worse off than you. Stop being a victim, think big picture, and choose to be grateful when challenged. Watch Joel Osteen Sunday morning for a positive and uplifting message to start your week. Pray for others each night before going to bed; there's no better way to feel blessed than praying and thinking of others. When you focus on adding value and helping others, it is impossible to feel bad about yourself.

### Three Key Questions

Who can I help today that is not able to repay me? In what ways am I a blessing to others? What in my life, family, friends, or career is a blessing to me today?

## Conclusion

One of this book's guiding stars has been to make it a practical and easy guide to implementing change a little at a time. So, stand up, take a deep breath, and smile big. Start your amazing journey toward living a life of tenacious abundance.



**Anthony Trupiano** has been happily married, successfully self-employed, and physically healthy for over three decades. He has found success in the finance and insurance industry for over twenty-one years now, though he also worked in health and fitness, as well as food and catering. Anthony has completed dozens of life-improvement programs and has also been a speaker at events for organizations such as MassMutual, New York Life, Deutsche Bank, Prudential, Million Dollar Round Table, and an NFL financial workshop for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

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# Thanks for the Feedback

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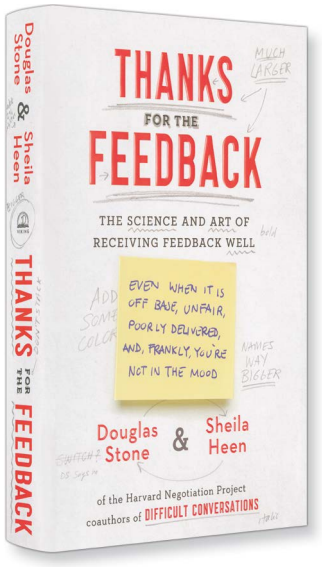
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Career & Self-Development

# Thanks for the Feedback

## The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well (even when it is off base, unfair, poorly delivered, and frankly, you're not in the mood)




by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We get feedback every day of our lives from friends and family, bosses, colleagues and customers. We know that feedback is essential for healthy relationships and professional development — but we dread it and often dismiss it. That's because receiving feedback sits at the junction of two conflicting human desires: we want to learn and grow, but we also want to be accepted just as we are right now.

*Thanks for the Feedback* is the first book to address this tension head on. It explains why getting feedback is so crucial yet so challenging and offers a powerful framework to help us take on life's blizzard of off-hand comments, annual evaluations and unsolicited advice with curiosity and grace.

The business world spends billions of dollars and millions of hours each year teaching people how to give feedback more effectively. Authors Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen argue that we've got it backward and show us why the smart money is on educating *receivers* — in the workplace and in personal relationships as well. It's the receivers, after all, who interpret what they're hearing and decide whether and how to change.

With humor and clarity, the authors blend the latest insights from neuroscience and psychology with practical, hard-headed advice.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify truth, relationship and identity triggers that block learning.
- How to separate appreciation, coaching and evaluation.
- How to dismantle distortions and draw boundaries in the face of unrelenting criticism.
- How to uncover blind spots to see hidden impacts of our behaviors.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK**

**by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen**

**The authors:** Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen are co-authors of the *New York Times* business bestseller *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. They are both Lecturers on Law at Harvard Law School, as well as the cofounders of Triad Consulting. For additional information on the authors, visit www.triadconsultinggroup.com.

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## Introduction

We swim in an ocean of feedback. Feedback includes any information you get about yourself. In the broadest sense, it's how we learn about ourselves from our experiences and from other people — how we learn from life.

In today's workplace, feedback plays a crucial role in developing talent, improving morale, aligning teams, solving problems, and boosting the bottom line. And yet, 55 percent of respondents in one recent study said their performance review was unfair or inaccurate, and one in four employees dreads their performance review more than anything else in their working lives.

Something isn't working. So organizations are spending billions of dollars each year to train supervisors, managers and leaders on how to *give* feedback more effectively. When feedback meets resistance or is rejected outright, feedback givers are encouraged to be persistent. They are taught how to *push* harder.

We think we have it backwards. If the receiver isn't willing or able to absorb the feedback, then there's only so far persistence or even skillful delivery can go. *The real leverage is creating pull.*

Creating pull is about mastering the skills required to receive feedback well and drive our own learning. It's about how to recognize and manage our resistance, how to engage in feedback conversations with confidence and curiosity, and even when the feedback seems wrong, how to find insight that might help us grow. It's also about how to stand up for who we are and how we see the world, and ask for what we need. It's about how to learn from feedback.

Receiving feedback sits at the intersection of our drive to learn and our longing for acceptance. These needs run deep, and the tension between them is not going away. But there's a lot each of us can do to manage the tension — to reduce anxiety in the face of feedback and to learn in spite of the fear. We believe that the ability to receive feedback well is not an inborn trait but a *skill* that can be cultivated. It may be fraught, but it can be taught. The rewards are great, and the stakes have never been higher.

## THE FEEDBACK CHALLENGE

## Three Triggers

Not all feedback is difficult. Most of us do just fine with positive feedback. Then there's the tougher stuff — the feedback that leaves us confused or enraged, flustered or flattened. This kind of feedback triggers us: Our heart pounds, our stomach clenches, our thoughts race and scatter. We usually think of that surge of emotion as being "in the way"— a distraction to be brushed aside, an obstacle to overcome.

But pushing our triggered reactions aside or pretending they don't exist is not the answer. Triggers are obstacles, but they are also information that can help us locate the source of the trouble. Understanding our triggers and sorting out what set them off are the keys to managing our reactions and engaging in feedback conversations with skill.

Because feedback givers are abundant and our shortcomings seemingly boundless, we imagine that feedback can trigger us in a googolplex of ways. Actually, there are only three: Truth, relationship and identity triggers.

**1. Truth Triggers** are set off by the substance of the feedback itself — it's somehow off, unhelpful or simply

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untrue. In response, we feel indignant, wronged and exasperated.

**2. Relationship Triggers** are tripped by the particular person who is giving us this feedback. All feedback is colored by the relationship between giver and receiver, and we can have reactions based on what we believe *about* the giver or how we feel *treated* by the giver. Our focus shifts from the feedback itself to the audacity of the person delivering it.

**3. Identity Triggers** are all about *us*. Whether the feedback is right or wrong, something about it has caused our identity to come undone. We feel overwhelmed, threatened, ashamed or off balance.

Our triggered actions are not obstacles because they are unreasonable but because they keep us from engaging skillfully in the conversation. Receiving feedback well is a process of sorting and filtering — of learning how the other person sees things; of trying on ideas that at first seem a poor fit; of experimenting. And of shelving or discarding the parts of the feedback that in the end seem off or not what you need right now.

And it's not just the receiver who learns. During an effective conversation, the feedback *giver* may come to see why their advice is unhelpful, and both parties may understand their relationship in a clarifying light. But it's nearly impossible to do this from inside our triggers. And so we make mistakes that cause us to put potentially valuable feedback into the discard pile, or just as damaging, we take to heart feedback that is better left at the curb.

## TRUTH TRIGGERS

# Separate Appreciation, Coaching and Evaluation

Sometimes, when receiving feedback, we feel grateful and energized. At other times we feel hurt and defensive. Our responses don't always hinge on the skill of the giver or even what is being said. Rather, they're based on how we are hearing what's said and which kind of feedback we think we are getting.

### Three Kinds of Feedback

When we use the word "feedback," we may be referring to any of three kinds of information: appreciation, coaching and evaluation.

**Appreciation:** Appreciation is fundamentally about relationship and human connection. At a literal level, it says "thanks," but it also conveys "I see you," "I know how hard you've been working," and "You matter to me." Appreciation motivates us — it gives us a bounce in our step and the energy to redouble our efforts.

**Coaching:** When you ask your boss for more direction, you're asking for coaching. Coaching is aimed at trying to help someone learn, grow or change. Coaching can be sparked by two different kinds of needs. One is the need to improve your knowledge or skills in order to build capability and meet challenges. In the second kind of coaching feedback, the giver is identifying a problem in your relationship: Something is missing; something is wrong. The giver wants the situation to change, and often that means they want *you* to change. The "problem" the coaching is aimed at fixing is how the giver is feeling or a perceived imbalance in the relationship.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation tells you where you stand. It's an assessment, ranking or rating. Evaluations are always in some respect comparisons, implicitly or explicitly, against others or against a particular set of standards. They align expectations, clarify consequences and inform decision making.

### Beware Cross-Transactions

One of the key challenges of feedback conversations is that wires often get crossed. There are two ways this happens:

1. A receiver may want a different type of feedback from the type given.
2. A giver may have intended one kind of feedback, but the receiver interprets it incorrectly.

Once crossed, these wires are tough to untangle. Then add this complication: There is always evaluation in coaching. On the receiving end, we constantly funnel the advice we're given into either evaluation or coaching slots. How you hear your girlfriend's suggestion to "call your mother" depends on your relationship (was she reminding or chiding?).

Often, feedback offered as coaching is heard as evaluation. ("You're telling me how to improve, but really, you're saying you're not sure I'm cut out for this.") So what helps? Two things keep us on track:

**Get aligned: Know the purpose and discuss it:** Cross-transactions happen when the giver and receiver are misaligned. The fix? Discuss the purpose of the feedback explicitly. Be explicit about what you think the conversation is about, and be explicit about what would be most helpful to you. Then discuss, and if you each need something different, negotiate. Remember: Explicit disagreement is better than implicit misunderstanding.

**Separate evaluation from coaching and appreciation:** The bugle blast of evaluation can drown out the quieter melodies of coaching and appreciation. The evaluation conversation needs to take place first. We can't focus on how to improve until we know where we stand.

## First Understand

We don't want to take feedback that's invalid or unhelpful, and so, quite reasonably, we screen for that. We listen to the feedback with this question in mind: "What's wrong with this feedback?" And as it turns out, we almost always find something.

Why is wrong spotting so easy? Because there's almost always *something* wrong — something the feedback giver is overlooking, shortchanging or misunderstanding. And givers compound the problem by delivering vague feedback, making it easy for us to overlook, shortchange and misunderstand what they are saying. But in the end, wrong spotting not only defeats wrong feedback; it defeats learning.

### Understanding Is Job One

Before we determine whether feedback is right or wrong, we have to first *understand* it and move beyond vague feedback labels (e.g., "Don't be so selfish"; "Act your age."). In part, this is because the giver and receiver interpret the label differently. For example, the coaching feedback "Be more confident" can be heard as "Give the impression that you know things even if you don't," but what was meant was "Have the confidence to say you don't know when you don't know."

To clarify the feedback under the label, we need to be specific about two things: 1) where the feedback is coming from and 2) where the feedback is going. Feedback givers arrive at their labels in two steps: they oberve data, and they interpret that data — they tell a story about what it means. Feedback givers rarely share the raw observations behind their labels because they simply aren't aware of them. It's up to you to help them sort it out. Your goal is to not ignore or dismiss the interpretation. Data is crucial, but so is interpretation.

Once you know where the feedback is coming from, you need to figure out where it is going. Is it advice from coaching feedback? Or is it consequences and expectations from evaluative feedback? It's up to the receiver to ask the necessary questions in order to move the conversation forward.

## See Your Blind Spots

There is always a gap between the self we think we present and the way others see us. We may not recognize ourselves in others' feedback, even when everyone else would agree that it's the conventional wisdom about who we are and how we are.

### Three Blind-Spot Amplifiers

Others observe things about us that we literally can't observe about ourselves. Our blind spots are their hot spots. But differing observations are only part of the blind-spot disconnect. There are three dynamics that amplify the gap between how we see ourselves and how others see us.

**Emotional Math:** We subtract certain emotions from the equation: "That emotion is not really who I am." But others count it double: "That emotion is *exactly* who you are."

**Situation Versus Character:** When something goes wrong and I am part of it, I will tend to attribute my actions to the situation; you will tend to attribute my actions to my character.

**Impact Versus Intent**: We judge ourselves by our intentions, while others judge us by our impacts.

### What Helps Us See Our Blind Spots?

Instead of dismissing the feedback or the person giving it to you, use these thoughts as a blind-spot alert. When you notice yourself wondering, "What's wrong with them?" make sure your next thought is "I wonder if this feedback is sitting in my blind spot?"

Ask the feedback giver, "What do you see me doing or failing to do that is getting in my own way?" If you respond with genuine curiosity and appreciation, they'll be able to paint you a picture that is clear, detailed and useful.

Other important skills are looking for patterns ("Where have I heard this before?") and getting a second opinion from another person by asking, "Here's feedback I just got. It seems wrong, but I wonder if this is feedback in a blind spot? Do you see me doing this?" When you invite others to be an honest mirror, you're able to see yourself in the moment and see the blind spots.

## RELATIONSHIP TRIGGERS

## Don't Switchtrack

We are often more triggered by the person giving us feedback than by the feedback itself. In fact, relationship

triggers may be the most common derailers of feedback conversations.

When a person offers feedback that trips off a relationship trigger for the other person, that person then breezes past the feedback and instead talks about how he feels. This creates a situation where two people are giving feedback, and no one is receiving it. The conversation gets smoothly shifted, as if by railroad switch, from one topic to two. Soon we are each heading in our own direction, moving farther and farther apart. A key part of the dynamic here is that the person receiving the original feedback is unaware that they are changing the subject.

Switchtracking has two potential impacts. The potentially positive impact is that the second topic being put on the table may be important — sometimes more important than the feedback that triggered it. The negative impact is that because we now have two topics, the conversation gets tangled. With switchtrack conversations, we don't *realize* there are two separate topics, and so both get lost as we each hear the other person through the filter of our own topic.

To get better at managing our impulse to switchtrack, we have to get better at understanding the relationship triggers that create these impulses: Two key kinds of relationship triggers include what we think about the giver (Are they credible? Do we trust them? Did they deliver our feedback with good judgment and skill?) and how we feel treated by the giver (Do we feel accepted? Appreciated? Like our autonomy is respected?).

### Relationship Triggers: What Helps?

There are three moves that can help us manage relationship triggers and avoid switchtracking. First, we need to spot the two topics on the table. Next, we need to give each topic its own conversation track (and get both people on the same track at the same time). Third, we need to help givers be clearer about their original feedback, especially when the feedback itself relates to the relationship.

## Identify the Relationship System

A system is a set of interacting or interdependent components that forms a complex whole. A relationship is a system, a team is a system, and an organization is a system. When something goes wrong in a system, we each see part of the system (and some things the other doesn't), and these observations are not randomly distributed between us.

Systems insight number one is that each of us is part of the problem. Systems insight number two is that each of us sees only part of the problem (the part the other person is contributing).

If we're going to have better conversations about feedback, we need a better handle on the ways that the giver and receiver (and often others) are contributing to the problem under discussion. This helps us move beyond blame and defensiveness and toward understanding, and it also produces more durable solutions.

### Take Three Steps Back

Let's look at systems from three different vantage points — from close in, medium range and wide angle. Each view enables us to see different patterns and dynamics in our relationship systems.

- **One Step Back: You + Me Intersections.** From here, we see the interaction of you and me as a pair. What is the particular you + me combination that is creating a problem, and what is each of us contributing to that?
- **Two Steps Back: Role Clashes.** This view expands our perspective to look at the roles each of us plays. Roles are often a crucial but largely invisible reason we bump into each other.
- **Three Steps Back: The Big Picture.** From this frame of reference we can view the entire landscape, including other players, structures and processes that guide and constrain the choices we each make and the outcomes we get.

### The Benefits of a Systems Lens

There are a number of advantages to understanding feedback through a systems lens.

- **It's More Accurate:** Systems thinking corrects for the skew of any single perspective.
- **It Moves Us Away from Needless Judgment:** Systems thinking eases the temptation to treat other people's contributions to the problem as *automatically* "bad" or "wrong" or "blameworthy."
- **It Enhances Accountability:** A systems approach helps you clarify your choices and actions and how they created the outcomes you got. Then when you say you're accountable, it actually means something.
- **It Helps Correct Our Tendency to Shift or Absorb:** A systems perspective helps us fight the tendencies of the blame absorber (it's all my fault) and blame shifter (it's not my fault) in ourselves, and understand them in others as we talk about feedback.

**It Helps Us Avoid "Fixes that Fail":** When we don't understand the system that produces the feedback, we often make the mistake of trying to adjust just one component of the system and expect that to solve the

whole problem. We're often tempted to solve a short-term problem without taking account of the long-term cost.

## IDENTITY TRIGGERS

## Learn How Wiring and Temperament Affect Your Story

People respond differently to feedback due to their wiring — their built-in neural structures and connections. Our wiring affects who we are and how intensely feedback affects us. A lot goes on in both your brain and body when you experience mood-altering feedback. Your "reaction" to feedback can be thought of as containing three key variables:

- **Baseline** refers to the default state of well-being or contentment toward which you gravitate in the wake of good or bad events in your life.
- **Swing** refers to how far up or down you move from your baseline when you receive feedback. Some of us have extreme reactions to feedback; we swing wide. Others remain on an even keel even in the face of disquieting news.
- **Sustain and Recovery** refer to duration, how long your ups and downs last. Ideally, we want to sustain a boost from positive feedback and recover quickly from a negative emotional dip.

### Wiring Is Only Part of the Story

The danger when talking about brain wiring and temperament is that we take our wiring as fixed and assume it is destiny. While aspects of our temperament are inherited, there is ample evidence that they are not fixed. Wiring changes over time in response to our environment and experiences.

And perhaps more important, our wiring — whether fixed or not — tells only part of the story. About 50 percent of our happiness is wired in. Another 40 percent can be attributed to how we *interpret* and respond to what happens to us, and about 10 percent is driven by our circumstances. If we're going to get better at handling tough feedback, we have to understand how emotions interact with and distort the stories we tell about what the feedback means. How you *feel* in a particular moment has a big impact on the story you tell yourself. If you're already in a dark mood, you'll tell a darker story. Similarly, our thoughts impact our feelings — a dark story leads to a dark mood. What this means is that we can change our stories by working to change either our feelings *or* our thoughts.

## Dismantle Distortions

One of the biggest blocks to receiving feedback well is that we exaggerate it. To understand and assess feedback, we need to dismantle distortions. This means finding ways to turn down the volume on the ominous soundtrack playing in our minds so that we can hear the dialogue more clearly.

To learn from upsetting feedback, we need strategies to counter the distortions that we bring to it, whether during the feedback conversation itself, beforehand (in preparation) or afterward (in reflection). Here are five strategies:

**Be prepared, be mindful:** Recognize your feedback footprint — your reactive behavior in response to criticism. Your footprint will show up strongest when the feedback is toughest. Think through in advance the worst that could happen, try it on emotionally, and reason through the possible consequences. This activity reminds you that whatever the outcome, you'll be able to manage.

**Separate the strands: feeling/story/feedback:** Pull apart the different threads of the conversation so you can see each element clearly, and observe how each is affecting the other. Ask the following questions: "What do I feel? What's the story I'm telling (and inside that story, what's the threat)? What's the actual feedback?" The goal of untangling everything is to see what you've woven in that does and doesn't belong. The more clearly you see that, the better you can keep the feedback in perspective.

**Contain the story:** When we think about the consequences of feedback, the goal is not to dismiss them or pretend they don't matter. The goal is to right-size them, to develop a realistic and healthy sense of what might happen and respond in line with these reasonable possibilities.

**Change your vantage point:** Anything that helps you see a dark situation from a different point of view is beneficial. Try to imagine you're an observer to the situation, or try looking back on your life from the vantage point of 10 or 20 years from now.

**Accept you can't control how others see you:** We care how others see us, but we have to accept that how others see us is something we can't control. Don't dismiss others' views of you, but don't accept them wholesale either. Their views are *input*, not *imprint*.

## Cultivate a Growth Identity

Feedback can contradict or undermine the story we tell about who we are, or it can confirm our worst fears about ourselves. Learning profitably from feedback is not only

about how we interpret the feedback; it's also about how we hold our identity.

Identity is the story we tell ourselves about ourselves — what we're like, what we stand for, what we're good at, what we're capable of. Our ability to metabolize challenging feedback is driven by the particular way we tell our identity story. Some people tell their identity story in ways that cause their identity to be brittle, while others tell their identity story in ways that allow it to be robust. Those in the latter group are predisposed to treat feedback not as a threat to who they are but as a core aspect of who they are.

We can all *learn* to hold our identity in ways that make us more resilient. We can't control the feedback that life throws at us, but we can make some specific shifts in assumptions that can improve our ability to take it in, stay balanced and learn from it. Two shifts are crucial:

**Give up simple identity labels, and cultivate complexity:** While our identities are built from the endless complexity of our life experiences, we tend to hold these identities as simple labels, such as "I'm competent, I'm good, I'm worthy of love." Simple labels are simple because they are all or nothing. All-or-nothing identities present us with this choice: Either we can exaggerate the feedback, or we can deny it. To accept being realistically complex, keep in mind that you will make mistakes, you have complex intentions, and you have contributed to the problem.

**Move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset:** Do you consider your traits and abilities fixed and finished? Or are they always evolving and capable of growth? Researchers argue over the precise degree to which various traits are fixed or elastic. But the bottom line is this: People do get better when they apply themselves, and people apply themselves when they believe they can get better.

### Move Toward a Growth Identity

Here are three practices to cultivate a growth identity:

- **Sort toward coaching:** As feedback receivers, we are always sorting feedback into coaching and evaluation bins. While identity is easily triggered by evaluation, it is far less threatened by coaching. Hear coaching as coaching and not as evaluation. You'll notice your identity reaction is diminished or gone.
- **Unpack judgment from the evaluation suitcase:** As we figure out how to take in evaluation, it's helpful to break evaluation itself down into three constituent parts: assessment, consequences and judgment. Accurate assessment is valuable, and the consequences are important to understand. Others' judgments? You may find certain judgments illuminating; other judgments you'll rightly dismiss. It's one person's interpretation, and you've got other interpretations, including your own, to weigh it against.
- **Give yourself a "second score":** Let's imagine you get a negative evaluation. Imagine that there is an invisible second evaluation. After every low score you receive, give yourself a "second score" based on how you handle the first score. Even when you get an F for the situation itself, you can still earn an A+ for how you deal with it. In the long term, the second score is often more important than the first. A strong second-score identity can help you deal with even the most challenging life events.

## FEEDBACK IN CONVERSATION

# How Good Do I Have to Be?

Is it okay to not only turn down feedback but to say, "I don't even want to *hear* it"? It is. In fact, being able to establish limits on the feedback you get is crucial to your well-being and the health of your relationships.

Being able to say no is not a skill that runs parallel to the skill of receiving feedback well: it's right at the heart of it. If you can't say no, then your yeses are not freely chosen. You need to make your own mistakes and find your own learning curve. Sometimes that means you need to shut out the critics for a while so you can discover who you are and how you are going to grow.

### Three Boundaries

Rejecting feedback can be as easy as saying no thanks or walking away or simply saying nothing. But sometimes it's more complicated. You say no, but the unwanted feedback keeps coming. It's not just bothersome, but destructive. This is when it helps to be explicit about boundaries. Here are three kinds of boundaries to consider:

**I May Not Take Your Advice:** I'm willing to listen. I'll consider your input. But I may not end up taking it.

**I Don't Want Feedback About That Subject, Not Right Now:** You are not only establishing your right to decide whether to take the feedback, you're establishing your right to be free of the topic altogether.

**Stop, or I Will Leave the Relationship:** If you can't keep your judgments to yourself, then I will leave the relationship or change its terms.

### Turning Away Feedback with Grace and Honesty

The biggest mistake we make when creating boundaries is that we assume other people understand what's going on with us. In setting up boundaries, you want to reject feedback clearly and firmly while at the same time affirming the relationship and showing that you appreciate the intention. Be specific about three things:

**The Request:** What, exactly, are you asking of them?

**The Time Frame:** How long is the boundary likely to be in place?

**Their Assent:** Don't assume that they understand you or agree. Instead, ask.

Finally, it's only fair to let them know what's at stake. You need to let them know what happens if they can't or won't observe the boundaries.

## Pull Together: Feedback in Organizations

Just as there are no perfect learning people, there are no perfect organizational feedback systems. Anyone choosing and implementing a particular system must grapple with the inevitable tensions and tradeoffs associated with it.

Leadership and HR are typically the ones expected to "do something" about the problem of performance management. They're the most visible and likely to have their hands in the design. Here are three things they can do that help:

**Don't just trumpet benefits; explain tradeoffs:** When selecting or implementing an organizational system, provide the following to employees at all levels: clarification of the various goals of the system; explanation of why this system was chosen over others; transparency about potential costs as well as benefits; description of the costs of half-hearted participation; and an invitation for ongoing discussion, suggestions and feedback.

**Separate appreciation, coaching and evaluation:** A single performance management system can't effectively communicate all three kinds of feedback. Each requires different qualities and settings to be effective.

**Promote a culture of learners:** If you want learning to be valued, it has to be embedded in what is talked about with admiration, what is highlighted as important in the war stories that are told, what matters when it comes to visible projects and key promotions.

### What Team Leaders and Feedback Givers Can Do

What can one manager or team leader do to improve an organizational culture?

**Model learning; request coaching:** In many ways, the manager *is* the culture: If they're good learners, they set the tone for a learning culture. Hold people accountable by showing them how you hold yourself accountable. Ask for coaching and help, not only from those above you but from peers and subordinates.

**As givers, manage mindset and identity:** As you think about whether and how to give feedback, factor in the long-term consequences for the receiver as well as your own short-term identity discomfort.

**Be aware of how individual differences collide in organizations:** Part of the challenge of feedback in organizations is due to differences in temperament and wiring. Our sensitivity to feedback can affect not only how we receive feedback but also how we give it.

### What Receivers Can Do

Regardless of context or the company you keep, you are the most important person in your own learning. Your organization, team or boss might support or stifle feedback. Either way, they can't stop you from learning. You don't have to depend on your annual review or your boss's willingness to mentor. You can watch, ask questions and solicit suggestions from coworkers, customers, partners and friends.

Like the tension between learning and acceptance for each of us as individuals, the tensions at the heart of organizational feedback are a permanent condition. The ideas presented can help manage these tensions and get us talking to one another. But while learning is a shared responsibility, in the end, it comes down to you.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Thanks for the Feedback,* you'll also like:

1. ***Coaching for Breakthrough Success*** **by Jack Canfield, Peter Chee.** Canfield and Chee offer a practical guide of 30 principles that every coach needs to succeed.

2. ***How to Say Anything to Anyone*** **by Shari Harley.** With her clear and specific roadmap in hand, Harley enables you to create the career and business relationships you really want.

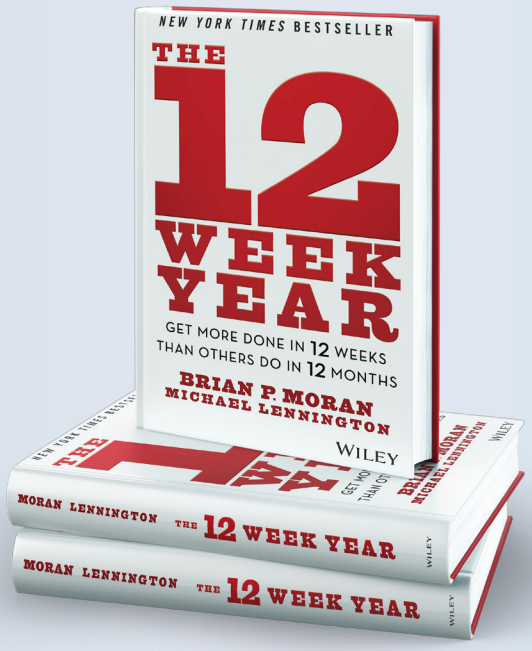
3. ***The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave*** **by Leigh Branham.** Branham translates the needs and desires of employers and employees into a common language.

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# The 12 Week Year

Brian P. Moran and Michael Lennington

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## The 12 Week Year

By Brian P. Moran and Michael Lennington

Brian P. Moran, President and Founder of The 12 Week Year, has 30 years of expertise as a corporate executive, entrepreneur, consultant and coach. His background as a corporate executive combined with his experience as an entrepreneur positions him with a unique skill set to help individuals and organizations grow and prosper.

Michael Lennington has been a consultant for most of his adult life and has worked in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and The Middle East. Currently, he spends his professional time coaching his entrepreneurial clients, writing about leadership and business execution, and building simple tools for people seeking to accomplish more.

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# The Secret to Help You Perform at Your Best

Brian P. Moran and Michael Lennington open their book by laying out a core concept that has been the focus of their thinking, work, and coaching for more than a decade. The "vast majority" of people never live up to their full potential. Most of us fail to set goals at all and among those of us that do, many of us fail to achieve them. What if that could change? What would happen in your life in particular if every single day you woke up and "performed up to your full potential?" The coauthors of ***The 12 Week Year: Get More Done in 12 Weeks Than Others Do in 12 Months*** are on a mission to "work with individuals, teams and corporations" in "unlocking the secret to helping individuals and organizations perform at their best and live the life they are truly capable" of living.

In a way, each of us has two separate and distinct lives. There is the life that we actually live day in and day out and then there is the life that we have the potential to live. Deep within us, we all know that there is a better life available to us, but we are not sure how to actualize it. In order to have that life, we have to show up as our very best selves each day. We have to avoid procrastination, conquer our doubts and fears, and "make things happen." The aim of this book is to teach you "how to increase your current results by four times or more, in a very short amount of time. You will learn exactly what it takes to perform at your best every day" in order to "produce staggering results."

The authors promise that this journey is not overly complicated. In fact, it is "quite uncomplicated." However, that does not mean it is easy. It will take effort and focus and, most importantly, execution. Moran and Lennington say that "effective execution is the path to accomplish the things you desire." ***The 12 Week Year*** provides the guidance to make that happen.

## Redefining the Year

Corporations and individuals are programmed to organize their goals on an annual basis. The authors assert that annual planning and goal setting is often a barrier to high performance. They are not saying that annual plans can't impact our lives and corporations in a positive way. Annual plans are better than

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no plans at all. However, their research and experience shows that performance is limited by this annual process.

As the authors worked with an increasing number of clients, they noticed a pattern. People believed that "their success or failure" was a reflection of what they had or had not achieved over the course of the year. "They set annual goals, created annual plans, and in many cases broke the goals down into quarterly, monthly, and sometimes even weekly plans." Despite the careful consideration and planning that went into it and the weekly, monthly, and quarterly benchmarks, people judged and "evaluated their success annually." The authors say that this is a trap and they call it "annualized thinking."

There are several flawed premises that make this annualized thinking problematic. The first is the false sense of security that an entire year brings. When the year begins, we think that we have "plenty of time in the year to make things happen." January comes and goes and although we may be behind where we planned to be, we think we've got tons of time to catch up. This continues into March and then May and so on. Before we know it, the end of the year is approaching. We continually believe that there is plenty of time left and thus, we "lack a sense of urgency."

The next flawed premise, which goes hand in hand with the first, is that many of us believe that our results will improve as the year goes on. If we fall short in the first quarter, we believe with all of our hearts that next quarter will be better. The authors write, "It's as if something magical will happen in late September or October that will result in a substantial increase." We are kidding ourselves. If the effort we have put in has not yielded the results we hoped to achieve early in the year, why would the results suddenly and dramatically improve? We want to believe they will and with the gift of time on our side, we kick the ball down the field hoping that our hail mary will result in a score at the end of the annual game.

The truth is that "every week counts! Every day counts! Every moment counts!" The key to working and performing at your absolute best is to rid yourself of this annualized thinking and "instead focus on shorter time frames." Annualized thinking "blinds people to the reality that life is lived in the moment and that ultimately success is created in the moment." Annualized thinking makes us complacent and we believe that things can be put off for later, even though putting things off is exactly what will stop us from reaching our goals.

You only need to look at year-end pushes in corporations to see this point clearly illustrated. As the end of the year draws ever closer, the entire organization rallies to generate the business needed to hit the annual target. Any tasks or activities that are not directly linked to the accomplishment of those goals are put aside to deal with once the goal is met. For the last months or weeks of the year, there is a "frantic rush to end the year strong and kick off the new one with gusto." What would happen if people could harness this energy and focus and determination every month, every week, and every single day of the year? That is the power of periodization and the essence of the 12 week year.

Moran and Lennington recognized that they could apply the principle of periodization to organizations and personal lives to increase success and achievement. They developed a "12 week approach to periodization" that allows people to "focus on the critical factors that drive income and life balance." Long-term goals actually get achieved when daily actions and thinking are chosen based on what is important with a sense of urgency. Actions are "manifestations of your underlying thinking" and actions are what lead to results.

The authors propose redefining the year as 12 weeks instead of 12 months. Forget the old way of thinking in terms of quarters. There are only 12 week periods followed by the next 12 week period on and on, "ad infinitum." Here are the implications of such thinking. All the buzz and energy and focus and excitement usually reserved for December is now happening all the time. This new 12 week year sets a deadline far sooner and you will act accordingly. The end game is just 12 weeks away, period after period, so in order to celebrate your success, you will get into gear and take daily action towards hitting that quickly-arriving target.

## Three Principles, Five Disciplines

Now that you understand the shift from 12 month to 12 week periods, it's time to integrate the set of "fundamental elements" that are essential to high performance and the 12 week year. The authors believe there are eight elements that they organize into three principles and five disciplines. "Those eight elements are: Vision, Planning, Process Control, Measurement, Time Use, Accountability, Commitment, and Greatness in the Moment." The principles are organized in this manner as doing so allows "you to better understand how they operate as a holistic system," which leads to more consistent and simple application.

The three principles that determine how effective and successful you can be with the 12 week year are:

1. Accountability: At its core, accountability is ownership. It is the ability to take responsibility for an outcome, even when that outcome is unfavorable. It relies on an internal understanding that each of us has "freedom of choice" in how we spend our time, in the actions we take towards achieving our goals, and in how we react when circumstances beyond our control impact our lives. Those who are accountable will always be asking themselves, "What more can I do to get the result?" Accountable people own the result, regardless of circumstance.

2. Commitment: Commitment exists as a future effect of accountability. While accountability refers to owning an action or result in the present, commitment refers to making a promise to perform an action in the future. They go together. The principle of commitment allows you to build strong relationships, keep promises to yourself and others, grow your character, improve your esteem, and drive your personal success.

3. Greatness in the Moment: Most people think of greatness as the result of some set of actions or achievements. In relation to living in a 12 week year, greatness should be viewed as that moment "when an individual makes the choice to

**You have to make choices in each moment to be great and the results will be confirmation of your greatness, not attainment of it.**

do what is necessary to become great." You have to make choices in each moment to be great and the results will be confirmation of your greatness, not attainment of it.

If you are able to fully embrace these three principles, you will have a solid foundation from which to grow your "personal and professional success."

The above principles are a means to tackle your way of thinking in relation to the 12 week year. The five disciplines provide a framework for the actions you take. They are focused on execution, which is a key component to top performance. The five disciplines are:

1. Vision: You need a clear and compelling vision that encompasses what you want to achieve on the business side that is also aligned with your personal aspirations. This vision paints a picture of what the future will look and feel like. It provides "a powerful emotional connection that promotes a sustained commitment and continual action."

2. Planning: Despite the near-magical effectiveness attributed to vision boards, it is not enough to create the vision, tack a reminder on the wall, and hope for the best. You have to put a solid plan in place that will move you ever closer to your target. An effective plan must include "top-priority initiatives and actions needed to achieve the vision" that is "constructed in a manner that facilitates effective implementation."

3. Process Control: Once a plan is in place, you have to further break things down to daily events and actions. Process Control refers to the "set of tools and events that align your daily actions with the critical actions in your plan." The point of putting these controls in place is to ensure that your time is spent strategically on activities that make money.

4. Measurement: Your process has to be regularly measured for effectiveness. You have to be able to determine if the process is working or if you need to make some tweaks. Measurement allows you to gain insight and feedback on the effectiveness of your daily actions and events. To be effective, your measurement should show "both lead and lag indicators" so you can accurately determine what needs to be done to correct the process.

5. Time Use: Everything comes down to how you use your time. You can have the most clear vision, thoroughly developed plan, airtight processes, and on-point metrics to analyze your results and still not reach your goals. It all means nothing if you do not spend your time intentionally. We live in a world that is ripe with distractions. Focused and productive use of your time is critically important to achieving your goals.

The five disciplines are interconnected. The authors point out that each affects the other. For example, a vision allows you to "live a life by design" while a life that is lacking that vision is being lived by chance. If you create a vision but fail to construct a plan, "then you have a pipe dream." A vision and plan without process control leads to frustration. Your days will be inconsistent with equally inconsistent results. If you are too afraid to measure your success then you will never make necessary changes to improve your results. Finally, "if all of those are in place but you are not intentional about what you say yes to and what you say no to, then "the day is controlling you" instead of you controlling the day. Every discipline impacts the other, for better or worse.

*The 12 Week Year* presents readers with a life-changing way to think about time and organize life for better performance and results. As with any endeavor that seeks to shake up the way you live and work, you are certain to encounter barriers and challenges along the way. The authors acknowledge that openly and present readers with common pitfalls they can expect to encounter, such as the need for immediate gratification. Through gentle but persistent reminders, they show readers that all they need to do is follow the vision, plans, and processes they've put in place to overcome those obstacles and reach goals.

The big carrot that motivates people to switch to a 12 week year is the promise that doing so will bring results that outperform a typical 12 month year by four times. That is a bold statement, to be sure. The authors back it up with the experiences of clients and corporations who have implemented this ideology and made that happen. For those who are pushed to perform with the promise of a reward of a more personal nature, such as a mini-vacation or a weekend getaway with friends, the authors note that hitting milestones four times per year instead of annually is the perfect set up for such a situation. With shorter intervals, you will push harder, stay the path more consistently, and have that much more to celebrate at the close of each period. An excellent resource for anyone looking to create quantifiable change in short order, *The 12 Week Year* shows readers how to get way more from the time you're given.

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# The 5 Choices

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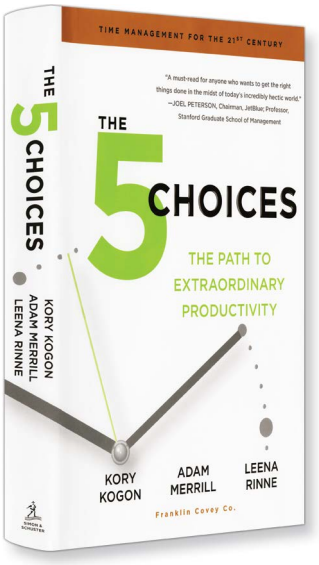
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Career & Self-Development

# The 5 Choices

## The Path to Extraordinary Productivity




by Kory Kogon, Adam Merrill, and Leena Rinne

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Every day brings us a crushing wave of demands: a barrage of texts, emails, interruptions, meetings, phone calls, tweets, blogs—not to mention the high-pressure challenges of our jobs—that can be overwhelming and exhausting. The sheer number of distractions can threaten our ability to think clearly, make good decisions, and accomplish what matters most, leaving us worn out and unfulfilled.

Now, FranklinCovey offers powerful insights drawn from the latest neuroscience and decades of experience and research in the time-management field, to help you master your attention and energy management through five fundamental choices that will increase your ability to achieve what matters most to you. *The 5 Choices* is time management redefined for the 21st century: it increases the productivity of individuals, teams, and organizations and empowers you to make more selective, high-impact choices about where to invest your valuable time, attention, and energy.

*The 5 Choices* will not only increase your productivity, it will also provide a renewed sense of engagement and accomplishment. You will quickly find yourself moving beyond thinking, "I was so busy today; what did I achieve?" to feeling confident, energized, and extraordinarily productive.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- New ideas on how to be more productive.
- How to get clear and focused on the things that matter to you.
- How to increase your capability in decision management.
- To recognize that you have the ability to do extraordinary work.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE 5 CHOICES**

**by Kory Kogon, Adam Merrill, and Leena Rinne**

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## Introduction: Feeling Buried?

It has never been easier in human history to accomplish great things. A big part of that is the dramatic increase in the power of technology to make us more productive.

With advances in interconnectivity, processing power, and wearable technologies that measure everything from the temperature of our skin to the flow of our blood, the interaction between how we live and think and the technologies we use becomes more inseparable each day.

Yet, paradoxically, these same technologies can make it harder than ever to accomplish the things that are important to us.

People feel overwhelmed like never before. They feel buried in things to do and simultaneously drained of their capacity to do them. They feel agitated and anxious, stressed when they are working and stressed when they are not. It is a semipermanent state of worried restlessness that pervades our culture and drains us of confidence and joy. This is the widespread human cost of the *productivity paradox*, and it will only become more challenging for people who do not know how to tame the paradox and turn it to their advantage.

The productivity paradox revolves around three critical challenges: we are making more decisions than ever, our attention is under unprecedented attack, and we are suffering from a personal energy crisis.

Everyone has the capability to do extraordinary work. Everyone has the potential to go to bed at the end of each day feeling satisfied and accomplished. However, in order to do this, you will need to directly address the three challenges. You will need to increase your capability in three areas: decision management, attention management, and energy management.

The good news is there are 5 Choices that, when consistently made, will help you do this. They are proven and they work.

## DECISION MANAGEMENT

## Choice 1: Act on the Important, Don't React to the Urgent

In a knowledge-work world where we are paid to think, create, and innovate, a primary tool for creating value is our brain. Before we go further, let's gain a little understanding about how our brain works. We will simply talk about two basic parts of the brain: the Reactive Brain and the Thinking Brain.

The Reactive Brain is the lower part of your brain. It is the source of the fight-or-flight response and is also where we process our feelings and emotions. Most of these processes happen automatically, before we have time to think about what's going on. Scientists say the Reactive Brain was built to ensure our survival as far back as prehistoric times.

In contrast, the upper part of our brain, the Thinking Brain, is the place where we make conscious and very intentional decisions. It is often called the *executive function*, because it is where we can consciously direct and override other impulses from the Reactive Brain. It is where we act rather than react. It is where we choose to pay attention to something in a deliberate, thoughtful way.

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The good news from neuroscience is that, with practice, we can actually rewire our brains to be more thoughtful and discerning about our choices. It is in those discerning choices that we determine the quality, joy, and happiness of our lives.

### On Being Intentional

In order to be truly productive, we need to gain the habit of being conscious and intentional about everything we do. In today's world, we can't just go on "I have a busy life" autopilot and expect to end up where we want to be.

To be truly productive and make those high-value decisions, it helps to have both a framework and a process. FranklinCovey's Time Matrix provides the framework, and Pause-Clarify-Decide (PCD) provides the process.

The Time Matrix model illustrates that people spend their time, attention, and energy in one of four quadrants, depending on how urgent and important their activities are.

### The Time Matrix™

Visualizing it as the top left quadrant, Quadrant 1 (Q1) is the *quadrant of necessity* and contains things that are both urgent and important. It is filled with crises (like a hospital visit), emergency meetings, last-minute deadlines, pressing problems, and unforeseen events. If you spent a lot of time in Q1, you may feel productive and energized, but if you spent too much time there, you may also burn out. Although it is often necessary to be in Q1, it is rarely where we do our best, most creative, and highest-value work, even though it may feel like it at the time.

In investment terms, you usually get out what you put in. It's essentially a break-even quadrant for the attention and energy you spend there. In the overall scheme of things, it's not a solid foundation for enduring success.

Visualizing it as the lower left quadrant, Quadrant 3 (Q3) activities are urgent but not important. This is the *quadrant of distraction*. Because things here are urgent, they feel like they need to be done now, but really, there are no serious consequences if you don't do them. Here you find needless interruptions, unnecessary reports, irrelevant meetings, other people's minor issues, unimportant emails, tasks, phone calls, status posts, and so on.

In terms of the time and energy you invest here, you get less than you put in. It's a negative return on your attention and energy.

Visualizing it as the lower right quadrant, the things in Quadrant 4 (Q4) are neither urgent nor important. We call this the *quadrant of waste*. We really shouldn't be here at all, but we often get so burned out fighting the battles in Q1 and Q3 that we go here to escape. This is where we let our brains go completely unconscious and fill our time with excessive relaxation, television, gaming, Internet surfing, gossip, and other time-wasters.

Visualizing it as the upper right quadrant, Quadrant 2 (Q2) is the quadrant of extraordinary productivity. Activities are important but not urgent. This is the *quadrant of extraordinary productivity* because here is where you take charge of your own life and do things that will make a real difference in terms of accomplishments and results.

Unlike the other quadrants, where things come at you, you have to consciously choose to be in Q2. You have to use the thinking part of your brain to discern the things of highest value and act on them.

Time spent in Q2 reduces the crises and problems in Q1 because you will intentionally spend time planning, preparing, and preventing. You will lower your level of stress because you'll intentionally decrease the amount of time you spend in Quadrants 1, 3, and 4. Most important, you will know that you are making progress on the things that really contribute and add value to your work and life every day.

Bottom line: The time and energy you invest in Q2 generates returns that are much higher, even exponentially higher, than that which you put in. That's why it's the quadrant of extraordinary productivity.

### The Essential Skill for Getting Into Q2: Pause-Clarify-Decide

The key to getting into Q2 is to pause your Reactive Brain long enough to clarify what is coming at you, then decide whether it is worth your time and energy. We refer to this vital process as Pause-Clarify-Decide (PCD).

Our ability to do this comes into play in the moment of choice when we consciously decide whether or not we will do something. Using PCD basically means that we take a brief instant to ask the question, *Is it important?* This simple process helps us get the return on the moment we desire.

Again, this is not how our brain is naturally wired to react. With an understanding of the Time Matrix, you have a framework to help you clarify whether or not something is important. When something comes up, you can ask yourself, *Which quadrant is this in?* Then you can make a better decision about what to do with it.

To sum up, we should remove any self-imposed activities in Q1, Q3, and Q4, reclaiming that time to invest in Q2. We can create a Q2 culture by speaking the language of importance and improve our ability to focus on Q2 together.

## Choice 2: Go for Extraordinary, Don't Settle for Ordinary

With all the challenges of life and all we have on our plates, it's a legitimate question to ask why we should set the standard at extraordinary. Extraordinary means going to bed at the end of each day feeling satisfied and accomplished. It's about accomplishing those things that add the most value to your work and life.

### What Are the Most Important Roles in Your Life Today?

Roles are where life happens. Roles are so fundamental to human identity that when we ask people to tell us about themselves, they always answer in terms of roles: "I am an engineer." "I am Jane's spouse." The trick is to keep them all in balance. The way each of your roles plays out in life affects all your other roles.

Our brains naturally organize information in categories like roles, so organizing your life in terms of roles makes a lot of sense. One of the most effective Q2 things you can do is to narrow your focus. Take the time to identify the few most important roles in your life today; evaluate how you think you are doing in each of them; then define what success looks like in each role. This will give your brain the targets it needs to greatly enhance the decisions you make every day.

### Making Your Roles Extraordinary

Now that you have identified and evaluated your most important roles, how do you transform them into something that will guide you and help you make better decisions about where you invest your attention and energy every day? The key is to determine your vision of success in each role. You can accomplish this by doing two things:

- **Anchor your purpose and passion in a Q2 Role Title.** Take a few minutes, and think broadly and deeply about one of your roles. Really go to town on what a vision of success could look and feel like. Capture it in the title of that role. For example, change the title of "Housemate" to "Supporter," or "Photographer" to "Visual Artist." If you like it, then keep going with your other roles.
- **Craft a Q2 Role Statement for each role.** For each role, craft a brief statement that articulates the outcomes you are after and the essential activities or methods that will help you achieve them. You are not looking for a goal; you are looking for a combination of outcomes and activities that will guide your goals, plans, and decisions. A formula that can be helpful is, "As (role title) I will (extraordinary outcomes) by (activities.)"

In addition to connecting to the motivational centers of our brains, clarifying our roles and goals taps into the deepest purposes we have in our lives. Our roles embrace our most significant relationships, our most profound joys, and our highest contributions and aspirations.

The Q2 time you take to think deeply about your Q2 Roles and Goals will help you tap into these deeper wells of motivation and high performance.

## ATTENTION MANAGEMENT

## Choice 3: Schedule the Big Rocks, Don't Sort Gravel

There is a big difference between thinking about what is important and actually accomplishing it. If we don't have robust planning disciplines and processes in place to execute what is important, then our Q2 Role Statements and Q2 Goals are merely wishful thinking.

### The Big Rocks and the Gravel

In this comparison, the Big Rocks represent the important Q2 priorities in our lives. These are the activities that come from our Q2 Role Statements and Goals. These activities are in contrast to gravel, which represents all the little things that fill up our lives—email, phone calls, laundry, less important priorities, and so on. These things take time and attention away from the Big Rocks.

You can never get ahead by just sorting through the gravel faster. Decide what is most important, and get those activities "in the bucket" before the week begins.

### A Critical Pre-Planning Tool: The Master Task List

In the 21st century, the Master Task List is probably one of the most vital tools we can use to keep our attention focused on Q2. The purpose of a Master Task List is to keep things in a single trustworthy tracking system so that you can get them out of your brain and stop worrying about them.

The basic rule for using a Master Task List is this: When something comes up that you might need to do, it goes either on the floor or on the list, but not in your head. This means you use your discernment skills right away and decide what to do with it, but don't leave it floating in your consciousness, taking up valuable working memory.

Without a Master Task List, you are more prone to have sleepless nights, tossing and turning as all the things you

need to do and haven't written down run through your mind like a broken record. You also feel the pressure of knowing that tomorrow a whole new slew of decisions and demands are coming your way and that you have nowhere to put them.

### Q2 Planning and the 30/10 Promise

If you spend 30 minutes each week and 10 minutes each day in Q2 Planning, you will dramatically increase your ability to be and feel accomplished at the end of every day.

Q2 Planning is a process where you take some time to quiet your mind and work from the Thinking Brain to consciously and intentionally load the Big Rocks into your weeks and days *first*, to make sure they get accomplished.

When you take some time to reduce the noise, get centered, and plan from a more thoughtful state, you will have an entirely different experience when you ask yourself, *What is most important?* The answers you get will be clearer and more accurate.

The 30/10 Promise will transform the time you spend everywhere else and dramatically increase your ability to feel accomplished at the end of every day.

### Weekly Q2 Planning

Find a quiet place, and take at least 30 minutes *before* your week starts to

**1. Review Your Roles and Goals.** Take some time to consciously connect with the vision for your life that you captured in your Q2 Role Statements and Q2 Goals. Don't skimp on this step. It will rekindle your deepest passion and highest motivations.

**2. Schedule the Big Rocks.** Ask the Big Rocks Question, *What are the one or two most important things I can do in this role this week?* When it comes to Big Rocks, you should only pick the top one or two most important things for each role. There is only so much you can do, so set the bar high, and pick the ones that will really make a difference.

**3. Organize the Rest.** With the Big Rocks securely in place, you can calendar other important things that need to be done—things that aren't critical, but need to be taken care of, like the laundry!

These three steps to Weekly Q2 Planning will ensure that your week is productive.

### Daily Q2 Planning

To plan your coming day, find a quiet place, and take at least 10 minutes to review the day you just completed, and

**1. Close Out the Day.** Look back at your tasks you scheduled. Is everything done? If not, then reschedule the unfinished items at some other time on your calendar, delete them if they are no longer important, or leave them on your Master Task List. The idea is to be accountable to yourself each day.

**2. Identify the Few "Must-Dos."** A must-do is something so important that you probably wouldn't end your day without getting it done.

**3. Organize the Rest.** Organize everything else around your must-dos.

## Choice 4: Rule Your Technology, Don't Let It Rule You

Our current technologies—from sticky notes to personal computers, from email to video conferencing, the Internet, the cell phone, text messaging, wireless networking, wearable devices, eBooks—can provide such immediate responsiveness to our actions that we can be caught up in responding to texts and tweets, thinking we are being productive, when in fact we are only being distracted.

Of greater concern, we may be missing the really important things like building strong relationships, collaborating on important problems, or doing some thoughtful and focused work. In the end, these things are far more important.

### Swordlessness and the First Principle

Sometimes we get caught up in the idea that if we just have the right tool—the right software, the latest gadget, and so on—then all our problems will be solved. No external device can replace our own minds.

When we embrace the idea that no tool will automatically save us, we act from what 16th-century Japanese sword master Yagyu Munenori called the "first principle," which is to be independent in every possible way and to keep your presence of mind in all circumstances. The notion is that when we get stuck on a particular tool, we create an attachment in our mind that keeps us from moving fluidly and responding appropriately to different circumstances as they arise. This is important, because the tools and technologies change all the time, but the first principle of conscious choice does not.

The first thing we need to do is get all our information organized. Basically, there are four kinds of information you need to manage—two of them you can act on; the other two are information that you file away for future reference.

- **Appointments.** Things you need to do at specific times.
- **Tasks.** Things you need to do that are not yet scheduled.
- **Contacts.** Information about people you interact with.
- **Notes/Documents.** Other information you want to keep track of that does not fall into one of the other three categories.

We call these categories the *Core 4*. The first task to bring order to the chaos is to learn to see incoming information so you know exactly where and how to access it anywhere, anytime. How you do that will depend on the system you use, but as a guideline, use the *Rule of One*.

This means having one Master Task List, one calendar, one contacts list, and one system for your notes or documents. This can be personalized, as long as you stay true to the principles managing the Core 4. You can design your system to be all paper, all digital, or a combination of both.

## The 3 Master Moves

These are 3 Master Moves that can help you leverage the features of your technology systems to dramatically increase their effectiveness as you deal with the incoming and organize your Core 4.

**Master Move 1: Win Without Fighting.** Win Without Fighting is based on the principle of automation. The goal is to confidently automate as many of these decisions as possible so that our brains do not have to use up energy on the mundane, useless, or unnecessary.

One of the most powerful ways to automate your incoming email is to master the rules or filter functions of your email program. Rules or filters can automatically put many of your emails where you want them to go before they ever hit your inbox!

Of course, you should be aware of any corporate guidelines that govern how you handle and delete email. But by taking some Q2 time to set up these rules, you can save thousands of hours later on.

Once you set up your rules or filter system, continue to be intentional about keeping it current. Continue to discern your new messages through the eyes of the quadrants. Look for patterns to automate and opportunities to prioritize. When you see one, take just an additional second or two to make a rule for those messages; then they will be handled smartly from that time forward.

**Master Move 2: Turn It Into What It Is.** The goal of this move is to eliminate any additional Q3s and Q4s from your inbox that rules and filters did not handle, then effectively manage the Q1s and Q2s.

To understand Master Move 2, realize that every email is really only made up of one or more of the Core 4. When you look at each email with this new pair of glasses, you realize that the information in the email already has a place set up in your Core 4 system where such information should go. Once you've identified each of the Core 4, then *immediately* Turn It Into What It Is, and get it out of your inbox. The basic rule here is to touch it once.

Having an uncluttered inbox gives you an uncluttered mind. There is nothing more peaceful than seeing your number of messages reduced to just a few and knowing that everything is where it belongs.

**Master Move 3: Link to Locate.** Have you ever been late for a meeting because you were scrambling to find all the resources you needed? When you are busy looking for stuff, which quadrant are you in? Generally, it's a self-imposed Q1. We have higher-value uses for our time, and that is what Master Move 3: Link to Locate helps you solve.

The paradigm shift for this move is to see the relatedness of information and to proactively connect resources among the Core 4 as much as you can ahead of time so you don't have to search for them later.

Even though many search functions have become quite effective for digital information, the more key information you have organized and linked, the lower your risk of not finding what you need, the greater your confidence, and the sooner your attention can be focused on the important work at hand.

Linking can be done by

- Inserting the actual file.
- Inserting an active hyperlink.
- Creating a text-based link.

The number of links you add is entirely up to you. The point is not to get obsessed with links, turning this into a Q4 activity, but to proactively create some well-chosen cross-references that will help you connect different items ahead of time.

In the end, the most important asset in any conflict is a calm and undisturbed state of mind. This allows you to act fluidly and with discernment in the moment of choice. While the skills are important, even more vital is your own ability to transcend your natural impulse to respond to every beep and buzz, and to consciously act from a centered, clear-thinking Q2 perspective.

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT

# Choice 5: Fuel Your Fire, Don't Burn Out

We have targeted the brain as the number-one asset and tool that must be optimized. To be extraordinarily productive, we need to create a way of life that is intentional, consciously making the highest-value decisions virtually every waking minute of the day.

Our mode of life today—constant stress, poor diet, lack of exercise and sleep—leads to what scientists call *exhaustion syndrome.* The rest of us call it burnout. We continually push through each day, postponing the renewal time our brains and bodies need. By contrast, extraordinarily productive people consistently recharge.

### Five Drivers of Mental and Physical Energy

To maintain your ability to carry out your great purposes and make the day-to-day decisions that get you there, you need the sustainable physical energy that comes from a well-cared-for and well-functioning body to fuel the brain with lots of oxygen and a constant flow of glucose.

The 5 Energy Drivers are

- **Move.** It's not just about exercise. Your body was meant to move. Take brain breaks periodically throughout the day. Get up from your chair at least every 90 minutes to walk around, even if it's just to the beverage area.
- **Eat.** Just as you don't put dirt in your car's gas tank, you shouldn't put poor-quality food in your body. The idea is that when you fuel your brain with the right amount of whole, natural foods in regular intervals throughout the day, you provide your brain and body with a steady supply of glucose and other nutrients that help you function at your best.
- **Sleep.** Getting a good night's sleep is not just enjoyable, it is vital to extraordinary productivity. One study indicated that individuals who had gone 17–19 hours without sleep performed like someone with a .05 percent blood-alcohol level. Showing up at work sleep-deprived is like showing up drunk.
- **Relax.** Learning to turn off the stress responses in our brain and act from a more centered, relaxed state can have a tremendous impact on our performance. Recovery strategies are as unique as the individual, and sometimes the right strategy is to reduce the load of work or even take some significant time off. Recovery and relaxation might be as simple as a 15-minute break to change your surroundings.
- **Connect.** Spending time building and maintaining meaningful relationships is actually nourishing to our brain. We may not think of relationships as a way to increase mental energy, but they are. Not only is the brain wired for movement, but it is also an inherently social organ.

Each of these 5 Energy Drivers is powerful in its own right. If you invest time in even one of them, you will get a quick and clear benefit. However, the real power comes when you have a regular pattern of life that honors all 5 Energy Drivers. When you have a healthy pattern of movement, eating, sleeping, relaxing, and connecting, you are strengthening yourself as a complete human being.

# Conclusion: Your Extraordinary Life

More than anything, extraordinary productivity is a question of being conscious in the moment. And it doesn't take much to change the equation. It's taking small steps each day to cultivate this habit in our own lives. It's being aware of our surroundings, the people we work with, and the opportunities for high-value decisions about where we spend our time, attention, and energy.

When we live our days this way, we find they are much more rewarding and fulfilling. We know that we have been involved in things that matter and have done them well. We can feel accomplished at the end of every day. And in the end, we may be surprised to find out that a series of extraordinary days has given us an extraordinary life!

## SPECIAL SECTION: BEING A Q2 LEADER

# What Leaders Can Do

A culture is particularly sensitive to the actions of its leaders. Almost by definition, they have a disproportionate impact on how a culture feels and what people do. But leadership is not just a position; in fact, some of the most powerful leaders in the world held no real formal position of power (think Mother Teresa or Gandhi). By this definition, leadership is a choice, not a position.

The suggestions here are ideas about how you can exercise leadership in each of the 5 Choices to create a Q2 culture among those you work with.

### Choice 1: Act on the Important; Don't React to the Urgent

- Share your commitment to a Q2 culture with those around you. Be explicit about what you are trying

to achieve and how it can help everyone feel more accomplished at the end of every day.

- Allow for strategic pauses. Create an environment where it is safe for people to press the pause button and make good decisions about where they are spending their time, attention, and energy.
- Reward Q2. Rewarding heroics is part of the corporate DNA. Nurture the higher-return Q2 culture by seeking out those accomplishments that get at root causes and prevent Q1s or projects that are completed on time and on budget without a rush.

### Choice 2: Go for Extraordinary; Don't Settle for Ordinary

- Share your own leadership Q2 Role Statements and Q2 Goals with others. By articulating your priorities to your team, it helps them calibrate their own efforts to make these things happen. As a leader, you cannot (and should not) try to do everything.
- Ask others to define Q2 Role Statements and Q2 Goals. If you are a formal leader and can do this, ask people on your team to come up with the contribution they want to make in their role and share it with you. The conversations you have can be both illuminating and motivating.
- Use the *From X to Y by When* formula when setting up organizational goals. Build on the current brain science when formulating your goals. The specificity of this formula will help you and everyone else make better decisions around where to spend your time, attention, and energy.

### Choice 3: Schedule the Big Rocks; Don't Sort Gravel

- Create organizational Q2 Time Zones. As a leader, you should be involving others and looking months, quarters, and even years into the future. If you are not, then you are not doing your job.
- Do Q2 daily huddles. The principles of Q2 Planning can apply in a variety of settings once you have the Q2 mindset and language.
- Get good at what you do a lot of. Spending Q2 time with your team to set up a good process around your most vital and repeatable work can help everyone in your organization stay focused in Q2.

### Choice 4: Rule Your Technology; Don't Let It Rule You

- Create an organizational Q2 manifesto. As a leader, take the initiative to set clear guidelines and protocols about how to handle email, texts, and so forth. Help your team know how to prioritize communications from you and those they sent to others.
- Get your technology right. Pick technologies that help people organize the Core 4. Give them the necessary tools and policies to make critical information available when and where they need it.

### Choice 5: Fuel Your Fire; Don't Burn Out

- Take care of yourself. Being an effective organizational leader takes all kinds of mental and emotional energy. Take time to take care of yourself. You will be a better leader if you do.
- Provide healthy food options. This one is sure to be a hit at the office. Start providing healthy options for people at work. When you see people alert and working rather than in sugar comas during afternoon meetings, you will see that it is money well spent.
- Create brain breaks. When you can see that a meeting has gone on too long, recommend that everyone take a brain break. Get up and walk around. Take a moment for humor and fun. These things provide a bit of renewal in your work and enliven the culture.
- Encourage and foster an ethos of health and energy in your culture, versus the tough-guy, work-all-hours-hero, make-it-happen culture that we often cultivate to get things done. Sure, there are times we choose to work long hours. That's reality. But if the culture celebrates strung-out, bleary-eyed, I-worked-all-night-again patterns of behavior, you are setting yourself up for crises, and what's worse, you are draining your culture of the creative energy you need to discover the next innovative idea that takes you to the next level or lifts you above the competition.

  Instead, celebrate people who choose to bring their very best energy to the workplace—they are the best employees you have.

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The 5 Choices,* you'll also like:

1. ***The 80/20 Manager* by Richard Koch.** Learn to be much more efficient and effective by applying the 80/20 Principle—just 20 percent of our time, effort, and key decisions generate 80 percent of our success.

2. ***Extreme Productivity* by Robert C. Pozen.** Pozen explains how to determine your highest priorities and match them with how you spend your time.

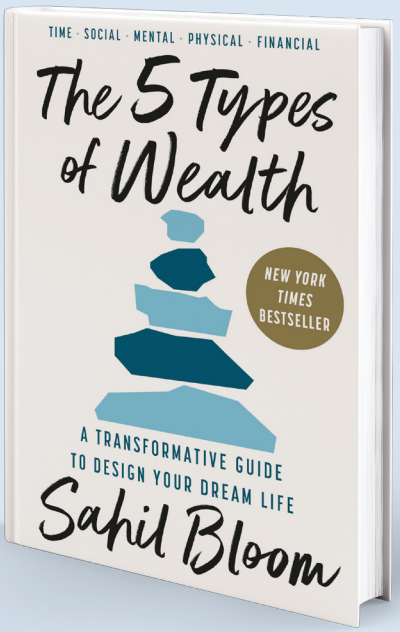
3. ***The Age of Speed* by Vince Poscente.** Poscente illustrates why harnessing the power of speed is the ultimate solution for those seeking less stress, less busyness, and more balance.

· Book 189 of 269 ·

# The 5 Types of Wealth

Sahil Bloom

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The 5 Types of Wealth

**A Transformative Guide to Design Your Dream Life**

*By Sahil Bloom*

Sahil Bloom is an inspirational writer and content creator, captivating millions of people every week through his insights and biweekly newsletter, The Curiosity Chronicle. Bloom is a successful entrepreneur, owner of SRB Holdings, and the managing partner of SRB Ventures, an early-stage investment fund. Bloom graduated from Stanford University with an MA in public policy and a BA in economics and sociology. He was a four-year member of the Stanford baseball team.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Achieving Lasting Happiness

History is replete with characters, real and imaginary, who have reached the pinnacles of financial success but have found their lives lacking and broken in ways that render that financial wealth all but tertiary. Financial wealth can aid in the building of a life of security and abundance, but in and of itself, it will not make a life joyful or fulfilling. Financial wealth can be incredibly beneficial, but it is not sufficient. In the end, Sahil Bloom builds his book, ***The 5 Types of Wealth: A Transformative Guide to Design Your Dream Life***, around the five types of wealth that build a fulfilling and full life. The fifth pillar, financial wealth, is helpful insomuch that it facilitates the other four: time wealth, social wealth, mental wealth, and physical wealth. Bloom dedicates ample time in his book to explore all five of these pillars.

## Time Wealth

The first type of wealth Bloom explores is time wealth, and one of the key principles he discusses in regards to this type of wealth is that we simply do not know how much of it we have left, and we often grossly underestimate the time we do have left with those we love. This became apparent to Bloom when a friend pointed out that, based upon the age of Bloom's parents and the fact that he goes to visit them about once a year, he will likely only see his parents fifteen more times in his life. Once Bloom internalized this truth and discussed it with his wife, he and his wife decided to upend their lives and move to be closer to their family. Once Bloom was able to conceptualize and think about the time he realistically had left with those he loves, he was able to make decisions that would help him maximize this time. It changed the course of his life, and this realization of his is used as the basis for many of the decisions he made later in his life, and it also appears numerous times throughout his book. In regards to time, Bloom believes, "It's later than you think." And it is not just parents with whom people need to be cognizant of time with. The only person that people spend more time with as they age is their spouse. Most of the time a person spends with their children is when the children are under the age of eighteen; time with friends drops considerably in young adulthood, and while time with co-workers stays fairly consistent during the working years, it drops off obviously and dramatically at the age of retirement.

Bloom states, "Once you embrace this harsh reality [that time left with people is often less than we think] investing in your Time Wealth means using the awareness of time's impermanence to spark action. It is building the power to direct your attention to the things that truly matter (and ignoring the rest). It is achieving control over your time - how you spend it, where you spend it, and whom you spend it with." One problem with time that Bloom observes is the Red Queen Effect. This refers to a character in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass and refers to the general human maxim that the more a person has, the more they want. He then notes examples of people who got what they always wanted in life only to realize that what they wanted is less rewarding and satisfactory than they envisioned it would be.

Bloom then turns to the first of his three pillars of time wealth: awareness. To describe people's inherent understanding of time wealth, he considers how it would be very hard to find a young person willing to trade places with Warren Buffett despite the overwhelming financial wealth that Buffett has. This is because Buffett was 94 years old at the time Bloom wrote his book. There is only so much more time a 94 year old would have left to enjoy his wealth. On the other hand, Bloom believes that Buffett might be willing to trade places with someone many decades younger with far less wealth. This shows how most people consider financial wealth far less important than time wealth when presented with such choices. Bloom describes this as a paradox: "You are subconsciously aware of the immense value of your time, but you regularly and consciously take actions that disregard that value." Bloom's second pillar of time wealth is attention, described as "the state or act of applying the mind to something," and it is essential to progress. Bloom believes that "concentrated attention leads to focused, extraordinary outcomes," and he believes it is important for people to focus their concentrated attention on what is most important to them, saying no to things that are not dedicated to these most important projects. Bloom's third pillar is control which he describes as "the ultimate goal." He believes that there is a goldilocks component to free time, with both too little and too much of it proving problematic, and he believes the ultimate goal is "the freedom to allocate time according to your preferences – to choose how you spend it, where you spend it, and whom you spend it with."

## Social Wealth

"Her one regret was that she hadn't spent more time deepening relationships with the people she cared about." These words were spoken by a man named Erik who lost his wife to cancer. Describing his relationship with his wife, Eric said that they fell in love quickly at the start of their relationship, but that it reached its highest peak when his wife, Aubrie, was actively dying of cancer. Having gotten rid of everything extraneous, they could focus exclusively on their relationship. Bloom takes Aubrie's wish for more time with those closest to her as an insight for those still living. For Erik, life was difficult before Aubrie's diagnosis. He often felt a tension between his job and his role as a father. While everybody has obligations, Eric became convinced that "we must remember what's behind our desire to do those things in the first place; we must remember our center. And it's not the money."

Bloom encourages his reader to consider who the most important people are in their lives and what they are doing to show those people their importance. This brings Bloom to his three pillars of social wealth: depth, breadth, and earned status.

Depth refers to a "connection to a small circle of people with deep, meaningful bonds." Bloom refers to this group as the people who will be sitting in the front row at your funeral. He believes that honesty, support, and shared experience support these relationships. While oftentimes family members are part of this circle, this is not necessarily the case. He writes, "where you find it in your life is not important; what is important is that you find it." Breadth refers to the larger circle of relationships in your life that provide "support and belonging." The closest fifteen or so relationships a person has forms their depth relationships, and all the other relationships belong to this category of breadth and "they can provide varied support such as networks for career opportunities, enjoyment, warm connections to new romantic partners, and more." People can find these relationships through shared activities, spiritual activities, and through networking. The final pillar of social wealth is earned status. Bloom explains that people seek out status. This is not a bad thing even though the phrase often has negative connotations. What matters is not a desire for status but rather how one goes about achieving it. All too often, people try to purchase this type of status or join groups where other esteemed people belong. He writes, "The allure of these symbols is not that you respect and admire the people who have them; it is that you imagine the respect and admiration that you will receive once you have them." He goes on to write, "to avoid falling into this trap, you have to identify the people you truly respect and admire and then determine what specific assets or traits elicit that respect and admiration." Too often people focus on bought status rather than on earned status, the latter of which he describes as "the real respect, admiration, and trust received through hard-won treasures."

## Mental Wealth

The next facet of wealth Bloom moves on to is mental wealth. The question he asks regarding mental wealth is "what would your ten-year-old self say to you today?" And to open this section of his book, he discusses a man named Hank Behar who was a seemingly ordinary man, "but the sum of his ordinary starts to look rather extraordinary." Hank was a screenwriter and director in Hollywood who had a successful marriage to an actress named Phyllis and numerous children and grandchildren. For his ninetieth birthday, Hank asked to be able to sit in on an astronomy class at Harvard. Bloom writes that "Hank's day at Harvard is much more than just a heartwarming story. It carries a deeper set of insights and lessons with science-backed implications for how you can live a healthier, more fulfilling life well into your sunset years."

Bloom considers curiosity to be "the foundation of a life of Mental Wealth," and he states that all people are born with a sense of curiosity and can find proof of it in their everyday lives. He believes that many people would find that the ten year old version of themselves would not be pleased to see where

> *Bloom asks, "Will you be dancing at your eightieth birthday party?" The answer to this question, he maintains, depends upon the actions you take today and in the coming years."*

their adult self ends up in life. Bloom says, the seeds of this discontent are sown in a person's twenties and thirties when they begin to focus almost exclusively on their job and then in a person's forties and fifties when people stop questioning the world and then in a person's sixties and seventies when they stop trying to learn new things because new skills and abilities do not seem necessary. He maintains that "it's not too late to reconnect" with your inner ten year old. He encourages his readers to consider what it is that would impress and excite the ten year old version of themselves and to consider pursuing that.

The three pillars Bloom establishes for mental wealth are purpose, growth, and space. By purpose, he refers to "the clarity of defining your unique vision and focus that creates meaning and aligns short- and long-term decision making." In short, it is "the unwillingness to live someone else's life." Purpose, he maintains, is what gives life meaning. It is what makes people distinct from one another. This requires people to connect "to something bigger than" themselves. People need not find a grand purpose; instead, when it comes to life purpose, the most important thing is that "it is personal" and belongs to you. When it comes to growth, Bloom goes back to Hank and Phyllis. Phyllis, at 88 years old, was still taking painting classes, "finding joy in the pursuit of new skills that have no utility beyond the sheer enjoyment she gets from the experience and personal growth." Growth depends upon a person's mindset, not innate aptitude. Anyone can develop a growth mentality. The final pillar of mental wealth is space. Bloom describes space through a paraphrase of Victor Frankl by saying, "your power is in the space that exists between stimulus and response." Most people are so busy that they consider finding space to be incredibly difficult. Bloom refers to John D. Rockefeller as someone who was good at finding space. He did this by walking around his gardens multiple times a day in order to allow himself time to breathe. Finding space does not require a person to stop the pursuit of worldly goods if that is what they want, but it does require intentionality.

## Physical Wealth

Bloom asks his readers to consider their eightieth birthdays when it comes to physical wealth as he asks them, "Will you be dancing at your eightieth birthday party?" The answer to this question, he maintains, depends in no small measure upon the actions you take today and in the coming years. Bloom considers three pillars for physical wealth. These are movement, nutrition, and recovery. These do not require superhuman abilities or resources, but rather they require a person to take consistent and mindful steps towards cultivating a strong body. When writing about physical health, he uses a videogame mindset where there are three levels, and people should not try to move to level three until they are first able to get comfortably from level one to level two.

In regards to movement, Bloom focuses on both "cardiovascular exercise and resistance training" as well as "activities that promote stability and flexibility." Cardiovascular training refers to both aerobic and anaerobic activity. Aerobic exercise helps the heart and lungs work well while in anaerobic activity, "the body breaks down stored sugars for energy" and generally refers to bursts of high intensity training followed by recovery. Strength training helps "to build overall muscle, power and strength" while "stability and flexibility" training helps make sure the body can "efficiently and effectively" move. At level one, a person should focus on movement for a minimum of thirty minutes a day while at level three additional and varied types of training are added.

Bloom then focuses on nutrition, urging readers to focus on some key principles. First is a person's caloric intake throughout the day which helps keep weight in a healthy range. Bloom then focuses on macronutrients urging people to focus on protein and clean food for the majority of foods eaten. At level one, a person should focus on eating "whole, unprocessed foods 80 percent of the time" while by level three, people focus on eating those foods all but five percent of the time while also focusing on protein and supplements.

Finally, in regards to recovery, Bloom focuses primarily on sleep. Sleep is crucial for memory, brain cleaning, the parasympathetic nervous system, and "emotional restoration and mood rebalancing." He maintains that people simply function better if they sleep better. It is not just the quantity of sleep that counts, however. The sleep environment and routine are also important for high quality sleep. At the most basic level, a person should focus on getting "seven to eight hours of sleep" while by level three, they should focus on improving their circadian rhythm while also focusing on "additional recovery methods."

## Financial Wealth

A key to understanding Bloom's position on financial wealth is a person's individual definition of what enough actually is. Without a clear idea of what a person is working for, they are at risk of falling prey to the Red Queen Syndrome mentioned earlier, always working for ever greater quantities of wealth with no clear end point in sight. He quotes an open letter Mark Twain wrote to a business tycoon of his time. In this letter, Twain refers to what he calls "the poverty of more" as he writes about how the tycoon gives up sleep and peace because he is always in a search for more money. "It isn't what a man has that consti-

tutes wealth," Bloom quotes Twain as saying. "No – it is to be satisfied with what one has; that is wealth."

As with his other four types of wealth, Bloom establishes four pillars of financial wealth: "income generation, expense management, and long-term investment." Income generations refers to "stable, growing income through primary employment, secondary employment, and passive streams." This needs to be combined with expense management in order to create a gap that can then be put into long-term investments "that compound effectively." To build or increase income, people can focus on building marketable skills. Then, a person can work to turn those skills into income. On the side of expense management, readers can focus on first creating and then sticking to a budget. They also can work on managing expectations by being aware of both the inevitability of inflation as well as of lifestyle creep where a person's "expectations… grow faster than [their] income." When turning to investing, Bloom reminds his reader of Warren Buffett's advice that "time, not average annual returns, is the most important factor." Bloom believes that "the most common and most attractive way to harness the full power of compound interest is to invest in and hold liquid market assets, such as stocks or low-cost diversified funds." Bloom breaks wealth into five levels. At the first level, a person is able to meet their most basic needs. By level three, basic needs are not much of a concern, and a person can focus on investing while still engaging in significant pleasures because of their money. By level five, a person has all pleasures available to them. They achieve financial independence as they no longer need an active income in order to maintain their current lifestyle.

Wealth is important to Sahil Bloom. Financial wealth, however, is not his primary focus because Bloom does not believe that financial wealth alone can bring a person peace or contentment. People need purpose and growth in their lives in order to feel direction, and it is social connection that makes life meaningful for almost all people. Bloom does not expect readers to go from an inert baseline in any of these areas of wealth directly to the upper echelons. Rather, he walks his reader through concrete steps that can be taken to get the reader to where they want to be. After describing his pillars of wealth, Bloom then explains concrete steps readers can take to level up in any of the areas of wealth they find themselves lacking in. This makes his book not only a philosophical discussion but a practical manual for developing a life of purpose and peace. Each tactic for growth is formulated to address a particular pillar that a person is lacking in, in order to help curb any overwhelm a person might have about approaching improvement in all areas at once.

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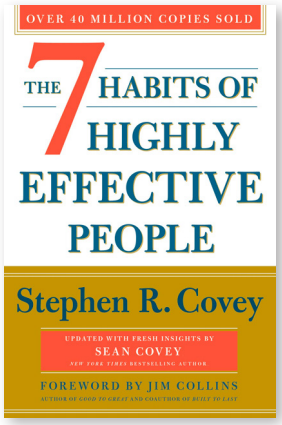
# The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Stephen R. Covey, Sean Covey

Executive Book Summaries®

# The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

30th Anniversary Edition




*by* **Stephen R. Covey** *with fresh insights by Sean Covey*

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For three decades, ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*** has transformed the lives of presidents, heads of state, CEOs, educators, students, parents, and families—millions of people of all ages and occupations. Presenting a principle-centered approach for solving both personal and professional problems, Stephen R. Covey reveals a step-by-step pathway for living with fairness, integrity, honesty, and human dignity. These principles give us the security to adapt to change and the wisdom and power to take advantage of the opportunities that change creates.

Now, this 30th anniversary edition commemorates the wisdom of the 7 Habits®, with personal insights from Covey's son, Sean Covey. In the current fast-paced world of nonstop information, 24/7 connectivity, and constant change, Sean Covey reflects on how the habits have been used over the past 30 years and offers valuable new insights on how we can apply the habits in our lives today. With these exciting additions, this edition refreshes the wisdom of the 7 Habits for a new generation of leaders.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why the 7 Habits are more relevant now than ever.
- The power of the inside-out approach.
- How the 7 Habits develop maturity by taking you from dependence to independence to interdependence.
- Exciting new data and stories illustrating how the 7 Habits change lives.

PART I: PARADIGMS AND PRINCIPLES

## Inside-Out

Almost all literature written about success in the first 150 years of this country focused on the Character Ethic—integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the Golden Rule.

Shortly after World War I, the basic view of success shifted to the Personality Ethic. Success became more a function of personality, of public image, attitudes and behaviors, skills and techniques that lubricate the process of human interaction. Elements of the Personality Ethic are beneficial and sometimes essential for success. But they are secondary, not primary traits. Many people with secondary greatness—i.e., social recognition for their talents—lack primary greatness or goodness in their character.

### The Power of Paradigm

A paradigm is the way we "see" the world—not in terms of sight but in perceiving, understanding, interpreting. Our paradigms, correct or incorrect, are the sources of our attitudes and behaviors, and ultimately our relationships with others. Both the Character Ethic and the Personality Ethic are examples of social paradigms. To try to change outward attitudes and behaviors does very little good if we fail to examine the basic paradigms from which they flow.

As we look at the problems we create as we live and interact with the Personality Ethic, we realize they are deep, fundamental problems. We need a deeper level of thinking—a paradigm based on the principles that accurately describe the territory of effective human being and interacting—to solve these deep concerns.

This new level of thinking is what ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*** is about. It's a principle-centered, character-based, "inside-out" approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness.

The inside-out approach says that private victories precede public victories, that making and keeping promises to ourselves precedes making and keeping promises to others. It says it is futile to put personality ahead of character, to try to improve relationships with others before improving ourselves.

Take outside challenges—a difficult boss, a personal addiction, a big opportunity—and start inside with yourself. All change starts with you.

### The 7 Habits in the Digital Age

Now is the greatest time to be alive. You can navigate with your phone's GPS instead of stopping at a gas station to ask for directions. You can fly to any city in the world. You can influence and reach millions around the globe instantly through books, blogs, videos, or a dozen other communication channels.

On the other hand, challenges have increased. Trust in our institutions is declining. Depression and anxiety have become a global epidemic. The family unit is hurting. Much of the world lives in terror, psychologically or literally.

For individuals, the pace of life is at light speed. We are connected 24/7. We are saturated in social media. Screens have taken over. There is too much information, too many choices. Something has to give.

This is why the 7 Habits are needed more than ever. They provide a sure foundation upon which you can build a better life. They offer stability in the midst of an increasingly crazy world. The 7 Habits give people their lives back. They remind us that, despite our psychic baggage or past, we have the power to choose. They encourage us to envision and pursue exciting purposes. They communicate that we have it within us to build quality relationships and find third alternatives that bring people together.

## The 7 Habits: An Overview

Our character is a composite of our habits, which form a powerful factor in our lives. Because habits are consistent, unconscious patterns, they constantly express our character and produce our effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

Habits also have a tremendous gravity pull. Breaking deeply imbedded, habitual tendencies such as procrastination, impatience, criticalness, or selfishness that violate basic human principles of human effectiveness involves more than a little willpower and a few minor changes in our lives.

### 'Habits' Defined

A habit is the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire:

- **Knowledge** is the theoretical paradigm, the ***what to do*** and the ***why***.
- **Skill** is the ***how to do***.
- **Desire** is the motivation, the ***want to do***.

Knowing you need to listen and knowing how to listen are

Being proactive means more than taking initiative. It means we are responsible for our own lives.

not enough. Unless you want to listen, it won't be a habit. Creating a habit requires work in all three dimensions. By working on knowledge, skills, and desire, we can break through to new levels of personal and interpersonal effectiveness as we break from old paradigms.

### The Maturity Continuum®

The 7 Habits move us progressively on a maturity continuum from **dependence** to **independence** to **interdependence**. On the maturity continuum, **dependence** is the paradigm of ***you***—***you*** take care of me; ***you*** come through for me, ***you*** didn't come through; I blame ***you*** for the results.

**Independence** is the paradigm of ***I***—***I*** can do it; ***I*** am responsible; ***I*** am self-reliant; ***I*** can choose.

**Interdependence** is the paradigm of ***we***—***we*** can do it; ***we*** can cooperate; ***we*** can combine our talents and abilities and create something greater together.

True independence of character allows us to act rather than be acted upon. It frees us from our dependence on circumstances and other people and is a worthy, liberating goal. But it is not the ultimate goal in effective living.

Interdependence is a more mature, advanced concept. As an interdependent person, you have the opportunity to share yourself with others and have access to the vast resources and potential of other human beings. Interdependence is a choice only independent people can make. Dependent people cannot choose to become interdependent. They don't own enough of themselves.

That's why Habits 1, 2, and 3 deal with self-mastery. They move a person from dependence to independence. They are the private victories, the essence of character growth. Private victories precede public victories. You can't invert that process any more than you can harvest a crop before you plant it. It's inside-out.

As you become truly independent, you have the foundation for effective interdependence. You have the character base from which you can effectively work on the more personality-oriented public victories of teamwork, cooperation, and communication in Habits 4, 5, and 6.

## PART II: PRIVATE VICTORY

## Habit 1: Be Proactive®

Being proactive means more than taking initiative. It means we are responsible for our own lives. Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. "Response-ability" is the ability to choose your response. Highly proactive people do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. Their behavior is a product of their own conscious choice, based on values, rather than a product of those conditions, based on feeling.

Reactive people are often affected by their physical environment. If the weather is good, they feel good. If it isn't, it affects their attitude and performance. Proactive people carry their own weather with them. They are still influenced by external stimuli, but their response, conscious or unconscious, is a value-based response or choice.

Our basic nature is to act and not be acted upon. As well as enabling us to choose our response to particular circumstances, this empowers us to create circumstances. Taking initiative does not mean being pushy, obnoxious, or aggressive but recognizing your responsibility to make things happen.

### What the Data Says

We now have a great deal of empirical data that backs up these ideas about proactivity. Stanford professor Carol Dweck found that most people have one of two mindsets, or paradigms, about their ability to learn: a "fixed" mindset or a "growth" mindset. People with a fixed mindset believe their intelligence and talent are fixed and that there's not much they can do about it. This is a reactive view of the world. "I'm not good at math" or "I've never been good with people, so why try?"

On the other hand, people with a growth mindset believe their basic abilities can be developed and enhanced through dedication and hard work, a belief that they are in the

driver's seat and can, therefore, improve and change. This proactive view of the world results in proactive thinking and language. "I need to get better with numbers," or "I can be more considerate of my partner."

### Circle of Concern® and Circle of Influence®

Another excellent way to become more self-aware regarding our own degree of proactivity is to look at where we focus our time and energy. We each have a wide range of concerns—health, children, problems at work, the national debt, and nuclear war. We could separate those from things in which we have no mental or emotional involvement by creating a "Circle of Concern."

Within our Circle of Concern are some things over which we have no control and some we can do something about. We could identify those in the latter group as within our Circle of Influence.

Proactive people focus their efforts in the Circle of Influence. The nature of their energy is positive, enlarging, and magnifying, causing their Circle of Influence to increase. Reactive people focus their efforts on the Circle of Concern, which results in blaming, accusing attitudes, and increasing feelings of victimization, causing their Circle of Influence to shrink.

### Direct, Indirect, and No Control

The problems we face fall in one of three areas:

1. Direct-control problems are solved by working on our habits, which are within our Circle of Influence. These are the private victories of Habits 1, 2, and 3.
2. Indirect-control problems are solved by changing our methods of influence. These are the public victories of Habits 4, 5, 6, and 7.
3. No-control problems involve taking responsibility to smile, to genuinely and peacefully accept and learn to live with these problems, even when we don't like them.

Dr. Martin Seligman, the distinguished director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, explores the benefits of focusing on your Circle of Influence. In his book ***Authentic Happiness***, he concludes that your happiness depends on (1) genetics, (2) circumstances, and (3) things you can control.

However, his research found that genetics and circumstances have less to do with happiness than the third category—the things you can control. To be happy, Seligman suggests, focus on things you can control.

For 30 days, work only in your Circle of Influence. Make small commitments and keep them. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem. When you make a mistake, admit it, correct it, and learn from it—immediately. Don't get into a blaming, accusing mode. Work on things you have control over.

## Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind®

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. You need to know where you are going in order to better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.

It's easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busyness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover it's leaning against the wrong wall.

### The Ladder of Success

At a Harvard Business School reunion, renowned management thinker Clayton Christensen told a story about his first job out of school at a prestigious consulting firm. As a young consultant, he worked hard, long hours Monday through Friday and was devoted to his colleagues and his clients. But juggling work and life demands became challenging.

One day one of his managers told him to clear his Sunday so that the team could prepare for an important client meeting on Monday. Clayton paused and told his manager he couldn't come in for the meeting. "I'm sorry," he explained, "I don't work on Sundays. That is the day that I reserve for my faith."

The manager walked away grumbling but came back a short while later. "Okay, fine. I've been able to move everything to Saturday. We'll have the preparation meeting then."

Clayton paused before responding. "I'm so sorry," he explained again. "I don't work on Saturdays. My wife and I made the decision long ago to prioritize our family on Saturdays. I spend Saturdays with my family."

His colleague stormed away for a third time before coming back with, "Do you happen to work on Fridays?"

Clayton explained how he got through that decision, which was the first of many that shaped his life for the better, propelled his career, and kept him near to his

family and faith. He sensed that if he were to compromise staying late or working weekends "just this once," it would become a slippery slope.

He learned over the years that it's easier to stick to your principles 100 percent of the time than 98 percent of the time.

### A Personal Mission Statement

The most effective way to begin with the end in mind is to develop a personal mission statement. It focuses on what you want to be (character) and to do (contributions and achievements) and on the values or principles upon which being and doing are based.

To write a personal mission statement, you must begin at the very center of your Circle of Influence. Whatever is at the center of your life will be the source of these four factors, which are interdependent:

**Security:** Your sense of worth, identity, emotional anchor, self-esteem, basic personal strength, or lack of it.

**Guidance:** Your source of direction in life, an internal frame of reference that includes standards or principles or implicit criteria that govern moment-by-moment decision-making and doing.

**Wisdom:** Your perspective on life, sense of balance, judgment, discernment, comprehension.

**Power:** The faculty or capacity to act, the strength and potency to accomplish something.

A mission statement takes deep introspection, careful analysis, thoughtful expression, and often many rewrites. Writing or reviewing a mission statement changes you because it forces you to think through your priorities deeply and carefully and to align your behavior with your beliefs.

By centering your life on correct principles, you create a solid foundation for development of the four life-support factors: Security comes from knowing that, unlike other centers based on people or things subject to change, correct principles do not change.

Wisdom and guidance come from correct maps, from the way things really are, have been, and will be.

The personal power that comes from principle-centered living is that of a self-aware, knowledgeable, proactive individual, unrestricted by attitudes, behaviors, and actions of others.

## Habit 3: Put First Things First®

Effective management is putting first things first. While leadership decides what first things are, it is management that puts them first, day by day, moment by moment. Learning to put first things first is hard. In fact, this is the habit, in general, that people struggle with most. Why is Habit 3 so hard? It's urgency, plain and simple. And the reality is most of us are addicted to urgency.

### The Time Management Matrix

We spend time in one of four ways, depending on the two factors that define an activity: urgent and important. Urgent means it requires immediate attention. Urgent things act on us and are usually visible. A ringing phone is urgent.

Importance, on the other hand, has to do with results. It contributes to our mission, values, and high-priority goals. We react to urgent matters. Important matters that are not urgent require more initiative, more proactivity.

Consider the Time Management Matrix:




The solution to overcoming your urgency addiction is to shift your paradigm from one of urgency to one of importance. Thanks to smartphones, social media, and the like, it is increasingly difficult to stay out of Quadrants I and III. In fact, data shows that 51.2 percent of our time is spent responding to things that are urgent.

People who live in Quadrant I can be called the Procrastinator. The results of spending too much time here include stress and anxiety, feeling burned out, and mediocre performance.

The Yes-Man is those who live in Quadrant III. They have a hard time saying no to anything that is urgent or popular, resulting in staying incredibly busy while getting nothing of importance done.

Quadrant IV is where a lot of people live. Meet the Slacker. Anything done to excess falls into Quadrant IV. Yes, chilling out and streaming a good movie is part of a healthy lifestyle. It's only when that single movie leads to two or three in a row that it becomes a waste of time, leading to feelings of guilt and apathy.

### Moving into Quadrant II

Quadrant II is where the Prioritizer lives. It's too bad, on average, that we only spend 30.8 percent of our time here. Time in Quadrant II results in improved relationships, high performance, and balance. This is where we make time to fix the screen instead of continually swatting the flies.

The return on the time and energy you spend in Quadrant II is exponential, while the return on Quadrant I is only equivalent to the input, and the return on Quadrants III and IV is virtually nonexistent.

The key to spending more time in Quadrant II is to reduce the amount of time you spend in Quadrant III, the quadrant of deception. QIII seems important because it is urgent, and thus, it tricks us. When time is scarce, we go through what psychologists call "tunneling," meaning we can only concentrate on the most immediate, often low-value tasks. This urgency mode causes us to lose about 13 IQ points.

The remedy to Quadrant III is to start saying no. Say no to responding immediately to every email or text that comes your way. Say no to serving on that community board when you might be neglecting your family or your health. Say no to filling out that report no one reads. The key to saying no is to have a deeper yes burning inside of you. Clarify the few things you do well, and then start saying no to everything else.

Of all that FranklinCovey has learned about time management after working with millions around the globe, one main idea stands out: Set aside 30 minutes each week to plan your week, and watch it change your life.

## PART III: PUBLIC VICTORY

## Habit 4: Think Win/Win®

Think Win-Win is an attitude toward life that says "I can win and so can you." It's not me or you, it's both of us. Think Win-Win is the foundation for getting along with other people. It begins with the belief that we are all equal, that no one is inferior or superior to anyone else, and no one needs to be.

Win/Win is not a technique; it's a total philosophy and one of the six paradigms of human interaction. This is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. It's not your way or my way; it's a better way, a higher way. The other five paradigms are as follows:

- **Win/Lose**. In leadership style, it is the authoritarian approach: "I get my way; you don't get yours."
- **Lose/Win**. This is worse than Win/Lose because it has no standards, no demands, no vision. In leadership, it's permissiveness or indulgence, being a nice guy, even if "nice guys finish last."
- **Lose/Lose**. When two Win/Lose people get together, the result is Lose/Lose. Both will become vindictive and want to get back at each other.
- **Win**. People with this mentality don't necessarily want someone else to lose. What matters most is that they get what they want.
- **Win/Win or No Deal**. If we can't find a solution that benefits us both, we agree to disagree agreeably.

Most situations are part of an interdependent reality, and then Win/Win is the only viable alternative of the five. Think of Win/Win as the bait of interpersonal leadership. Character is the foundation of Win/Win. There are three character traits essential to the Win/Win paradigm:

- **Integrity**—the value you place on yourself.
- **Maturity**—the balance between courage and consideration.
- **Abundance mentality**—there is plenty out there for everyone.

### Win-Win Is the Only Alternative

A few years ago, FranklinCovey was working with a telecommunications company that was laying cable in cities across the United States. In most cases, cities were eager to have the cable laid, in spite of the temporary disruptions it caused. One ma-

Habit 5 is powerful because it is right in the middle of your Circle of Influence. You can always seek first to understand.

jor city, however, was not keen on the idea. They knew that if they allowed one cable company to tear up the city, they would have to allow the same for every cable company that followed them. They did not want their city repeatedly torn up.

Negotiations ultimately came to a standstill. The city was not willing to proceed unless the company paid them a fee. The result would have been no cable access for the citizens (a loss for the city) and no access to thousands of customers (a loss for the company). They were headed for lose-lose.

One of the negotiators for the telecommunications company had recently been through the 7 Habits training. Under his leadership, the company went back to the city and said, "What if when we lay our cable, we also laid cable for two or three future providers? We'd turn over the cable access to them for less cost than what they would typically incur. Then the city would be torn up only once."

### The Better Choice

The city loved this idea. The cable was laid. When the competitors arrived, they were delighted to learn that the cable was already in the ground and at a much-reduced cost. So the city and its citizens won because their streets were not constantly torn up and they got their cable, and the competition won because they got their cable laid at lower rates.

But the biggest win was for the initial company: The two competitors paid them more than the installation had cost! They had laid their cable for free and picked up some spending money on the side.

## Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood®

Seek first to understand involves a deep shift in paradigm. We typically seek first to be understood. Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They're either speaking or preparing to speak.

Empathic listening is listening with the intent to understand. Empathic listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You look out through it, you see the world the way they see the world, you understand their paradigm, you understand how they feel.

Empathic listening is powerful because it gives you accurate data to work with. It takes time but nowhere near the time that it takes to back up and correct misunderstandings when you're already miles down the road.

As you learn to listen deeply to other people, you will discover tremendous differences in perception. You will also begin to appreciate the impact these differences can have as people try to work together in interdependent situations.

### Then Seek to Be Understood

Seek first to understand. . .then to be understood. Knowing how to be understood is the second half of Habit 5 and equally critical to reaching Win/Win solutions. Seeking to understand requires consideration; seeking to be understood takes courage. Win/Win requires a high degree of both. So it becomes important in interdependent situations for us to be understood.

Habit 5 is powerful because it is right in the middle of your Circle of Influence. You can always seek first to understand. That's something within your control. And as you do it, your Circle of Influence begins to expand. Habit 5 is also something you can practice right now.

Select a relationship in which you sense the emotional bank account (a metaphor for trust) is in the red. Try to understand and write down the situation from the other person's point of view. In your next interaction, listen for understanding, comparing what you are hearing with what you wrote down. How valid were your assumptions? Did you really understand that individual's perspective?

### Listening Empathically: For Leaders

Listening empathically gets even harder when you're in a leadership position, because people tend to defer to authority. That is why so many senior leaders are poor listeners and do most of the talking anytime they're in the room.

If you are in a leadership role, do a gut check. The next time you're in a team meeting, ask yourself, "What percent-

age of the words spoken in this meeting today came from my own mouth?" If there were six people in the room and 80 percent of the words came from you, that is a problem.

There is a time and place for empathic listening. Use empathic listening when the topic is important, sensitive, or really personal, like when a colleague needs career advice, or if you're having a communication problem with a loved one. These conversations take time and can't be rushed. A good rule of thumb is to use empathy any time emotions are high. You don't need to do it in casual conversation or everyday small talk.

We increasingly communicate via text and email. Does that change anything about this habit? Yes. The use of technology strips out the tone of voice and facial expressions that help us empathize. So anytime you're dealing with an important, emotional issue, do not email or text. At some point, meet face-to-face, or at least talk it out over the phone. An emoji just isn't going to cut it.

Note that Habits 4, 5, and 6 are different but work together. Over the years, Franklin Covey has taught students the mnemonic root, route, and fruit. Habit 4: Think Win-Win is the foundation, or root, of effective relationships. The route for getting there is to practice Habit 5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood. And the fruit you produce by practicing Habits 4 and 5 is synergy, Habit 6.

## Habit 6: Synergize®

Exercising all the other habits prepares us for the habit of synergy. Synergy is the essence of principle-centered leadership. It catalyzes, unifies, and unleashes the greatest powers within people.

Simply defined, synergy means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It means that the relationship the parts have to one another is a part in and of itself. And it is not only a part but the most catalytic, the most empowering, the most unifying, and the most exciting part.

Life is a team sport, and with the right attitude and skills, you can find synergistic answers to complex problems—not all of the time but most of the time. You have to believe in the idea that by working together, we can find a solution that is better than what either of us had in mind.

A key building block to finding third alternatives (a solution that is mutually beneficial and is better than what either person originally proposed) is to set aside your ego and acknowledge that you need the collective intelligence of everyone involved to find the best solution.

Another building block is conversation. We must learn to communicate with one another. We need to brainstorm, talk through issues, bounce ideas off each other, and go back to the drawing board again and again and again.

### Synergy and Communication

It's phenomenal what openness and communication can produce. The possibilities of significant gain and improvement are so real that it's worth the risk such openness entails. Consider three different levels of communication and how closely they relate to trust:

**Defensive**. The lowest level of communication coming out of low-trust situations would be characterized by defensiveness, protectiveness, and often legalistic language, which covers all the bases and spells out qualifiers and the escape clause. Such communication only produces Win/Lose or Lose/Lose. It isn't effective, creating further reasons to defend and protect.

**Respectful**. The middle position is respectful communication, a level where fairly mature people interact. They communicate politely but not empathically. They may understand each other intellectually, but they really don't deeply look at the paradigms and assumptions underlying their own positions and become open to new possibilities. Respectful communication works in independent situations, but the creative possibilities are not opened up. Compromise is the position usually taken, meaning that 1+1=1½. Both give and take. It produces a low form of Win/Win.

**Synergistic**. Synergy means that 1+1 may equal 8, 16, or even 1,600. The synergistic position of high trust produces solutions better than any originally proposed, and all parties know it. They also genuinely enjoy the creative enterprise.

### A Tale of Tech Synergy

Sergey had been studying computer science at Stanford University for two years when he was assigned to help new students at spring orientation. That morning, he was slated to show a guy named Larry around the campus. They didn't hit it off right away and found each other quite obnoxious. They disagreed on nearly everything—but eventually they had so much fun contradicting each other on every topic that they became friends.

While both Sergey and Larry liked computers, they were total opposites. Sergey was a party guy; Larry was private

Essentially Habit 7 is preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have—you.

and reserved. Sergey couldn't sit still; Larry had once painstakingly built a printer out of LEGO bricks.

When they later worked together as part of Larry's dissertation, they experimented with a new way to search the internet. At that time, you would type a word into the computer, and the internet would spit back how many times the word showed up and where.

Larry thought it would be interesting to search for links, not for words. He figured the more often a website was linked to other websites, the more important it was. Using his approach, search results would come up on your screen in order of importance.

### The Birth of BackRub

Sergey and Larry called their new program "BackRub" because it counted the number of links back to an original website. To run the program, they filled Larry's room with so many cheap computers that the university's network nearly shut down. So they moved their project into a friend's garage.

Years later, more than a billion people use BackRub—now called Google, the company Larry Page and Sergey Brin started in a dorm. The two college guys who founded Google rarely agreed on anything. What would have happened if they had always seen eye to eye?

Clearly, they needed each other's strengths to build one of the world's greatest companies. Neither could have done it alone.

Think about a person who typically sees things differently than you do. Consider ways in which those differences might be used as stepping stones to third alternative solutions. Perhaps you could seek out his or her views on a current project or problem, valuing the different views you are likely to hear.

**PART IV: RENEWAL**

## Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw®

Suppose you were to come upon someone in the woods working feverishly to saw down a tree.

"What are you doing?" you ask.

"Can't you see?" comes the impatient reply. "I'm sawing down this tree."

"You look exhausted!" you exclaim. "How long have you been at it?"

"Over five hours," he returns, "and I'm beat! This is hard work."

"Well, why don't you take a break for a few minutes and sharpen that saw?" you inquire. "I'm sure it would go a lot faster."

"I don't have time to sharpen the saw," the man says emphatically. "I'm too busy sawing!"

Habit 7 is about taking time to sharpen the saw. It surrounds the other habits on the Seven Habits paradigm because it is the habit that makes all the others possible.

### Four Dimensions of Renewal

Essentially Habit 7 is preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have—you. It's renewing the four dimensions of your nature:

**Physical**—exercise, nutrition, stress management. The essence of renewing the physical dimension is to sharpen the saw, to exercise our bodies on a regular basis in a way that will preserve and enhance our capacity to work and adapt and enjoy.

**Spiritual**—value clarification and commitment, study, and meditation. Renewing the spiritual dimension provides leadership to your life. It's highly related to Habit 2. This dimension is your core, your center, and your commitment to your value system. It's a very private area of life and a supremely important one. Spiritual renewal takes an investment of time.

**Mental**—reading, visualizing, planning, writing. Most of our mental development and study discipline come through formal education. But as soon as we leave the external discipline of school, many of us let our minds atrophy. There is no better way to inform and expand your mind on a regular basis than to get into the habit of reading good literature.

Writing is another powerful way to sharpen the mental saw. Keeping a journal of our thoughts, experiences, insights, and learning promotes mental clarity, exactness, and context.

**Social/emotional**—service, empathy, synergy, intrinsic security. The social and the emotional dimensions of our lives are tied together because our emotional life is primarily, but not exclusively, developed out of and manifested in our relationships with others.

This dimension centers on Habits 4, 5, and 6—principles of interpersonal leadership, empathic communication, and creative cooperation. If our personal security comes from sources within ourselves, then we have the strength to practice the habits of public victory.

### A Masterpiece from Sharpening the Saw

In 2008, Lin-Manuel Miranda had been working nonstop for seven years to bring his first musical, *In the Heights*, to the Broadway stage. After winning four Tony Awards for his debut, he finally made time for a vacation to Mexico. He packed "a little light reading" for the beach: *Alexander Hamilton*, by Ron Chernow—the exhaustive biography of a mostly forgotten founding father.

"The moment my brain got a moment's rest, *Hamilton* walked into it," Miranda said in an interview with Arianna Huffington. "It's no accident that the best idea I've ever had in my life—maybe the best one I'll ever have in my life—came to me on vacation." From that seed of an idea, *Hamilton* went on to shatter records, become a cultural phenomenon, and win Miranda a Pulitzer Prize, an Emmy, a Grammy, and 11 Tony Awards!

So many jobs in today's knowledge worker age depend on wise decisions and good judgment. So much of our happiness depends on the quality of our relationships. You may think you don't have time to exercise, go to lunch with a friend, read a book, write in your journal, attend that conference, take a break, or go on a family vacation. In reality, you don't have time not to.

Change—real change—comes from the inside out. It doesn't come from hacking at the leaves of attitude and behavior with quick-fix Personality Ethic techniques. It comes from striking at the root—the fabric of our thought, the fundamental, essential paradigms, which give definition to our character and create the lens through which we see the world.

By centering our lives on correct principles and creating a balanced focus between doing and increasing our ability to do, we become empowered in the task of creating effective, useful and peaceful lives for ourselves and for our posterity.





Stephen R. Covey was an internationally respected leadership authority, family expert, teacher, organizational consultant, business leader, and author who dedicated his life to teaching principle-centered living and leadership to build both families and organizations. ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*** was named the #1 most influential business book of the 20th century and has sold more than 40 million copies in over 40 languages. Sean Covey is a business executive, author, speaker, and innovator. He is the president of FranklinCovey Education and is devoted to transforming education throughout the world through a principle-centered leadership approach. He directs FranklinCovey's whole school transformation process, called Leader in Me®, which is now in more than 5,000 schools and 50 countries throughout the world.

***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: 30th Anniversary Edition*** by Stephen R. Covey, Sean Covey, and Jim Collins. Copyright 1989, 2004, 2020 by Stephen R. Covey. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 464 pages, ISBN 978-1-9821-3713-7. Summary published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®. Copyright 2020 Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. For permissions and repritns, please contact service@summary.com. 42BS06

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# The Art of Active Listening

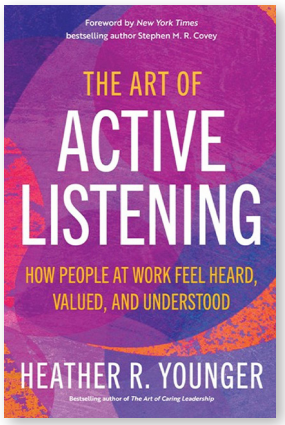
Heather R. Younger

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# The Art of Active Listening

## How People at Work Feel Heard, Valued, and Understood

*by* **Heather R. Younger**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

When someone at work takes the time to listen to you, they make you feel important and that what you said matters. When someone shares something that is happening to them at home, they feel gratitude for being given the time and for being heard. When a customer vents about what a business could be doing better to serve them, they will thank the listener profusely for hearing them out. The more we get this listening thing right, the more all employees will feel a sense of belonging and want to stay, and the more customers will feel appreciated and supported by us.

Conversely, when people fail to listen, those who have something to say are left feeling confused, disconnected, or even helpless. Heather B. Younger wrote ***The Art of Active Listening: How People at Work Feel Heard, Valued, and Understood*** to address these missed opportunities. In it she explains the idea of being a supportive, caring leader who actually listens to people and works to protect them from harm. No one at work is excluded from the need to actively listen and can learn how to do so effectively with the process outlined in this book.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to recognize the unsaid.
- The importance of seeking to understand.
- Three action steps for sustainable change.
- How to close the loop.

## The Cycle of Active Listening

When we listen to someone, they receive our attention like a gift. When we hold space for them, asking questions and leading with curiosity, we send them the message that their voice holds weight and a place of importance in our heart.

Being a good listener has the potential to heal so many of the divisions between us. When we think about it that way, we realize listening is our most important responsibility.

The premise of ***The Art of Active Listening*** is that listening at work is flawed because people don't feel safe telling the truth, and listening is usually one-sided so it rarely produces any results or the outcomes that we are looking for.

You might understand the importance of making a conscious effort to hear and restate what others are saying, which is certainly a big part of how we need to think about listening. But that's not all that is needed.

Active listening is more of a doubling down, with the purpose of not only understanding another person, but also addressing any issues they raise in a way that makes them realize their opinions matter. Active listening is the doorway to increased belonging, loyalty, profitability, innovation, and so much more. It is the difference between *thinking* we understand what people want and *knowing* what they want.

Of course, one reason we might not want to listen in the first place is because we worry that we'll hear something we'd prefer not to address. This internal resistance can often be the biggest obstacle to listening at work and it is why leaning in to understand isn't enough on its own.

Follow through is vital and can be accomplished with a model called the Cycle of Active Listening, which is a continuous, dynamic, and never-ending process.

The Cycle of Active Listening can move organizational culture forward, but it requires a strong commitment to change–not just changing how we currently think about active listening, but also how we *demonstrate* our understanding through actions.

The following sections lay out each of the five steps of the Cycle of Active Listening that we need to take if we want to learn how to listen well at work.

## Recognize the Unsaid

Over thirty thousand engagement survey responses and years of working with organizations to transform employee engagement have shown clearly that when you know how to listen, people will tell you *exactly* what they need to bring their full selves to work. This starts with the first step in the Active Listening Cycle: recognizing the unsaid.

Recognizing the unsaid means paying attention, so that you can pick up on important signals–like someone's facial expressions, body language, or tone of voice. You take time to sense what someone might be thinking but hasn't revealed out loud yet. When you make an effort to notice when someone is holding back their feelings, opinions, or ideas, you recognize the unsaid.

Here are some examples of things people might be thinking, but not saying out loud, at work:

- "I wish management would show me that I'm valued here because I feel like I'm just a number to them."
- "The rapid pace of change seems disorganized, and it's stressing me out."
- "I feel like my team doesn't like me and excludes me from important conversations."
- "I'm your customer, but instead of providing what we need, you keep trying to sell us what we don't want."
- "The way you miss deadlines, or reschedule calls all the time, makes me think that I'm not an important client to you."

We have the power to *recognize the unsaid* when those around us are struggling or trying to send us a message. The customer who hasn't been calling in new orders, the prospect who stops returning our calls, the coworker who has stopped contributing in meetings…all are examples of opportunities to recognize the unsaid.

If we don't do our part, these are the same folks who will leave, seemingly out of the blue–although if we'd recognized the unsaid, we'd have noticed the signs all along.

If you're interested in transforming your ability to recognize the unsaid, you must start by cultivating a listening mindset that puts you in the best position to uncover what's true–and that can require patience. This advice holds true no matter your position at work.

Leadership teams need to work to build people's trust every day–for example, meeting more regularly with employees one-on-one instead of in large groups, demonstrating a consistent willingness to confront hard truths, and using

Recognizing the unsaid can be an uncomfortable experience, but there is necessary growth in that discomfort.

tough feedback to make changes.

If you can show that you value all opinions, all the time–and not just the ones people *think* you want to hear–people will feel safer speaking up in the long term.

We also need to recognize what we're personally leaving unsaid. If you work for a company with a culture that supports you to express yourself, and yet you don't speak up when something feels amiss, take the time to listen to what your gut is telling you before speaking to someone you trust.

By taking the time to go inward, you'll become more aware of what you personally need to thrive to work. You just have to be willing to listen closely, so that you can understand your needs and act accordingly.

Recognizing the unsaid often starts with facing the unknown and being prepared for whatever the truth may reveal–including when we need to take action in response to what we've learned.

The temptation can be to bury our heads in the sand because we don't feel prepared to deal with what could be an inconvenient reality. Recognizing the unsaid can be an uncomfortable experience, but there is necessary growth in that discomfort.

## Seek to Understand

By recognizing what's not being said and then seeking to better understand the truth you uncover, you'll be in a position to move on to the next step in the Cycle of Active Listening.

To become a better listener at work, you must seek to understand. That means stepping outside those experiences that shaped how *you* see the world, so you can gain an understanding of what drives other people.

Several elements must be present if you want to be successful in seeking out understanding: curiosity, open-mindedness, empathy, presence of mind, and a courageous spirit.

### Lead with Curiosity

When you're seeking to better understand others in similar ways, let down your guard enough to allow a sense of curiosity to shine through. Set your ego aside and see if you can maintain a sense of childlike wonder when listening to others.

Put aside what you think might be true, and listen not for what you want to hear, but for what you want to learn. Not only can you gain a greater understanding of a situation by cultivating curiosity, but also you can put your listening skills to good use by ensuring that the other person feels *valued*.

### Be Open-Minded and Minimize Assumptions

When seeking to understand, throw out your assumptions. That means entering into a conversation as if you were a blank slate, ready to receive what might be revealed. If you're to truly give the gift of active listening, and not hijack it for your own purposes, you *have* to stop predicting what's next based on the knowledge you already have.

Stay open and learn something new. Minimizing assumptions means not relying on what you infer to be true when it's time to listen in, dive deeper, and clarify your understanding.

### Flex Your Empathy Muscle

When someone seeks to understand where we're coming from, it completely shifts the energy running through any subsequent interaction. It makes you feel like they understand how you feel. Empathy is sensing the feelings and pain of another. We do this to try to understand what they are experiencing.

When we insert empathy into the active listening process, it helps make the conversation more about the person we're speaking with. Leaning in with empathy has more to do with quality than quantity. It's much more important to be fully present and make sure that the empathy we display is genuine.

### Be Fully Present

When seeking to understand, we should aim to make the people on the other end of our interactions feel that we are being present. One of the most important things you can

do for those you lead is set aside uninterrupted time to sit with them, one-on-one, and hear their thoughts.

Help them appreciate how much you value them with your presence. There's no better way to get to know someone other than to spend quality time with them. If you want to be known as an active listener, carve out time to be present with the people who look to you for guidance and support, so that you can seek to understand them better.

### Build Your Professional Courage

When something is wrong, it requires summoning courage to run toward the discomfort to address it, rather than running away from it. Sit down and ask a few leading questions. Continue to dig deeper, reflecting back on what you hear the other person say.

When you leave the tough interaction, the other person will know you've taken their concerns seriously and understood them. It can be easy to overcomplicate active listening, but we don't need to. We just need to invite more courage into our interactions with people whose opinions, ideas, and insights we want to harness.

## Decode

Whether you consider yourself a leader or not, you need to manage expectations and communicate when you can't solve every problem at once. Discerning which action items you will act on first, if any, is something you need to think carefully about if you want to avoid overpromising or getting people's hopes up. This process of discernment is called *decoding*.

To ensure that you're actively listening, you must slow down and take the time to decipher what someone tells you. That means interpreting what you've heard. Decoding is your opportunity to connect the dots between what someone said and what you should do about it.

When you decode, you have the opportunity to identify those changes that are likely to have the greatest impact. In other words, decoding allows you to see the complete picture.

As you think about how to master the art of active listening, remember the importance of decoding before you take action, so that you know what to do next. You might be tempted to jump to conclusions, but instead give yourself space to interpret what someone shares with you.

Reflect on what you hear before choosing whether and how to act. This reflection period lets the people in your presence see how important they are to you and helps you make informed decisions that will benefit more people in the long run.

The benefits of decoding are numerous. Here are two of them that demonstrate the critical role that decoding plays.

### Uncover Flawed Thinking

How many times have you left a meeting after a heated debate and realized you were on the wrong end of the argument? This happens to the best of us. When you discover that your assumptions were wrong, the first step is to release your initial desire to prove you were right, own your mistake, and reenter the conversation with more humility.

The second step is to admit your error to anyone who felt wronged by your assumptions, so that they see you're taking responsibility for your inaccurate thinking and behaviors. Approaching this type of situation from a place of vulnerability will help you build trust.

### Increase Collaboration

We can only get so far alone. When we embrace collaboration we are empowered to do more than we ever could by ourselves. Learning to relinquish control over different things on your plate helps you to learn to trust the gifts of others and enjoy more time for family and self-care.

The best part is, collaboration is a way to enlist the help of experts who help you stay on the leading edge. When you include more people in the process of decoding the information you receive, you have the chance to uncover connected problems and gain additional insights. Certain problems may never surface if you choose to act alone instead of collaborating.

It can be hard to find the patience to decode effectively but doing so is worthwhile. When you fail to interpret what you hear from people at work as a leader, you send them the message that they are inconsequential cogs in a big machine and not important to you or your organization.

## Act

There is a time to decode, and then there is a time to act–in that order. Taking action after you've followed the first three steps is the difference maker when it comes to active listening. That means signaling to others your commitment to help them. One act alone can send someone the message that they are valued, important, and more than just a means to an end.

When you're responsible for leading change in your organization, you'll see other people go through their own versions of resistance.

We need to remember that for every action we take, there is an equal and opposite reaction. When someone at work voices their concerns, and you act by hearing them out, you're likely to receive a positive reaction–such as a strengthened relationship and maybe even increased productivity or engagement.

On the other hand, if you choose not to address that person's concerns, the consequences of your inaction will likely entail a negative reaction–such as weakened relationships, low morale, a lost customer contract, or even someone's resignation.

It's not the size of the action that counts but the intent behind it–and the alignment of those actions to the person's original request. This is what determines an action's impact. That means your impact could be the same whether the action you take is big or small. The question to ask is, "Do my actions align with the person's expectations and meet their needs?"

No matter how committed you are to taking action, you have to be sure you can sustain it. Here are three proactive steps you can take to ensure that the changes you implement are sustainable.

### 1. Recognize the Need for Change

Whichever problem you're experiencing, even if you're aware of the issue but unsure of its origins, be assured that *someone* knows the root cause. Other people can be your greatest asset when it comes to diagnosing a problem and its source.

That's why it's imperative to ask the right questions and listen to what people tell you. Accept that people may not be saying out loud what could make the workplace culture better. Lean into the Cycle of Active Listening to meet that need to change head-on.

### 2. Cultivate a Desire for Change

We're hardwired to resist change. In fact, our bodies want to protect us from it–hence the release of stress-induced hormones that make us fight, flee, or freeze. When you're responsible for leading change in your organization, you'll see other people go through their own versions of resistance.

The best thing you can do in these situations is communicate. People are often more receptive than we think they are and more likely to embrace change if they feel their opinion is valued. If you lead a team, think about how the members might respond if you present the change to them in detail and ask for their opinion.

### 3. Build the Stamina Needed to Persist

One of the reasons people are so resistant to change is that the process can be drawn out, like a long and tedious race. Real change at work takes time, in the same way a new habit takes months to establish. You must show up to work prepared to take the actions necessary for change to take root.

Gathering as much input from employees as possible before changing anything is great, but that won't necessarily correlate to lasting impact. Once you've taken action, involve others by asking questions like, "What would be helpful to you in terms of next steps?" That will enable you to act based upon what they need as a priority to keep going.

You must believe in your organization's ability to achieve sustainable change. You must have faith in your ability to not only take action but also overcome any obstacles in your path.

## Close the Loop

The fifth step in the five-step process we follow if we want to listen effectively and positively engage those around us is to close the loop. Closing the loop is the connecting piece and it's easy for us to forget because it requires intentional effort. Closing the loop says the following:

- "I acted. Thank you for your feedback, and here's what I did about it."
- "I can't do anything about what you brought to my attention now, but I might be able to do something later."

- "I can't do anything about X, but I can do Y."

The same goes for customers. You can say, "We heard what you had to say, and here's what we're going to do about it," or "We heard what you had to say, and here's the end result."

You go back to the person who gave you the feedback–whether in a survey or in a one-on-one interaction or small group meeting–and let them know, "Thank you for your feedback. By the way, we heard you and here's what's next."

Closing the loop means you're communicating that you are planning to act on the input you received, are in the process of acting on that input, or already have acted. A little gratitude here goes a long way. When you genuinely thank someone for their input, they feel your appreciation and are likely to feel more connected to you as a result.

This step completes the Cycle of Active Listening, but then the cycle starts over again. Yes, you read that correctly. To be known as a great active listener, you have to be committed to doing it well, with everyone you encounter, and demonstrate your listening skills often.

This is not a one-and-done proposition but something that should be an ongoing part of all your interactions. You simply keep working the steps.

When exploring how they might apply the Cycle of Active Listening, people often find that closing the loop is one of the hardest for many at work.

This is because people don't realize that listening to someone requires any action at all and that following up with those who have given feedback is like the period at the end of a sentence. It completes the active listening process.

Many of us tend to be check-the-box people. We think the effort toward something, without full commitment, should be good enough. Our check-the-box-thinking causes us to mistakenly assume there is one quick-and-simple solution to solve a particular workplace challenge. But the answer is rarely quick and simple.

When organizations get listening to employees and customers right, it positively impacts customer loyalty, employee morale, and a company's bottom line. Embrace the entire process of active listening, and don't consider it done until you've closed the loop on all feedback.

The very act of closing the loop makes others feel a part of the change they seek, a part of something bigger.

## Are You Ready to Become a Better Active Listener?

We're at a difficult time in our history. We've become oblivious to the needs of others because we fail to listen. People everywhere feel helpless, ignored, and unimportant to the people they work with.

This, in some ways, was heightened by the move to more remote work, but it has been its own epidemic for some time. Listening at work is the single most important thing we can do to create more hope, a deeper sense of importance and belonging, and a desire to stay invested for the long haul.

Listening is not only a way to connect with people. We give others at work their power back when we commit to listening to them in the way outlined in ***The Art of Active Listening***.

This is true in all areas of our lives.

Those in our presence no longer feel like numbers on a spreadsheet or a means to an end–they finally feel heard, valued, and understood for who they are as people.

People often don't want us to fix or solve a problem for them. Most times, people come to us simply because they need an ear. They long to form relationships with people interested enough to give them their undivided attention.

In a world focused on action, there are many cases that can't be fixed. There are many times when people don't need a solution from us. Sometimes, just hearing someone out is all we need to do.

This is true as leaders of teams, as leaders of households, and as leaders in our communities. You can be the spark. Go out and change your little corner of the world by demonstrating the art of active listening.

Active listening is the doorway to increased belonging, loyalty, profitability, innovation, and so much more. It is the difference between thinking we understand what people want and knowing what they want.



Heather R. Younger is the CEO of Employee Fanatix, a leading workplace culture and employee engagement consulting and training firm. She is a highly sought-after keynote speaker, bringing the best insights from over 25,000 employee stories to the stage. A diversity, equity, and inclusion strategist, Heather is an expert in creating safe spaces for these vital conversations. She is also a trusted expert for stories on culture, workplace engagement, and employee retention, contributing to leading news outlets.

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# The Art of Possibility

Rosamund Stone Zander, Benjamin Zander

SOUNDVIEW Featured Book Review
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# Re-Envision Your Organization and Your Life

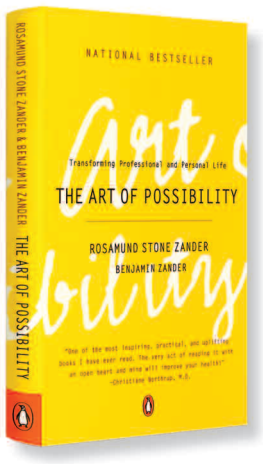
by Chris Lauer

## THE ART OF POSSIBILITY

**by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander**

*© 2002, Penguin Books, 210 pages, $15.00, ISBN 978-0-14-200110-3*

Every individual's unique perspective of the world influences everything he or she sees, says and does. While that might seem simple enough, much can be gained by recognizing that a single perspective might also be a limiting factor. It can shut out the possibilities available if that perspective were to be transformed. Shifting perspectives to new angles is what Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander intended when they wrote *The Art of Possibility* in 2000. Since then, their work has continued to elevate the perspectives of thousands of readers and organizational leaders by providing them with a multitude of guided insights. The ideas are culled from visionaries who have worked with talented people and organizations for decades, creating limitless possibilities for better work and life.




While many business books are self-help books disguised as organization-help books, *The Art of Possibility* makes no bones about its intended reader: When you change your own perspective, your organization stands a better chance. When you rethink your basic assumptions and perceptions with a better view of the possibilities, the decisions you make for yourself and your organization improve.

Innovation and creativity — two fundamental tools of organizational growth — rely on a deep capacity for taking risks and thinking outside the box. Offering business leaders a series of principles for developing the ability to see the powerful possibilities that lurk all around us, the authors of *The Art of Possibility* describe how different views of the events, people and things around us can be illuminated so anyone can draw them out.

### A Different Approach

The authors are a husband-and-wife team of intelligent professionals with many impressive credentials to back up the lessons and perspectives they advocate.

Rosamund Stone Zander is an executive coach and family systems therapist who has spent many years developing models for leadership, relationships and effective action. Her theory of human development that permeates *The Art of Possibility* promotes creativity as an essential adult capacity. She has conducted workshops for the British Civil Service, the Aspen Institute, National Public Radio, the World Economic Forum and many others, introducing leaders around the world to her ideas and programs.

### The Corporate Conductor

The concepts found throughout *The Art of Possibility* also spring from the experiences of Benjamin Zander, who has been the conductor of the Boston Philharmonic since it was formed in 1979. For more than three decades, Zander has shared his ideas and musical philosophies as a guest conductor with many of the world's top orchestras. He also gives regular performances with the Philharmonia Orchestra of

London, with whom he recently recorded the complete cycles of Beethoven and Mahler symphonies.

Benjamin has also been speaking to major organizations about leadership and creativity for the past 10 years. In 1999, he was honored with the Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, for his outstanding contribution to cross-cultural understanding. Part of that understanding is his deep belief in the art of possibility.

## A Different Lens

In *The Art of Possibility*, the Zanders describe how they are continually striving to see the world through a wider lens that focuses beyond scarcity and survival to a world of abundance and passion. Constantly polishing that lens to remove the things that block a clearer perspective of possibility can help anyone see what others miss. It can also help people at all levels get more from their lives than they would if they remained blind to the many options hiding beneath the surface of everyday life.

**The Zanders describe how they are continually striving to see the world through a wider lens ... Constantly polishing that lens to remove the things that block a clearer perspective of possibility can help anyone to see what others miss.**

The Zanders aim to help others see what Michelangelo saw when he looked at a block of marble or stone. A rock in the master artist's eyes was not merely a rock. It was a beautiful statue just waiting to be revealed once the excess material had been removed. That's the type of perspective on life that comes from practicing the art of possibility that the Zanders describe. Life and everything in it can be simply viewed as products of nature and nurture, or they can be seen for all of the greatness that is possible when better, often hidden, ideas and observations are focused into more creative actions and behaviors.

The authors write that we can all change how we think, but we usually need a little help tapping into the possibilities of the moment when faced with difficult demands. To help readers recall the lessons within *The Art of Possibility*, the Zanders have created a series of catchphrases that can guide readers back to the ideas and perspectives that have been presented. A dozen of these catchphrases and the cleverly prepared life lessons to which they are attached fill *The Art of Possibility*. The phrases capture not only a dozen principles behind the art of possibility, but 12 simple ways to recall them when they are needed most.

## 'It's All Invented'

For example, the Zanders' launch into their journey through the universe of possibility with the insight, "It's all invented." What they mean is that everything that we take for granted is often merely an assumption. When we discard these assumptions and get past an obsolete survival mentality or scarcity mentality, we can find a better and more flexible life. We can also create better organizations where people take smarter risks, roll with the punches and emerge stronger and better able to maximize their potential. The lesson the Zanders present can best be described as thinking outside the box while knowing that the box was just an imaginary construction that we invented in our own minds. When we get outside of that box, and we imagine the possibilities beyond artificial constraints and find ways to ask better questions when faced with uncertainty, we make better decisions that are not bogged down by obstacles that might have once helped us stay safe but are no longer needed.

Insightful stories from the realms of physical science, anthropology, biology, art and the authors' personal experiences decorate the ideas that are presented throughout the Zanders' book. Vignettes from the lives of many legendary men and women illustrate how great minds from the past and present have been able to make valuable breakthroughs. These innovations have changed how we think by cultivating better ways of seeing what was once taken for granted.

## Seeing Beyond Assumptions

It is easy to believe that everything that can be seen is visible with our human eyes. The proof is right in front of us, much like the many other assumptions we make about our lives and organizations every day. But what about the things that other creatures can see? Bees see patterns in the ultraviolet light reflected by flowers. Owls can see in the dark. Frogs are able to see and catch insects better than humans. Likewise, many other types of things flit past our senses and perceptions. That's why it is important to always remember that there are other ways to view what we think is so obvious. If we are missing so much information that is out there but beyond our view, perhaps it

makes perfect sense that we might also be missing other facts and possibilities because of our assumptions in other areas.

By remembering and practicing the mantra "It's all invented," the Zanders' write, we can better invent the spaces in our lives where we can build even better organizations and personal relationships.

That lesson is just one of the 12 practices that is offered in *The Art of Possibility*. The other principles go even deeper into the world of possibility. One way to see the difference between our usual way of thinking and the other way described by the authors is to see the difference between what they call "the world of measurement," which is based on competition, grades and comparisons, and another realm where more and better possibilities are available because it is open to the unlimited resources of our imagination.

## The Power of a Fallible Maestro

One of the highlights of *The Art of Possibility* is the inside look it offers into the lives of its co-authors, especially Benjamin Zander's life as a world-class conductor. Since the genre was first developed, business books have compared the relationship between a conductor and his or her orchestra to the relationship between a business leader and his or her organization. This is because both rely on the leader's ability to motivate all of his or her people to move in the right direction to create harmonious accomplishments. This is only possible when everyone is doing his or her individual job correctly. This is how the different parts of a huge orchestra combine to create a single, beautiful accomplishment. Zander recognizes this fact, but he also takes the metaphor of conductor-as-business-leader in a different direction by pointing out that few jobs are as totalitarian as the conductor's role in an orchestra.

Many conductors throughout history have seen themselves as flawless maestros who will only accept fawning questions rather than true critical assessments from their musicians. Zander writes that it was not until 20 years into his career that he had a revelation. He realized that his power as a conductor was less derived from his ability to make himself better as a conductor and interpreter of a composer's music than it was about how well he could engage and invigorate his musicians. Once he started seeing his leadership role in this new light, he recalls, his attention shifted to enabling his musicians rather than pleasing his audience and critics.

When he began to recognize his new role as a mentor to the musicians he conducted, he began to connect with the members of his orchestra better than ever before, which helped him improve his skills as their leader. To the surprise of the musicians he was conducting in the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, he broke with the tradition that painted conductors as infallible. Instead, he began to readily admit his mistakes to those he was leading. Leaders in any type of organization can learn from the personal experiences at the podium that he relates. Breaking free from the traditionally hierarchical confines of a conductor is what the Zanders mean when they propose their principle "Lead from any chair." In other words, the leader/follower dynamic can often waste much of the talent that is available if it leads to only one-way, top-down communication. The old hierarchy creates intimidated employees who are too afraid to confront a leader with apparent mistakes.

## How to Improve Give-and-Take

To facilitate a better give-and-take between an organization's people and the person who stands at the top, Benjamin Zander explains that he has initiated a practice within his orchestra that helps to create valuable coaching that moves up and down all levels of the group. Zander puts a blank sheet of paper on the stand of every member of his orchestra and invites the musicians to give him whatever feedback each one feels can help him "empower them to play the music more beautifully."

Although he was prepared to face vast criticism from his players, instead he generated a level of trust that he had never seen before. Comments on these "white sheets" moved from basic practical issues about the connection between the musicians' parts and the music they were performing to deeper insights that helped him better understand his role and methods.

Zander writes that some of the comments he receives on these white sheets are so insightful about his interpretation of the music that he takes them to the podium when he is conducting. By spreading this unique practice to all of the orchestras that he conducts, he is better able to tap into the brilliance of the exceptional artists in these organizations. To connect what he has learned with the person who initiated a change in tempo or the restructuring of a song, for example, Zander writes that he makes eye contact with that person at the moment the change occurs during the performance. This simple action, he explains, provides a sense of pride and delight among his musicians that would have been impossible if old-fashioned conducting styles and relationships were still in place.

Another way that the conductor empowers his people while also learning from them is to ask one of his orchestra's musicians to conduct a passage or a piece while he listens from the back of the room. The result is more than just another perspective from which he can hear the music, but a sometimes life-changing experience for the musician who might have never had a similar chance to see, hear and feel the piece from the perspective of the conductor.

## Lighting a Spark

Another principle that highlights the Zanders' collection of provocations toward the joy and importance of looking at the world through the lens of possibility is the concept of "lighting a spark." Everyone can benefit by looking past the usual choices and igniting the future with the "spark of possibility," the co-authors write. The active ingredient in the formula for creating better possibilities is the fire of passion and the best way to extinguish that flame is with fear.

One way to bypass that fear and ignite the passion and possibilities in others, the authors explain, is through the practice of enrollment. Rather than pressuring people into seeing things your way, or fighting with them to do what you want them to do, enrolling them "is the art and practice of generating a spark of possibility for others to share," the Zanders write. To demonstrate the power of enrollment, Benjamin tells the story of how he was able to get the world's greatest cellist to play a solo during a performance by the New England Conservatory orchestra. By enrolling him through their mutual love of the piece's composer and the close connection Zander made with the cellist when he flew from Boston to Washington to meet him in person, the possibility of a great performance was turned into reality.

Spreading the spark of possibility to others through your own passion is what enrollment is all about. The steps, according to the authors, can help anyone do this by imagining that other people are already prepared to get enrolled.

**When persuasion and instigation are not working for you, the co-authors explain, simply remember to 'light a spark.'**

Your next step is to present yourself as a willing participant who is available for whatever inspiration emerges. Making a passionate offer comes next, followed by the belief that other people are just as excited about the possibility as you are. When persuasion and instigation are not working for you, the co-authors explain, simply remember to "light a spark." By aligning your interests with those of others and enrolling other people into your passion, you can capture the power of possibility and create stronger relationships along the way.

## Groundbreaking Ideas

Filled with simple yet profound ideas such as these, along with a passionate look at the wonderful power of possibilities, *The Art of Possibility* captures the potential of people and their organizations like few other books can. It is no wonder that it is a *New York Times* bestseller that has sold more than 500,000 copies worldwide since it was first published in 2000 by Harvard Business School Press. Filled with the wonder and excitement found during the professional and personal lives of both a world-class conductor and an innovative psychotherapist, *The Art of Possibility* captures some of the most important yet overlooked concepts that leaders can use to improve themselves and their organizations. The practices the Zanders describe are not simply rules for fixing specific things, they are valuable tools for transforming anything through the power of infinite possibility. ●

**The authors:** Rosamund Stone Zander is a pioneer in the field of leadership and relationships. As a family therapist and an executive coach, she develops models for leadership and effective action. She has designed programs and workshops for global corporations as well as government agencies, including Hampton/Hilton Inns, IBM, Whirlpool, The Bureau of Public Debt, Harvard Medical School and Carnegie Mellon University.

Benjamin Zander has been on the faculty of the New England Conservatory in Boston for 35 years. He is also the artistic director of the music program at the Walnut Hill School, a boarding high school for highly accomplished young performing artists. He teaches master classes all over the world, including a class for conductors as part of the London Master Classes at the Royal Academy in London.

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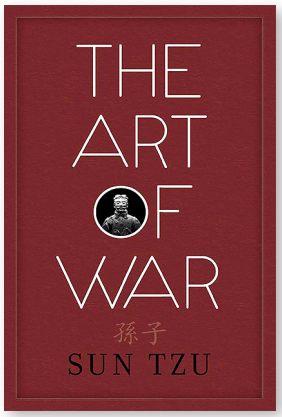
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# The Art of War

Sun Tzu

Executive Book Summaries®

# The Art of War




*by* **Sun Tzu**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***The Art of War***, Sun Tzu describes his experiences and things he has learned in war as a Chinese general. Not only can these tactics be used in war, but also in business and everyday life. The book focuses on many themes, such as adaptability and leadership while incorporating the importance of strategy and precise planning. Furthermore, Sun Tzu emphasizes the importance of knowing yourself and how one should analyze and use their strengths and weaknesses.

***The Art of War*** is broken into thirteen chapters, each focusing on an important part of war and victory. Sun Tzu uses his own experiences on these topics to guide people and show them how to succeed. While the book was written many years ago, the work remains timeless as it translates across time and location.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Learn why strategy is just as important as force.
- Discover your strengths and weaknesses and learn how to use them.
- Adapt techniques on how to be flexible when plans fall through.
- Understand your fears and motivations.

## Laying Plans

**Sun Tzu said: The art of war is of vital importance to the State.**

The art of war, then, is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field:

1. The Moral Law: causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger.
2. Heaven: night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons
3. Earth: comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.
4. The Commander: stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerely, benevolence, courage and strictness.
5. Method and discipline: the marshaling of the army in its proper subdivisions, the graduations of rank among the officers, the maintenance of roads by which supplies may reach the army, and the control of military expenditure.

Therefore, in your deliberations, when seeking to determine the military conditions, let them be made the basis of a comparison, in this wise:

1. Which of the two sovereigns is imbued with the Moral law?
2. Which of the two generals has most ability?
3. With whom lie the advantages derived from Heaven and Earth?
4. On which side is discipline most rigorously enforced?
5. Which army is stronger?
6. On which side are officers and men more highly trained?
7. In which army is there the greater constancy both in reward and punishment?

## Waging War

**Sun Tzu said: In the operations of war, there are in the field a thousand swift chariots, as many heavy chariots, and a hundred thousand mail-clad soldiers.**

When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, then men's weapons will grow dull and their ardor will be damped. If you lay siege to a town, you will exhaust your strength.

There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.

Bring war material with you from home, but forage on the enemy.

Contributing to maintain an army at a distance causes the people to be impoverished.

The proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause the people's substance to be drained away. Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy.

Now in order to kill the enemy, our men must be roused to anger; that there may be advantages from defeating the enemy, they must have their rewards.

In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.

## Attack by Strategem

**Sun Tzu said: In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good.**

The highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.

It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him; if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.

If equally matched, we can offer battle; if slightly inferior in numbers, we can avoid the enemy; if quite unequal in every way, we can flee from him.

There are three ways in which a ruler can bring misfortune upon his army:

1. By commanding the army to advance or to retreat, being ignorant of the fact that it cannot obey.

Learn to brag. You are not bragging, you are informing. You must inform your boss of the work you complete and the effort it takes when they are not present.

2. By attempting to govern an army in the same way as he administers a kingdom, being ignorant of the conditions which obtain in an army.
3. By employing the officers of his army without discrimination, through ignorance of the military principle of adaptation to circumstances.

There are five essentials for victory:

1. He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.
2. He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.
3. He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks.
4. He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.
5. He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

## Tactical Dispositions

**Sun Tzu said: The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.**

The good fighter is able to secure himself against defeat, but cannot make certain of defeating the enemy.

He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Military method to control success:

1. Measurement owes its existence to Earth;
2. Estimation of quantity to Measurement;
3. Calculation to Estimation of quantity;
4. Balancing of chances to Calculation; and
5. Victory to Balancing of chances.

## Energy

**Sun Tzu said: The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.**

Fighting with a large army under your command is no different from fighting with a small one: it is merely a question of instituting signs and signals.

In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack—the direct and the indirect; Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline, simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.

Hiding order beneath the cloak of disorder is simply a question of subdivision; One who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearances, according to which the enemy will act.

## Weak Points and Strong

**Sun Tzu said: Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.**

Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him. You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks if you only attack places which are undefended.

Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.

If we do not wish to fight, we can prevent the enemy from

engaging us even though the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground.

We can form a single united body, while the enemy must split up into fractions. The spot where we intend to fight must not be made known. If the enemy sends reinforcements everywhere, he will everywhere be weak.

Knowing the place and the time of the coming battle, we may concentrate from the greatest distances in order to fight. Carefully compare the opposing army with your own, so that you may know where strength is superabundant and where it is deficient.

Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.

## Maneuvering

**Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign.**

Having collected an army and concentrated his forces, he must blend and harmonize the different elements thereof before pitching his camp. After that, comes tactical maneuvering, than which there is nothing more difficult. Maneuvering with an army is advantageous; with an undisciplined multitude, most dangerous.

We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. In war, practice dissimulation, and you will succeed.

When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided amongst your men; when you capture new territory, cut it up into allotments for the benefit of the soldiery.

Now a soldier's spirit is keenest in the morning; by noonday it has begun to flag; and in the evening, his mind is bent only on returning to camp. This is the art of studying moods.

Disciplined and calm, to await the appearance of disorder and hubbub amongst the enemy:—this is the art of retaining self-possession.

To be near the goal while the enemy is still far from it, to wait at ease while the enemy is toiling and struggling, to be well-fed while the enemy is famished:—this is the art of husbanding one's strength.

To refrain from intercepting an enemy whose banners are in perfect order, to refrain from attacking an army drawn up in calm and confident array:—this is the art of studying circumstances.

It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill. Do not pursue an enemy who simulates flight; do not attack soldiers whose temper is keen.

Do not swallow bait offered by the enemy. Do not interfere with an army that is returning home. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.

## Variation in Tactics

**Sun Tzu said: In war, the general receives his commands from the sovereign, collects his army and concentrates his forces.**

When in difficult country, do not encamp. In country where high roads intersect, join hands with your allies. Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions.

Hence in the wise leader's plans, considerations of advantage and of disadvantage will be blended together.

Reduce the hostile chiefs by inflicting damage on them; and make trouble for them, and keep them constantly engaged. There are five dangerous faults which may affect a general:

1. Recklessness, which leads to destruction;
2. cowardice, which leads to capture;
3. a hasty temper, which can be provoked by insults;
4. a delicacy of honor which is sensitive to shame;
5. over-solicitude for his men, which exposes him to worry and trouble.

## The Army on the March

**Sun Tzu said: We come now to the question of encamping the army, and observing signs of the enemy. Pass quickly over mountains, and keep in the neighborhood of valleys.**

Camp in high places. When an invading force crosses a river in its onward march, do not advance to meet it in mid-stream.

All armies prefer high ground to low. When the enemy is

Manage the patterns, not the person. As a manager, you need to be able to identify patterns in behavior rather than merely symptoms.

close at hand and remains quiet, he is relying on the natural strength of his position. When he keeps aloof and tries to provoke a battle, he is anxious for the other side to advance.

If his place of encampment is easy of access, he is tendering a bait. Movement amongst the trees of a forest shows that the enemy is advancing.

Humble words and increased preparations are signs that the enemy is about to advance. When the light chariots come out first and take up a position on the wings, it is a sign that the enemy is forming for battle. Peace proposals unaccompanied by a sworn covenant indicate a plot.

When some are seen advancing and some retreating, it is a lure. When the soldiers stand leaning on their spears, they are faint from want of food.

If those who are sent to draw water begin by drinking themselves, the army is suffering from thirst. If the enemy sees an advantage to be gained and makes no effort to secure it, the soldiers are exhausted.

When an army feeds its horses with grain and kills its cattle for food, and when the men do not hang their cooking-pots over the camp-fires, showing that they will not return to their tents, you may know that they are determined to fight to the death.

## Terrain

**Sun Tzu said: We may distinguish six kinds of terrain, to wit:**

1. Accessible ground: Ground which can be freely traversed by both sides
2. Entangling ground: Ground which can be abandoned but is hard to re-occupy
3. Temporizing ground: When the position is such that neither side will gain by making the first move
4. Narrow Passes: if you can occupy them first, let them be strongly garrisoned and await the advent of the enemy.
5. Precipitous heights: if you are beforehand with your adversary, you should occupy the raised and sunny spots
6. Far from the enemy: If you are situated at a great distance from the enemy, and the strength of the two armies is equal, it is not easy to provoke a battle.

Now an army is exposed to six several calamities, not arising from natural causes, but from faults for which the general is responsible. These are:

1. Flight: Other conditions being equal, if one force is hurled against another ten times its size, the result will be the flight of the former.
2. Insubordination: When the common soldiers are too strong and their officers too weak,
3. Collapse: When the officers are too strong and the common soldiers too weak,
4. Ruin: When the higher officers are angry and insubordinate,
5. Disorganization: When the general is weak and without authority,
6. Rout: When a general allows an inferior force to engage a larger one, or hurls a weak detachment against a powerful one.

If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight, even though the ruler forbid it; if fighting will not result in victory, then you must not fight even at the ruler's bidding.

Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys.

## The Nine Situations

**Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground:**

1. Dispersive ground: When a chieftain is fighting in his own territory. Fight not.

2. Facile ground: when he penetrated into hostile territory but to no great distance. Halt not.
3. Contentious ground: Ground the possession of which imports great advantage to either side. Attack not.
4. Open ground: Ground on which each side has liberty of movement. Do not try to block the enemy's way.
5. Ground of intersecting highways: Ground which forms the key to three contiguous states, so that he who occupies it first has most of the Empire at his command. Join hands with your allies.
6. Serious ground: When an army has penetrated into the heart of a hostile country, leaving a number of fortified cities in its rear. Gather in plunder.
7. Difficult ground: all country that is hard to traverse. Keep steadily on the march.
8. Hemmed-in ground: Ground which is reached through narrow gorges, and from which you can only retire by tortuous paths. Resort to stratagem.
9. Desperate ground: Ground on which you can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay. Fight.

Rapidity is the essence of war. Make forays in fertile country in order to supply your army with food. Carefully study the well-being of your men.

Throw your soldiers into positions whence there is no escape, and they will prefer death to flight. If they will face death, there is nothing they may not achieve.

Confront your soldiers with the deed itself; never let them know your design.

Place your army in deadly peril, and it will survive; plunge it into desperate straits, and it will come off in safety.

## The Attack by Fire

**Sun Tzu said: There are five ways of attacking with fire:**

1. Burn the soldiers in their camps
2. Burn stores
3. Burn baggage
4. Burn arsenals and magazines
5. Drop fire on the enemy

In order to carry out an attack, we must have means available. The proper season is when the weather is very dry. In attacking with fire, one should be prepared to meet five possible developments:

1. When fire breaks out inside to enemy's camp, respond at once with an attack from without.
2. If there is an outbreak of fire, but the enemy's soldiers remain quiet, bide your time and do not attack.
3. When the force of the flames has reached its height, follow it up with an attack, if that is practicable; if not, stay where you are.
4. If it is possible to make an assault with fire from without, do not wait for it to break out within, but deliver your attack at a favorable moment.
5. When you start a fire, be to windward of it. Do not attack from the leeward.

No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique.

If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are.

## The Use of Spies

**Sun Tzu said: Raising a host of a hundred thousand men and marching them great distances entails heavy loss on the people and a drain on the resources of the State.**

Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men. Hence the use of spies, of whom there are five classes:

1. Local spies: inhabitants of a district
2. Inward spies: officials of the enemy
3. Converted spies: getting hold of the enemy's spies and using them for our own purposes.
4. Doomed spies: doing certain things openly for purposes of deception, and allowing our spies to know of them and report them to the enemy.
5. Surviving spies: those who bring back news from the enemy's camp.

Hence it is that which none in the whole army are more intimate relations to be maintained than with spies.

If a secret piece of news is divulged by a spy before the time is ripe, he must be put to death together with the man to whom the secret was told.

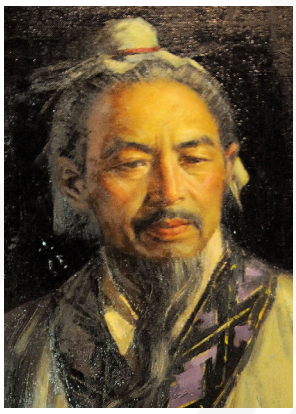
The enemy's spies who have come to spy on us must be sought out, tempted with bribes, led away and comfortably housed.

The end and aim of spying in all its five varieties is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the converted spy. Hence it is essential that the converted spy be treated with the utmost liberality.

Spies are a most important element in war, because on them depends an army's ability to move.

## Conclusion

***The Art of War*** remains a classic that can assist people in various parts of their lives. Sun Tzu is able to offer a guide to show others how to be strong leaders and how to consider different strategies. This results in learning the skills for conflict resolution and knowing when and how to confront one's enemies. These tools can be used in everyday life and challenges people to think through various tactics to win without fighting.



Sun Tzu, a military general and strategist who lived in ancient China, is one of East Asia' s most important historical figures. Traditional historians believe that he lived between 544– 496 B.C. Sun Tzu' s birth name was Sun Wu; the name he is well known with is an honorific that means " Master Sun." He is most famous for writing ***The Art of War***, a timeless classic and one of the most important works of Eastern literature.

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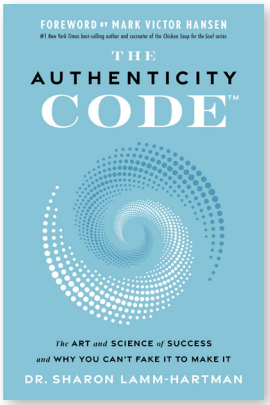
# The Authenticity Code·

Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman

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# The Authenticity Code™

## The Art and Science of Success and Why You Can't Fake It to Make It




*by* **Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We are always presenting ourselves, whether through formal pitches, informal communications, or interviews for a promotion or an entirely new job. This book addresses some important cutting-edge questions such as: what if instead of thinking authenticity is all about you, you thought of it as being about you and others? What if you could turn your greatest wound into your greatest authentic gift to give? What if instead of thinking of authenticity as a trait like integrity, we reimagined it as a skill that we can learn to become more authentic?

Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman wrote ***The Authenticity Code™***, because, in the case of communications, those who fake it will never make it. Success in any endeavor demands authenticity, and breaking the code requires this formula: Your Presence + Your Audience + Your Presentation = Your Success. Authenticity is your most powerful way of adding value by expressing your unique gifts and talents for your chosen audience.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To focus on your audience for maximum effectiveness.
- To hook your listeners with a strong beginning.
- The elements that make up a cohesive presentation.
- To assess your progress as you prepare for impact.

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## Know Your Audience and Yourself

To deliver the most effective presentation you possibly can, it's vital that you know as much about your audience as you can possibly ascertain. The more you know about your audience—especially the key decision maker(s)—the better your presentation will likely go.

### Appearance Matters

Let's say that someone gets hired to play the part of a character at Disneyland. They want to appear as Moana or even Aladdin or Mickey Mouse. If you want to work in a Disney Park, you are deliberately choosing your audience. Kids. Families. Disney management used to prohibit visible tattoos while employees were working.

Recently they changed their policy to allow cast members to show 'appropriate' visible tattoos, yet they still ask that employees choose hair colors that look natural. They ask their employees to think Disney with every move. Would Aladdin chew gum while flying on his magic carpet? Authenticity means dressing, speaking, and acting in ways that are consistent with a company and its culture. If you did not authentically fit with the culture and internal and external audiences, you would have chosen a different company with different audiences.

### Personalities

The people to whom you present all make decisions in different ways. Understanding what is important to them is a critical component for effective communication. If your decision maker is a point person and you are a people person—and you don't present according to their 'get to the point' preferences—you will completely lose your decision maker and, worse yet, frustrate them. The opposite also applies.

### Authentic Brand Statement

There is no point in beginning a journey without having some destination as a goal. The destination may ultimately change over time, but the initial destination is a vital place to begin. Your Authentic Brand Statement is your most powerful way of adding value by expressing your gifts and talents. It is a statement that describes what you came here to do and who you came here to be.

A brand statement may read like this one: I am the CEO of World Wide Synergistics who seeks out and hires the most competent, skilled, innovative individuals I can identify for every position that needs to be filled, and I inspire and empower them to succeed beyond their greatest expectations. I foster positive attitudes toward our company, and model healthy workplace relationships. I give this by encouraging, supporting, and motivating people to exceed what they thought was possible.

### More than a Presentation

It is difficult to separate the three parts of The Authenticity Code™ because your presence + your audience + your presentation are all critically important for success, and they mix together. The best example of how this works is a smoothie. Smoothies are made of whatever healthy stuff is found in the fridge: bananas, blueberries, strawberries, kiwi, celery, and leafy greens, such as kale. Kale may remind you of sandpaper, but when it's thoroughly blended with the other ingredients, it's not only delicious; it's also energizing! It offers significant health benefits. It's much the same when it comes to the 'ingredients' of The Authenticity Code™. They must be blended to achieve maximum effectiveness.

## Key To a Compelling Presentation

Once you have completed your audience-understanding matrix and know some basics about your audience, you need to plan and rehearse an attention-getting opening that will hook them to listen to you.

### Strong Beginning

When you begin a speech, a sales pitch, a job interview, or any other type of presentation, you only have 90 to 120 seconds to 'grab' your audience. There are time-tested ways to accomplish this daunting feat. The first way to grab attention is through a story. The second way to command attention is through humor. That being said, never begin with a joke, even if you think it won't offend anyone in your audience. Third is to use an analogy or metaphor. A solid fourth way to capture your audience's attention is by asking a question. And the fifth and final attention-getting technique is to begin with a quotation. Your first words would ideally be like a tasty appetizer that whets their appetite and interests them in the full-course meal. Make it short, fast, punchy, interesting, and creative.

### Clear Executive Summary

There are three key parts of an effective Executive Summary:

First, you state your purpose. In many cases, it is to educate or inform. You might be giving a project or program

update, sharing information on a new project or program proposal, describing the value of a product or service, or even sharing why you are the best candidate for a position you are interviewing for.

Second, state your value proposition: What's in it for your audience? Why should they listen to you? What is the bottom-line impact of your presentation? It could be cost savings, market share increase, time and efficiency savings, or some other benefit that the audience will receive from listening to you.

Third, what is the desired outcome? You could be seeking a decision, approval to go to the next step, additional resources, input or feedback, help solving a problem, or help in the process of moving forward to the next step.

### Concise Body Message

The letters in HORSE represent the first letters of words or phrases intended to remind you to have clarity in each of your agenda items so you can tell your audience what you are there to tell them in a clear and concise way.

The H in HORSE represents 'Highlight the main point.' In other words, start with the hottest topic. You also always start with your hottest topic in case your presentation is cut short.

The O in HORSE stands for 'Okay, so what?' 'Okay, so what' simply means that you tell us exactly why your main point—your hottest topic—is important to your listeners.

The R represents 'Relevant information or data.' This is where you present the essential information that supports your 'so what.' That information could include things such as research findings and test results. It also might include what human and technological resources could be required to achieve the desired end.

The S in HORSE tells you to 'Summarize the key point or points.' Sometimes in shorter presentations or with shorter agenda items, this can be optional.

The E represents 'Ease into your next H.' That means to highlight the point of your next agenda item or ease to your close. Create a Transition Statement or use your agenda as a transition slide.

Once you start to use the HORSE to create a clear body message in any presentation or communication, it will become second nature—just like riding a horse!

## Finish Strong

Have you ever gone to a fireworks display, and nothing special happens at the end of the show? No big finish? No finale? You get in your car or board the train to go home, and the big thought on your mind is Well, that sure was a disappointment. I expected more. Just as you, your family members, and other viewers expected a big finish, so the people in the audience for your presentation expect to leave with a thought in their minds: "I get it!" or "That's fantastic!" or "Thank you!"

Finishing strong or ending with a 'Fireworks Close' to your presentation ideally should include a call to action. This is where you come back to the desired outcome you expressed in your Executive Summary and ask your audience to give you what you asked for, such as a decision, approval to go to a next step, and so on. The closing is your final opportunity to make your magic. There is nothing more important than your attention-getting opening to capture your audience's attention during your presentation. However, it is your close that drives their action after your presentation has been completed. With this being what they remember, your closing should include a recap of your main points.

## Practice and Preparation

As I'm sure you already know, preparation is key. But preparation is more than the content of your presentation. You can have all the facts, details, and supporting data available, but if you don't deliver it properly, your message won't achieve the results you desire.

### Practice Makes Better

There are three ways to practice. The first way is to deliver your presentation in front of a mirror, ideally a full-length mirror. The second way is to find a captive audience, usually family, friends, or peers. The third way is to use video to record your presentation rehearsal. It's not that practice makes perfect. Rather practice makes permanent or better. Every time we do something, we improve . . . little by little.

### Using Non-verbal Communication

Your visuals, charts, and slides are part of your nonverbal communication. In other words, your visuals are a reflection of who you are. Clear visuals equal a clear you. The basic truth is a chart or slide needs to be readable if it is to be useful. There are a number of factors that contribute to readability: The first is the font that you choose to use.

Avoid script fonts or handwritten fonts or anything frilly. The second big point is the background color you choose. Naturally, there must be sufficient contrast between the font color and the background color. And, remember, many people—mostly men—are color-blind. Cluttered visuals communicate a cluttered you.

The fact is, 75 percent of everything we know today, we learned visually. Studies show that 90 percent of all information that comes into our brains is visual. Our brains absorb images 60,000 times faster than words. Your slides are not your presentation. Your slides simply support you as the presenter.

## Minding Your APQs (Authentic Presence Qualities)

Can you spot a fake bill? Fake money sends you a lot of clues that the bills are not authentic. And the US treasury—as well as the treasuries of Canada, Mexico, and other countries—develops new and improved anticounterfeiting measures on an ongoing basis. When you examine a fake bill closely, it asks you questions that you can't answer. In that case, you know that it's a fake. But what about the inauthentic presenter, executive, teacher, or salesperson? Well, you can be very certain that your audience will spot all of the clues. And this is why you can't fake it to make it! Your audience can spot a phony a mile away.

These are the traits that separate average people from extraordinary people. Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman, the CEO of Inside-Out Learning, researched key qualities that, if demonstrated, contribute to the expression of authentic presence. The basic qualities are warmth, thoughtfulness, openness, sincerity, integrity, clarity, passion, confidence, polish and presentation, inspiration, trustworthiness, and respect. If you've been counting, there are 12 of them. And they are all important. To improve your presentation skills, after rating yourself, ask three or more people to rate you to help you determine your Authentic Presence Qualities strengths and blind spots. Unless we know how others view us, we can't authentically choose whether we want to work on our growth and development.

A survey of 268 senior executives revealed "Executive Presence counts for at least 26 percent of what it takes to get promoted." The highest estimates are closer to 80–90 percent, with the remainder made up of your specific skill set. No matter which number you believe, authentic presence is still an important factor in how successful you will be as a leader and in your professional career. Think about it if you are competing for a job with someone who has similar accomplishments and skills; the only thing that will differentiate you is your leadership presence. In the end, the job will go to the most authentic person.



**Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman** has 20+ years of award-winning experience as CEO and founder of Inside-Out Learning, Inc. (IOL), a WBENC-certified global leadership, team and organization development consulting firm. IOL works with Fortune 500, mid- and small-size businesses to level up their professional and leadership development skills. With a doctorate in leadership and organization development from Columbia University and a masters from Cornell, she is a CEO, leadership development consultant, certified executive coach, speaker, writer, educator, wife, and mother.

***The Authenticity Code™: The Art and Science of Success and Why You Can't Fake It to Make It*** by Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman. © 2021 by Dr. Sharon Lamm-Hartman. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Greenleaf Book Group Press. 178 pages, ISBN 978-1626348677. Summary copyright © 2022 by Soundview Book Summaries ®

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# The Behavior Breakthrough

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Career & Self-Development

# The Behavior Breakthrough

## Leading Your Organization to a New Competitive Advantage




by Steve Jacobs and Colleagues

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A powerful new competitive advantage is within your reach. To perform well over the long term, to make everyone's valiant efforts work and "stick," you need another ingredient, something basic and seemingly ordinary: behavior. New results require new behavior. It's that simple — and that difficult.

*The Behavior Breakthrough* reveals the quiet revolution that is underway in pioneering and successful organizations. Their people routinely focus on "move the needle" priorities, skillfully identify the new actions that are required to win and consistently perform them.

In *The Behavior Breakthrough*, organizational behavior expert Steve Jacobs and his colleagues explain how these companies do it, presenting the game-changer for new business results. They offer lessons on identifying high-impact behavior, fostering it, and building new and lasting competitive advantage. Moreover, they share the important implications of behavioral leadership for breakthroughs in executing business plans, coaching for elite performance, guiding large-scale change, building culture and accelerating talent strategies.

Distilling decades of research and experience, the authors deliver a career-changing and life-changing book that will give you "new eyes," simple models for everyday use, and inspiring and instructive stories of Fortune 500 leaders who have won big results.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To use the scientific field of Applied Behavioral Science to your advantage in implementing change in your organization.
- The seven essential steps to putting behavioral change into practice.
- Why culture eats strategy for breakfast — and how to use behavioral leadership to shape your culture to align with your organizational goals.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE BEHAVIOR BREAKTHROUGH**

**by Steve Jacobs and Colleagues**

**The author:** Steve Jacobs is Chairman and Senior Partner of The Continuous Learning Group (CLG) consultancy. For decades, he has advised senior executives on achieving new performance, culture change and lasting competitive advantage. His counsel is sought by Fortune 100 corporate leaders and he speaks frequently at corporate and conference events.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com.

## The Quiet Revolution

This book introduces you to a neglected game-changer in the world of business: *Behavioral Leadership*®. Behavioral leadership focuses on crafting desirable shifts in everyday habits, behaviors and routines. Based on *Applied Behavioral Science*, a discipline that has been researched and taught in major universities for decades, behavioral leadership puts to work the principle that *new results require new behavior.*

Unfortunately, almost all organizations overlook the essential role that *targeted behavior change over time* plays in achieving superior results. As a result, promising new initiatives never get off the ground or stall in midair, resulting in wasted resources and subpar performance.

Most executives disregard behavior and related subjects like leadership skills and culture because they view them as "soft stuff." Executives seeking to improve field sales performance, for instance, might hire new sales people or design a new field sales compensation system, but they generally don't emphasize what the field sales managers can *do* differently or what top performers are *doing* that others are not.

We can attest to the pronounced tendency of leaders to overrate themselves. Even when leaders recognize their weaknesses in shaping new behavior, they don't improve unless they apply conscious effort; none of us do. In the workplace and throughout our lives, instances in which people know what behavior is desirable in a situation but choose to do something else are commonplace.

The widespread neglect of behavior in organizations creates a tremendous opportunity for transformative business leaders — those elite few who are willing to invest the time, focus and energy to do something new to achieve something great. Competitive advantage in any industry or geography flows as much from behavioral leadership as from new strategies, processes or technologies. The decades-old science of behavior has the potential to trigger a *quiet revolution* in companies that apply it.

Information today is everywhere and instantaneous, but practices as simple as meaningful feedback between leaders and employees or consistent task performance are still as scarce as ever. Bringing new everyday behaviors into your organization can prove more useful and more conducive to an energized, engaging work environment than any strategy or process you might embrace.

## Your Return on Revolution

Golfers seeking to improve their putting may experiment with new equipment, but sooner or later they succeed by adopting different behavior, such as changing their grip or adjusting their backswing. Likewise, behavioral leaders understand the very real return that behavior yields — what we call the *Behavior → Results connection.*

Many companies perceive leadership and behavior as intangible, difficult to measure and less essential to financial performance than other drivers. Managers regard efforts to improve behavior as costs that must be contained rather than as investments that can be commercially leveraged. As behavioral leaders become more sophisticated, they begin to adopt new approaches for estimating potential ROI and deciding when, where and how long to invest in behavioral capability. We touch on four of these methods here:

- **Cost of Leadership Neglect:** This captures the opportunity cost of *not* systematically developing behavioral leadership skillfulness throughout a business unit or enterprise. It is one thing for a leadership

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus** Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Corbin Collins**, Contributing Editor

team to weigh a budget expenditure of X dollars for developing leadership capability in the coming year and quite another for them to knowingly reject the opportunity to save (or generate) five to 15 times that amount per annum.

- **Cost of Partial Adoption:** Often, companies roll out strategic initiatives without clear metrics for establishing how extensively people are adopting a desired behavior. Since adoption is new behavior and we can measure both new behavior and its *value*, we can decide when it makes sense to invest further in incremental adoption and when the likely yield reaches the point of diminishing financial return.
- **Value of Sustainability:** Most companies and many leaders tend to assume that any change their organization makes will stick, and so they shift their time and attention to other things. Behavioral leaders understand that shaping new behavior is essential, but *sustaining* behavior change yields the greatest prize.
- **Value of Capability Extensions:** The greatest return on investments in behavioral leadership comes from new applications of this capability beyond the initial execution. Suppose you could improve your sales performance by motivating consistently superior selling behavior across your sales force, or suppose you could execute quickly and consistently any new strategic change in your company. What would that be worth to you?

Additional benefits follow when leaders focus on motivating employees' *discretionary performance* of new behavior (discretionary performance is their highly engaged, "what to do" performance). These benefits are at least as important strategically and emotionally:

- **The Culture Benefit:** Improved work culture that engages employees and retains top talent.
- **The Change Execution Benefit:** Accelerated deployment of strategic changes (via superior execution capability).
- **The Shared Capability Benefit:** Measurable proficiency in behavioral leadership skills common across leaders and managers.
- **The Personal Benefit:** Emotional reward from achieving new results and making a positive difference in people's work lives.

## Drivers of Sustainable High Performance

Leaders must first understand the foundations upon which lasting behavior change rests. The science behind behavioral leadership is logical and practical, and the principles are easy to grasp.

We begin by presenting the powerful DCOM® Model for sustainable high performance in organizations:

- **Cornerstone 1: Direction:** Does everyone in the organization clearly understand what is most important? To effect behavior change, leaders must articulate three things especially well: vision, values and value-oriented metrics.
- **Cornerstone 2: Competence:** Are the organization and its people capable of achieving its vision and purpose? Competence includes several kinds of capabilities and competencies, such as technical capability, collaboration skills, work-management skills and economic literacy.
- **Cornerstone 3: Opportunity:** Are all needed resources available, and is the organization removing barriers to performance? Creating an environment where employees have the opportunity to excel involves sufficient authority to perform their jobs well, clear and consistent boundaries, proper work processes to facilitate performance, and all resources needed to get the job done well.
- **Cornerstone 4: Motivation:** Do people want to perform, or do they just have to? Do the consequences that employees experience for their daily actions clearly align with the Direction to inspire desired behaviors?

Most leaders steer companies by falling back on a small set of organizational levers like new policies, structures or compensation designs. Behavioral leaders understand their range of levers for leading new performance. Among other things, they

- Link their decisions to the specific results targets and high-impact behavior that they want to encourage.
- Use a complete and shared set of organizational levers in weighing alternatives.
- Place equal emphasis on leadership levers and organizational levers, knowing that changing day-to-day leadership practices may at times be more effective and/or less expensive than changing organizational processes.

By applying an understanding of how and why people behave, behavioral leaders can greatly increase the power and sustainability of their decisions.

It is possible to derive additional advantage by probing deeper into some of the cornerstones. Applied Behavioral Science (ABS) takes the understanding of one cornerstone, Motivation, to a much higher level.

Using a fundamental model called ABC (Antecedents, Behavior, Consequences), behavioral leaders can trigger and sustain new behavior to obtain desired results. Validated by countless scientific studies, the ABC model captures

the process by which all behaviors take place. We define a *behavior* as what we do or say (actions and speech). *Antecedents* are conditions or events that occur before a behavior, serving to prompt or enable it. *Consequences* follow after a behavior takes place and either encourage or discourage the behavior from taking place again.

Most organizations place 80 percent of their time, attention and budget on the things that are intended to get new behavior started, that is, on "antecedents." Consequences, however, follow behavior and typically have 80 percent of the influence on whether or not people will continue that behavior.

The E-TIP tool assesses which of the many possible consequences will most influence behavior and helps leaders to better understand how to establish the right balance of consequences to motivate desired behavior. The **E** in E-TIP stands for **E**ffect: Will a consequence encourage or discourage future behavior? The **TIP** stands for **T**iming, **I**mportance, and **P**robability. Consequences that happen sooner rather than later, that the performer regards as important, and that are highly likely influence behaviors most powerfully over time.

## Putting Behavioral Leadership into Practice — Seven Essential Steps

Now you know the core concepts underpinning behavioral leadership. But how can behavioral leaders *apply* this knowledge to achieve revolutionary results? We believe you will find these seven essential steps exciting and applicable to your own initiatives. Whether it's retooling an organization's culture, rethinking the annual plan or undertaking a change initiative, *how* leaders undertake these seven steps determines the form, function and scale of the outcome, and *how well* they undertake them determines the extent of the advantage:

- **Step 1: Target the Business Opportunity and Desired Results:** Behavioral leaders focus their behavioral capability on strategic business opportunities ranging from sales growth to innovation, cost management, capital stewardship and culture change. Then they set worthy, precise and challenging results targets. Consider how your organization translates priorities into results targets.
- **Step 2: Pinpoint the High-Impact Behavior:** High-impact behaviors drive targeted results, are few in number, do not likely happen without focused, purposeful effort, and can pull along other desired behaviors. Pinpointing behavior well takes time, rigor and experience. Behavioral leaders ask, "Whose behavior? Precisely what behavior? What supporting behavior is needed?"
- **Step 3: Understand the Drivers:** Behavioral leaders draw upon ABS to identify the triggers (antecedents) and impact on the performers (consequences) of behavior. What conditions, events and actions precede and prompt behavior? What happens to the performer as a result of the behavior?
- **Step 4: Implement the Behavior Change Plan:** Behavioral leaders apply logical, practical, systematic techniques to develop a *behavior change plan*. They apply effective antecedents to prompt high-impact behaviors. They seek to rebalance consequences by encouraging desired behavior and discouraging undesired behavior. And they accelerate the behavior change process by observing and reinforcing new, successive steps in the right direction.
- **Step 5: Continuously Improve Your Own Leadership Practices:** Leaders typically don't see themselves as part of the problem. Behavioral leaders not only accept that they may in fact be part of the problem, but they also see themselves as *part of the* solution in shaping new, high-impact behavior. They adjust their personal leadership practices continually to enhance their positive impact.
- **Step 6: Measure Behavior Change Progress and Impact:** Behavioral leaders establish ways of measuring progress both in behavior change and results impact. Measurement of behavior (how often a behavior occurs) is a *leading indicator* of results. If the right behavior increases, results will too — so by monitoring behavior, you can predict results.
- **Step 7: Sustain It, Improve It, Apply It to New Priorities:** Behavioral leaders think of success as *sustained behavior change and business impact*. They aim to make new habits "business as usual." They improve over time upon the initial gains, and they extend the new behaviors in new ways.

## Game-Changing Plan Deployment

Each year, companies develop a business plan that establishes priorities and deployment approaches. Yet annual plans usually fail to deliver. The first underlying cause for failing to achieve a plan comes from the numerous, often conflicting demands on middle managers. The second underlying cause comes from that neglected game changer — behavioral leadership. Few leaders identify or use the

critical behaviors that keep the workforce focused in the right direction and create the behavior changes needed to execute. Senior leaders also neglect to identify which of the critical priorities are the organization's BRAVO goals, that is, the top priorities that will require significant behavioral change. BRAVO is an acronym for Behaviorally Reinforced Acceleration for Vital Outcomes.

To set the right annual plan in motion, we have created and deployed the MAKE-IT process for organizational execution. It conceptualizes strategic initiatives as rolling out in four distinct phases or milestones:

- **MAKE-IT Clear:** Senior leaders set the stage for successful execution by communicating the change clearly to everyone. Leaders link the change to new competitive advantage and results targets, frame the desired patterns of future behavior, assess drivers of current and desired behavior, and establish a deployment road map that addresses each DCOM cornerstone — Direction, Competence, Opportunity, Motivation.
- **MAKE-IT Real:** Leaders ensure that managers and supervisors are ready to lead broad-based behavior change. Leaders deploy a map of high-impact behaviors for all roles and levels, training managers and assigning specific behavior change plans for each manager to implement. Leaders also develop leading and lagging metrics to track progress.
- **MAKE-IT Happen:** It's execution time as managers deploy their behavior change plans. They seek feedback and coaching to sharpen their skillfulness and address obstacles to behavior change. They discuss progress metrics and key learnings in team meetings at all levels and reward forward momentum. They continue to model desired behavior and celebrate progress.
- **MAKE-IT Last:** Sustain the change — make it stick. This phase focuses not only on sustaining the desired behavioral changes but also on broadening and deepening the advantage that has been realized. Leaders monitor cultural and behavioral indicators for slippage and augment organizational processes even further to support continuous improvement.

Companies that have behavioralized their approach to plan deployment have greatly improved their business results and softer measures like employee satisfaction and retention. Here are six tips for executing better than the competition:

1. **Start Early and Use an Annual Planning Calendar:** Behavioral leaders schedule annual planning events to allow sufficient time for considering behavioral change implications at every step. They use a well-documented, annual planning cycle.
2. **Start at the Top:** Ensure complete alignment among the executive team members and then among the next two levels of leaders on the annual priorities, especially the BRAVO goals.
3. **Use High-Impact Behavior at the Planning Table Too:** Leadership team decision making at the planning table itself constitutes a type of performance-related behavior, and some companies have carefully identified high-impact behaviors for such settings.
4. **Set Reasonable Stretch Goals:** Behavioral leaders set goals that reflect the organization's capability at a given annual deployment cycle. When facing triage conditions, they establish stretch goals that focus on establishing safe and reliable operations. If the organization is underperforming but under control, then more aggressive performance goals become appropriate.
5. **Ensure True Cross-Boundary Collaboration:** As important as it is to achieve complete vertical alignment on key priorities and high-impact behaviors, horizontal alignment across group boundaries remains at least as important (and perhaps tougher).
6. **Build Behavioral Execution Capability in Successive Cycles over Time:** Behavioral leaders seek improvement in steps or stages over a three- to four-year period, building a level of simple, practical behavioral adherence so that the types of practices described previously become business as usual. Among other things, the company strategically nurtures new behavioral leaders for the future.

## Coaching for Elite Performance

Behavioral leaders regard performance coaching as job one and work hard to master specific coaching skills grounded in behavioral science. They understand the advantage that emerges when leaders and managers throughout a business unit prioritize skillful performance coaching.

Performance coaching is a *structured dialogue that recognizes excellence and achieves business goals by specifying areas for improvement and learning*. Managers coach others to help them develop new skills, initiate a desired competency or goal, stretch performance to the next level or redirect behavior to solve existing problems. Performance coaching must occur regularly and consistently, not just once or twice per year.

Although conversations include feedback, they go beyond mere feedback talks in the following ways:

- Feedback focuses on *past* behavior, but performance coaching focuses on *future* behavior.
- Feedback talks about "what, so what, now what." Performance coaching is about solving problems and removing barriers to performance.
- Feedback is mostly about telling, but performance coaching is more about asking and discussing.

Performance coaching focuses explicitly on business results. Performance coaches spend most of their time discussing high-impact behaviors and linking them to results. They aim not just at addressing performance problems but more often at achieving *high* performance and reaching a person's full potential.

Don't simply aim for strong performance; take the highest possible performance as your standard and help even high achievers excel further.

Here are some practices that behavioral leaders use to implement performance coaching successfully in an organization. The IMPACT coaching model has contributed to a number of the companies' successes described in this book. IMPACT is an acronym for key coaching practices:

- **I**dentify and **M**easure desired business results.
- **P**inpoint high-impact behaviors most essential to achieving targeted business results.
- **A**ctivate and **C**onsequate discretionary performance of desired behavior.
- **T**ransfer successful approaches to achieve new progress.

Companies that effectively scale and leverage coaching capability typically

- Focus coaching on new organizational performance and new strategic advantage.
- Establish clear roles and accountabilities for coaching at each level of the management spine.
- Map strategic imperatives to high-impact behaviors to establish the primary focus of managers' feedback and performance coaching.
- Align high-impact behaviors upward from performer groups through each level of leadership.

Companies also define the performance coaching process and skill sets, describing specific, proven practices underpinned by the science of behavior change.

## Changing the Way Organizations Change

Behavior-based execution means changing organizations, but what's the best way to achieve this change? Consultants and other experts have traditionally advised leaders to delegate the hands-on work of change to others. But in today's fluid environment, when the challenges of aligning thousands of employees around the globe are so daunting, leaders play a more active role, particularly when the company requires significant behavior change.

Not all leaders are experienced or sophisticated in managing change. Some just "do" change in the way that feels right to them, unaware of the science of behavior. Their strategies all share something in common: They rely on people to change behavior when asked.

The traditional project-management approach focuses on the basic task of rolling out the solution. The change management approach emphasizes the fostering of understanding and buy-in. In both approaches, leaders usually create the case for change, set expectations, make decisions, and monitor leading and lagging metrics.

Executives who excel at leading change know not to measure success by how fast a solution gets developed and deployed but rather by how quickly people begin to work differently and improve results. These executives set the expectation that the project team and leaders bear joint responsibility for ensuring that people implement change and achieve expected results. They don't declare success when the project is deployed, but when performance changes. Shared accountability forces project teams and leaders to recognize that new results require new behaviors.

In implementing a behavioral approach, leaders perform behavior-change planning with both the project team and leaders, asking, "What new behaviors will the company require of leaders and employees? Which one to three behaviors are most critical? How will those behaviors generate promised results? Which behaviors will the company still have trouble generating after go-live?" How will we know at an early stage if these behaviors are happening?

We can augment the behavioral tools presented in previous chapters with the following tips:

1. Senior leadership should assume more responsibility for communicating the case for change in terms that help the entire organization understand what the change means to them, not just why the change is good for the business.
2. Project teams, when they exist, should use behavioral tools such as the ABC and E-TIP Analysis to influence the balance of consequences in the design stage.
3. Governance structure leaders and members should learn and utilize behavioral tools at each MAKE-IT phase.
4. The organization should integrate specific behavioral methods within its existing approaches for devel-

oping stakeholder engagement, effective communications, and change-resiliency practices.

5. Deployment planning should transcend the traditional large-scale change solutions and include deliverables like new role definitions, communications tool kits, training and self-help tools.

## Winning on Culture

Most of us know the phrase, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." But have we really internalized the idea? Business thinkers have written about culture's relationship with competitive advantage, but most leaders still don't commit to reshaping their cultures — and of those that do, few succeed.

We can trace the struggle organizations have with reshaping culture to one simple fact: Leaders remain confused about how to define culture. Behavioral leaders begin by rejecting vague definitions of culture and refusing to undertake initiatives that are merely symbolic. They define culture in a way that enables them to change it in tangible, focused, performance-enhancing and enduring ways. Specifically, they define culture as

*A pattern of behavior that is encouraged or discouraged by people and by systems over time.*

Culture for behavioral leaders is behavior that is explicitly *encouraged* or *discouraged*. Behavioral leaders determine what factors encourage the undesirable behavior in the current culture. They assess the extent to which meaningful antecedents and consequences encourage culturally desirable behaviors and use this analysis to establish their road map for progress.

Behavioral leaders often clarify culture change objectives by framing them as From → To themes (e.g., From a Culture of Blame to a Culture of Accountability, From a Culture of Silos to a Culture of Collaboration, etc.). They then translate the desired culture into specific high-impact behaviors throughout the organization at every level and role. Doing so enables individuals to see the important role they play in creating the desired culture and, by extension, in helping the company to succeed.

The following tips can help smooth the way and ensure the success of your organization's cultural change initiative:

1. **Make the Commitment:** Senior leaders, you are the architects of your company's culture. You may have inherited unfavorable conditions from your predecessors, but you bear responsibility both for envisioning a new culture and for implementing processes and practices to MAKE-IT Happen. You have to put culture change front and center — or risk failure.
2. **Don't Start All at Once:** Begin with a few well-chosen pilots to fine-tune culture change methods and demonstrate meaningful business impact. Three to five proof-of-concept projects will usually work.
3. **Balance Enterprise Standards with Local Flexibility:** Offer clear guidelines for when you expect simple replication and when you will allow innovation on the local level.
4. **Start at the Top and Work Down:** It's important for each level of leadership, starting at the top, to ensure sufficient clarity and skillfulness before asking the next-level managers to do their part.
5. **Practice Consistency:** Not only must a manager's practices align with those of line workers across time; practices must remain consistent *across managers*.
6. **Use Metrics That Motivate:** CN (Canadian National Railway Company) implemented Employee Performance Scorecards to align the individual's performance metrics with the company's Culture of Precision Railroading objectives. Scorecards became a source of pride for a number of employees. Some employees took the scorecard home to share with their families.
7. **Signal with Informal Processes Too:** Conventional approaches to culture change use symbols (titles, trophies, mascots, logos) to reflect what's important to an organization. We encourage this as well. Be creative and have fun. Just remember to purposefully use symbols to prompt and encourage desired behavior.
8. **Get the Right People on the Bus:** Senior leaders often wish they had addressed more quickly those individuals who had worked to derail progress. If someone persists in impeding the desired culture, leaders must ask him or her to leave the organization, regardless of role or level.
9. **Stay in It for the Long Haul:** Building culture for competitive advantage merits regular attention over time. Most competitive environments are constantly evolving. A high-performance culture by definition strives for continuous improvement.

## Developing Behavioral Leaders

To achieve competitive advantage through Applied Behavioral Science, companies not only need an enhanced annual plan, culture and change processes — they also need strong behavioral leaders. We define such leadership

as *the ability to foster and sustain discretionary performance of high-impact behavior change*. All behavioral leaders must motivate their people and colleagues to *want to* perform at consistently high levels. Moreover, senior leaders must have the capability to scale behavioral leadership across business units and, ultimately, across the enterprise.

What distinguishes behavioral leaders is not general intelligence, sophistication or competence, but possession of a set of skills and abilities relating to application of the behavioral approach. Companies that seek to foster these skills and abilities must go well beyond the conventional leadership training most companies favor.

In particular, they must take leaders outside of the classroom setting and develop them in the field, where they learn by doing, every day. Leaders themselves must commit to the process of personal growth and to mastering the behavioral techniques so critical for superior performance.

Behavioral leaders apply the DCOM performance model better than most. When it comes to *Direction*, behavioral leaders articulate strategic goals and expectations to direct reports, teams and organizations. They then ensure that the organization demonstrates the *Competence* and capability to follow the strategic direction. They also work to sweep away bureaucratic obstacles so that individuals have the *Opportunity* to fulfill the company's stretch goals. Finally, behavioral leaders provide *Motivation* to their people. They align rewards and recognitions with organizational goals.

Behavioral leadership training typically integrates three ingredients:

1. Programs employ stretch assignments that task leaders with both achieving new organizational performance and sharpening their leadership effectiveness.
2. They provide enough *feedback* so that executives remain keenly aware of their development targets at all times.
3. They incorporate the clear expectation that leaders develop *others in turn*.

How can individual leaders best approach their own development? We offer the following tips:

- **Set Continuous Improvement Targets for Your Personal Development Goals:** Some executives see leadership as too subjective and intangible to allow for meaningful annual improvement goals. Behavioral leaders *always* work toward leadership improvement goals.
- **Practice, Practice, Deliberate Practice:** Behavioral leaders accept that ongoing practice is part of success. But not all practice is created equal. Practice that focuses on relatively undeveloped skills works best, even if this means venturing out of your comfort zone.

## Building Enterprise Advantage

The science underpinning behavioral leadership has as much to say about *sustaining* behavior change as it does about encouraging new behavior in the first place. The same principles that bring about change can sustain it when continuously applied.

First, *keep moving forward*. Take aim at new results targets. Embrace new high-impact behaviors. Second, *set the stage for sustainability from the very beginning*. Behavioral leaders build in certain activities as they complete MAKE-IT Clear, MAKE-IT Real and MAKE-IT Happen phases so that the foundation for sustainability is already established as they move on to MAKE-IT Last.

Companies that have led the way in sustainability practices anticipate leadership transitions, plan for them, and leverage them to the fullest. Once selected, new leaders receive briefings on behavior-based applications, results, and learning from past implementation cycles as well as on implications for their own leadership practices.

The best behavioral leaders view initial accomplishments as the reason to stay the course, broaden and deepen their behavioral leadership acumen, and drive to a more formidable position. Ultimately, they seek the kind of enterprise advantage that can only be achieved through continuity, ingenuity and persistence. And they build this enterprise advantage by extending to new areas and audiences, targeting new types of performance results (and therefore new types of behavior), integrating new implications for formal organizational processes, developing more advanced "201-level" sophistication in applying the science and incorporating new deployment tactics.

Pioneers in behavioral leadership have recognized perhaps the greatest advantage that the approach affords: *Competitors cannot purchase it off the shelf. They cannot reverse engineer it. They cannot imitate it overnight. There are no shortcuts*. Companies can only possess competitive advantage by earning it through repeated experience. Those who have a head start will more likely maintain that advantage for many years to come.

Here's to getting started.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Behavior Breakthrough*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Oz Principle*** **by Craig Hickman, Tom Smith, Roger Connors.** The authors detail how people and organizations, armed with attitudes of workplace accountability, can overcome obstacles, excuses and biases.

2. ***Sway*** **by Ori Brafman, Rom Brafman.** Ori and Rom Brafman explore several of the psychological forces that derail rational thinking.

3. ***360 Degrees of Influence*** **by Harrison Monarth.** Monarth provides advice on how to gain the trust and respect of those around you and how to expand your influence well beyond your immediate environment.

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# The Book of Real-World Negotiations

Joshua N. Weiss

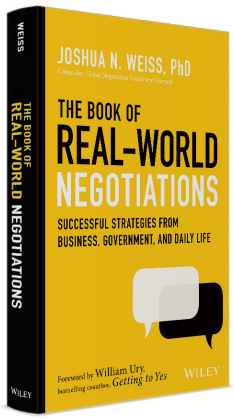
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# The Book of Real-World Negotiations

## Successful Strategies From Business, Government, and Daily Life

*by* **Joshua N. Weiss, Ph.D.**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many of us enter negotiations with skepticism and without understanding how to truly negotiate well. Because we lack knowledge and confidence, we may abandon the negotiating process prematurely or agree to deals that leave value on the table. ***The Book of Real-World Negotiations*** will change that once and for all by immersing you in real-world scenarios.

Through hard-to-find examples, you will learn exactly how to effectively and productively negotiate. As a result, you'll be better able to grasp the true power of negotiation to deal with some of the most difficult problems you face or to put together the best deals possible.

Once you come to understand through these cases that negotiation is the art of the possible, you'll stop saying "a solution is impossible." With the knowledge and self-assurance you gain from ***The Book of Real-World Negotiations***, you'll roll up your sleeves and keep negotiating until you reach a mutually satisfactory outcome!

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Common negotiation mistakes and the five key principles of great negotiators.
- To meet short-term needs while building long-term relationships.
- To recognize hidden dimensions in negotiations.
- To understand and respect cultural differences.

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## Introduction: The Power of Stories to Teach About Negotiation

Actual negotiations that happen in business, government, and the world around us stay lodged in our memories better than theories, concepts, or facts. Why are these negotiation stories so powerful? An important part of the reason is because they often challenge our assumptions and preconceptions about what is achievable when people sit down together.

The best stories have a memorable arc from beginning to end, overcoming obstacles, conflicts, and controversies, while ultimately conveying a lesson in an easy-to-understand manner. Negotiation stories, generally speaking, follow a similar pattern. They begin with an introduction, reach some kind of apex in terms of a quandary, and culminate with either a constructive way forward, the parties walking away to something else, or a stalemate.

The connection between stories and negotiation is deeper, however. In difficult moments in negotiations, we are much more likely to summon up a story with a happy or dramatic ending, a lesson or anecdote, than we are a concept or theory. Negotiation stories, simply put, stay with us and are easy to recall in critical moments.

The negotiations that follow hold invaluable teachings that will help to broaden people's perceptions on negotiation and how to overcome difficult obstacles and challenges. First, however, let's review some key principles.

## Mistakes Negotiators Make, and What Do Great Negotiators Do Anyway?

Learning to be an effective negotiator is a journey, not a destination. Along that journey you will encounter many notions about what effective negotiation looks like. There are some commonly held fictions related to negotiation that often lead people astray and away from creating the best deals or solutions possible. Below are the most common.

**A winner and a loser—and nobody wants to lose**. This win-lose way of thinking leads people to conceive of negotiation from this vantage point—thereby limiting the negotiator's thoughts on what might be possible.

**The false promise of compromise**. While compromises might be needed from time to time, they certainly are not what effective negotiation is all about. So what do you do if you don't compromise? You resist the urge and dig into the issue in a deeper fashion. What that means is taking a creative approach where you explore all the underlying interests and sources of value that exist.

**Misnomers about manipulation and deception**. The thinking goes that when a negotiator finds something that creates discomfort in the other negotiator, they seek to exploit it. Successful negotiation does not involve these deceptive tactics. In fact, it is really the opposite—building relationships and finding creative solutions are what make effective negotiation possible.

**The strong don't negotiate**. The fourth fallacious customary perception of negotiation is that it is for the weak. Strong people coerce others to do things, not persuade them. The reality is very different. Negotiation is one of the key tools that we have at our disposal to solve our conflicts. There is nothing weak about this process.

**Negotiators are born, not made**. Everyone can learn how to negotiate more effectively. Each person has their own negotiation ceiling that they can achieve, which requires time and effort.

**You have to sacrifice the long-term relationship for short-term gain**. This is a false dichotomy. Those that negotiate regularly, particularly with people with whom they have a long-term relationship, are always watching that fine line. They will never do something in the short term that damages the long-term relationship because they know it will come back to haunt them down the road.

### What Great Negotiators Do: Five Key Principles

As you read through the different cases, you will notice at least five principles emerging continuously. It is fair to say that these five tenets are a necessary condition for success in virtually all negotiations. If you use all of the principles below, you are much more likely to reach creative solutions that maximize the value in all your negotiations.

**Principle 1: Invest in preparation (instead of having a plan)**. Even though it is very tempting for people to want to develop a specific plan of action, that approach rarely works effectively. There are two reasons why plans are ineffective. The first reason is that what happens in a negotiation is partly contingent on the actions of the other.

Second, negotiations are rarely linear and full of unexpected twists and turns. Given that truism, even the best-laid plans of negotiators are likely to go awry. Being clear on your end goal but flexible on how to get there is a critical

The challenge for any negotiation in a business context is how to meet your short-term needs while also building the long-term relationship.

component of successful negotiation.

**Principle 2: Mindset and the importance of cultivating the relationship**. Mindset underpins everything a negotiator does in a negotiation. For example, if a negotiator brings a mutual gains thought process to the table, that puts them in the right frame of mind to envision potential solutions and to freely explore possibilities that meet both their and the other negotiator's needs. One must seek to meet their short-term interests while preserving the long-term relationship.

**Principle 3: Creative problem solving**. When a negotiator engages in creative problem solving, they free their mind from its traditional constraints and are more able to engage in innovative explorations. These roads less traveled are often the avenues to success. In order to problem-solve effectively, one has to see and make connections where others do not.

**Principle 4: Managing the emotional side of negotiation**. Whether we like it or not, emotions always play a role in negotiation. The question should not be whether to keep emotions out or let them in but, rather, how does one let them in with some control? The way in which most negotiators do that today is through emotional intelligence.

**Principle 5: Uncovering the hidden dimensions of negotiation**. Many of the covert dimensions of negotiation are far from obvious and require a lot of exploration and investigation. Astute negotiators look for these dimensions and assume there is more going on than meets the eye.

In other cases there are key psychological dimensions involved, such as face saving, that underpin the entire process. Finally, in still other examples, there are critical interests or needs that are driving the process but are lurking under the surface like the hidden elements of an iceberg.

## PART I: DOMESTIC BUSINESS CASES

The challenge for any negotiation in a business context is how to meet your short-term needs while also building the long-term relationship. See if you can spot the places where some of the above-mentioned principles apply.

## Saving a Merger With Creative Thinking

Two companies, called Amity and Branco, had recently agreed to merge. As they were working through some of the issues post the merger, Amity abruptly changed one of their policies and decided to "tax" each division in a new way that would cost Branco a whopping $25 million. The tax was supposed to cover the costs of harmonizing the two firms' computer systems and other technologies. Amity felt it could do this because it was the much larger of the two companies and the one doing the acquiring.

The tax on Branco was so onerous that it would turn the economics of the merger upside down, making it a financial loser for Branco. Needless to say, frustration levels from employees at Branco rose quickly. Two of the people at Branco who were deeply involved were Danny and his boss, Amy, both of whom were stunned at the turn of events and worried about their jobs and the jobs of their colleagues.

Danny immediately began doing intense factual research. Together, Amy and Danny, with two other colleagues, used the research and developed a number of possible options on how to move forward.

Danny recalled, "We realized something obvious that everyone had missed when the two sides were bickering during the negotiation. If we didn't integrate the technologies, the costs to the firm would actually go up! We had the right to block the integration. Why? Because my company would be forced to maintain a myriad of duplicate systems, which would create serious inefficiencies. I realized we had a common interest I could highlight." That common interest was cost savings.

### The Negotiation

The solution Amity and Branco ultimately found was a result of questioning assumptions and digging deep for a solution no one had thought of based on a special ac-

counting method. Amy and Danny's division would pay its portion of the costs to change the system, but it wouldn't pay the current operating costs.

The method would also cut costs to other divisions by ending duplicate accounting systems and wouldn't create any further financial issues for either side. Danny concluded that he would wind up saving $14 million for both sides using this approach, salvaging the merger, reviving his and his boss's careers, and winning the respect of his new colleagues. "I was hero for a day," he added.

There are a number of key lessons here. The first lesson is the value of preparation and learning from a clear framework in order to do so.

The second lesson was the key shift from a positional, back-and-forth negotiation, to a more interest-based way of viewing the situation. Instead of getting pulled into the game of one-upmanship, Danny stepped back and searched for a creative solution.

The final lesson is that even in the face of a power asymmetry, you have options if you think creatively enough.

## How a Bad BATNA, but a Strong Relationship, Sidestepped a Lawsuit and Created a Mutual Gain Solution

In 1995, Jim, Bill, and Tim started a company in a rented room with a fax machine. Their company, Contrexo, an Architecture, Engineer, and Construction management firm (AEC), grew from those very modest beginnings into a moderate-size business by 2001 with a value of approximately $20 million.

At that time, Contrexo was approached by a large publicly traded AEC firm called Mantosar, which wanted to acquire them. After some rather straightforward negotiations, Contrexo became a wholly owned subsidiary of Mantosar. The three principals who created Contrexo began working at Mantosar. As part of their contract with Mantosar, the three had a noncompete clause for a period of five years.

As the three men worked in conjunction with Mantosar, they became increasingly frustrated with the overall business model and experienced a strong feeling of disenfranchisement. Furthermore, they could not see a way to grow Contrexo. The former owners and senior managers wanted to make a change but were forced to wait until their noncompete agreements had expired. At that juncture, they decided to leave as individuals—one by one. The idea was to leave slowly and start a new company similar to Contrexo.

Jim was the first to leave the firm. The remaining senior leaders would come over one at a time and get restarted that way. Jim began reaching out to major clients to let them know that they were on their own again, and the new company began to get new contracts. Shortly after Jim left, Bill followed.

Approximately one week later, Jim got a phone call from Mantosar's president, Peter, and CEO, Ramon. Peter and Ramon explained that they needed to speak with Jim immediately because they were considering bringing litigation against their new company. Jim, of course, agreed to meet.

Ramon added that when both Jim and Bill left Mantosar, they forced a significant material change of leadership that required public reporting because Mantosar was a publicly traded company. Immediately Mantosar would have to take the goodwill off their books as a write-off, which amounted to approximately $11 million in value. This would impact their stock price, and they simply could not allow that to happen.

Peter and Ramon then explained that the only option they would have would be to sue Jim and Bill personally. They candidly admitted that they might not win the lawsuit, but it would tie up Jim, Bill, and the new company professionally for seven years. As a result, Jim and Bill's new business would likely fall apart. Jim and Bill had worked well with Peter and Ramon for a number of years, and they all liked each other personally. Peter and Ramon did offer Jim and Bill their jobs back at Mantosar with significant pay increases. Neither Jim nor Bill were interested in that opportunity.

### The Negotiation

One thing was clear to Jim. Even though he did not think it all through strategically, he knew his BATNA was not a good one. He understood that a potential lawsuit could stop his new business in its tracks, with no real hope for success.

Yet, Jim did not react negatively. In fact, he let his emotions run through, acknowledged them, and then quickly got into brainstorming mode. One of the keys to doing that was the strong relationship he had with Peter in particular.

After some brainstorming around the issue, Jim eventually hit on a new idea. He asked Peter and Ramon if he and Bill could buy back Contrexo. It was a novel idea and one that had not come up before. In the end, it was the solution they

needed, but it would be far from simple. Per usual, the devil was in the details.

One problem was that Jim and Bill did not have the $11 million in cash or capital to do the deal. On a piece of paper they mapped out a sale price and how Mantosar would have to take back a loan of significant value. Peter and Ramon would have to deal with a write down they could take and what Jim and Bill could manage in loans.

Jim and Bill negotiated a loan of $6 million, along with reasonable interest rates they felt they could manage. They also mapped out a continued relationship between the two companies into the foreseeable future. That took future competition off the table and ensured a profitable arrangement for both going forward. This plan also enabled Jim and Bill to keep the agreements they had in place with other vendors.

This broke new ground for Mantosar. They had never let a wholly owned subsidiary be bought back. Curiously, from Mantosar's perspective, a lawsuit might have actually made more sense to pursue. With this deal they took a loss and had to take back loans, among other things. The only explanation Jim could surmise as to why they went down the road of a negotiated deal was the pre-existing relationship he had with Peter and the impact of a lawsuit on Mantosar's stock price.

### Lessons Learned

There are innumerable lessons within this case. First, the value of the relationship between Jim and Peter saved this situation from escalating out of control.

Second, how you react to different moves in negotiation matters considerably. Third, sometimes a power differential in negotiation does not always unfold in the way the parties expect. In this case, Mantosar had a lot of power and ability to control the process, and yet they showed a lot more flexibility than a pure power analysis might suggest.

## PART II: INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CASES

With the interconnected nature of the world, more and more companies are working internationally. As a result, an increasing number of negotiations are taking place across borders and between businesses stretching from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Business deals are happening everywhere, in some of the most unlikely places and between some of the most unlikely partners.

Negotiation in this context has a number of added dimensions. First, laws differ from country to country, and it is often unclear which laws will be applicable in a given situation. Second, unique cultural norms undergird each negotiator's overall orientation. Unless those cultural differences are understood deeply, they can easily disrupt a process that otherwise would flow smoothly.

> Unique cultural norms undergird each negotiator's overall orientation.

### Going a Long Way to Make a Deal

Ecru is a small clothing company based in New York City. Ecru's CEO, Howard Sheer, led the negotiations with a potentially new supplier based in India, called Indegopro. Sheer began looking to India as more and more unfavorable changes were taking place in China, where his previous supplier base existed.

Indegopro was a large factory group based primarily in India with facilities in other countries. Sheer very much wanted to work with Indegopro for a multitude of reasons, but he feared that they held all the cards in the negotiation and it would be a difficult process to meet his goals and make the deal profitable for the much smaller Ecru.

Sheer did his due diligence and investigated Indegopro thoroughly. As he did, he found that they served small entities similar to Ecru but also big department stores like Gap and Banana Republic. He also found that Indegopro had a great track record of working with all of these different stores. Their quality, value, and public relations all checked out.

Sheer's challenge was that Ecru was tiny in comparison. How would he persuade them that doing business with Ecru was worthwhile to them?

Ecru had engaged Indegopro on one order, and Sheer was very happy with how they performed. The terms under which that first deal was done, however, were not at all ideal for Ecru. They were working under a Letter of Credit (LC),

which they could manage, but LCs tend to be expensive, and Ecru didn't have the ability to engage this way into the future.

Put differently, Ecru needed the ability to finance the business, and the bank would only open a limited number of LCs. Thus, Sheer knew the core of the negotiation was about a future partnership and the terms under which that arrangement would unfold.

Sheer also knew that in Indian culture, having a strong relationship mattered a great deal when it came to doing business. Unfortunately, that was lacking.

Then it hit him. He would make a trip all the way to India to demonstrate his level of commitment.

### The Negotiation

In going to India, Sheer was doing his best to bridge the cultural gap. He wanted to send a clear and unequivocal signal that he was very serious about working with Indegopro now and into the distant future. His goal was to get them to understand that he deeply valued their business, and he was prepared to invest in the relationship to prove it.

After spending the day together and discussing things generally, Sheer turned to the specifics and the heart of the negotiation from his point of view. The primary issue was the financing terms. Sheer's opening offer was for 90-day terms based on receipt of goods, which in actuality was 120 days in payment terms, because to ship the merchandise by boat would be 30 days in transit.

To Sheer's surprise, the representatives at Indegopro had no issue with the 90 days. They countered with a proposed 1.75 percent flat finance charge, which for Sheer was considerably cheaper than opening an LC or tying up his credit line at the bank that he could use for other purposes.

Upon reflection, this was not an exceptionally challenging negotiation, but it was the unknowns of the negotiation parameters and the lack of a relationship that defined this situation. The representatives at Indegopro explained to Sheer, after the agreement had been signed, that they were very moved by the effort it took for him to come all the way to India and the professionalism of the presentation of his business plan for the future.

## Crossing Cultures and Crossing Wires

When negotiators consider culture, they often contemplate behaviors and customs, but the more challenging aspects of culture from a negotiation point of view lie beneath the surface and are profoundly embedded in ways of acting, thinking, and believing.

This negotiation took place in Pankyo, South Korea, regarding a merger and acquisition negotiation between a Korean biotechnology company and a German biotechnology company. Pankyo is an emerging digital city comparable to Silicon Valley in the United States.

This particular negotiation occurred in a face-to-face capacity at the CEO's office of the Korean company, named Kyammi. The German company involved in the negotiation is called Bundascorp. Bundascorp's CEO visited South Korea for the series of negotiations in which Kyammi's CEO was seeking capital investment from Bundascorp. In return, Bundascorp's CEO was seeking to control the management of Kyammi through a merger and eventual acquisition.

Kyammi wanted to be an authorized subsidiary of Bundascorp and maintain its business relationship through their capital investment. They wanted this relationship because they would benefit from Bundascorp's excellent global reputation in the biotechnology field. Bundascorp wanted to control the management of Kyammi because they owned one of the leading biotechnologies in the world along with affluent human resources and regional networks that dominated the Asian market.

The underlying interest of Kyammi was not to lose its majority stake in the company so they could still make their own decisions, while also maximizing the amount of investment from Bundascorp. On the other hand, Bundascorp wanted to take control of the Korean subsidiary company's shares in order to exploit the regional domination of Kyammi in Asia. By exercising its power over management, this task would be made much easier.

### The Negotiation

While the negotiations had many dynamics, none were more critical to a solution than getting to the bottom of the cultural issue that underpinned each company's orientation and position.

Korean parties seeking foreign investment perceive themselves as the lower-power parties, given that their counterparts have financial capability and resources. As a result, Koreans engage in negotiation processes without communicating their needs and wants with the high-power parties.

Despite Kyammi's CEO experiencing significant dis-

Culture not only controls the ways in which people raise . . . issues but also their ability to openly resolve any disputes or conflicts that might arise during the process.

comfort with the way the Bundascorp's CEO negotiated, he did not express these emotions openly since such a demonstration would have been deeply frowned upon from a cultural point of view.

The negotiation process progressed simply because Kyammi's CEO made begrudging concession after concession. As a result, Kyammi's CEO lost most of his company shares through these voluntary concessions, allowing Bundascorp to take over 65 percent of the company.

This was not, however, where the negotiation ended. When South Koreans engage in this kind of behavior, they frequently do not comply with the agreement they signed. In order to comply and implement an agreement, they need to be satisfied with the negotiation process itself as well as the personal relationship with their counterpart(s).

The outcome of this negotiation was far from optimal—particularly for Kyammi but also for Bundascorp. By making their concessions as their culture dictated, Kyammi attempted to put itself into a new and different relationship with Bundascorp. Bundascorp unfortunately did not understand what was happening and, as a result, took advantage of the situation and the relationship.

Interestingly however, due to the very strong emphasis on the relationship by the CEO of Kyammi, the business relationship has persisted and, while not balanced, it continues to this day. One can only imagine how much more fruitful the relationship would be if the situation had properly met Kyammi's cultural expectations.

## PART III: GOVERNMENT AND DAILY LIFE CASES

There are a number of lessons that are key for people to understand who are negotiating in an international cultural context such as this. Culture not only controls the ways in which people raise (or do not raise) issues, but also their ability to openly resolve any disputes or conflicts that might arise during the process. The key to dealing with all of this is understanding the culture one will be interacting with and their ways of living, working, and negotiating.

A tremendous number of negotiations happen all around us every day—whether it is between civil society entities, hostage situations, or at the governmental level between warring factions. Akin to the business cases that have been previously presented, these cases cover a vast array of areas. What is interesting is the similarities involved despite the disparate nature of the examples.

### What's In a Name—and How Do You Negotiate It?

This negotiation scenario was shared by someone who worked at a law firm and who was serving their client in a pro bono capacity. The client, Life Care International (LC), was involved in humanitarian work and the delivery of aid after natural disasters. LC engaged in work all around the world and deployed in rapid fashion to help those in need.

At a certain point LC ended up in a major city in a Slavic country, delivering much-needed aid after a natural disaster. While they were working in this city, they encountered another nonprofit organization called Life Care International for the Benefit of Children (LCIBC). This nonprofit organization was much smaller and did a different type of work—primarily helping children in need of medical care. Both entities were known in their respective spheres as simply Life Care.

As they both worked in this city, confusion began to take hold. At first the problem was trivial. The occasional phone call to the wrong office. However, it got worse and more frequent over time, with people who were seeking to connect with one nonprofit contacting the other nonprofit seeking their help, donations intended for one entity ended up with the other organization, and so on. What began to emerge was a classic trademark dispute.

It turns out that LCIBC had been around longer and held the trademark. Due to the confusion both were experiencing, LCIBC eventually asked LC to change their name. This is where the negotiation ensued, as neither wanted to change their name given the sunk costs and investment they both had in their name and, more importantly, their identity.

As the parties prepared to negotiate, they sought different ways to solve the problem but simply could not find a viable answer.

### The Negotiation

At that point, one party suggested a mediator be brought in to help. During the course of the mediation, the mediator eventually asked LCIBC a slightly counterintuitive question given they held the trademark: "How important is your name to you?"

It was a very interesting question that stopped the lawyers for LCIBC in their tracks and seemed to shift the conversation to a different and unexpected place.

After giving it some thought, LCIBC responded by saying that their name was actually really long, and even though they held the trademark, they would consider changing it. They explained further that their name really did not effectively describe the core of their work, and they would be amenable to something else. The question was, what?

The mediator then suggested the following to LCIBC: "What if LC paid you to change your name?" There was silence in the room as the parties considered the out-of-the-box suggestion. After a few moments they both realized that the proposed solution might actually break the deadlock. It turned out that solution would be much cheaper and easier for LCIBC to do than the other way around.

Interestingly, and what made this solution that much more effective, was the fact that LC had insurance that would not have been enough to pay for their own name change but would be enough to pay for LCIBC's. Thus, in the end, a creative solution was found out of what seemed like a no-win situation for LC and an uncomfortable one for LCIBC.

This example beautifully highlights the distinction between positions and interests. The mediator clearly grasped the positions but also probed the underlying interests.

Second, the mediator brought in some very innovative and creative thinking by flipping the problem on its head. Instead of seeing the problem as something the defendant (LC) had to fix on their own, the mediator reframed the problem as a joint one. This perspective freed the mediator to ask some thought-provoking questions, leading to the creative idea of LCIBC changing their name due to their size and having LC pay for it.

These case studies demonstrate that effective negotiation happens in a multitude of different ways. Often the most improbable negotiation solutions occur in the face of tremendous odds through creativity and persistence. These breakthroughs occur when a negotiator is thinking that a solution is simply not possible, or they have run into what seems like an insurmountable obstacle.

But they don't quit. Their desire to find a solution, and belief that one can be found, is essential to their success.

As you go forward, be endlessly creative, and never give up.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Negotiating the Impossible: How to Break Deadlocks and Resolve Ugly Conflicts (Without Money or Muscle)*** by Deepak Malhotra
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# The Catalyst

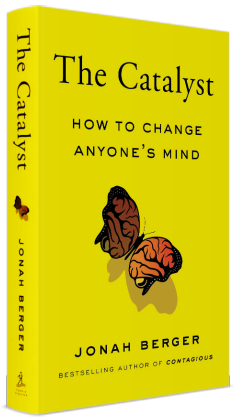
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# The Catalyst

## How to Change Anyone's Mind




*by* **Jonah Berger**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone has something they want to change. Marketers want to change their customers' minds, and leaders want to change organizations. Startups want to change industries, and nonprofits want to change the world. But change is hard. Often, we persuade and pressure and push, but nothing moves. Could there be a better way?

Successful change agents know it's not about pushing harder or providing more information; it's about being a catalyst. Catalysts remove roadblocks and reduce the barriers to change. In ***The Catalyst,*** Jonah Berger identifies the key barriers to change and how to mitigate them. You'll learn how catalysts change minds in tough situations, such as how marketers get new products to catch on and how leaders transform organizational culture.

***The Catalyst*** is for anyone who wants to catalyze change. Whether you're trying to change one person, transform an organization, or shift the way an entire industry does business, you can learn how to become a catalyst.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why persuasion is not the best way to change minds.
- The five horsemen of inertia, i.e., the key barriers to change.
- To reduce people's uncertainty and resistance.
- To effect change by building agency, finding common ground, and marshalling strength in numbers.

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## Introduction

Change is hard. We persuade and cajole and pressure and push, but even after all that work, often nothing moves. Things change at a glacial pace if they change at all. In the tale of the tortoise and the hare, change is a three-toed sloth on his lunch break.

Isaac Newton famously noted that an object in motion tends to stay in motion, while an object at rest tends to stay at rest. Just like moons and comets, people and organizations are guided by conservation of momentum. Inertia. They tend to do what they've always done.

When trying to change minds and overcome such inertia, the tendency is to push. Client not buying the pitch? Send them a deck of facts and reasons. Boss not listening to the idea? Give them more examples or a deeper explanation.

The assumption is that pushing harder will do the trick. That if we just provide more information, more facts, more reasons, more arguments, or just add a little more force, people will change. Unfortunately, that approach often backfires. Unlike marbles, people don't just roll with it when you try to push them. They push back.

So if pushing people doesn't work, what does?

### A Better Way to Change Minds

To facilitate change, chemists often use a special set of substances. These unsung heroes clean the exhaust in your car and the grime on your contact lenses. They turn air into fertilizer and petroleum into bike helmets. They speed change, enabling molecules that might take years to interact to do so in seconds.

Rather than pushing, they lower the barriers to change. And these substances are called catalysts.

Generating change is not about being more convincing or a better persuader. Instead, it's about being a catalyst—changing minds by removing roadblocks and lowering the barriers that keep people from taking action.

Rather than asking what might convince someone to change, catalysts start with a more basic question: Why hasn't that person changed already? What is blocking them? This is about how to overcome inertia, incite action, and change minds—not by being more persuasive or pushing harder but by being a catalyst.

Reactance, Endowment, Distance, Uncertainty, and Corroborating Evidence can be called the five horsemen of inertia. Five key roadblocks that hinder or inhibit change. These five ways to be a catalyst can be organized into an acronym. Catalysts reduce Reactance, ease Endowment, shrink Distance, alleviate Uncertainty, and find Corroborating Evidence.

Taken together, that forms an acronym, REDUCE. Which is exactly what great catalysts do. They REDUCE roadblocks. They change minds and incite action by reducing barriers to change.

Let's now discuss each of these five elements.

## 1. Reactance

Instructing jurors to disregard inadmissible testimony can encourage them to weigh it more heavily. Alcohol prevention messages can lead college students to drink more. And trying to persuade people that smoking is bad for their health can actually make them more interested in smoking in the future.

In these and similar examples, warnings became recommendations. Just as telling a teenager not to date someone somehow makes that person more alluring, telling people not to do something has the opposite effect: It makes them more likely to do it.

People have a need for freedom and autonomy. To feel that their lives and actions are within their personal control. That, rather than driven by randomness, or subject to the whims of others, they get to choose. Consequently, people are loath to give up agency.

Restriction generates a psychological phenomenon called reactance. An unpleasant state that occurs when people feel their freedom is lost or threatened. Whether made to encourage people to buy a hybrid car or save money for retirement, any effort is often unintentionally seen as impinging on people's freedom. It interferes with their ability to see their behavior as driven by themselves.

To reestablish a sense of autonomy, people often react against persuasion. They do the opposite of whatever is being requested.

### Allow for Agency

To reduce reactance, catalysts allow for agency— not by telling people what to do or by being completely hands-off but by finding the middle ground. By guiding their path. Four key ways to do that are (1) provide a menu, (2) ask, don't tell,

One way to allow for agency is to let people pick the path. Let them choose how they get where you are hoping they'll go.

(3) highlight a gap, and (4) start with understanding.

**Provide a menu**. One way to allow for agency is to let people pick the path. Let them choose how they get where you are hoping they'll go. For example, potential hires know they are supposed to negotiate, so—almost regardless of what they're offered—they usually ask for more. One way to deal with this is to give candidates the tradeoffs. An extra week of vacation is equivalent to $5,000 less salary. Ten thousand more in salary is equivalent to this much less in equity.

Letting potential hires choose which dimension is more important makes them feel like they have more of an active role in the process—and hopefully satisfies their need to negotiate. It's providing a menu: a limited set of options from which people can choose.

**Ask, don't tell**. Another way to allow for agency is to ask questions rather than make statements. Questions shift the listener's role. Rather than counterarguing or thinking about all the reasons they disagree with a statement, listeners are occupied with a different task: figuring out an answer to the question. How they feel about it or their opinion. Something most people are more than happy to do.

More importantly, questions increase buy-in. Because while people may not want to follow someone else's lead, they're much more likely to follow their own. The answer to the question isn't just any answer; it's *their* answer. And because it's their own personal answer, reflecting their own personal thoughts, beliefs, and preferences, that answer is much more likely to drive them to action.

**Highlight a gap**. Another route to self-persuasion is to highlight a gap—a disconnect between someone's thoughts and actions or a disparity between what they might recommend for others versus do themselves.

"Can I get a light?" Talk to any smoker, even someone who smokes casually, and they've probably heard this question at least once if not hundreds of times. Most people are happy to oblige.But when smokers in Thailand were stopped on the street and asked this question, their responses were nowhere near as positive. "I'm not giving it to you," said one smoker. "Cigarettes contain poison," responded another. "They drill a hole in your throat for cancer. Aren't you afraid of surgery?" lectured a third.And they did so because the person who made the request was a child.

A small boy wearing a monkey T-shirt or a girl in pigtails. Each no more than four feet tall and barely over ten years old. The kids pulled cigarettes from their pockets and politely asked smokers for a light. After being rejected and often chastised for their request, the kids turned to walk away. But before they did, they handed the smoker a piece of paper. A small note, folded into fourths, almost like a secret passed under the table at school. "You worry about me," it said, "but why not about yourself?" And at the bottom was a toll-free number smokers could call to kick the habit.With a meager budget of only $5,000 and no media spending at all, the campaign had an enormous impact. Calls to the helpline jumped more than 60 percent. Many called it the most effective anti-smoking ad ever.

The Smoking Kid campaign worked because it highlighted a gap, a disconnect between what smokers were suggesting to others (kids) and what they were doing themselves. People strive for internal consistency. They want their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to align.

Consequently, when attitudes and behaviors conflict, people get uncomfortable. And to reduce this discomfort, or what scientists call cognitive dissonance, people take steps to bring things back in line.

**Start with understanding.** Over the last few decades, negotiators have relied on a simple stairway model. A basic set of steps consistently works. The first step isn't influence or persuasion. Before people will change, they have to be willing to listen. They have to trust the person they're communicating with. And until that happens, no amount of persuasion is going to work.

Think about why word of mouth is more persuasive than advertising. If an advertisement says a new restaurant is good, people don't usually believe it. Because they don't think they can trust what the ad is saying. But if their friend says they'll love the homemade tagliatelle, they're much

more likely to give it a shot. Why? Because that friend has earned permission. They've known the friend long enough to assume she has their best interests at heart.

Rather than trying to persuade, start by understanding. Why is the supplier's price higher than desired? Perhaps their costs have gone up. When people feel understood and cared about, trust develops. The supplier realizes the goal is a long-term partnership and not just a money grab.

## 2. Endowment

People tend to eat the same foods they've always eaten, buy the same brands they've always bought, and donate to the same causes they've always supported. Take someone who's just had heart bypass surgery or had an angioplasty to widen obstructed arteries. Afterward they're told, often multiple times by multiple doctors, to change their diets and lifestyles. But only around 10 percent actually do.

Change is hard because people tend to overvalue what they have: what they already own or are already doing. Once we have something, once we're endowed with it, we start to become attached to it. And consequently we value it more.

Also, losses loom larger than gains. When deciding whether to take a bet, buy a new phone, or make any change at all, potential disadvantages are weighed more heavily than potential advantages. Losing $100 feels worse than winning $100.

To get people to change, the advantages have to be at least twice as good as the disadvantages. New software can't be just a little better; it has to be *a lot* better. A new approach can't just be slightly more effective; it has to be *significantly* more effective. So how do we ease endowment? Two key ways are to (1) surface the cost of inaction and (2) burn the ships.

### Surface the Cost of Inaction

To overcome endowment, we need to help people realize the cost of doing nothing—that rather than being safe or costless, sticking with the status quo actually has a downside. Business author Jim Collins once said that "good is the enemy of great… We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life."

The same holds for change. When things are good, it's easy to stick to the status quo. Change is costly and requires effort, so as long as things are good enough, the impetus to switch is muted.

So, to change minds and ease endowment, catalysts surface the cost of inaction. They make it easier for people to see the difference between what they are doing now and what they could be doing. And rather than focusing on how much better the new thing is than the old, or the potential gain of action, catalysts do the opposite. They highlight how much people are losing by doing nothing.

Seeing how much time or money is being lost is more motivating than seeing how much could have been gained.

### Burn the Ships

When endowment is really strong, sometimes change requires going one step further. And those situations may warrant burning the ships. The expression "burning one's bridges" comes from the idea of burning a bridge after crossing it during a military campaign, leaving the troops no choice but to continue the march. Compared to the situations most people face on a daily basis, this tactic is clearly extreme. And selfish.

But similar, less drastic versions can be applied to a broad set of situations in which people are stuck on the status quo. Not completely taking the old option off the table but making people realize and bear more of its true costs.

Car manufacturers don't refuse to make replacement parts for older vehicles, but once a reasonable time has passed, they stop making as many. Prices go up, and consumers are encouraged to transition to something new. Manufacturers don't force consumers to change, but they also don't subsidize the prices on the old parts, leaving them artificially low. They pass the cost on to the consumer, making it less likely those consumers will stick with the status quo.

So sometimes inaction needs to be taken off the table. Or at least no longer subsidized. Because while inaction might beat newcomers in a royal rumble, once inaction becomes more costly, suddenly the contest is a lot more even. Now everyone is on equal footing. Rather than thinking about whether a given new thing is better than the old one, by helping to take inaction off the table, burning the ships encourages people to set aside the old and instead think about which new thing is worth pursuing.

## 3. Distance

When trying to change minds, we hope that evidence will work. That giving people facts, figures, and other information will encourage them to move in our direction. Unfortunately, that doesn't always happen.

Numerous studies, whether examining medicine, politics, or other areas, have found that evidence that was supposed to change minds didn't always work. Sometimes it made people more likely to believe the truth, but other times it just reaffirmed falsehoods. Rather than changing false beliefs, exposure to the truth often increased misperceptions. Giving people correct information made them more likely to believe the exact opposite.

> Rather than going after anyone, catalysts start by finding the people who see their offering as a painkiller.

### The Region of Rejection

People have a range, or zone, around their beliefs that they are willing to consider. Staunch conservatives oppose government spending and regulation. Tell them about a bill to eliminate deficit spending or protect free markets, and they'll probably support it.

But go beyond that zone, to things like raising the debt ceiling or providing universal health care, and it backfires. The further afield the message, the less likely they'll listen. And the more likely it will push them in the opposite direction. Because the region of rejection not only impacts change, it shapes how people perceive and react to information. People search for, interpret, and favor information in a way that confirms or supports their existing beliefs.

How do catalysts avoid the region of rejection and encourage people to actually consider what they have to say? Three ways to mitigate distance are to (1) find the movable middle, (2) ask for less, and (3) switch the field to find an unsticking point.

**Find the movable middle**. When dealing with issues that people feel strongly about, start by finding the movable middle. Individuals who, by virtue of their existing positions, are more likely to shift because they're not so far away to begin with. One way is to look for behavioral residue. Clues that indicate conflicting opinions or a willingness to change. In a business context, consumers who've complained about a competitor on social media, for example.

Trying to get a new product to take off? Rather than trying to convince everyone how great it is, find the subgroup that already needs it. Venture capitalists often refer to products and services as vitamins or painkillers. Nice-to-haves (e.g., vitamins) that can be put off until later, or need-to-haves (e.g., painkillers) that people can't live without.

Rather than going after anyone, catalysts start by finding the people who see their offering as a painkiller. Locating potential users who need the offering and can't wait to sign up.

**Ask for less**. Sometimes we want to change minds of people who are further away. So how do we do that? Try asking for less rather than pushing for more. Dial down the size of the initial request so that it falls within the zone of acceptance. Not only will that make that initial request more successful, it also makes big change more likely overall.

This is really about chunking the change. Breaking big asks into smaller, more manageable chunks. Starting with one and building from there. Moving 10 or 15 yards at a time, rather than tossing a Hail Mary and hoping for the best.

**Switch the field; find an unsticking point**. When someone is really dug in, you can find a dimension where there's already agreement and use that as a pivot point. Have a boss who doesn't support an initiative because they think it will cost too much? Dealing with a colleague who doesn't believe in company culture because they think it's too "squishy"?

Catalysts switch the field and find an unsticking point. Rather than pushing harder down the same blocked path, explore related directions where people aren't so dug in. Even though someone might seem like an adversary on one dimension, there's probably more to them than just that. Points of agreement like making sure the company continues to grow or employee retention stays high. Start with that. Start with the areas of agreement and build from there.

## 4. Uncertainty

People are risk averse. They like knowing what they are getting, and as long as what they are getting is positive, they prefer sure things to risky ones. Even if the risky choice is better, on average.

This devaluing of things uncertain is called the "uncertainty tax." When choosing between a sure thing and a risky one, the risky option has to be that much better to get chosen.

Change almost always involves some degree of uncertainty. Consequently, the more change involves uncertainty, the less interested people are in changing. The more ambiguity there is around a product, service, or idea, the less valuable that thing becomes. So how can we get people to un-pause?

Trialability is how easy it is to try something. The ease with which something can be tested or experimented with on a limited basis. The easier it is to try something, the more people will use it, and the faster it catches on. Trialability works because making things easier to try lowers uncertainty.

The question, then, is how to reduce uncertainty by lowering the barrier to trial. Four key ways to do that are to (1) harness freemium, (2) reduce up-front costs, (3) drive discovery, and (4) make it reversible.

**Harness freemium**. Like Uber and Airbnb, Dropbox often appears on lists of "unicorns," or privately held start-ups with valuations of more than $1 billion. In less than a decade, the file hosting company has amassed more than 500 million registered users. More than 200,000 businesses and organizations have signed up, and the company is valued at more than $10 billion.

But it wasn't always that way. At the outset, Dropbox struggled to get customers to sign up. The technology was innovative, but they were trying to solve a problem most people didn't realize they had. Dropbox's CEO thought about hiring a marketing person or buying some search ads, but the firm didn't have a lot of money to spend, and the return on investment seemed low.

So, rather than trying to convince people how great their service was, Dropbox did something else. They gave it away for free. On the surface, this might seem backward. Give your product away for free? This seems to violate the basic laws of successful business. But it worked. In just two months, the number of users more than doubled. In less than a year, the number had increased tenfold. And soon Dropbox was making billions of dollars in revenue.

Dropbox grew by harnessing a business model called freemium. "Freemium" is a portmanteau, a linguistic blend of two words: "free" and "premium." The initial or basic version is free of charge, but the experience is designed so that satisfied users will eventually pay to upgrade to an enhanced or premium version.

**Reducing up-front costs**. When it launched free shipping, Zappos got a lot of pushback. No one thought it would succeed, and it was an expensive gambit. But it worked because it removed the main barrier to purchase. It reduced uncertainty.

Free shipping was the catalyst that made e-commerce into the behemoth it is today: Just think about Amazon Prime. Success came not from dropping prices or devising a clever slogan but by removing the roadblock that was hindering change. By allowing consumers to experience things like they would in a physical store, without having to pay for the opportunity, free shipping overcame the uncertainty tax and changed how people shop forever.

These and similar examples work by reducing the up-front cost. They shrink the amount of time, money, or effort required at the outset to experience something.

**Drive discovery**. What if people don't even know you exist? Or they know you exist but don't think they'd like what you have to offer? If people don't know something exists or don't think they'll like it, they're unlikely to go looking to try it.

Supermarkets hand out free samples of smoked sausage on toothpicks. That not only lowers the barrier to trial for sausage lovers; it also grows the set of people who think about buying sausage in the first place.

Trial-size toothpastes in first-class airline amenity kits or shaving cream samples in hotel bathrooms serve the same function. Even if someone isn't looking to switch toothpastes, anyone who forgets theirs at home will try the sample, increasing the chance that they will change brands in the future.

**Make it reversible**. Returns are a big issue for retailers. Consumers return more than a quarter of a trillion dollars in merchandise annually, and less than half of those goods can be resold at full price.

Not surprisingly, then, many retailers are tightening up their policies. REI and L.L.Bean have replaced their famous lifetime guarantees with stricter limits. Most companies give consumers 30 days to return their purchases,

When it comes to changing minds, translation comes into play. Not everyone likes or believes the same thing.

with the expectation that shorter policies will reduce costs and increase profit.

But some research suggests this might be shortsighted. Two marketing researchers ran an experiment in which different groups of consumers randomly received different return policies. For the strict policy group, only defective products or incorrect shipments could be returned. For the lenient policy group, any product could be returned at any time for any reason.

Contrary to intuition, the less restrictive policy actually increased profits. Not by just a little but by 20 percent. Because the lenient policy didn't just increase returns; it also increased sales and word of mouth. And these increases were more than enough to offset the cost of the extra returned merchandise. Applied to the company's full base of customers, the lenient policy would have increased profits by more than $10 million a year.

Money-back guarantees or pay-for-performance contracts work similarly. "Don't like it? We'll fix it." Some lawyers advertise that they don't get paid if the client doesn't win. Even airline tickets are covered by a 24-hour return policy. All of which lower uncertainty and reduce inertia, encouraging customers to change their minds from "no" to "yes."

## 5. Corroborating Evidence

Imagine someone comes into the office Monday morning and tells you that they watched an amazing show over the weekend. The dialogue is sharp, the plot is gripping, and the acting is superb. They just loved it and they think you'll like it, too.

When your co-worker says a show is great, that could mean the show is really, truly great. But it might also just reflect the fact that they like lots of shows. Or that they like all sitcoms or anything with a strong female lead.

When someone hears a recommendation, they try to make sense of it. To sort out what that recommendation means. Does it say something about the thing being recommended, or does it just say something about the recommender themselves?

So whenever people get a recommendation or see someone else doing or liking something, they try to figure out—to translate—what it means for them. How informative is that person's opinion? What does it say about their own likely reaction?

When it comes to changing minds, translation comes into play. Not everyone likes or believes the same thing. And what works for one person or organization doesn't necessarily work for another. Things are subjective rather than objective. So how do we solve the translation problem?

### Strength in Numbers

There's strength in numbers. Corporate boards wait to adopt new practices until they've been adopted by several peer institutions. Doctors wait to adopt new drugs until they see multiple colleagues using them. And companies wait to adopt supply chain technologies and management strategies until they've been piloted by a number of other firms.

Multiple sources saying or doing the same thing solves the translation problem. If just one source suggests or does something, it's hard to translate. Hard to know if their opinion is diagnostic. Hard to know what their reaction means for your own.

But if multiple sources say or do something, it's harder not to listen. Because now there's corroborating evidence. Reinforcement. Multiple sources concur. They have the same view, response, or preference. And this consistency means it's much more likely that you'll feel the same way.

If multiple people are doing the same thing, it's harder to argue that they're wrong. Harder to argue that the thing they're suggesting or recommending isn't any good. Multiple sources also add credibility and legitimacy. Increasing the expectation that others will approve and lowering the risk of embarrassment or sanction.

More sources doing or saying the same thing can provide more proof. But who those sources are and when they share their perspectives plays an important role. In particular, when finding corroborating evidence, it's important to consider who, when, and how.

**Which sources are most impactful?** A great deal of research finds that similarity matters. Looking at hotels on TripAdvisor? You don't just want to know whether a hotel is highly rated; you want to know if that hotel is highly rated among people like you. If you're a family traveling with two kids, you probably want a place that other families recommend. The fact that hip 22-year-olds like the hotel isn't as useful.

In other words, the translation problem is less of a problem when there's less need for translation. In the absence of Another You, similar sources are the next closest thing. Sources that are dealing with the same issues or challenges. Other people with the same needs. Other companies in the same vertical. The more similar they are, the more proof or corroborating evidence they provide, and the greater their impact.

**The science of when**. Let's go back to the co-worker recommending a show. If they tell you how much they love it, and another co-worker says something similar the next day, it's hard not to at least consider checking out the show. It's a hot topic, lots of people are talking about it, so you infer that the show must be pretty good.

Spread those conversations out a bit more, though, and their effect is muted. If one co-worker says something today, and another mentions the show three weeks from now, it's less likely to drive action. It's been a while since you heard about the show, so you're less likely to infer it's widely popular. You've probably heard about a lot of other shows in the meantime. And if enough time passes, you may not even remember hearing about the show in the first place.

When trying to change minds, then, not all proof is equal. Concentrating proof boosts its effectiveness. Trying to increase attention for a new service or important social cause? Make sure that different media hits happen soon after one another so potential supporters hear about it multiple times in a short period.

Trying to change the boss's mind? After stopping by her office, catalysts encourage colleagues to make a similar suggestion right away. Concentration increases impact.

Whether it's about shifting minds, changing behavior, or inciting action, catalysts REDUCE roadblocks.

And anyone can be a catalyst. You don't have to be a slick talker or have the best PowerPoint deck. You don't have to have a huge advertising budget or work for a big organization. And you don't have to have 20 years of domain expertise, know how to speak with your hands, or be the most charismatic person in the room.

By being a catalyst, and working to REDUCE roadblocks, you, too, can change anyone's mind.

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# The Changemaker Mindset

Ilja Grzeskowitz

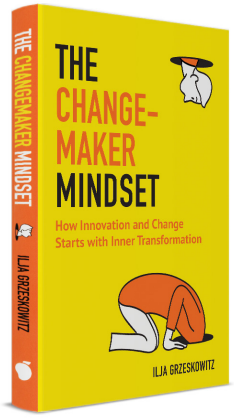
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# The Changemaker Mindset

## How Innovation and Change Starts with Inner Transformation

*by* **Ilja Grzeskowitz**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

On a hill above Los Angeles is a building that stands apart. George Wyman, the designer, was a simple draftsman working for five dollars a week for the original architect when millionaire Lewis Bradbury asked if he wanted to design the building. After initial doubts, Wyman agreed. Although he had no training as an architect, nor past projects for reference, he created a structure that has shaped the cityscape for over a century and is admired by professionals around the world. Wyman had a changemaker mindset. He took his "one shot," his unique opportunity to make a difference. We all have "one shot." It's our task in life to figure out how we use it.

In his ninth book, ***The Changemaker Mindset***, Ilja Grzeskowitz, states, "The most important success factor of the future will be a radical human changemaker mindset." In this time of increasingly intense digitization of all areas of life, the return to personal relationships, team spirit, and the individual—with all their strengths and weaknesses—will be the most crucial success factor for the future.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To envision your purpose to formulate your plan for success.
- People matter—don't go on the journey alone.
- Persistence is more than a daily grind.
- A mindset for change makes the difference.

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## Introduction

When it comes to getting from point A to point B—mentally or physically, a changemaker mindset is essential. Grzeskowitz notes that the three Ps of Personal Development are: Purpose. People. Persistence.

### The Change Loop

The better you understand what drives you and your fellow human beings, the easier it is to reach your goals. Six core needs drive each person. Four of them are based on lack (Freedom, Security, Individuality, and Community, one of which is always dominant). These motivate behavior. Once we have permanently secured these four needs, the two growth needs—Vision and Mission—come into play.

### Change or Die

The more we understand what drives us and what our dominant basic need is, the easier it is to lead a life free from the expectations of others and design our future. The motto is: change or die. And, at a time when conditions are becoming increasingly complex, technical developments are more rapid, and the pace of change is soaring, your individual personality is the only factor you can really rely on. The best part? You can influence this factor, beginning to end.

## Stay Yourself To Change Yourself

Trust yourself. Listen to your inner voice and find out what drives you. The more your work is based on the true core of your personality, the easier it will be for you to make necessary changes.

### What's Important

Who owns the story of your life? Are you the producer, scriptwriter, and lead actor, or are you primarily guided by the expectations and standards of others?

### The Personal Freedom Plan

The combination of your dream life and work life ultimately leads to personal freedom for true fulfillment. Determine what's important; build everything else around that vision. Start by asking yourself about what matters to you: What do I wish for myself most of all? Follow with questions probing your financial and professional vision. Finally, ask lifestyle questions such as: What is the everyday life that I dream of? Create a clear vision.

### Positive Obsession

Use the power of positive obsession. Four Love Factors determine your career success: what you do, how you do it, who you do it for, and why you do it. Whenever we love our job, our products, and especially our customers, we inevitably deliver above-average results.

Picture people who love what they do: Accountants juggling numbers as if there were nothing better in the world. Or teachers who treat their students as if each one of them was an extraordinary gift to the world. So, whatever kind of job you have, do the work with infectious passion. If you love how you do something, then even the smallest task acquires great significance.

## External Change Through Internal Transformation

You can let yourself be guided by the expectations of others, make yourself cozy in your comfort zone, and react passively to external circumstances. Or you can assume responsibility and actively shape the desired or necessary change. If you don't take care of your own luck, your success, and your satisfaction, nobody will!

### Of Dodos and Wolves

Are you a dodo or a wolf? The dodo, extinct since 1681, lived a happy and carefree life on the island of Mauritius. Its wings were so stunted that the dodo was unable to fly. But that didn't matter, because dodos didn't have a single natural enemy. They were cozy and comfortable living in paradise until the humans arrived. The humans left the dodos alone, but the rats, pigs, cats, and monkeys that traveled with the humans loved the taste of the dodos' eggs. The dodos were victims of never having faced a challenge.

The counterpart to the dodo is the wolf—it has numerous characteristics that are relevant to change. The wolf is a prime example of future-oriented adaptability—awareness, flexibility, and persistence. The future will belong to the wolves, while the dodos will perish due to their comfortable passivity. And yet, in our society, our companies, and organizations, there are far too many dodos who prefer to wait, hesitate, and blame external circumstances instead of taking life by the horns.

### Nobody Wins Alone

In a future characterized by digitization, disruption, and

technical progress, the human being will be the most critical success factor.

### The Team Is Sacred

Only a team allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results—the team is sacred. Even supposed superstars are lost without their team. The British Formula One racing driver Lewis Hamilton needs his mechanic team like he needs air to breathe. Professional soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo can shine only because Sergio Ramos and his defensive colleagues have his back. The great Richard Branson, with more than 260 companies, is so successful only because he places his employees at the center of his endeavors. And they pay him back with dedication, performance, and passion. Nobody wins alone.

## Put Your Employees First

In the markets of tomorrow, a focus on employees will be more important than a focus on customers. Marriott, the hotel chain, understands employee care. Company leader, J. Willard Marriott, clearly and articulately formulated his aspirations, values, and management philosophy, right on his homepage. Also, the entire HR strategy of the chain is geared toward employing people who can identify with it 100 percent. The results speak for themselves because Marriott is known primarily for its service-minded and friendly employees. When the entrepreneur was asked one day which training methods the company uses to ensure this high standard, he gave a simple but revolutionary response, saying, "We just hire nice people." Why? J. Willard Marriott realized that his team is sacred; Marriot selects and treats his staff accordingly.

### The Days Of "Harder, Faster, Stronger" Are Over!

The philosophy of "Harder—Faster—Stronger" is about the pursuit of more and more. And of course, more recognition from other people. Without a break. Without a deep breath. And without gratitude for what you have already achieved and accomplished. Life deserves mindfulness, appreciation, and a high degree of gratitude.

### The World Needs More Battery Changers

Imagine the weekly meeting of department heads. The manager had carefully prepared a PowerPoint presentation, but when she clicked to the first slide, nothing happened. Frantically, she clicked on the remote control and stared hopefully at the projection screen. Multiple clicks—no luck. It wasn't long before a murmur started in the room and grew louder by the second. "Somebody needs to do something," one person said. Another complained, "With the ancient equipment we have to work with around here, it's no wonder it doesn't work." The criticism was hurled at everything. The mood was boiling. All because the projector didn't work. It probably would have continued for some time longer, had the young head of one department not done something that interrupted the endless spiral of negativity and criticism. She rummaged in her purse, rose from her seat, and wordlessly stepped forward. Then she took the remote control, opened the flap, and changed the batteries. "So," she told her colleagues, "it's working again. Can we continue now?" The world doesn't need any more people who think they know exactly what everyone else is doing wrong. The world needs more battery changers!

## The Motivation Revolution

### An Uncomfortable Truth

The better we can motivate ourselves, the better prepared we will be for the challenges of the future. The concept of motivation can be traced back to the Latin word, *movere*. The "carrot and stick" method is a type of "motivation" in theory only. In practice, external motivation—where people only act based on money, praise, or avoidance of punishment—is no more than a myth. If we want to motivate other people to move mentally or physically from point A to point B, then we need to know their inner motives and create the framework conditions in which they are triggered as often as possible—provoked or nudged, that is. The better you know the values, needs, and motivations of your employees, colleagues, and customers, the more you can align your communication and motivate them to change.

### Every Fool Is Different

One slogan seen on the wall art at Cologne Bonn Airport is "Every Fool is Different." Every person is different. Every person is individual. Every person is a unique personality with strengths, weaknesses, and of course, lovable quirks. Yet, we continue to apply the standard formula for communication: what applies to me must also apply to all others. We must meet others according to their needs, values, and motives. Knowing these and combining them with personal goals creates a magical cocktail of deep drive, genuine commitment, and a contagious passion.

## Change. Just. Do. It.

The biggest brake on personality development is the ten-

dency toward passivity. Start finally. You have everything you need. You just have to get on with the doing.

### Imperfect, But Sexy

Berlin's famous party mayor was asked if there was a connection between wealth and erotic charisma. He replied, "No. You can see that in Berlin. We are poor, but sexy." The economic conditions of that time were not perfect, and the citizens had to accept many cutbacks. However, the slogan "Poor, but sexy!" ensured that the people of Berlin were suddenly proud. The perfect moment will never come. Don't wait for it. Prepare yourself as much as necessary, but as little as possible. Just start the change.

### The Seven-Second Rule

Use the Seven-Second Rule to train your changemaker mentality. Behavioral scientists have determined that our daily decisions have already been made on an unconscious level before we register them with our full awareness. If you have not acted within seven seconds, then nothing will happen. You shift to your automatic behavior. And your brain will talk you out of the harder path. Whenever you feel an impulse to do, say, or implement something, you have seven seconds to physically take action. This doesn't have to be a big thing; it's also about starting with the little things. Pick up the phone, write something down, make eye contact, or open your laptop to write an important email.

### The Success Formula

If you don't achieve what you'd hoped to, there's only one person responsible, and that is you. Let's rethink success. Can success only be tied to material things, external achievements, and the attainment of socially-decreed goals? Is it not also success if a single mother raises her three children while, at the same time, working two jobs and still being happy and satisfied? Is it not success if a family decides to live far away from the big city in an old farmhouse and be completely self-sufficient? And is it not also success for a flourishing lawyer to give up his career, live on ten dollars a day as a diving instructor in Thailand, but to have finally found peace of mind through this activity? Figure out what you want and makes you happy and what's important to you. Then you'll make the right decisions.

### It Is Never Too Late to Make a Big Difference

The author was surprised to see a 75-year old woman waiting for him at reception when he was speaking at an event. He was even more impressed when he met her 96-year old father. That elegant man in the wheelchair, in a perfectly fitted suit, holding a briefcase, was there to attend the conference devoted to personal growth and change. Don't you know people who, at the age of twenty, think that by the end of school they will have learned and already know everything that life has to offer? Yet this man said that although his time may be limited, one thing he knew for sure is—it's never too late to make a big difference!

Life is not a straight line, but a fast roller-coaster ride with ups and downs, successes and defeats. As soon as you find the answer, life changes the question. However, what you want to achieve in life—with every goal, vision, and dream—the growth staircase is waiting to be climbed by you.



Ilja Grzeskowitz is a global conference speaker on change, innovation and transformation. He was an executive manager for Germany´s largest retail corporation Karstadt as well as for IKEA, before he started his own consulting company in 2009. As an author, he has published ten books (among them three bestsellers), which have been translated into ten different languages and hundreds of thousand copies worldwide.

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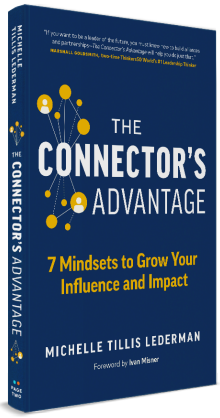
# The Connector's Advantage

Michelle Tillis Lederman

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# The Connector's Advantage

## 7 Mindsets to Grow Your Influence and Impact




*by* **Michelle Tillis Lederman**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Creating valuable connections and relationships can be challenging and awkward, especially if you want to use those connections for personal and professional success. In ***The Connector's Advantage***, author Michelle Tillis Lederman shows you what it means to be a Connector and how to become one. By looking at common mindsets and techniques of great Connectors, Lederman lays out the exact steps for growing your connections. From these relationships, you can impact the world and become a Connector in your own life. As you become a Connector, you will have a more significant impact on yourself, as well as those around you.

Through stories, feedback, and real-life applications of connection-making, anyone can learn how to become a Connector. Lederman specifically examines the mindsets of Connectors and offers helpful tips for cultivating the same attitudes within yourself. The techniques provided in this book center around authenticity and generosity, allowing you to create relationships that actually mean something. By incorporating these mindsets and techniques in your own life, learn how to become a Connector that forms reliable relationships to help you out in your personal and professional life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why connections matter.
- What distinguishes Connectors from other networkers.
- The 7 mindsets of Connectors.
- How to become a Connector.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Connection or Luck?

Some people naturally seem to have good fortune. You probably know one or two people whose life always seems to go right, even without them trying. From winning the lottery to landing a big job promotion, luck seems to have a massive impact on a person's quality of life. From the outside looking in, it can feel unfair how some people always seem to be in the right place at the right time.

If you're like most people, you probably don't think you're lucky. Luck is something that almost always befalls someone else, not yourself. Why is that? The answer is simple - because luck is a rare thing, and many "lucky" events are actually due to connections, not luck.

## Why Connections Matter

Connection is the key to success in both your professional and personal lives. Having a variety of relationships helps you overcome obstacles, move on to the next phase in your life, and be more content overall. Without connections, it is impossible to succeed, even if you are highly motivated, intelligent, and qualified. To put it bluntly, you will not go far without valuable connections.

By having valuable connections, you can improve most aspects of your life. People often associate networking with work and business. It can help you get ahead in marketing ventures, land your dream job, or receive a hefty bonus. Those who start a new business will find connections vital to the company's success.

Aside from business, though, connections improve personal lives and wellbeing too. Having supportive and stable relationships are required for a healthy life. The more links you add to your list, the more people you can depend on when times are tough.

## Becoming a Connector

Even when you have connections, it can be difficult to translate those connections into success. It takes a Connector to know exactly how to start, grow, and use connections in a valuable way to both their lives and the other party's lives.

In other words, a Connector is someone who cultivates and creates meaningful connections with those around them. Many people mistake Connectors for Users, but Connectors are wildly different. They focus on connections in the long haul, allowing them to create meaningful and fulfilling relationships built on trust and mutual respect.

Whether you are new to networking or have been in the game for a long time, translating your networking venture into observable success can be tricky. It requires specific skillsets and mental exercises to become a Connector who truly utilizes connections for success.

### Mindset #1 of a Connector: Open and Accepting

You don't want to be friends with someone mean, judgmental, and close-minded. Nobody else wants to be either. Don't close yourself off to new relationships by being closed and judgmental. Instead, be open and accepting of a variety of people and situations.

Similarly, only real relationships flourish. Create real relationships by being completely open, accepting, and authentic about yourself, your goals, and your desires. People can see through fakeness, and they don't want connections with it. Be yourself by being open, honest, and accepting of yourself. If you don't accept you, nobody else will either.

People who are open and accepting almost always have stronger connections. Their open mindset allows them to connect with many people, even those completely different from themselves. This then allows them to have more perspectives, help, and support when the time comes. Connectors know this to be true. They make it a priority to be open and accepting of themselves and others.

### Mindset #2 of a Connector: Have a Clear Vision

Sometimes, it can be challenging to know what you want. Hamburger or chicken nuggets? Left or right? Stay or go? Though a little bit of uncertainty is okay, you should not be uncertain about your vision. Knowing exactly what you want is how you create your ideal life. Just as you won't get where you want to go without directions or an address, you won't live the life you want without a clear vision of it.

For this reason, Connectors almost always have clear visions of their goals and desires. Their visions are so clear that they can create action steps to get to the point they want. This allows them to set goals, ask for help when they need it, and communicate their goals, feelings, and wishes with their connections along the way.

Start creating clearer visions by setting SMARTER goals, meaning goals that are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Actionable
- Realistic
- Timed
- Engaging
- Revisited

By setting SMARTER goals, you have a clear idea of what you want and how to get there. Use these goals to create the life you want. Then, keep talking to your connections to get there faster and ensure you are going the right way.

As you set your goals, don't forget about your connections. They are there to help you become the person you want to be. Communicate with them, ask for help, and offer support in return so your connections can flourish alongside you.

### Mindset #3 of a Connector: Believe in Abundance

How often have you heard the phrase "less is more?" Though this cliché is true in many cases, it is not right for connections. In fact, the opposite is true when it comes to relationships. Abundance is the best. The more you believe in abundance, the more opportunities you will have, people you will meet, etc.

To believe in abundance is to believe in opportunities. Whether they be work opportunities, relationship opportunities, or personal opportunities, abundance lets you see the potential for all sorts of options in your life. Invest your time, energy, and motivation into these opportunities, and you will see them come to fruition.

To fully believe in abundance, don't compare yourself to others, and don't take away anyone's shine. Just as you have an abundance of opportunities, so do the people around you. Trust yourself and your journey so you can experience abundant opportunities within your own life.

### Mindset #4 of a Connector: Trust

It's common knowledge that a romantic relationship will not last without trust. The same is true with all relationships, even the one with yourself. Trust is what allows relationships to flourish, grow, and be useful when times are tough. When a relationship lacks trust, one or both parties get defensive, vindictive, or toxic.

With this in mind, Connectors make trust a priority. They know that trust is what will allow their relationships to grow and go smoothly. They tackle every one of their relationships with authenticity, vulnerability, transparency, and consistency. These four attributes are the ingredients to both giving trust and receiving it in return.

To trust your connections, though, you first have to trust yourself. Many people forget this fact. If you don't trust your decisions and abilities, there is no way that you can learn to trust another person. Put your best foot forward by trusting yourself when it comes to your actions, decisions, and abilities.

### Mindset #5 of a Connector: Social and Curious

Although your exact social preference may differ, humans are naturally social creatures. Even those who are introverts need socialization now and then. We cannot thrive without meaningful social interaction. This is why those without friends or close family members are often sad and depressed. We absolutely need social interactions to live happy, healthy lives.

Connectors know that social interaction is what makes and breaks us. They make a point to be social in various ways, whether in group settings, one-on-one time, or virtual relationships. No matter the way they communicate, they make it a point to be social.

Curiosity is a prominent feature of becoming more social. The more curious you are, the more likely you will go out, meet new people, and try new things. Let your curiosity lead you to become more brave, outgoing, and social every day. You may be interested in throwing a party, joining a club, or attending a unique event. Follow that curiosity and boost your socialization. Don't be afraid to get creative with it, either!

### Mindset #6 of a Connector: Conscientious

Conscientiousness is when you're careful and diligent. In the case of connection-making, conscientiousness is about being diligent and careful in the relationship. This includes doing what you say you're going to do, checking in, and overall being the right person to have a connection with.

Suppose you leave conscientious out of the equation. In that case, you often will look like you don't care about the other person or the relationship as a whole. When this happens, other people are less likely to want to be your connection in return. After all, nobody wants to be in a one-sided relationship.

An essential part of being conscientious is knowing when to say no and when to say yes. Some situations will arise when you simply do not have the time or energy to perform a favor. In these cases, it is more conscientious to say no. Just make sure to say it in a way that is compassionate, heartfelt, and respectful to the other person. In other cases, you should say yes.

### Mindset #7 of a Connector: Have a Generous Spirit

Do not expect for your connections to help you if you aren't willing to give to them. For this reason, generosity is a crucial foundation for rewarding connections. You cannot become a Connector without first having a generous spirit for your connections and the world around you.

No matter where you are, try to add something to the organization or people. Whether you are at the office, home, or gym, try to add something by being generous and attentive to the situations' needs and wants. Even if you don't get anything in return initially, nothing is ever really for nothing. It just might take a bit to see the results.

As you become generous, you might notice that certain people try to take advantage of you. Set boundaries to prevent this from happening. Having healthy boundaries in place does not make you any less generous. Instead, it is a way of being generous to yourself. If you aren't generous to yourself, there is no way to be helpful and beneficial to others.

## Diversity is Key

In the stock market, most investors want a diverse portfolio. This ensures that not all their money will be lost at one time in the case that a company should tank unexpectedly. Diversity is key in connections, too. Obviously, having diverse connections means more opportunities for help and perspectives. Still, diversity extends beyond the type of people you make connections with.

The modern world is equipped with countless ways to make connections with people. Use diverse mediums to create different types of relationships. For example, LinkedIn and other technology tools are a great way to diversify your connections. As the world continues to develop, you need to keep up with the times by using these helpful portals. Link, reach out, and promote your business on LinkedIn to expand your network and online presence.

More than LinkedIn, though, use other social media platforms to connect with those around you. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are more personal social media accounts. Still, they are a great way to connect with someone if you are interested in them for more than just business purposes.

As you build these online connections, remember to be authentic, and respect people's privacy. Having a connection with someone doesn't entitle you to every detail of their lives.

## What Now?

Kick your networking up a notch by becoming a Connector. Reach out to people with intentions to connect, but do so in an accepting, trusting, and conscientious way. If you authentically create relationships in this way, you will eventually see that your connections improve your life and career, making you feel a bit more lucky.



Michelle Tillis Lederman, CSP, PCC, named one of Forbes' Top 25 Networking Experts, is the author of several books including the internationally known The 11 Laws of Likability. Tillis Lederman is the founder and CEO of Executive Essentials, which provides customized communications and leadership training and coaching programs. A former finance executive and NYU Professor, Tillis Lederman is a regular in the media, appearing on NBC, CBS, Fox, NPR, CNBC, and in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and others.

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# The Element

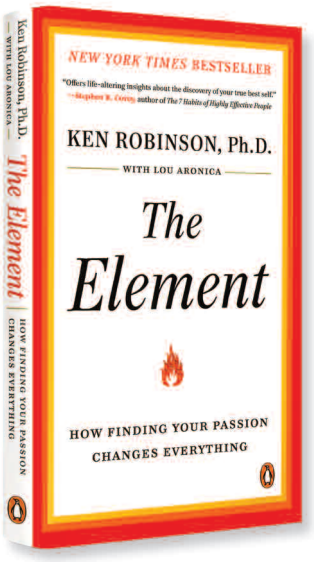
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Career & Self-Development: Change & Advancement

# The Element

## How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything




by Ken Robinson, Ph.D., with Lou Aronica

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A 2-year-old teaches himself to read by watching *Sesame Street* and tries to teach other kids to count using his number blocks. As an adult, his math lectures draw standing-room-only crowds. A 9-year-old girl is thought to have a learning disability. A psychologist thinks otherwise and opens the door to an extraordinary life of dance. A young girl in Greece dreams of academic life and becomes one of America's leading political commentators. Terence Tao, Gillian Lynne and Arianna Huffington all took different paths to discovering their Element and each was changed profoundly by the experience.

The Element is the point at which natural talent meets personal passion. When people arrive at the Element, they feel most themselves, most inspired and achieve at their highest levels.

In *The Element*, learning expert Ken Robinson, Ph.D., draws on the stories of a wide range of artists, athletes, scientists, business leaders, academics and others to show you why finding your Element is essential for all of us. He also explores the conditions that lead us to live lives that are filled with passion, confidence and personal achievement.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to unleash the powerful driving force inside every human being.
- The key to the breathtaking diversity of human talent and passion, and to our extraordinary potential for growth and development.
- How to make any vision, any dream, a reality.
- How to find the place where your talents and desires intersect.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE ELEMENT**

**by Ken Robinson, Ph.D., with Lou Aronica**

**The authors:** Sir Ken Robinson, Ph.D., is an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation and human resources. He has worked with national governments in Europe and Asia, international agencies, Fortune 500 companies, national and state education systems, nonprofit organizations and some of the world's leading cultural organizations. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2003 for his service to the arts.

Lou Aronica is the author of two novels and co-author of several works of nonfiction, including the national bestseller *The Culture Code* (with Clotaire Rapaille).

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For additional information on the authors, go to http://www.summary.com.

## Introduction

The Element is the place where the things we love to do and the things we are good at come together. It is essential that each of us find his or her Element, not simply because it will make us more fulfilled but because, as the world evolves, the very future of our communities and institutions will depend on it.

The world is changing faster than ever in our history. Our best hope for the future is to develop a new paradigm of human capacity to meet a new era of human existence. We need to evolve a new appreciation of the importance of nurturing human talent along with an understanding of how talent expresses itself differently in every individual. We need to create environments — in our schools, in our workplaces and in our public offices — where every person is inspired to grow creatively. We need to make sure that all people have the chance to do what they should be doing, to discover the Element in themselves and in their own way.

To make the best of ourselves and of each other, we urgently need to embrace a richer conception of human capacity. We need to embrace the Element. ●

## The Element

Gillian was only 8 years old, but her future was already at risk. Her schoolwork was a disaster, at least as far as her teachers were concerned. She turned in assignments late, her handwriting was terrible and she tested poorly. Not only that, she was a disruption to the entire class, one minute fidgeting noisily, the next staring out the window, forcing the teacher to stop the class to pull her attention back, and the next doing something to disturb the children around her. The school was very concerned. This came to a head when the school wrote to her parents.

The school thought that Gillian had a learning disorder of some sort and that it might be more appropriate for her to be in a school for children with special needs. All of this took place in the 1930s.

### The Letter

Gillian's parents received the letter from the school with great concern and sprang to action. Gillian's mother put her daughter in her best dress and shoes, tied her hair in ponytails and took her to a psychologist for assessment, fearing the worst.

Gillian remembers being invited into a large oak-paneled room with leather-bound books on the shelves. Eventually, her mother and the psychologist stopped talking. The two adults left her sitting there on her own. But as he was leaving the room, the psychologist leaned across his desk and turned on the radio.

As soon as they were in the corridor outside the room, the doctor said to Gillian's mother, "Just stand here for a moment, and watch what she does." There was a window into the room, and they stood to one side of it, where Gillian couldn't see them. Nearly immediately, Gillian was on her feet, moving around the room to the music. The two adults stood watching quietly for a few minutes, transfixed by the girl's grace. Anyone would have noticed there was something natural — even primal — about Gillian's movements. Just as they

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Edward O'Neill**, Graphic Designer; **Chris Lauer**, Contributing Editor

would have surely caught the expression of utter pleasure on her face.

At last, the psychologist turned to Gillian's mother and said, "You know, Mrs. Lynne, Gillian isn't sick. She's a dancer. Take her to a dance school."

Little Gillian, the girl with the high-risk future, became known to the world as Gillian Lynne, one of the most accomplished choreographers of our time, someone who has brought pleasure to millions and earned millions of dollars. This happened because someone looked deep into her eyes — someone who had seen children like her before and knew how to read the signs. Someone else might have put her on medication and told her to calm down. But Gillian wasn't a problem child. She didn't need to go away to a special school.

She just needed to be who she really was.

Gillian Lynne found her Element. Most people have not.

### Find Your Element

Finding your Element is essential to your well-being and ultimate success, and, by implication, to the health of our organizations and the effectiveness of our educational systems.

If we can each find our Element, we all have the potential for much higher achievement and fulfillment. We all have distinctive talents and passions that can inspire us to achieve far more than we may imagine. Understanding this changes everything. It also offers us our best and perhaps our only promise for genuine and sustainable success in a very uncertain future.

Being in our Element depends on finding our own distinctive talents and passions. Why haven't most people found this? One of the most important reasons is that most people have a very limited conception of their own natural capacities. ●

## Think Differently

One of the key principles of the Element is that we need to challenge what we take for granted about our abilities and the abilities of other people. This isn't as easy as one might imagine. Part of the problem with identifying the things we take for granted is that we don't know what they are *because* we take them for granted. They become basic assumptions that we don't question, part of the fabric of our logic. We don't question them because we see them as fundamental, as an integral part of our lives.

## 'The Shoulders of Giants'

Isaac Newton famously said, "If I saw further it was because I stood on the shoulders of giants." This is not just a phenomenon of science.

A good example of something that many people take for granted without knowing it is the number of human senses. When asked how many senses they have, most people will answer five — taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. Some will say there's a sixth sense and suggest intuition. Rarely will anyone offer anything beyond this.

Physiologists largely agree that in addition to the five we all know about, there are four more. The first is our sense of temperature. Another is the sense of pain. Next is the vestibular sense, which includes our sense of balance and acceleration. And then there's the kinesthetic sense, which gives us our understanding of where our limbs and the rest of our body are in space in relationship to each other.

### Athletes and Performers

Athletes have a profound sense of the capacities of their physical bodies, and their achievements show how limited our everyday ideas about human ability really are. If you watch athletes, dancers, musicians and other performers of their class at work, you can see that they are thinking, as well as performing, in extraordinary ways. They draw from the deep reserves of feeling and intuition and of physical reflex and coordination that use the whole brain and not just the parts that we associate with rational thinking.

In these ways, athletes and all sorts of other performers help to challenge something else about human capacity that too many people take for granted and also get wrong — our ideas about intelligence.

How are you intelligent? Knowing that intelligence is diverse, dynamic and distinctive allows you to address that question in new ways. This is one of the core components of the Element. For when you explode your preconceived ideas about intelligence, you can begin to see your own intelligence in new ways. Discovering the Element is all about allowing yourself access to all of the ways in which you experience the world, and discovering where your own true strengths lie.

Just don't take them for granted. ●

## Beyond Imagining

We tend to underestimate the range of our senses and

our intelligence. We do the same with our imaginations. In fact, while we largely take our senses for granted, we tend to take our imaginations for granted completely. We'll even criticize people's perceptions by telling them that they have "overactive imaginations" or that what they believe is "all in their imagination." And yet, far more than any other power, imagination is what sets human beings apart from every other species on earth.

The imagination is vitally important in our lives. Through imagination, we can visit the past, contemplate the present and anticipate the future. We can also do something else of profound and unique significance.

We can create.

### Creative Dynamics

Creativity is a step beyond imagination because it requires that you actually do something rather than lie around thinking about it. It's a very practical process of trying to make something original. Some common features pertain:

- It is a process. Usually, the creative process begins with an inkling, which requires further development.
- Creativity involves several different processes that wind through each other.
- It involves using media of some sort to develop ideas.
- Creative work also often involves tapping into various talents at your disposal to make something original.
- People who work creatively usually have something in common: They love the media they work with.
- Creativity also uses much more than our brains. We, ourselves, are the medium of our creative work.
- Creative work also reaches deep into our intuitive and unconscious minds and into our hearts and feelings.

In the 19th century, William James became one of the founding thinkers of modern psychology. By then, it was becoming more widely understood that our ideas and ways of thinking could imprison us or liberate us. James put it this way: "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitude of mind. … If you change your mind, you can change your life."

This is the real power of creativity and the true promise of being in your Element.

## In the Zone

At the age of two, Terence Tao taught himself to read by watching *Sesame Street,* and he tried to teach other kids to count using number blocks. Within the year, he was doing double-digit mathematical equations. Before his 9th birthday, he took the SAT-M (a math-specific version of the SAT given primarily to college candidates) and scored in the 99th percentile. He received his Ph.D. at age 20. When he was 30, he won a Fields Medal, considered the Nobel Prize of mathematics, and a MacArthur Fellowship.

Dr. Tao is extraordinarily gifted. He's earned the moniker "the Mozart of Math," and his lectures — his *math lectures* — draw standing-room-only crowds. His academic record suggests that he could have been successful in several disciplines, but his real calling, his discovery of the Element, came via math when he was still a toddler.

"I remember as a child being fascinated with the patterns and puzzles of mathematical symbol manipulation," he told an interviewer. "I think the most important thing for developing an interest in mathematics is to have the ability and the freedom to play with mathematics — to set little challenges for oneself, to devise little games, and so on. Having good mentors was very important for me, because it gave me the chance to discuss these sorts of mathematical recreations; the formal classroom environment is of course best for learning theory and applications, and for appreciating the subject as a whole, but it isn't a good place to learn how to experiment."

### Brilliance and Passion

Tao probably finds himself in the zone regularly. In addition to being born with rare skills, he is also extremely fortunate because he arrived at his version of the Element when he was very, very young. He found the place where his brilliance and his passion met, and he never looked back.

No one was going to tell Tao to stop doing math because he'd make more money if he were a lawyer. In that way, he, and others like him, had an unencumbered path toward the Element.

But they *provide* a path as well. For they show all of us the value of asking a vitally important question: If left to my own devices — if I didn't have to worry about making a living or what others thought of me — what am I most drawn to doing? Tao probably never had to wonder what he was going to do with his life. What the rest of us need to do is see our futures and the futures of our children, our colleagues and our communities with the childlike simplicity prodigies have when their talents first emerge.

This is about looking into the eyes of your children or those you care for and, rather than approaching them with a template about who they might be, trying to understand who they really are.

We need to understand what puts them and us in the zone.

And we need to determine what implications that has for the rest of our lives. ●

## Finding Your Tribe

Tribe members can be collaborators or competitors. They can share the same vision or have utterly different ones. They can be of a similar age or from different generations. What connects a tribe is a common commitment to the thing they feel born to do. This can be extraordinarily liberating, especially if you've been pursuing your passion alone.

Finding your tribe can have transformative effects on your sense of identity and purpose. This is because of three powerful tribal dynamics: validation, inspiration and what is called the "alchemy of synergy."

Connecting with people who share the same passions affirms that you're not alone; that there are others like you and that, while many might not understand your passion, some do. It doesn't matter whether you like the people as individuals, or even the work they do. It's perfectly possible that you don't.

What matters first is having validation for the passion you have in common. Finding your tribe brings the luxury of talking shop, of bouncing ideas around, of sharing and comparing techniques, and of indulging your enthusiasms or hostilities for the same things.

Some people are most in their Element when they are working alone. This is often true of mathematicians, poets, painters and some athletes. Even with these people, though, there's a tacit awareness of a field — the other writers, other painters, other mathematicians, other players, who enrich the domain and challenge their sense of possibility.

### How Do They Do That?

Finding your tribe offers more than validation and interaction, important as both of those are. It provides inspiration and provocation to raise the bar on your own achievements. In every domain, members of a passionate community tend to drive each other to explore the real extent of their talents.

Sometimes, the boost comes not from close collaboration, but from the influence of others in the field, whether contemporaries or predecessors, whether directly associated with one's particular domain or associated only marginally. ●

## What Will They Think?

When Arianna Stasinopoulos was a teenager in Greece in the 1960s, she had a sudden and passionate dream. Leafing through a magazine, she saw a picture of Cambridge University in England. She was only 13 years old, but she decided on the spot that she had to be a student there. No one took her seriously. No one except Arianna herself, that is. And one other person.

Her mother decided that they had to find out if Arianna's dream was even remotely possible. She made some inquiries and learned that Arianna could apply for a scholarship. Arianna applied as soon as she was eligible.

To her delight and everyone's astonishment (except her mother's), Cambridge accepted Arianna — and she won a scholarship. She went on to graduate from Cambridge University with an M.A. in economics.

Now based in the United States, Arianna Huffington is the author of 11 books on cultural history and politics, a nationally syndicated columnist and co-host of a National Public Radio political roundtable program. In May 2005, she launched the *Huffington Post* Web site, "one of the most widely read and frequently cited media brands on the Internet." In 2006, *Time* magazine put her on their list of the world's 100 most influential people.

### Swimming Against the Tide

All cultures — and subcultures — embody systems of constraints that can inhibit individuals from reaching their Element if their passions are in conflict with their context.

The urban culture may not be best for someone who wants to run a small shop where he knows everyone's name. Parts of heartland American culture are not prime territory for those who want careers as scathing political comics. This is why Arianna Stasinopoulos wanted to leave Greece. Finding your Element sometimes requires breaking away from your native culture in order to achieve your goals.

In seeking your Element, you're likely to face one or more of the three levels of constraint — personal, social and cultural.

Ultimately, the question is always going to be, "What price are you willing to pay?" The rewards of the Element are considerable, but reaping these rewards may mean pushing back against some stiff opposition. ●

## Do You Feel Lucky?

Some "lucky" people have been fortunate to find their passions and have the opportunities to pursue them. Some "unlucky" people have had bad things happen to them. But good and bad things happen to all of us. It's not what happens to us that makes the difference in our lives. What makes the difference is our attitude toward what happens. The idea of luck is a powerful way of illustrating the importance of our basic attitudes in affecting whether or not we find our Element.

Describing ourselves as lucky or unlucky suggests that we're simply the beneficiaries or victims of chance circumstances. But if being in your Element were just a matter of chance, all you could do is cross your fingers and hope to get lucky as well. There's much more to being lucky than that. Research and experience show that lucky people often make their luck because of their attitudes.

We all create and shape the realities of our own lives to an extraordinary extent. Successful people take an active role in "getting lucky." They've mastered a combination of attitudes and behavior that lead them to opportunities and that give them the confidence to take them.

### Conscious Efforts

One way of opening ourselves up to new opportunities is to make conscious efforts to look differently at our ordinary situations. Doing this allows a person to see the world as one rife with possibility and to take advantage of some of these possibilities if they seem worth pursuing. If we keep our focus too tight, we miss the rest of the world swirling around us.

Another attitude that leads to what many of us would consider "good luck" is the ability to reframe, to look at a situation that fails to go according to plan and turn it into something beneficial.

People who find their Element are more likely to evolve a clearer sense of their life's ambitions and set a course for achieving them. They know that passion and aptitude are essential. They know, too, that our attitudes to events and to ourselves are crucial in determining whether or not we find and live our lives in the Element. ●

## Somebody Help Me

Mentors serve an invaluable role in helping people get to the Element. It might be overstating things to suggest that the only way to reach the Element is with the help of a mentor, but it is only a mild overstatement. We all encounter multiple roadblocks and constraints on the journey toward finding what we feel we were meant to do. Without a knowledgeable guide to aid us in identifying our passions, to encourage our interests, to smooth our paths and to push us to make the most of our capacities, the journey is considerably harder.

Mentorship is, of course, a two-way street. As important as it is to have a mentor in your life, it is equally important to fulfill these roles for other people. It is even possible that you'll find your own real Element is as a mentor to other people.

### More Than Heroes

We all have personal heroes — a parent, a teacher, a coach, even a schoolmate or colleague — whose actions we idolize. In addition, we all have heroes we've never met who stir our imaginations with their deeds. We consider Lance Armstrong a hero for the way he overcame a life-threatening illness to dominate a physically grueling sport, and Nelson Mandela a hero for his critical role in ending apartheid in South Africa. In addition, we forever associate people with heroic acts — Rosa Parks' triumphant stand against bigotry, Neil Armstrong's first step on the moon.

These people open our eyes to new possibilities and fire our aspirations. They might even drive us to follow their examples in our lives, moving us to dedicate ourselves to public service, exploration, breaking barriers or lessening injustice. In this way, these heroes perform a function similar to mentors.

Yet mentors do something more than heroes in our search for the Element. Heroes may be remote from us and inaccessible. Mentors are different. They take a unique and personal place in our lives. Mentors open doors for us and get involved directly in our journeys. They show us the next steps and encourage us to take them. ●

## Is It Too Late?

One of the fundamental precepts of the Element is that we need to reconnect with ourselves and see ourselves holistically. One of the greatest obstacles to being in our Element is the belief that our minds somehow exist independently of our bodies, like tenants in an apartment, or that our bodies are really just a form of transportation for our heads. The evidence of research, and of common sense, is not only that our physical health affects our intellectual and emotional vitality, but that our attitudes can affect our physical well-being. But

equally important is the work you do to keep your mind young. Laughter has a huge impact on aging. So does intellectual curiosity. Meditation can also provide significant benefits to the physical body.

The answer to the question, "Is it too late for me to find the Element?" is simple: No, of course not. Even in the cases where the physical degradations that come with age make certain achievements impossible, the Element is still within reach.

### Keeping Things Plastic

What this really comes down to is our capacity to continue to develop our creativity and intelligence as we enter new stages of our lives.

Research indicates that, as long as we keep using our brains in an active way, we continue to build neural pathways as we get older. This gives us not only the ongoing potential for creative thought, but also an additional incentive for continuing to stretch ourselves. There is strong evidence to suggest that the creative functions of our brain stay strong deep into our lives: We can recover and renew many of our latent aptitudes by deliberately exercising them.

Remarkable, life-enhancing things can happen when we take the time to step out of our routines, rethink our paths and revisit the passions we left behind (or never pursued at all) for whatever reason. We can take ourselves in fresh directions at nearly any point in our lives. We have the capacity to discover the Element at practically any age. ●

## For Love or Money

To be in your Element, it isn't necessary to drop everything else and do it all day, every day. For some people, at some stages in their lives, leaving their current jobs or roles to pursue their passions isn't a practical proposition. Other people choose not to do that for a whole range of reasons. Many people earn their living doing one thing, and they then create time and space in their lives to do the thing they love. Some people do this because it makes greater sense emotionally. Others do it because they feel they have no alternative but to pursue their passions "on the side."

Whether or not we can spend most of our time in our Element, it's essential for our well-being that we connect with our true passions in some way and at some point.

### A New Richness

Discovering the Element doesn't promise to make you richer. Quite the opposite is possible, actually, as exploring your passions might lead you to leave behind that career as an investment banker to follow your dream of opening a pizzeria. Nor does it promise to make you more famous, more popular or even a bigger hit with your family. However, for everyone, being in their Element, even for part of the time, can bring a new richness and balance to their lives.

The Element is about a more dynamic, organic conception of human existence in which the different parts of our lives are not seen as hermetically sealed off from one another, but as interacting with and influencing each other. Being in our Element at any time in our lives can transform our view of ourselves. Whether we do it full-time or part-time, it can affect our whole lives and the lives of those around us. ●

## Making The Grade

The core ideas and principles of the Element have implications for each of the main areas of education. The curriculum of education for the 21st century must be transformed radically. Intelligence is diverse, dynamic and distinct. Here is what it means for education.

First, we need to eliminate the existing hierarchy of subjects. Elevating some disciplines over others only reinforces outmoded assumptions of industrialism and offends the principle of diversity. Too many students pass through education and have their natural talents marginalized or ignored. The arts, sciences, humanities, physical education, languages and math all have equal and central contributions to make to a student's education.

Second, we need to question the entire idea of "subjects." For generations, we have promoted the idea that the arts, the sciences, the humanities and the rest are categorically different from each other. The truth is that they have much in common. There is great skill and objectivity in the arts, just as there is passion and intuition at the heart of science. The idea of separate subjects that have nothing in common offends the principle of dynamism.

Third, the curriculum should be personalized. Learning happens in the minds and souls of individuals — not in the databases of multiple-choice tests. Learning is a personal process, especially if we are interested in moving people toward the Element. The current processes of education do not take into account individual learning styles and talents. In that way, they offend the principle of distinctiveness.

### Teaching

The Element has implications for teaching. Too many reform movements in education are designed to make education teacher-proof. The most successful systems in the world take the opposite view. They invest in teachers. Mentoring and coaching is the vital pulse of a living system of education.

The Element has implications for assessment. Education is being strangled persistently by the culture of standardized testing. The irony is that these tests are not raising standards except in some very particular areas, and at the expense of most of what really matters in education.

The future for education is not in standardizing, but in customizing; not in promoting groupthink and "deindividuation," but in cultivating the real depth and dynamism of human abilities of every sort. For the future, education must be Elemental. ●

## Afterword

Finding the Element in yourself is essential to discovering what you can really do and who you really are. At one level, this is a very personal issue. It's about you and people you know and care for. But there is a larger argument here as well. The Element has powerful implications for how to run our schools, businesses, communities and institutions. The core principles of the Element are rooted in a wider, organic conception of human growth and development.

Sir Isaac Newton composed his theories at the dawn of the mechanical age. To him, the universe seemed like an enormous mechanical clock, with perfectly regular cycles and rhythms. Modern science has changed metaphors and, in doing so, has shifted our understanding of how the universe works.

In our own time, though, we still routinely use mechanistic and technological metaphors to describe ourselves and our communities.

The power of metaphors and analogies is that they point to similarities, and there are certainly some similarities in how lifeless computers and living minds actually work. Nonetheless, your mind clearly isn't a solid-state system in a metal box on your shoulders. And human organizations are not at all like mechanisms. They are made up of living people who are driven by feelings and motives and relationships. Organizational charts show you the hierarchy, but they don't capture how the organization feels or how it really works. The fact is that human organizations and communities are not like mechanisms: they are much more like organisms.

### Become the Best

The Russian novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn understood the connection between ourselves and others. "If you want to change the world," he said, "who do you begin with, yourself or others? I believe if we begin with ourselves and do the things that we need to do and become the best person we can be, we have a much better chance of changing the world for the better."

### Aiming High

Human beings and human communities are the same. We need the right conditions for growth, in our schools, businesses and communities, and in our individual lives. If the conditions are right, people grow in synergy with the people around them and the environments they create. If the conditions are poor, people protect themselves and their anxieties from neighbors and the world. Some of the elements of our own growth are inside us. They include the need to develop our unique natural aptitudes and personal passions. Finding and nurturing them is the surest way to ensure our growth and fulfillment as individuals.

If we discover the Element in ourselves and encourage others to find theirs, the opportunities for growth are infinite. If we fail to do that, we may get by, but our lives will be duller as a result.

To make the best of our time together on this small and crowded planet, we have to develop our powers of imagination and creativity within a different framework of human purpose. Michelangelo once said, "The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it." For all our futures, we need to aim high and be determined to succeed. To do that, each of us individually and all of us together need to discover the Element. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Element*, you'll also like:

1. ***A Whole New Mind* by Daniel H. Pink.** The age of right-brained thinkers — artists, inventors, big-picture thinkers — has arrived. Learn the six essential aptitudes you'll need to excel in this new business environment.
2. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There* by Marshall Goldsmith.** The corporate world is full of intelligent and skilled executives, but Goldsmith gives you the 20 habits to help you push for the very best in your career.
3. ***Talent is Overrated* by Geoff Colvin.** What's the real solution to the mystery of high performance? Colvin reveals the secrets of "deliberate practice." It's difficult. It hurts. But more of it equals better performance. Tons of it equals great performance.

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# The Elephant's Dilemma

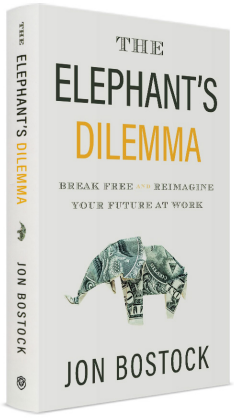
Jon Bostock

Career &
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# The Elephant's Dilemma

## Break Free and Reimagine Your Future at Work




*by* **Jon Bostock**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

This book is for those who are stuck in the "elephant's dilemma" in their work. An elephant grows up tethered to a tent peg that he can't break free from as a baby elephant. The baby elephant grows up and has many more times the power and strength to break free, but it believes it is still unbreakably tethered to that post as it was as a child. Similarly, many wait safely in their corporate jobs tied to the never-ending cycle of business and never try to break free.

Jon Bostock in ***The Elephant's Dilemma*** will show you how to break free from the constraints of business and reimagine your future at work. It'll show you how to make business decisions that are more sustainable, more radical, and more disruptive so that you can leap into a more fulfilling future.

Further, Bostock shows the reader how to create an innovative business with a true competitive advantage. You can make your business sustainable and leave a lasting legacy upon others in a real and meaningful way.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to break free from the constraints you have let yourself be limited by.
- How to reimagine your future.
- How to create a business with a competitive advantage.
- How to make your business sustainable and leave a legacy that changes the world.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Introduction

This book is for those who are stuck in the elephant's dilemma in their work. The elephant grows up tethered to a tent peg that he can't break free from as a baby elephant. The baby elephant grows up and has many more times the power and strength to break free, but it believes it is still tethered to that post as it was as a child.

### You Are the Elephant

In a similar way, many wait safely in their corporate jobs tied to the never-ending cycle of business and never try to break free and do work that is more meaningful.

This book will show you how to break free from the constraints of business and reimagine your future at work. The antidote to being stuck in a career rut is to move. Moving. Leaping forward. You can do anything you want. You can look up from the day-to-day grind and look further ahead than the next quarter's profit projections. You can shift out of your rut and into a more fulfilling, meaningful career that will make your future work for you.

### Get Out of the Bubble

Today's neighborhoods encourage people to live in a bubble. They reduce a person's connection to their community. These McNeighborhoods are an illustration of the insular life of today, caring only about what's inside their bubble.

The same old work doesn't engage your mind. You get used to all the conformity, all the sameness, and you look elsewhere for something interesting.

The US generally appears to have stabilized. Compare the state of our society today to the developments of our past. Progress slowed. We stopped taking moon shots and, instead, focused on less weighty, less impactful innovations. We stopped coming together to take giant swings that shook our culture and became more divided.

If we don't start to innovate in ways more reminiscent of our past, we'll remain flat while the world's challenges peak. If we keep operating the same way we are today, with small steps taken here and there but no massive cultural swings, we'll end up with a lot of problems.

The solutions we have in place today will not hold up to the challenges of tomorrow. And often, we don't correctly predict what those challenges will be. Most of us did not see, or at least take seriously, the threat of a pandemic.

## You Are Capable of Creating Change

Think beyond what is best for your family and think about what is best for everyone. Your hardships don't have to impact your attitude and outlook on life. We need to look up and reach out. We need to join together as a community.

### Measuring Up to Mammoths

Elon Musk of Tesla dreams big. SpaceX and The Boring Company are just two more of his innovative ideas.

In an environment like GE, being one of 300,000 employees, it's hard to see the direct impact of your work. I knew our group did good work, but there was so much happening around us that it felt like our efforts were sucked into this big, bureaucratic machine where they just … disintegrated. We were trying to drive innovation, but we were like a single cog pushing hopelessly against a huge metal beast.

Starting a new company is a great deal about tolerance of taking risks. We need people to improve the world around them. Wherever you're at, break free from there. Shake off the chains of life as you know it, and imagine what would happen if you innovated in this world. It means starting with a single step.

### Tugging the Chain

Big companies do a really good job of keeping you just busy enough, distracted enough, tired enough that you don't look for more fulfilling work elsewhere. Their business life cycles keep pulling you back in, engaging you in challenging work that doesn't really affect much change. They cycle you through various opportunities that make you feel good for a short while, so you can push down the urge to do more meaningful work and snuff it out.

Being sustainable is about adjusting operations so they could sustain changes in ownership and management and the world. Ensuring a company is sustainable in those terms has a positive impact on employees, the local community, and the brand.

### Stepping Out of Stagnation

Stagnation is the killer of dreams. Maybe that's how you feel in your work: idle and listless, like you're incapable of moving anywhere more meaningful. It's a common trap. Significant steps are rarely easy. Breaking free of a known existence—even one that's kind of a downer—feels risky, and it often takes time to step into that.

If you don't feel you can take a big step forward into something different, a smaller step is essential. Breaking free and finding more fulfilling work starts with pulling on the chain, just a little, to test your strength. That's all you can reasonably expect to start with if you've spent your whole life being risk-averse, getting up at the same time every day, wearing the same color pants, putting on the right sock first, then the left, getting into your safety-rated sedan, and clocking in at a nice, secure company.

Even if things don't pan out, you learn from those experiences. You feel how empowering it is to impact the world around you. You're inspired. You gain confidence. You just feel good about yourself.

Break free from small expectations, know someone might laugh at your mismatched fashion choices, and keep doing it anyway. Create a reinforcing cycle of change that will move you from stagnation to satisfying payoffs.

## Identify Your Impact

To feel like your work is making a positive impact, you've actually got to make a noticeable, markedly positive impact. It's not enough to just nudge the scale. Yes, if you're not used to taking steps outside the normal way of doing things, you have to start small and get your confidence up. But then you need to look for bigger leaps.

Really think about the contribution you want to make in this world. Identify the impact you want to make, then decide on the best outlet for that change. Choose your path to get there. There are three main paths to take impactful business leaps: reimagining products and services, redesigning operations and supply chains, and aligning organizations into multidimensional sustainability. These three elements can elicit change in isolation, or they can be combined for greater effect.

When you focus on aligning with multidimensional sustainability, you find radical answers to challenges in our world. When you consider how you'll make your organization more sustainable, take a multidimensional approach. Look at the materials your product requires, the travel your executives take, the labeling your product uses, and every other aspect that contributes to your organization and its goal. Align those elements, and you'll find new possibilities to make giant leaps in your industry. The key is to identify the impact you want to make and the best outlet for that change.

## Imagine Change

After you've identified the impact you want to make on the world, you need to imagine how you can create that change. You need to envision how you'll make products, services, and operations more sustainable, efficient, minimal, or whatever you're trying to do. To imagine anything remotely interesting, you first have to erase what you already know. Get a whiteboard with nothing on it, and build the product, service, or operation up from scratch.

Think about what you're trying to create as a piece of art. With art, you start with something that isn't what it becomes. You begin a painting with a blank canvas, a drawing with a blank page. Solving problems is done best when you create without constraints. Start with a clean canvas. Then define the problem you're solving and establish the most efficient way of doing it. Everyday act like there's a whiteboard in front of you.

### Diversity of Thought

Groupthink is a phenomenon that occurs when a bunch of people come together to make decisions based on the same data. Usually, a desire to conform and support each other subconsciously encourages them to reinforce existing opinions without considering alternatives.

We sometimes forget the importance of fresh perspectives. If you want to avoid the traps of groupthink, where you can't come up with any new or innovative ideas, you must include people who see the world differently. You must deliberately bring together alternative viewpoints so that you can see new things. Then, you can solve issues that affect you and others who are not like you. You can have truly successful whiteboarding sessions where you invent innovative solutions.

When we search for diversity of thought, we must force ourselves to look beyond labels. We should seek out people who truly offer perspectives unique from our own. Find people with different belief systems formed by different experiences. A genuine drive to include varied people and ideas will serve you better than pencil-whipping "diversity" for the sake of political correctness.

Groupthink in your business will prevent you from breaking free and making leaps forward. And increasing diversity in your business isn't just a nice thing to do; it will result in more imaginative and more fulfilling business leaps. It's truly transformational for individuals and businesses.

### An Ecosystem of Kindness

When you're trying to do something new and innovative, you need people around you to participate. That might mean they lobby for your ideas, offer encouragement, or lend their efforts to your goal. This isn't just useful; it's essential.

Think of supporters as a personal board of advisors that provides unique perspectives, advice, and guidance. The more you can build out a diverse board of advisors, the better. As this is an informal congregation, it relies on kindness. You need others to kindly donate their time, energy, and insights to your cause. To encourage this, you must be kind to them.

### Permission to Break Free

Hierarchical thinking happens in corporate America. People don't usually like to take action unless given permission by their boss. In a lot of big companies, employees find themselves sitting back and waiting for the new corporate agenda to be pushed down from the top. Only then will they react to the instructions and start slowly shifting forward. They take incremental steps as far as they feel able, before waiting for more guidance from above. This is the habit of hierarchical thinking. It's a system that doesn't set anyone up to create a lasting impact. It just shuffles employees down a well-trod path no faster than the boss will allow.

We need people who will support and celebrate others who take risks. You need to rewire yourself to get comfortable being the outsider. It's creative and innovative and all-around awesome. You know no one will give you permission to do this new thing, but you have what you need to execute on it, so you don't bother wasting time waiting for approval. You just step outside the box and get moving.

## Create An Inspired Legacy

I don't care what industry you're in; there are a lot of companies doing similar things to yours but with a different philosophy. Alternatively, if you're willing to take on the risk, you can start your own company. There is risk involved in that. Find another way to step forward. Get funding—there are people who are willing to invest in great ideas. Find a company that'll pay you a set salary every month and let you work toward your goals.

### Make Your Mark on the World

The most important legacy is one that sustains this earth for future generations. This is what community is all about. We come together to achieve better, safer, more fulfilling environments. There is nothing more noble than taking action to contribute to your community in a lasting way.

### A Sense of Urgency

Bring a sense of urgency to the ideas you've learned. Remember to look out from your bubble to the wider world. It's not enough to give your kids a good education and assume they'll be okay. We're all affected by the world at large, and it's on us to ensure it survives. If you're reading this book, you're in a privileged position to break free from the chains of the normal way and make a mark on the world. It's not just your duty to yourself and your children; it's the path to fulfillment. It's what will quiet the nagging feeling that you're wasting your time on this earth. Working for something bigger than yourself will fulfill you.



Jon Bostock was a tethered elephant at General Electric for eleven years until he made his move and became the COO at Big Ass Fans (true story, real name). After restructuring the company and focusing on long-term economic sustainability, he was successful in shepherding the company's landmark sale. These concepts of disruption and sustainability inspired Jon to break free and start Truman's, a company designed to reduce waste and clutter in the consumer cleaning products industry.

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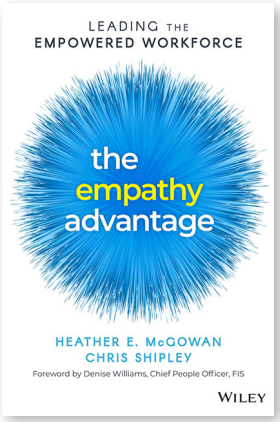
# The Empathy Advantage

Heather E. McGowan, Chris Shipley

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# The Empathy Advantage

## Leading the Empowered Workforce




*by* **Heather E. McGowan and Chris Shipley**

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Emerge the Empathetic Leader
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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The why, where, and how we work has changed forever. Work isn't returning to "the way it was" and leaders who resist this will struggle the most. The job of staying on top of people and labor market trends, anticipating and delivering what is needed to cultivate a culture of excellence, attracting and developing top talent, and protecting employee well-being at a time of unprecedented stress is not an easy feat. Yet here we are.

With the pandemic fresh in our minds, now is the time to understand its impacts on our work lives, the way we organize work, and the way we lead others. In ***The Empathy Advantage: Leading the Empowered Workforce***, authors Heather E. McGowan and Chris Shipley have teamed up to document these seismic shifts and connect the dots about the new workforce that is evolved, empowered, and exhausted, creating a playbook for "leading in this new work era."

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What the new normal of work looks like
- How to rethink your workforce
- Why you need to rethink your organization
- What it means to rethink your leadership

## The New Normal of Work

Workers adapted superbly to the challenge of maintaining business continuity amid the chaos that was the uncertainty of Covid-19. Our once separate personal and professional lives have merged. But the pandemic was merely a fast-acting catalyst for changes that have been afoot for a decade or longer. Shifting demographics, social norms, and generational experiences have permanently reshaped the workforce in ways larger than any one seismic event.

Our new workforce is now an amalgam of age, experience, and attitudes. Gen Z's entrance into the workforce permanently fixes this new composition. They are the most diverse, well educated, authentic, and socially engaged generation, and they would rather not work than work in jobs that don't reflect and respect their values and interests.

And there you are, smack dab in the middle of these converging trends, trying to figure out what this means for the people you lead and the organization you support. It starts with knowing and understanding the people you hope to lead, so let's start there.

## Part 1: Rethink Your Workforce

### Meet Your New Workforce

The diverse workforce is not coming; it is here. It was never safe to assume that workers who looked like you shared your motivations and experiences. Now, those assumptions are an occupational liability.

Our workforce is a melange of life experiences and rich perspectives that can make our work more enriching and more valuable. Our workforce, and now its leadership, is starting to look like the markets we serve. To tap that value, you're going to have to see–*really see*–the new workforce.

There is no racial majority in the 18 and younger cohort, the very people who are filling jobs today and will continue to fill jobs in the future. Within 10 years, in fact, Gen Z workers will fill 30% of the workforce. Racial reordering has given rise to the "People of the Global Majority," a reference to the global market that now comprises more Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) than whites.

The workforce is also pan-generational from Boomers to Gen Z and everything in between. In a world that requires continuous learning and adaptation, an age-diverse workforce now has a distinct advantage over a singularly young or singularly older workforce because our brains develop different capacities at different ages. An age-diverse workforce enables all employees to benefit from these developmental peaks.

With gender we see some of the most profound changes in the composition of the workforce with more women than men achieving a university education and entering the workforce for the first time in history.

Adding well-educated women to the workforce has significant and universal benefits, especially now as we tackle thorny issues. This challenging future requires a style of working that is less about individuals executing tasks in isolation and more about collaborative exploration.

Finally, perhaps the most rapidly transforming demographic marker in the workforce is gender and sexual identity. Once firmly defined as fixed and binary, gender and sexual orientation are increasingly understood to be fluid and exist on a continuum. And increasingly, acceptance is being codified in law.

Awareness, openness, transparency, and acceptance go a long way to create a workplace and team dynamic that engages workers of every background. As we dive deeper into the digital economy, humans will continue to be the greatest source of value creation. Little optimizes the investment in humans more than diversity in the workforce.

### Understand Your Worker's New Habits

Prior to the pandemic, business and society had experienced a 15-year period of exponential technology-driven growth. The pandemic only accelerated that change. As the world changed, we evolved, and so did the way we work.

**We Embraced Existing Technology**: We started using the tools that were already all around us–many of them a decade old or older–including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Skype, and more. Medical offices embraced telemedicine and consumers adopted every manner of app to stay connected professionally and personally. Small businesses and individuals adopted non-cash payment systems. QR codes finally had a reason to exist at scale. And we learned how to use all of it.

Given that very few of these technologies were new, this rapid digital transformation was due to *human transformation*. Technologies relegated to specific use cases became near universal. *We* transformed *ourselves* to enjoy the benefits of those technologies.

Purpose forms the heart of the new age of human-centric, or humanized, work.

**We Learned to Trust:** None of the virtual tools–indeed, remote work itself–would have been effective at all if we had not made the collective decision to trust one another, at a fundamental level. The trust we found in ourselves and one another helped us make it through three years of remote work. Only because we finally trusted our people and each other to work autonomously were we able to maintain performance and productivity.

**We Learned to Adapt:** The pandemic required everyone to confront unprecedented change. To keep pace, we needed a process of learning new skills and unlearning the habits and systems that prevented progress. Workers embraced agency to act and work in ways that make them more creative, more productive, and more fully human.

### Understand the Empowered Mindset

While the pandemic was experienced differently in one way or another by virtually everyone, one through line stands out. The relationship between individuals and organizations for which they work has forever changed. We have reaffirmed our values. We have reordered our priorities. We have reassessed our work. While the Great Resignation grabbed the headlines, the Great Reset is the real game changer.

Before the pandemic, life was what you had time for when your work was done. In the pandemic, the line between work and life blurred and work didn't always come first. In time, we settled into routines and many of us found that we liked tucking work into life much more than before, when we stressed about having a life outside of work. This reordering of life over work has empowered workers.

Our relationship to what we do and why we do it has also shifted. Workers now desire, or rather demand, meaningful work. Work is now filtered through one basic question: Is it worth it? Workers in every kind of role are seeking work that satisfies both economic and emotional requirements in a careful calculus that measures purpose alongside pay and flexibility alongside status.

We are at our best when we integrate our work with our inherent values. We are our best when we are both living and working our purpose. Purpose forms the heart of the new age of human-centric, or humanized, work. And it is the new organizing principle for companies and teams. When organizations make their purpose clear they attract workers who are dedicated to those values.

Perhaps most important to our new attitudes toward work in an era of remote and hybrid teams, relationships matter more than ever. It is our job as leaders to use our most human capability, empathy, to build the relationships that create the stickiness–the sense of belonging–that engenders engagement and builds organizational capacity.

Making the effort to really understand how your workers are thinking now, to dive into what truly motivates people to engage deeply in their work and with their colleagues, is so worth it, not simply because it creates a more positive workplace, but because it is the single most important thing you can do to unlock value in your business.

## Part II: Rethink Your Organization

### Upgrade Your Operating Models

Business leaders today have had a way of working, organizing, and leading that worked well enough when everything was familiar. These models and maps are comfortable; after all, they got us where we are today. But they bring an increasingly worrisome false confidence.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it has shown that they no longer work and layering them on top of a newly empowered workforce might just be dangerous. It's time, then, to throw them away.

In 2019, the Business Roundtable, an organization composed of the CEOs of the largest and most influential American companies, took a bold step and rejected the 50-year-old shareholder capital doctrine that valued a corporation almost solely on its stock price.

Instead, companies needed to embrace their *stakeholders*–the employees, customers, communities, and investors that in aggregate supported and benefited from the company. This

ushered in the Human Value Era, that puts the workforce at the center of organizational thinking and structure.

Instead of organizing around flat jobs that require more or less the same work every day, the better structure is to organize around projects. This enables people to come in and out of projects as needed, tapping skills when the demand requires them.

This shift from flat, jobs-based work to complex, project-based organizations is not just a nice idea; it's essential. In the modern knowledge economy, work has shifted from linear and predictable to complex and variable. It's time, then, to organize differently to tap the full potential of your team.

The best way to move forward is to abandon command and control structures that were built for scalable efficiency and embrace experimentation and review systems that are designed for scalable learning. Think of work as a set of activities that require individual and collective effort in order to reach an outcome.

In this definition, tasks aren't defined, outcomes are. The people doing the work have the latitude to do the work–the activities–required to reach the objective. That flexibility permits workers to be responsive to changing conditions, while staying fixed on the goal, rather than stuck in a job.

The organization itself naturally has expectations, aspirations, and preferences. A misalignment of these expectations between the organization and the people creates stress, and unchecked, that stress can lead to burnout. Today, we are confronting a decidedly more fragile relationship between the people and the organizations in which they work and we need to double down on our focus on people.

Benefits should not be seen as supplemental compensation. In the Human Value Era, benefits like healthcare, tuition reimbursement, and childcare combine to help your people perform better at work.

Time off matters, but flexibility is just as important. Workers want more flexibility and many more may be willing to rejoin the workforce if they were offered less "traditional" schedules. By turning benefits on their head and thinking of them not as supplemental compensation but as an investment in your company's most precious asset, benefits become an investment in the business.

The focus on value creation through scaled production of product and services was myopic, and blurred the importance of our most valuable asset: our people. To be successful in continuous change, we must focus on the development, engagement, well-being, and happiness of our people.

### Enable Your Empowered Workforce

Culture is a contract, sometimes written and often not, that directs how people within an organization choose to work together. Every organization has a culture. The best are intentional and well-articulated. Organizational values are clear and these clear values underpin decision making. People know what is in–and out–of bounds. They know what is expected of them, usually without being told. Culture is just what you do.

Change happens on top of a strong culture, not to one. The consistency matters. Culture is the operating system. It's how everyone in the organization understands and has context for actions and decisions. Culture enables distributed decision making–because people understand the context and parameters for actions. You work and decide and act within the cultural framework. Well-defined culture allows a business to grow and scale because everyone knows what they are working for and how to work together.

How can you tell if you're working in, or contributing to, a toxic culture? The signs are everywhere. Stress levels are high. Decision making is slow. People tend to feel underappreciated or believe they are being treated unfairly. These organizations tend to experience high rates of employee turnover. Work doesn't have to be that way.

Vibrant cultures are built on a foundation of shared values and trust, and nurtured with mindful intention. This mindfulness toward culture is a leading indicator of a healthy, learning, and engaging workplace. Culture is actuated by people who work in concert with shared values, mutual respect, and–most necessarily–implicit trust. Without trust, the potential of your culture cannot be realized.

Trust–or the lack of it–is expressed in every interaction, every mandate, every conversation. How you lead demonstrates your trust in your team and whether your team can trust you.

Trust runs up and down the org chart. The simplest, and sometimes hardest, way to achieve that bi-directionality is to operate with transparency. You will make mistakes. Own them. Correct them. Those are signs that you have listened, heard, and empathized with the concerns of your employees and customers.

People are more motivated and engaged when they feel a sense of shared purpose. That shared purpose makes people

Loosen your hold and enable your workers to contribute as uniquely and best as they are able.

feel valued and appreciated. It makes them feel seen, respected, validated, and empowered. Culture and purpose are the foundation for the trust and autonomy that empower workers to engage as a team working in league to a greater end.

Use purpose to fuel your organization. It is your best recruiting, retention, sales, and brand tool. Purpose is the *ultimate reason* for the work and is your unique competitive advantage. Clear-sighted purpose is the foundation of effective culture and the key to successful business adaptation. It is the expression of why your company exists and sets you apart. In fact, it can set you above.

Make your purpose evident in everything you do, everything you say, everything you sell, everyone you hire. Make your purpose a beacon so that your tribe can find you. Other companies can build similar things. They can provide better pay and perks. They can buy more advertising. But they can't outpurpose you once you have established your one, true, immutable purpose. That advantage will always fall to you.

## Part III: Rethinking Your Leadership

### Pilot Your Expedition Team

Leaders embracing the new challenges of the Human Value Era may not always have a clear line of sight to the objectives, but you can still move forward, taking your team on an expedition of learning, collaboration, discovery, and value creation in this new world of work.

An expedition is a journey into the unknown. In your work, it may be the exploration of a new product, service, or business model. It might be a collaboration to secure a new customer or launch a unique marketing campaign. It could be the daily journey of serving and supporting customers.

To run a successful expedition, it is essential that you put the right people in the right roles at the right times. Some people excel at problem finding, some at problem solving, others at scaling the novel idea while reducing risk. Knowing how to field your people properly is the most critical part of your job as expedition leader.

As you head out to lead your newly empowered workforce, relinquishing ideas, self perceptions, and behaviors that no longer serve you will lead to a more successful expedition.

**Relinquish the Primacy of Your Expertise:** Let go of ideas about yourself as an all-knowing leader. You are leading people now who have skills, knowledge, experience, and perspective that you likely don't have. Your job isn't to outshine your people. It's to guide them to bring back answers and approaches you might not have discovered on your own.

**Give Up Command and Control:** For too long, the boss gave an order and enticed performance by rewarding good work or punishing those who fell short. You need to move beyond that. Your job is to bring out the best in each of your people, freeing them to apply their unique talents to the task. Loosen your hold and enable your workers to contribute as uniquely and best as they are able.

**Abandon the "No News is Good News" Mantra:** Workers in fear of reprisal fail to share important information or sugarcoat bad news, lest they raise the ire of the boss. Strong leaders, however, know that their challengers are their secret weapon. Your people should be free and *encouraged* to dissent. This drives superior teams toward learning and innovation.

**Leave Meetings Behind:** Calendars are so full of meetings that we don't have time to actually do our work. And many of the people in those meetings don't need to be there.

Imagine that rather than scheduling meetings, you hold a "briefing" to start a project or a "review" to assess the progress of a project. You might even schedule a "post mortem" to evaluate the challenges and successes of a project once it is completed.

When we speak of purpose, it should be clear that there is not one singular purpose. When our individual purpose connects to purpose in our work and aligns with organizational purpose, incredible potential for value creation is unlocked.

When you fill the role as expedition leader who coaches your team, you are helping them align their purpose with

the organizational purpose–and that makes magic happen.

## Embrace Your Superpowers

"I. Don't. Know." Say it. Again. Get comfortable with those words. Because there is so much that you don't know. So much that others know that you do not. And that's just fine. Even if it's uncomfortable.

In the face of unprecedented uncertainty, ambiguity, change, and rapid formulation of new skills and knowledge, no leader can know it all. To acknowledge that you do not know, to be vulnerable to that truth, is a profound act of courage.

The ability to show up, to acknowledge that you don't know, to be brave in the face of uncertainty, these are the cornerstones of empathetic leadership in the Human Value Era.

When you open yourself to reveal your full, imperfect, authentic self you invite people to be their true selves with you. Your vulnerability creates a true connection and builds the foundation for psychological safety and belonging.

Acknowledging that you do not know also lifts a tremendous burden from your psyche and allows you to focus on what you and your team collectively know, identify gaps, and learn together. It is the path to innovation and creative collaboration.

It takes courage to recognize you don't know, and it is well worth the risk. Doing so imparts agency to your team, freeing them to contribute more fully and giving them a greater stake in the outcome of decisions. That, as an empathetic leader, is your highest objective. And it is the key to unlock all the other superpowers of your leadership.

**The Power of Awareness:** Your work as a leader is essentially to make decisions and manage both your emotions and help others manage theirs. Doing that requires a high degree of self-awareness, social awareness, and emotional intelligence.

**The Power of Candor:** Nothing cuts to the core like direct, honest communication, carefully and clearly delivered. Candor is easy when the going is good but it is tougher when the honest truth is less than pleasant. But that is when it matters most.

**The Power of Listening:** Deep listening is an act of vulnerability. You need to be open to really hear the ideas and concerns of the people who work with you. More importantly, you need to commit to following up on what you hear. You don't have to adopt every idea or placate every grievance but a "Thanks for sharing" response isn't enough.

**The Power of Being Human:** For too long, we validated ruthless, anti-worker behavior for the sake of the bottom line. In the new social contract between worker and employee, we are free to be more human as leaders and develop relational rather than transactional relationships with our workforce.

This means you can drop the charade of the tough-minded boss and embrace your empathetic self. You can be fully human, and that may just be the greatest superpower of all.

## Emerge the Empathic Leader

Change is inevitable. The pandemic-induced lockdowns put that in sharp relief. Change in the circumstances around you requires change in understanding, change in methods, change in process, change of mind, and change in self-perception. Change is hard and the magnitude of change brought on by Covid-19 seems nearly impossible.

The impulse to return to the before-times mode of operation and leadership is understandable. But here's the thing: you can't. You won't be going back, *ever*. Because everything *has* changed.

Everything about the who and how and where of work is different. There is no respite from change and you are already doing a great job navigating it.

This pandemic is surely not the last disruption. Climate change, geopolitical conflicts, technology disruptions, labor shortages, and inflation are just a few of the forces that will challenge organizations each and every day from now.

How do you lead through these challenges? With empathy. With trust. With compassion. Engaging your superpowers to become the best possible leader for these times. Let's go.



**Chris Shipley** has documented, influenced, and predicted the impact of technology on business and society for more than 30 years. Today, Chris is focuses her work on the human and organizational challenges in the face of technology- and economically-driven disruption. Future-of-work strategist

**Heather E. McGowan** helps leaders prepare their people and organizations for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Heather gives lucidity to this topic through her illuminating graphic frameworks and powerful metaphors, all backed by deep research. Pulitzer Prize–winning NYT columnist Thomas Friedman frequently quotes Heather in his books and columns and describes her as "the oasis" when it comes to insights into the future of work.

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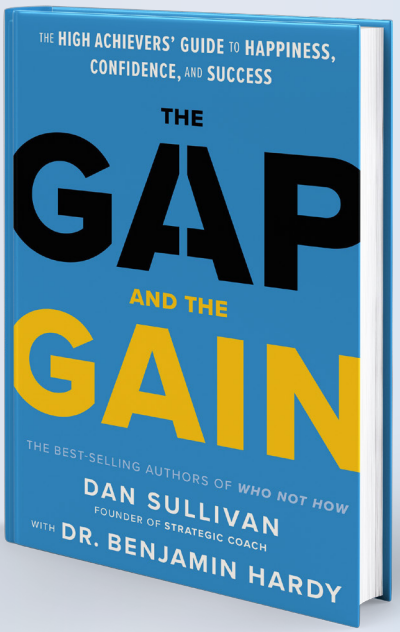
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# The Gap and The Gain

Dan Sullivan

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Gap and the Gain

By Dan Sullivan with Dr. Benjamin Hardy

Dan Sullivan is the world's foremost expert on entrepreneurship and has coached more successful entrepreneurs than anyone on the planet. He is the co-founder of Strategic Coach®, the leading entrepreneurial coaching program in the world, and author of more than 50 publications on entrepreneurial success

Dr. Benjamin Hardy is an organizational psychologist, author, and the world's leading expert on the application of the Future Self science. His books have sold hundreds of thousands of copies, and his blogs have been read by hundreds of millions.

## The High Achievers' Guide to Happiness, Confidence, and Success

Dan Sullivan and Dr. Benjamin Hardy want to share a simple yet profound strategy for maintaining happiness, positivity, and motivation so you can achieve your greatest goals. Many ambitious entrepreneurs are habitually unable to enjoy their achievements. They measure their success against the ideal they set, not how far they have come. ***The Gap and the Gain*** is a system for measuring progress. Its purpose is to explain why most ambitious people are unhappy and how to solve it. There are many ambitious people that have plenty of progress in their lives but they're still unhappy because they measure it wrong. It's easy for people to fall into cynicism and despair with negative thoughts but a simple mindset shift can easily transition them into the right setting.

If you're struggling in any area of your life and want to truly succeed, then you must learn how to live your life in the Gain and stay out of the Gap. This will not only help make you be successful but also, happy. This book will challenge everything you think you know about achievement. From reading this book you will learn that measuring your current self-versus your former self has boundless psychological benefits including heightening motivation, boosting confidence, and continued success in your life. It will help you see progression even when times are tough in present-day circumstances. It's about staying away from the Gap and transform yourself into a Gain in any given situation. The GAP is where individuals measure progress based on their ideals whilst the GAIN is where individuals look back and measure the distance they have traveled from their previous selves. Unsuccessful people focus on the Gap but successful people focus on the Gain! "The way to measure your progress is backward against where you started, not against your ideal."

Dan Sullivan, who is the world's foremost legendary expert coach on entrepreneurship. With forty years in the field, Dan has coached and helped many successful people with tens of thousands of success stories to prove it! The author of this book is Dr. Benjamin Hardy, an organizational psychologist and author. Benjamin and Dan have previously worked together and written a book called *Who Not How* which became a national bestseller. Hardy wrote this book using Dan's teachings and

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tools, as well. "This one simple concept is a masterclass on positive psychology, healthy relationships, mental well-being, and high-performance. Everything that psychologists know about how to create a successful person can be achieved using the Gap and the Gain," says Dr. Benjamin Hardy.

## Embrace the Freedom of "Wants"

In the first chapter, you will learn how to embrace the freedom of wants and avoid the attachment of needs. The Gap is the unhealthy need to something outside yourself. The book states that when you are in the Gap, you have an external need for something outside of yourself. When you are driven by your needs rather than your wants, you have a desperation to attain that need. Simply let go of those external needs for things in your life.

A talented Olympic skater, Dan Jansen was set to win a medal in the Winter Olympics in 84' but he didn't. Every race after that, he was always shy of winning a medal. Many even would suggest that he was jinxed because something always would happen that sabotaged his win. Ten years later in the 94' Olympics, he had another chance at a medal and decided he needed to change his mindset. Instead of being in the Gap mindset and thinking about the races and medals he should have won in the past but failed. He choice instead to be in the Gain mindset and think of everything great in his life. He realized how truly blessed he was to be in the Olympics and decided to use those Gains as fuel and in the final race of his career he simply showed his gratitude to the sport he loved. He ended up winning the gold medal and breaking a world record. He used the Gain versus Gap mindset and finally won a medal that he had competed for over a decade. He let go of the external need to win the medal.

## Be Self-Determined

The second chapter of the book discloses a fundamentally important aspect of being in the Gain. That is to live your life in a self-determined way. In doing so, you will stop living in the Gap and measuring based on your ideals, which is an impossible principle to be aimed at. As Seth Godin explains, "Our current system of teaching students to sit in straight rows and obey instructions isn't a coincidence. It was an investment in our economic future. The plan: trade short-term child labor wages for longer-term productivity by giving kids a head star in doing what they're told." Children are trained to measure themselves against external reference points. All these external reference points become untouchable ideals. They are what society deem as successful but don't measure up realistically and therefore, why so many people are stuck in the Gap.

Dean Jackson, a marketing expert, says he made a list of ten things asking himself, "I know I'm being successful when..." This list makes up his personal success criteria. He references his list when he's trying to make decisions or presented with opportunities. Be self-determined by defining your own success criteria. When your reference point is internal, you make the final call of what success means to you, without other influences. The more you live with it and stay within it, the faster you'll get to where you want to go. Basically, external reference points make it impossible to feel successful because no matter what you've done or accomplished, the success criteria is always shifting. Therefore, you should consistently refine and update your success criteria as you advance on in life down the road.

## The Compound Effect of the Gap and the Gain

In the third chapter you will learn that being in the Gap can create a very negative effect in your life. The stress takes a major toll on your mind and physical body. Being in the Gap is a hard habit we fall into many times a day, and like any habit it's hard to break out of it. The more time you spend in the Gap the shorter your life span will be. However, being in the Gain mind frame has the opposite effect, its healing and restorative. There's even research that gives evidence that optimist people typically live ten years longer than pessimistic people. Other research has shown that unhappy people get sick easier. On average, unhappy employees take 15 more sick days than happy employees do.

In a research study, people were first assessed on their happiness levels, then were injected with the cold virus. The individuals who had happier levels at the beginning of the trial fought off the virus better than the less happy individuals. They had less symptoms as well, such as sneezing, coughing, and congestion. This clearly shows that the way we interpret an experience can literally affect how your body metabolizes the experience. Hardy explains that the Gap and the Gain is a useful tool because there is simple language for it that is easy to understand. Start using the Gap and Gain language to help train your brain to see the Gains. Call yourself out when you catch yourself in the Gap frame of mind, then vocalize the Gain instead. When you're in a conundrum, ask yourself what is the Gain here? How do we turn this into a Gain?

## Always Measure Backwards

Chapter four states that it's easy to forget about your past Gains, all the strides and accomplishments made throughout life. It's important to take time regularly to measure your Gains from different time frames. Hardy recommends journaling to help keep tabs of your daily successes so you can look back and see the Gains. He states, that most of us will forget majority of the Gains made, therefore, journaling will help keep record of them, so you can look back on them. Having a reminder of the easily forgotten past Gains can boost your hope, confidence, motivation, and resilience for the future and take you out of the Gap.

A public-school physical therapist named Jill Bishop, works with children with extreme mental and physical disabilities. Jill works with a child named Rosie who has a brain disorder that makes her incapable of learning and developing properly. Just last year, Jill accomplished teaching Rosie to walk on the grass but that accomplishment had been long forgotten by now. Jill was focused on new challenges and they seemed endless to her. However, Once the annual reviews came, Jill was relieved. Seeing and remembering all the important milestones that they had

> In the Gain, your motivation helps push through difficult challenges at hand."

accomplished and forgotten. She realized that the doctors were wrong and that Rosie is capable of learning and developing. Jill added that she believes teachers and therapists burn out much quicker when they focus on the problems and be in the Gap. Being able to regularly see progress is key to maintain the motivation needed to be in the Gain. In the Gain, your motivation helps push through difficult challenges at hand.

## Measure Three Daily Wins

Chapter five discloses that we all have the sweet spot hour of the day, that has the biggest impact on both short-term and long-term success. The use of this hour has effects that outweigh what you do with any other time of the day. It'll determine how productive and purposeful you'll be.

Hardy suggests that the last hour of the day can be used as your Gain-hour, one that transforms how you sleep and perform the following day ahead. Our behaviors before bed are heavily coded into our long-term memory. Unhealthy habits before bed can affect the day ahead. Dan Sullivan has been teaching his clients to write down three wins from the current day and continue to do this daily. Having a daily accountability partner helps keeping track and reporting. Asking a friend, a coworker, or even a family member to help track. Pearson's Law states, "When performance is measured, then performance improves. When the performance is measured and reported then the rate of improvement accelerates."

Kayla Harrison who is a two-time Olympic gold medalist says she visualizes winning the medal every night before falling asleep. She believes what you do during that hour before sleep sets the tone for the following day. This is where your deepest habits are formed. How you end the day doesn't just affect your sleep, it also dictates when you'll wake up and how committed you'll be for the activities planned for the following day. As Thomas Edison said, "never go to bed without a request to your subconscious."

## Transform Every Experience into a Gain

In the sixth and final chapter you'll learn that being in the Gain isn't only about seeing the bright side of things, it's about taking every experience life throws at you and transforming it to serve you. When a person is in the Gap, they ask why this is happening to them and act in a victim mentality. However, when you're in the Gain, you are controlling the meaning of your past. It enables you to turn every valley into a future peak. Being in the Gain empowers you to be better, not bitter. You look at your experiences and utilize them to become more adaptive and successful in your future. As Dan explains, "everyone who grows achieves their progress and improvement by transforming frustrating and painful failures into rules and measurements for satisfying success."

A man named Howard Getson woke up one morning discovering that he lost $2 million from the stock market crashing, saying it was the worst day since the Great Depression. He realized after mouthing those words that it was the worst for him but not for everybody. After that realization Howard thought he needed to rethink his system for investments. So, although, he had lost 2 million in a single day and was upset, with his new insight, he was able to get out of the Gap the very next day. Howard was able to take bad experience and turn it into a Gain, he measures success by adapting to change. Howard states, "the Gap makes you more psychologically rigid while the Gain increases your psychological flexibility."

In *The Gap and the Gain: The High Achievers' Guide to Happiness, Confidence, and Success,* Dr. Benjamin Hardy wrote this book to inform ambitious people the simplistic yet powerful concepts, that many high-achieving people are seldom happy until they learn the Gap and the Gain distinction. When we measure ourselves against the ideal, we're in the Gap. A person needs to recognize oneself in the Gap mindset and get out of it. By embracing the freedoms of wants rather than needs, becoming self-determined, and training your brain to see the Gains to get out of the habitual Gap.

Simply, measure the Gain, not the Gap. Hardy firmly believes that these concepts can be easily integrated into your work and day-to-day life. To get in the Gain you must remember to always measure progress backwards, take note of 3 wins daily, and transform every experience into a Gain. When we measure ourselves against our previous selves, we're in the Gain! Always recount your progress to help inspire the perseverance to keep going and celebrate the small victories along the way. He has learned from experience that it is a positive and permanent human skill that has proven useful in every entrepreneurial field it is taught.

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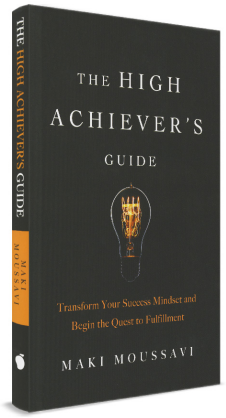
# The High Achiever's Guide

Maki Moussavi

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Executive Book Summaries®

# The High Achiever's Guide

## Transform Your Success Mindset and Begin the Quest to Fulfillment




*by* **Maki Moussavi**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many high achievers "have it all" but remain unfulfilled, feeling there must be more to life. Despite having success, they struggle with overwhelm, stress, and anxiety; are settling for okay when they really want more; or crave the chance to focus on a higher purpose. Are you one of them?

***The High Achiever's Guide: Transform Your Success Mindset and Begin the Quest to Fulfillment*** lays out a process for creating a new way of operating that you can use for the rest of your life to continue expanding and finding a holistic, redefined kind of success that has eluded you thus far. You'll learn how to do this by examining how you got here, what drives you, how you hold yourself back, and what it takes to define your new vision for life by facing fear, using your voice, trusting your instincts, and committing to a new way of being.

Author Maki Moussavi, a formerly unfulfilled high achiever who made her way out of corporate-land to a new career as a transformational coach, knows whereof she speaks. Her many insights, thought-provoking exercises, and "to-don't" and "do-instead" lists will inspire you to change your life.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why many high achievers feel out of touch with their true desires.
- What the most toxic thing in your life is—and how to handle it.
- The importance of showing the world your authentic self.
- The keys to a fulfilling life.

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## You've Been Programmed

In our fast-paced world, we barely take a breath between one activity and the next. We are so used to doing entirely too much that we don't know how not to do it. Unsurprisingly, we have a severely diminished capacity for tapping into our truest selves.

How do we, the high achievers, get this way? It all comes down to programming: the accumulation of the experiences that shapes our lives, that limits how we see ourselves, and that, along with continuous exposure to the expectations of the outside world, drowns out who we are at the core of our beings. We're so out of touch with who we are elementally because of the cacophony that is our lives that even though something is wrong, all we have to go on is this vague sense of unease that we cannot name or describe.

Many complex external influences have shaped the way you operate today. Your early experiences are likely to have led to the formation of limiting beliefs. "I don't have what it takes." "There's not enough _____ to go around." There are many more.

Mustering the courage to face your own limiting beliefs head-on will free you from them. Because you've been programmed, the key to unlocking your transformation is to rewrite the programming and patterns that are keeping you in the hamster wheel of stagnation.

### Toxic Fumes

The most damaging set of expectations you will ever be subjected to are those imposed on you by participating in toxic relationships in either your professional or personal life. Even when the person poisoning your atmosphere is your boss, spouse, parent, friend, or child, it's absolutely necessary to change the dynamic. Toxicity ruins your peace of mind, puts you on edge, makes you feel cornered, and steals any chance you have at joy.

Toxic people are manipulators. They feel entitled to whatever it is that you have that they need, and they take and take and take. The manipulator, who is often someone close to you, uses fear, obligation, and guilt to influence you.

The most effective way to handle any toxic relationship or situation is to establish boundaries. Logic will not work. Set the boundary, share it verbally, and make clear what the consequences are for violating it. The other person may act confused, cry, or get angry. You can't control their reaction and it shouldn't silence you. Don't rationalize or justify your position.

### Go Inside Your Head

Think about your limiting beliefs. How are they making an appearance in the form of patterns in your thought processes? For example, are you a worrier? Are you afraid to fail? Patterns can be very damaging. For example, if you believe that things don't go your way, you not only convince yourself of a bad outcome, you invite it.

Self-defeating patterns can be hard to identify—the key to doing so is to wake up, come out of autopilot mode, and become conscious of how the things you tell yourself lead to the patterns that bind you.

### Dig Into Your Relationships

The one–two punch of limiting beliefs and patterns has a major influence on how you relate to others, what you expect in relationships, what you tolerate, and how often you experience similar themes and challenges interpersonally. For example, if you have the limiting belief that you are uninteresting, your pattern may well be to isolate yourself. The people around you have no idea why you behave as you do. They often follow your lead and in doing so give you space to create the reality you're living in, even if it's not the reality you want. You must make a deliberate decision to wake up, tune in, and decide that you have within you everything you need to break the chains that bind you.

Limiting beliefs are rarely true. The most effective way to interrupt patterns is to repeatedly poke holes in the "logic" that was used to construct them until you drain the power of the initial belief.

## To Achieve or Not to Achieve

Generally, you've been taught that you'd better work tirelessly if you want to be successful, and it's implied that your needs outside the pursuit are not central to the success equation. Do what you're told, take on more, focus on what's wrong with you, and success is yours for the taking. Is it any wonder that success achieved by these means feels hollow and unfulfilling?

Spoken and unspoken expectations at work will, if you allow it, rule your life and rob you of your ability to move fully under your own power in the direction that you choose. Success that requires your acquiescence to staying limited must be redefined. Settling is terrible for your sense of self-worth. It does not equal success. And you can't continue in

this state indefinitely. You will burn out. The key to a fulfilling life lies within the intangibles that you have overlooked and deprioritized.

## How Fear Controls You

Fear, a primal biological and emotional response, services a critical purpose: survival. It can be difficult to differentiate between the useful kind of fear that keeps you alive and the limiting kind of fear that keeps you stuck.

Three illusions are fueled by fear:

**Failure.** Failure is never the end of the line. It's an opportunity to assess what you could have done differently.

**Loss.** Examining your life and making changes that help you align more with who you truly are may trigger anger, defensiveness, indignation, fear, and even jealousy in others. As you work on yourself, one natural consequence is feeling you've outgrown certain people or situations. This is a loss to be grieved and processed, but it makes space in your life for something better.

**Control.** We believe that we must know how something is going to turn out in order to move forward. But control is an illusion; it doesn't exist. Believing it does gives you tunnel vision—you're not open to opportunity. Let go of your iron grip. There is something out there that will light you up and energize you.

### The Dangerous Allure of Conditions

The most dangerous way to make excuses may be waiting to do what you want to do when the time is right. Your reasons for waiting may sound perfectly reasonable, but there's no such thing as perfect timing. Why is it so bad to vow to spend more time with your family later, when the big project at work is over? Because something else will come up to derail you. You're a high achiever, so work takes priority over everything.

Perfectionism is part of the problem. Do you feel that unless you can get to the gym five days a week, there's no point in exercising at all? Why? Won't your body benefit from three brisk walks? Do not allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good.

## What Are You Worth?

People nearly always use as an excuse for inaction that they can't afford to make less money and there's no money in whatever they really want to do. Thinking that there's not enough money in your idea and that you're not smart, talented, or driven enough to go after it are damaging limiting beliefs. Who says you have to quit your job to try your hand at what you're contemplating? And consider this: refusing to consider opportunities means that you've decided to stay in a compromise that isn't working for you; you're trading your time, health, peace of mind, and overall fulfillment for a salary.

> . . . refusing to consider opportunities means that you've decided to stay in a compromise. . .

A lot of high achievers have in common an inability to put our own needs first. Do you consider it a badge of honor that you're getting more work done by getting ridiculously inadequate sleep? You're sending a very clear message to yourself about your value when you don't make the time or money investment to refill your proverbial tank.

The most common excuse for not making yourself a priority? "I don't have time." What this means, really, is that you don't have priorities. It may make it easier to put yourself first in the list of factors when making any decision if you realize that this choice serves everyone around you, too.

Guilt and shame are at the heart of our worthiness issues. It's imperative that you wake up and look at the role they're playing in your life: they're keeping you stagnant, keeping you from loving yourself. The issue of money is a classic way we deny ourselves because we don't feel worthwhile. Do you resist spending anything on yourself, even though you can afford it? Why? If you treat money as the tool it is and use it to have experiences beyond paying for the basics, you allow it to play a powerful role in facilitating your enjoyment of life, which you deserve to do.

### Your Feelings Are Your Compass

We are bombarded with messages encouraging us to minimize our emotions in favor of logic and detachment. Dismissing emotions is fundamentally flawed and damag-

ing. It's how we end up in autopilot mode, resigned to the way it is. Your feelings act as your compass and help steer you toward and away from situations, people, and circumstances if you will allow them to.

### What About Your Friends?

When you vent with others who share your feelings, you create a tribe of the miserable who understand one another and bond through that understanding. It can bring you closer to your coworkers and friends, but venting is not a plan. It's a damaging pattern that can convince you that there's nothing better than the status quo.

Find people who are more interested in creating their realities than complaining about them. Then show up. Be authentic. Let people see you. It will bring in those who are good companions for you on this journey and clear out those who aren't.

Be cautious about who you confide in as you change your life. When you meet resistance and skepticism, your tendency early in your transformative journey is to let self-doubt creep in. And keep going—if you are experiencing fear or a sense of isolation, know that it will pass.

## Show Up and Use Your Words

Staying silent, censoring yourself, or otherwise hesitating in any way to show up is about putting the comfort of others ahead of your need to express who you are. Keeping your words inside is harmful. When you are constantly watching your mouth, others don't actually know who you are.

Speaking up does not equate to creating conflict. It's not up to you to make it okay for others. Being agreeable rather than truthful doesn't move anyone or anything forward. Be kind, not nice. Say what the other person needs to hear, not what they want to hear. And give others the opportunity to respond. No one can give you what you expect if you don't vocalize it.

The beautiful side effect of showing up authentically is that you open yourself up to a brand-new world of connections and possibilities. When you are genuine, people can really see you.

### Be Tenacious and Trust

When it comes to changing your life, you must be tenacious in the pursuit of what you envision. Bring your high-achieving A game and make it happen. Whether it's starting your own business or creating a life that works for you inside an existing corporate structure, you will face your own demons many times over. Humans aren't good at having the patience to allow events to unfold in the face of uncertainty, but you must trust the process.

Stop putting off your life. There is no right time to do this work. It will never be convenient or easy, and you don't know how much longer you'll be here. Find a sense of adventure and excitement and expect the best for a change.



Maki Moussavi is a corporate career veteran with a Master's degree in Genetic Counseling who left the glory of societally-defined success to become a transformational coach and motivational speaker. Maki has a passion for helping people see their true potential and supporting their journey to raising the bar for their lives. Her ability to break down complex concepts into accessible and actionable information was the backbone of her corporate achievements and is a critical component of her coaching and thought leadership today.

***The High Achiever's Guide: Transform Your Success Mindset and Begin the Quest to Fulfillment*** by Maki Moussavi © 2019 Maki Moussavi. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Mango Publishing Group 226 pages pages, ISBN 978-1642500219 Summary copyright © 2020 by Soundview Book Summaries®

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# The Hight 5 Habit

Mel Robbins

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The High 5 Habit

By Mel Robbins

Mel Robbins is one of the leading voices in personal development and transformation and a New York Times Bestselling author. Her groundbreaking work on behavior change has been translated into 36 languages and is used by healthcare professionals, veterans' organizations, and the world's leading brands to inspire people to be more confident, effective, and fulfilled. As one of the most widely booked and followed public speakers in the world, Mel coaches more than 60 million people online every month and videos featuring her work have more than a billion views online, including her TEDx talk, which is one of the most popular of all time.

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# Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit

There are plenty of books available today— and by 'plenty' we mean 'thousands'— that claim to offer transformative change with a single, simple adjustment to your daily habits. That 'one small trick' that will make you more productive, happier, healthier, and whatever superlative you want to choose.

With that in mind, it would be understandable to approach the latest in a long line of books of this type with a healthy amount of skepticism. But what if there really were a single habit that had the power to completely change your mindset and the way you approached every day?

Mel Robbins is a bestselling author and leading voice in the area of personal development and transformation. Her TEDx talk is one of the most popular of all time, and her collective videos have amassed over a billion streams. She's previously made publishing waves with her hit book, *The 5 Second Rule*, and is now back with another hit— ***The High 5 Habit***. According to Robbins, this new habit of focused self-worth was the key to breaking her out of one of the most difficult periods in her life and showing her a path to undoing self-doubt, jealousy, fear, and feelings of unworthiness. Now, she's put down everything this new habit has taught her— including a guide to making it work for each of us— in this book that's already a bestseller selling thousands of copies worldwide.

At the core of *The High 5 Habit* is the idea that even those of us who are constantly supporting, encouraging, and uplifting others tend to neglect one very important person in our lives when it comes to encouragement— ourselves. Robbins has set out to inspire all of us to give the same love and encouragement to ourselves that we usually reserve to others, and to do it in a formal way that will become an integral part of our day-to-day routine.

So, is *The High 5 Habit* as transformative as thousands of readers are already claiming? Let's explore it in a bit more detail to find out.

## What is the High 5 Habit?

One day, Mel Robbins woke up and found herself feeling her worst. In the book's introduction she recounts how her life

leading up to this point had been a whirlwind of unpleasant experiences and feelings. "The stress was nonstop. I'd been so busy taking care of and worrying about everyone and everything else, who was taking care of me?"

That morning, Robbins dragged herself out of bed and into the bathroom, where she caught her reflection in the mirror and found her negative feelings surrounding her recent stress compounded by negative feelings about her own appearance. She started picking apart the things she didn't like about the way she looked. Soon, she was caught in a spiral.

Then, Robbin did something that changed her mindset. She lifted her hand and met the reflection in the mirror in a self-high five. She didn't say anything, but she says that she was 'telling [herself] something she desperately needed to hear.' She was assuring herself that she could do it, that she could get through this, that she was worth love and self-care and kindness.

She writes about what happened next: "Immediately, I felt my chest loosen, I squared my shoulders, and I cracked a smile at how corny the high five seemed, but suddenly, I didn't look so tired, I didn't feel so alone, and that to-do list didn't seem so daunting. I went on with my day."

At its most basic, this is exactly what *The High 5 Habit* is. Each morning, Robbins encourages readers to first take a moment to stand in front of the mirror and 'be with yourself' for just a second. Don't focus on your appearance, but rather on who you are as a person. Next, whenever you feel ready, it's time to give yourself that high-five. It's simple, it's quick, and yes, it's a little bit corny. But it might just be the single most effective habit you pick up this year.

## Changing What We See in the Mirror

According to Robbins, one of the core benefits of this habit is that it changes our self-perception first thing in the morning, before we take on the day as the only person we have available to us— ourselves.

The habit itself may be simple, but the science behind it is sound. When we engage in gestures that carry an ingrained positive connotation, it actually changes the way our brain functions. It's the reason that smiling makes us feel happier, or performing an act of service for someone actually makes us feel more positive feelings towards that person.

The act of the high-five has a long established history in human culture as the most essentially positive physical touch you can give another person. It's an affirmation, it's a congratulation, it's encouragement, all wrapped up into one simple, snappy action. So, when we high-five ourselves, we find it more difficult to feel negative about our appearance, our decisions, and the day we face ahead. Subconsciously, your mind changes its thinking to match the positive physical gesture— making you almost incapable of thinking negatively about yourself.

The morning routine that many of us usually find serving as a chance to ruminate on all of our anxieties and insecurities suddenly becomes something else. It's the moment when we encourage, motivate, and inspire ourselves. In Robbins' words, we begin each day by telling ourselves: "I see you. I believe in you. I am here with you. You got this."

Soon, we'll have such a positive association with that moment in the mirror that we'll actually begin to change what we see when we look at ourselves. We'll feel good, positive feelings before the moment of the high-five even comes, because our brain will have created a connection between that bathroom moment and all of the encouragement that comes when we get there.

## The Comparison Wars

A significant portion of The High 5 Habit is centered around jealousy and bitterness. In one of the book's most poignant sections, Robbins recounts a story about how she let jealousy and bitterness nearly consume her.

"I remember this time when a friend of ours bought a beautiful house and threw a big party to celebrate. Walking in that door, into a home that was five times the size of ours, at a time when we had little kids and could barely pay our mortgage, I thought I was going to self-combust. I was so jealous that I could barely contain it, and I did what many of us do: I aimed it right at my husband. On the ride home, we got into a big fight because I started crying over the fact that "We'd never have a home that nice."

Whether each of us can point to an example as vivid as that in our own lives, we all struggle with feelings of jealousy. We look at others' lives and careers and think, Why can't I have that? Why do they get to have it and I don't? What did they do to deserve that? When is it going to be my turn?

Quickly, those thoughts turn from jealousy at what we're missing to resentment of ourselves for our failures. If I worked harder or were smarter, I would have those things. I should be much farther along in my path than I am now. What's wrong with me?

Robbins evangelizes the power of the High 5 Habit for combatting thoughts and feelings just like these. She also advocates for a more flexible attitude towards the feeling we call jealousy. What makes jealousy damaging, she says, is when we turn it inwards on ourselves and say, So-and-so has X and I'll never have it because I'm not good enough.

It's perfectly natural and even healthy, Robbin says, to look at something someone has and think, I want that for myself. As long as we remove the self-limiting thoughts that come next. Instead, we should high-five ourselves and think, Okay, what steps can I take today to get there?

## Starting Today, Instead of Tomorrow

In *The High 5 Habit*'s second half, Robbins introduces the concept that she calls Flip It. Like the high 5 habit itself, this concept is simple but surprisingly powerful.

To get an example of it for yourself, think of something that you want to change, try, or do in your life. Then, just as the

> **The more comfortable we become with unapologetically pursuing our dreams, the closer we'll come to living the life we truly want to live. . . "**

book's namesake habit requires you to physically take an action, you have to say the thing out loud. Whether it's achieving a fitness goal, improving your financial state, or completing a creative endeavor, say the goal out loud to yourself and allow yourself to feel that it is, in fact, possible. Now, think about the biggest limiting belief that's standing in your way. "I'm too out of shape to run a marathon." "I'm in too much debt to start saving." "I'm not a good enough writer to publish a book."

Finally, it's time to Flip It. Robbins says that while the idea of flipping a limited belief into the belief that you really can achieve something is simple, there are some steps that will help you really make that shift.

First, she advocates giving yourself a deadline. Even if the deadline is arbitrary, creating a deadline for yourself means that you're serious and you're not going to let anything stand in your way. It's you telling yourself that you have a time limit, so you'd better start carving out time each day for your goal because soon your time will be up to achieve it.

Next, you have to write your goal down. It can be in a planner, a notebook, on a note you keep by your bedside table, or even— ideally— on your mirror so that it can pair with your daily high-five. Robbins says the importance of this is that it serves as 'evidence' of your goal. "Every time you see a piece of evidence, a sign, a coincidence, or some positive spin on why you should [pursue your goal], I want you to write it down in your notebook.'

Robbins tells a powerful story of a cab driver who had dreams of moving to California and pursuing a career as an actor. But his limiting beliefs were tough to overcome, and his timeline was too vague and distant. She encouraged him to stop thinking it was possible, set a goal to move, and then start pretending that the universe was leaving clues everywhere to encourage him to follow his goal. He eventually broke down in tears at having finally unlocked the feeling that his dream was something achievable.

## Moving Forward

Near the conclusion of the book, Robbins drops what could be considered a sort of caveat. She lists all of the ways that habit and its surrounding principles can be transformative, encouraging, and positive in your life. She highlights how making choices from a place of self-empowerment and belief rather than doubt and jealousy can unlock potential you didn't know you had. She recounts the ways that the habit has transformed her own life and helped guide her toward greater understanding. But then she says something else— "That doesn't mean it was easy or perfect."

In the end, this is one of the most powerful aspects of Robbins' approach in *The High 5 Habit*. She has an absolute belief in her habit as a tool, and believes in the power of trusting in that tool for her readers, but she also acknowledges that it won't pave a path with gold towards whatever dreams and goals you may have. She acknowledges that there will be discomfort, though it will be temporary. The more comfortable we become with unapologetically pursuing our dreams, the closer we'll come to living the life we truly want to live, free from self-doubt and self-hatred.

Finally, Robbins leaves us readers with a straightforward daily checklist to put us in the right mindset each morning. Get up when the alarm rings, tell yourself that you are safe and loved, make your bed (a gift to yourself), celebrate yourself with a high-five in the mirror, put on exercise clothes, and set aside time to think about your dreams first thing in the morning before taking on other responsibilities.

Are any of these habits revolutionary? Of course not. Self-affirmation is certainly not a new concept. But together, they add up to a powerful mindset shift that can help just about anyone. "These practices are simple," Robbins says. "But I want you tot rust that doing them, one after the other, every morning doesn't just set you up for a better and more productive day. These practices are far more expensive. They will quiet your nervous system, focus your mind, and support you.

## Conclusion

Upon reading a summary of *The High 5 Habit*, one might be prompted to wonder— Do I really need to read an entire book about high-fiving myself in the mirror every morning? Even the author acknowledges just how simple the habit is on its surface.

However, the book is packed with insights, anecdotes, inspiration, and direction that add up to be a meaningful and genuinely helpful guide to everything the habit itself represents. The ultimate benefit is that by the end, you'll hopefully start thinking of yourself the way Mel Robbins thinks of all her readers— someone whose dreams are worth following and whose capabilities mean those dreams are always within reach.

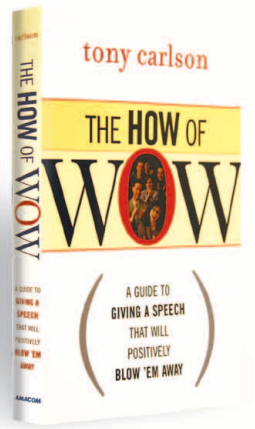
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# The How of Wow

Tony Carlson

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/ CAREER TECHNIQUES




By Tony Carlson

## A Guide to Giving a Speech That Will Positively Blow 'Em Away

# THE HOW OF WOW

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Someone once said, "Talk is cheap because supply exceeds demand." Every day in North America, 10,000 or more people stand in front of a crowd and deliver speeches. Twenty-five minutes later, 9,998 are forgotten by everyone except perhaps the speaker and his or her subordinates. Some observers figure the conference business in the United States alone is worth $120 billion per year. That's a large cost for speeches being slept through by people bored with "bizspeak" and numbed by pointless PowerPoints.*

*Communications expert Tony Carlson knows what it takes to electrify audiences and make a lasting impact. In* The How of Wow, *he shares tips on getting attention, empathy and respect from audiences; developing a bigger and better stage presence; and making every speech a memorable and powerful experience for you and your audience alike. Giving speeches is a great way to get recognized and build your personal brand. Tony Carlson helps you gain and enhance your reputation as a public speaker without peer.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ **How to get to know your audience.** Learn why audiences do not need to have points repeated to them three and four times in a speech. Discover how to engage your listeners with insight, wit and energy.

✓ **Why you should study the great speakers.** From preachers to politicos, find out why you should get to know the best speakers inside and out. Learn how they carry themselves, use their bodies and props, and hold crowds in rapt attention.

✓ **Why you must write with clarity and depth.** Simplicity is the best rule of thumb for a speech. Find out how to use vibrant, active verbs and avoid clichés.

✓ **How to deliver the goods**. Learn how to prepare for the moment, how to use your body to your advantage, and when it's best to say nothing at all.

✓ **How to get feedback.** Find out how to use your speaking opportunity to position yourself as an expert on your topic, building your brand so that you're the first person audience members will think of when they need that kind of expertise.

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# THE HOW OF WOW

**by Tony Carlson**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## Why Should You Care?

Delivering memorable speeches is a powerful tool to build your personal brand. You can make a name for yourself by working on your presentation skills. Besides, if you have ambitions of climbing the leadership ladder at your company, you need a name people know and respect. In this sense, a speech invitation is an *opportunity*, not an obligation. You have a chance to show what you are made of, as an expert in your field and as a person.

Consider it this way — on a beige canvas, even a dash of color makes an impact and becomes memorable. When you have a few dozen or more individuals in a room listening to you — and no one else is talking but you — you can be memorable. When else do you get that kind of opportunity to gain and maintain the attention of so many people, including your colleagues, peers and even your bosses? You have the chance to cast yourself in a very different light: a radiant light that could change your career.

Demonstrable communications skills enhance your promotability because the same things that make a good speaker also make a very promotable individual, particularly in organizations with an emphasis on engineering or other technical disciplines. Communication is the glue that often holds such technology-heavy organizations together, and provides the fuel that drives innovation and growth.

### *Communication and Individual Responsibility*

Peter Drucker describes management as both a social function and a liberal art. "Management is about human beings," he wrote. "Every enterprise is composed of people with different skills and knowledge doing many different kinds of work. It must be built on communication and on individual responsibility." Communication and individual responsibility are concepts that come together on the platform in the person of the speaker who demonstrates his or her personal commitment, expertise and leadership. Leadership, like public speaking, takes courage, articulation and a willingness to say the unpopular thing.

On the platform, mediocrity is never acceptable. Never settle for "good enough." Respect audience members enough to deliver real value — ideas they can learn from, imaginative scenarios that stimulate new avenues of exploration, and fresh opportunities for more

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## Understand Your Audience

Consider the following about the members of your audience:

✓ **They learn and perceive differently.** The audience is not a mob. It is a collection of individuals who all learn in a different manner. Some people are stimulated by visuals; some focus on auditory cues. Some learn best only by doing. You must make the connection with all these types.

✓ **Their memories are built on meaning and context.** The meanings on which memories are based are a function of our ability to recognize or create patterns. This right-brain activity, the creation of meaning and memorability, is close to the emotional core of an individual's being. The stronger the memory, the easier it is for us to make the right connections with our audiences.

✓ **They respond when you share your humanity.** This is the one thing that you have that connects you with every single person in every single audience. Take your shared experience as a living, breathing, functioning person in the 21st century and drive it into your audience's brains. Follow it up with as much rational, logical or technical discussion as you want, as long as you start and end in the right brain, with meaning, you will be remembered.

**The author:** Tony Carlson has 30 years of experience as a communications executive, award-winning journalist, educator and corporate writer. He is currently editor of corporate communications for Bell Canada.

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## Why Should You Care?

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informed dialogue. You can and must connect with the audience in ways that others cannot, or do not. It's not difficult — you simply must want to do it.

### *Tried … but Not Necessarily True*

Why does every speechifying, how-to book insist on the old, tried-and-true model of speechmaking as the preferred blueprint? You know the steps:

1. **Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em.**
2. **Tell 'em what you came to tell 'em.**
3. **Tell 'em what you just told 'em.**
4. **Bask in the applause.**

Do we really think audience members are so stupid that they need to hear stuff three times? This conventional speech structure is tired. We've outgrown the old model because of the skills we've had to learn in an information-rich world: We process more information in a 24-hour period than the average person 500 years ago would come across in a lifetime. We must look for another way to be memorable.

The first response most people have to the prospect of giving a speech is to focus on the input — what they are going to say. This might seem logical on the surface, but dig a little deeper. By focusing first on what you're going to say, you effectively ignore what you want to get out of it.

### *Begin by Considering the End*

Consider that any communication requires at least three elements — the data to be communicated, the person sending out the information and the person receiving the information. The common approach looks only at the first two elements, with a focus on the point of view of the sender (the person speaking) and the material being pitched. Whether anyone is there to catch it is practically beside the point.

Wouldn't it make more sense to begin at the end and work back? Begin with what you want the audience to believe or do at the end of the speech, then figure out how to get there. Only when you know what you want the audience to do after the speech can you build a speech that the audience will remember, that will build your brand.

### *The Golden Goals of Speechmaking*

In any speech, there are two outcomes you need:

1. **The audience remembers *you* in a positive way.**
2. **The audience remembers your *headline* in a positive way.**

If you accomplish these golden goals, you will have extracted real value from the opportunity.

These might seem like modest ambitions, but consider the reality in which you are speaking — as one of several speakers put up in front of often less-than-attentive audience members, most of whom will be back at their desks, fully engaged in their lives after you conclude your talk. If you can be remembered in spite of *that* competition, you'll have done well.

In addition, never underestimate the ability of the modern human being to have information flow virtually uninterrupted in one ear and out the other without touching so much as one cell of gray matter.

You are the water; your audience is the horse. Audience members have been led to you, and you must make them drink. You have to connect with them to be memorable for them. ■

# Before You Write a Word

It's a necessity: If you want to be a great speaker, you must study great speakers. And some of the most effective speakers can be found on Sunday morning religious television. Set aside the theology and any negative feelings you might have about such figures as Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart or other "televangelists." Look at the results — million-dollar ministries that employ thousands and run on multimillion-dollar budgets. Those results come from one thing — the ability of those people to speak and to enlist the support of their audience. That is powerful speaking.

### *Swaggart's Swagger*

Jimmy Swaggart swaggers back and forth across the stage, using every trick in his actor's repertoire — the floppy Bible, the glasses that he dons and removes as the situation demands, his flowing hair, his body language and even his sweat. They all say "commitment" and "passion." Not everyone has it in him- or herself to deliver a speech like Swaggart, but his approach to the podium shows us things we can and should learn, such as the following:

- **The body is a powerful prop.**
- **Movement can add drama, breaking down the wall between the audience and the speaker.**
- **Tone, inflection and pauses add color and emphasis.**

Some of the great speakers of our time have borrowed from evangelists. Bill Clinton's speeches were full of the ebb and flow of the great preachers of his Southern heritage. Martin Luther King Jr., too, never ventured far from his roots: His "I Have a Dream" speech has the cadence, repetition and rhythm that punctuate so many fundamentalist worship services.

Always have your ear out for what other speakers are doing. Make note of the best and what they do well; make note of the worst and what they do poorly. Adapt

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## Before You Write a Word

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what's best for you and ignore the rest.

### *Keep a 'Good Stuff' File*

Be a pack rat for interesting facts and thought starters. Collect trivia, newspaper clippings, Internet articles, magazine features — all of it grist for the mill even if only to act as a catalyst for an innovative theme. And do yourself a favor: Do the research yourself. Another person can read the exact same thing as you and not notice the same useful or oddball details you notice. Everyone simply has different filters. If you want that offbeat fact, that little anecdote that raises your talk out of the mundane, you have to keep alert all the time for these snippets. Like a magpie, collect shiny bits, because you just never know.

### *Find the Hook*

There's an energy that crackles through the room when you approach the podium to speak — a moment of expectation, of anticipation, perhaps of drama. It's a great moment, and not one you want to waste with conventional pleasantries. The audience is most open to a speaker in this moment, so the speaker must hook the audience with an indelible first impression.

Even before you write a word of your speech, spend time figuring out your hook. Your nervousness and the audience's anticipation are both human emotions. Therefore, the beginning of your presentation is the perfect moment to respond with a hook that sets itself right in the emotional center of the audience members' brains.

### *The Story Hook*

The classic model of a speech has been likened to a set of bookends — strong and broad at the start and finish, with a bunch of stuff in the middle. In other words, the speech has a strong start, a middle that proves the start, and a strong finish that reiterates the start.

Speeches should, however, follow a more classic, story-centered arc, building in interest and involvement from the opening to the climax. The tension in a story rises as complications arise, and the connection between the watcher and the watched strengthens until a resolution is achieved. The momentum builds: It doesn't stop to review what the audience already knows, nor does it head back to where the story began. Instead, it moves ever forward, toward a new, higher plain.

Indeed, from our earliest stirrings as cognitive beings — creatures who can react not only to physical stimuli, but also to abstract ideas — we learn the lessons of life and we absorb the values of our culture through stories. Does it not follow, then, that modeling a speech after the structure of a story might just be an effective way to connect with an audience?

For additional information on trivia for your "good stuff" file, go to: http://my.summary.com

## Professor Slams 'Chartjunk'

Edward Tufte is professor emeritus of political science, computer science and statistics, and graphic design at Yale University. His assessment of the rise of what he terms "chartjunk" is withering.

"It induced stupidity," he writes, "turned everyone into bores, wasted time, and degraded the quality and credibility of communication." Being in thrall to slideware, he claims, "routinely disrupts, dominates and trivializes content. Thus, PowerPoint presentations too often resemble a school play — very loud, very slow and very simple."

Presentations, he notes, should and will stand or fall based on the "quality, relevance and integrity" of their content. "If your numbers are boring," he adds, "then you've got the wrong numbers. If your words or images are not on point, making them dance in color won't make them relevant. Audience boredom is usually a content failure, not a decoration failure."

### *The Metaphorical Hook*

Being memorable from the first moment you open your mouth means plugging into the imaginative power of your audience. An image, not a picture, is worth 10,000 words. The theaters of our minds are often much richer, and certainly much more personal, than the theaters of the local multiplex. A good speaker can use that common experience to create powerful, personalized images in the minds of an audience — images that are sufficiently compelling in themselves to make the speech memorable.

### *The Location Hook*

Where you are is not only something you have in common with the audience: It can also be the source of an "Aha!" moment. There is nothing more immediate to audience members than their physical surroundings, from the size and shape of the room, to the view out the window, to the comfort of the chairs in which they're sitting. Location is tangible. Location is in your face. It can be an exceptionally compelling hook for a speech, because you can be confident that it is a shared human experience for everyone in the room.

Everyone likes to hear his or her hometown praised by visitors, and with a little bit of research, it's easy to come up with a nifty little fact that lets the locals know you've done more than localize a canned talk. You must, however, make it connect with your theme — that's the trick. If you don't, it will seem like the mandatory opening joke that has nothing to do with the reason you or

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## Before You Write a Word

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anyone else in the room is there.

### *The Time Hook*

Our culture and values are shaped by history — not the dry history of textbooks, but the living history of the people in our lives. It's like six degrees of separation with another dimension: time. It's fun to connect people to others who live at the same time through broad, overlapping circles of acquaintance. Add in a timeline, however, and there's a whole new level of connection.

Often, a great way to make the all-important connection with an audience is to bring to bear some historical context — an anniversary, for example. If an anniversary of some neat event falls on the day you're making your speech, it's a legitimate way to make a quick and lasting connection, as long as it has some relevance to your theme.

### *The Provocation Hook*

Most speeches are boring. Agree? Disagree? It doesn't really matter — that statement got your attention. Sometimes you need an in-your-face approach to catch your audience's collective ear, and a provocative statement might do the trick.

In most cases, the provocative statement will leave part of the audience thinking, "Right on!" and another part of the audience thinking, "Who does this person think he is?" Anyone left over will just be asking him- or herself how you're going to get yourself out of the corner into which you've painted yourself. Any way you slice it, though, you have the audience hooked with a little bit of drama right from the time the curtain goes up.

### *Keep the Focus on You*

In many organizations, no one gets up to speak without a laptop full of slides, reducing business plans and strategies to bullet points on deep blue backgrounds. Something must be on the screen behind the speaker, in part because it's so easy to do. Indeed, PowerPoint and other similar software are terrific products. They also happen to be the wrong products, most of the time, if your objective is to create a lasting impression.

There are numerous problems with using slides — some technical, some more fundamental. For instance, there is a limit to how much information a slide can actually carry. A single slide cannot usefully contain a large amount of material. If you cut your information down to what can easily be visible from the back of the room (typically 40 words, maximum), you end up with a tremendous number of slides, each of which displays a very narrow band of information.

### *The Arguments for Slides*

There are, however, a number of arguments in favor of slides, but each can be debunked with ease:

- *Slides help the audience keep track of where you are in the presentation.* The audience is not dumb. If your spoken text is sufficiently logical and interesting, the audience will be able to follow you without visual bookmarks. This is particularly true when you insert an updated agenda slide every time you switch to a new topic area. All you're doing is helping audience members gauge how much longer they have to count their teeth with their tongues until you're finished.
- *Slides help me keep track of where I am in the presentation.* This is the crutch argument, often heard from inexperienced speakers. If you need slides to keep you on track, you probably don't know enough about your topic to be up in front of a crowd.
- *Slides provide visual flair — they look cool.* Yes, you can make some attractive visual aids, but you shouldn't invest too much in that visual appeal. Regardless of how pretty your pictures are, they will not be a substitute for substance or ideas.
- *Slides are good because a picture is worth 1,000 (or 10,000) words.* Many people do respond most readily to visual images, but the stock photos that grace most slides look like they came from a Sears catalog, and the graphs and pie charts are often sterile depictions of even more sterile numbers. They are not totally useless, nor are they something on which you want to hang your entire connection with the audience. ■

## As You Write

Now, it's time to get down to it and actually write something. How do you put all your prepared points and supporting material into a 20-minute capsule you can deliver with conviction to an audience that will remember you and your message?

Keep one word in mind: simplicity. This does not mean writing for simpletons or dumbing down your speech in any way. Simplicity is clarity of thought and expression. Directness. Candor. It means using whatever means are at your disposal to simplify sometimes complex ideas, to give the ethereal some tangible heft.

### *Big Words Vs. Smaller Words*

The days of high-flown oratory are gone. It is better to stick to plain words, simply spoken. These will make a lasting impression. Why is it so difficult to do, though? Quite simply, most people write in a style that is different from how they talk. We talk normally, using everyday English, but when we write, we tend to gussy

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## As You Write

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up our language for fear of being seen as somehow not advanced or sophisticated enough to do the job.

Trouble is, sometimes the big word isn't the right word. When people try to get fancy in their choice of words, they invariably make it tougher for whoever is on the receiving end to determine exactly what is being communicated. Why camouflage ambiguity in big words? Why hide meaning when you can spell it out instead?

### *Don't Use the Passive Voice*

Nothing kills the momentum of the written or spoken word faster than the passive voice. It hides accountability and is the domain of the nameless, faceless and brandless bureaucrat. By using the passive voice, people avoid taking responsibility for actions or feelings, ceding their authority in the process.

For example, which would you say to your teenager:

- **"It is felt that one shouldn't stay out past one's curfew,"** or,
- **"I want you home by midnight, or else."**

You are the one in charge, so you would most likely say the latter. You're setting the limits, not some nebulous committee; thus, you must make that fact abundantly clear. Why would you do any differently in a speech?

### *Avoid Clichés*

People who pepper their remarks with clichés, consciously or not, frequently demonstrate nothing more than their grasp of the obvious and their lack of creative, original thought. If the language you use is filled with trite phrases, people may just assume your ideas are similarly unoriginal, noncreative or unmemorable.

### *Jettison Jargon*

The use of jargon (acronyms, shortened versions of words, and the like) is often a judgment call. A properly used piece of jargon can cut through much verbiage, enabling you to get to your point quickly and directly, as long as everyone in the audience knows what that jargon means. For example, everyone knows NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — it's a common piece of jargon. Telecom industry insiders know their DSL from their DTH, but bankers do not.

The risk of using jargon is a risk of alienating an entire swath of your audience. While its use can establish a higher level of intimacy with members of the audience who recognize and know a particular term, it can also put a considerable amount of distance between you and those who are not in the know.

### *Use Quotations Judiciously*

Some people have said things so well that it seems pointless to try to say them better. Why not just copy them (with proper attribution, of course)? How often have you heard speakers go to the well? "As Richard Nixon once said …" or, "In the words of Arnold Schwarzenegger, before he was governor …" It's a commonly used trick in the speaker's arsenal.

And that is its detriment — its commonality, its quality of being utterly forgettable. Another drawback is credibility: If you don't know who you're quoting or what the person stood for, how useful is the citation?

Using quotations also signifies a kind of ceding of your field and your audience's attention to someone else. Quoting someone famous doesn't show that that person would agree with you: It shows that you agree with that person. It does nothing for your brand, except perhaps to demonstrate your ability to research and/or memorize the words of others.

### *In Defense of Quotations*

That is not to say quotations are not useful. They do serve as fine thought starters, pointing your mind in directions it may not have been headed. Sometimes quotations are a very serviceable solution. If you feel you must use them, try to do so in an unconventional, unforgettable way. Work to surprise your audience, not bore them.

### *Practice Makes Perfect*

Your connection with the audience — your key to being memorable — likely rests on your performance, not the logical force of your content on paper. The only way to hone that performance is to practice performing. Here are some suggestions:

- **Practice aloud.** Know your material so well that, on the day of the performance, you can forget about everything but performing. Know the script backward and forward, with no surprises lurking in the middle of a paragraph. Make sure the speech fits the time you have been allotted. Practicing aloud turns the written word into the spoken word. Stand up when you practice, ideally at a lectern with your delivery copy in front of you (even more ideally, with a trusted adviser watching and listening).
- **Check for tongue twisters.** The tongue is trainable. With exercise, your tongue can get things right virtually all the time. And exercise means rehearsal. Test out where your words flow together. Find out where the tongue twisters are and change them.
- **Vary pace, pitch and force.** *Pace* is the speed at which you speak. *Pitch* is the note on the musical scale

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For additional information on Lee Iacocca's short, powerful speech, go to: http://my.summary.com

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

## As You Write

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you use, such as raising your pitch at the end of a question. *Force* is the loudness of your speech, from the intimate stage whisper of confidants to the hellfire-and-brimstone shout of an emotionally committed speaker. To fully engage your audience, vary all three components. To get that variance down correctly, you must rehearse.

- **Practice ad-libs.** One way to change the pace and reinvigorate audience members is to step away from the text of your speech and actually talk to them. Ad-libbing can strengthen your connection with the audience, but it is a skill that must be learned to be most effective. Consider planning your ad-libs carefully, to make sure you stay coherent and on-topic when you do turn from your prepared speech. ■

For additional information on how what can go wrong might just go wrong, go to: http://my.summary.com

## The Benefits of Silence

A well-timed pause in your speech can do a number of things. It can put a bold underline on a point you've just made, or it can set the table for a blockbuster idea. A pause engages the audience, even if it's not at a dramatic moment. It can signal a break for those whose attention has wandered and an opportunity for them to jump back in. For those who are still "with you," it provides a breather, a moment for reflection on what you've said, and a chance to internalize or to carry on their own inner dialogue with what you're saying.

A pause can also serve a very practical purpose for you — to give you time to catch your breath, to get over rising nerves, or even to take a drink. Of course, you must be as inconspicuous as possible when doing this, but even the briefest of silences can help refresh you quickly and effectively.

# Stand and Deliver

The time has come for you to give your speech — time to deliver. Now, it's all about confidence: confidence that all the planning and thought that went into your content was on track; confidence that your run-throughs have made you thoroughly familiar with your material. Now, it's between you and the audience, and it's up to you to make that all-important connection.

### *'Advancing the Room'*

Everything you've done in preparation for your speech has been to ensure that you are well within your comfort zone in terms of content, the audience, your timing and everything else. To ensure that you'll be comfortable, be sure to go to the venue before the event and check things out. It's called "advancing the room." Be thorough about it. When you rise to speak, you should feel as if you're in the meeting room where you have sessions with your team, or, better still, in your living room. You must feel comfortable, so you can forget your surroundings.

There are many, many details to check. Among them are the following:

- Where do you sit before being called up to speak?
- How many steps are there to the stage (in the dark, it's hard to tell)?
- Where is the water?
- Is the microphone too high? Is it too low? How does it adjust? If you prefer to walk around, can you get a lapel microphone?
- Does the lectern light work? Where is the backup bulb?
- What is the layout of the stage? Is there room to walk around?

For additional information on a speech delivery checklist, go to: http://my.summary.com

### *Walk-Through Steps*

Here are some additional things you should do when advancing the room:

**1. Be sure that any spotlights the lighting crew plans to use won't blind you from seeing your text or interfere with your eye-to-eye connection with the audience.**

**2. Check the sound system so you can hear what you sound like over the speakers.**

**3. If you insist on using slides, run through them a couple of times, checking for proper order and the pace of change from slide to slide.** Also, find out what method is being used to change the slides (laptop, handheld changer or backstage technician).

**4. If you're using a teleprompter, run through it with the operator so you can coordinate your efforts.**

**5. Find out what kinds of cameras might be used.** If your organizers have hired a still photographer, prepare yourself for flashbulbs and motion during your speech.

All this checking takes time, but it is crucial to make sure you're able to set aside any thoughts of logistics and focus on making the connection with your audience.

### *Be Yourself, Only Better*

Many presentation coaches tell clients that they "just have to be themselves" when giving a speech. They mean well — it's good advice to stay within your comfort zone. One problem with that approach, though, is that it can fool people into thinking they don't have to do anything differently, whether they're engaged in water cooler

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## Stand and Deliver

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chat or addressing a convention center crowd. The same tricks you use to make boardroom presentations will not translate well in a large room.

This is not to say you need to find a whole new "you" when you hit the platform. You must be *you*. Only be a *better* you. Speechmaker is only one of the many roles you have: one part subject matter expert, one part erudite, witty star. You have your words, but you also have yourself as an actor and your body as a prop. And you get to design that prop, defining the character you will portray.

### *Body Language*

There are a number of critical things to remember when considering the importance of body language in your speech. These include:

- Regardless of what you do with your body during the speech — walk around, stand still, etc. — make the action big enough to be seen from anywhere in the room.
- Make sure your body language is authentic. If, for example, you never talk with your hands in normal conversation, don't try it in a speech.
- Gauge whether it's appropriate to keep your hands in your pockets. Some say it's impolite; others say it's a good way to disarm and charm an audience. ■

# After the Talking Is Done

What you do after your speech is one of the most important aspects of creating a memorable impression and enhancing your personal brand. There are two key ways you can benefit from some thorough follow-up — to keep improving as a speaker and to spread the word of your personal brand beyond the audience in the room the day you spoke.

### *Use Feedback to Get Better*

If you want to find out how your performance went, just ask. Start with yourself. Do you think you stumbled? At which points in the speech did you feel you were losing the audience? At what point did your performance match what you envisioned in your rehearsal?

Secondly, find other trusted viewpoints. Ask your colleagues who attended the session with you, with the caveat that the honesty of their opinions (and the usefulness of those opinions) will depend on the relationship you have with them and the power differential between them and you. You can also ask them for suggestions for improvement.

Then, of course, there's the audience. One gauge of your success is how many people approached you after the speech to ask questions, make comments or exchange cards. You can get at least anecdotal evidence of how well you did by the nature of their questions and comments. You might also have the opportunity for formal audience evaluations. Often, these are put together by the event organizers who will, after crunching the numbers, give you the results of what the surveyed audience members thought of your appearance. What you're looking for here is an unfiltered critique from the most important people involved in the speech — the members of your audience.

### *Spread the Word*

Much of the mileage you'll get from your speech is word-of-mouth — from your own mouth to the listeners in the room, and from their mouths to their own circles of influence once they leave the venue. A memorable talk can elevate public discourse and connect you with important thought leadership. If you're great, your name and point of view will be on everyone's lips. You must, however, be able to keep the momentum going yourself.

That begins with inviting the messengers. These include:

- *The media.* Members of the media are paid to carry messages, and their reach is extraordinary, for good or bad.
- *Influential colleagues or friends.* Invite or entice them to come — even pay their way, if necessary. This accomplishes a couple of things. First, it ensures you have at least a smattering of allies in the room. It also enlists those people as messengers to spread the word of your brilliance to anyone in their circle of acquaintance they feel is appropriate.

### *Get It Out in Writing*

Through these messengers, you can also distribute copies of the text of your speech so that the paper appears on the desks of influential people, complete with the endorsement of a mutual acquaintance. No more cold calls for your words!

While you're considering sharing the text, think seriously about repackaging the content to provide more shelf life. The simplest way is to hand it to your Web gurus and have them post it in an easy-to-read print format on your organization's Web site. With a little more effort, you can trim your speech down to the length of an op-ed piece and send it to editors.

### *The Expert Is You*

You can also become an expert commentator for the electronic media. Ever wonder how news networks so quickly find those retired generals and security experts to appear on camera as soon as there's a breaking story? Those people are in a pool of experts, and they got there by making their expertise known to the producers. By delivering a speech on a specific topic, you can position yourself as an expert on that topic, increasing your profile and building your brand. ■

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# The Influence Book

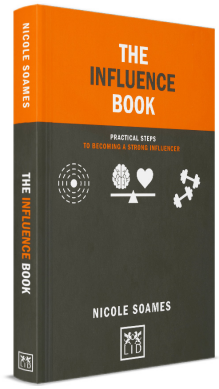
Nicole Soames

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# The Influence Book

## Practical Steps to Becoming a Strong Influencer




*by* **Nicole Soames**

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## The Summary In Brief

The power of influence plays an important role in all aspects of our lives. Whether it is pitching a business idea or getting the kids to do their homework, we try to influence others on a daily basis. By viewing influencing as a life skill that can be strengthened, we can learn how to inspire others to make a change, create deeper relationships, improve our performance, and build powerful, personal brands.

Nicole Soames, the author of ***The Influence Book,*** helps you achieve influencing success by explaining how to harness emotional intelligence to establish trust and rapport. Putting yourself in the other person's shoes and identifying how to motivate them on an emotional level makes it easy for you to convince the other person to say yes.

You'll receive practical ideas and techniques to unlock your inner confidence, prepare for any influencing situation, and deliver compelling storytelling to win hearts and minds. The more frequently you put your new skills into practice, the better outcomes you will achieve, and the more assured you will be.

## In This Summary, You Will Learn:

- How developing your emotional intelligence can help you become a strong influencer.
- How to identify different communication styles to quickly find common ground.
- How to use the storyboard technique to create influential stories.
- How to network successfully so you can become even more influential.

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## Why Influencing Matters

Whatever your walk of life, you draw on influencing skills every day to get others to agree to your point of view. Imagine a teacher who is an expert in their subject but fails to inspire, or a developer who creates brilliant designs but can't persuade their client to implement them. It is time to understand the immense value influencing can bring to your life and to see it as a life skill that can be developed and strengthened.

Influencing is the ability to leverage your emotional intelligence to communicate effectively so that you make it easy for the other person to say yes. Creating a balanced relationship is at the heart of influencing and developing your emotional intelligence—the ability to focus on the other person's needs—is central to becoming a strong influencer. By combining emotional intelligence with business skills training, you can make a seismic difference in your performance and across all the relationships in your life.

### Develop A Confident Mindset

Self-knowledge is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence, so your first task is to give yourself an honest appraisal. Write down your key strengths, like deep empathy or creativity, and how they help you influence others. Next, identify weaknesses and areas for development, such as a fear of public speaking. Ask others to help you identify blind spots.

As another exercise, make a list of different influencing situations, such as meeting with a customer to sell a new product. Write down your motivation for each and how it makes you feel. Understanding your underlying motivations and emotional needs will help you be more prepared and confident.

In the 3 Circles of Influence described by Stephen Covey, the inner "control" circle represents things that are totally in our control, such as where we live and what we do. The middle circle, our area of influence, includes things that we can do something about, such as the quality of our work, the relationships we form, and results we can achieve. Focus your attention on the things within your influence circle. Identify areas you'd like to influence and set three goals for the year ahead, such as improving your relationship with a customer, mentoring a new employee, or becoming a thought leader in your field. Challenge yourself. Adopt a positive mindset as it will take time and perseverance to achieve your goals.

### Be Authentically You

It can be tempting to conceal weaknesses with bravado, but "fake it until you make it" rarely works and others can find it insincere. Strong influencers understand that the best communicators are able to connect with others in a genuine way. Be prepared to show your vulnerability. This makes you approachable and helps you build rapport with others. "People buy people" so being genuine and communicating in a way that is consistent and confident, without being arrogant, will help you develop an authentic voice and increase your credibility.

## Set Yourself Up For Success

Before an influencing conversation, work out exactly what you are going to ask for. By preparing thoroughly and seeing things from the other person's point of view, you will be able to answer questions and head off concerns, saving time in the long run.

### Recognize Communication Styles

Learning to identify different communication preferences will help you reach common ground quickly. One of the easiest tools is the DISC method, which breaks down four communication styles: Dominant & Driven; Influencing & Persuading; Secure & Steady; and Compliant & Considered. **D** types are fueled by results. They communicate in a direct manner and won't engage in chitchat. **I** types are people-oriented and enthusiastic. They want to be liked and crave recognition. **S** types are diplomatic. They tend to avoid confrontation and dislike being put under pressure. **C** types are motivated by processes. They are perfectionists, worry about being criticized, and prefer to communicate in writing so they can take their time. By recognizing the other person's style—people are usually a blend of types, you can better understand how they make decisions.

Note your own style, and how it is on a good day and a bad day. You can have a different style when you are stressed. For instance, on a good day an I type might be sociable, but on a bad day, frantic. Whatever the scenario, you'll influence others better if you respect their communications traits and align them to yours. When dealing with D types, communicate in a concise way, backing up statements with evidence. Expect I types to make a spontaneous decision. A S type is more likely to say yes to a simple concept that will be valued by others. C types are more methodical so supply details and pros/cons. Plot out the other person's DISC profile and what you can do to influence them more effectively.

## The Importance Of Relationships

Seeing another person's point of view and understanding their needs will help build a relationship and ensure that they

do not feel manipulated. Use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for insight into motivations. He identifies five stages of needs: physiological; safety and security; love and belonging; esteem; and self-actualization. This pyramid can be adapted for a business setting, with the primary need to make a profit and secondary needs to satisfy corporate strategies and fix pain points. Try filling out a pyramid for each of your customers and consider how you can help solve their needs.

Influencers can also create needs in the minds of others. Henry Ford said, "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses." The key to creating a need is to make a comparison that resonates by considering the other person's mindset. If they believe they are performing worse than expected, they will be more likely to be open to new ideas than if they are performing well. When you identified the need, outline the benefit you can deliver, and provide data that shows how you can help them improve. Even if they don't completely agree with your numbers, your aim is to demonstrate that you genuinely care about their needs.

Ask clever open and closed questions to connect and clarify. Prepare ahead, write down the needs your ideas can meet and questions you can ask. Keep DISC styles in mind. For example, lots of open questions might encourage an I type to go off on a tangent. Listen carefully to responses, paying attention to body language and tone, as well as words.

### Building Rapport

Uncovering or creating needs, listening with empathy, showing genuine interest and using commonalities to connect can fast-track building rapport. But you can inadvertently break it by making assumptions, getting too personal too soon, being inflexible, adding opinions inappropriately, and not preparing the next steps. Trust is built by delivering on your promises (reliability), having credibility and empathy, while minimizing your personal agenda. If you're too focused on yourself, the level of trust will automatically go down and you'll be less likely to influence.

## Influence Through Storytelling

Stories engage us on an emotional level. We are 22 times more likely to remember a story than facts alone. Using the insights gathered about the other person, you can create a story tailored to them. Build your story with analogies, rhetorical questions that prompt thought, reiteration to secure a key point, compelling numbers (a 90-day warranty sounds like a better deal than a 3-month one), mock-ups or visuals, and third parties to introduce a different perspective and establish credibility.

People buy the "why," not the "what." Lead with why the other party should say yes and demonstrate how you can help them. Focus on the benefits to them. Ask yourself: what's in it for them; how can I prove it; and why should they say yes. By building the story this way, relating it to their needs and backing it up with facts, you are likely to motivate on an emotional and commercial level.

Use the **STRONG** storyboard framework to ensure your story makes an impact.

1. **S**et the scene by creating context with the needs of the other person.
2. **T**ailor the story, going through each of the benefits of your proposal
3. Summarize your **R**ecommendations
4. Explain the **O**pportunity or the net benefits
5. **N**egotiate
6. **G**et to the next steps

Write out your key messages for each of these steps, starting with the big-picture recommendation, what's in it for them, and then work backwards. Detail the needs you are addressing and quantify the size of the opportunity. Prepare for negotiating curveballs by listing different variables and solutions. Outline next steps. Make sure your points are clear and concise. Keep asking yourself "so what?" from the other person's point of view.

### Deliver An Influential Story

If you don't deliver your story in an inspiring way, you'll struggle to convince the other party. Draw on your emotional intelligence and be present in the moment. Take steps to minimize anything that might distract you. Put effort into how you appear, what you say, and how you sound. Stand tall and make strong eye contact. Don't lose your personality when you start a presentation. Avoid vague weak speak, such as "hopefully we can agree," or "in all honesty," which can undermine your credibility. Because people speak faster under pressure, slow yourself down. If you want to land a key message, pause to emphasize it, and give the other person time to process. If you notice the other party's attention begin to wander, re-establish eye contact before continuing, and then dial up your energy.

## Control The Conversation

Despite all your preparation, you can't know exactly how people will impact a conversation. There are four interaction types: questions or statements; tactics; issues; and negotiation points. Each needs to be managed differently. Respond to questions and statements as they come up, but note if they embody a tactic, issue, or negotiation point. Recognize unfair tactics, like someone checking their phone as an attempt to shift the balance of power. If you spot a tactic, respond with humor, move the conversation, and get back to business. Take control by saying something about the need to work together or re-summarize to help the other party focus.

For a real issue, ask clarifying questions and show that you value the opinion. Ask if there are other issues. By helping them put everything on the table, you'll facilitate a smoother path to closure. Ask which issues are the most important so you can focus on addressing them. If you can't find a solution, start negotiating to find an overlapping position. Don't worry if you can't provide a solution on the spot, you may need to say that you'll get back to them.

Finally, close with confidence. A strong influencer will always put the next steps on the table as a way of checking if the other party is on board. Be specific with simple, definitive next steps.

## Influencing Via Phone And Email

When it comes to influencing, meeting in person makes a difference. It is better for building a relationship and you're more likely to close. You can't read body language on a call. If a face-to-face isn't possible, use Skype or pick up the phone. Email is a last resort. Be resilient: It takes perseverance to influence others, so always follow up with the other party, and maintain control throughout all your interactions. Make sure you keep nudging, without bombarding.

## Keep Fit For Influencing

Honing your skills takes practice. Adopt the principle of Plan, Do, and Review to help focus on areas you find challenging. Set a specific goal, use your skills, then review the conversation and how it went. Compare the actual to what you prepared for. Don't just focus on whether you achieved the outcome, note how you changed the other person's behavior. Rehearse. Film yourself as you practice your story to see how confidently you come across in your body language, tone, and overall presentation.

## Network For Success

Networking provides the opportunity to put your influencing skills to the test. Strong influencers tend to be givers; aim to be generous to others more often than not. Always respond promptly to requests; building credibility and trust will pay big dividends. Seek out every opportunity to grow your network. List people you know who can help you achieve your goals. Prioritize building relationships with them by following five principles: be interested—ask questions and listen carefully; be interesting—have something to say; be generous—invest your time; make connections; and keep in touch. Don't just take their card, follow up. By nurturing your relationships and behaving in an authentic, generous manner, you are on your way to winning other people's hearts and minds.



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# The Introvert's Edge to Networking

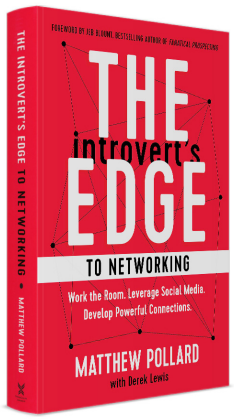
Matthew Pollard

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# The Introvert's Edge to Networking

## Work the Room. Leverage Social Media. Develop Powerful Connections

*by* **Matthew Pollard, with Derek Lewis**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Introverts across the world have been sold a lie: that our ability to network depends on having the "gift of gab." This is nonsense. You don't have to be outgoing to be successful at networking. You don't have to become a relentless self-promoter. In fact, you don't have to act like an extrovert at all.

The truth is, introverts make the best networkers . . . when armed with a plan that lets them be their authentic selves. In ***The Introvert's Edge to Networking***, Matthew Pollard, an introvert himself, draws on over a decade of research and real-world examples to provide an actionable blueprint for introverted networking. In this paradigm-shifting book, you'll discover how to overcome your discomfort through a clear networking system, use your strengths, connect with the right people, and much more.

Whether you're a small business owner struggling to make a living or a professional who's hit a career plateau, ***The Introvert's Edge to Networking*** is your path to a higher income and a rolodex of powerful connections.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To turn networking into a repeatable system.
- To leverage your innate strengths as an introvert.
- To target and connect with top influencers.
- To follow up, get feedback, and win validation.

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## Why Introverts Make Better Networkers

You'd rather get a root canal than go to a networking event. But you know you're supposed to, right? Everyone says how important it is in landing that dream job, securing your next client, or connecting with a high-level contact who could launch you into the stratosphere. You know you should do it . . . but it's just agony.

How can introverts compete with extroverts, who seem to have natural charisma, the gift of gab, and the ability to effortlessly form connections? How can introverts succeed at networking while feeling authentic?

Introverts can outperform their extroverted counterparts by realizing two truths:

- The introvert's road map to success doesn't look like the extrovert's. We're different and we need to embrace that.
- Traditional networking doesn't work for introverts. We need a smarter approach that leverages our natural strengths.

Introverts have a natural edge when it comes to the way networking should really be done—not playing a numbers game and talking to as many people as possible but by being strategic, being prepared, practicing, and knowing how to cultivate deeper relationships with just a few of exactly the right people in the room. In other words, by playing a totally different game.

### Stop Copying the Extroverts

There is a type of networking called "strategic networking." It's a smarter and more effective style, one that introverts can dominate. Network strategically, and you will be rewarded with connections to people who value your work and who would love to help you reach your goals faster. It's your ticket off the hamster wheel.

This system ensures that introverts, if they're willing to do the prep work, easily have an edge over their extroverted counterparts. Naturally outgoing extroverts can walk into a room and just wing it. While it often comes off as transactional, they're usually unwilling to put in the time and effort this process requires. After all, they've made it this far on their own—why fix something that they don't see as broken?

Introverts, on the other hand, love being superprepared and equipped for success before they ever walk into the room.

So how do you go from an awkward and uncomfortable networker to a networking powerhouse? The answer lies in the three Ps: planning, preparation, and practice. Let's kick off the steps to this process by channeling your superpower: your passions.

## Channeling Your Superpower

Strategic networking is like getting a rocket ship into orbit. Each element of your rocket ship forms a part of your greater networking system. If your networking system is your rocket, then passion is undoubtedly the fuel.

This is why uncovering what you're truly passionate about and aligning it with what you currently do, or want to be doing, is vital. Without passion, while you will still be able to portray the most authentic version of yourself and likely still skyrocket your results, you'll always feel incongruent in the networking room. As such, you'll be missing the explosive force you need to truly get to orbit.

### Lighting Your Fire

Being connected with your passion and mission gets people to give you their time, money, networks, and ideas. They'll want to follow you, work with you, and help you get where you want to go. This is the kind of stuff that moves mountains.

To find your rocket fuel, you need to be able to answer three important questions:

- What do you want to see (happen, stop happening, change, or improve) in the world, within the workplace, with customers, with suppliers, with prospects, and so on?
- Why do you care?
- What's the driving passion behind it?

For the moment, don't worry about how you'll make money from your passion. The questions are not about why you're networking. They are about what's important enough to get you to jump out of bed in the morning, outside of the money you get paid or the worry of making none.

The answers may not come to you right away. Try asking yourself some of these questions to get the juices flowing:

- "I could have done anything—why this (that is, why did I decide on this profession)?"
- "Do I have any personal connection to the business or

To truly succeed at networking, you need to stop casting a wide net and instead focus on being the perfect fit for just a select few.

career I've chosen?"

- "At work, what do I get my greatest joy from? (Your answer to this question can include previous jobs or businesses.)"
- "What are the tasks that I do that make time fly?"
- "What do I hate seeing happen to (prospects, customers, suppliers, co-workers, and so on)?"
- "What do I love seeing (prospects, customers, suppliers, co-workers, and so on) experience?"
- What are my favorite types of problems to solve at work?"
- "What do I get the greatest joy from in my personal life?"
- "How can I make that relevant in my business or career?"

Let's now talk about why success doesn't come from being everything to everyone but being the only logical choice to a select few.

## You Can't Please Everyone

To truly succeed at networking, you need to stop casting a wide net and instead focus on being the perfect fit for just a select few. This is the group that will be motivated to hire you, buy from you, appreciate your work, and pay you what you're worth—the group that sees you as the only logical choice, regardless of your competition.

### The Basics of Niching

Discovering your perfect niche is easier than you think. We can find it in just three simple steps.

**Step one for business owners**. First, get out a pen and paper. You're going to make two lists. On the first list, write down the names of people who, when your phone rings with their number in the caller ID, you hear "cha-ching!" These are high-paying customers who pay you what you're worth and never haggle on price.

For the second list, write down the names of people who sing your praises. This may mean raving to others about your work or products. It could be people who consistently send referrals your way. They're the people who, when you ask for a short testimonial, write you a page. Think of these people as being on your "evangelists" list.

These need to be exhaustive lists. Put down everyone who's ever paid you well or had a positive interaction with you professionally.

**Step one for employees**. Think of your current and former bosses, direct or indirect managers, and even co-workers as customers. Which of them ensured you were paid your bonuses, gave you generous raises, or otherwise financially rewarded you? Who gave you opportunities that either directly or indirectly led to a monetary benefit? What external customers always wanted to work with you—and when the phone rang with their number on it, your employer heard cha-ching?

On your evangelists list will be the people always telling others about you and your outstanding work. They recommended you for special projects or awards. They constantly encouraged and supported you in seeking promotions.

**Step two**. Now you need to sort these lists. Look at all the names you've written down across both lists. You'll start to notice some similarities. Whatever you notice, sort them into groups according to those characteristics. This might include wanting help with a specific outcome, like veterans needing career guidance as they re-enter civilian life, or CEOs wanting to win an award like Great Place to Work. Maybe they're old-school retailers who want more of a digital presence on social media. It might be bringing systems and processes to their chaotic workday.

Or these groups might be sorted by one or more of the following: demographics, psychographics, geographic, or behaviors.

**Step three**. Get out a red marker. Looking across your sorted minigroups, circle the ones that you've made fantastic money from. Like your original cha-ching! list, these are people who, when your phone rings with their number

on it, you're almost assured it's money in the bank. Circle a group only if every person in it is a moneymaker for you or your company.

Next, go through your minigroups again, this time with a blue marker, circling the groups who sing your praises. Again, circle a group only if everyone in it is a raving fan, and consider niching further if many, but not all, names fit this requirement.

You'll notice some groups have just a red cha-ching! circle around them, which means great money, but they don't show you off to the world. You'll also notice a few groups with just a blue evangelists circle around them. They love you and you probably love them, but you need to make money.

Finally, you'll notice one, two, or even several magical groups, the ones that have both a red and a blue circle around them. One of these groups, and only one, is your target niche for all your networking efforts. Pick the group that most aligns with your passion and mission. In the long term, that's the one you'll make the most money from and love your life while doing it.

Now that you know your niche, it's time to discover your secret sauce. It's time to answer the question "What are the three main reasons they think you're so fantastic?" This is not about the reasons they hired you or purchased your product. This is about the unexpected surprises that make you a standout.

## Our Difference Defines Us

A Unified Message (UM) is the magic piece of the puzzle, the catalyst to interest and rapid growth within your target niche. It's just one, two, or three perfect words that will change the trajectory of your business or career forever.

A Unified Message is the hook that gets people to lean in. It is the key to starting a networking conversation on the right foot, so you never feel salesy or inauthentic. It works for people just getting started in their businesses and careers. It works for midlevel managers and struggling-to-survive freelancers. It works for multimillion-dollar business founders.

"I'm a programmer." "I'm a realtor." "I'm an HR professional." "I'm in customer support." "I work in a call center." The moment you identify yourself this way, the other person puts you in a commodity box.

A commodity is understood to be a material or product that looks pretty much like all its competitors. Milk, for example, is pretty much milk. Rice is rice. There's no substantial difference between them, so many of us feel it doesn't really matter which one we choose.

A Unified Message is the clean slate you need to attract your ideal prospects or employers. Think of it as a slingshot right into a discussion of who you are and the value you can provide.

### Crafting Your Own Unified Message

Go back and look at your answers to the last section. Not just the three main problems you solve or outcomes you provide, but all the wonderful things you identified as standout qualities. Looking at all these things that you do, and that your niche really appreciates, ask yourself, "What is the higher-level benefit of all that? What is it that my target niche really gets out of working with me? How can I summarize all of this in just two or three words?"

For example, Wendy's niche was working with high-level executives being relocated to China. The guidance she provided—helping the family as a whole to thrive in a country with far different cultural norms—was her real secret sauce. That's why her UM was the China Success Coach. It was this message as well as her package, the China Success Intensive, that took her from struggling to make just $50–80 an hour in a saturated market, to making $30,000 per family, with virtually no competition.

Keep in mind, you're not creating a tagline or slogan. Whatever you come up with, you must be able to use it in a sentence: "I am the [UM]." Just like saying, "I'm an accountant." Here are some other real-life examples:

- "I help thought leaders and influencers uncover why their website content isn't getting great rankings on Google: the Authority Detective."
- "I work with event planners wanting to create a memorable moment for attendees by providing laser light shows that dance to music: the Memory Weaver."
- "I help traditionally high-achieving executives get out of an uncommon funk: the Plateau Hacker."

In creating your UM, ignore the urge to be descriptive; the goal is actually to be somewhat vague and ambiguous. It's designed to be a hook. If your UM is obvious, they don't need to know more. Think of your UM as a movie trailer. It's not the whole show—it's just the teaser that gets people to buy a ticket to the full movie.

Now, let's talk about the different opportunities your UM presents in the networking room, and how to handle each one.

> You can't judge a book by its cover . . . or a cat by its box.

## Speak to the Right People

Now we have a plot twist: Networking is not primarily about finding people who want to hire you. Networking is really about meeting the people who, after one good networking conversation, could pave the way to a multitude of sales opportunities, the people who could help you land a job far beyond what you'd ever hoped for.

### Champions and Momentum Partners

So who are these magical people? They are champions and momentum partners. Champions are an elite group. They're the high achievers and influencers who really make the world go 'round. The people who can seriously give your rocket ship a huge boost. They might be connected with those impossible-to-access individuals. They might have won prestigious awards. Their work might have afforded them a great deal of respect or name recognition. They might have a popular magazine, mailing list, podcast, or social profile.

These people should be your most guarded and cherished network contacts. They should be the individuals you almost never ask anything of. They'll also likely be the people that offer you more support than you could ever expect.

Momentum partners are a small group of connections who willingly open up their Rolodex to you, and for whom you do the same. Whether it's an introduction to a podcast host, a magazine editor, an event organizer, a possible champion, a new prospect, or even another momentum partner, a good partnership should bring a wave of warm connections into the in-boxes of all parties involved.

### You Never Know Who You're Going to Meet

Think of every person you meet in the context of Schrödinger's cat, the thought experiment where you assume something both is and isn't. Erwin Schrödinger, the Austrian physicist who came up with the idea, proposed a scenario wherein a cat would be put in a box with a radioactive atom, a Geiger counter, and a flask of poison. When the atom decayed, the Geiger counter would detect it and go off, shattering the flask and killing the cat.

But when would the flask shatter? To someone looking at the closed box, you'd have to assume that the cat was both dead *and* alive.

You can't judge a book by its cover . . . or a cat by its box. Some of your best prospects, momentum partners, and champions are likely walking right by you—or sitting right next to you—without you ever taking advantage of the potential networking opportunity. They may not be dressed like how you'd imagine a champion, momentum partner, or even prospect would be dressed. They may not seem the "right" age. They may not even look like they're open to a discussion.

But don't assume the conversation is dead before before you open the box. Instead, have the Schrödinger's cat mentality and be open to connecting with people . . . anywhere . . . anytime.

### Do Your Research Before You Get in the Room

Before heading into an event, wouldn't it be nice to know who's going to be there? Wouldn't it be great to already have multiple conversations started so that, when you show up, you could just continue them? Wouldn't that take the pressure off?

Today, with social media, networking websites, and apps, there is a wealth of personal information out there—our "cyber footprint," if you will. People post pictures of themselves at events, they like and comment, they promote things they're going to, their friends and colleagues tag them . . . and it's all just waiting for you to discover.

And from these social profiles, you can usually guess if the potential connection is more likely to be a prospect, momentum partner, or champion. If you were selling to a board of directors or interviewing with a group of executives, would you research them first? Of course you would! Well, networking should be no different.

## What to Do in the Room

Through the previous sections, you've already uncovered all

the necessary ingredients for your Networking Playbook. All you need is the recipe for how they all go together, in a way that feels congruent and authentic to you.

Here's a basic script:

"I'm the (insert UM)."

They ask: "The (UM)? What exactly is that?"

"Thanks for asking!" (Share concise statement, drawing from your passion, your new understanding of your niche, and the three main problems you solve or outcomes you provide for them.)

**Option 1**: "Well, I hate seeing (niche) (define problems).

**Option 2**: "I love seeing (niche) (define success); however, I find that (define problems).

"Do you know anyone like that?" (Wait for response, which is almost always yes—especially if you've done all the right research beforehand.)

### Matthew Pollard's Networking Playbook

Here's what Matthew Pollard says when people invite him to explain what he does as the Rapid Growth Guy:

**Option 1**: "Well, I hate seeing introverted small-business owners, with strong functional skills, constantly stuck in a hamster wheel of struggling to find interested prospects, set themselves apart, and make the sale, all while feeling like they're selling to prospects who only seem to care about one thing—price. Do you know anyone like that?"

**Option 2**: "Well, I love seeing introverted individuals with enough skill, passion, talent, and belief in themselves to launch their own business. However, I find that many of them end up stuck in an endless hamster wheel of struggling to find interested prospects, set themselves apart, and make the sale. Do you know anyone like that?"

Of course they do. That describes virtually everyone in or associated with his niche.

He then says, "I'm on a mission to help these business owners realize they don't need to give up on their dream business—that there is a way they can earn a phenomenal income doing what they love. Not by getting better at their functional skill, as they're usually already great at that, but instead by focusing on three often neglected steps."

"Actually, you know what, let me give you an example. See, when Wendy"—or Whitney or Derek—"first came to me. . . "

At the end, after sharing his moral, when he says, "Does that make sense?" most people say, "Yes, that's me! I need what Wendy has!" or "I have the exact same problems that Wendy did!" or "Wow, you really know your stuff. I'm not a small-business owner myself, but I want to introduce you to—"

See, they've just experienced a powerful cocktail of passion, mission, and story. They've heard the enthusiasm in his voice and felt his excitement. How could they not be affected by it? If they were one of his potential niche prospects, momentum partners, or champions, how could they not be compelled to further the relationship?

Remember, most people are not very good at networking. So even if you do this in a way that is less than perfect, it will still be a whole lot better than the transactional pitchers out there or the unplanned, aimless time wasters.

## The Step Everyone Forgets

Have you ever been to a farmers' market? You can't help thinking of the months and months of work that went into all that beautiful, fresh produce.

Can you imagine having to plow all those fields, till all that soil, and then during spring planting season, get all those seeds in the ground? But the work doesn't stop there. For the entire growing season, you then have to ensure all the crops get the water and nutrients they need to thrive. Finally comes harvest, and you have to head out again to gather your crops. Then and only then, you get to take them to market and finally cash in on all that hard work.

Networking without follow-up is like farmers neglecting to tend to their crops. Sure, you'll get a few results, but without follow-up, you'll miss out on your biggest-yielding prospects, momentum partners, and champions—the relationships that require more time to grow.

### Follow-Up for Prospects

For example, for prospects you'll follow up in one of two ways, depending on what happened during your initial conversation.

If they agreed to a follow-up discussion and you scheduled it then and there, your follow-up is simply an email confirming that meeting. Something like this:

The goal is to discover what works, what doesn't, and what inspires interest within your niche.

"(Name), it was great to meet you yesterday, and I'm so pleased you found my guidance helpful. I greatly look forward to helping you further during our call on Friday the seventeenth at 1:00 p.m. EST. I'll also follow this email with a calendar invitation."

"If you have some spare time between now and then, I'd highly recommend checking out the below post/video/podcast interview: (Link goes here.) (Briefly explain what it will help them with—this should not be anything promotional in nature.) I think you'll get a ton of value from it. I look forward to speaking with you soon." (Follow up with your calendar invitation.)

If you didn't schedule a call at the event, but the person asked you to reach out with some options, then your message should look like this:

**Option 1**: "(Name), it was great to speak with you yesterday, and I'm so pleased you found my guidance helpful. As promised, below are a few times I'm available to chat further." (Offer two different days of the week at two different times, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.) "Would either of these work for you? I look forward to hearing from you soon."

**Option 2**: "(Name), it was great to speak with you yesterday, and I'm so pleased you found my guidance helpful. As promised, below is a link to my scheduling app, where you can book in with my calendar directly: (Scheduling link goes here.) I look forward to speaking with you soon."

## The Feedback Factory

Now that you have all the elements of a successful networking system and have practiced your script to deliver it well, the first several times you go out networking should be about obtaining feedback—that's it. The goal is to discover what works, what doesn't, and what inspires interest within your niche.

### Validation

When it comes to your initial validation, while of course you want to confirm that your overall script and stories have the desired effect, there is nothing more important than confirming your Unified Message. You need to ensure that it intrigues and excites your niche, not puts them off or leaves you trapped in the same old commodity box.

### The Strength Architect

Jay Kali is a great example of validation at its best. Jay was really struggling in his online personal training business. While he did have a few regulars, they weren't paying the bills, and he hadn't had a single new client in more than eight months.

As Jay shared his homework within our Rapid Growth® Academy community, it quickly became apparent that, although he'd worked with many types of people, his real passion and a lot of his bigger successes came from helping women regain their strength after pregnancy.

Excited by his new niche, Jay went to work creating his stories and uncovering his Unified Message. With a little support from the group, it wasn't long before Jay had three amazing stories and had decided on a UM: the Strength Architect. All he needed now was a little practice, and he'd be ready to validate it with the world.

He decided to try it out at a conference he'd soon be attending out of town. During one of the breakouts at the conference, attendees were asked to take turns sharing what they did: "I'm a hypnotist." "I'm a copywriter." Person by person, they described themselves in terms of their functional skill.

When it was Jay's turn, he said, "I'm the Strength Architect." This was the only time, out of all the people in the breakout, that someone interrupted to ask, "What exactly is that?" Jay went right into the first part of his networking script and then asked, "Do you know anyone like that?"

Many people nodded their heads, and the group leader didn't seem annoyed that he was taking too much time, so Jay continued: "Well, I'm on a mission to help . . . " From there, instead of transitioning into a story, he concluded with, "I don't want to monopolize the group's time, though, so please feel free to find me later if you'd like to chat further."

As soon as the breakout wrapped up, several people asked Jay for his card. *That's* a validated UM.

After each networking event, do an assessment of how it went. Did they invite you to share more? Did you say your UM and remember to stop? How did they respond? Did you stick to the script? Did it feel conversational? Did you tell your stories well? Did they respond as expected? Were there any curveballs that you didn't know how to react to?

For discussions that didn't lead to a call to action, were they in your niche? If so, can you pinpoint where things went off the rails? Is there anything you could have done differently that could have improved the result?

When asking these questions, it's important not to self-criticize. If you didn't obtain the desired effect, it's not a reflection on you or your personality. It's just an indication that your networking system might need improvement.

## The Digital Frontier

While of course life would be easier if nothing ever went wrong, the sad fact is, things often do. That's why, even when things are going great—actually, especially then—you should leverage your hard work online. It's the last piece of the puzzle to safeguarding your career or business, and it's the key to possibilities far beyond what you could ever expect.

There are many people who know a lot about SEO, PPC, or whatever other acronym the jargon-focused digital marketers say is the key to online success. But don't get lost in thousands of tactics. Just take what you already have, keep it simple, and build out your first online assembly line.

Jay Kali, the Strength Architect, initially offered personal training online, targeting English speakers. But this forced him to compete against both live trainers and the hundreds of other online trainers doing the exact same thing—all with a similar bland message.

But after his successful validation at the conference, Jay simply embedded his message into his online content via Facebook and sent out a few direct messages. That, with a few basic website changes, led him to being booked solid and hitting a goal he'd set for himself almost five years before—all within less than six weeks from successful validation.

Stories of digital success go on and on. However, they could never have happened without the initial work in the networking room.

So, once you've successfully completed your validation and perfected your networking script, it's time to leverage all your hard work into the digital frontier.

Let's amplify your message to a global community.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Quiet Influence: The Introvert's Guide to Making a Difference*** by Jennifer B. Kahnweiler
- ***Don't Be a Stranger: Create Your Own Luck in Business Through Strategic Relationship Building*** by Lawrence R. Perkins



Matthew Pollard is known as the Rapid Growth® Guy for challenging business owners to think differently and inspiring business transformation across the globe. He's the host of two top-ranked podcasts and the author of the best-seller ***The Introvert's Edge***, called "a game changer" by Neil Patel. Praised as "the real deal" by *Forbes*, Matthew has been featured in *Fortune*, *INC.*, *Entrepreneur*, and *CEO* Magazine, and is a regular TV, radio, and podcast guest nationwide.

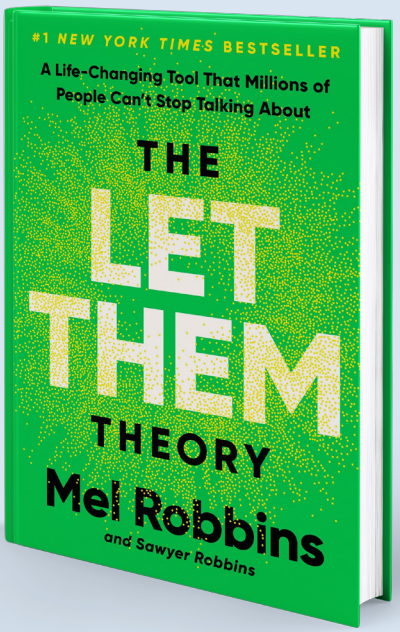
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# The Let Them Theory

Mel Robbins

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Let Them Theory

**A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About**

*By Mel Robbins*

**Mel Robbins** is the creator and host of the award-winning The Mel Robbins Podcast, one of the most successful podcasts in the world, and a #1 New York Times bestselling author. She has amassed 21 million followers online and is considered the most sought-after expert in life improvement, mindset, and behavior change. The Wall Street Journal calls her a "billion-view podcaster" and TIME magazine says she gives millions of listeners around the globe "a reason to believe in themselves."

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Two Simple Words That Will Set You Free

"The problem isn't you. The problem is the power you unknowingly give to other people." Mel Robbins writes these words very early on in her book, ***The Let Them Theory: A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About***. Prior to discovering her theory, Robbins, like many people, had spent years trying to make everybody else happy in an attempt to bring herself happiness. She found out, however, that no person can ever do enough to make everybody like them. She has since come to believe that "When you stop managing everyone else, you'll realize you have a lot more power than you thought – you've just unknowingly been giving it away." The power in her Let Them Theory stems from the fact that people can avoid wasting their energy when they stop trying to control other people and instead focus on themselves, and their actions.

## Let Them

Robbins explains that she first came up with this theory at her son's prom. She had been used to teenage girls planning out minute details of their prom months in advance. This was not the case when her son came of age. While she insisted he get his date a corsage, he insisted that the girl did not want one. She secretly bought one for the girl, believing herself to know better. When her son's date offered him a boutonniere, Robbins believed she was vindicated and pulled out the corsage she purchased, only to make the situation uncomfortable because the girl liked making her own arrangements and had already made her own corsage. After pictures, the group of teens decided to go to a taco joint in the rain, and Robbins, along with some other parents, tried to find reservations to a nice sit down restaurant. Finally, one of her daughters stopped her and told her mother to just let the teens do what they wanted to do. "Let them" she kept repeating. Finally, Robbins relented and gave her son money to go to the taco joint.

This one moment changed Robbins life as she started to use "Let Them" as a mantra of sorts for her life, letting people have whatever opinions they wanted to about her life and her choices and to do whatever they wanted to in life. This ranged from having opinions about what she posts online to the donut shop having a

right to be out of donuts. The more adopted this approach, the more she realized that most of her worries were not worth the time they took. People started to notice a change about her.

"Let Them [other people] be themselves because they are revealing who they are to you," Robbins writes. She posted a video online about this philosophy and had many millions of people view it within one day. People resonated deeply with this idea to the extent that many people started to get the words, Let Them, tattooed on their bodies. People, Robbins writes, have an innate need for control, but in the end, nobody can ever control anybody but themselves.

## Let Me

The Let Them Theory does not end with these two simple words, however. Power is found in the two words that follow: Let Me. Robbins relates the power in these words by describing an emotional reaction she had to a social media post a friend of hers made. Robbins used to be part of a social group but had lost close touch with the other women over the years. One night, however, she logged onto social media to find that the group had gone on a trip and did not invite her. They were seemingly having a wonderful time, and she was feeling profoundly excluded. She started worrying about what she did that caused her to be excluded, but she could not think of anything she did to hurt any of the women. Her immediate reaction was to fix whatever had been broken by contacting the women and trying to make amends. Finally, however, she reminded herself of her words, Let Them, and she was able to let go of a lot of the angst the photos and situation were causing her. She could simply "Let Them go on the trip." These words do not mean that she gave in; rather they mean that she acknowledged that she could not change what happened no matter what she did.

Robbins writes that "Trying to control people and situations doesn't calm your fears. It amplifies them." This theory is not something she simply came up with in isolation. It is deeply rooted in stoicism, Buddhism, Radical Acceptance, and Detachment Theory. Once a person has internalized Let Them and is able to move past controlling other people, they can move on to Let Me and decide the prudent course of action in the current situation, if action is even prudent at all. Deciding what to do in response to another's actions gives a person their power back.

Robbins explains that people get a sort of positive feedback when they say Let Them. This feedback stems from a sense of superiority that comes from knowing that they have been able to rise above a situation. These words gave Robbins the power, clarity, and space to acknowledge that nobody, including these women, owed her anything. If she wanted a better social life, she needed to do the work. With Let Me, she could decide to reach out to the women and extend social invitations to other people. Robbins was able to realize that nobody has a responsibility for her social life except herself.

This Let Me part of the theory is really where the power lies. Without it, people can feel lonely. It is in Let Me that people create the life they want with the reality they have. Loneliness is a sign that the theory has not been implemented properly or fully. The theory is "not an excuse to stop answering your phone, to shrug your shoulders, to refuse to talk it out with a friend or family member who is hurt, to stay in a situation that hurts you, or to ignore discrimination or dangerous behavior. It is not a license to give someone the silent treatment, ghost people, avoid hard conversations, or withdraw from your relationships." Well implemented, it should increase connection rather than exclude it.

## Stress and Everyday Hassles

Robbins goes on to explain how Let Them can help people avoid some stress in everyday life. Stress can even be reduced when a person encounters a long line at a coffee shop or bad traffic. Since situations like these cannot be avoided, "learning how to respond differently to the annoying and stressful situations every day will change your life." To do this, a person needs to create some distance between the situation and their reaction.

To explain how this works, Robbins explains a flight she was on. There was a man behind her coughing into the air without covering his mouth. Robbins had a lot going on and could not get sick. She asked the man to please cover up his mouth while coughing, but he refused. Everyday stressful situations like this one change the ways our brain functions and cause the "fight, flight, or freeze response." Living in this state is why many people are frequently exhausted. Once a person understands the stress response, they can use the Let Them Theory to help "reset [their] stress response." "The moment anything happens that stresses you out," Robbins writes, "say Let Them. Put yourself in the pause. Then say Let Me and take a breath."

When Robbins was on the plane, she could not stop the man from coughing. Instead of allowing herself to stew the entire time, she put on headphones so as not to hear him and she covered her mouth and nose with her scarf. It was the best she could do. She reclaimed her power and reduced her stress response. Robbins tells her readers that oftentimes there will be multiple different paths a person can take when they focus on their Let Me. She writes, "every situation will be different based on how you feel, what's going on in your life right now, how much time you have, how important the issue is to you, what your values are, and what the most effective approach is." Let Me allows the reader to "put [their] time, energy, and values at the center of [their] life." Robbins frequently considers how long a situation will bother her when she tries to decide how to proceed. If a situation will bother her for quite some time, it is obviously of more importance than a situation that she will easily and quickly get over. She maintains that "No matter how big the problem is or how stressful something feels, there's always something you can do through your actions and your attitude to make it better."

## Other People's Opinions

Oftentimes, what stops people from acting even in very positive ways in their lives is the fear of other people's opinions. It can be the most difficult to get along with those we are in the closest relationships with because they are the most likely to be honest, and we care the most about their opinions. To explain

> *. . . difficult adults are easier to get along with once a person realizes that most adults have the emotional maturity of an eight-year old and therefore act in similar ways to children.*

how this is the case, Robbins writes about how her mother was not happy with Robbins's fiance and eventual husband. Her mother told her that had she had the choice, this is not the man she would have chosen for her daughter. Robbins came to learn that this was because her mother feared that Robbins would never return to her hometown permanently if she married her husband. This fear made sense to Robbins, and she had to learn to let her mother feel this way. After all, she realized that she likely would have felt the same way in her mother's position. She let her mother feel how she felt, and then she married her husband despite her mother's hesitations. Realizing what was happening let Robbins step away from the power struggle. The Let Them Theory allows for acceptance, and because of that, it gives "space for a deeper connection, honesty, and love."

Robbins believes that difficult adults are easier to get along with once a person realizes that most adults have the emotional maturity of an eight-year old and therefore act in similar ways to children. The reason many adults fail to mature properly emotionally is because they were shut down as kids and were not allowed to express the full range of emotions. This means that as adults, they never learned how to process these emotions. While the Let Them Theory requires a person to allow adults in their life to act and feel how they choose, the Let Them Theory ensures that adults will not be vulnerable to the childish behavior of adults because they are able to choose how to respond to such behavior. Adult readers may also recognize themselves as having poor emotional management skills, Robbins writes, and when they do, they should show themselves mercy while working to develop these skills.

Once a person starts to realize the power they have to dictate their choices, they may start to notice that some of their choices feel wrong. This was the case with a man who started to believe that he was not supposed to marry his fiancee. He knew how upset his fiance would be and how much money people, including his parents, stood to lose should he call off the wedding. He knew that cancelling the wedding would make many people upset. Still, using the Let Them Theory, he called off the wedding, giving those who grieved or were angry time and space to feel those emotions. He knew that in the long run it was what was best for everybody, so he chose what he needed to do despite the feelings his actions caused in others.

## Comparisons

Robbins believes there are two types of comparisons people can engage in. The first type can torture people as they lament the blessings others have that they do not. She maintains that some people are just lucky in certain areas and there may be nothing a person can do to increase their own blessings in that area. Some people are just beautiful or smart or were born into money. In these situations, Robbins recommends merely letting people have those blessings without torturing yourself over them. People generally engage in upward comparison where they look at people who have more than they do and this makes them feel like they are lacking. Robbins recommends, "Let Them live their life. Let Me focus on mine."

The second type of comparison does not involve self-torture. This type of comparison can be a source of teaching in a person's life. When engaging in this second type of comparison, you look towards others who have what you want in an effort to emulate the steps they took to get there. In this way, you too can enjoy these fruits in your life. Here you can "Let Them lead the way." Robbins writes about a woman named Molly who was an interior designer. She knew the steps she needed to take in order to advance her career, but she never did them. Then one day Molly went online and found an annoying neighbor had taken those very steps she knew she should have taken and launched her own career. In this case, Molly could let herself be woken up by her friend to make the changes in her life and career that she was very capable of making.

## Adult Friendships

Robbins moves on to discuss how Let Them can help with the friendships people have as adults. She discusses what she calls, "The Great Scattering." Up until adulthood, many people spend their lives with people in the same stage of life, encountering the same situations. These people take the same classes and play the same sports. People do not move through their younger years alone. Once they graduate and enter the workforce, however, this changes. People may spend their time with the same people day in and day out, but they are not all at the same life stage and have the same energy as them. This leads many people to start to feel a lack of true friendship in their lives. There are "three pillars of friendship." These are "proximity, timing, and energy." If people are not nearby, in the same life stage, and have chemistry with each other, they are unlikely to become good friends. This is part of why friendships can fade: one of the three pillars can disappear. Robbins acknowledges that when people allow friends to fade away because that is what the other chooses, it can lead to loneliness. She cautions her reader that "friendships are not a tit for tat. Do not keep score. Reach out to people because you want to. But don't expect a response."

Making new friends as an adult takes time, and it also takes con-

scious effort. A person must be willing to make the first move in friendships if they want to develop a healthy circle of friends as an adult. Robbins recommends taking classes to meet people and reaching "out to the people you've been hanging out with to see if anyone wants to go" to any interesting events.

## Helping Influence People

Robbins moves then on to a person's influence. It is not possible to help somebody who does not want to be helped, and it often requires a person to make hard decisions. Robbins writes about a time her daughter started waking up in the middle of the night, afraid. Robbins allowed her daughter to come spend the night in her room each night, but the girl's anxiety continued to be a problem during the night. Eventually Robbins realized that in rescuing her daughter every time she was afraid at night, she was making it impossible for her daughter to grow. Even though it was incredibly difficult to do, Robbins started to gently walk her daughter back to her own room when she would come to Robbins, and this was what finally, after time, allowed her daughter to heal and to grow. Not all situations will be with children and will be resolved quickly, but when we allow others to fail, they give them the opportunity to grow. When we allow others to act how they choose, we can then choose how we want to react to them and show up for them and support them. Sometimes this is as difficult as withdrawing all financial support when a loved one with addiction fails to take the steps necessary to get better. Robbins maintains that it is important to "stop bailing out other adults." She suggests her readers "believe in their ability to heal, and create an environment where change is possible."

Robbins writes, "The reality is, adults choose who and how they love and sometimes they won't choose you. People's behavior tells the truth about how they feel about you… by chasing love, you chase away the deep and meaningful relationship you're worthy of." She maintains that people will demonstrate who they are and what they want. Robbins ends her book by discussing situations where we may want somebody to love them who does not. Her same principle of Let Them and Let Me apply here in the same ways it does in every other area of her book.

Robbins' two principles are incredibly easy to understand, and her book does an excellent job giving examples and illustrations that show how they work in different areas of life. By the end of the book, her readers have all they need to free themselves from the prison of other people's opinions and desires and allow themselves to live their own lives according to their own values. In this readable and highly applicable book, Robbins offers her readers a path to true internal freedom.

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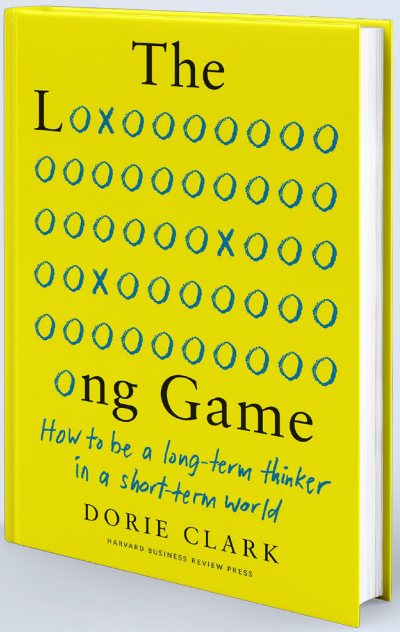
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# The Long Game

Dorie Clark

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Long Game

**How to Be a Long-Term Thinker in a Short-Term World**

By Dorie Clark

Dorie Clark is a consultant and keynote speaker who teaches executive education at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and Columbia University's Graduate School of Business. She is the author of Entrepreneurial You, Reinventing You, and Stand Out. The New York Times has described Clark as an "expert at self-reinvention and helping others make changes in their lives." Her books have been translated into eleven languages. Learn more and download your free self-assessment at dorieclark.com.

## Long-Term Strategy Gets Personal

Today's professionals live in a state of constantly being pushed to their limits. These limits are often exasperated by the urgent need for tasks to be completed, the overwhelming feelings associated with handling things themselves, and constantly feeling two steps behind. To combat this stress, they keep their head down, push forward, only focused on the next task at hand – never taking a moment to breathe for themselves. This is an endless cycle, one that takes a toll on both personal and professional goals.

Instead of only looking at the task at hand, Dorie Clark uses her book ***The Long Game: How to be a Long-Term Thinker in a Short-Term World*** to share her unique experiences and crates the framework necessary for professionals to take a long-term approach to their professional game instead of only looking at the tasks at hand. There are only 24 hours in everyone's day, by using the right strategies Dorie Clark explains how professionals can leverage their time more efficiently and in more powerful ways – utilizing a long-term approach to achieving goals instead of the stressful short-term approach.

## White Space

If you are a professional, you are all too familiar with the concept of being busy. The question is – why are you busy? Dorie Clark explains it like t, "You can't pour more liquid into a glass that's already full." We don't plan our time accordingly, and lack the white space needed in our lives to balance out the stress. So many of us keep packed schedules, but the truth about these schedules is that they keep us trapped by designs of our own, living life in autopilot going from one task and objective to another.

Dorie uses her own life experiences to explain how having a busy life and being numb to everything around us, replacing it with our workload can be normal. From going through a breakup, a death in the family, selling her home, and moving to another state, she still delivered sixty-one keynote talks during that year – mainly because the only time she didn't cry was when she was away from home, so she stayed busy. She uses several other scenarios to help explain how being busy can be the "drug" that replaces something else in our lives.

There is a reckoning that comes – one way or another. You can spot inefficiencies, which spark these big-picture questions:

*Should you be doing this task yourself?*

*Can you delegate it to someone else, or just stop doing it altogether?*

*Where should you focus your efforts to get the biggest return?*

*If today were a new day, would you invest in that project?*

By answering these questions, you can begin to set a pattern in your schedule that includes limits and true priorities within it. Instead of letting your work expand and fill all of your time, set boundaries around it. Sometimes this requires learning to say "no," even to the things you really want to do. We oftentimes say "yes" because we don't want to disappoint others, we are worried about being judged negatively, we want to avoid the hard conversations, we want to feel important and needed, and we are plagued by FOMO (the fear of missing out). Dorie explains that there comes a time when we have to let go of these unrealistic expectations of pleasing others and instead think more about ourselves. If it doesn't rank a nine or ten on the excitement scale for you, then it should automatically fall into the "no" category. Although this doesn't always jive in daily operations, we can begin looking at how we divide out our personal time.

One thing that most professionals are familiar with is the idea of using checklists – something you may use on a daily basis in your role to ensure a job is done correctly. What if you applied the same principles to your life? There are four questions that Dorie uses with her executive coaching clients to help them thing through requests, opportunities, and obligations:

*What is the total commitment?*

*What is the opportunity cost?*

*What is the physical and emotional cost?*

*Would you feel bad in a year if you didn't do this?*

The important point that Dorie is stressing in this first section is figuring out how to delegate your time to what matters most. While we may be rushed with deadlines or important tasks, our "white space" time is still extremely important – we just have to make sure we are turning down what doesn't excite us to make space for what does. The long-term impact of our decisions should be factored into this, not just our what it provides for us in the short-term.

## Focus Where It Counts

Your time is important, and now you have some extra sitting around. How do you decide what to do with it to maximize your long-term goals (which may not always be obvious)? Dorie focuses on providing the right recipe for focusing your time where it counts – setting the right goals, exploring, thinking in waves, strategic leveraging, and finding the right people within the right rooms. The goal is to optimize your time to overlook the short-term outcomes and focus more on the long-term outcomes.

Dorie talks about Google's statement when they went public in 2004 – "We encourage our employees, in addition to their regular projects, to spend 20% of the time working on what they think will most benefit Google. This empowers them to be ore creative and innovative. Many of our significant advances have happened in this manner." -Sergey Brin and Larry Page. The Google 20% concept was originally created by 3M, which allows 15% time to be innovative. Dorie finds the idea of cordoning off time for innovation as a way to explore and see where your passion takes you but finding this time can be tricky. She points out that Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer made the comment that it requires 120% time to add in that additional innovation – something most professionals really don't have the time to do. You have to fight to be able to carve out an additional 20% of your time to do anything extra around your obligations.

The best way to really carve out your time is by thinking in waves. You have to alternate between modes in order to maximize what you get done. Dorie uses a Career Wave model that explains sequencing between:

- Learning
- Creating
- Connecting
- Reaping

This leads into her questions for achieving an optimal leveraging strategy:

*What should you spend your time doing?*

*What are the 20% of your activities that will yield 80% of the results?*

*What can you stop doing?*

*How can you use constraints to your advantage?*

*What are your hypotheses about the future and how do they inform my actions today?*

*How can you do something once and make it count ten times?*

*Where, and how, do you want to live?*

*What would it look like t stand up for your vision?*

*How can you combine work and your personal life to make both more enjoyable?*

*What forms of currency, connections, etc. do you have to leverage?*

You can use these to start thinking about the different types of networking opportunities you engage in – long-term, infinite, or short-term. Where will your connections get you and what can they do for you – in the long run? You have to consider the various impacts that these opportunities play within your life before committing to something that takes more of your time than you are truly willing to commit.

> . . . becoming a long-term thinker doesn't happen overnight – it's a long-term process that requires a strategy focused on achieving those goals."

## Keeping the Faith

Thinking about your goals and your long-term approach can be lonely and feel unfulfilling. Dorie explains that it is worth it though, in the end. In the first two sections she lays out the groundwork for creating the white space in your schedule and then allocating that time doing something with your goals in mind and how to achieve them. While they aren't something easily accomplished, they point toward a brighter future.

Dorie uses the story of J.K. Rowling's first Harry Potter novel and its twelve publisher rejections to explain using strategic patience when a plan doesn't work out. There are circumstances that occur that leave us in disbelief – how can it be happening to us? She talks about Anne Sugar who had to bounce back from rejection. As a successful executive coach, she was working for major companies and Harvard Business School's executive programs. She loved writing, and even took her online poetry classes for fun. No matter how much she wrote, she was always hearing about how she wasn't innovative enough – she was upset. To get rid of her sadness and self-doubt she talked to a friend who suffered similar setbacks – only to realize that their path was not the one she wanted to take. She never gave up and was eventually noticed for one of her Harvard Business Review stories – now she is a viral writer on LinkedIn.

As a rule of thumb, when things aren't looking as though they will go in the right direction, Dorie says to push forward and use these questions to stay on track:

*Why are you doing this?*

*How has it worked for others?*

*What do your trusted advisors say?*

These questions help you reconnect with your purpose and your strategy. To be recognized, and as an expert, it takes time. Don't be discouraged by the bumps along the way. There will be failures along the path, but it is what you do with those failures that makes the difference in how you achieve your long-term goals without focusing on short-term accumulation. Her explanation pushes toward using those failures as alternative paths to your goal and adapting the plans that don't work into something fruitful that allow you to leverage your connections.

In the same way that you experience failure, you will experience reward and according to Dorie, you have to reap those rewards. Her example of choice for this scenario is the infamous "marshmallow study" conducted by Walter Mischel at Stanford University's Bing Nursery School in the 1960s. Children were offered the opportunity to have one sweet treat now or they could wait 15 minutes in the room alone with the treat and receive two. The true value of this came years later when the study was put up against the life outcomes of those children. The ones who waited and showed self-control performed remarkably better on almost every measure.

Dorie explains that becoming a long-term thinker doesn't happen overnight – it's a long-term process that requires a strategy focused on achieving those goals. You have to start small because goals can feel overwhelming. Positive momentum comes by going one step at a time.

## The Three Keys to Becoming a Long-Term Thinker

No one said it was easy, Dorie puts this realization at the very beginning of her book. Through the research and real-life stories illustrated throughout, it is possible to create the winning strategy that drives you toward being a long-term thinker instead of focusing on the short-term benefits of any goal.

It takes a great deal of courage to carve your path to success and to be a long-term thinking, three habits must be cultivated:

1. Independence
2. Curiosity
3. Resilience

## Conclusion

Dorie Clark voices that everyone has the capacity to hone in on our individual skills, develop new techniques, and overcome the barriers to being better long-term thinkers. By using the strategies she illustrates throughout *The Long Game* and experiences that back it up, she provides the framework to play the long game instead of only focusing on what rewards a short-term solution provides.

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# The Long-Distance Teammate

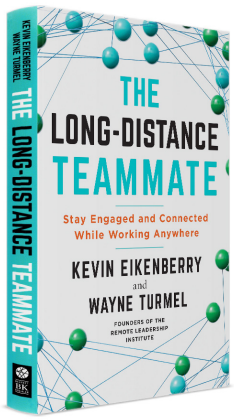
Kevin Eikenberry and Wayne Turmel

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# The Long-Distance Teammate

## Stay Engaged and Connected While Working Anywhere




*by* **Kevin Eikenberry and Wayne Turmel**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Even before the coronavirus hit, remote work was growing at nearly 30 percent per year, and now it's just a fact of life. There are many millions of people who once worked at a central location every day who now find themselves facing an entirely new way of working.

Written by the founders of the Remote Leadership Institute, ***The Long-Distance Teammate*** is the most authoritative single resource for helping remote workers get work done effectively, build relationships that are both productive and satisfying, and maintain a career trajectory when they are not in constant close contact with their leader, co-workers, or the organization in general.

***The Long-Distance Teammate*** tackles three important issues: navigating the personal and interpersonal, growing the skills to be productive, and communicating effectively—all from a distance. In short, there is a big difference between working at home and being an effective member of a team. This practical guide describes that difference and allows you to be a great remote teammate.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The 3 P Model for remote work success.
- Strategies for staying motivated when you work alone.
- The importance of ethical visibility.
- To lead great remote teammates.

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## Introduction

The trend toward remote work is undeniable and is happening in more and more types of jobs. Even after the initial COVID-19 response, you're likely facing new ways of working. If you return to the office, it may be only part time, or the person at the next desk who has been there for ages may not be there some or most of the time.

Being a teammate will look very different than it did not too long ago and will continue to evolve.

Working remotely isn't just a new normal—something we must learn to live with—it is an opportunity to work in ways that provide great operational and productivity results for the organization, as well as provide individual teammates with the opportunity to be a part of great results while finding great meaning for themselves, too.

Being a long-distance teammate covers a variety of situations. It could mean being part of a team that will never meet face-to-face, or a team that sees each other a few times a year. It includes hybrid teams, where some work in the same location, and others work elsewhere.

The mindsets, skill sets, and habit sets you need to succeed as a part of a team in any of these situations are more similar than different.

### Three Key Words

Three words, teammate, connected, and engaged, are critical to successful, satisfying remote work.

There is a difference between a team member and a teammate. Anyone who shares a manager or works on the same project is a team member. A true teammate is something different and deeper than that. To be a teammate implies a social and emotional connection that goes beyond merely who you report to and work with.

Being connected as a long-distance teammate means connection to the work, your boss, the direction of the organization, and your fellow teammates; more than just technical connections, but interpersonal ones.

Engagement isn't something that is done to you—it is something you choose to do. Engagement is more than employee satisfaction. How much discretionary effort are you putting in? How much of your heart, soul, and effort are you putting into your work? Are you satisfied with just the bare minimum, or are you doing your best most of the time? It will take focus and work to achieve this picture.

## PART I: YOU AS A REMOTE TEAMMATE

This part begins with a model that will help you with every part of your life as a remote worker. Then we'll look at the mindset it takes to be a great remote teammate. After that we will get super practical—addressing some of the challenges you face every day: how to stay motivated, manage your time and productivity, and build routines that will support your success.

## The 3 P Model for Remote Work Success

When we begin working remotely, we are often energized. No commute! We can work in our Led Zeppelin T-shirt! We can take the kids to school and get so much more done when they're not there!

But after the honeymoon phase, you're left with the day-to-day reality of working without regular social interaction, knowing what is going on, or having access to the boss or your co-workers whenever you want it.

There are three factors that impact the overall quality of remote work. Three areas that, if you give them the attention they deserve, can greatly enhance the quality of your work, enhance your relationships with others, and help you create the kind of workplace and long-term success you desire, even when you don't work in the company's headquarters or right under your boss's nose.

**Productivity**. Getting tasks accomplished is not the same as being productive. By definition, productivity is the measure of work yielding results, benefits, or profits. It is about outcomes, not activity.

A team member focuses on their work and tasks. A teammate considers not only how to be personally productive to get the most and best work done in the time allotted but how to help the rest of the team and organization meet its goals. At the end of the day, real productivity is about getting more of the right or best things done—not how much time you spent doing it.

**Proactivity**. Research shows one word that both managers and workers agreed best describe a great remote teammate. That word is proactivity. Proactivity isn't just about tasks; it's also about your mindset.

When you have a question about your work, do you ask for

When we work away from others on our team, it can be hard to see a picture of our work that's beyond what we see right around us.

clarification immediately, or do you just try to work through it? In coaching conversations, do you accept that your manager isn't talking about your personal development plan, or do you raise the subject yourself? When that meeting is running long, do you speak up and try to get the team back on track, or do you sit back, roll your eyes, and go answer your email instead?

Both managers and team members say that the thing they look for most in a teammate is that kind of initiative. It requires bravery, trust, and engagement but may be the single most important component in your long-term success as a remote worker.

**Potential**. Finally, do you consider the long-term implications of your work and the choices you make? This is perhaps the most difficult thing about working remotely, and often contributes to feelings of isolation and disengagement over time.

What is your goal for this job in the short term? What do you want to accomplish here? How do you feel you can make the biggest contribution, and what are your goals long term? Does it help you build the skills and experience you desire? And how does this role fit into your vision for yourself?

You're already working away from others. If you consider productivity, proactivity, and potential, odds are you'll be more than a remote worker; you'll be a great teammate and member of the organization.

## Getting Your Mindset Right

Every day matters. It doesn't matter how you got here. It doesn't matter what the current work or role is, whether this is just a short-term job or gig to help pay for college, or if you don't plan to do this kind of work for long. The work may not connect to the work you love or plan, but the way you think about this job today and the way you do the work will have an impact on your long-term success.

It's not just your job. It's about organizational success. You are a part of an organization. You have been hired, one way or another, to help create great results for that entity. And so, it is in your best interest to think about your work (and it may be harder when you don't walk into an office with the organization's name on the door) from the perspective of the organization.

You're not just doing the daily work—to be most successful you must think about that daily work in the context of what you bring, not just what you take home every two weeks.

Likewise, it's not just your job; you're part of a team. When we work away from others on our team, it can be hard to see a picture of our work that's beyond what we see right around us. That's one reason why it is easy to forget that we're a part of a larger group.

A critical part of your ultimate success is recognizing your role on the team and making it part of your work every day.

**Your job = your work + team work.**

The teammate mindset starts with clearer expectations of yourself and from others. Until you see your work in this way, you can never have the kind of success and impact that is possible.

## Getting and Staying Motivated When You Work Alone

The good news about working at a distance is that you can (within reason) set your own pace, work on what you need to work on when you are at your best, and not be interrupted by silly questions and unimportant conversations. When you're on your game, you are super-productive, and everyone knows it.

Then there are the other days. Maybe you look at your to-do list and think, "Ugh. Why bother? Nobody notices anyway." Maybe no matter how busy you are, your task list never seems to shrink. Or it seems you haven't spoken to another human being in days.

When you feel this way, it can be hard to do good work, and there's nobody around to help you get past those feelings.

The truth is you are not alone. Let's discuss some tools to snap out of it faster and be in that lull state for shorter periods of time.

Once we realize that a momentary feeling of ennui (which is a fancy way of saying restlessness) or dissatisfaction is normal, we also know that the reasons fall into a few easily identified categories. We feel like we're lacking energy, focus, purpose, and useful feedback.

For example, let's address a lack of energy. One way to keep your energy level up is to not drain yourself. Work with your manager to meet the requirements of the job. Set a realistic, and agreed to, start and stop time for your work, and then walk away. Shut down your computer or close your office door when it's quitting time. If you don't have a door, at least shut down that laptop.

Make sure you set boundaries on how much you will allow yourself to engage with work from your phone during non-working hours.

Here are some other tips for keeping your energy level high:

- Take a break.
- Eat healthier.
- Get physical.
- Talk to someone pleasant.

## The Power of Establishing Routines

While a routine can become boring and uninspiring, developing certain habits and duplicating a successful process can have very real benefits.

According to Tracy Kennedy, the personal development expert at Life-hack.org, some of the benefits of establishing a morning and end-of-day routine include increasing productivity, reducing stress, starting the day on the right foot, controlling the day so the day doesn't control you, and balancing your personal and work life better.

### How to Build a Healthy, Productive Morning Routine

There is no such thing as a standard, one-size-fits-all way to face the day. But there are some best practices and rules of thumb to establish habits to start your day as a remote worker:

- Give yourself time to breathe and open your eyes before reaching for your phone.
- Be mindful of answering messages before you start work. If you absolutely must respond to an email or a message at the start of the day, make sure it's only that one, and return to your morning.
- Eat a healthy breakfast. Build your dietary habits into your routine, or you'll find yourself grabbing whatever is handy or fastest, and it's seldom the best for you.
- End your day as mindfully as you begin it. If you don't do something to signify you're off duty, your brain will nag at you to keep working. Turn off the lights in your home office. Close your laptop entirely.

## PART II: SKILLS TO HELP YOU SUCCEED

This part outlines the skills that take you far beyond technical expertise. In fact, these are the skills that will allow you to work successfully with others—especially in a remote or virtual setting. Being able to build trust, communicate more effectively, set clear expectations, and more will keep you from tearing your hair out. But you can set a higher bar for yourself than that.

This is about helping you engage and connect in new and more profound ways with your work and your teammates. To do that requires you to build and hone a new set of skills.

## Getting Clear Expectations for Your Work

While it might seem obvious, when we don't know what is expected of us, it is nearly impossible to succeed. Unfortunately, unclear expectations are the rule more than the exception, especially for remote workers.

This gets directly at "Productivity" from the model: Without clear expectations, how can you even measure your productivity in a meaningful way?

What should be included in "clear expectations"? When you have clarity from your leader (or others) in each of these areas, you can be sure that you are both on the same page: the work itself, the quality of the work, why the work is being done, the timeliness of the work, communication about the work, and how the work is done.

### How to Make Expectations Clear

Remember that the responsibility for having clear expectations rests with both parties—whether between you and

your leader, your teammates, or customers. If you aren't clear, you can—and should—do something about it.

If you are ready to be clearer and be kind as you do it, here are a series of steps you can take to create clearer expectations for yourself (and the other person too):

- Ask for time to have the conversation.
- Create a series of questions.
- Be clear on what you need.
- Have an open conversation.
- Write the expectations and metrics down.
- Agree and commit.

Ethical Visibility is about making sure that your work is recognized in the context of the team's work and results.

## Creating Great Remote Communication

Communication is inherently harder at a distance. It is hard enough across the desk from each other—and everything that distance adds makes it more challenging. If you want better communication in your work situation, you must recognize that creating better remote communication starts with you.

The main difference between working in a central location and working remotely is that we rely much more heavily on technology to connect us to our teammates when we're apart.

What are the types of tools that all good remote and hybrid teams need to have at their disposal? Key categories include telephony, asynchronous written and text-based communication, synchronous unified communication and collaboration, video conferencing, web meeting and screen sharing tools, project management tools, cloud file-sharing services, and cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise platforms.

### Picking the Right Tool

Since you have a seemingly endless array of technology, that means you can choose the right tool from those options. Here are four questions to ask yourself when you are ready to be more intentional about which communication tool to use.

**What is the purpose?** What am I trying to accomplish with this communication?

**What is the timing?** Do people need this information right away? What tool gets people's attention fastest? How urgent is it?

**What am I communicating?** In every case, try to think about what you are actually communicating and how that tool will help.

**Who is my audience?** If you know that people have a preference, then you might bow to that preference a little bit as long as it still makes sense with the other factors.

## Creating Ethical Visibility

One of the unintended consequences of working apart from your manager and your teammates is that you are often out of sight and out of mind. On your best days, this means you're not being interrupted all the time, and you're not being micromanaged or overloaded with tasks.

The flip side of that is you often feel ignored. Are you being considered for that promotion or that special project? Did you get asked for your input on that question? Why were you the last person to hear about that problem? It can feel like you are invisible.

How do you make yourself visible in a positive way to your manager and your teammates without seeming to make everything about you or coming across as vain or egotistical? This balancing act is called "Ethical Visibility."

Ethical Visibility is about making sure that your work is recognized in the context of the team's work and results. Ethical Visibility is,

**About the team's/organization's goals, not you**. Make sure that you're using words like "we" and "us." When making suggestions, put them in the context of what the group is trying to achieve, not how smart you are.

**Appropriate to the team culture**. Being ethically visible means that you stand your ground and contribute

but don't do it in a way that creates unnecessary tension or conflict within the team.

**Supportive and positive**. Be aware of others and their feelings—and how you might be impacting them.

**Judged by behavior, not intent**. This is hard to hear, but just because you didn't mean to be rude to Alice might not mean she doesn't think you were rude. Take feedback from others on how they want to be communicated with.

Remember this is harder when you work remotely from your teammates. Realize that being visible to your teammates is critical, and resolve to continually work at this.

## Building and Maintaining Relationships

Just because you are by yourself while you work in your home office, at the dining room table, or somewhere else doesn't mean that you are working alone. You are part of at least one team, even if you don't see people except on their profile photo or occasionally on the webcam. And since we are humans and not robots, we will (and must) interact.

Since that is true, whether we are introverts or extroverts, relationships matter in getting your work done.

Let's talk about how to build and maintain relationships when we are remote and not in the next cubicle or down the hall.

**Make it a priority**. You're busy. If you want to build and maintain relationships, though, you've got to make the effort.

**Use multiple communication channels**. If you want to invest in and build working relationships, you need to recognize that you need to use more of the tech at your disposal than just what you're used to. You will build relationships faster and more effectively with richer tools—more webcam and less email is a good starting point.

**Listen**. If you want to improve any relationship, improve your listening skills. If you are only sending emails, you aren't listening in ways that build relationships, so be thinking about your communication options.

**Build interaction, not transaction.** Ask yourself, "How do I make sure that at the end of our conversations, people feel it was worth their time and they feel valued?"

**Let them into your world**. Some people have tight boundaries, and other people have wide boundaries in relation to what they care to share about themselves (and know about others). Find the right boundaries for yourself and for them.

## Giving and Receiving Feedback

Feedback wasn't always plentiful when Norma worked in the office, but occasionally there was some simple acknowledgment from her teammates in the hallway. Now that she is working from home? Nothing. She is deafened by the silence, and without feedback she is left wondering about how she is doing. She is operating under the "no news is good news" theory but is unsure if that is accurate, and she'd really like to know.

The goal of feedback is to provide people with information, data, or observations that will influence them to change their thinking and behavior for mutual benefit. For that to happen, feedback must be heard, understood, accepted, and applied.

### How to Give Feedback as a Teammate

Since you don't have the position of boss, how you give feedback to your teammates is exceptionally important. Start with a question that asks permission to share your observations. For example, "Hey, can we talk about how meetings are going? I have some observations." Or "Would you be open to some feedback on X?"

Once you have agreement, here are a few tips to make the feedback you give more effective:

- Make it a two-way conversation.
- Use the phone or the webcam.
- Slow down.
- Stick to the facts.
- Make it meaningful.
- Be specific.
- Be kind.
- Be timely.

## PART III: YOU AND YOUR FUTURE

In this section, you'll read about taking care of yourself and planning for your future in a mindful, ethically responsible way. You might feel uncomfortable thinking this way, but

Spend some time on your own spiritual, mental, and social development. What are you doing to help center your own being?

who cares about your work as much as you do? Who is most invested in your future?

Remember that it's okay to balance your work and your personal life in a way that works for you and your family. It's okay to plan now for the next step of your working life, whatever that is. In fact, if you don't, who will?

## Taking Care of Yourself

Being a great teammate sounds like a selfless act; we help our managers, we look out for and coach our teammates, and everything is for our customers. What about you? If you're not healthy, motivated, engaged, and relatively sane, it's difficult to be productive, be proactive, or think about the potential of your work.

There are two big areas you need to consider when thinking about self-care: your physical comfort and well-being and work and home life balance.

### Your Physical Comfort and Well-Being

Here are some things you can do to make working remotely better for you physically:

- Get enough sleep.
- Stop checking your phone a half hour before bedtime.
- Set a natural rhythm. Find a bedtime and wakeup time that work for your body, and stick to that schedule as much as possible.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol, and sugars before bed.
- Schedule breaks.
- Get outside.
- Eat healthy.

### Work and Home Life Balance

Balance isn't some arbitrary formula or perfect destination. Don't get fooled into thinking work-life balance is some magical formula. It's what works so that you are meeting your commitments to your employer, yourself, and those close to you.

Build physical distance between your work and personal space. If you are lucky enough to have a separate work room or home office, make sure that your hobby doesn't also take place in that same space. If you work out of your bedroom, make sure that when you are not working, the laptop is closed and the monitor shut down so that you will be less likely to dive back into work.

Share your passions and outside interests with your teammates and your manager. Do you know what your teammates care about? It gives you something to talk about other than tasks and numbers, and often helps build personal relationships and connections.

Spend some time on your own spiritual, mental, and social development. What are you doing to help center your own being? This isn't some new-age question. It's vital to people that we learn new things and challenge ourselves beyond work.

## Managing Your Learning and Growth

You are responsible for your own career development and upgrading your skills. That's true whether you work in an office or from home, miles away from world headquarters. What is unique about working remotely is you may have more control and responsibility for making it happen whether it's part of your "individual development plan" or not.

Many of us have relied on the structure of the workplace and the organization to help us grow our skills. HR sends out notifications about upcoming classes. Your manager works with you on that individual development plan.

You want to grow your skills and become more productive. That requires being proactive and thinking about the potential impact on your work and goals. Learning, developing skills, and growing as a worker and as a human being is how you make the 3 P Model a real, living part of your professional life.

Self-directed learning can take many forms:

**Traditional training and learning through your organization**. Most organizations have training available in many different forms: traditional classrooms, virtual sessions, e-learning, and more. Talk to your manager and people in your organization about your goals. Go directly to the people in your organization to talk about funding.

**Investing in yourself**. Just because the organization doesn't have the right course or program or the budget for you doesn't mean that needs to stop you. Break the elephant into bite-sized chunks. While it might be nice to take a whole series of interrelated classes on Excel, start with the introduction, or cherry-pick the specific modules that will most interest or benefit you.

Seek less-expensive alternatives. There is no shortage of content outside your company, from a Harvard MBA to free webinars. While to some extent you get what you pay for, take advantage of low-cost and even free training to begin with. Udemy and LinkedIn Learning are just a couple of places to start.

## PART IV: IF YOU LEAD OTHERS

## Leading Great Remote Teammates

Many people aren't just leading remote teams; they work remotely themselves. This part is especially for you.

Every leader wears at least three hats, even if they don't think about it, even if some of the hats are gathering dust in the closet: the leader hat, the team member hat, and the communicator hat.

As the leader of a remote team, when you give them opportunities to step up, especially when they are working remotely, they will. Give them more tangible and meaningful ways to contribute, and they will thrill you with their results.

As a remote team member, think about how your team would grade you as a teammate. And what about the team of your peers? How are you doing in your relationships and trust building with them? How effective are those virtual meetings?

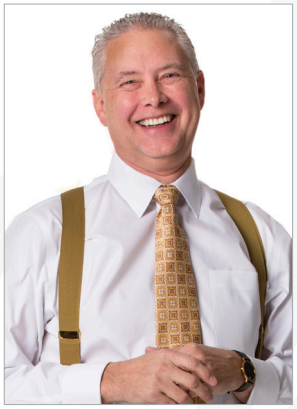
You must take your role as a communication conduit from your team upward and from management downward more seriously, and work at it harder. Make sure you know what is going on with your team, not just with the work but also with their emotions and stress. Hone your communication skills for sharing organizational messages, too.

The world of work has changed and is changing constantly. Working remotely using technology is part of that change. When you help people engage and connect, everyone wins. At an individual level, work becomes more meaningful and purposeful. As a team, you will be more successful and perhaps have some fun.

The organization and the people they serve win, too.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***The Long-Distance Leader: Rules for Remarkable Remote Leadership*** by Kevin Eikenberry, Wayne Turmel
- ***The Power of Presence: Unlock Your Potential to Influence and Engage Others*** by Kristi Hedges



Kevin Eikenberry is a recognized world expert on leadership development and learning and is the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group. He has been named twice by Inc.com as one of the Top 100 Leadership and Management Experts in the World and has been included in many other similar lists. He is the author, the co-author, or a contributing author of nearly 20 books. Wayne Turmel has had many careers, including standup comic, car salesman, and co-founder of the Remote Leadership Institute. He's the author or co-author of over a dozen books.

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# The Lost Art of Connectin

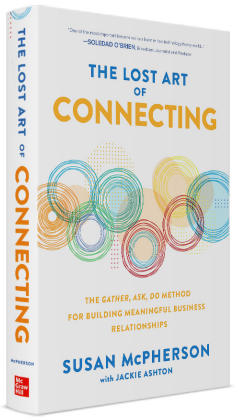
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# The Lost Art of Connecting

## The *Gather, Ask, Do* Method for Building Meaningful Business Relationships




*by* **Susan McPherson with Jackie Ashton**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Networking is often considered a necessary evil for working professionals. With social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, reaching potential investors or employers is much easier. Yet, these connections often feel transactional, agenda-driven, and dehumanizing, leaving professionals feeling burnt out and stressed out.

Instead, we should connect on a human level and build authentic relationships beyond securing a new job or a new investor for your next big idea—this is especially key as people head back to the workplace after a year of isolation. In ***The Lost Art of Connecting***, "serial connector" and communications expert Susan McPherson offers a simple, three-step methodology to help people go back to basics, tap into our humanity, and learn to be more intentional and authentic.

With helpful tips and useful advice on making the most of every step, ***The Lost Art of Connecting*** is the handbook we all need to foster personal and professional relationships that blur the lines between work and play—and enrich our lives in every way.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The one simple question that defines true connection.
- Why you need to first connect with yourself to connect with others.
- Communication strategies to help you practice relationalism.
- To follow up in ways that deepen your business relationships.

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## Introduction

To build meaningful relationships you don't need to connect with the 8 billion people on this planet. In fact, you shouldn't.

Instead, let's use the illustration of a constellation. There are 250 billion stars in the galaxy. Not all of them align in just the right way to make that special sight that is the constellation. And like networking, you never know just how you are connected to another person until you put in the work to see the patterns.

Building meaningful relationships involves, first, defining what meaningful means to you; second, seeking others who not only share your values and your vision but also those who challenge you, expose your blind spots, and broaden the diversity and breadth of your network; and third, making those relationships deep and rewarding. That is the art of connecting.

Connecting comes down to one simple question: "How can I help?" Asking this question in any meeting, any introduction—any moment—immediately narrows your focus on how you can be of service and support to others. And isn't that what makes relationships feel meaningful?

Every single person is an introduction to something else: another person, a unique skill, a new project, or something you inevitably will learn about yourself. It should never be about, "What will I get from this person?" But instead, "What can I learn? What can I discover?" Or, "Who could I connect this person with?"

### A New Approach to Building Meaningful Connections

There's a method for creating your personal network of stars, for creating magic in relationships by asking "How can I help?" It's called the Gather, Ask, Do method. This method will not only help you create your constellation, but it will give you the tools to help others create constellations, too—many of them. And that is perhaps the most rewarding aspect of this method: not only the deeply nourishing relationships that you will develop but also the ripple effect of connecting others.

In the Gather stage, you will learn how to better connect with yourself, defining your business values and goals, and determine how you can help and whom, and who would help you grow.

In the Ask phase, you will continue to ask "How can I help," as well as deepen your relationships by asking more and more questions, building the depth of your connections and curiosity.

In the Do phase, you will take action—immediately doing the helping in all the ways that you possibly can, building trust, competence, and depth of connections.

## PART I: GATHER

In this section, you will learn how to gather the stars of your constellation by first examining your relationship with yourself and clarifying your goals. Then you will learn several tips and strategies to begin to expand your network of connections in ways that feel natural and inspiring and don't zap your energy.

## 'Help, I Don't Know Anyone!'

We've all been there: a networking event, the first day at a new job, or even just a big meeting. We walk into the room and—panic sets in—"I don't know these people!"

There are ever more ways to connect, but there are exactly as many ways to disconnect. Yet, with a simple mindset reboot, you can drastically improve your ability to build business relationships: Don't discount the possibilities in your current network. Start there and you will reap enormous rewards from what is right in front of you.

**Connect with yourself**. First and foremost, connect with yourself. Are you an extrovert who loves gatherings and people and derives energy from others? Or are you someone who prefers intimate gatherings and getting together less frequently? Knowing this about yourself is key to implementing the art of connecting in a sustainable way. When you stay intentional, you make the biggest impact—connecting and communicating with people without burnout or fatigue.

**Start with who you know**. Oftentimes in networking, we get pigeonholed into reaching out to specific people. But in reality, someone who is already in your immediate network might be able to introduce you to the correct person. One of the most powerful changes you can make right away to improve your business relationships is to change your mindset. Your existing network is your biggest asset—use it.

**Clarify your goal**. The next step is to clarify your goals. And here's where we start to zoom in on that "connect with

The best way to become a connector—to build a meaningful and robust network—is to take command and be the host.

yourself" mindset: What do you want to accomplish in your career and in your life? An important distinction: This is not the goal of your meeting or even necessarily the subject of your initial conversation. Right now, clarifying your business goals is for you to get clear in your objectives. (The goal of the meeting is to establish or deepen a long-term, reciprocal relationship—but more on that later.)

For now, what do you want to achieve: Are you looking for a new job or promotion? Launching a new business? Looking for a donor or funder? Whatever the case may be, make this very clear and write it down.

## Invite to Get Invited

Traditional networking is typically motivated by the desire to acquire something: a business card, an invite, a job, a connection, a partner or client, or funding for your business. But not only is that approach ineffective; it will also leave you frustrated and exhausted.

Instead of throwing business cards at a roomful of people who will likely add them to their recycling bin, consider a simple paradigm shift. The best way to become a connector—to build a meaningful and robust network—is to take command and be the host. Rather than waiting for an invitation (or to "get" anything at all), *do the inviting yourself*.

### FOMO Becomes JOMO

Hosting—rather than waiting to be invited—makes connecting easier in a key way. It completely transforms your inner monologue. When you're doing the inviting, any anxiety, fear, or dread you might have about networking can dissolve. Instead of wondering "Will I be invited?" your thoughts can become "Who should I invite?"

Asking yourself that question immediately puts you into a position of power: You are in control. FOMO (fear of missing out) can transform into JOMO—joy of meeting others. Instead of being a follower, waiting for permission, you become a leader: hosting, connecting, and building relationships, one gathering or call at a time.

**Define the purpose of your gathering**. Many people skip over this important step. But if you haven't set an intention or a goal, what's the point of getting together in the first place? Are you trying to raise awareness? Are you trying to educate people? Are you trying to fundraise for a cause?

**Host rather than wait to be invited**. Now it's time to decide how and with whom to do it. It doesn't need to be a fancy gathering, and it doesn't need to be a three-hour event. It doesn't have to be a big group of people. It could be a 20-minute call with a few neighbors to brainstorm ways to reduce wildfire risk in your area.

**Keep it simple and start small**. Building a network doesn't have to be overwhelming or draining. Having breakfast with three people sounds pretty easy, right? Let the guests you invite do your legwork for you by inviting a friend. Connections will unfold organically with hardly any effort on your part. All it takes is two committed people to quickly build to four people. Then, the next time you meet, ask each of those four to bring a colleague—and voila, you already have eight people.

## Zoom Calls, DMS, IRL Meetings, and Snail Mail, Oh My!

Business meetings used to take place primarily in one of two scenarios: over a meal (coffee, lunch, drinks) or in a conference room. But the pandemic has forever changed the game for meeting dynamics. Deciding where to execute your gathering can cause decision fatigue even for the most skilled executive. Should you gather on Zoom or Microsoft Teams? Or is Google Hangouts better? What about a pop-up event?

As you continue to add to your constellation of contacts, you will begin to develop a knack for knowing which particular medium (in real life, Zoom, phone call, or DM) is best in which instance and for which particular contact. Until then, here are a few suggestions to get you started, offering some scaffolding for knowing which particular venue is best.

**In real life (IRL)**. Whenever possible, it's best to meet someone for the first time IRL. Smiles, interpersonal chemistry, eye contact, the friendly buzz of a new kinship—these subtleties are nearly impossible to replicate online. If you need to have an important negotiation or discussion, or if you are interviewing for a job, in person is also best. You can avoid awkward digital hangups or miscommunication.

**Zoom.** Presentations (that don't need much discussion), status updates for an ongoing client or partner, or a replacement for an in-person meeting that can't take place due to cost, travel challenges, or distance, a Zoom meeting works best.

To make virtual meetings a bit more personal and connected, startup investor and advisor Fran Hauser recommends starting the meeting by following up on something someone said in the last call. "How did that client pitch go, Susan?"

**By phone**. For regular check-ins with clients and colleagues, especially if you work remotely. As much as people tend to avoid connecting by phone today, it's the perfect way to follow up with someone you've met with previously in person or by Zoom. Notice the way that you can listen—and be heard—by phone.

**Snail mail**. For the new business relationships, use snail mail as an opportunity to express gratitude for favors: thank you for the job referral, thank you for reviewing a résumé.

## The Constellation Effect

By now hopefully you are getting a sense of how the constellation analogy applies and how you can use it to cultivate your own relationships. There are synergies to appreciate and enjoy over the course of your professional career or even a lifetime.

Your ideal contact isn't derived by asking, "Who do I know in marketing," for instance, but rather, "Who do I know that cares about helping people?" Or, "Who do I know who cares about my line of work or the particular mission or objective I'm trying to achieve?" The key is to not limit your outreach by job titles, professional experiences, or even geographic locations. Keep your mindset focused on your mission and your overall goals.

The question you should also be asking yourself isn't "How do I build community and connections?" but rather, "Which ones should I focus on?" Which communities should you join, and which ones should you pass on? Which ones don't currently exist? Should you build that community? Or let someone else take the reins?

In that sense, you don't need to worry about finding "that" investor, *the* perfect contact. Instead, worry about finding someone who simply cares about your mission and your values. When you do that, there is no shortage of creative ways to reach your ideal networking target through indirect contacts. Since we now know all the ways our existing contacts have value, why not tap them?

Expanding your network through degrees of separation works. And when you have an inspiring mission and purpose—people will want to jump aboard.

### Nail Your Story

Making an authentic connection with someone starts with laying the foundation, by figuring out how you might best fit together. A smart first move is to know your own story, your narrative—what skills you bring and where you're headed—like the back of your hand. Because once you do make those connections with others—perhaps even contact your ideal client or partner—what happens then? Once that connection transpires, you need to be ready to make the most of it.

Distill your story down to its essence: What are you trying to accomplish? And how can you elevate your story into a mission that others can rally behind? When your story is polished and clear, it's significantly easier to figure out how you best fit with others—to create a constellation.

## PART II: ASK

In this section, you will learn how to start connecting the dots (or stars) that you have gathered together in Part I. The method boils down to the most important ask of all: "How can I help?" But beyond that, we will also narrow in on how asking more (and the right) questions will begin to align the stars of your constellation into the pattern you want.

## How Can I Help?

When you become really skilled at asking "How can I help," the magnitude of the constellations that you can build and the great work they can create in this world are truly awe-inspiring.

Reframing the classic "ask" to be nontransactional breaks down the barrier of quid pro quo that often stymies business relationships and makes networking events so unbear-

able. The minute you ask someone how *you* can support them, their ears perk up. It also establishes equality. You no longer give off the impression of a desperate someone who needs something or is afraid of being perceived as lower on the professional totem pole.

Instead, you tip the scale of power and control in your favor. By taking action, you establish yourself in a position to help, support, and guide.

> Engage a curious mindset: What does this person in front of you know that you don't?

### How It Fuels Learning

It is vitally important that we understand differing perspectives, for our business as well as our broader lives. Our country is in a deep polarization crisis: We don't understand people who we perceive to be different from us. Philosophically, it may be difficult to broker a conversation with someone whose political, social, and environmental views are so vastly different from our own.

But listening fuels understanding. And if you want to succeed in business, you will be infinitely more successful if you deeply understand everything you possibly can about your industry, the people in it, and the major problems that need solving.

Engage a curious mindset: What does this person in front of you know that you don't? It doesn't matter who they are—they know something (likely, a lot of things) that you don't.

### Draw the Line

But wait—can't being a giver put you in a position to be a doormat? Where is the line between giving too much versus too little? Adam Grant says that being a giver doesn't mean saying "yes" to every request. Instead, he proposes, it means setting boundaries around who, when, and how you help.

The *who* is about setting boundaries with takers—if someone has a history or reputation of selfish behavior, you're not obligated to help.

The *when* is about setting boundaries with time. Failed givers drop everything whenever they get a request; successful givers block out time for their own goals and for self-care.

The *how* is about setting boundaries with the types of help you give. The idea is to be what he calls a "generosity specialist": Help in ways that energize you rather than exhaust you, and in situations where you can add unique value.

## Know Your Ask: The Who, What, Where of Getting What You Want

Perhaps you've been making deeper business connections using the tools that you have learned. Maybe you've crystallized your offering so you're in a better position to ask for what you want from a specific person—and get it. Most pursuits require preparation, and making an ask is no exception.

### Prepare Your Oscars Intro

At the Oscars, or any awards ceremony, the recipient receives a warm introduction before they take the stage. It typically includes a two-minute spiel of that person's life or accolades along with a bit of humor and levity.

When you're preparing for a meeting, do you research as though you were preparing an Oscars intro for that person? Ask yourself: Could I stand up to introduce this person and hit their key five data points? The key five are age, school, passion projects, media, and company news. As digital sleuthing and research tools abound, there's no excuse not to have their bio down.

Your job now is to consider how they may like to interact. Some colleagues are huggers. Others are hand shakers, and with COVID-19, some prefer phone, others Zoom, others text.

Consider the geographic, social, and ethnic backgrounds of who you are meeting. The way that you build rapport with a 65-year-old board member in New York is very different than the way you will connect with a 26-year-old actress in Los Angeles. The way you build a relationship with someone in Michigan might be different than the way you would do it in Florida or Italy or Japan.

## Pitch Perfect

You've been reaching out to your contacts and have the per-

fect person to pitch or have started writing that ideal cover letter for that dream job. Maybe you need to hire a team member or find a producer for a television show or podcast you want to create.

But maybe you don't need to make the ask at all. Maybe what you need isn't permission or funding but courage and scrappiness.

Baratunde Thurston is a writer, comedian, commentator, and author of the book ***How to Be Black***. He says that on a Saturday after he took his last flight back to California from New York before lockdown in March 2020, he woke up with three words in his head: live on lockdown. He wanted to make an entertaining, interactive, and participatory show about the pandemic that was informative and fun and also driven by the people who are in it—in the audience.

Had he not been quarantined at the time, he would have put the wheels in motion to get all of the right approvals and people, funding, production, and hair and makeup. But since none of that was possible, he just started making the show. And people loved it. Instead of waiting for all the right pieces to fall into place—he just did it.

From that experience, he developed excellent technical skills: editing video, sound, and imagery and all sorts of things he hadn't done in a very long time. Don't get trapped in limiting your thoughts or beliefs; ask yourself tough questions about whether or not the ask needs to happen in the first place.

### Nail Your 4/4/4

For those asks that do need to occur, how do you handle them?

Nail the 4/4/4. First, your bigger vision, which you should always be thinking about: What do you need in four years? Next, what are your priorities for the next four months? Then bring it back to the next four weeks (or even four days). What's most critical?

When you're making an ask, be very clear in what you want before you even step into the room, send an email, or make a call. And once there, be abundantly clear in stating it.

Your ask should be specific, measurable, and time-bound: What exactly are you asking them to do and by what date? "Could you review my cover letter by next Friday?" "Could you lend 10 minutes of your expertise and hear my elevator pitch?" Whatever your ask is and however you deliver it, be assertive in communicating what you want.

## Communication 101

Pings, bleeps, blurts—these sounds pepper the landscape of our days. We live in a world of nonstop communication that happens across a head-spinning number of channels, time zones, and even languages.

The challenges are many: How do you communicate in a way that is efficient but not terse? How do you make your communications authentic and deep without inadvertently crossing a professional or cultural line? How do you draw boundaries to allow for critical personal time to avoid burnout but also make yourself flexible and available?

Striking the right balance in each of these pursuits requires prioritizing openness and transparency, as well as seeing the humanity of each person—valuing the relationship above all else, including the one with yourself.

### Practice Relationalism

When you communicate with others, regardless of the medium, keep the focus on the bigger picture. Viewing communication channels, styles, and messages through the lens of relationalism places the priority not on how many relationships you have but, rather, on their thickness and depth.

Every single human relationship you have in business—and every communication you send—should strengthen the notion that you see this person as a whole human.

Any email, text, or message you write and don't deliver face to face can be misconstrued. When you don't know someone's personality, it is easy to misunderstand the intention or meaning behind the words.

For sensitive or important conversations, reach out by phone. And if you feel put off by someone else's email, consider the fact that it could be a misinterpretation. Remember, you can always ask the recipient which format they prefer.

**Be explicitly kind.** Communicating with kindness pays off. Research on psychology, leadership, management, and neuroscience shows that meaning, joy, and satisfaction can come from the very relationships and communication we build with others in our work.

**Give feedback when needed**. Clear, effective, and authentic communication also includes feedback, a critical component of healthy business relationships. It's a step in the relationship that requires vulnerability: telling someone what you don't like about something they've said, done, or created.

For any relationship where there are potential synergies to help each other in business and in life, it's worthwhile to take the relationship deeper.

But when you learn how to skillfully say hard things well, feelings of closeness, connection, and respect can transpire. Especially when it's delivered with skill and with kindness, giving feedback can be—somewhat counterintuitively—a gateway to greater intimacy.

## PART III: DO

You made new contacts at events, through your volunteer work, through the gatherings you've hosted yourself, and even all the Zoom happy hours you joined. Now what? How do you take those connections from the realm of an acquaintance into a connection that is meaningful and deep? Through several small actions that build up over time.

### The Art of the Follow-Up

For any relationship where there are potential synergies to help each other in business and in life, it's worthwhile to take the relationship deeper. And what people so often ask is, how? How do you *do* that? How do you deepen a business relationship without feeling awkward or stiff?

Here are some simple tricks and strategies that you can use to make "following up" more dynamic, less rote, and not so much of a chore.

**Sew the first line of connecting thread**. When you first meet someone—especially if it's someone you feel a connection with or a shared passion or goal in business—you want to act right away once the doorway to the relationship has been opened to deepen that connection. What did you talk about? Is there a passion you share? Here are a few examples of follow-up emails:

"It was wonderful to meet you. I'm fascinated by the work you're doing in _____ field. Please keep me posted on your work. I'd love to find ways to support you and your endeavors."

"I saw this article on _____ and thought of you—it was great to connect! Let's keep in touch."

**Do the thing they told you to do**. Did you meet someone new who suggested a book you should read? Pick it up from your local library or the bookstore—and then write them to say you did so and to thank them for the tip. Did the person mention that they were just on a podcast? Listen to the episode and send a brief note, or better yet, promote the podcast on Instagram or Twitter.

Not only will these actions provide context into their work and their personality, you will also have another reason to connect. After you listen to the podcast you can write: "Fascinating podcast about impact direct-to-consumer marketing—I have some friends in this space I'd love to connect you to, if you'd like?"

**Find their chief differentiating factor (CDF)**. Each person has a chief differentiating factor, or CDF. This is each person's specific expertise or "secret sauce" that makes them unique. Once you learn what someone's CDF is, it's your job to *remind them of it*. If you reflect back on someone's specialness in a way that they can clearly see it—they will be forever grateful. The rewards for both of you will be huge.

### Spread the Wealth

It may come as a surprise that money can engender connection. But whether it's talking about money (hello, vulnerability) or putting your dollars where your passions are, even the tricky territory of giving, receiving, or talking about money, when used skillfully, can pave the way to greater closeness.

Whether it's a small contribution to a crowdfunding site or a larger investment in a business, putting your money behind the organizations and people you want to support is a great way to build relationships in a truly meaningful way.

You truly don't need to have a large savings account to do this. Just 10 dollars to a crowdsourced campaign could connect you to an organization you may care about for life, and that can introduce you to fascinating people.

Similarly, every frank and open conversation you're willing

to have about money is another way to engender depth, openness, and transparency in your business relationships.

### How to Ask For It

Let's say you're getting a new business off the ground. How do you ask for funding? Now there are these great vehicles, whether it's Kickstarter or iFundWomen.com, where you can raise that first 20, or 30, or 40,000 dollars. Yes, it's hard work. But that could get you to a place where you would have some cushion to bring on a programmer or a consultant to create your websites and your collateral.

When you have deep, meaningful relationships, it's a lot easier to generate support if you've already built the types of relationships you will need to fund your company.

## Always Take (And Innovate On) The Meeting

"Always take the meeting" is a quip that runs through many networking guides. You'll never know where a connection will lead, even if it takes you somewhere you didn't expect.

But let's take this advice one step further by encouraging you to constantly push yourself to innovate on what "meetings" even mean, in addition to saying "yes" to potential meetings as much as you can (without burning out, of course).

Every new mode of communication or gathering is an opportunity to learn something about how human beings operate and thrive. Some of the most common tools are Zoom, Slack, and email, but did you know that there are hundreds of other platforms and tools for connecting? Keep your eyes open for new platforms for connection, and be willing to try them out, even the new or unpopular ones.

"Always take the meeting" really means perpetually having your meeting hat on. This doesn't mean always be working; rather, keep the possibility of a fortuitous connection afloat in your mind.

While you may not meet a king as a result of any last-minute trips to the convenience store, you will no doubt make an untold number of friends, colleagues, collaborators, and partners in similar instances where you will be in some place for one thing but make a connection that can help or segue into an entirely different thing altogether.

If you pay attention to and cherish the people you meet at those various pit stops along your life's path, you will create enduring friendships. And if you are human, vulnerable, and kind—people will be much more willing to support you in the good as well as the more challenging moments.

Remember, it's so often the detours rather than the destination that matter most.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Connection Culture: The Competitive Advantage of Shared Identity, Empathy, and Understanding at Work*** by Michael Lee Stallard
- ***The Connector's Advantage: 7 Mindsets to Grow Your Influence and Impact*** by Michelle Tillis Lederman



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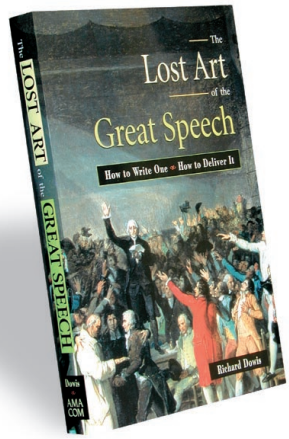
# The Lost Art of the Great Speech

Richard Dowis

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### How To Write One, How To Deliver It

# THE LOST ART OF THE GREAT SPEECH

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You don't have to possess a loud, sonorous voice, a pearly white smile, or a wild, charismatic stage presence to give a great speech; all the pleasant packaging and abundant confidence in the world will be rendered useless if your speech itself is illogical, boring or poorly written.

Richard Dowis, a former journalist and retired senior vice president of Manning, Selvage, and Lee Public Relations, knows that what ultimately counts — what ultimately stays with an audience long after the event is over — is the content of what is said. This summary teaches you how to effectively collect, organize and shape that content into distinctive, potent speeches. In the course of the summary, Dowis provides you with the following:

- ✓ A list of things to consider before you agree to speak, including the speech's format, topic and purpose.
- ✓ A discussion of the integral parts of the writing process.
- ✓ Explanations of the different ways in which you can organize your speech.
- ✓ A list of things your speech's opening should accomplish.
- ✓ Helpful hints on using effective, powerful language in your speech.
- ✓ A multitude of proven techniques that speechwriters use to make their speeches more interesting, meaningful and dramatic.
- ✓ Tips on using statistics effectively.
- ✓ Ways to add impact to your closing.
- ✓ The broad areas to consider when editing your speech.

Whether you have been asked to give a speech or to write one for someone else, your writing habits and style will ultimately determine the success of your endeavor. Turn the page for your first lesson in this lost art.

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# THE LOST ART OF THE GREAT SPEECH

**by Richard Dowis**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## Before You Speak

If you've been invited to speak at a function (whether as the sole speaker or one of a group of speakers), the function's organizers recognize that you have something to say on the given topic that others cannot or will not say. Your perspective is appreciated and your participation anticipated.

Once the organizers have extended the invitation to speak, keep the following points in mind as you consider the invitation and begin to prepare for your speech:

- **Format.** Will you be the sole speaker or one of a number of speakers on a given topic? Will the event be a panel discussion (with simultaneous participation from other speakers, a moderator and the audience), or will you be given the dais alone? The answers to these questions will guide all your preparation efforts.
- **Topic.** Do not agree to speak on a topic about which you feel uncomfortable or do not know enough. Be certain the event's organizers understand your credentials and do not "oversell" you to an audience, creating a set of expectations you cannot meet. If the event's organizers allow you to choose your own topic, choose one that is appropriate for the audience and event. If you suggest a topic that is different from the one given you by the organizers, stay as close as possible to the original idea; a variation on the theme is better than a different theme altogether. Make certain, also, that the topic is important to you; if it is not, it will sound phony and boring to your audience.
- **Purpose.** Determine what you want the audience to think or feel as a result of your speech — ask this question both of yourself and your sponsor. Write down a brief statement of purpose and keep it on hand as you write your speech.
- **Time.** Can your topic be managed in the time allotted to you? Consult with your sponsor; if you're given 15 minutes to speak on a topic that requires 30 minutes, you'll have to negotiate for more time, choose a different topic or decline the invitation altogether.
- **Details.** Assume nothing. Make sure you and your sponsor are on the same page regarding every detail of the event — from date, time and place to the pronunciation of any pertinent names (if you introduce or address specific individuals).
- **Know the organization.** Find out everything you can about the sponsoring organization and its membership before you accept the invitation to speak, then let those factors guide you in your writing efforts. ■

### Six Purposes of a Speech

From his experience in reading and writing speeches, Richard Dowis has identified six basic purposes of a speech:

1. **To entertain**
2. **To inform**
3. **To inspire**
4. **To motivate**
5. **To advocate**
6. **To convince or persuade**

A speech can have more than one purpose, of course. A president's state-of-the-union address, for example, should inform members of Congress about the progress his administration has made, convince them that his policies are good for the country and motivate them to work hard to pass those policies.

A speech is rarely made solely to entertain. Humor, as we shall see later, is mostly used to reinforce the other purposes of the speech.

### Choosing the Appropriate Topic

A young minister was invited to speak to a group of elderly men and women. The subject he chose was "The Sin of Lust." After the speech, a sweet little old lady came forward to shake the minister's hand. "That was a nice message," she said, "but with this group, it would be more appropriate to talk about rust."

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# Preparing to Write

A well-written speech is a disciplined speech — it doesn't ramble; it fits the time allotted; it contains no superfluous detail but doesn't leave out anything important. Writing a speech forces you to think in specific terms, to apply discipline and creativity to the explication of an idea or topic. Having a written, polished script in hand allows you to relay your work with confidence and a necessary grasp of the subject.

Integral parts of the writing process include:

- **Research.** Before you begin to write, you must have a solid working knowledge of your subject from experience, interviews and reading. Reading is important — consult current books and articles on the topic of your speech to make sure your information is up-to-date. The Internet is helpful, too; online resources on just about any topic are plentiful on the Web. You will also want to include quotations, anecdotes, statistics and other useful information in your research effort.
- **Brainstorming.** Get together with a small group of people (organizers, experts, friends) in an informal setting and talk about the subject, throwing around ideas and sharing insights.
- **Purpose.** Don't even think about writing until you have a clear, focused impression of what the speech should accomplish. Take your statement of purpose and expound on it in detail — include specific topics you will cover and state explicitly what you want your audience to do, think and feel in reaction to those topics.
- **Outlining.** Create a road map — a list of points you want to make in the speech based on the topic and the time allotted. Read through that list. Analyze it, evaluating each point then pare down the list to three to five essential topics. Discarded points are not necessarily extraneous; they may crop up again to support, explain or reinforce your main points.
- **Identifying a thesis.** A single, strong, unifying idea should evolve from the paring process. This is the thesis of your speech, its core idea or statement.

### *Organizing Your Speech*

Once you have completed your research, laid out your goals in a statement of purpose, created an outline and honed it down to a cogent thesis, you must set yourself to the task of organizing the speech. A well-organized speech is the product of an orderly mind; regardless of how strong your arguments or how interesting your material, the speech will not succeed unless it is logically organized.

That said, there is no right or wrong way to organize a speech. The best method of organization depends on the material, the audience and your input and approach as speaker. Some of the most common methods of speech organization include the following:

- **Chronological order.** If you're telling a story, consider organizing the speech in chronological order, particularly if there is an element of suspense you can use to build to a climax.
- **The "Big Bang."** Some speakers start with a bang by stating their thesis in the first minute or so. This can be useful if the thesis is startling or unexpected. If you're not careful, however, the speech can go downhill quickly when your follow-up points are not as exciting as your opening.
- **The simple "Tell 'em" approach.** One time-honored approach goes something like this: "Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em (in your opening); tell 'em what you have to tell 'em (in the body of the speech); then tell 'em what you just told 'em (in your conclusion)." This approach has some merit, but may be too simplistic (even insulting), depending on the audience and the topic.
- **Cause-and-effect.** In this approach, state some problem that is pertinent to the speech thesis, give the cause of the problem, describe its effect, then suggest a solution. This works fine when the topic and supporting material are in sync; if you don't have the support, however, this approach will not satisfy your need. ■

***Regardless of how strong your arguments or how interesting your material, the speech will not succeed unless it is logically organized.***

## Thought Modules

Another interesting way of organizing your material when writing the speech is to break your facts and ideas down into small manageable units. These units — which could be termed "thought modules" — each consist of a single idea and all of its supporting material. For example, for one point of your outline you may have an interesting statistic, a pertinent quotation and an anecdote; those materials (the point and its supporting matter) comprise one thought module.

Once you have your material logically sorted into thought modules, you can organize those modules into whatever order best suits the needs of your speech.

# Beginning Well — What Your Opening Should Accomplish

Even the most accomplished speechwriters face the challenge of creating effective openings. In a very short time, these openings may need to accomplish as many as a half-dozen things:

- **Establish rapport between the speaker and the audience.** It is important to identify common ground between you and those who are listening to you. Who can forget John F. Kennedy's memorable opening in his speech in the divided city of Berlin at the height of the cold war — "*Ich bin ein Berliner,*" or "I am a Berliner" — which expressed solidarity (however symbolic) with his audience. The quick establishment of rapport is a key element in any speech opening.
- **Set the tone for the speech.** Is the occasion formal or informal? Serious or relaxed? Friendly or expressing opposition? Sometimes the tone you set does several things at once; if you open with a joke, for instance, you're telling your audience to relax a bit, even though the topic might be a serious one.
- **Establish or reinforce your credibility.** How detailed you make this opening depends largely on how much the audience knows about you in advance, from publicity, prior engagements and/or how you are introduced. While it is a good thing to play up your reputation and experience, you should do so in a way that does not appear boastful.
- **Arouse interest in a subject.** This, too, depends on the audience's knowledge of the topic and of your reputation, that is, on how much groundwork for discussion has already been laid in advance.
- **Take advantage of your "grace period" with the audience.** You will typically have several minutes at the beginning of the speech during which the audience is most attentive. A weak opening might squander that precious time.
- **Segue smoothly into the topic.** Be sure your opening — whether you use a joke, an anecdote or some other device — is relevant to your topic. It should segue cleanly and logically into the body of the speech, carrying your audience with it.

### *Five Types of Openings*

Although there are many ways to begin a speech, most seem to fall into five major categories:

- **Novelty.** This opening grabs the audience's attention through the use of a novel or outrageous act or point.
- **Dramatic.** This opening uses suspense or a startling statement to pique the audience's curiosity.
- **Question.** In this opening, the speaker asks a question that may either be a rhetorical one (for which no answer is expected) or a real question that he or she will answer in the course of the speech.
- **Humorous.** Starting the speech with a joke or funny anecdote can be a great icebreaker; it can also set the tone for the speech and make, support or illustrate a pertinent point. The humor must be in good taste and delivered with the right timing in order to be most effective.
- **Reference.** This is the most common opening, in which the speaker makes a reference of some sort, then uses that reference as a launching pad for the speech. ■

## The Novel Opening: An Illustration

Jeff White, of the credit-reporting and information services company Equifax, gave a speech in 1980 in which he predicted a time when his relatively narrow field would broaden to include all financial transaction services. He began the speech by thanking the audience for inviting him to speak "on this beautiful September morning in 1990," and with that he began "reminiscing" about the old days before his field had broadened. He continued the ruse for a minute or two before turning back to the present day, by which time he had roped his audience in with his novel opening.

# Watch Your Language

The greater our skill with language, the more clearly we think and the better we express our thoughts. Good speakers and writers have many words at their command; simply having them and using them with discretion, however, are two very different matters. Using language well in a speech often means using the strong, simple words that compose our everyday language. Contrary to what some people believe, the ability to use language is not comprised entirely of using words like cognizant, incumbent or instrumentality. Good writers and speakers know the grace, elegance and power of simplicity.

In other words, good speakers have confidence in their ideas, and do not need to couch them in floury or pretentious language. Here are some suggestions for making language work for you when you write or deliver a speech:

***(continued on page 5)***

### Watch Your Language

*(continued from page 4)*

**Be yourself.** Use language that is natural to you. If you're not a folksy person, do not try to sound like one of the guys down at the barbershop. If you're an adult speaking to a teen audience, do not try to show your mastery of teen slang. If you rarely tell jokes, don't open your speech with one just because you think the audience will expect it. If you try to use language that does not reflect your natural tendencies, you will sound phony and will, consequently, lose your audience's attention quickly.

**Talk with the audience, not at them.** Speak as if you're carrying on a conversation with your audience, not lecturing them. Use personal pronouns (I, you, we, us), contractions, and other conversational speech. Address the audience directly and avoid abstraction at all costs.

**Use appropriate personal references.** When you have a personal experience that can be used in your speech to emphasize a point, do not hesitate to use it. Keep in mind the fact that the reference must be appropriate for both the subject and the audience.

**Use active verbs and vivid nouns.** Verbs such as represent, indicate, postulate, cogitate and ascertain seem lifeless and colorless next to verbs such as run, cry, spring, jump, roar and burst — strong verbs that evoke images of flesh-and-blood creatures doing things. These words can be termed "gut words," because they seem to come from the gut rather than the brain. They are perfect for pulling the audience into an anecdote, or punctuating a point in simple, direct terms everyone can understand.

**Use active voice.** Voice refers to the relationship of a subject to its verb. If a subject is acting, the sentence is in active voice; if a subject is acted upon, the sentence is in passive voice. For example, "She threw the pie at him" is active because the subject (she) is acting (throwing the pie). "The pie was thrown at him by her" is passive, because the subject (pie) is acted upon (was thrown). Although passive voice is sometimes appropriate and necessary, most good writers and speakers tend to use active voice.

**Be aware of meaning.** Sometimes words have connotations that go beyond their dictionary definitions. Even words that are closely related in meaning (thin, slender and skinny, for instance) evoke different images and send different messages. When you choose your words, consider what images they conjure in people's minds.

**Get to the point.** Say what you want to say, then stop. If you follow this basic rule of thumb, your words will have power and your ideas will be well received. ■

## Avoid Jargon

Jargon is vocabulary that is indigenous to a particular trade, profession or group. Lawyers and doctors, for instance, have a particular way of speaking to one another, a kind of shorthand that sounds confusing to others. While you may use jargon when it is appropriate for both your audience and topic, it must be used properly and at the proper time. When jargon escapes those boundaries and seeps into general usage, however, your audience may be confused.

A good rule of thumb is this: If you're speaking to members of your own profession, use the language you use in everyday conversation with your colleagues. Do not, however, use professional jargon with a lay audience.

## Small Words, Big Ideas

The following speech by Winston Churchill is one of the most recognized speeches in the world:

*We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France. We shall fight on the seas and oceans. We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing grounds. We shall fight in the fields and in the streets. We shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.*

There are 81 words in this famous excerpt. Only nine of those words have more than one syllable. Only four words have more than two syllables.

Simple words are usually the best to convey powerful ideas.

## "Secrets" of the Pros

So often, we are bombarded by offers of "secrets" guaranteed to provide us with some miraculous benefit — a longer life, an improved golf game, a winning lottery number, etc. There are no such "secrets" in writing speeches, only proven techniques that speechwriters use to make their speeches more interesting, meaningful and dramatic. Some of these techniques are as follows:

**The Rule of Three.** Writers, particularly speechwriters, have long recognized the almost mystical qualities of the number three, and have fashioned a rhetorical device called a triad, or "the rule of three." This device, quite simply, is the expression of related thoughts or ideas in a group of three, often with the initial words or

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## "Secrets" of the Pros

*(continued from page 5)*

sounds the same for all three, and almost always with each element of the triad using the same grammatical form. Some famous examples are as follows:

- Abraham Lincoln: " [T]hat a government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish ..."
- Julius Caesar: *"Veni, vidi, vici"* ("I came, I saw, I conquered").
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."

Ideas grouped in threes are more memorable; when correctly constructed, they add drama, interest and rhythm to a speech. They also emphasize important points and make them stick in the minds of listeners.

**Anaphora.** Another often-used device in speechwriting is anaphora, or the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses or sentences. Although speechwriters often combine triads with anaphora, the latter is also used when more than three elements are needed. One excellent example of anaphora is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s most famous speech, in which he began eight sentences with "I have a dream." Not only did the phrase echo and re-echo throughout the speech, it has continued to echo throughout history, even to this day.

**Alliteration.** Repetition in various forms can be effective, when used with reasonable restraint. Special care must be given when using alliteration — the repetition of several similar sounds in a sequence, with sometimes tongue-twisting results. Alliteration is difficult to read and may cause even the most seasoned speaker to stumble. While occasional intentional alliteration is fine, you must re-read your speech carefully, to avoid accidental alliteration in your speechwriting. In other words (and here we'll use alliteration), remember this: Always avoid any accidental alliteration.

**Hyperbole and understatement.** The exaggeration for the sake of emphasis, known as hyperbole, is another effective device when used properly. Hyperbole used for dramatic effect should be an obvious exaggeration, such as "He was big as a grizzly bear and twice as mean." At the opposite end of the spectrum, understatement can likewise be used to great effect to make a point, such as when the late Senator Everett Dirksen said, when considering a spending bill, "A billion here, a billion there. Pretty soon it adds up to real money."

**Transitions.** Good speechwriters can move smoothly from one subject to another — making transitions that don't jar or lose the audience. Transitions help ensure clarity by helping the listener shift gears mentally, from the opening to the body, the body to the closing. They also indicate that a change of position or a contradiction is on the way.

When writing articles or books, transitions can be created by using headings or subheadings; in speeches, you must find other ways of making transitions. Sometimes a slightly exaggerated pause or emphasis of a word or phrase serves as a transition. These are the verbal punctuation marks you can use to keep your speech from sounding choppy or jarring. ■

## The Power of Antithesis: Three Examples

Another common and useful device is placing an idea next to one to which it is sharply contrasted — a figure called antithesis. "Ask not what your country can do for you," John F. Kennedy said in his inaugural. "Ask what you can do for your country." That call to service, powerful and appropriate though it was, was made even more so by virtue of the juxtaposition of contrasting phrases in the sentence — an effective use of antithesis.

An antithesis is a conflict, and as with any conflict, it should be resolved whenever possible. This reconciliation will often emphasize the point of the antithesis. For example, at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta in 1988, the Rev. Jesse Jackson compared his background to the background of Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis in the following way: "His parents came to America on immigrant ships; my parents came to America on slave ships."

He then reconciled this antithesis with the following phrase: "But whatever the original ships, we're in the same boat tonight."

One of the greatest examples of antithesis is in a speech from the 1800s by *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry W. Grady. Grady's purpose, to dramatize the plight of southern farmers, is powerfully achieved by a series of antithesis and a closing reconciliation:

> *They buried him in the midst of a marble quarry . . . and yet the little tombstone they put above his head was from Vermont. They buried him in a pine forest, and yet the pine coffin was imported from Cincinnati . . . The nails in his coffin and the iron in the shovel that dug his grave were imported from Pittsburgh . . . The wool in the coffin bands and the bands themselves were brought from the North. The South didn't furnish a thing on earth for that funeral but the corpse and the hole in the ground.*

## Using Statistics

When we think of statistics, we tend to think of dry, tedious recitations of facts and figures, not devices to enliven a speech. Yet, when used properly, statistics can dramatize or reinforce a point, bringing home a concept that might have otherwise drifted right past the audience.

Keep the following points in mind when using statistics:

**1 Statistics do not have to be dull, dry figures; they can be interesting and dramatic, depending on how and where they are used in a speech.** For example, if you are discussing junk food consumption, you can spice up your delivery by mentioning that Americans consume 75 acres of pizza every day and that seven percent of Americans eat at McDonald's every day. If you are discussing everyday hazards in the home, your audience may be amazed to learn that one American drowns in a bathtub every day.

### Use Visuals When Necessary

Some material simply cannot be explained without graphic illustrations, although visuals are not appropriate for every subject or audience. When you do have material that requires you to use visuals, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- **Don't use visuals as a crutch.** Make sure you have prepared a solid, well-written and thoughtful speech.
- **Don't let visuals take over a speech.** Use them to support or reinforce points, not to dominate your message.
- **Get your timing down.** Don't allow a visual to be seen unless you're ready to discuss it, and be sure to take it down after you've finished talking about it.
- **Avoid using handouts.** They distract attention from you and usually lead people to jump ahead and miss what you're saying.
- **Be sure everyone can see the visual clearly.** Be sure the layout of the room is conducive to showing visuals. Also, make sure you do not stand directly in front of the visual during your speech.
- **Stay in control.** Maintain good eye contact with the audience as you discuss the material on the visuals.
- **Avoid referring to the visuals as visuals.** Don't say things like "The next slide illustrates ..." Match your words to the slide and the audience will make the connection.

**2 You should try to express statistics in terms to which your audience can relate**. A trillion, for instance, is an incomprehensible number for most people; amounts in the trillions of dollars often go over people's heads. It would be useful, then, for you to provide some illustration that casts such an amount in a way that audiences can better conceptualize.

For example, telling an audience that the United States has spent $5.4 trillion on programs for the poor since 1965 is just fine, but a bit humdrum — people know that's a lot of money. Your point is better served by following that statistic with the fact that, with $5.4 trillion, you could buy every farm in the United States, as well as every factory, office building, radio station, TV station, telephone company, retail and wholesale business, hotel, airline and so forth. This expression illustrates the statistic in such a way that the audience can now picture a previously incomprehensible figure.

**3 You should avoid using too many raw figures, particularly when they are close together.** Use anecdotes or a pertinent reference in order to space out statistical information. This will help the audience relate an illustration to the statistic, increasing the likelihood of understanding and retention. ■

## Closing the Speech

Just as you have a "grace period" in the opening minutes of your speech during which the audience is at full attention, the period in which you close your speech is a similarly crucial time. A solid closing adds impact to your message — in all cases, you want to end with a bang, not a whimper.

You must first decide what you want your closing to accomplish, over and above leaving your audience satisfied by the speech. Do you want your audience to do something? To believe something? To feel a particular way about your subject? These things all relate back to the purpose and thesis of the speech (discussed earlier), both of which can be reinforced by a forceful closing — a parting shot, if you will.

Most closings fall into one of seven categories:

- **Summary.** The speaker briefly summarizes the high points of the speech.
- **Wrap-up.** The speaker closes the circle, so to speak, bringing together various points covered in the speech.
- **Direct appeal.** The speaker asks audience members to take a specific action.
- **Thesis.** The speaker reiterates the main point (or thesis) of the speech.

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## Closing The Speech

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- **Reference.** The speaker ties some reference to the subject of the speech — the date, location, event, etc.
- **Inspirational.** The speaker closes with a moving anecdote, poem or quote.
- **Humorous or anecdotal.** The speaker uses a joke or funny anecdote that makes a strong closing point.

In considering these closings, remember that closings, like openings, are rarely so neatly packaged; indeed, the best closing features a combination of two or more kinds. When thinking about your closing, think logically and creatively about how to best close a speech, and craft a closing that makes your speech most effective. ■

### Anaphoric Closings

Many of the rhetorical tools explained in the article "Secrets of the Pros" can be used effectively in the different types of closings.

In the following example, the speaker uses anaphora in the direct appeal that closes his speech:

*Let's monitor performance, let's complain when promises are broken, let's use our electoral muscle to get the sort of government we deserve. Let's work to get more women elected to public office. Let's humanize government to make it not only accountable, but responsive to the people who elected it. After all, who deserves it more than we?*

President George Bush used three anaphoric triads in the two-paragraph closing to his speech at the United Nations at the time of the Gulf War. The result is a particularly effective inspirational message of support.

*The world must know and understand, from this hour, from this day, from this hall, we step forth with a new sense of purpose, a new sense of possibilities. We stand together, prepared to swim upstream, to march uphill, to tackle the tough challenges as they come, not only as the United Nations but as the nations of the world united.*

*And so let it be said of this final decade of the 20th century, this was a time when humankind came into its own, when we emerged from the grit and smoke of the industrial age to bring about a revolution of the spirit and mind, and began a journey to a new age and a new partnership of nations. The U.N. is now fulfilled its promise as the world's parliament of speech. And I congratulate you. I support you. And I wish you godspeed in the challenge ahead.*

# The Final Stages — Editing Your Speech

Even after you have researched, outlined and written a speech, there is still more to do — you must give your speech a thorough editing. Keep in mind that this function may not always be your duty alone. Depending on your role — if you are writing for another speaker, for example — there may be others who have a hand in this important task. As Peggy Noonan, former speechwriter for Ronald Reagan, once noted, "A speech is a fondue pot, and everyone has a fork."

There are five broad areas to consider when editing your speech:

**Edit for content.** Question everything — check every statement, statistic and quotation for accuracy. Examine every simile, metaphor, analogy and illustration for suitability. Be critical of your use of humor, considering the audience at every use. Look at the overall content of the speech and ensure that it fulfills the purpose you set out to fulfill.

**Edit for organization.** Be sure your speech is a coherent, logical and unified presentation, not a random collection of ideas and information.

**Edit for style.** Editing for style will probably produce the most changes — if you rearrange word combinations, sentences and other structural and stylistic aspects of the speech, you will likely create new meanings and impressions, which you must address. Keep in mind that short sentences are easier to read than longer ones; simple sentences are better than complex ones; and all alliteration, rhyme and unusual combinations of words must always be intentional.

**Edit for language.** Do not overuse jargon or words of excessive length. Consider whether the language you use preserves natural speech patterns and rhythms — does it, in other words, sound like it was meant to be spoken, or read silently? Avoid use of passive voice, cliches, obscenity and generalities; focus instead on delivering an even-toned, interest and colorful speech.

**Edit for grammar.** Perfect grammar does not produce a perfect speech; too many instances of bad grammar, however, can damage an otherwise good speech. You must strike a balance between bending certain grammar rules to facilitate a conversational tone and adhering too closely to those same rules, sounding stilted or stiff in the process. ■

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# The Magic of Thinking Big

David J. Schwartz

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In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Magic of Thinking Big

*By David J Schwartz*

Dr. David J. Schwartz was a professor at Georgia State University in Atlanta and the president of Creative Educational Services, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in leadership development. He died in 1987.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Believe You Can Succeed

In ***The Magic of Thinking Big***, David J Schwartz, PhD sets out to give his readers advice to change both their thinking and their attitudes in order for them to become more successful in business and to live more satisfying lives. First published in 1959, Schwartz's book explores twelve different areas for his readers to examine in order to maximize their potential. Of primary concern to Schwartz is the manner in which people think and how their thoughts can either help or hinder them.

## The Power of Belief

Schwartz starts out discussing a vice president at a sales meeting who, when talking about an employee whose sales were many times the sales of his peers, says that the difference between the salesman who stands out and the other lower performing salesmen lies in the different ways the various people think. This is the very essence of Schwartz's book in which he says, "case history after case history proved that the size of bank accounts, the size of happiness accounts, and the size of one's general satisfaction account is dependent on the size of one's thinking." He believes that the reason most people fail to think on this large scale is because they allow themselves to be influenced by the people and by the environments around them, people and environments that lead to less desirable outcomes.

For Schwartz, believing in success is the crucial component to success. He believes that a person who believes they can do anything will, in fact, be able to do anything. What most people lack, therefore, is a belief in themselves. This disbelief in oneself goes beyond just limiting a person's estimation of themselves. When a person does not believe they are capable of doing something, others around them will also fail to see the potential in that person. Schwartz tells his reader that people can choose to focus on the thoughts of Mr. Triumph or Mr. Defeat each day. Each of these mental characters produces thoughts in a person's mind, and the outcomes people experience will depend on which character they choose to listen to on a particular day. If a person thinks triumphant thoughts, they will be more successful than the person who focuses on defeats. Schwartz urges his readers to think big, remind themselves that

they are a success, and focus on successes over failures. Along the same lines, much later in the book, Schwartz talks about a person's attitudes towards others. Just like he encourages his readers to listen to Mr. Triumph to train their thoughts about themselves, he encourages his reader to focus on the positives in other people and to avoid listening to those who put others down because it will draw a person's attention away from the positive traits in other people.

## Banish Excuses and Fear

Besides a disbelief in oneself, another obstacle Schwartz often sees people fall into is what he calls excusitis. He believes that all people he calls failures and the majority of people he calls average suffer from some form of excusitis. He mentions numerous different types of excuses people make for their failures. These include their health, their lack of intelligence, their age, and their luck. He believes that people need to overcome whichever form of excusitis they have as he knows that even people in poor health, the young, the old, and those without standout intelligence can succeed. In his discussion on luck, he tells his reader that he believes in causes and effects and when a person experiences an effect they consider to be either lucky or unlucky, they should look to see the cause of that effect rather than focus on luck.

Schwartz sees fear as a person's number one enemy, and he believes that people who have gained confidence and have overcome their worry have acquired their confidence and were not born with it. He believes that the way to overcome fear is to first identify it and then to take action. This action needs to occur swiftly as "hesitation only enlarges, magnifies the fear." In his later chapter on action, Schwartz states that successful people are active and less successful people are passive. After all, active people accomplish their objectives and earn confidence and income because of their actions while the passive person plans on doing what needs to be done but never actually does it. While ideas are important, it is action that gets results.

## Fostering Confidence

Schwartz believes that many people who lack confidence do so because of the way they approach memory. It is important, he believes, for people to focus on positive thoughts and memories. Schwartz believes that people who lack confidence dwell on the unpleasant and discouraging parts of life, so he encourages his readers to recall positive memories when they. He believes that people can create negativity around nearly any event or happening, but he believes that a person's mind will choose to cooperate with them when a person chooses to focus on the positive. He goes on to talk about how acting in accordance with one's conscience also helps a person build confidence. He goes on to discuss multiple different concrete steps a person can take to increase their confidence. These steps include sitting in the front seat and walking faster because "we can change our attitudes by changing our physical actions."

Schwartz goes on to say that "probably the greatest human weakness is self-deprecation – that is, selling oneself short." He admits that it is wise to understand one's own weaknesses so that a person can understand where there is room for improvement. Still, he believes that a person should know their value as well, and in order to do this, they can list out their chief assets and then consider successful people they know who do not exhibit this characteristic to such a high degree. This will help a person to realize that they do actually outrank successful people in key ways. Schwartz goes on to give specific ways that people can develop the vocabulary of a big thinker. This includes using "big, positive, cheerful words" to describe both one's feelings and other people. He also implores his reader to encourage others with positive language and to use positive words when describing plans to other people. He wants his reader to "look at things not as they are, but as they can be." A person can do this by considering the ways in which they can add value to things, to people, and to themselves. In his section on creative thinking, he believes people need to focus on how they can improve.

## Fostering Respect and a Healthy Diet

Schwartz then discusses respect and the way to command it from others. He believes that in order to get respect from others, a person must believe they are deserving of the respect. One way a person can command respect is through the way they dress, and he encourages his reader to "never leave home without feeling certain you look like the kind of person you want to be." He believes that what a person looks like on the outside affects how they feel on the inside because a person's appearance communicates something to both oneself and to others. Schwartz then discusses respect for one's work. He believes that there is a "correlation between a person's job respect and his job performance." In other words, if people think their job is important, they will perform higher quality work. When considering who to promote, he believes employers consider the work a person is doing at their present position in order to determine if they will do high quality work in a higher position. A person's attitude towards their job does not just flow in the direction of superiors, however, as subordinates will consider their job to be of more or lesser importance based on the attitudes of their superiors. He encourages people to create a commercial selling themself and to repeat this out loud and often in order to build their own self-confidence.

Schwartz believes that people are born with a certain capacity. What determines how much of that capacity they reach is the diet they feed their mind. He says, "companionship with people with big ideas raises the level of our thinking; close contact with ambitious people gives us ambition." He believes that people are destined to change, but what trajectory that change takes is determined by the environment a person cultivates in the future. He describes three types of people. The first group has surrendered to the idea that there is nothing they can do to get ahead. The second group has partially surrendered to this idea of failure, and after many years of struggle, they have determined that the effort is not worth the outcome, and they give up. The final group is those who never surrender. It is from this group that the most successful people come. It is not easy to stay in this group, however, and people must remain vigilant to never give into the influences that are trying to suppress them. He

> *Good home environments should help refresh people and give them new ideas.*

believes that there are negative thinking people everywhere and that people must always be on guard against them so as never to surrender themselves to these negative thoughts. Schwartz understands that people are susceptible to those around them, and so he encourages his reader to "be sure you're in the flock that thinks right." Likewise, he believes a person's home life influences their work life. Good home environments should help refresh people and give them new ideas.

## Beneficial Attitudes

Going along with what a person feeds their mind, Schwartz turns his attention to the attitudes a person holds. He believes there are three key attitudes a person should cultivate. The first is the "I'm activated" attitude which refers primarily to enthusiasm. He tells the story of a professor he once listened to who could not garner the attention of his students. Schwartz came to understand that students were not enthusiastic about the material because the professor was not. One way to increase enthusiasm is to dig deeper and learn more about a topic with the idea that the more a person learns about something, the more interesting they will find it. Second, he encourages his reader to live everything they do up. By this he means he wants his reader to smile at people and to have a confident handshake. He wants his reader to say what it is they have to say with life. He also encourages people to share good news when they come across it. After all, "other people want to be around alive, enthusiastic people." He wants his readers to constantly consider whether people around them are better off for having been with them.

Next he encourages the attitude of seeing other people as important. After all, people have a strong need to feel important. This attitude is important because it will encourage others to be cooperative. Along these lines, he encourages his readers to show their appreciation, call people by their names, and to share the credit with other people when success comes. He encourages appreciation both in the outside world as well as in one's home.

Finally, he encourages a service first attitude. He believes that most people want to make money and make this their primary focus. This approach makes people blind to the actions they need to take in order to actually make more money, namely invest in service. Schwartz believes that "'put service first' is an attitude that creates wealth." He believes that too many people are overly focused on their need to make more money when what they should be really focused on is how to be more productive to earn more money. In order to overcome this, he encourages people to "always give people more than they expect to get."

## Dealing with Failure and Setting Goals

People will fail. The difference between those who succeed at high levels and those who do not succeed is that those who are ultimately successful learn lessons from their failures and move on. He encourages his reader to consider highly successful people because he says readers will find that successful people have had to overcome huge obstacles in order to get where they are. Therefore, he encourages his reader to "decide right now to salvage something from every setback." Persistence will not be enough, however, as true success also requires experimentation.

Along with persistence and experimentation, Schwartz discusses the importance of goals. He believes both people and businesses need to look to the future to determine where they want to go if they ever want to be successful. He encourages goal setting in the home, at work, and in social spheres. The future he wants people to dream of is a big one.

Schwartz's book, *The Magic of Thinking Big*, was written in 1959. Because of this, the modern reader may take pause with some of his language, primarily that prizing the viewpoint of a male breadwinner in the workforce and a wife who stays at home. In addition, Schwartz refers to people at times along the binary lines of successes and failures. Despite this, Schwartz's book contains prized insights that can help both men and women in their professional and in their personal lives. Many of his principles revolve around being a person of both action and integrity. For Schwartz, treating people well and understanding other perspectives will help grow a person's own confidence as well as help them to grow in the esteem of others. The principles he provides are no less applicable or valuable today in our technological world than they were in Schwartz's mid-twentieth century. In fact, some of these principles may be even more important as the world becomes less and less personal.

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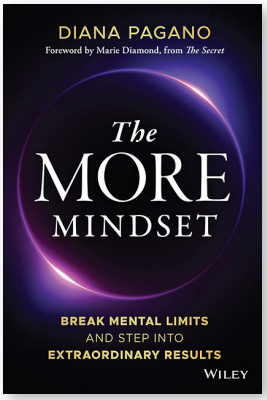
# The More Mindset

Diana Pagano

Executive Book Summaries®

# The More Mindset

## Break Mental Limits and Step into Extraordinary Results




*by* **Diana Pagano**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

***The More Mindset: Break Mental Limits and Step into Extraordinary Results*** explores how deeply rooted beliefs, internal dialogue, and habitual thought patterns shape confidence, decision-making, and perceptions of possibility. Many individuals who appear outwardly successful still experience dissatisfaction, burnout, or uncertainty about their direction. These tensions often arise from unexamined beliefs absorbed from family, culture, and past experiences that quietly influence expectations and behavior. Recognizing these inherited assumptions reveals how fear-based thinking and negative self-talk can reinforce hesitation and limit progress.

The book presents a framework for intentionally redirecting thoughts and choices to replace limiting mental habits with more constructive patterns. Drawing on concepts related to neuroplasticity, emotional awareness, and mindset development, it outlines strategies for reframing adversity, challenging internal narratives, and cultivating habits that strengthen resilience and confidence. Practices such as visualization, gratitude, boundary-setting, and reflection are offered as ways to sharpen focus and sustain motivation during periods of uncertainty or stress. Ultimately, the work emphasizes aligning daily actions with personal values and long-term aspirations so individuals can reshape beliefs and expand the possibilities they see for their lives.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Examine inherited beliefs and internal narratives that shape confidence and choices
- Reframe fear, setbacks, and adversity as signals that guide growth and action
- Apply visualization, gratitude, and self-talk to redirect attention and sustain motivation while pursuing meaningful goals
- Establish boundaries and reflection habits that align daily actions with long-term purpose and personal values

## Introduction

As a single mom living in Scottsdale and a rookie entrepreneur managing my real estate career, people thought I had it all together. But inside, I was searching and longing for something more. The moment I raised my standards from what my life was to the life I dreamed of, everything changed.

The life I imagined became reality because of the mindset shifts I cultivated. These shifts helped me grow a multimillion-dollar foreign language company to five times its size when others saw it as impossible. Without the tools I will share, none of it would have happened.

This is about building a life, brick by brick. No shortcuts. But this time, you will be laying the kind of foundation that will weather any storm. You won't just think positive thoughts—you'll build something solid, something real.

You will gain a robust understanding of how to harness the power of your thoughts to change your life's trajectory, develop deeper self-awareness, and cultivate transformative habits that foster personal growth and fulfillment.

CHAPTER 1

## You Are What You Believe

From the moment you enter this world, your beliefs are shaping you. These beliefs, acquired both consciously and unconsciously throughout our lives, actively construct who we are, influencing our self-image and confidence. They shape our understanding of the world and guide our perspective, ultimately affecting our expectations, goals, and dreams.

Beliefs can be, and often are, passed from one generation to another without challenging their validity or origin. We absorb these unquestioned beliefs on face value because we trust the source. Oftentimes, these "psychological DNA-like residues" belong to our parents, our teachers, our friends, and the broader social network around us—our village. They become part of the framework through which we interpret our experiences and life events.

Some beliefs are positive; others are negative to the point that they harm us on a psychological level. Still others can paralyze our progress toward success, making it impossible to achieve our goals, become our true selves, and fulfill our potential.

While seemingly harmless, even comical or absurd, some of the beliefs we acquire in childhood can have surprisingly detrimental effects on our development that continue into adulthood, while others have more significant implications.

### What You Think, You Attract

Our stress, sadness, and discontent create an energetic resonance within our environment, which in turn reflects back on us, amplifying and perpetuating these negative emotions. Our thoughts and emotions influence the experiences we attract into our lives. In essence, the universe reflects, delivers, and re-delivers.

Your thoughts give you a level of vibrational energy. If you are emitting a frequency of constant worry, you will likely attract similar circumstances toward you, as they tend to match that energy. Choose your responses wisely. Acknowledge your emotions, release them, and then move forward. Shift that frequency.

This switch can be as simple as saying, "There are bigger problems in life; this one isn't one of them." This change in perspective can quickly shift your energy.

### Pushing and Pulling Through

People who are truly focused on not just changing but transforming their circumstances commit, in both attitude and energy, to allowing nothing to stop them.

You have the power to control your thoughts, redirect them by "changing the channel," and build new ones that will help you get whatever you want in life and take you wherever you choose to go.

You can achieve anything you imagine, and even more, when you live your life devoid of self-imposed limitations. Scientific research has shown that belief in oneself significantly improves the likelihood of success.

CHAPTER 2

## The Power to Make a New Choice

You wake up every day thinking, "This is the day when things will be different." But the harsh reality of dread lurks, residing in your stomach and biding its time for the opportune moment to strike. You try to convince yourself that this week, this month, this year will be different. But you simply can't muster the courage to take the next step.

Being in situations that deplete your energy, where you feel you were meant for more, is never the path you are meant to take, no matter what choices you've made in the past. Making a new choice now doesn't immediately guarantee instant change either. But it is the beginning of the change that's about to happen.

> As difficult as it may be to admit, you are responsible for the choices you make: the good, the bad, and even the choices you don't make.

The Power of Choice is one of the first and most vital concepts I teach. For success to occur in any area of life, it is essential to recognize that you *always* have a choice, regardless of the circumstances. As difficult as it may be to admit, you are responsible for the choices you make: the good, the bad, and even the choices you don't make.

### Your Journey

Ruminating on negative thoughts and beliefs gives them an undeserved sense of truth. These self-fulfilling prophecies can then dictate the course of your life. This negative self-talk is precisely the obstacle you must overcome through conscious choice. To break this cycle, begin by examining your internal dialogue.

The key is to prevent these negative thoughts from paralyzing you. Acknowledge them, but don't dwell on them. Otherwise, they can take on lives of their own and begin emitting vibrational energy. This is how we manifest things into our lives.

CHAPTER 3

## Breathing During the Storm

When you're going through life and feeling like you're stuck, unfulfilled in some aspect of it, or even worse, in the throes of a crisis, it can feel impossible to counter negative thoughts that aren't serving you.

It is precisely during these times of *perceived* impossibility that we need to explore strategies for navigating adversity. This is where growth begins. Remember, some of the most remarkable achievements were once deemed impossible until they were actually accomplished.

### It is Okay Until It's Not

Why do we consistently prioritize the needs of others over our own? Why do we habitually make promises to ourselves or tell ourselves that we'll eventually find the time, knowing deep down that these promises will remain unfulfilled?

I need you to confront the notion that you have no time for yourself. What you are doing is like driving a car on bald tires, thinking, "Well, I am just driving another week, so it will be okay." It seems fine until it isn't. Then one day the bill comes due: your health, your comfort, your happiness, and sometimes even your life.

### Set Clear Boundaries

Without clear boundaries, anything goes. You become susceptible to guilt trips and may feel obligated to comply with every request, regardless of your own needs. This dynamic isn't limited to client relationships; it extends to interactions with family as well.

Asserting your boundaries is essential. You must clearly communicate your limits and expectations because people around you are not mind readers. One mistake we make is assuming they should just know. The truth is, they do not. Make it crystal clear.

Don't apologize for upholding your values, your time, and your energy. When you consistently stand your ground, people will recognize that you mean business and respect your clear boundaries.

### Build and Boost Your Confidence

Confidence is like a winter coat: you have to wear it *every day*, because if you skip it, you will truly feel the cold. That means being proactive.

You must hold a pristinely clear vision in your mind of what your confident self looks like. To achieve it, you must know what that success looks like in vivid detail in the future, as if it has already happened.

Here are ideas on how to build and boost your confidence:

- Follow through on the promises you make to yourself, whether they are big or small
- Take action, even if it feels messy or imperfect
- Monitor your self-talk
- Practice daily gratitude
- Choose your environment wisely
- Visualize your success in what you want to achieve
- Elevate your energy
- Become your number one cheerleader

CHAPTER 4

## Happiness Is Not Something You Seek

Happiness is a fundamental aspect of the human experience. Feelings of accomplishment and pride are enriching and uplifting emotions, as they contribute significantly to our overall happiness. However, it is important to remember that we are the source. This means we have the power to cultivate a mindset that embraces the beauty and wonder in every aspect of life.

Happiness is a state of mind; it is a proactive choice you make and a behavioral practice you develop every day. The happiest people on earth are happy because they *choose* to be happy. If your happiness is predicated on the expectations of others or on external circumstances, it will leave you empty.

The constant narratives you feed your mind—or self-criticism, even over minor details—can significantly impact your overall happiness. By dwelling on perceived flaws, you may unknowingly prevent yourself from fully appreciating and enjoying the present moment.

So how do you build on that? How do you change your conditioned subconscious to see and feel happiness while simultaneously working toward your dreams? By focusing on the right things and by listening and speaking to your heart.

Cultivating happiness begins with a conscious decision. Start by appreciating the little things that bring you joy. Reflect on areas of your life that fill your heart with it. Identify the specific aspects of these experiences that bring you the most fulfillment. Pay attention to the positive emotions they awaken. True happiness arises from within.

### Countering Negative Thoughts

Engaging with negative thoughts and images strengthens the neural pathways you have created through repeated focus on these unhealthy states, emotions, thoughts, and images. This can lead to an exaggerated emotional response to even minor challenges, potentially triggering feelings of depression and anxiety.

The crucial factor lies not in the presence of these emotions, but in *how* we choose to respond to them. Your mind possesses immense power. By consciously choosing to counter negative thoughts that do not serve you and avoiding dwelling on them, you can break free from the cycle of self-sabotage and build what motivation psychologist Carol Dweck calls a "resilient mindset."

### Love Yourself

Before you can show up for others in your life, you need to love yourself. You need to do it unconditionally so that when you make a mistake, you don't berate yourself with shame and criticism. Make personal check-ins a habit:

- Reflect on yourself, your milestones, and what you want to accomplish next
- Review your broader plan and purpose
- Be present and supportive of yourself and those around you
- Let these habits build your confidence over time

CHAPTER 5

## Sorry, Not Sorry

Take time for yourself to figure out your life's journey and do the things that light your heart on fire. When you start doing the very thing that you feel the most aligned with—your true purpose and what you love—your life will shift in ways you never thought possible.

Your goals don't have to make sense to anyone but you. You are the only person who decides how big you want to dream. You don't need permission to live your truth. You don't need to apologize for your ambitious goals, and you certainly don't need to feel guilty for wanting to live life on your terms and with real purpose.

The biggest regret you can have is the shot you didn't take, the opportunities you didn't pursue, the ideas you didn't create, and the people you didn't let in. Begin, even if it looks messy.

There will never be a perfect moment to disrupt the status quo and pursue what you truly want. If you wait for ideal conditions, you may never begin. This is how dreams are suffocated—by believing that

- some things are possible and others impossible
- certain circumstances are right while others are wrong
- you are either ready or not ready

CHAPTER 6

## Change the Channel

Change is inevitable. Sometimes it's a welcome guest; other times, it demands a pivot. You have to shape both your identity and the meaning you assign to your circumstances. To do so, you must embrace the challenges that come with them.

> Ruminating on negative thoughts and beliefs gives them an undeserved sense of truth.

Imagine trying to "change the channel" of your thoughts. Just like on television, the channel you choose shapes how you feel. A comedy channel brings joy; a suspense channel brings tension and anxiety; and a horror channel brings fear. When facing challenges, it works the same: the *perspective* you choose—the "channel" you tune into—shapes your experience and your outcome. Remember, the angle at which you perceive challenges matters.

Practice with purpose until this mindset becomes second nature. Having the right perspective can do wonders. How we speak to ourselves and the questions we ask ourselves in those circumstances are of great importance.

People who refuse to allow negative language, thoughts, and images to saturate their minds during significant moments are simply light years ahead of those who do. They don't allow those thoughts to take flight; they challenge them. See yourself as a winner, and you will become one.

### It's Never a Failure

What makes someone say, "I have failed"? Maybe it's the belief that if you don't achieve what society deems worthy, then you have failed. Sometimes it's as simple as selecting the wrong answer or making the wrong decision. But isn't this what life is about? Nobody taught us how to "do life."

Release the notion that your life has to be perfect in the world's eyes. Challenges are clues—something you need to learn from. To stop or give up, refusing to try again, is my definition of failure. When you pivot, struggle, or fall, remember that there is something better on the other side. The only question you need to ask yourself is: Who do I want to be on the other side?

It may seem difficult to "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" when you are in the thick of the storm. It doesn't have to be that way. You have the one thing that is readily available to you, the greatest gift you can access at any moment: the ability to change the channel.

You alone can do that; nobody else can do it for you. Nothing will change unless you change the channel that you're on. Be an active participant in replacing your negative thoughts with positive ones. Don't get discouraged if it feels difficult at first. Ease comes with consistent practice. Put in the time to make your reality and your future better than they are now.

CHAPTER 7

## A Time to Move, a Time to Be Still

As with everything, awareness is power. When you are aware of how your mindset and subconscious affect your well-being, you can use that knowledge for good.

You must be able to distinguish between when it is time for you to steer—to put in the effort and go hard after your goals—and when it is time to ease off the pedal, calm your mind, slow down, and focus on your inner peace.

### Take Control of Your Anxiety

Focusing on nothing else but the future triggers anxiety, especially when it comes with a host of worst-case scenarios and what-ifs.

Anxiety is closely connected to the concept of FEAR (False Evidence Appearing Real). It can conjure feelings so powerful that they cause you to believe the issues in focus are real. Feelings are not facts; they stem from your thinking. Therefore, since you can change your thinking, you can also change your feelings, including feelings of anxiety.

Most people fail to realize that they are literally holding their breath during an anxiety attack. This can cause hyperventilation, further exacerbating physical symptoms and making it difficult to calm both the brain and the body.

Take five or even ten deep breaths. I like to use the 5-4-6 second method: breathe in for five seconds, hold for four seconds, and breathe out slowly for six seconds. Repeat. Even something this simple can make an immediate difference.

A proactive and productive way to manage anxiety with lasting effects is simple:

1. Stop
2. Breathe
3. Clear your mind
4. Be still

5. Focus on positive thoughts
6. Visualize yourself calm, cool, and collected
7. Use affirmations while imagining yourself in that state, such as: "I am calm, cool, and collected," or "All is well. I am loved, and I am safe."
8. Repeat

You can do this for as little as two to five minutes a day, or as many times a day as your schedule allows.

### Mental Detox

Mental detox is important for your well-being and for moving you toward your dreams. Here are some of the mental detox practices I use:

- Unplug
- Keep a gratitude journal
- Take a "friends and family" vacation
- Embrace the outdoors
- Take a "me, myself, and I" day
- Improve your inner dialogue

CHAPTER 8

## Visualization on Steroids

The power of visualization is real. Everyone has access to it, and anyone can practice it. To me, visualization is a way to rewire and train your brain to search for what can go right, *not* what can go wrong. By focusing on the bright spots and turning that insight into a mental image of what you want, you can produce powerful results.

All aspects of life carry energy. By intentionally directing that energy, you can shape your reality and conquer your goals. Manifesting your desired outcomes requires consistent daily actions that also boost your confidence and expand the possibilities you see for yourself and your circumstances.

Visualizing yourself successfully engaging in your goal activity is crucial to moving your life ahead in the right direction. It's that straightforward.

Celebrated author Napoleon Hill eloquently sums it up in his classic book *Think and Grow Rich*: "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve." My modern take: seeing is believing, and believing allows you to see. Visualization is simply the act of seeing and constructing the outcome you want.

### Momentum's Power Source

The Reticular Activating System (RAS) is a network of neurons located in the brainstem, where it connects to the spinal cord. This neural network operates below the level of conscious awareness, automatically filtering and prioritizing incoming and outgoing information.

Specifically, the RAS filters incoming information based on what it has been programmed to prioritize through focused visualization. Essentially, it allows only relevant details to reach your conscious awareness while ignoring what it perceives as unimportant to your current focus. These selected pieces of information are then processed into your conscious thoughts, influencing your emotions.

To put it simply, the RAS is like a genie in a bottle. You *tell* it what is important to you and what you want, and it delivers the tools you need to accomplish that.

CHAPTER 9

## Barriers Overrated

Most obstacles that we encounter in life are ones we place there ourselves. These self-imposed barriers often prevent us from taking the first step because we've already convinced ourselves that the situation is impossible. Remember, it all begins in your mind. What you believe will be.

Barriers to your dreams only exist because you choose to quit after a challenge. But dreams truly die when you continue to believe that your skills and capabilities are limited.

Meet challenges head-on with the mindset: "Yes, this might be hard, but it doesn't matter because I will push through, figure it out, and make it happen."

If you believe you can push through it, that you can overcome it, it's no longer a barrier. It's just a minor annoyance that you will deal with and then promptly forget.

### Breaking the Chains of Guilt

Self-imposed barriers, though often unseen, can be among the most difficult to overcome. One such pervasive barrier is guilt. This heavy emotional burden clouds our minds, distorts our vision of what we truly desire, and ultimately prevents us from pursuing fulfilling opportunities.

Whatever its origin, self-forgiveness is the path to overcoming guilt. A powerful tool in this process is engaging with our former selves. Through honest self-reflection and in-

> Some of the most remarkable achievements were once deemed impossible until they were accomplished.

ner dialogue, we can confront past hurts, clear our minds, and extend forgiveness to ourselves and to those who have wounded us.

### When Fear Comes Knocking

Fear is a natural part of life; it is not a matter of *if*, but *when* you will encounter it. This is where "change the channel" comes into play. Remember, we are a reflection of what we project, and we have complete control over whether we choose to answer the call of FEAR when it comes knocking.

You can slam the door in the face of fear and choose to open another door that leads to hope, peace, and opportunity. The choice is always yours. When you do that, life begins to happen *for* you instead of *to* you.

CHAPTER 10

## Create a Life Worth Living

I often see others settling for less than their hearts' desires. I was one of them. I was the one wondering, "How can I live a life of real purpose and live life on my terms? How can I stop settling and have more?"

I now have the answer, with certainty: by creating it for yourself. The magic of living life on your terms—the life you are ready to live—relies on three things in how you show up and what you feed:

- Your mind
- Your heart
- Your stomach (your second brain)

### Leverage Gratitude

Gratitude is one of the most important daily practices you can make time for. It works on many levels and can truly change your life. With consistency over time, you will notice even greater results.

When you think about the people and things you are grateful for in your life, you tap into a powerful resource. When things go wrong, as they sometimes will, you may feel tested, frustrated, or angry. In those moments, learn to pause, take a deep breath, and think about everything you are grateful for. Don't overthink it. Practice it consistently over time and notice the difference.

### Authenticity Matters

In our lives, we often wear a mask, a façade of who we think we are supposed to be. To become who you are meant to be, you must show up honestly as yourself and be comfortable with your imperfections.

Being authentic is a prerequisite for happiness. When you realize that you are a good person, deserving of praise and admiration for who you are and what you have accomplished, no matter how big or small it may seem, you will be able to appreciate and love yourself even more.

There is no reason you cannot have the life you desire. When you picture it, you will feel it. You need to have it burned into your mind's eye to the point that it feels almost within reach. This is the power of the true, authentic you. Don't ask out of fear. Ask with a hopeful heart and let the hope of your heart's desire lead the way. Build the image of your life on your own terms.

CHAPTER 11

## Be Open to Receive More

What does it mean to be open to receive more? Opening your heart, mind, and soul to receive more is like opening a door and allowing new, positive energy to enter. When your entire being is open to new opportunities, possibilities, thoughts, emotions, habits, and connections, those things begin to appear in your life.

We are all human, and we all make mistakes. That's how you learn. That's how you grow. Give yourself the grace you deserve. Allow yourself to be happy and open to living the life you truly want. Continue to see in your mind's eye where you want to be and what it feels like, and build on that vision.

### Be Happy and Celebrate Daily

Be happy today because today offers the chance to make a new choice, take a new step, and begin again. Be happy

today because you are privileged to open your eyes in the morning and are given the gift of another day. Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, but today is yours, so make it count.

In our day and age, people don't celebrate small victories nearly enough. Something grand has to happen—a graduation, a marriage, a birthday, a promotion. But what about celebrating the small things?

Underestimating the power of celebrating the small steps toward a larger goal is a mistake. Each small victory is a chance to invest in yourself.

The best part of celebrating your victories is the momentum it creates. When you gain momentum, everything begins to happen more easily, more quickly, and more effectively. This is when your whole being exudes an infectious energy that can move mountains. It's the kind of creative, exciting energy that fuels what once seemed impossible.

## Conclusion

Living your life to the fullest and being open to more require effort. Think about your life as a garden. You plant your seeds with intention. You pull out the weeds that do not serve you. You water your garden to nourish it. Then, you enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Putting this into practice involves a few simple habits:

- Reflect
- Show gratitude
- Reward yourself
- Look ahead
- Believe in your ability to dream bigger

*You* choose how big you want to dream. Never restrain yourself, your capabilities, or your potential; likewise, never let anyone else do the same.

If you feed your mind with negativity and denial instead of positivity and drive, and if you don't focus on your grit while working with your grace, you won't reach your goals. But if you work with the amazing gift you have been given—your mind—you will achieve remarkable things.

You will accomplish things in your life that no one ever dreamed possible, simply because you have discovered the power that lies within you for more.

Your potential is greater than any challenge you may face.

Your faith, focus, and action will unlock opportunities you haven't yet imagined.

Believe in yourself.

The best is yet to come.



**Diana Pagano** is a mindset coach, author, keynote speaker, and host of the *Make Things Happen* podcast. Founder of the MAKE THINGS HAPPEN™ movement, she helps individuals and organizations break through limiting beliefs and achieve next-level performance using strategies grounded in neuroscience and practical experience. A first-generation Mexican American from San Diego, Pagano overcame early financial instability and frequent moves to build a successful career in real estate and business leadership. She later helped scale a multimillion-dollar language company as executive vice president. Today she inspires audiences worldwide through speaking, workshops, and coaching that turn motivation into bold action.

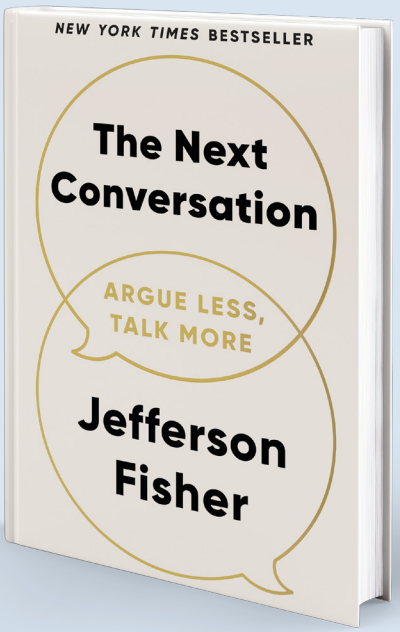
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# The Next Conversation

Jefferson Fisher

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Next Conversation

**Argue Less, Talk More**

*By Jefferson Fisher*

**Jefferson Fisher** is a trial lawyer, writer, and speaker whose work to help people communicate during life's everyday arguments and conversations, with his practical videos and authentic presence, has gained millions of followers around the world, including celebrities and global leaders. He is a sought-after speaker on communication at Fortune 500 companies and governmental agencies, and hundreds of thousands of people subscribe to his actionable email newsletter and podcast. Fisher is a Texas board-certified personal injury attorney and the founder of Fisher Firm, where he helps people all over the United States connect to trusted legal services.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Change Everything with Your Next Conversation

Conversations happen in every aspect of life. They can be lighthearted, full of laughter and fun, and bring people together. They can share stories, convey information, and help further a common goal in ways that encourage both parties and bring them together. Conversations are a way for people to find common ground that helps them move forward together more unitedly. This is the ultimate goal for people, but getting there isn't always easy.

Conversations can be exceptionally challenging. What may have started as a quiet conversation in which the conversants are trying to find their way back to each other ends full of tension and harmful words that can't be taken back. It can divide groups of people instead of uniting them. Why does this happen? Particularly when simply trying to share one's feelings or what they feel is helpful information. When blood pressures rise and communications become charged, what can be done? Is there a way that difficult conversations can occur and end without rabbit trails, frustration, or heated words?

Jefferson Fisher believes so, and in ***The Next Conversation: Argue Less, Talk More,*** he shares the wisdom he has gained over the years. A lawyer by trade, he learned at a young age that communication and learning how to read people well was vital. Fisher started sharing his strategies via short videos online, and, after receiving thousands of messages from his social media followers, he realized their problem wasn't necessarily what they wanted to say. Instead, the issue was how to say what they were thinking or feeling in a way that would help them connect with people and avoid arguments and awkward moments.. Fisher states that part of the reason he wrote this book was to help people gain skills to help their next conversation go smoothly and bypass harsh, unnecessary words.

Communication is modeled and observed, and if the communication style that has been learned isn't healthy, then it is time to break the cycle and learn a new way of communicating.

*The Next Conversation* is divided into two parts. Part One teaches the reader how to connect with themselves so they know what to do and how to react well when conflict arrives. Part Two

teaches how to leverage their new mindset so they can better connect with the people around them. Fisher shares three rules for changing conversations for the better: 1. Say it with control, 2. Say it with confidence, and 3. Say it to connect.

Fisher is confident that the difficult conversations will be removed and that in their place, there will be space to experience real growth and real connections, allowing them to show up confidently in each space of their life. Each chapter ends with a summary that can be referenced quickly. Fisher encourages the starting by picking one tip that resonates with them and learn how to apply it well before moving on to the next one. Doing this will prevent feeling overwhelmed as though everything must be implemented at the same time. This is a process, and Fisher is confident that the reader will gain the needed confidence to communicate and connect well.

## Part One: The Essentials

While it is common knowledge that how one communicates matters, its ripple effect is not as commonly acknowledged. The way that someone communicates with their coworkers, servers, or friends is observed by the people around them, particularly children. They will then communicate that way to those around them, so what started as a drop in the ocean eventually creates a tidal wave the original communicator could have never anticipated.

Contrary to the popular belief that winning an argument is paramount, something else is more important. Rather than proving one's rightness, it is vital to understand and remember that people might be dealing with several different things simultaneously, and only the tip of the iceberg is being seen. It is essential to show compassion and recognize the struggle resulting from communication conflicts.

If the ultimate goal is winning an argument, the trust and rapport built between people will be broken. Instead, the goal should be unraveling the issue to reveal the matter's core and gaining an opportunity to connect with others. Doing this will allow conflict to evolve into connections and open doors for a more meaningful life.

When heated conversations end, one often thinks about what they could have said differently. When given the chance to speak to the other party again, they may have an idea of what to say, but it is vital to have a goal in mind before beginning the next conversation. Doing this will help organize thoughts and begin moving toward each other. The most basic goal should be to learn from the other person, not to prove something. Recognizing unrealistic and realistic goals and proposing to set them is the beginning of understanding the other person and their point of view. The next step is defining and setting values, the true north of the conversation. They allow the reader to stay authentic while navigating the conversation and help them align the conversation to meet their goal before it begins.

Despite all the ways technology brings people together, it doesn't make up for the connection that is longed for. This should be considered when approaching conversations because it could mean the difference between building or breaking connections with other people. Rather than connection, conversations through texts or email can seem more transactional because they focus on efficiency, not understanding or authenticity. Connection in this context is an understanding, acknowledgment, and discernment, which are vital to a conversation. It doesn't mean the result will be a happy conversation in which both parties always agree or come to a united resolution. It means that control and confidence are present when difficult conversations need to take place.

## Part 2: The Application

Rather than sharing quick fixes with the reader, Fisher provides a concrete three-step method for building a connection in the next conversation.

Say it with control.

Say it with confidence.

Say it to connect.

He explains that one's views, needs, and truth are the essentials of self-expression that make each individual unique and bring out an assertiveness they either didn't know or forgot they had. By following the directions shared, he promises the output will be a bolder, more assertive place in the conversation.

## Rule 1: Say it with control

Conversations that lead to harsh words and heightened tensions are often regretted almost immediately. While the spoken battle may be won, the relationship could have been lost, and it doesn't need to be that way. Learning to control oneself and recognize the triggers that ignite an argument's flame is essential—such as feeling threatened, becoming defensive, or facing personal attacks. This rising heat in a discussion is succeeded by cooling off - walking away from the conversation, reaching a place of mutual understanding, or encountering an impasse. The cooling process can only begin when there is a noticeable pause, and both parties can recognize the damage inflicted. These can also be labeled as Fight or Flight (heating) and Rest and Digest (cooling), and knowing these can help conversations be seen differently and lead to a place of internal curiosity. Fisher encourages reverse-engineering one's triggers, which results in becoming more adept at identifying what triggers the people around them and helping them defuse them.

Controlling the moment during a heated conversation is necessary because while it may not be possible to see a disagreement coming, the tension that leads up to it can almost always be felt. By learning how to leverage what the body is already doing, one can gain higher ground in an argument in a healthy way. Three highly effective tools can help weather the storm that comes in an argument.

The first tool is Your First Word is Your Breath. Taking a moment to breathe will allow for a moment of calm instead of letting heated words spill out. The next tool is Your First Thought

> *It is vital to remember that words don't just affect the person at the other end of the conversation but the person speaking.*

is a Quick Scan. When a Quick Scan is completed, the result will be a better understanding of how they feel in the moment, and it will help them keep control of their emotions. Finally, using Your First Conversation is Small Talk helps bring mindset to the forefront. It is vital to remember that words don't just affect the person at the other end of the conversation but the person speaking. Choosing words that treat oneself better will also serve them as they work to improve their overall mindset.

Learning how to control the pace of a conversation is helpful when learning to communicate thoughts effectively. Rushing indicates the speaker was planning their response instead of listening well to the other person. While silence in a conversation is considered uncomfortable, a well-timed pause can be an effective tool to help fix communication struggles. Pausing in a conversation allows for time to reflect, reconsider, and regulate and can be used to create meaningful moments in each conversation.

## Rule 2: Say It with Confidence

Feelings, like confidence, cannot be switched on like a light. To feel more confident, one must take a more proactive approach and pair it with assertiveness. Assertiveness is how confidence is expressed, and the pair feeds into each other. Taking small steps, choosing assertive words, and eliminating filler words in conversations will help strengthen sentences and arguments and empower the reader to meet their needs. By choosing and focusing on one of the ten ways to practice assertiveness, confidence will slowly begin to bloom until it becomes second nature in conversation.

Word choice and speaking pace are also indicators of confidence. Choosing words carefully and avoiding filler words will show those around that the speaker is confident and knows exactly what they are conveying. Eliminating unnecessary apologies will also assist as they grow in confidence. Even though it might come from a place that feels like humility, what is actually happening is underselling oneself, which will end up being a distraction.

Feeling confident is important when conversing with difficult people, and it can be even more so when they are relatives. It is typically advised to find common ground and live peaceably with each other, but when this can't be done, being assertive can change the perspective of the conversation. When met with a half-hearted apology, constant interruptions, and hurtful or insensitive comments, standing up for oneself is paramount as a form of self-care. The person making those comments seeks to make themselves feel better, so the reader needs to slow down and use firm, concise phrases to combat this and call out the behavior.

While they can be challenging to set, boundaries are also essential when taking and staying in control of a conversation. Setting boundaries is also healthy because it protects and prioritizes health and happiness over continuing to acquiesce to others. This can be avoided by creating a manual and enforcing it. Crafting replies and being prepared when someone starts to escalate and push buttons is a form of self-care and prevents being pushed around.

Enforcing boundaries can feel awkward, but the more it is done, the easier it will become. The boundary should begin with the value attached to the conversation to prevent others from pushing past it. If they are applying pressure on a topic that is uncomfortable or nonnegotiable, remind them of it. This needs to be quickly followed by naming a consequence, beginning a condition, and then an action step. Following through must happen if they persist trying to move past the boundary. Consistency is key, and holding boundaries firm is imperative on the path to gaining confidence.

## Rule 3: Say It to Connect

Connecting with people should be easy, but it can be tricky when neither party knows how to frame a conversation. While there might be a vague goal in mind, several rabbit trails and diversions will be on the way. Framing a conversation will make it easier to connect with others; it eliminates the small talk and the recaps that aren't needed and gets straight to the point of the matter at hand.

First, a direction must be set so that each party knows where they are going and where they will end up. When communicating this, the reader must be sure their goals and values are clear. Next, they should call their shot and share the projected end. It should be as specific as possible so that they know what the goal is. Finally, get their commitment to the frame that has been presented. Doing this will enhance the conversation by keeping what is necessary and ignoring what isn't, meaning each conversation will need a separate frame to avoid making things muddled or confusing. It will also help reach the goal of connecting.

Getting defensive in a conversation is costly and will ultimately break any connection that may have been made. Becoming defensive happens when something triggers, and it may show itself in ways such as giving someone the silent treatment or brushing off serious topics. It erects a wall that results from being uncomfortable, and while it is a mechanism designed to protect, it can prevent either party from understanding the other. When the trigger is allowed to take control, it looks for things to keep feeding the defensiveness. However, there is a way to stop allowing defensive break connections.

Continuing to be defensive doesn't have to remain the default

by purposing to understand the other person and what they are trying to communicate. It is essential to take a few seconds to pause and think about where they are coming from. It is more likely they are going through a hard time rather than taking verbal shots for no reason. Picking up every gauntlet that is thrown down isn't necessary, but what is crucial is showing them grace and staying in control of oneself. Refusing to enter into every argument presented will prevent walls being raised and preserve the desired connection.

Finally, having a difficult conversation and staying in control is possible. It doesn't have to become a situation where voices are raised, tensions are high, and the result ends with even more frustration. To start, set a time for the conversation when both parties are available to speak without distractions. Removing external factors will help avoid embarrassment and frustration. Asking the other party to set aside a time to speak also shows respect for their autonomy.

In today's world, it is common to begin with pleasantries to hopefully soften the blow when delivering difficult news, but skipping them and reaching the end goal would be more effective and succinct. Starting with unnecessary pleasantries and platitudes will only delay the difficult conversation that needs to take place. There is also the possibility that the pleasantries will delay the inevitable and see the original end goal ignored and pushed to the side. While it may seem harsh, it isn't because clarity in challenging conversations is a kindness to both sides and allows them to walk away with their dignity intact.

To avoid losing the end goal, it should be stated in one of the opening sentences. Moving everything else after that will bring clarity and allow the point to be made quickly. It will also ensure that the listener doesn't get lost because they became hooked on a word that then proceeds them down a rabbit hole away from the current conversation. This can easily be applied to conversations over text or email because removing pleasantries, justifications, and unnecessary words will help prevent confusing conversations.

Conversely, when approached by someone who wants to have a difficult conversation, it is essential for them to know that they are coming to a safe place. That means they know they can reach the reader and will not be shouted at or belittled for sharing their needs. Being a safe space, no matter what side of the conversation one might be on, is an excellent opportunity to connect with people. This doesn't mean the conversation will be easy but by being proactive and working to shift mindsets to be a person who is ready and able to handle difficult conversations.

## In Conclusion

*The Next Conversation: Argue Less, Talk More* by Jefferson Fisher is an enjoyable read that draws the reader in and shows them how to shift their mindset so they don't walk into their next difficult conversation being anxious. He shares the tactics he has learned and honed over the years, which have helped him gain confidence and communicate with the people around him. While it goes in depth, he states upfront that he is not a psychologist or a therapist but a man sharing what he has learned from the daily grind of conversations with people in his life. The reader will soon see the benefits in real life by putting the mindset tips he shares into practice. They will also see their confidence grow as they are able to share their thoughts, ideas, and more with the people around them.

Learning how to communicate well is not something that can be taught in school, but those skills can be gained if one is willing to slow down, read people, and change one's mindset. Knowing what to say is the easy part. Knowing how to say it is now easy, too.

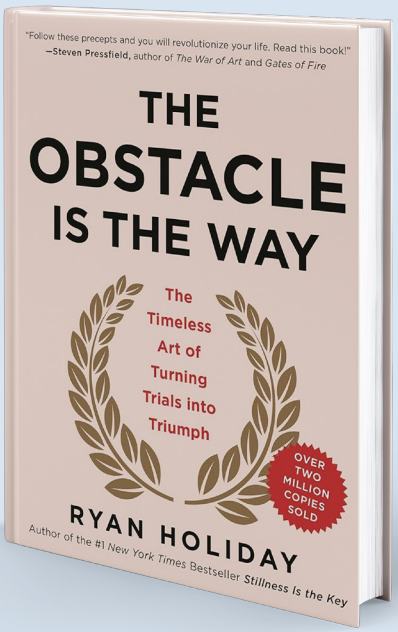
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# The Obstacle is the Way

Ryan Holiday

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Obstacle is the Way

### The Timeless Art of Turning Trials into Triumph

*By Ryan Holiday*

**Ryan Holiday** is one of the world's bestselling living philosophers. His books, including T*he Obstacle Is the Way, Ego Is the Enemy, The Daily Stoic*, and the #1 New York Times bestseller *Stillness Is the Key*, appear in more than forty languages and have sold over 10 million copies. He lives outside Austin with his wife and two boys ... and a small herd of cows and donkeys and goats. His bookstore, The Painted Porch, sits on historic Main Street in Bastrop, Texas.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Turn Your Problems into Your Biggest Advantages

In his book, ***The Obstacle Is the Way***, author Ryan Holiday encourages his readers to see obstacles and impediments in a new way. Instead of seeing them as roadblocks or insurmountable problems, he wants his reader to draw on the experience that history provides and realize that it is not despite obstacles that people succeed but rather because of obstacles that they succeed. He looks at historical figures as diverse as General Dwight D Eisenhower and Laura Ingalls Wilder as well as those from as far back as ancient Athens and as modern as President Barack Obama to show how people from all areas of life and through the ages have been able to face obstacles and use them to propel them forward. For Holiday, "the obstacle is the way."

While each person has their own unique combination of obstacles, Holiday believes that "the responses they elicit are the same: Fear. Frustration. Confusion. Helplessness. Depression. Anger." To a large degree, we cannot control the obstacles that confront us. That does not leave us helpless, however. We can control both our attitude about the problem and our approach to the problem, and therein lies the opportunity. Holiday quotes Andry Grove of Intel as saying, "Bad companies are destroyed by crisis. Good companies survive them. Great companies are improved by them." Holiday's book is not just about business, however. His principles apply to all people in all walks of life. They are principles for a successful life, not just a profitable company.

"Turn it around. Find some benefit. Use it as fuel." This is the principle Holiday wants his readers to live by when they are faced with obstacles. There are three principles at play in changing obstacles into opportunities: "Perception, Action, and the Will," and he organizes his book according to these three principles.

## Perception

Holiday understands that it takes skill to properly align our perceptions, but it is a key to successfully meeting the demands placed upon us. Perception refers to "how we see and

understand what occurs around us – and what we decide those events will mean." These perceptions can either serve to strengthen us or to weaken us.

When discussing the discipline that beneficial perception requires, he refers to John D. Rockefeller's rise in the oil industry until he eventually controlled 90% of that industry. This all occurred within 20 years of the Panic of 1857. While those around him panicked as the financial crisis developed, Rockefeller stayed calm. He took the Panic of 1857 and used it as an opportunity to watch and learn. He saw it as a "baptism in the market," learning how many people were left unprepared for market challenges. He learned that because the market is volatile, it requires discipline to make a profit. As Holiday says, "For the rest of his life, the greater the chaos, the calmer Rockefeller would become, particularly when those around him were either panicked or mad with greed." Rockefeller was able to succeed because he taught himself "to see opportunity inside the obstacle," something many people cannot do. Holiday insists that when faced with obstacles, we have a choice: we can follow our emotions and the direction of the crowd, or we can filter them. This filtering requires discipline, but it is this discipline which can help a person determine the most prudent course of action.

Crucial to success in the face of obstacles is a determination to control what it is that we can control, namely how we allow something to affect us. Holiday writes about Rubin Hurricane Carter who went from being a boxing superstar to being incarcerated for a triple homicide he did not commit. Rather than allowing himself to fall into despair and rail against what he could not control, Carter chose to focus on what he could control. He spent all of his free time in prison working on his legal case instead of fighting against what he could not control: the rules and confines of prison life. Holiday explains that the large amount of time prisoners have on their hands is part of why some people are able to drastically turn their lives around while incarcerated. When inmates learn to accept where they are and control what they can, some are able to make great strides that prepare them well for life in the outside world. All of this requires controlling perceptions. Holiday writes, "There is no good or bad without us, there is only perception. There is the event itself and the story we tell ourselves about what it means."

"When we aim high," Holiday writes, "pressure and stress obligingly come along for the ride. Stuff is going to happen." When obstacles do arise, grace and poise are the most important characteristics a person can possess; these are even more important than talent is. He sees these attributes as acts of defiance because they require an individual to refuse to be intimidated. He believes that the road is tough, but there are always countermoves that people can make when faced with obstacles if they refuse to allow themselves to become overcome with fear and with a sense of failure.

NASA, Holiday explains, understands this need for a clear head in the face of obstacles. This is why before its first launch, NASA trained astronauts in hundreds of simulations. NASA knew things would go wrong, and they also knew that high above the Earth, panic will lead to death. Holiday says, "Uncertainty and fear are relieved by authority. Training is authority." We must understand that we do not have the luxury of panicking when faced with obstacles. Rarely does allowing our emotions to upset us give us options. Rather, oftentimes they get in the way of introspection, alertness, and wisdom. He does not encourage his reader to ignore feelings. Rather, he wants his readers to acknowledge them and deal with them. He does not, however, want them to believe that feeling something is the same thing as doing something.

When moving on to discuss objectivity, Holiday says that the thought, "This happened and it is bad" are actually two different ideas. The first part explains an objective reality, but the second refers to our interpretation of it. "The observing eye sees simply what is there," he paraphrases Miyamoto Musashi as saying; "the perceiving eye sees more than what is there." In other words, the observing eye does not see insurmountable obstacles; it just sees what is there. It is the perceiving eye that makes judgments about it. Holiday believes that these perceptions are not helpful as they inundate us with information we do not need. It takes strength to override our perceptions and the instinctual behavior they lead to. He encourages his reader to take themselves out of the equation and consider what advice they would give to another in the same situation. This will make it easier for a person to determine the correct course of action to take.

Holiday writes, "Problems are rarely as bad as we think – or rather, they are precisely as bad as we think." Because of this, people have to train themselves to avoid thinking about the meaning of everything. This requires training our brains from pursuing distracting thoughts and instead focusing on what is in front of us and what needs to be done. "It's our preconceptions that are the problem." Holiday maintains that there is always an opportunity in every situation. For example, instead of focusing on how problematic a difficult colleague is, a person can instead look at the opportunity that person gives them to appreciate good friends and keep alert while at work. Being able to become better because of obstacles is referred to as post-traumatic growth,and it propels individuals to new growth.

## Action

Holiday maintains that "Action is commonplace, right action is not." Our actions must be prudent and be in service of our larger goal. He tells the story of Demosthenes, Athens's greatest orator. Demosthenes had a lot stacked against him that could have and possibly should have held him back. He did not succumb to these obstacles, however. He took deliberate action to overcome them. Stripped of his rightful inheritance and suffering from a severe speech impediment, he decided to become a great orator, inspired by oration he had seen in the past. He took numerous steps to overcome his speech difficulties and he took every opportunity he had to improve his skills. When faced with setbacks in winning back his inheritance, he became flexible and creative, always taking steps to achieve the goal set before him. He eventually succeeded in winning back the small part of his inheritance that was still left. Holiday maintains that how we react to bad circumstances tells us a lot about ourselves. He believes that many people, even if they can conceive of a solution,

> *...a lack of persistence is what stands in the way of most people achieving their goals. "*

find themselves remaining stuck because it is easier to ignore a problem than it is to take right action. He writes, "No one is coming to save you. And if we'd like to go where we claim we want to go – to accomplish what we claim are our goals – there is only one way. And that's to meet our problems with right action."

The first part of taking action is simply to begin. People may be hindered from action because of fear or because of some other factor that is holding them back, but he says the first step is to "Take the bat off your shoulder and give it a swing." He maintains that most people could be doing more or trying harder to get where it is they want to go. And while beginning to take action is important, equally important is persistence. We must refuse to give in to failure, and we must quiet the noise around us that is keeping us from our goals. He believes that a lack of persistence is what stands in the way of most people achieving their goals. When obstacles arise, discouragement is acceptable; quitting is not.

When a person takes action, they will fail. It is an inevitable part of the process. He finds failures to be beneficial, however, because "Failure puts you in corners you have to think your way out of. It is a source of breakthroughs." He acknowledges that failure hurts, but he insists that the only way to make sure "we don't benefit from failure – to ensure it is a bad thing – is to not learn from it." Because of this, he does not want his reader to merely keep doing the same thing repeatedly with the same failing results. Rather, he wants his reader to listen to failure and find ways to improve because of it.

Holiday then moves on to describe The Process, a philosophy and method coined by the highly successful football coach, Nick Saban, of the University of Alabama. Saban would tell his players to focus on what they need to do at this exact moment rather than to look far ahead at future goals. As Holiday says, "Excellence is a matter of steps," and it requires people to excel at each of these steps successively while blocking out distractions. He believes this is a relaxing process because even the largest tasks are "just a series of component parts." While goals are important, the process of achieving them "is about doing the right things, right now. Not worrying about what might happen later, or the results, or the whole picture." Two factors are critical to taking steps. First, a person needs to perform each step, each task, with excellence, believing that nothing is beneath them. They must maintain this commitment to excellence. Second, they must remember the maxim, "think progress, not perfection." This requires people to look at where they want to go and accept, when necessary, imperfect solutions that can still end up bringing them to their goal. Sometimes this requires acknowledging that one way of doing things is impossible but then using this acknowledgment as an impetus to finding another way to solve the problem.

## Will

Finally, Holiday turns his attention to the will. He calls the will "our final trump card" because it is the one thing that can never be taken from us. Even in the worst and the most immutable of circumstances, people still have the power to "turn it into a learning experience, a humbling experience, a chance to provide comfort for others." This insistence on learning and growing is what he defines as will. Will allows for a person to find purpose in suffering.

Holiday writes, "If Perception and Action were the disciplines of the mind and the body, then Will is the discipline of the heart and the soul." To exemplify what he means by this, Holiday turns his attention to President Abraham Lincoln who suffered tragedy in his life and also suffered from melancholy that would be labeled as depression today. President Lincoln used his suffering as a way to help others. He used what he suffered to help him lead the country during one of its most tumultuous times. Holiday claims that the will is what can allow people to be happy despite the horrific things that can happen to them.

Holiday goes on to ask his reader if they are prepared in case a worst case scenario ever does happen. He says that nobody is born prepared for such times. Rather it is through mental practice that people can develop the steel backbone that is sometimes necessary to handle the sometimes exceedingly difficult periods of life. This strengthening is best done during good times so that we have it to rely on during difficult times. Stoics refer to this steel backbone as the Inner Citadel, and it can never be taken from a person by outside forces. This Inner Citadel can only be strengthened through challenges and difficulties. As Holiday says, "The path of least resistance is a terrible teacher. We can't afford to shy away from the things that intimidate us. We don't need to take our weakness for granted."

Part of this preparation for obstacles involves anticipating or thinking negatively. By this, Holiday encourages his readers to always make sure to include disruption in their plans. This requires people to come up with answers to some of their "what if…" questions, and then to go further and understand that if the worst really does happen that they will be okay. Holiday states that people will never be happy if they are looking to have other people always come through and for things to always go right because they simply will not. He does not see this attitude as pessimism because it can help people dig out from under weaknesses and manage setbacks as they come. Holiday knows that things could always be worse. He believes that it is an act of hubris to believe that we can control everything and that this idea of control is reinforced by breakthroughs that have made it possible for people to live more safely alongside

nature. But people cannot control everything, and he believes that this is fine. He says, "The way life is gives you plenty to work with, plenty to leave your imprint on."

Because something can be learned from every experience and because people can use their will to choose how to respond, Holiday believes that people can learn to love everything, even their obstacles. He writes, "We have to put our energies and emotions and exertions where they will have real impact…This is what I've got to do or put up with? Well, I might as well be happy about it." He understands that this is a foreign concept to many but that if we acknowledge that our opportunities come to us through our adversities, we can learn to love the obstacles because they provide fuel for our growth.

Perseverance is required for all that Holiday asks of his reader. This is different from persistence. Persistence requires a person to keep working despite obstacles until an objective is achieved. Persistence, however, is about looking at the big picture and is what gives a person the will to keep on fighting. This is important because there are many obstacles in life. We do not suddenly come to the end of them when we overcome one. Perseverance requires both energy and endurance. He believes that more people fail because of a lack of will than they do because of external circumstances. When people are faced with impossible situations, he believes one way they can shore up their will is by changing the focus from themselves onto how they can help other people, and he uses the example of Prisoner of War James Stockdale who used his time as a prisoner to help shore up his fellow captives.

Holiday is a stoic, and he ends his book by explaining how these principles of stoicism have been passed down through the years. He uses these principles to help guide his reader from perception to action and through the will. Right perception is necessary in order to take action. Choosing to and performing actions is critical to moving forward. No one gets anywhere without taking steps, and those steps must be rightly ordered. It is about focusing on the next step in front of us and taking that step. Both training our perception and acting on our goals requires will. It is the glue that holds the others together. Holiday breaks his book into three different sections, Perception, Action, and Will. Each of these sections is then broken down into smaller chapters pertaining to one small aspect of the larger principle. Because of this, his book is readable and easy to digest. He uses examples throughout history to exemplify his ideas, and these leave his readers with the impression that the greatest obstacles in life can be flipped and can, indeed, lead us to become stronger, better people, proving the maxim that what does not kill us makes us stronger.

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# The Person You Mean to Be

Dolly Chugh

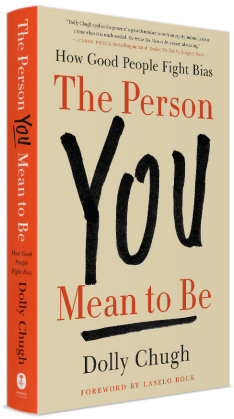
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# The Person You Mean to Be

## How Good People Fight Bias

*by* **Dolly Chugh**




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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many of us believe in equality, diversity, and inclusion. But how do we stand up for those values in our turbulent world? ***The Person You Mean to Be*** is the smart, "semi-bold" person's guide to fighting for what you believe in.

Author Dolly Chugh reveals the surprising causes of inequality, grounded in the "psychology of good people." Using her research findings in unconscious bias as well as work across psychology, sociology, economics, political science, and other disciplines, she offers practical tools to respectfully and effectively talk politics with family, to be a better colleague to people who don't look like you, and to avoid being a well-intentioned barrier to equality. Being the person we mean to be starts with a look at ourselves.

Whether you are a long-time activist or new to the fight, you can start from where you are. Through compelling stories and surprising science, ***The Person You Mean to Be*** guides each of us closer to being the person we mean to be.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To identify and manage self-threat.
- To use a growth mindset to fight bias.
- To understand how privilege creates systemic headwinds and tailwinds.
- The difference between diversity and inclusion.
- To show meaningful support to those who lack privilege.

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## Introduction: Good-ish People

Many people believe in the American values of equality and equity, diversity and inclusion, the values underlying the founding of this country and many major spiritual teachings. Race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ability—they believe bias of all forms is wrong. They are believers.

Seventy percent of Americans, according to a Reuters poll, interact with people of a different race in their circle of friends, co-workers, and relatives. Among people under 30, this number rises to an astounding 90 percent. According to a CBS poll, 77 percent of us now personally know someone who is openly gay (compared to only 42 percent, less than 25 years ago).

Our workplaces are less gender-segregated. Our definitions of gender fixed at birth are evolving. So we are more diverse, and more divided, than ever before. Believing in the values of equality is no longer enough. We need to be people with the skills to make it better. We need to learn how to fight bias.

### Claiming an Identity

In speech and action, we express how we see ourselves and how we want to be perceived by others, a process that organizational scholars Caroline Bartel and Jane Dutton call "identity claiming." Psychologically, identity claiming is an ordinary and universal process. Each of us claims multiple identities.

Each of us has an intense craving for others to see and acknowledge our various identities, a phenomenon that Bartel and Dutton call "identity granting." We are vigilant for clues about whether our identity has been granted.

When we are unsure of whether an important identity has been granted by others, our craving for affirmation becomes more intense and urgent. Psychologists call this a moment of self-threat—our identity is being challenged or dismissed. Just as moments of physical threat trigger a hyper focus on self-preservation, moments of psychological self-threat do the same.

For example, if you value being seen as a do-gooder, then you feel self-threat when people judge you as a greedy person.

Threat, especially self-threat, is stressful. Threat-motivated stress can lead to bad performance, negative health consequences, and poor behavioral choices. We do not feel good and we usually do not treat others well. We become defensive. Our hopes of being a good person are diminished at times like these. Research reveals how our need for affirmation overrides our genuine desire to be a good colleague, friend, and ally.

We all fall into this pattern. We fish for affirmation. We center our needs, nudging away the needs of others. We seek what activists call "cookies," acknowledgments of our good intentions, even when the impact is costly to the cookie giver. We especially crave that affirmation when faced with a situation that challenges the believer identity we are claiming. The affirmation relieves the self-threat, but ironically, we end up acting less like—not more like—the people we mean to be.

### The Psychology of Good People

While none of us are good all the time, and some of us are far from good a lot of the time, we still see ourselves as good. How do we sustain this view of ourselves? We hold a faulty assumption that our behavior pivots around our ethical standards and our moral values. That is not how our minds actually work. Our behavior pivots around our identity. Even when we fall short, our reflex is to claim an identity as a good person. Evidence to the contrary is a self-threat.

As a result, people are prone to what researchers call "bounded ethicality." Bounded ethicality is the psychology of "good-ish" people. Good-ish people are sometimes good and sometimes not, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not, like all of us. This model of bounded ethicality challenges ways of thinking and talking in which you are either a good person or not, a racist or not, an unethical human or not.

Here, we expand on the model of bounded ethicality with a model of "ethical learning." This redefines what it means to be a good person as someone who is trying to be better, as opposed to someone who is allowing themselves to believe in the illusion that they are always a good person.

With that in mind, the following is for and about people of all races, ethnicities, genders, religions, physical and mental abilities, and sexual orientations, good people who believe in building a better workplace and world.

To do so, let's now learn the four ways in which builders are different than believers.

The difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset lies in whether we believe we have blind spots.

## Part I: Builders Activate a Growth Mindset

Mindset refers to our belief about our capacity to learn and improve. If you have a growth mindset about drawing, you believe that you can improve your stick figures with effort, time, and feedback. The alternative, a fixed mindset, is where you see yourself as fully formed—either as someone who is terrible at drawing or wonderful at drawing or somewhere in between—and destined to stay that way.

The fixed mindset is an "either/or" mindset because it allows no room for being a work-in-progress.

### When Growth Mindsets Matter the Most

The difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset lies in whether we believe we have blind spots. As builders, we should never make claims of not being racists, sexists, etc. These claims are rarely accurate and usually lower our credibility. Rather, we should say, and believe, "I know that I have work to do in this area." That statement, if made with sincerity, reveals movement from a reflexive fixed mindset to a more intentional growth mindset.

When people are angry at you, activating a growth mindset is critical to learning why they are angry. It is easy to write off the anger as sour grapes. This defensive dismissal—typical in a fixed mindset—is unwise.

As believers, we know that inequity is real in this country. Inequity triggers anger. Therefore, anger is a natural response from people from marginalized groups—whether they be women, or people of color, or gay people, or immigrants. However, the resulting anger can generate heat and self-threat. It can confuse or shut down fixed mindset observers.

As builders, our opportunity is to learn from this anger, not to recoil from or "tone police" it. When people are expressing anger about something being unfair, consider listening with the intent to grow from what you hear. Even if the anger makes you uncomfortable, do not let it stop you from listening.

Research says that when we view ourselves as works-in-progress, we are more willing to hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We are more likely to apologize to people we have hurt, and we offer better, more complete apologies. Accountability is higher, not lower, when we give ourselves room to grow.

Thankfully, psychologists such as Carol Dweck and others have tested a host of ways to help us activate a growth mindset. The gist of these interventions lies in listening to what our "mindset voice" tells us about who we are and our capabilities. Let's say you make a comment that you feel is legitimate and inoffensive. To your surprise, people are offended, and you are told that your comment is racist.

Your fixed mindset voice might lead you to think, "That is ridiculous. I am not a racist. I should have kept my mouth shut. I will just say that I am sorry the other person was offended and get out of this conversation as fast as possible."

Try to activate a different voice, which leads you to say, "That was not my intention. Would you be willing to tell me what I did wrong?"

### One of the "Good Guys"

At first glance, Rick Klau seems like the prototypically successful, straight, white Silicon Valley guy. He has had a bunch of cool jobs at Google, including working on their Blogger, Google+, and YouTube products. He is now a partner at an offshoot of Google called GV (formerly Google Ventures) that invests in and helps launch tech startups.

Rick's work straddles two industries that many people want to break into: venture capital and technology. He hires, manages, and evaluates the potential and performance of many ventures and people.

In that capacity, Rick says, "I felt strongly that women and underrepresented minorities should have equal opportunities in the workplace. And I would have told you that, as someone in a position to hire people, I had done a good job of ensuring equal opportunities. I would have told you that I was one of the good guys." Like so many of us, Rick is a believer.

Rick's boss insisted that he and his peers attend an uncon-

scious (sometimes also called implicit) bias training. Google, like many organizations, was (and is) trying to address the overwhelming whiteness and maleness of their organizations.

Rick took the Implicit Association Test (IAT) and received his implicit bias score. The web-based IAT was developed by the world's experts in unconscious bias, psychologists Mahzarin Banaji, Anthony Greenwald, and Brian Nosek.

Taking the test is like playing a video game in which you need to be both fast and accurate. The goal is to quickly categorize words and pictures, with less than a second allowed for each response. There is little time to think, which is the point. The test is not measuring what you would do if you had the time to think it over. It is measuring what your brain associates with what when you are on autopilot.

Rick did not like his Gender IAT score. Like more than 75 percent of us, he was faster at associating women with things related to family and home and slower at associating women with things like career and work. On the flip side, he was slower at associating men with things like family and home. This implicit result directly contradicted his explicit egalitarian gender beliefs. He emerged "spooked." His moral identity was at stake. Self-threat flooded his mind.

### Getting to Work

What happens next is a choice between growth and fixed mindsets. Individuals can use their IAT scores as a first step, not a last step, in examining how implicit bias might manifest itself in their work and world, which is precisely what Rick did.

Opening up his laptop and phone, he scrolled through his contacts. To his dismay, only 20 percent of the people in his contact list were women. Next, he reviewed his connections on Twitter and LinkedIn. The ratio was the same: 20 percent. What he believed and what he built did not match.

So Rick actively sought out connections with people who "didn't look" like him. He shifted the gender ratio of people with whom he interacted on social media. He made himself vulnerable by making that ratio publicly available and by publicly committing to change. He declined invitations to all-male panel discussions and suggested alternatives. He stopped referring to mixed-gender groups as "guys."

Rick knew he was not the only "good guy" with an unconscious bias and 20 percent problem. So he rolled out the unconscious bias training to all of the hundreds of companies in the GV portfolio. He even had the sessions recorded and posted publicly on YouTube. He encouraged others to take the IAT, study their contacts, and analyze their calendars. He shared what he was learning in online articles, blogs, and frequent tweets. He shared his slipups and his progress. He took a strong stand that we all could do better.

## Part II: Builders See and Use Their Ordinary Privilege

Visual attention researcher Jeremy Wolfe and his colleagues say we see what we expect to see. They re-created the airport security screening process in a lab and had study participants screen bags for "weapons." When the participants were told that the dangerous objects would appear 50 percent of the time, participants had a 7 percent error rate.

When the participants were told that the dangerous objects would appear only 1 percent of the time, their error rate increased to 30 percent. They did not expect to see something, so they did not see it, even when it was right there.

This is an example of what researchers call "bounded awareness." Bounded awareness is our tendency to not see, seek, or use readily available and relevant information.

Similarly, Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman and his collaborator Amos Tversky demonstrated that our eyes and ears and minds approach the world with a point of view. Then we (unconsciously) set out to find evidence to confirm that point of view. This "confirmation bias" is the natural reflex to pay more attention to the stuff that supports your point of view while discounting or not even noticing the stuff that contradicts your point of view.

Stereotypes, both conscious and unconscious, also trigger the confirmation bias. Studies show that we are more likely to notice, remember, and search for additional information when it confirms a stereotype.

We can move from believer to builder when we see what is not visible and challenge it.

### How to See More, Respectfully

As you make your own efforts to counter the confirmation bias by entering conversations and spaces where people from marginalized groups are speaking more freely than usual, be prepared. Know that you will feel self-threat and that affirmation will not always be provided.

Do not allow yourself to write off what you are hearing

as "divisive." Stay where you are, so you can learn more, rather than exiting. Don't give up that access. Second, avoid jumping into others' conversations, arguing for your perspective, or sharing your views and experiences. You will feel self-threat that will make you crave affirmation. Don't let that cookie craving lead you to crowd out or hijack the discussion.

Third, notice the judgments you are having about other people. Challenge yourself to hear their experience without questioning its expression. Avoid being the tone police.

## Systemic Headwinds and Tailwinds

In this context, privilege may or may not have anything to do with money. Privilege is about whether cultural, legal, and institutional systems are experienced equally by everyone. The key insight is that many systems privilege some people over others.

Have you ever flown east-west versus west-east in the United States? You may have noticed a difference in flight times. It takes as much as 40 additional minutes to go from New York to L.A. versus L.A. to New York, for example. The difference lies in the headwinds one faces going west versus the tailwinds going east.

Antiracist educator and author Debby Irving uses an often-cited headwinds and tailwinds metaphor to explain the invisibility of these systemic, group-level differences. Headwinds are the challenges—some big, some small, some visible, some invisible—that make life harder for some people but not for all people. When you run against a headwind, your speed slows down, and you have to push harder.

When you have a tailwind pushing you, it is a force that propels you forward. It is consequential but easily unnoticed or forgotten. When you have the tailwind, you will not notice that some runners are running into headwinds. They may be running as hard as, or even harder than, you, but they will appear lazier and slower to you. When some of them grow tired and stop trying, they will appear self-destructive to you.

Our failure to see systemic headwinds and tailwinds in the world around us leads us to blame the people facing the headwinds. As a result, we confuse equality and equity. Equality says we treat everyone the same, regardless of headwinds or tailwinds. Equity says we give people what they need to have the same access and opportunities as others, taking into account the headwinds they face, which may mean differential treatment for some groups. We see a meritocracy where one does not exist.

## The Power of Ordinary Privilege

Ordinary privilege is the part of our everyday identity we think least about, because we do not need to. People who can walk are less likely to think about their legs than people who cannot walk. White people are less likely to think about their race. Straight people are less likely to think about their sexual orientation. The upwardly mobile are less likely to think about their economic mobility.

It is important to realize that this is not because there is anything inherently better about legs, whiteness, straightness, or upward mobility. Rather, the society in which we live is structured around these identities. Those whose identities do not vary from the norm are lulled into thinking that their experience is universal.

Since each of us has a multifaceted identity, each of us probably has at least one domain of ordinary privilege. What makes ordinary privilege a *privilege* is that it usually brings us some influence not easily given to those who lack it.

For example, psychologists Alexander Czopp and Margo Monteith found that white people who confronted a person expressing racial stereotypes were judged less negatively (by the offender) than black people doing the same. They also found that offenders felt more guilt and were more likely to apologize if confronted about their behavior by a white person than by a black person. Both black and white confronters were equally effective in decreasing the offender's future stereotyping.

Whether in organizations or on social media, ordinary privilege is a secret weapon. When those who are outside of the targeted group get involved, for better or for worse, they will be heard differently. The result of this reality is a great opportunity for each of us to see and use our ordinary privilege.

## How to Use Ordinary Privilege to Fight the Headwinds

Subha Barry, former head of diversity at Merrill Lynch and Freddie Mac, encourages us to share the work among multiple people, including those with ordinary privilege. "In organizations, we typically tap the same person to take the lead on these issues," Subha observes. "But, instead, we need to learn from how a flock of birds flies." The lead bird of the V formation literally flies into the headwind, cutting the wind so that the other birds can coast in the jet stream. The key to the flock's success is that the lead bird is not per-

manent. The lead rotates backward, allowing another bird to step into the role.

In her current role leading Working Mother Media, Subha advises organizations to "find other people to step up. Do it for a limited period of time and see what they come up with."

Do not rely on the same people, especially the people facing the headwinds all the time, to lead the flock all the time. Invite others in to be educated and to use their ordinary privilege. More of us can do more than we realize.

## Part III: Builders Opt for Willful Awareness

There are four modes of behavior that prevent believers from humanizing others and from engaging in builder behaviors. In these four modes—savior, sympathy, tolerance, and typecasting—good intentions are counterproductive.

By trying to be a hero, by feeling bad, by treating difference as something to be tolerated or ignored, or by typecasting someone to be someone they may not be, we operate in modes that do more harm than good. Look out for these four "good" intentions.

**Savior mode**. We have a range of motivations for helping others. We volunteer our time and contribute our dollars to people and causes and, in doing so, we feel good when others let us help them. Social scientists call this the "warm-glow effect."

That warm glow is a few favors away from being a serious problem in which we see ourselves as saviors who sweep into causes and communities to perform a rescue mission. In the savior trap, we get hooked on the warm glow. The work becomes more about us than others. We miss opportunities for others to take the lead or gain capabilities because we would lose the opportunity to be a savior. The way out of savior mode is to redirect your attention to the person or issue you care about.

**Sympathy mode**. The sympathy mode is much like the savior mode, but it is less about solving the problem and more about being the one who does not have the problem. We feel bad for those who do have the problem, but not in a way that connects us. Our well-intended sympathy makes it more about us than about them. Our own feelings are at the center. When we feel sorry for someone, we inadvertently put ourselves in the high-power position. For believers, this feeling of power can lead us to unintended perceptions and actions.

**Tolerance and difference-blindness mode**. We talk about tolerating gay people, and Muslims, and immigrants, and so on. Author Suzanna Walters explains the problem in her book ***The Tolerance Trap***. Tolerance is not an end goal, she says, but a dead end. Tolerance otherizes difference.

Corporate efforts to "manage diversity" are another well-intended but misguided example of the tolerance mode. Business school professor Martin Davidson explains in his book ***The End of Diversity As We Know It*** that managing diversity suggests there is a problem to be solved. The alternate approach is leveraging difference, where there is an opportunity to be seized. When organizations opt for managing diversity rather than leveraging difference, they engage in different activities and reap different outcomes as a result. The tolerance mode is defensive and narrow.

Color-blindness is another flavor of tolerance, and in America it is a popular flavor. Color-blindness is a version of difference-blindness and tolerance that ignores headwinds and tailwinds. When we do this, we unintentionally mask the reality that we are not all walking through life having the same experiences and the same conversations. In America, being black or gay or Muslim affects one's daily reality in ways both positive and negative. When we "don't see difference," we don't see the reality of headwinds and tailwinds.

**The typecasting mode**. The typecasting of women as "wonderful, more nurturing and benevolent than men" is what psychologists call "benevolent sexism." When "women are wonderful," they are penalized for "nonfeminine" behavior, such as competitiveness, ambition, conviction, and career focus. Women are put on a narrow pedestal, and the fall is steep. We also penalize men for behavior we expect from women.

Typecasting also emerges from other positive stereotypes, like the "model minority" stereotype of Asian Americans as smart, hardworking, docile, and wealthy. When we assume academic orientation, we miss athletic potential. When we assume financial security, we miss economic need. We see the pedestal, not the person.

All of us will fall into all of these modes some of the time. If we can approach that reality with a mindset of getting better, rather than of not being bad, we will feel less taxed by the fear of doing something wrong.

Inclusion is what happens before and after the official decisions in which people are formally brought into a group.

## Part IV: Builders Engage

Some people use "diversity" and "inclusion" as interchangeable buzzwords. However, building diversity and building inclusion are distinct.

Inclusion is what happens before and after the official decisions in which people are formally brought into a group. Think of diversity as the gateways to schools, organizations, and communities, and inclusion as the pathways leading up to and after that gateway. In other words, gateways are the decision points when we track the diversity numbers, such as admissions, hiring, promotions, and salary decisions. Pathways are the moments that shape those outcomes, but they are not tracked by a formal statistic.

### Meetings Are a Big Opportunity

The average employee spends about six hours per week in scheduled meetings with three or more attendees. Given how hard it is to synchronize multiple people's presence and attention in a single time and potentially a single space, one might expect meetings to be sources of great value. Instead, employees report a high failure rate that would be unacceptable in most activities; nearly half of their meetings are ineffective.

Tony Prophet, the chief equality officer at Salesforce, thinks this is a missed opportunity. Meetings are filled with "thousands of moments" that reflect the culture of an organization and the culture of more or less inclusion.

Meetings can operate as a keystone habit for inclusion. Just as systemic patterns in society will continue unseen and unfelt, so will systemic patterns in meetings. Meetings will replicate the headwinds and tailwinds of the organization and society unless we design them to do otherwise.

More "deliberative design" of meetings has the potential to redirect headwinds and tailwinds. One easy way to redesign meetings is to think about who sits next to whom. If you are noticing patterns in who sits with whom, and you have influence over the seating, consider assigning seats with a particular purpose in mind or even randomly.

At the core of an effective meeting is effective listening. Even if we are not in formal, senior positions and even if we do not attend meetings often, listening is still critical to inclusion. How well we do it has great influence over how others experience what communication scholars call the "talk-saturated" moments of our lives.

Few of us are good listeners. Most of us think faster than others speak, creating the potential for significant mind wandering. To make things worse, we are not as good at listening to some people versus others. Being a better listener also tunes us in to whose voices are being discounted or muted. This kind of pathway bias is hard to measure and prove to others, so it becomes critical that we bear witness to it when it happens (or listen to those who did bear witness). Then we can amplify those who are muted and include those who are excluded.

### Show Meaningful Support

Rabbi Eric Solomon welcomed his guests to the Beth Meyer Synagogue in Raleigh, North Carolina. As the new rabbi, his installation ceremony marked the beginning of his service in 2005. Many members of the synagogue, local community leaders, and leaders of nearby churches were arriving to participate in this long-standing tradition.

And something was different from tradition. When Rabbi Solomon first arrived, he had reached out to his counterpart in the Muslim community, Imam Mohammed Baianonie. They spent some time getting to know each other over tea and biscuits. Rabbi Solomon invited the imam to the installation ceremony, and he came, bringing members of his congregation and his blessings. Some people were surprised to see them walk in.

Surprise quickly melted into hospitality. For the first time that anyone could recall, a Jewish community leader had reached out to a Muslim community leader. "My congregation received our honored guests as if they were entering the Tent of Abraham. It was one of the proudest moments of my career," Rabbi Solomon later wrote.

Over the following decade, the relationship between the

rabbi and the imam grew. They talked about religion. They ate together. They brought their congregants together to do volunteer work in the community. They built a relationship between themselves and their communities.

Then a grisly triple murder became national news in 2015. Three immigrant Muslim graduate students were shot in the head in nearby Chapel Hill. Conflict over a visitor's parking spot in their apartment complex had presumably escalated. Amid growing Islamophobia, the Muslim community felt terrorized.

The funeral services were held on a soccer field to accommodate more than 5,000 attendees. From across the world, people and religious organizations reached out to express their condolences. The mosque was overwhelmed by the outpouring and needed help coordinating with all those reaching out. Because of the trusting relationship they had built with Rabbi Solomon, the leaders of the Muslim community chose him to play this delicate role.

### Lessons for Offering Support

Through this and other relationships, Rabbi Solomon has learned a few lessons about how to offer support. First, Rabbi Solomon explains, open your heart to what the other party needs, if anything. "It is very humbling to sit and say 'Let me let you lead. Let me ask questions and be curious and listen deeply. Let me listen to what you need.'" Showing support does not begin with having a solution. They know more than he does.

Second, he acknowledges that he sometimes experiences inner conflict while listening to people. Third, Rabbi Solomon explains, be prepared to be uncomfortable. "Sometimes, when I am proximate to someone's problems, I begin to realize how much privilege I have as a male, as someone with light skin, and so on," he confesses. "It can be very discombobulating internally. Even though I'm trying to be helpful, they are angry at me. And they have the right to be angry. But it can be socially, psychologically dangerous to feel attacked. It's very hard work."

Rabbi Solomon's description—hard work—perfectly explains how it feels to cope with self-threat. We will not always get the affirmation we crave. Craving the affirmation does not make us bad people as long as we work to see the craving for what it is and prevent it from being a burden to others.

All of us can opt for willful awareness rather than willful ignorance. All of us can engage. Each of us can find our own way to be builders and to support builders. The only wrong way is to settle for only being believers.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Making Diversity Work: 7 Steps for Defeating Bias in the Workplace*** by Sondra Thiederman
- ***The 2020 Workplace: How Innovative Companies Attract, Develop, and Keep Tomorrow's Employees Today*** by Jeanne C. Meister, Karie Willyerd



Dr. Dolly Chugh is an award-winning professor at the NYU Stern School of Business, where she studies the psychology of good people. To learn more, check out her TED Talk (top 25 of 2018) and her popular monthly Dear Good People newsletter. More at dollychugh.com.

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# The Plan

Kendra Adachi

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In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Plan

**Manage Your Time Like a Lazy Genius**

*By Kendra Adachi*

**Kendra Adachi** is a two-time New York Times bestselling author, the creator of The Lazy Genius Podcast, and an expert on compassionate time management. She lives in NC with her husband and three kids.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Manage Your Time Without Being At Its Mercy

Life can feel like a lot at times. Some aspects overlap in your personal and professional lives, but at the end of the day, you are probably left feeling overwhelmed and like you are pouring from an empty cup. So you panic and try to manage everything because that is expected of you, but you probably flop into bed, berating yourself for everything that didn't get done and how the rest was completed.

That doesn't feel very good, does it? Particularly for women, who are expected to be all things to all people and get everything done with a smile. You've probably picked up several different time management books and wondered why they're not resonating with you. It's because, in many ways, they're not written for you.

In ***The Plan: Manage Your Time Like a Lazy Genius***, Kendra Adachi proposes a necessary change. She shares that 93% of time management books aren't written with what women are expected to get done in mind. They are typically written by those who don't have a boss and don't have to manage the things a working woman has to deal with daily. She acknowledges that there is wisdom to be gleaned and gained from these books but wants to share a time-management book that highlights and amplifies women's voices and needs.

Adachi shares the time management wisdom she has gained and curated over the years to make the reader feel she is sitting across from them, sharing a warm drink and a laugh. The Plan is written in three sections that are easy for the reader to digest and refer back to. Section One highlights the principles of the PLAN; in Section Two, Adachi shares specific, practical strategies, and Section Three is filled with pep talks that will help the reader feel off-kilter due to various time-management struggles. Each closes with a recap and notes to ensure the reader fully grasps the knowledge she is sharing.

## The PLAN

Adachi begins by breaking down the principles of The PLAN for the readers, saying that each time they pick up The Plan will

be a chance for them to discover and apply something new. She states that the reader lives in an "everything at once" way of life that was amplified by the Digital Revolution being intermixed with the Industrial Revolution. A high level of productivity became the standard way of life. However, it was based on a male-dominant way of strategy and execution and didn't consider the unique challenges that women face, making them think they are the problem.

Adachi proposes that the system is not just the problem; the system is broken. With that in mind, she shares two beliefs for the readers to apply to their lives. First, she states that the goal the reader needs to work towards is not greatness but integration. Integration means the reader is living fully knowing and loving themselves. They can tend to their bodies instead of mastering them and forcing them to work at a capacity that does not fit how they want to live. The second belief is that the reader should start where they are, not with where they want to go. This will allow them to tend to their bodies in the season they are in with all of the things that come along with it, staying rooted in the present.

Adachi shares that since the goal isn't everything at once, the reader can use her visualization of being in the middle of the ocean on a pool floatie of their choice and move towards the shore at the pace that feels right to them and doesn't overwhelm them to the point of drowning.

As the reader begins shifting their mindset away from everything at once, Adachi encourages them to proactively and reactively name what matters. By proactively naming what matters, the reader will be able to posture themselves in a way that allows them to tend to their bodies and stay focused when facing the tasks ahead of them. They can also break down the task ahead of them into smaller choices, prioritizing what is most important even further. When the reader is faced with an in-the-moment decision, she tells them to either trust their gut or trust what already matters but to keep asking themselves what truly matters right now. Each season is different, and that will influence the decisions they make.

## Breaking Down The PLAN

Adachi shares that the lens the reader can use to manage their time is The PLAN, which highlights four points from her Lazy Genius principles: Prepare, Live, Adjust, and Notice. She states that these points can be as a three-pyramid, and the walls are labeled Plan, Adjust, and Notice, and they all support the reader as they Live. This contrasts with a culture that orients towards thinking about what was and what could've been changed. With this in mind, the reader can think of living as painting a picture, where the picture can be adjusted, rather than the static picture a puzzle presents. The reader can fully live in the moment, knowing that they can be kind to themselves and be flexible so they can focus on what they need.

As the reader learns how to Prepare well, Adachi states that the proper order for them to do this begins by naming what matters, calming the crazy, and trusting themselves as they face what's next. By naming what matters in the season they're in, they will be able to curb the instinct that tells them to charge frantically ahead and instead notice what has them feeling overwhelmed and then begin to calm the nerves they are experiencing. Once they have done this, the reader can trust themselves and see the situation more clearly.

Women face a unique struggle because they move into systems that weren't built for them and tell them they can't trust themselves. However, Adachi encourages them that while they will not always get it right, that doesn't make them untrustworthy; it simply makes them human.

Next, Adachi shares that while Living is a pretty basic concept, the reader is faced with so many inputs and is taught to take in as much as possible and she doesn't think that's a healthy way to live. Instead, she encourages the reader to recognize the power of the season they are in, stating that it will be challenging for the reader to live well if they ignore where they are now. They can do this by making the season smaller, breaking it down, naming what matters at the moment, and remembering three mindsets to help them as they begin the process. They need to match the expectation to the energy they can give, remind themselves that where they are is not forever, and they are allowed to change their minds.

Finally, Adachi calls the reader to Notice. When the reader does this, it must be done without judgment or swooping in to fix the problem. Noticing doesn't call for immediate change but might eventually lead to it. Rather, the reader is learning to listen to their bodies and how outside forces might be influencing them and noticing kindly. This will remind the reader that they are painting their lives, not forcing themselves into a puzzle. Noticing will allow them to adjust when needed. Adachi also reminds them that the goal is for the reader to integrate themselves, starting wherever they are.

## Bringing It All To The Table

Adachi takes a moment to speak directly to women and says that there is a link between a woman's ability to manage and their hormones. Since women cannot live according to the same rhythms that men do and yet are told they must, she shares an in-depth look at what women are up against and a strategy for them to help set a rhythm that works for them and their bodies. She believes that while a change is coming and more research and support is being done, it is up to women to change the narrative.

The strategy she lays out invites the reader to take the time to Notice, Prepare, Live, and Adjust, and states that it is for both women and those who don't have periods. This invites the reader to tune in with their body and its needs. Everyone experiences unique pauses and rhythms; when they understand it better, they can bring their whole self to every area of their lives.

The reader doesn't need a quiz to tell them who they truly are, though Adachi acknowledges the value in naming who you are. She states that no book or system can help the reader live a fully integrated life, so she encourages looking at life as a painting instead of puzzles. This allows the reader to adjust as they need to, depending on what they are able to bring to the table that

> *Adachi decides to switch up the PLAN acronym to NAPL to give the reader a tool to help them better manage their journey to integration.*

day. Everyone has a unique brain chemistry that influences how they are able to cope with situations in front of them, and Adachi wants the reader to embrace every color on their palate as they learn to embrace, honor, and love themselves on this journey.

Adachi decides to switch up the PLAN acronym to NAPL to give the reader a tool to help them better manage their journey to integration. She says they need a more comprehensive perspective on what matters to them. The reader is invited to Notice their energy first and allow it to influence how they manage their time, Adjust their expectations to the reality they are faced with, Prepare to pivot following the steps she lays out, and finally, Live, remembering the importance of relationships and connections with the people around them.

## Putting in the Work

Now that the reader understands this new way of living, Adachi invites them to explore the strategies she outlines. She cautions them not to apply everything all at once because that isn't how the PLAN is built; instead, she reminds them to start small. The strategies are laid out in a way that will guide the reader in a linear path, but instead, they are a collection that aligns with the PLAN and helps them as they face the unique situations they may encounter.

Rather than breaking down what they have learned so far, the reader is invited to continue painting their life and start with today. Today has its challenges and worries, and it's vital to recognize when they are being overwhelmed by fragmentation and urgency throughout so they can approach them with the necessary caution. By prioritizing what's important for that day, the reader can adjust based on the energy in their tank and still show themselves.

## Figuring Out What Works

For those who prefer to plan a week at a time, Adachi shares a strategy she says is like a capsule wardrobe. While there are staples to be utilized, one day might see the reader planning down to the minute while another might see them completing a couple of tasks written down on a scrap of paper and calling it a day. The reader is still getting done what they need to, but they are choosing to be flexible in how they do it, and they have a chance to discover new, fun ways to help them organize their week. However, when the reader decides to approach their week ahead, Adachi gently reminds them that staying grounded and kind to themselves is more important than staying on task.

Similarly, Adachi says that she thinks each month has its own unique personality, and as such, the reader needs to consider starting it where they are and looking back at where they were before they attempt to look ahead. By reflecting on where they were from month to month, the reader can help cultivate kindness for themselves in their life season. They can name what matters and make have-to and hope-to lists. The reader should avoid normalizing each month because not only is each moment of each month, they are different.

Adachi offers wisdom for readers as they seek to plan their seasons. She encourages them to keep naming what matters, noticing where they have been and where they are, and using this to help them adjust as they look ahead. These things can lay the foundation for the reader, as they have identified what is most important to them and put it in its proper place. Adachi shares questions that help the reader reflect on the past so they are grounded before they move into the future.

For readers who enjoy projects, Adachi shares tips for how to face them. Projects aren't simply limited to home renovations; she acknowledges that projects often have projects built into them. Whether it is an existing project or the reader hopes to start a new one, the reader is given a list of questions for both scenarios so that they can begin and finish the project. As a self-proclaimed recovering perfectionist, Adachi shares that a different way for the reader to see goals is by using a Someday list. This will allow them to still have goals to work towards, whether it is the acquisition of a skill or a dream vacation, while not feeling weighed down by their dreams simultaneously. However, not everything on the Someday List carries the same weight and should be treated and approached the same way, and the reader needs to take that into account.

Now that the reader has the strategies they need to fully integrate themselves into their lives instead of seeking greatness, Adachi encourages them to practice checking in with themselves to experience the fullness of the PLANs benefits. Whether it is a daily, weekly, or monthly check-in, the rhythm she suggests is the same. She calls the reader to prepare at the beginning, adjust where they need to be in the middle and notice where they have been at the end.

As the reader reflects on the different strategies and practices they have learned, Adachi says that as they move forward, their goal is simply to live an integrated life that begins precisely where they are, not where they want to be. They don't need to run and apply everything simultaneously because that is the old mindset trying to sneak back in and reclaim its place. Instead, the readers can remember to be kind to themselves and apply the principles they have learned when needed.

## Friendly Reminders

Before closing, Adachi encourages the reader with pep talks that she hopes will help them meet where they are. She states that the pep talks are not intended to be quick fixes; instead, they are there to help the reader catch their breath and avoid a Big Black Trash Bag moment. Feeling overwhelmed is not a place the reader must stay, and they should not.

## Setting Boundaries

When the reader is faced with a situation where something is added to their plate, Adachi reminds them to name what's important and learn to be okay with letting certain things and saying no to other things. Why? Because not everything can matter all at once, the reader can't be everything to everyone, and there will be times when their plan falls apart. When this happens, feelings of frustration and guilt attempt to swallow them, but the reader can recall the principles and strategies that Adachi shared with them. The reader needs to remember to take a breath, treat themselves with kindness, pivot when needed, and remember that they are working towards integration and not greatness.

## Working Through the Struggles

There are times when the reader may feel alone and unmotivated. There are also times they are exhausted, wish things were different, and may not even have a plan. When this happens, Adachi encourages the reader to find their circle and ask for help, redistributing the labor to ease some of their burden. It can also for the reader to reframe their mindset when they struggle with task initiation by starting as small as possible, and taking steps towards the task's completion. When exhaustion hits, she suggests taking a seventeen-minute nap. Even if sleep doesn't come, taking a few moments to purposefully be be still and quiet is helpful to the reader and she reminds them that rest is not a reward, it is a requirement so they are able to bring their best, whole self forward.

When life doesn't look quite how the reader thought it would or they're struggling with not having a plan, Adachi says that there is encouragement to found. She reminds the reader that they are allowed to care and where they are is good and invites them to do a Heartbeat Check In to help them in the season they are, saying that it's possible for the reader to present with their struggles as well as find the good that those struggles bring. It's possible for the reader to create a plan, whether planning comes naturally or is a struggle for them. A plan is not a requirement to living but it can be helpful when something springs up out of the blue. Not matter what, Adachi invites the reader to start right where they are to integrate their whole self into their lives, one small, helpful decision at a time.

*The Plan: Manage Your Time Like a Lazy Genius* by Kendra Adachi is an enjoyable book that is easy for the reader to digest and understand. Adachi gently guides them to a new way of thinking with humor and easy-to-apply strategies to help them on their journey as they adjust their mindset from what has been ingrained in them. She shares what has helped her and tells the reader that the goal is not greatness but integration so they can live their lives fully. She encourages the reader to be gentle with themselves and notice the different rhythms and pauses they experience. She reminds the readers to be gentle with themselves and that where they are is good right now and invites them to revisit the PLAN when they are ready to try a new strategy or principle.

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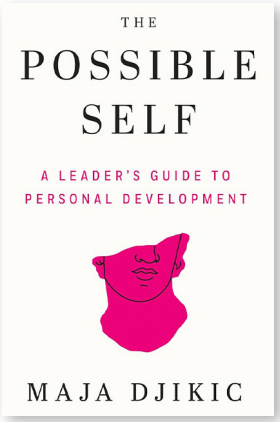
# The Possible Self

Maja Djikic

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# The Possible Self

## A Leader's Guide to Personal Development




*by* **Maja Djikic**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Development - a natural process that makes living beings grow over time into possible future selves - is a hallmark of all life. Yet what seems so simple for flowers and infants is far more complicated for adults. Development is possible throughout our lifetime, until our very last breath. As adults, though, we find that this same force that is supposed to move us to our potential can stall. When we encounter a seemingly intractable problem in some domain of our life and try to change, we can find ourselves at a loss.

What makes us stuck, why can't we change, and should we even keep trying? The battle for self-change is often grueling and painful, and we may want to give up, but giving up the struggle feels like abandoning the person we could become: our possible self. In ***The Possible Self: A Leader's Guide to Personal Development***, author, personality psychologist, and adult development expert Maja Djikic calls on us to not give up, helping us transform with knowledge and techniques that we can use to get unstuck and create a lasting change in our lives.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The five parts that make up the Wheel of Self.
- How to connect to our core wants to develop.
- Why changing behavior alone does not lead to lasting change.
- The three minds that work together to change frozen constructs.

## Part I: The Wheel of Self

### When the Wheel Stops Working

One way to think of the self is as having five different parts, arranged into a wheel: motivation, behavior, emotion, mind, and body. When most of us try to change, we often focus only on behavior. What we forget is that behavior is governed by the other parts of self.

When the Wheel of Self is moving well, all five parts of the self are in harmonious, developmental motion, seamlessly supporting the change. When in the midst of this process, we don't have to try to change, apply willpower, or develop habits to keep our new behaviors. It is as if all parts of the self conspire to develop a new way of being. When the wheel of self is moving well, we don't *try* to develop, we simply *do*.

What happens when the Wheel of Self stalls? We try, over and over again, to change, but our strategies to build new behavioral routines never seem to work. When we try to change behavior in one direction, while our minds, emotions, and bodies are fighting the opposite tendency, what we are producing is not a self change but a form of self fragmentation.

This kind of change leaves us stressed, exhausted, and full of guilt once we revert to the old behavior. *For a successful and lasting inner change, we need all the parts of the self to move together.*

Motivationally, what we want may get very intense and turn into a desire–a chronically unfulfilled goal. When we don't get what we want for a long time, we can lose hope, yet this hopelessness is temporary. We can try to stop wanting some change or pretend that we no longer want it, but the desire will surge again.

Behaviorally, desire and hopelessness lead us to *alternate between overdoing and distractions*. Desire makes us hurry to achieve our goals, and we pour time and energy into self-change. When this happens, overdoing gives way to distractions, where we abandon what we desire and try to forget about it.

In the emotional realm, the long unfulfilled desire can permeate our life. It's difficult to relax and do enjoyable things if the looming unsatisfied want is always in the background. Many negative emotions show up when we feel stuck. A sense of hopelessness, dread, restlessness, and despair are common.

The mind *ruminates or obsessively thinks* about how to gain our goal while increasingly doubting that it is possible. Another trick our mind plays on us is to mask hopelessness with the appearance of genuine acceptance. Our inner voice says things like, "I'm fine with it. I'm even better off without it." Yet despite these thin reassurances, and many distractions to stop thinking about it, giving up feels like an impossible option.

Finally, the body cannot but be drained by all the mental, emotional, and behavioral activity that keeps leading nowhere. It's easy to forget that the stress of inner conflict is energetically expensive. If ruminative thinking about past failures and future fantasies continues for an extended period, the body under stress may start showing signs of illness.

## Part II: Working with the Wheel

### Motivation

Wants are the force of our motivational system, pulling us toward our potential. One way to think of how wants function is to start with the core, or developmental wants, which need a method of fulfillment. Before we even understand language, we start forming beliefs, or constructs, of how to achieve what we want and the constructs can stay implicit throughout adulthood.

The most effective constructs tend to relate thematically to the want itself. Take the core need of forming friendships. Treating others well is relational in nature and much more likely to lead to close friendships than something like having an interesting job, for example.

Furthermore, effective constructs are direct actions someone can take now to fulfill the want.

Ineffective constructs promise fulfillment in the far future This causes the core wants to get associated with other wants, each increasingly more distant from the original. The further we get from the core want, the less satisfied we feel when we achieve the outer layer ones, since they only peripherally, if at all, satisfy the want at the core.

The key to our development and fulfillment, then, is to try to excavate and satisfy our core wants. The paradox of success without fulfillment, where we feel dissatisfied and restless despite having accomplished societally admired heights of achievement, is often based on the distance between our core wants and the outer layer of wants we have achieved. The further we are from the core, the less satisfied we will likely be.

Our ability to fulfill our potential depends on holding on to the invisible thread that connects us to our core wants.

Let's say we want self-respect. Buying an expensive watch (an outer layer want) because we want admiration (middle layer want), which we think will give us self-respect (core want) is not likely to work very well or for long. On the other hand, knowing ourselves and acting in accordance with who we are will directly produce the self-respect we want.

*Our ability to fulfill our potential depends on holding on to the invisible thread that connects us to our core wants.*

## Behavior

Now that we have done the difficult work of finding the core wants, what are we to do next? Why should we hesitate to directly satisfy our core wants by changing behavior? Because *when we are stuck in some part of our life, the blocks to change extend not just to wants, but emotions, mind, and the body too, which makes behavioral change difficult to sustain.*

Rather than launch into action, we need to restore enough willpower to move the rest of the Wheel of Self. What that means is that, paradoxically, our task will be to *do less* and sometimes even *do nothing*. Doing less of what hasn't worked in the past will help us restore willpower, to give us enough energy to continue our inner work.

When we attempt to change something about ourselves– eat better, exercise more, become more assertive, or build better relationships– focusing on changing only the behavior without moving other parts of the self frequently results in self-defeat. We will have employed our willpower to push one spoke of the wheel in one direction, while the rest of the wheel's momentum is going in the opposite direction. It is no surprise that after a while we feel drained and broken. Using willpower on any (or all) other parts of the self is likely to be more effective.

We need to *restore willpower sufficiently to move emotions, mind, and old neural pathways in a new direction*. What we want is to make sustained movement in the whole Wheel of Self so that our new way of being will continue naturally and not require either habit or willpower to maintain over time. It will simply be our natural, new way of being.

Often, just before we sleep, we feel our cup of willpower has been drained. Yet, in the morning, we wake up with a full cup of energy and start pouring it out all over again. Overnight our willpower got restored. Just as a fatigued muscle needs rest to restore strength, sleep restores willpower.

Other activities that research has shown to improve self-regulation are exposure to nature, anything that makes you laugh or smile, and meditation. Meditation, in particular, is known to expand the size of the cup of willpower, and it does so over the long term.

Finally, all intrinsically motivated activities that engage core, developmental wants also restore our willpower. This gives us a whole host of unique restorers of self-regulation that can be physical, social, individual, creative, or spiritual.

## Emotion

Emotions are a signaling system that tells us where we stand in relation to our wants. Not only do they signal to us, but they also give us energy and prompt us toward what we have to do to get closer to what we want. When emotions work well and we interpret their signals correctly, they become our guides in effectively protecting ourselves, overcoming obstacles, grieving our losses, and feeling happiness as we get closer to our wants. However, being stuck in some domain of our life distorts our emotional signals so they become difficult to interpret.

When we feel negative emotions, such as being dissatisfied, anxious, or restless, we tend to view the emotions themselves as the problem. Blaming the signal for telling us something we don't want to hear is a bit like blaming pain for signaling that we have been injured. We often treat negative emotions as the enemy, trying to avoid, suppress, or distract ourselves from feeling them to continue with our life as it is. Our emotions, however, will continue signaling for change. The very thing we don't want to experience holds the key to achieving our wants.

Contrary to our everyday use of the word "emotional", emotions are rational at their very core. The amygdala is the part of the brain central to processing emotions. Damage to the amygdala impairs our ability to process emotions

and thus, impairs decision making. We need our emotions to function well to act rationally.

There is an additional component of emotion. Between the situation and the signal, there are lenses that represent our constructs or beliefs. It's the construct or belief that will decide which emotion we'll feel in response to a situation. The very same situation– an environmental disaster, for example, will make some people angry, some sad, some fearful, and others energized. The same situation in different minds will bring about different emotions and, therefore, different actions.

An interesting implication of this way of thinking about emotions is that we can't have an emotion without there being a goal or a want. We often believe we simply wake up with emotions or that they come from nowhere. This seeming unpredictability of emotions, particularly negative ones, can make us feel powerless.

In reality, *negative emotions come when we veer away from our goals, and they go away as soon as we are back on track to fulfill them.* Emotions are meant to be temporary, as would be logical for a signaling system. A traffic light that is always red or always green would lose its function and purpose.

Because we are so used to experiencing emotions in the background of our activities, we may get the impression that emotions are there to be felt. But emotions, if we could give them a voice, would urge us, "Don't just feel me, DO something!" A tool we have at our disposal is choice. Resilience, the ability to not just cope with troubled circumstances, but flourish despite them, can be found in how we leverage this uniquely human tool.

There are two ways you can apply choice: learning how to fully process negative emotions in the moment, and building resilience in the long term.

To process emotions in the moment, follow this technique:

1. Approach, rather than suppress, distract, or express it, giving space and time to experience it.
2. Calm and comfort ourselves.
3. Examine the wants and constructs that underlie our emotions.
4. Strategize.
5. Create a plan to take action.

Practices that we can employ long-term cultivate our resilience, allowing us to not just cope, but flourish in uncertain and troubling circumstances. We cultivate resilience by applying the lever of choice to all components of our emotions.

We can apply choice to:

- Which wants or goals we want to pursue.
- Situations we put ourselves in and how to change our environment to suit us better.
- Change the beliefs or constructs through which we see the world.
- Learn how to express an emotion when it arrives.

When our emotional system is working well, we can move past our obstacles toward our wants and pivot from our losses toward re-engagement, with new goals and relationships.

### Mind

We've now reached the part of our inner work in which we have to reflect on constructs and beliefs that contribute to our inability to get what we desire the most. When a closed construct shows up in our mind, along with other thoughts, it's difficult not to believe them. We have to learn to recognize which ones are accurate and which ones are distorted.

It is far more difficult to get to the truth of ourselves by using our minds than we commonly believe. The mind can argue any side of the case, and when our Wheel of Self is stalled because some of our constructs are frozen in time and don't reflect the reality of ourselves or the world, it is the same mind we need to use to get it moving again.

The mind, in fact, is the central lever that can notice the problem in the self and apply techniques and experiences that will guide it toward change. That's exactly what we do, when we use our mind to probe our wants, to understand rather than distract from strong negative emotions, and intervene to reshape parts of our nervous system to lay down new neural pathways.

How can the mind do such contradictory things– be the cause of the problems, and the pathway to its solution? How can the mind intervene in the mind? It does so by not being one mind. Instead of thinking of ourselves as having one mind, we can think of having three:

1. The Problem Solver: the conscious mind
2. The Intuiter: the unconscious mind
3. The Choice-Maker: the meta mind

## We use the conscious mind to structure experiences that restructure the unconscious mind.

The Problem Solver is the mind we most identify with–the one that can do complex calculations, think through a difficult problem, and carve a path toward a solution. This mind, which we believe does everything for us, turns out to be a very small, powerful, and energy-expensive imagining device. It is small both in terms of how many things we can have in our minds at the same time, and how quickly it processes information, which is estimated at 50 bits per second.

The Intuiter is the unconscious mind. Given its immense capacity, the unconscious is where we store all our learnings, including our expertise. In terms of processing speed, the most conservative accounts put it at 11,000,000 bits per second, a staggeringly fast system.

What we call an instinct is a thought, emotion, or urge to action that is the result of all the processing done by the unconscious mind. This is where all that we have learned in our life waits patiently until we need it, and then just shows up in our awareness. This is important because the closed constructs that we struggle with come to our awareness automatically from the unconscious mind.

If we only had the Problem Solver and the Intuiter as our minds, we could never challenge what they say. Fortunately, there is a third mind that observes what the Problem Solver and the Intuiter are up to.

The Choice Maker is the mind that allows us to watch ourselves think and have thoughts. Without it, we wouldn't be capable of meta-cognition–we couldn't think about thinking or having thoughts. When things are going well, the meta-mind can inconspicuously direct attention to whatever is relevant at the moment.

If there's a problem, the meta-mind directs attention to what it believes to be the source of the problem–our own mind. We become self-conscious. The Choice-Maker notices that something may be amiss, directs itself to our own mind and body, and then makes a decision.

To be able to change, we have to detect and update our closed constructs, which is the source of our problem. We must direct the Choice Maker to illuminate our closed constructs, with the help of the Problem Solver. The Problem Solver is crucial in solving the issue of closed constructs, but not by ordering the rest of the mind about.

Instead, with Choice Maker's help, it will gather the information necessary to design experiences that will allow the rebuilding of close constructs that distort our view of ourselves in the world. *We use the conscious mind to structure experiences that restructure the unconscious mind.*

### Body

Given that closed constructs are neural pathways carried in our body, just knowing what they are, and even how they came to be, doesn't make them reopen automatically. The Problem Solver can't force the Intuiter to update or change the construct.

*Insight may be necessary, but it is not sufficient for transformation.* It needs to be joined with an experience that opens the lid to the closed construct, and only then can we update it, getting the Wheel of Self to move again. The difficulty is that the source experience that closed the construct is most often *in the past*.

To update it we need to go to that source experience, to the past, to lay down a new set of neural pathways. To understand what makes this possible, we need to explore the part of ourselves that allows us to have a past in the first place–our body.

From an evolutionary perspective, we can think of our bodies as vessels made of the past meant to act in the present while looking to the future. The first obvious thing that bodies do is move us around to meet their wants.

The second function of the body is to carry our past, in our brain and nervous system, as well as the muscles, joints, organs, blood cells, immune cells, and many other constituents of the body whose actions in the present moment are altered by the memory of the past.

Bodies hold our learnings and employ them forward as we encounter new situations. If the body carries our learnings,

it also carries our constructs that distort our experience. The closed constructs that feed these unconscious patterns are carried in the body, so it will be in the body that changes required for re-learning will have to occur.

To loosen the lid of a closed construct we need a different, non-linear model of change. We've all known individuals who make a dramatic change seemingly overnight. This is possible because when our emotional system is dysregulated, the nervous system gets into high gear and can build new neural pathways more quickly. Instead of slow, gradual change, we see dramatic and sudden transformations.

Whether the change is positive or negative doesn't depend only on the intensity of the emotional distress, but whether or not it is caused by external circumstances or is part of our own exploration of change.

Emotional dysregulation is like a force that can be used to either shut the lid down on constructs or open them back up, depending on the intensity and voluntariness of the event. What we see then is that emotional dysregulation provides the first ingredient that is essential to a transformative change.

The second ingredient is the information that will be poured into the new construct. Think of it as a new framework or way of looking at ourselves and the world. The nervous system has activated to lay down new pathways quickly, but what exactly it will encode depends on what information it gets. Self-guided re-learning can be designed to open our constructs and lead to development.

There are two components you need to have ready to design a re-learning experience to update your closed constructs.

1. Finding the significant events that caused the closing of the constructs, and;
2. Finding a new framework or experience that would have allowed the processing of the significant event.

To find the events, we must turn to memories and ask two questions:

1. Which memories from the past intrude on our mind when we think of the construct?
2. Do we still have strong emotions about these events?

We can find new frameworks for the problems we encountered during significant events in two ways: as information and as experiences. If we think of a new framework as information, we will follow the beginning steps of cognitive behavioral therapy. We will notice the unhelpful, frozen cognitive constructs, and explore other, more helpful ones.

Another way to think about the new framework is not as information, but as experience. If the construct was created in childhood, for example, one easy exercise to find new frames is to imagine a younger sibling, a child, a niece, or a nephew, in a similar situation and see how we would react to them. As adults, we can take that experiential exercise and offer what we need to our younger selves to reframe it.

The strategies above can be explored more deeply with the support of a friend, therapist, or partner. They can also be repeated as many times as needed to update closed constructs.

We grow and develop naturally, guided and pulled by our potential that manifests in our interests and things we love– whether ideas, skills, hobbies, careers, or people. This is why it's so painful when our development stalls or stops. When we work through each part of the Wheel of Self– motivation, behavior, emotions, mind, and the embodied past– we can get unstuck.



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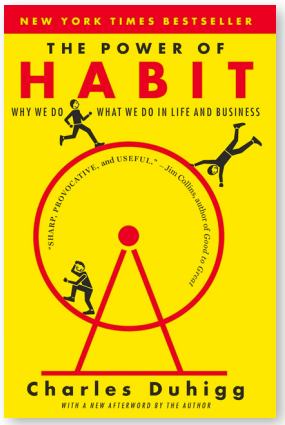
# The Power of Habit

Charles Duhigg

Executive Book Summaries®

# The Power of Habit

## Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business




*by* **Charles Duhigg**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***The Power of Habit***, Charles Duhigg, award-winning business reporter for ***The New York Times***, takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed.

Along the way, we learn why some people and companies struggle to change, despite years of trying, while others seem to remake themselves overnight. We visit laboratories where neuroscientists explore how habits work and where they reside in our brains. We discover how the right habits were crucial to the successful promotion of Pepsodent; to Tony Dungy who led his team to a Super Bowl win by changing one step in his players' habit loop; and to Alcoa when it turned itself around by changing just one routine within the organization.

At its core, ***The Power of Habit*** contains an exhilarating argument: The key to exercising regularly, losing weight, raising exceptional children, becoming more productive, building revolutionary companies and social movements, and achieving success is understanding how habits work. By harnessing this new science, we can transform our businesses, our communities and our lives.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why the brain tries to make routines into habits.
- How cravings create and power new habits.
- How to apply the golden rule of habit change.
- What "keystone habits" are and the importance of them in creating a new routine.

## INTRODUCTION

When you woke up this morning, what did you do first? Did you hop in the shower, check your email or grab a doughnut from the kitchen counter? Did you brush your teeth before or after you toweled off? Which route did you drive to work? When you got home, did you put on your sneakers and go for a run, or pour yourself a drink and eat dinner in front of the TV?

"All our life, so far as it has definite form, is but a mass of habits," William James wrote in 1892. Most of the choices we make each day may feel like the products of well-considered decision making, but they're not. They're habits. And though each habit means relatively little on its own, over time, the meals we order, whether we save or spend, how often we exercise, and the way we organize our thoughts and work routines have enormous impacts on our health, productivity, financial security and happiness. One paper published by a Duke University researcher in 2006 found that more than 40 percent of the actions people performed each day weren't actual decisions, but habits.

James — like countless others, from Aristotle to Oprah — spent much of his life trying to understand why habits exist. But only in the past two decades have scientists and marketers really begun understanding how habits work — and, more important, how they change. At one point, we all consciously decided how much to eat and what to focus on when we got to the office, how often to have a drink or when to go for a jog. Then we stopped making a choice, and the behavior became automatic. It's a natural consequence of our neurology. And by understanding how it happens, you can rebuild those patterns in whichever way you choose.

## PART I: THE HABITS OF INDIVIDUALS

### The Habit Loop: How Habits Work

Within the building that houses the Brain and Cognitive Sciences department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are laboratories that contain what, to the casual observer, look like dollhouse versions of surgical theaters. There are tiny scalpels, small drills, and miniature saws less than a quarter inch wide attached to robotic arms. Even the operating tables are tiny, as if prepared for child-sized surgeons. Inside these laboratories, neurologists cut into the skulls of anesthetized rats, implanting tiny sensors that can record the smallest changes inside their brains.

These laboratories have become the epicenter for a quiet revolution in the science of habit formation, and the experiments unfolding explain how we develop the behaviors necessary to make it through each day. The rats in these labs have illuminated the complexity that occurs inside our heads whenever we do something as mundane as brush our teeth or back the car out of the driveway.

Toward the center of the skull is a golf ball-sized lump of tissue that is similar to what you might find inside the head of a fish, reptile or mammal. This is the basal ganglia, an oval of cells that, for years, scientists didn't understand very well, except for suspicions that it played a role in diseases, such as Parkinson's.

In the early 1990s, the MIT researchers began wondering if the basal ganglia might be integral to habits as well. They noticed that animals with injured basal ganglia suddenly developed problems with tasks, such as learning how to run through mazes or remembering how to open food containers. They decided to experiment by employing new micro-technologies that allowed them to observe, in minute detail, what was occurring within the heads of rats as they performed dozens of routines. Ultimately, each animal was placed into a T-shaped maze with chocolate at one end.

The maze was structured so that a rat was positioned behind a partition that opened when a loud click sounded. Initially, when the rat heard the click and saw the partition disappear, it would usually wander up and down the center aisle, sniffing in corners and scratching at walls. It appeared to smell the chocolate, but couldn't figure out how to find it. When it reached the top of the T, it often turned to the right, away from the chocolate, and then wandered left, sometimes pausing for no obvious reason. Eventually, most animals discovered the reward. But there was no discernable pattern in their meanderings. It seemed as if each rat was taking a leisurely, unthinking stroll.

The probes in the rats' heads, however, told a different story. While each animal wandered through the maze, its brain — and in particular, its basal ganglia — worked furiously. Each time a rat sniffed the air or scratched a wall, its brain exploded with activity, as if analyzing each new scent, sight and sound. The rat was processing information the entire time it meandered.

The scientists repeated the experiment, again and again, watching how each rat's brain activity changed as it moved through the same route hundreds of times. A series of shifts slowly emerged. The rats stopped sniffing corners and mak-

> Habits never really disappear. They're encoded into the structures of our brain... The problem is that your brain can't tell the difference between bad and good habits.

ing wrong turns. Instead, they zipped through the maze faster and faster. And within their brains, something unexpected occurred: As each rat learned how to navigate the maze, its mental activity decreased. As the route became more and more automatic, each rat started thinking less and less.

It was as if the first few times a rat explored the maze, its brain had to work at full power to make sense of all the new information. But after a few days of running the same route, the rat didn't need to scratch the walls or smell the air anymore, and so the brain activity associated with scratching and smelling ceased. It didn't need to choose which direction to turn, and so decision-making centers of the brain went quiet. The rat had internalized how to sprint through the maze to such a degree that it hardly needed to think at all.

But that internalization relied upon the basal ganglia, the brain probes indicated. This tiny, ancient neurological structure seemed to take over as the rat ran faster and faster and its brain worked less and less. The basal ganglia was central to recalling patterns and acting on them. The basal ganglia, in other words, stored habits even while the rest of the brain went to sleep.

### The Automatic Routine of 'Chunking'

This process — in which the brain converts a sequence of actions into an automatic routine — is known as "chunking," and it's at the root of how habits form. There are dozens — if not hundreds — of behavioral chunks that we rely on every day. Some are simple: You automatically put toothpaste on your toothbrush before sticking it in your mouth. Some, such as getting dressed or making the kids' lunch, are more complex.

Habits, scientists say, emerge because the brain is constantly looking for ways to save effort. Left to its own devices, the brain will try to make almost any routine into a habit, because habits allow our minds to ramp down more often. This effort-saving instinct is a huge advantage. An efficient brain allows us to stop thinking constantly about basic behaviors, such as walking and choosing what to eat, so we can devote mental energy to inventing spears, irrigation systems and, eventually, airplanes and video games.

The process within our brains is a three-step loop. First, there is a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode and which habit to use. Then there is the ***routine,*** which can be physical, mental or emotional. Finally, there is a ***reward***, which helps your brain figure out if this particular loop is worth remembering for the future. Over time, this loop — cue, routine, reward; cue, routine, reward — becomes more and more automatic. The cue and reward become intertwined until a powerful sense of anticipation and craving emerges. Eventually, a habit is born.

Habits aren't destiny. Habits can be ignored, changed, or replaced. But the reason the discovery of the habit loop is so important is that it reveals a basic truth: When a habit emerges, the brain stops fully participating in decision making. It stops working so hard, or diverts focus to other tasks. So unless you deliberately fight a habit — unless you find new routines — the pattern will unfold automatically.

According to Ann Graybiel, a scientist at MIT who oversaw many of the basal ganglia experiments, "Habits never really disappear. They're encoded into the structures of our brain ... The problem is that your brain can't tell the difference between bad and good habits, and so if you have a bad one, it's always lurking there, waiting for the right cues and rewards."

Without habit loops, our brains would shut down, overwhelmed by the minutiae of daily life.

## The Craving Brain: How to Create New Habits

One day in the early 1900s, a prominent American executive named Claude C. Hopkins was approached by an old friend with a new business idea. The friend had discovered an amazing product, he explained, that he was convinced would be a hit. It was a toothpaste, a minty, frothy concoction he called "Pepsodent." This venture, the friend promised, was going to be huge. If, that is, Hopkins would consent to help design a national promotional campaign.

Hopkins, at the time, was at the top of a booming industry that had hardly existed a few decades earlier: advertising.

He had turned dozens of previously unknown products — Quaker Oats, Goodyear Tires, the Bissell carpet sweeper, Van Camp's pork and beans — into household names. And, in the process, he had made himself so rich that his best-selling autobiography, ***My Life in Advertising***, devoted long passages to the difficulties of spending so much money.

### Hopkins' Rules

Hopkins was best known for a series of rules he coined explaining how to create new habits among consumers. These rules would transform industries and eventually became conventional wisdom among marketers, educational reformers, public health professionals, politicians and CEOs.

When his friend approached Hopkins about Pepsodent, the ad man expressed only mild interest. It was no secret that the health of Americans' teeth was in steep decline. As the nation had become wealthier, people had started buying larger amounts of sugary, processed foods. When the government started drafting men for World War I, so many recruits had rotting teeth that officials said poor dental hygiene was a national security risk.

Yet, as Hopkins knew, selling toothpaste was financial suicide. The problem was that hardly anyone bought toothpaste because, despite the nation's dental problems, hardly anyone brushed their teeth.

"I finally agreed to undertake the campaign if he gave me a six months' option on a block of stock," Hopkins wrote. The friend agreed.

It would be the wisest financial decision of Hopkins's life. Within five years of the partnership, Hopkins turned Pepsodent into one of the best-known products on earth and, in the process, helped create a toothbrushing habit that moved across America with startling speed. A decade after the first Pepsodent campaign, pollsters found that toothbrushing had become a ritual for more than half the American population. Hopkins had helped establish toothbrushing as a daily activity.

The secret to his success, Hopkins would later boast, was that he had found a certain kind of cue and reward that fueled a particular habit. It's an alchemy so powerful that even today the basic principles are still used by video game designers, food companies, hospitals, and millions of salespeople around the world.

So what, exactly, did Hopkins do? He created a craving. And that craving, it turns out, is what makes cues and rewards work. That craving is what powers the habit loop.

### Creating a Craving to Power a Habit

To sell Pepsodent, Hopkins needed a trigger that would justify the toothpaste's daily use. He sat down with a pile of dental textbooks. "It was dry reading," he later wrote. "But in the middle of one book I found a reference to the mucin plaques on teeth, which I afterward called 'the film.' That gave me an appealing idea. I resolved to advertise this toothpaste as a creator of beauty. To deal with that cloudy film."

In focusing on tooth film, Hopkins was ignoring the fact that this same film has always covered people's teeth and hadn't seemed to bother anyone. Toothpaste didn't do anything to help remove the film. In fact, one of the leading dental researchers of the time said that all toothpastes — particularly Pepsodent — were worthless.

That didn't stop Hopkins from exploiting his discovery. Here, he decided, was a cue that could trigger a habit. Soon, cities were plastered with Pepsodent ads.

"Note how many pretty teeth are seen everywhere," read one ad featuring smiling beauties. "Millions are using a new method of teeth cleansing. Why would any woman have dingy film on her teeth? Pepsodent removes the film!"

The brilliance of these appeals was that they relied upon a cue — tooth film — that was universal and impossible to ignore. Telling someone to run their tongue across their teeth, it turned out, was likely to cause them to run their tongue across their teeth and, when they did, they were likely to feel a film. Hopkins had found a cue that was simple, had existed for ages, and was so easy to trigger that an advertisement could cause people to comply automatically.

Moreover, the reward, as Hopkins envisioned it, was even more enticing. Who, after all, doesn't want to be more beautiful? Who doesn't want a prettier smile? Particularly when all it takes is a quick brush with Pepsodent?

In the third week, demand exploded. There were so many orders for Pepsodent that the company couldn't keep up. Within a decade, Pepsodent was one of the top-selling goods in the world, and remained America's best-selling toothpaste for more than 30 years.

Before Pepsodent appeared, only 7 percent of Americans had a tube of toothpaste in their medicine chests. A decade after Hopkins's ad campaign went nationwide, that number had jumped to 65 percent. By the end of World War II, the military downgraded concerns about recruits' teeth because so many soldiers were brushing every day.

### Find a Cue, Define the Rewards

The key, Hopkins said, was that he had "learned the right human psychology." That psychology was grounded in two basic rules:

- First, find a simple and obvious cue.
- Second, clearly define the rewards.

If you get those elements right, Hopkins promised, it was like magic. Look at Pepsodent: He had identified a cue — tooth film — and a reward — beautiful teeth — that had persuaded millions to start a daily ritual. Even today, Hopkins's rules are a staple of marketing textbooks and the foundation of millions of ad campaigns.

Unlike other pastes of the period, Pepsodent contained citric acid, as well as doses of mint oil and other chemicals. Pepsodent's inventor used those ingredients to make the toothpaste taste fresh, but they had another, unanticipated effect as well. They're irritants that create a cool, tingling sensation on the tongue and gums.

After Pepsodent started dominating the marketplace, researchers at competing companies scrambled to figure out why. What they found was that customers said that if they forgot to use Pepsodent, they realized their mistake because they missed that cool, tingling sensation in their mouths. They expected — they craved — that slight irritation. If it wasn't there, their mouths didn't feel clean.

Claude Hopkins wasn't selling beautiful teeth, he was selling a sensation. Once people craved that cool tingling — once they equated it with cleanliness — brushing became a habit.

"Consumers need some kind of signal that a product is working," Tracy Sinclair, who was a brand manager for Oral-B and Crest Kids Toothpaste, says. "We can make toothpaste taste like anything. The tingling doesn't make the toothpaste work any better. It just convinces people it's doing the job."

Anyone can use this basic formula to create habits of his or her own. Want to exercise more? Choose a cue, such as going to the gym as soon as you wake up, and a reward, such as a smoothie after each workout. Then think about that smoothie, or about the endorphin rush you'll feel. Allow yourself to anticipate the reward. Eventually that craving will make it easier to push through the gym doors every day.

Cravings drive habits. And figuring out how to spark a craving makes creating a new habit easier.

## The Golden Rule of Habit Change: Why Transformation Occurs

Tony Dungy had waited an eternity for the job as head coach of the Buccaneers. For 17 years, he prowled the sidelines as an assistant coach, first at the University of Minnesota, then with the Pittsburgh Steelers, then the Kansas City Chiefs, and then back to Minnesota with the Vikings. Four times in the past decade, he had been invited to interview for head coaching positions with NFL teams. All four times, the interviews hadn't gone well.

Part of the problem was Dungy's coaching philosophy. In his job interviews, he would patiently explain his belief that the key to winning was changing players' habits. He wanted to get players to stop making so many decisions during a game, he said. He wanted them to react automatically, habitually. If he could instill the right habits, his team would win. Period.

"Champions don't do extraordinary things," Dungy would explain. "They do ordinary things, but they do them without thinking, too fast for the other team to react. They follow the habits they've learned."

How, the owners would ask, are you going to create those new habits?

Oh, no, he wasn't going to create new habits. Dungy was going to change players' old ones. And the secret to changing old habits was using what was already inside players' heads. Habits are a three-step loop — the cue, the routine, and the reward — but Dungy only wanted to attack the middle step, the routine. He knew from experience that it was easier to convince someone to adopt a new behavior if there was something familiar at the beginning and end.

His coaching strategy embodied an axiom, a Golden Rule of habit change that study after study has shown is among the most powerful tools for creating change. Dungy recognized that you can never truly extinguish bad habits. Rather, to change a habit, you must keep the old cue and deliver the old reward, but insert a new routine.

That's the rule: If you use the same cue and provide the same reward, you can shift the routine and change the habit. Almost any behavior can be transformed if the cue and reward stay the same.

Four times Dungy explained his habit-based philosophy to team owners. Four times they listened politely, thanked him for his time and then hired someone else.

Then, in 1996, the woeful Buccaneers called. Dungy flew to Tampa Bay and, once again, laid out his plan for how they could win. The day after the final interview, they offered him the job.

Dungy's system would eventually turn the Bucs into one of the league's winningest teams. He would become the only coach in NFL history to reach the play-offs in 10 consecutive years, the first African American coach to win a Super Bowl, and one of the most respected figures in professional athletics. His coaching techniques would spread throughout the league and all of sports. His approach would help illuminate how to remake the habits in anyone's life.

There is, unfortunately, no specific set of steps guaranteed to work for every person. We know that a habit cannot be eradicated — it must, instead, be replaced. And we know that habits are most malleable when the Golden Rule of habit change is applied. If we keep the same cue and the same reward, a new routing can be inserted.

But that's not enough. For a habit to stay changed, people must believe change is possible. And, most often, that belief only emerges with the help of a group.

If you want to quit smoking, figure out a different routine that will satisfy the cravings filled by cigarettes. Then, find a support group, a collection of other former smokers, or a community that will help you believe you can stay away from nicotine, and use that group when you feel you might stumble.

If you want to lose weight, study your habits to determine why you really leave your desk for a snack each day and then find someone to take a walk with you, to gossip with at their desk rather than in the cafeteria, a group that tracks weight-loss goals together, or someone who also wants to keep a stock of apples, rather than chips, nearby.

The evidence is clear: If you want to change a habit, you must find an alternative routine, and your odds of success go up dramatically when you commit to changing as part of a group. Belief is essential, and it grows out of a communal experience, even if that community is only as large as two people.

## PART II: THE HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS

## Keystone Habits: Which Habits Matter Most

On a blustery October day in 1987, a herd of prominent Wall Street investors and stock analysts gathered in the ballroom of a posh Manhattan hotel. They were there to meet the new CEO of the Aluminum Company of America — or Alcoa, as it was known — a corporation that, for nearly a century, had manufactured everything from the foil that wraps Hershey's Kisses and the metal in Coca-Cola cans to the bolts that hold satellites together.

Alcoa's management had made misstep after misstep, unwisely trying to expand into new product lines while competitors stole customers and profits away. There had been a palpable sense of relief when Alcoa's board announced it was time for new leadership. That relief, though, turned to unease when the choice was announced: the new CEO would be a former government bureaucrat named Paul O'Neill. Many on Wall Street had never heard of him. When Alcoa scheduled this meet and greet at the Manhattan ballroom, every major investor asked for an invitation.

"If you want to understand how Alcoa is doing, you need to look at our workplace safety figures. If we bring our injury rates down, it won't be because of cheerleading or the nonsense you sometimes hear from other CEOs," O'Neill said. "It will be because the individuals at this company have agreed to become part of something important: They've devoted themselves to creating a habit of excellence. Safety will be an indicator that we're making progress in changing our habits across the entire institution. That's how we should be judged."

The investors in the room almost stampeded out the doors when the presentation ended. One jogged to the lobby, found a pay phone, and called his 20 largest clients.

"I said, 'The board put a crazy hippie in charge and he's going to kill the company,'" the investor said. "I ordered them to sell their stock immediately, before everyone else in the room started calling their clients and telling them the same thing.

"It was literally the worst piece of advice I gave in my career."

Within a year of O'Neill's speech, Alcoa's profits would hit a record high. By the time O'Neill retired in 2000, the company's annual net income was five times larger than before he arrived, and its market capitalization had risen by $27 billion. Someone who invested a million dollars in Alcoa on the day O'Neill was hired would have earned another million dollars in dividends while he headed the company, and the value of their stock would be five times bigger when he left.

So how did O'Neill make one of the largest, stodgiest, and most potentially dangerous companies into a profit machine

and a bastion of safety? By attacking one habit and then watching the changes ripple through the organization.

### Keystone Habits

O'Neill believed that some habits have the power to start a chain reaction, changing other habits as they move through an organization. Some habits, in other words, matter more than others in remaking businesses and lives. These are "keystone habits," and they can influence how people work, play, live, spend and communicate. Keystone habits start a process that, over time, transforms everything.

Keystone habits say that success doesn't depend on getting every single thing right, but instead relies on identifying a few key priorities and fashioning them into powerful levers. The habits that matter most are the ones that, when they start to shift, dislodge and remake other patterns.

Researchers have found institutional habits in almost every organization or company they've scrutinized. "Individuals have habits; groups have routines," wrote the academic Geoffrey Hodgson, who spent a career examining organizational patterns.

To O'Neill, these kinds of habits seemed dangerous. "We were basically ceding the decision making to a process that occurred without actually thinking."

At the time, Alcoa was struggling. Critics said the company's workers weren't nimble enough and the quality of its products was poor. But at the top of O'Neill's list he didn't write "quality" or "efficiency" as his biggest priorities. At a company as big and as old as Alcoa, you can't flip a switch and expect everyone to work harder or produce more. The previous CEO had tried to mandate improvements, and 15,000 employees had gone on strike. It got so bad they would bring dummies to the parking lots, dress them like managers, and burn them in effigy. "Alcoa was not a happy family," one person from that period said. "It was more like the Manson family, but with the addition of molten metal."

O'Neill figured his top priority would have to be something that everybody — unions and executives — could agree was important. He needed a focus that would bring people together, that would give him leverage to change how people worked and communicated.

### Choosing a Focus for Leverage

"I went to basics," O'Neill said. "Everyone deserves to leave work as safely as they arrive, right? You shouldn't be scared that feeding your family is going to kill you. That's what I decided to focus on: changing everyone's safety habits."

At the top of O'Neill's list he wrote down "SAFETY" and set an audacious goal: zero injuries. Not zero factory injuries. Zero injuries, period. That would be his commitment, no matter how much it cost.

The brilliance of this approach was that no one, of course, wanted to argue with O'Neill about worker safety. Unions had been fighting for better safety rules for years. Managers didn't want to argue about it, either, since injuries meant lost productivity and low morale.

What most people didn't realize, however, was that O'Neill's plan for getting zero injuries entailed the most radical realignment in Alcoa's history. To protect workers, Alcoa needed to become the best, most streamlined aluminum company on earth.

O'Neill's safety plan, in effect, was modeled on the habit loop. He identified a simple cue: an employee injury. He instituted an automatic routine: Any time someone was injured, the unit president had to report it to O'Neill within 24 hours and present a plan for making sure the injury never happened again. And there was a reward: The only people who got promoted were those who embraced the system.

As Alcoa's safety patterns shifted, other aspects of the company started changing with startling speed, as well. Rules that unions had spent decades opposing — such as measuring the productivity of individual workers — were suddenly embraced, because such measurements helped everyone figure out when part of the manufacturing process was getting out of whack, posing a safety risk. Policies that managers had long resisted — such as giving workers autonomy to shut down a production line when the pace became overwhelming — were now welcomed, because that was the best way to stop injuries before they occurred.

O'Neill never promised that his focus on worker safety would increase Alcoa's profits. However, as his new routines moved through the organization, costs came down, quality went up, and productivity skyrocketed. If molten metal was injuring workers when it splashed, then the pouring system was redesigned, which led to fewer injuries. It also saved money because Alcoa lost less raw material in spills. If a machine kept breaking down, it was replaced, which meant there was less risk of a broken gear snagging an employee's arm. It also meant higher quality products because, as Alcoa discovered, equipment malfunctions were a chief cause of subpar aluminum.

### Initial Shifts Start Chain Reactions

Researchers have found similar dynamics in dozens of other settings, including individual's lives.

Studies have documented that families who habitually eat dinner together seem to raise children with better homework skills, higher grades, greater emotional control and more confidence. Making your bed every morning is correlated with better productivity, a greater sense of well-being and stronger skills at sticking with a budget. It's not that a family meal or a tidy bed causes better grades or less frivolous spending. But somehow those initial shifts start chain reactions that help other good habits take hold.

If you focus on changing or cultivating keystone habits, you can cause widespread shifts. They help other habits flourish by creating new structure and they establish cultures where change becomes contagious.

## PART III: THE HABITS OF SOCIETIES

## The Neurology of Free Will: Are We Responsible For Our Habits

Habits are not as simple as they appear. Habits, even once they are rooted in our minds, aren't destiny. We can choose our habits, once we know how. Everything we know about habits, from neurologists studying amnesiacs and organizational experts remaking companies, is that any of them can be changed if you understand how they function.

Hundreds of habits influence our days — they guide how we get dressed in the morning, talk to our kids, and fall asleep at night; they impact what we eat for lunch, how we do business, and whether we exercise or have a beer after work.

Each of them has a different cue and offers a unique reward. Some are simple and others are complex, drawing upon emotional triggers and offering subtle neurochemical prizes. But every habit, no matter its complexity, is malleable. The most dysfunctional companies can transform themselves.

However, to modify a habit, you must decide to change it. You must consciously accept the hard work of identifying the cues and rewards that drive the habits' routines and find alternatives. You must know you have control and be self-conscious enough to use it.

Once you understand that habits can change, you have the freedom — and the responsibility — to remake them. Once you understand that habits can be rebuilt, the power of habit becomes easier to grasp, and the only option left is to get to work.

If you believe you can change — if you make it a habit — the change becomes real. This is the real power of habit: the insight that your habits are what you choose them to be. Once that choice occurs and becomes automatic, it's not only real, it starts to seem inevitable.



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# The Power of Identity

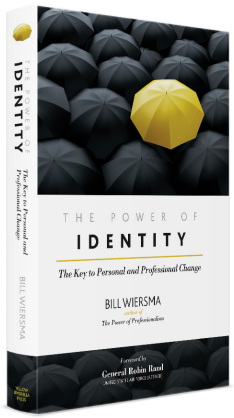
Bill Wiersma

Career &
Self- Development

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# The Power of Identity

## The Key to Personal and Professional Change




*by* **Bill Wiersma**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Struggling inner-city kids. Dismayed girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. Disillusioned business veterans. What do these seemingly unrelated groups of people have in common? Each has had their life dramatically altered for the better—the by-product of a newfound sense of self. Each developed a more robust identity.

Identity, with its unique ability to reveal our better angles, breeds confidence sufficient to fuel desirable change. ***The Power of Identity*** takes the central principle (identity) from author Bill Wiersma's groundbreaking book ***The Power of Professionalism*** and deepens its application to individuals and organizations alike, demonstrating how identity is a powerful agent of change in every aspect of a person's life.

When it comes to higher-order development, identity has a dramatic impact on choice and behavior. But identity's real magic lies in its unique ability to ignite one's value system in a personal way.

Identity-based development is an idea whose time has come. ***The Power of Identity*** promises to be as transformational as Wiersma's prior work.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Identity's vital role in behavior change and decision-making: how an identity refresh, aided by a personalized identity profile, can jump-start one's outlook and confidence—even in dire circumstances.
- Why the advent of identity-based development promises to disrupt leaders' thinking about their approach to development and change management.

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## Identity: A First-Order Mover of Behavior

In the United States we put enormous emphasis on *doing* but far less on *being.* More than ever, people are overwhelmed with activity but starved for purpose. Given the breakneck speed at which so many of us live our lives, the all-important "who am I" question is not asked by that many of us, much less answered.

Perhaps we dismiss the question because we think it's superfluous. Perhaps the question lacks cachet. Perhaps we think it's too simple. Perhaps it never occurred to us to even ask the question. Or perhaps we're anxious about how we would answer it.

The bottom line is the power of identity has not been fully appreciated let alone understood well.

### Behavior Precedes Identity

When you listen to people, whether they be a teacher talking about their students, a store manager talking about an absentee owner, a mother of three talking about her teenage boys, a politician talking about their opponents, the all-star performer talking about their less-than-credible boss, a millennial talking about their roommate, the common denominator in all their stories is *behavior*—often undesired behavior. Behavior is where the rubber meets the road. It's a big deal in every aspect of life and work.

Undesired behavior, because of its nature, gets a lot of airtime. Far too many senior business leaders are deluged with undesired behaviors within their organization. It saps their time and energy. Every one of those leaders, not surprisingly, talks about the need for behavior change. And the need for behavior change is indisputable. The question is how do you approach it so you have positive results?

While behavior garners the spotlight, it's invariably a symptom, an outward expression of something deeper. Frankly, the something deeper is more important than the behavior itself. That something deeper is *identity*. The key principle here is that *being* precedes *doing*. Who we are (our identity) shapes what we do (our behavior).

Consider why a tightfisted friend on a fixed income—and a cancer survivor—consistently contributes more than a thousand dollars a year to the American Cancer Society; why an accountant with a strong environmental leaning buys a hybrid, even though the numbers don't add up; or how a long-standing entrepreneur and free-market zealot suddenly joined spirited public demonstrations as a 99-percenter, which meant that he was taking aim—politically and culturally—against the wealthiest Americans and engaging in unvarnished, bare-knuckle identity politics.

What do these three examples have in common? Each person was acting against their own short-term self-interests. Each felt they were making a principled choice—one that they took pride in. Their identities—a cancer survivor, an environmentalist, a 99-percenter—drove those decisions and the behavior that followed.

### When Identity Influences Decisions

When people allow their identity to influence their decisions, they essentially ask themselves three questions: "Who am I?" "What kind of situation is this?" "And what do people like me do in this kind of situation?" More often than not, this process occurs naturally, automatically, subconsciously. But the tougher the decision, the more it becomes a conscious decision.

Identity is especially helpful when we must grapple with tough decisions, when we're conflicted, when we're tempted, and when we're out of sorts. If you want to make a dramatic change in your life, identity is an essential first step in helping you get there.

What about changes in others? Do you want your company's suppliers to be more responsive? Do you want your work team to ditch all the pointless drama? Would you like your work silos to become a thing of the past? Identity is the key to all these changes. And in the end, changes like these significantly improve everyone's quality of life.

## Identity: What It Is, What It Isn't

Who am I? This long-standing question is arguably one of life's most important. Yet, it's a question that too many simply haven't addressed. As a result, it's no wonder that most people struggle to answer it—at least with much confidence. The question seems straightforward enough, some might even say simple. But the question is anything but simple.

We all have parts: big parts, obscure parts, unique parts, passionate parts, defining parts, inspiring parts, colorful parts, loving parts. Put all the parts together, and they reveal a unique mosaic of who we are. Who we are is a collection of identities that give meaning and direction to our life.

Let's understand identity as an array of important values, beliefs, ideologies, and philosophies. It's a metaphorical

Some identities shape us more than others. There are precious few identities that truly reflect *who we are* and volumes more that reflect *what we are*.

basket that we're always carrying around. It contains the things we love, the things we take pride in, the things we're passionate about, our values, the things we gladly commit our resources to. Identity is a way to express to others who we see ourselves to be.

Some identities shape us more than others. There are precious few identities that truly reflect *who we are* and volumes more that reflect *what we are*.

Assume for a moment that a newborn named Anne in Montreal has the ability to answer that question. What might she say? "I'm Canadian (my nationality). I'm Asian (my ethnicity). I come from pioneer stock (my heritage). I'm upper-middle class (my social status). I'm French-speaking (my language). I'm Catholic (my religion). I'm a Phang (my surname). I have a well-established ancestry (my genetics)."

Collectively, these things, which are largely inherited, tell Anne a lot about her beginnings. Yet knowing Anne's genetics tells us a lot more about *what* she is rather than *who* she is. Who Anne will become is ultimately how she chooses to live her life. We don't yet know what is important to her. We don't yet know who is important to her. We don't yet know what she stands for. Who Anne will become is all ahead of her.

### Identity Profiles

As we acquire more experiences in life, it becomes easier to recognize the identities that define us in unique ways. For example, we could say that a man is a husband, educator, and a professional. These three identities are starting points in understanding who he is. Yet, intuitively we know that three identities provide only a partial picture.

That's why a template is provided in Chapter Four of ***The Power of Identity,*** to help readers create an initial identity profile. Having the profile is important because it helps provide a more robust picture. It's more robust because of the methodology that accompanies the template.

In short, the methodology, among other things, produces "identity tiers," which segment identities by importance. First-tier identities carry the most sway and have the highest degree of impact; third-tier identities have proportionally less sway, less impact. Tier-one identities come closest to describing who we are at our core.

For example, the man's identities of husband, educator, and professional could be his first-tier identities, whereas his second-tier identities could include things such as dad, American, and servant. Third-tier identities could include things like friend, change agent, and entrepreneur.

Invariably there's a difference, sometimes a big one, between who we are and who we imagine ourselves to be. Faux identities, which can arise for any number of reasons, are both prevalent and problematic. Each of us can distort the view we hold of ourself. Sometimes our self-views are embellished, artificial, or illusionary. And naturally, consequences follow from each.

The methodology helps to maximize the number of identities that truly belong on one's profile and to minimize the number of identities that have no business being there in the first place.

Identifying our core identities is often messy. It forces us to go deep, which can be uncomfortable. We're so close to the subject, we don't always see the forest for the trees. Plus, our self-examination suggests that change is in the offing, which is something many of us would prefer to avoid.

The subtle but important differences in identities can be major distinctions. After all, there's a big difference between someone's seeing themselves as a professional defined largely by the color of one's collar and someone's seeing themselves as a professional defined largely by how one acts. When it comes to identities, these things matter, at least if the objective is higher-order decisions and the desirable behaviors that result.

## Keystone Identities: The Key to Transformation

Keystone identities are special. They're often game-changers. For many, being a professional is a keystone identity. So is being a parent. A keystone identity matters most because it has

special qualities that enhance other identities. Simply put, it acts as a lever—it has a disproportionate effect on everything around it. Most important, it helps make us better people.

We might think a tier-one identity would naturally also be a keystone identity. But that's not always the case. Yet, almost without exception, a keystone identity is a tier-one identity. Consider the following questions:

- Do you see evidence of keystone identities among those close to you?
- What does your gut tell you about your keystone identities? Do you recognize any?
- What would it do for your confidence if you were able to identify your keystone identities?

A keystone identity is defining. It's naturally aspirational. In many ways, a keystone identity is magical—helping people to "up their game." In the process, people create a better version of themselves. A keystone identity is one of the precious few identities that truly reflect who we are or who we're trying to be. Non-keystone identities, as helpful as they are, don't deliver the same type of impact.

Because keystone identities have amazing transformative power, being able to identify them is especially important. The methodology in Chapter Four of ***The Power of Identity*** aids in the identification process.

## Who Am I—Really?

You may have already formulated a general identity profile in your mind. If so, no doubt your intuition played a big role in that. Yet, the precision needed to develop a top-notch identity profile requires more than just intuition. The devil is in the details.

Questions help tease out those details. Consider these: How do you choose to spend your time? What do you stand for? What are the things that make you tick? What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?

What do you spend your money on? What was the last thing you took a stand on? How are you using your talents? When faced with two equally compelling choices, what tips the scale between the two? What brings you contentment? What types of things are worth making a sacrifice for?

What types of things really make you angry? What are the types of things you would do if no one paid you? These questions and others like them will stimulate your thinking as you begin to develop your profile.

The aim of an identity profile is to help us better define who we are or who we want to be. It's analogous, as the saying goes, "Be yourself, but be your best self." With greater clarity about who we are, we're better able to breathe life into the things that are most important to us—our values.

A robust identity profile is one that's chock-full with identities that reflect who we are. That's what you should be aiming for in developing your profile.

## Implications for Individuals

Your profile is a terrific start, but it's not the end by any means. Let's now discuss the important implications for individuals, developmentally speaking, that stem from the learning advanced to this point.

Consider development as one of two things: (1) the growth of a person's capabilities or (2) the growth of a person who has evolved in significant ways. The former is about doing; the latter is about being. Naturally, there are synergies between the two.

When it comes to creating dramatic impact, developmentally speaking, identity is the real deal. Identity changes people's very nature. As a result, many things naturally change with it, including behavior.

So what's required of us, developmentally speaking, to become more evolved? How do we hit that elusive developmental high-water mark?

Human-development scholar Robert Kegan suggests two fundamental things have to change in the upward shift from one level of development to another: (1) one's thinking and (2) the source of one's self-worth. Kegan indicates that for us to evolve, the source of our sense of worth—our sense of self (identity)—must also evolve.

This is accomplished by adopting identities consistent with who we are or who we're trying to be. In other words, our choosing who we'll be is a precursor to our evolving.

Numerous stories, both business and non-business alike, in ***The Power of Identity*** illustrate how an identity refresh changed people's very nature and buoyed their confidence. In each case, the wisdom of the day suggested that the desired shifts—dramatic ones—were so much folly. Here's one such story.

### The Girls of Malawi

Mary Tuchscherer's California-based nonprofit organization, VoiceFlame, helps marginalized adolescent girls in Malawi become confident writers and published authors.

"Blossom" isn't a word one normally associates with Malawian young people. Poverty is rampant in the country. Deprivation, isolation, and oppression are commonplace. For most, each day is a struggle to survive. Short life expectancies and high infant mortality are problematic. Nearly a million people are infected with HIV/AIDS, which equals more than 10 percent of the adult population.

When identity is central in an organization's change effort, it inevitably has a multiplier effect.

Most Malawian children have little education because they are needed to tend the fields and care for their siblings. In such a society, the dominant culture reinforces distinct gender roles that favor males. Thus, most routine family tasks are performed by female children. Three-quarters of the country's literate people are men.

On the surface it seemed odd: teaching girls to write and expecting dramatic and far-reaching results. But by expressing themselves through the written word, something ignited within each of the girls. Their outlooks became remarkably upbeat; their confidence waxed strong.

Instead of believing their only choice in life was to marry young (and marry well), the girls began to articulate individualized life goals. Instead of remaining silent about their dreams, the girls expressed hopes and desires through writing and by verbalizing them out loud.

For the Malawian girls, the impacts of the VoiceFlame program don't stop with a newfound ability to read and write. It shifts their mindsets. Their world expands. The girls teach other family members and acquaintances to read and write. The girls take more prominent roles in their family businesses. They strengthened their entrepreneurial skills, and some gained the confidence to start their own small businesses.

In other words, they were very different people than before. The change was dramatic—even more impressive when one considers everything that was working against them.

Appreciating the full impact the VoiceFlame program has had on the girls is often best experienced by hearing directly from them. Some of the girls developed a simple chant, a mantra that conveys their feelings. In four short lines the girls tell their full story. The message—only 15 words long—is simple yet speaks volumes about the girls' newfound perspective: "I am a writer. I have a voice. It is unique. I write with it."

The root of the change is the girls' newfound identity as writers; "writer" became a big part of who they became. And we know that people's most powerful identities—keystone identities—change everything around them.

Time and again, experience demonstrates that this degree of change isn't necessarily unusual. Whether it's a student at a Southern California trade school or a company president in North Carolina—stories both memorialized in the book—it's common to see a big jump in confidence as a result of a refresh involving a keystone identity.

## Implications for Organizations and Families

As impressive as behavior change can be for individuals, it is equally so when applied to groups of people within organizations. When identity is central in an organization's change effort, it inevitably has a multiplier effect.

As the nature of people change in concert with their thinking, an organization's habits improve, new norms are embraced, and cultural health improves. As a result, trust increases and results improve.

For our purposes, an organization is any group of persons joined by common interests or purpose.

Speaking of bottom-line results, what if you could improve the health of your organization's culture such that you could reduce your company's bids anywhere between 2 and 5 percent? Would that give you a competitive advantage?

Would that make your job, as the organization's principal

leader, easier? Do you think the experience might change the way you lead people?

### Organizational Change in Action

Based in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, Danboise Mechanical suffered when sister departments acted as independent entities, wasting energy by competing with each other rather than with competitors in the marketplace. Danboise suffered from a silo mentality that resulted in duplication of effort, lack of synergy, and missed opportunities.

The shift in people's thinking and subsequent actions was a result of Danboise's adoption of identity-based development, with professionalism as its centerpiece. Employees came to view themselves as professionals and worked hard to live up to its tenets by developing a professional mindset. They internalized the notion of being a professional in a way that was far more resolute than prior to the initiative.

Moreover, executive leadership made sure that the initiative wasn't treated as the "flavor of the month."

It changed the culture; it felt like a revitalized company. By becoming more interdependent, Danboise benefited in myriad ways beyond breaking down their silos—as important as that was.

Again, this type of dramatic change—one spawned by identity-based development—isn't a "one-off." For instance, the performance of one division of Otis Elevator in North America went from "worst to first," in statistical terms, in 24 months. That division took on a new aura—thanks in large part to identity-based development and reinforcing it in every aspect of the business.

So taken by the results as well as the process, leaders in both Otis and Danboise adopted a new approach to leading. Rather than attempting to squeeze new behaviors out of the proverbial orange, they chose to grow better oranges. These leaders learned that when someone takes on the mantle of being a professional, a lot of things naturally take care of themselves.

It's strategic in nature because it develops the whole person. Time and again, when leaders learn more about identity-based development, it disrupts their thinking about development and change management.

When leading others, what do you emphasize, behaviors (doing) or being (identity)?

Companies that have made professional ideals their north arrow (meaning they have made a commitment to integrate them into the fabric of their business) should take professionalism out of the shadows and bring it into the sunlight.

But what about talking up the professionalism in environments outside the organization, such as market-facing audiences? For instance, what impact might that have on sales prospects or on investors?

Declaring what you stand for—in this case that your organization is built on professional ideals—with market-facing audiences can be terrific. That is, it can be terrific granted that (1) the organization and its people largely emulate the admirable traits and characteristics that people come to expect from those proclaiming to be professional and (2) that it's communicated effectively. The former is showing (actions); the latter is telling (words). Your actions must be consistent with your words.

## Breaking the Scourge of Shame

Many researchers and therapists today believe we have an epidemic of shame. That shouldn't be surprising if people increasingly aren't clear about who they really are. In the absence of identity, we tend to be tossed to and fro by our culture's finicky whims. Under such conditions, shame has a fertile breeding ground. This is why it's so important for us to be clear about who we really are.

Shame is an especially painful self-judgment about one's self-worth that gets to the heart of who we are (our identity). Shame whispers, "There's something very wrong with you."

Identity proves to be especially valuable as both a prevention and intervention in managing shame. For example, 42-year-old Randy, a star merger-and-acquisition guru, takes a big risk on a tempting but shaky company that quickly loses 80 percent of its market value.

As a "professional" (tier-one identity), Randy felt badly about the stinging impacts on his investors, but the risk was disclosed up front. While Randy felt mortified, he successfully avoided feeling shame.

Just as you're not going to win the Daytona 500 with a 300-pound concrete block tethered to your rear bumper, it's improbable that you'll be able to reveal your best self with shame dragging you down.

Identity is akin to an inoculation from shame. When you're secure in yourself, you won't be obsessed with being liked,

One of the reasons people embrace identity so readily is a sense that it eventually will make them better people... Get better and you'll be better.

you won't measure your success against others, you won't be fixated by what others think of you, and you won't allow others to define you.

## Becoming a Better Person

For many who have undergone an identity-induced change, becoming a better person is the thing they treasure most. Identity plays an important role as a first-order mover of behavior, but its ultimate power is its ability to transform.

People approach identity in one of three ways. Depending on the situation, people treat identity as a means to (1) get something they need or want, (2) help them avoid making regretful decisions, or (3) help them grow as a person.

These can be sorted into the following categories: intervention, prevention, and catalyst. The impact and benefits associated with each are clearly useful, although there are significant differences in scale between the three. In terms of impact, you might think of them as good (intervention), better (prevention), and best (catalyst).

### Intervention, Prevention, Catalyst

Intervention focuses on filling a short-term need that's largely tactical in nature. Prevention focuses on avoiding falling prey to unwise pursuits, unsavory temptations, and the self-indulgent whisperings of one's own ego. Catalyst focuses on becoming secure in who you are or who you're trying to be.

Catalyst is the ideal. When identity is treated as a catalyst, it invariably creates the greatest impact. Because the focus is on becoming something (i.e., it's forward looking), a person's capabilities naturally grow in conjunction with their growth as a human being.

Contrast that against treating identity as merely an intervention, which at its core is primarily about problem solving and helping people to grow their capabilities.

Sometimes what we don't do says as much about us as what we actually do. This is where prevention comes in. Treating identity principally as a prevention has worthwhile benefits. Prevention helps us to avoid saying something or doing something we'd later regret.

Developmentally speaking, intervention and prevention are largely focused on *doing*, whereas catalyst emphasizes *being*. Catalyst has a forward-looking nature and thus is the higher-order approach.

Becoming a better person typically involves things such as a change in one's thinking, an enhanced view of oneself, and a shift to internal validation as one's primary source of self-esteem. Each is foundational, consequential in its own right. They're also representative of the types of things one normally associates with higher-order development.

### Get Better, Be Better

One of the reasons people embrace identity so readily is a sense that it eventually will make them better people. For most, the relationship between a robust identity and becoming a better person is self-evident. Get better and you'll be better. People sense this intuitively.

Identity is, for each of us, our path home. It's our north arrow, one reflecting both our best intentions and noble desires. Because we own it, we're invested.

Getting this identity thing right can be hard, but that mustn't dissuade us. When it comes to aspirational pursuits, falling short is inevitable. But each of us is more than the sum of our individual behaviors.

Writer Charles Moore wrote about a teaching moment that Leo Tolstoy shared with his readers. A priest had been criticized by one of his parishioners for not "walking the talk." The critic told the priest that the principles he was teaching must have been just as erroneous as these aspects of his behavior.

In response, the priest admitted his shortcomings in living up to the ideals he espoused, but he disputed the parishioner's conclusion. He said, "Look at my life now and compare it to my former life. You will see that I am trying to live out the truth I proclaim."

A robust identity brings out the best in us. And identity can make what we become that much more robust.

Identity's fruits can be applied to virtually every aspect of the human condition. Make no mistake, identity is a difference maker regardless of age, tribe, or station in life. And since life is about becoming, identity—with its unique ability to address the whole person—is central in our efforts to become a better person.

## A Final Note – From the Author

As the author has noted, this identity thing is a big deal. When it comes to the subject of identity, there's a lot to unpack. The fact is, the topic of identity encompasses so many important aspects of one's life personally as well as professionally. And, as this summary illustrates, identity is a natural elixir in prompting desired change.

In some instances, it may even change one's very nature. So often, dramatic change is precipitated by a shift in identity. Thus, identity should be central in any change effort. It's higher-order development at its best.

There will be some who see the primary aim of this book to be the building of a personal brand, which is the public side of identity. But that isn't the aim. Rather, it's to help people develop the private side of their identity. It's about proactively defining ourselves and caring more about what we think of ourselves than what others think of us.

It's important to allow identity's private side (i.e., defining ourselves) to drive its public side (i.e., a personal brand), not the other way around.

The dust jacket of ***The Power of Identity*** dramatically superimposes an eye-catching yellow umbrella amid a sea of plain, generic umbrellas. This powerful image artfully depicts the message and purpose of the book. The yellow umbrella represents a fresh, vigorous version of our identity.

And that's the all-important aim of the book: for readers to forge their own vibrant, distinctive self. Everyone should have a yellow umbrella.

When you're confident about knowing who you are, you have a powerful north arrow. Absent that, you'll forever be buffeted by culture's persnickety demands, your own ego, or by cantankerous people.

With a rock-solid identity you won't be obsessed with being liked. You won't measure your success against others. You won't be fixated on what others think of you. You won't allow others to define you.

You'll feel less conflicted and gain a surprising boost in self-esteem. You'll be secure in yourself—something that, unfortunately, has eluded so many.

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***The Power of Professionalism: The Seven Mind-Sets That Drive Performance and Build Trust*** by Bill Wiersma
- ***The Power of Reputation: Strengthen the Asset That Will Make or Break Your Career*** by Chris Komisarjevsky



Bill Wiersma is the founder and principal of Wiersma and Associates, a management consulting firm marketed under the brand Better Professionals, which services Fortune 500 companies and the professional services sector. He is a trusted advisor to executive leadership on senior team development and organizational culture. Wiersma is a renowned thought leader. His book ***The Power of Professionalism*** has become the definitive source on what it actually means to be a professional and significantly changed the way in which professionals view themselves.

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# The Power of Moments

Chip Heath, Dan Heath

# BOOK SNAPS™

## Zooming In On Your Next Read




### The Power of Moments

**Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact**

*By Chip Heath and Dan Heath*

Chip Heath and his brother, Dan Heath, have written four New York Times bestselling books: *Made to Stick, Switch, Decisive,* and *The Power of Moments*. Their books have sold over three million copies worldwide and have been translated into thirty-three languages including Thai, Arabic, and Lithuanian.

## Creating Your Defining Moments

Chip and Dan Heath believe that certain individual moments in a person's life have immense impact. They call these defining moments and they are "meaningful experiences that stand out in our memory." Some of these moments happen by chance, but others are created. In their book, ***The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact,*** the Heaths explore the necessary elements needed for a meaningful moment to exist, and they also explore how different individuals and organizations have been able to apply these principles in order to create memorable experiences that can change both business and lives. Their goal in writing their book is to help the reader create defining moments in their own lives and businesses.

In the first chapter, the Heaths discuss what they call duration neglect. Duration neglect refers to people's tendency to forget the actual length of an event. Instead, what people remember most are "the best or worst moment, known as the 'peak'" and the last moments. Beginnings also play an important role in a person's memory of an event. The Heaths use these ideas to prove that people do not rate their experience by averaging the emotion experienced throughout the whole duration, rather they rate their experiences based upon "the peaks, the pits, and the transitions."

There are four elements that alone or in conjunction with the other three have a tendency to create defining moments: elevation, insight, pride, and connection. The authors organize their book around these four elements. While defining moments can be either positive or negative, the authors focus on positive moments because those are the moments they want to help people create more of.

The Heaths believe that three ideal times for defining moments are pits, peaks, and transitions. Peaks are high points in life or in an experience. Some of these milestones include retirement and accomplishments within a person's career. They then discuss pits. A pit, the lowest part of an experience, can actually be turned into a peak if handled well such as when a customer complains and gets satisfactory resolution. Examples of pits are negative feedback and the loss of a loved one. Transitions happen naturally in life, and the authors advocate making them into special moments. Examples of these life transitions are the first day of school, the first day on a new job, and a promotion.

## Elevation

The first element that can help make ordinary moments memorable are moments of elevation. These are experiences that go beyond the ordinary. They are frequently joyful, and they are considered peaks. The authors believe that these moments deserve planning. Too many businesses, the posit, focus most of their time on remedying areas of weakness and not enough time on creating moments of elevation. This is counterproductive, they say, as improving the experience from good to great has a higher financial payoff than moving from negative experiences to neutral ones. The Heaths refer to a study done by the research firm, Forrester, which states that elevating the positives earns a company nine times more money than eliminating the negatives does.

The authors explain that positive moments can be created through "elevation, insight, pride, and/or connection." To create such a moment through elevation, the Heaths recommend boosting sensory appeal, raising the stakes, and breaking the script. While all three elements are not necessary for a particular moment of elevation, most such moments have at least two of these elements. Boosting the sensory experience can involve any or all of the senses, and it involves making things beautiful. Raising the stakes can involve "productive pressure" such as making something into a performance or including a deadline. The Heaths devote an entire chapter to breaking the script. A script, "refers to our expectations of a stereotypical experience." It can be thought of as creating a surprise; however, it is a strategic surprise that forces a person to think about the actual script itself. To exemplify this, the authors point to Southwest Airlines. They encourage their flight attendants to be cheeky when making their safety announcements. These are important because these announcements can turn into peak experiences of the trip.

## Insight

The Heaths describe moments of insight as moments that "deliver realizations and transformations." While many of these moments happen spontaneously, there are a couple of strategies the Heaths have for artificially creating these moments. The first of these is helping people to trip over the truth, and the second is stretching for insight. Oftentimes people will not see the truth until they are forced to, but when they do finally see the truth, that moment can become a defining one in their lives. These are not long and drawn out moments. They usually take minutes or hours to happen. The key to tripping over the truth is that people have to come to the realizations themselves. The events that lead to these realizations can be manufactured, but the lessons must be learned on one's own. A necessary ingredient, however, is that the facilitator of the moment must know what outcome they want to bring about.

Helping people trip over the truth is one way to bring about moments of insight. The other is to put people in situations where they must stretch for insight. "To stretch is to place ourselves in situations that expose us to the risk of failure." This is important because "action leads to insight more often than insight leads to action." Mentors can play a large part in helping people stretch because they push people to become more than they currently are, but mentors also provide direction and support. This relationship gives a person assurance that if they try something new, someone will be there to help them if they fail. This pushing opens the mentee up to the possibility of failure, but it also allows them more moments for self-insight. The Heaths say, "The promise of stretching is not success, it's learning."

## Pride

The next element that can help create a defining moment is pride. Part of moments of pride include working hard and gaining positive results. It is also important, however, that the person is noticed by others. People can help others experience moments of pride simply by recognizing them. The Heaths posit that "while recognition is a universal expectation, it's not a universal practice." The Heaths encourage people to practice recognition constantly with a preference to weekly or daily recognition rather than monthly or yearly. The Heaths are not fans of employee of the month programs because they can breed cynicism as the best employees cannot always win all the awards, so less than stellar employees eventually earn the awards, making them essentially meaningless. To get around this in a formal recognition program, the Heaths recommend using objective measures to determine recognition. Such an objective measure could be sales volume. The other problem the Heaths have with such programs is that the recognition is programmatic rather than personal. The recognition that means the most to people is frequently spontaneous and refers to specific behaviors. In short, "effective recognition makes the employee feel noticed for what they've done." The Heaths refer to researchers who have shown that providing praise often benefits the person being praised just as much as it does the person they are praising.

The Heaths also believe in the importance of multiplying milestones. By this they mean celebrating numerous smaller milestones a person meets on the way to their biggest milestones. One of the benefits of this frequent recognition is that it helps make goals more tangible. For example, the goal of learning to play the guitar is not very specific, and as such, a person may give up after a short period of time. If they provide themselves with many numerous goals along the way, such as practicing a certain number of times per day for a set period of time, they will have measurable goals they can celebrate as milestones. The Heaths refer to this as a level-up strategy. The authors believe that this type of thinking is missing in many areas of life. People frequently focus on "a numerical goal plus supporting plans." The authors do not find this particularly motivating. While goals like this provide accountability, they are not generally inspiring. To create moments of pride, it is helpful to consider what is actually motivating and what can be accomplished in weeks or months. They ask, "What's a different accomplishment that is worth surfacing and celebrating?" For example, a weight loss milestone that might be more motivating than losing 10 pounds in two months might be to fit comfortably in a certain pair of pants. If a person meets a milestone, the authors believe it is important to celebrate, to create a peak moment. Milestones help make people successful because they encourage people to push themselves to complete tasks. These milestones "are conquerable and worth conquering."

> Practicing acting with courage can both reduce fear and bolster confidence."

Many moments of pride in a person's life require courage. While it is not possible to manufacture moments of courage, it is possible to create moments in which a person can practice exercising their courage so they are ready when the moment to act arises. Practicing acting with courage can both reduce fear and bolster confidence. They state that "courage isn't just suppressed fear. It's also the knowledge of how to act in the moment." People can help themselves act as they wish in moments requiring courage by making specific plans for what will happen should a treacherous situation occur. An example of this is if a person who wishes to cut down on alcohol consumption makes a plan specifically for when a waiter asks them if they would like a drink. For many people, the hard part is not knowing what to do; rather it is acting on that knowledge. This requires practice. This practice, however, must require courage itself.

## Connection

The final element that can lead to defining moments is courage. "When members of groups grow closer, it's because of moments that create shared meaning." Many peak moments involve these experiences of shared meaning such as weddings and graduations. They involve personal contact; therefore, big moments are shared, not via Zoom, but through in person at ceremonies in the presence of others. The Heaths explain that groups that bond together quickly often have had to struggle together. For example, when a group of research participants had to complete an activity with their hands in cold water, they bonded more with each other than when the participants completed the same activity in comfortable water. People often will choose to struggle if they deem the work important, if they are granted autonomy, and if they are allowed to choose whether or not to participate.

The Heaths differentiate between purpose and passion. Purpose refers to a person's belief that their work is benefiting others or has a larger meaning. Passion refers to the excitement a person has about their work. People with both high passion and high purpose perform well, but purpose is actually more important than passion in regards to how well a person will perform. They say "purpose trumps passion." Part of this is because people can share a common purpose, but passion is more individual. A takeaway for leaders then is to purposefully cultivate purpose. This can be done by determining who the final beneficiaries of a project are. For example, a hospital janitor can find purpose by remembering that the ultimate effect of his or her good work is "the health and happiness of patience."

The Heaths also discuss responsiveness in terms of how it creates a sense of connection. They state that our relationships are strongest when we feel responded to and when we respond to others. This requires understanding, validation, and caring. In other words, a person should feel seen, respected, and cared about. The need for responsiveness is easily understood in personal relationships, but it is also important in professional encounters. For example, when people find themselves frustrated with a commercial experience, this often happens because they do not believe people at the company have been responsive to them. People do not like being treated like a number. Moments of connection require responsiveness. Responsiveness does not always lead to intimacy. For intimacy to develop, turn taking is required where both parties share. The Heaths write that "a defining moment of connection can be both brief and extraordinary."

Chip and Dan Heath wrote *The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact* to help people create these defining moments in their own lives. These moments can be personal such as graduation ceremonies or weight loss milestones, or they can be professional such as moments of professional recognition and better customer service experiences. The Heaths do not, however, see these defining moments as simply a means to an end. They believe they are an end in and of themselves. Prioritizing putting out fires over creating moments, in the end, usually backfires. The Heaths write that "In life, we can work so hard to get the kinks out that we forget to put the peaks in." Defining moments are moments of action, and it is the task of the individual to stay alert for these moments.

The Heaths' book provides a clear blueprint for helping to create these moments, but it is also peppered with examples of all of these different techniques that were successfully put into place. Through these examples the authors show how people have been able to elevate the mundane to the remarkable, and in doing so, have created defining moments and memories that can last a lifetime and can help bond people together. Through the entire book, the authors prove that creating these defining moments is a noble task with outcomes that go far beyond being merely a means to an end.

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# The Power of Potential

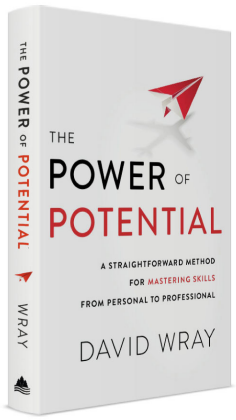
David Wray

Career

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# The Power of Potential

## A Straightforward Method for Mastering Skills from Personal to Professional




*by* **David Wray**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We've all seen a talented individual in action and secretly wished we could achieve as easily and effortlessly as they seem to do. Well, you can! You can replicate any skill, as long as you understand both the visible and invisible workings that an expert utilizes when 'doing their thing.'

***The Power of Potential*** is built around the idea that expertise and excellence isn't about luck or simply natural talent, but unlocking a defined system for identifying skills to model, laying the groundwork for development, choosing the right experts to emulate, and cultivating your skills over time.

Through this summary, you'll learn all about the seen and unseen ways that experts become smarter, better, more effective, and less given to insecurity and delays in their development. By the end, you'll have unlocked the power of your own potential—and discovered actionable tips for continuing your journey towards the top of the experts pile.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify the invisible processing through which an individual's worldview influences their actions.
- Unlock your ability to master the skills you really want and need.
- The real but invisible process of receiving information and reacting to it, even when we react to the same event differently each time.
- The tools necessary to harness these inner systems to your advantage.

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Meghan P. Kozak, Editor-in-Chief • Kylie Waytuck, Graphic Designer

## Identifying Which Skill to Model

Narrowing the process of skill development into specific areas of expertise spotlights several important interconnected aspects of the modeling process.

- Knowledge and insights are most likely to result from identifying and using a specific moment in time with each expert, which you will be selecting next
- Learning can be accelerated by focusing on a more specialized subject area. Don't be afraid to dig deep.
- Interconnected activities and micro-moments influence outcomes, even when it's not immediately apparent.
- Gaps in understanding the process, left unresolved, can negatively impact the likelihood of acquiring the desired skills.
- Ancillary skill development can be useful with regard to broader developmental objectives

### Laying the Groundwork for Your First Challenge

Now that you've identified your specific area of mastery, it's time to find experts to emulate. At its core, modeling is the process of identifying, codifying, and replicating excellence. When modelling, you should choose your expert mentors according to a few key themes that will determine their effectiveness for you:

- Your own objective assessment of an expert's skill level
- Expert's availability and time commitment
- Expert's openness to exploring the process in detail
- Expert's willingness to be gently focused by the interview
- Your personal ability to develop quick connections
- Your own comfort level with an 'I don't know what I don't know' attitude

### Choosing Your Experts

At this stage, the question arises of how many experts and aspiring experts to choose for developing a model. A good minimum number is five— three experts and two aspiring/in-training experts.

Choosing more experts than needed will give you flexibility in the event that an expert backs out of their commitment.

Once you've selected potential experts, it's time to make first contact using the method of the five Ws— who, what, when, where, why.

By this point, you have hopefully connected with your experts, delivered a crisp and clear message, finalized your participant list, and established a contingency plan.

### Preparing to Interview

When it comes to preparing for an interview with an expert you hope to incorporate into your model, there are seven key preparatory steps:

- Establishing a meeting time and place
- Outlining the meeting
- Recognizing your 'chosen moment' process steps (the moment when you'll obtain maximum value from the interview)
- Adapting to your expert's needs (knowing your expert)
- Making a mental road map of your objectives
- Organization your information collection method
- Knowing and managing yourself (preparing based on your own specific needs)

By this point you should be in a perfect position to conduct an interview in a way that will extract the greatest value for everyone involved!

### Conducting Your Interviews

Conducting successful interviews with experts depends on understanding the following five key concepts:

- The importance of rapport and how to develop and maintain it
- How the Personality Map (PM) can be used to get an outside-in look at how an expert masterfully performs
- The types of questions most likely to elicit relevant information from experts for subsequent use in the first draft model
- The TATE Model: A useful and structured method for organization the skill process
- An applied example of a TATE model

Our next step is to integrate all of this information gathered from the experts into a first draft model, one which you'll hone and develop into what will become your final draft model and which will serve as your guide to developing the skills and expertise you're seeking.

## Developing a First Draft Model

So, here you are, poised with your stack of notes, or your app with annotated notes, or digitally recorded files from each interview. What comes next?

The goal is to integrate the interview notes into a crisp and practical draft model. It's often easier to work backward rather than forward, so start with the end in mind. You need to create the model with a view to ensuring you are inherently addressing the following basic questions or objectives:

What are you seeking to achieve (or help others achieve)?

Who are you doing it for?

Why does it matter?

How do you plan to organize the process steps?

### Closing the Gaps

Closing the gaps between the first draft and the final version of your skill model involves road-testing the draft model, and learning how to identify and eliminate or reduce differences identified. There are two ways to do this:

Observe the expert in action performing the skill concerned

Perform a walk-through of the draft process model with each expert

Observation is typically the best method, because you not only see the perfect model in action, but there's also no filter (other than any inherent observational bias). You're seeing the skill you hope to model in its purest form.

## Developing a Final Model

With gaps identified and dealt with, the final model is ready for development. The easiest starting point in this phase is to update and extend the process flow diagram, using the additional insights gained from the live walk-through (or second interview).

Specifically, look for distinct teaching moments for yourself within the walk-through. These reflective teachable moments serve three purposes:

To identify any residual skill steps that may not have surfaced beforehand during the expert interviews or walk-throughs

To reach 'in the moment' skill readiness. The more practiced, the more effective it will prove in practice

To start shifting focus toward cementing the quiet confidence, the kind of confidence that draws the desired skill outcome to you and keeps it there

### Understanding Motivators and Styles

People have different motivations for pursuing skills and expertise. Generally, these fall into one of three categories, or somewhere along the spectrum between them. Consider which one describes you best, keeping in mind that you may not fall perfectly into a single category.

Are you a Graduator, who is a relatively conservative change agent looking to identify problems and achieve a desired outcome?

Are you a Renovator, who is a pragmatic agent of change looking to apply their skills to solving real problems they see in their life, work, and industry?

Are you a Disruptor, someone who wants to develop skills that will allow them to transform entire industries and maybe even the world?

The motivation behind your pursuit of your skills will help you determine the best path forward.

## A Moment to Dream

Let's take a moment to apply a technique used by Walt Disney and countless others to turn their dreams into plans and their plans into reality.

First, choose three locations nearby your home or office. These should be places that are easily accessible. The first location is to dream, the second location is to plan, and the third location is to critique your plan.

### Dream

Step into your chosen location to dream and connect with your feelings of dreaming freely. Bring the big picture of your desired skill into your dream space. See yourself living vividly and without limitations, using an anything-is-possible attitude.

### Plan

Step into the location you chose for planning, then connect your dream to a concrete plan. Believe that your dream is fully realizable, and define a plan that will make it happen.

### Critique

With a plan in mind, step into the critique location and connect with your on-fire moment here. Take time to poke holes in your plan (not the dream, but the plan to achieve it) and see whether there is a better path forward.

### Prioritizing Your Focus

With your plan defined, it's time to address the next questions: With so many moving parts, where do you start first? What should you prioritize and how do you make that decision? If you can't do it all, what then? Are there any shortcut tricks that will accelerate the outcome?

Align your dream with your plan to develop a powerful visual motivator for the generative outcome you seek. If you don't have these plans yet, choose an example or make up your own for a relatively quick self-improvement activity.

## Reaching Your Destination

So, how do you know you've reached your destination and mastered your skill? Here are some typical criteria you (and people you trust) can use to assess where you stand.

Consistently successful performance: a track record of high and reliable performance of the skill int eh past

Depth and breadth of implied knowledge, such as the ability to identify patterns and relationships between things, the ability to see things others cannot, the ability to anticipate outcomes, understanding complex concepts or systems, and making the complex simple.

Peer recognition and respect: being seen by experts in the field as an expert yourself. Getting expert attention may be challenging; however, the power of social media can turn this around

Experience: the period over which the skill has been performed, typically measured in years. Generally, the longer a skill has been performed, the more perfected it is. Also consider the frequency of skill application, not just the number of years

Self-reflective: Experts can pinpoint their latest mistake in agonizing detail, typically because it eats away at them.

Credentials: Experts commonly hold professional certifications or licensing

## Don't Stop Now

Now, how do you turn your mastered skills into a lifetime as a change champion? Change champions are individuals who:

Understand and acknowledge the need and reasons for change as well as the ecosystem impacts that will result

Set clear outcomes that are accomplished via the planned changes

Understand and plan for things that may work for or against their journey

The possibilities are infinite and you can make a difference now! And, perhaps most crucially, have fun doing it!



For over twenty years, David Wray has been a passionate transformation and change management executive. He has worked with Fortune 100 companies and individuals throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Seeing firsthand how many people struggle—and often give up—while trying to learn new skills, he wondered why some manage it almost effortlessly. During this quest to understand the "differences that make a difference", he discovered their secrets.

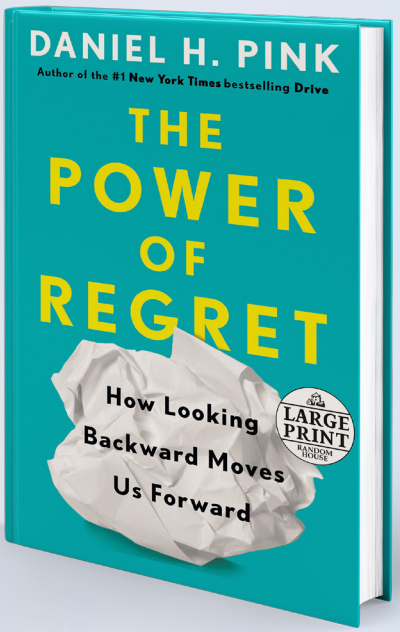
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# The Power of Regret

Daniel Pink

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Power of Regret

### How Looking Backward Moves Us Forward

By Daniel Pink

Daniel Pink is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of seven books -- including his latest, *The Power of Regret: How Looking Backward Moves Us Forward.* His books have sold millions of copies around the world, been translated into forty-two languages, and have won multiple awards. He lives with his family in Washington, DC.

# Looking Back to Move Forward

We live in a world where many people extol the benefits of living regret-free. The theory behind this ethos is that to live without regrets means we accept that every action we have taken has led us to where we are and who we are today. The concept is so prevalent that many people burn the phrase, "no regrets" onto their bodies as a tattoo. Author Daniel Pink, in his newest book, ***The Power of Regret: How Looking Backward Moves Us Forward,*** confronts this idea, and comes to the conclusion that regrets, properly conceptualized and utilized, are actually beneficial and can point us to what we need to do in order to live the good life.

Pink defines regret as the feeling a person gets when people believe their present would be better had they made a different choice in their past. Focusing only on positive emotions and drowning out the negative ones can detrimentally affect a person's life and potential. Pink's goal in his book is to advance the claim that regret is a necessary emotion and that, if used correctly, can help us course correct and create better futures. If used incorrectly, however, it can lead to either overwhelmingly negative feelings or to stagnation and fear of decision making.

## Regrets Make Us Human

For Pink, regret is part of what makes us human. This is because in order to regret something, we have to perform two separate cognitive feats: we need to both go back in time and go into the future. In other words, in order to experience regret, a person must look at their present and experience some dissatisfaction. The person then must cognitively travel back to the past and mentally change some action before then projecting themselves back into the future to see how his or her life would look different had that revised action actually occurred. This is not something beings with lesser formed intellects can perform. That being said, it's such a crucial aspect of being human that not being able to experience regret in this way can signal a problem in a person's psyche.

This is just the beginning of regret, however. In order for a person to experience regret rather than sadness or despair, they must compare their present circumstances with the alternative imagined circumstances and determine that the alternative is better. They then must assign blame.

For regret to occur, the person must feel that the outcome was determined by actions they took, not by a twist of fate. To extrapolate on Pink's ideas, a person might experience regret if they left a stove running and their house burned down. They would experience sadness, perhaps, but not regret had a wildfire come and burned their house down.

## The Nature of Regrets

Pink then begins his discussion of the nature of regrets. He describes counterfactual thinking which occurs when our minds are able to concoct circumstances that never actually existed in real life. In other words, we can imagine other possible outcomes. Some of these scenarios he describes as "at leasts." With "at least" thinking, a person sees an outcome and looks at other possible worse outcomes. This leads the individual to think "At least that didn't happen." These are also called downward counterfactuals. On the flip side, people can come to an "if only" counterfactual. With this scenario, a person looks at a negative outcome and thinks of what better circumstances they would be faced with if only they acted differently in this past. This is called an upward counterfactual.

Despite people's dislike of the feeling of regret, Pink claims three benefits can arise from the emotion:

1. It can improve decision making. This happens because past regret can slow down our decision making as well as help us make different decisions in the future.

2. It can improve performance. Regret can do this by increasing persistence. A large part of this is because people want to avoid the "if only" feelings associated with regret. This can help a person if the regret was their own or even if it was a hypothetical regret of a fictional person. In other words, a person might read a story of someone who experienced regret, and then they become more persistent in their own actions in order to avoid feeling the same way.

3. It can deepen meaning. Regrets can help people make more positive decisions in their present. The example Pink gives is of a woman who regretted not spending enough time listening to the stories of grandparents in the past. Now that the grandparents are gone and the regret has set in, the person makes sure to hear the stories of her own parents, so she does not have that regret as time passes.

Pink describes different attitudes people have towards feelings, and he comes to the conclusion that with regrets, the best option is to understand that feeling is for thinking. He believes that if people acknowledge their feelings, think about them, and use these thoughts to make better decisions in the future, people will create better outcomes. If a person ignores feelings, they can be led into delusion. If they indulge them and value them for only what they are, they can fall into despair. If they use them and think about them, however, these negative feelings can aid us in our future decision making.

## Type of Regrets

Pink and his colleagues launched the World Regrets Project. As part of this project, they have recorded the regrets of over sixteen thousand people over 105 countries. Through analyzing these regrets, Pink has come to believe that while the surface level of many regrets looks different, the regrets share a deep structure. Looking at the deep structure of the regrets, he came up with four main regrets people have: foundation regrets, boldness regrets, moral regrets, and connection regrets.

The first type of regret he discusses is foundation regrets. These regrets concern such actions as not saving enough money for the future and not taking care of one's health. The human need not being met with a foundation regret is a need for stability. This need for stability crosses multiple different facets of human life including the physical and financial lives of people. These "regrets arise from our failures of foresight and conscientiousness." The basis for a lot of these regrets is temporal discounting. In other words, we overvalue the present and undervalue the future. These regrets involve placing too much emphasis on areas where there is no lasting value. One key aspect of foundational regrets is that they compound. This means that small daily choices can add up to large negative effects in the long run. Pink cautions, however, against what he calls the foundation attribution error. If people fall into this erroneous thinking, they are likely to attribute failures to personal faults or decisions. While this may be the case, some of our failures stem from situations outside of our control. The main lesson to be learned from foundation regrets is to plan ahead.

The next type of regret Pink explores is boldness regrets. These regrets arise when we do not take an action that we later wish we had. These regrets could involve a single instance where we did not act boldly, or they can accumulate over a lifetime of small decisions. The main need not being met with boldness regrets is growth. Many people's boldness regrets involve not speaking up when they believe they should have. "The pain of boldness regrets is in the pain of 'what if?'" Pink goes on to explain that people regret inaction more than action. Pink believes this is because when we act, we know what has happened, and we don't have to ask "what if?". The lesson to be learned from boldness regrets is to speak up and take risks.

The third regret Pink discusses is moral regrets. These regrets occur when we do not act according to our belief of what is right and what is wrong. With moral regrets, the need we are deprived of is a feeling of goodness. Moral regrets are difficult to pinpoint because people vary so greatly in their definitions of morality. Only 10% of the deep structure regrets were moral regrets, but when they occurred they were especially painful. Of the regretted moral breaches people expressed regret over, the five greatest were as follows:

1. Harm such as bullying

2. Cheating

3. Disloyalty

> The lesson to be learned from moral regrets is to do the right thing."

4. Subversion or disrespect for authority
5. Desecration which involves regrets about degrading the sanctity of something.

The lesson to be learned from moral regrets is to do the right thing.

The final deep structure regret Pink explores is connection regrets. These regrets form when we have failed to maintain connections with people important to us. The human need not being met with these regrets is the need for love. Connection regrets can be broken down into two categories: closed door and open door regrets. Closed door regrets occur when a person has died and no further connection is possible. Open door regrets occur when there is still a possibility to do something about the relationship. Some of these connection regrets occur because of a conscious decision or a rift that occurs. Others occur when people simply drift apart. People, unfortunately, become fearful about fixing connection results because they overestimate how annoyed the other party might be and underestimate the probability that they would welcome the contact. "The lesson of closed doors is to do better next time. The lesson of open doors is to do something now."

## What to Do Now

If regrets are a natural part of human life, what can we do in order to maximize the benefits they can provide to us while minimizing the psychological harm? Pink lays out a two step process. First, we should undo the regrets if possible. "[P]eople are much more likely to undo regrets of action rather than of inaction." One reason for this might be because action regrets often stem from one harsh incident whereas inaction regrets elicit less extreme and instant emotional discomfort. When looking to undo a regret, a person can offer an apology or try to make current decisions that mitigate the negative effects of past decisions.

Second, we can "at least" the situation. In other words, we can look at the situation and look to see what could be worse if we had performed another action. We can also look for the silver lining in what has occurred. While these will not change our current situation, both can help mitigate the emotional distress we feel when we cannot undo a regret.

There are three things we can do to help ourselves take the feeling of regret, intellectualize it, and turn it into positive action. The first is self-disclosure. When we put feelings into words, we can understand them better and deal with them more effectively. This can be either disclosure to another person or self-disclosure through writing. The phrase Pink uses is "relive and relieve" to discuss the power of self-disclosure.

Next, people need to focus on self-compassion. Pink discusses harm that can come from focusing just on self-esteem. At its worst a focus on self-esteem can lead to narcissism and a lack of empathy. He prefers fostering self-compassion which involves treating ourselves like we would treat other people. If another person messes up, we are often more kind to them than we are to ourselves. He sees a focus on self-compassion as having the benefits but not the drawbacks of focusing on self-esteem.

Finally, he encourages self-distancing. This helps people "analyze and strategize" about their regrets. One way a person can do this is through space, by positioning oneself as a fly on the wall witnessing the regret. The second way to do this is through time. When we do this, we look to the future to determine how we will feel about a regret a month, a year, or even fifty years into the future. The third way to self distance is through language. We can do this by referring to ourselves, in our thoughts, by our first name or by third person pronouns.

Pink's main warning about regret is to not allow ourselves to dwell too much in anticipatory regret. Looking at how we may or may not feel regret in the future can help us make decisions in the present. If we spend too much of our mental space anticipating regret, however, we can paralyze ourselves. To remedy this, Pink urges us to see if a potential regret would fall into one of the four deep structure categories of foundation: regrets, boldness regrets, moral regrets, or connection regrets. If a certain action could trigger one of these regrets, we should put some time and attention into making the decision. If it does not involve one of the deep structure areas, then we can take the decision less seriously.

Pink has surveyed and analyzed the surveys of thousands of people. From these surveys, he and his colleagues have come to understand the underlying structure of regrets. Understanding these regrets can help people come to peace with their past and make better decisions in the future. Pink offers some concrete ways for how a person can do this. Instead of extolling a "no regrets" lifestyle, a person can then use their actual regrets from the past to form a better future.

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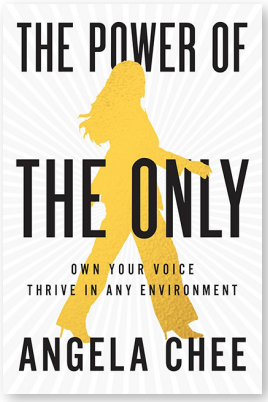
# The Power of the Only

Angela Chee

Executive Book Summaries®

# The Power of the Only

## Own Your Voice, Thrive in Any Environment




*by* **Angela Chee**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you've ever felt the strain of being "the Only" in the room—the only woman, person of color, unconventional thinker, or outsider by background or experience, you surely know that sense of difference can create self-doubt, silence strong ideas, and limit visibility. Too often, people who feel they do not fully belong hold back, despite a desire to communicate with confidence and make a greater impact.

***The Power of the Only: Own Your Voice, Thrive in Any Environment*** reframes this challenge as an advantage. It is a practical, reflective roadmap for transforming uniqueness into strength rather than liability. Through structured exercises, real-world stories, and research-backed guidance, readers learn how to reframe limiting beliefs, communicate with clarity, and step forward with confidence. At the core are five principles that help individuals recognize their inherent power, articulate their voice, and focus on thriving rather than merely fitting in.

Written by Angela Chee, an award-winning former television news anchor, media and communication coach, keynote speaker, and host of *The Power of the Only* podcast, the book draws on more than two decades in media and leadership development. Chee blends her experience as a pioneering Asian American woman in broadcast journalism with insights from CEOs, founders, creatives, and everyday professionals, to create a practical guide to leadership, visibility, and authentic influence.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Learn how to reframe being "the Only" as a strategic advantage
- Build confidence by recognizing and owning your existing strengths
- Develop a clear, authentic voice and improve communication with clarity, presence, and connection
- Shift from survival mode to long-term growth and leadership impact

INTRODUCTION

## The Power of the Only

The Power of the Only is seeing, understanding, and feeling what others don't. It's leveraging this unique perspective to achieve your goals and create change for yourself and others. It is cultivated through years of navigating challenges and unfamiliar situations as an Only—whether you are the only woman, person of color, LGBTQ individual, neurodivergent professional, or the lone voice in the room who sees things differently and seeks to shift the status quo, break through barriers, and create something new.

When you step into this power, you know the value you bring to every interaction. You don't second-guess yourself. You know what you want and don't want, what you are willing to do and what you are not, and you don't accept that these decisions are unavailable to you. You will thrive in any environment and be the bridge builder for the next generation of leaders, ideas, and innovation. But where does this power come from?

It's already inside us. You already have everything you need. If you are an Only, all the things that may have been challenging in the past, such as the act of hitting barriers and either breaking through them, going around them, or forging a new path, are what have helped shape you to see beyond, understand, navigate, process, empathize, and innovate. Your power is already inside you waiting; all you have to do is tap into it.

Growing up as the only Chinese American girl around taught me how to navigate conversations, be comfortable, and connect with different groups. Working in competitive industries like Hollywood and TV news helped me hone my skills and know how to be seen and heard, despite others telling me it would be too hard. When I was younger, I felt like I had to hide parts of myself; now, I am comfortable in my skin. It took time and various experiences to step into who I am. Once I truly embraced being an Only, it started to make a difference in my life.

### The Five Principles of the Power of the Only

To harness the Power of the Only, we must break through barriers, both internal and external. We must see what those barriers are, understand where they came from, and redefine them so that they are no longer obstacles but strengths.

Through my research, experience, and years of interviewing individuals who have stepped into their strength and thrived, I've identified five guiding principles for doing the same:

1. Own your opportunity
2. Own your power
3. Own your voice
4. Own your communication
5. Own your future

PRINCIPLE 1

## Own Your Opportunity

Owning your opportunity isn't just saying yes to the opportunities in front of you; it's also showing up when others say there are no options. You don't listen to the limiting messages from society, the "You can't do this," or "You shouldn't do that." You see what is possible and believe you can achieve it.

For my whole life, I was taught to be grateful and not make a fuss. It was the built-in template of my immigrant parents.

All of us have a set of internal rules that shape our decisions, feelings, and, ultimately, our lives. These rules can be influenced by our families, life experiences, workplaces, and communities. And sometimes, these rules can block us from our true potential.

Despite all the logical, personal, external, and probably very good reasoning as to why you didn't own your opportunity in the past, you *can* change and learn to navigate your reality with the goal of owning your opportunities in the future. You don't have to be on television or be an award-winning filmmaker. Everyone deserves to own their unique and desired opportunity, whatever it may be.

To own *your* opportunity, you must first acknowledge that some circumstances are not your fault and that you can't fix everything. When you can see that situations are not always in your control but don't internalize this lack of control as a personal flaw, you can more easily access your power and move forward.

Then, you must reframe your challenges. When you understand where your barriers are coming from, you can honor your past, see it as a gift, and use it as fuel for the future. But most importantly, you must view being an Only not as a burden, but as the most important opportunity that you own. Having the ability to navigate diverse perspectives and serve as a bridge builder is a true superpower.

### Recognize It's Not All Your Fault

As Onlys, there will be barriers that aren't our fault. For some, these challenges may be cultural; you may have a lan-

> True worth comes from being in alignment with yourself.

guage barrier or be restricted by cultural norms. Maybe you are ruled by family values or parental expectations. Others may face economic or social barriers that can limit access to opportunities. Systemic injustices like discrimination and gender inequality can also play a role. It's important to recognize your true value and realize that there's not always something to fix or prove.

Sometimes, you may feel a bit exhausted and feel like no matter how hard you try, it's not enough or there's another level to break through. It may take longer to own your opportunities than others if they don't have to overcome the same hurdles you do. These obstacles can slow you down, but you don't have to let them stop you. To own our opportunity, we first need to take a deeper look at where these external and internal barriers come from and what is ours to carry.

Once you have acknowledged the barriers in your life—internal, external, or both—you can create your own story. You don't have to accept what has come before. It's time to challenge the status quo and redefine power and success on your own terms.

### Reframe Your Challenges as Power

Reframing your challenges is shifting your perspective, honoring your past, and embracing all your experiences as stepping stones to growth and empowerment.

We may have taken on barriers from society, our families, and the media; however, we have the agency to control what we take in, what we keep, and what we let go of. To reframe your challenges as power, mine your past challenges for insights, honor your history and the challenges it presents, and embrace those challenges fully to own your opportunities and move forward with abundance and power.

By embracing your challenges or what you once viewed as roadblocks, you can step more fully into your true self. This shift not only cultivates a more positive and resilient mindset but also empowers you to own your opportunity with confidence and perseverance. The process of enduring and overcoming these challenges reveals your true capabilities, fostering a sense of self-assurance and strength.

By appreciating your struggles, setbacks, and barriers, you transform them into powerful lessons that fuel your growth. This mindset allows you to continuously learn, evolve, and thrive, ensuring that you not only recognize but also fully own the opportunities that come your way. In doing so, you become the architect of your own success, turning every challenge into a stepping stone.

### See Being an Only as an Opportunity, Not a Burden

Progress in society's efforts to make change in many areas is slow and often comes up short. That's why it's more important than ever to view being an Only not as a burden, but as a unique opportunity to create meaningful change. By embracing this perspective, we can leverage our distinct voices and experiences to affect change where it matters most.

Do you wonder why it's your responsibility to step up, explain yourself, and educate others? I often hear from Onlys about being disillusioned and tired of running into the same persistent roadblocks.

I believe the very reasons some might view being an Only as a burden—not feeling like you fit in, being isolated, or facing discrimination and microaggressions—are the same reasons why it's more important than ever to own our opportunity and create change, not just for ourselves, but for others.

Having someone with a distinct perspective in the room and fostering diverse perspectives are essential for effective decision-making, innovation, and preventing groupthink. Groupthink occurs when well-intentioned people make irrational or suboptimal decisions because they have a strong urge to conform, leading to not speaking up or raising alternative ideas, which then leads to a uniform way of thinking.

PRINCIPLE 2

## Own Your Power

Owning your power means not letting others dictate your value. You know you have everything you need inside to succeed. You are worthy *now* and not because of your title, level, awards, number of followers, or any other external metric. You don't need permission to take up space. You don't need to change who you are to access your power. You have internal status and agency. You know who you are and what you stand for, and you know you belong there.

You've likely experienced and will continue to experience times when people don't see your power. Truly owning your power is knowing who you are, owning your worth, and embracing it fully. Ask yourself: *Do I know my own value, regardless of external circumstances? How can I improve my sense of self?*

Some of us don't own our power because we cannot see it or because we've been told we don't have any. These limiting messages, whether a passing comment or consistent criticism, can affect what you believe about yourself.

If others put limitations on you, you may start accepting narratives about who you are that don't serve you and keep you from stepping up. These narratives, both external and internal, shape our self-perception.

### Reclaim Your Story

You can step into your full power and claim it:

1. **Understand that you don't need to change who you are**, but you do need to discover who you are and how you want to show up in the world.
2. **Recognize that your worth is not tied to your title, status, or others' expectations.**
3. **Find ways to celebrate yourself** and realize it's not a luxury but a necessity for stepping into your power.

How will you know you're fully owning your power? When you can see *beyond* it.

### Don't Change Who You Are

People often feel like they need to play a role or act a certain way to fit in, or even to hide their true selves. Owning your power isn't about changing who you are; it's about *reclaiming all parts of yourself and embodying all of it*. It's not about fitting in; it's about digging deeper to discover who you are, what you value, and how you want to show up in the world.

When you figure out who you are and embrace it, you no longer rely on external validation. You cultivate a sense of empowerment, authenticity, and self-respect by not changing who you are. When you are true to yourself, you can show up more fully, foster more authentic connections, and truly own your power.

Once you take the time to understand your strengths, values, and boundaries, you too can navigate your life with more clarity and intention. Doing this also helps you live in alignment with your true self rather than being influenced by external pressure, expectations, or the need for validation.

Finding yourself doesn't usually happen overnight, but you can start the conversation today. Or, if you've had this conversation before, now is the time to revisit it.

### Own Your Worth

Owning your worth and internal status is knowing you are enough. It's about seeing and honoring who you are *right now*, even if others don't. It's knowing you are more than a title, position, label, or whatever category others may want to place you in. It's about developing strong internal status: seeing all your strengths, knowing and trusting your value, and understanding what you bring to the table.

It's about remembering who you are, even when facing challenges or transitions. Your internal status follows you no matter where you go, no matter what happens around you. You stop comparing yourself to others. You realize it's not about doing more to be worthy or defining yourself based on your achievements or others' rules and standards.

*True* worth comes from being in alignment with yourself.

### Celebrate Your Wins

We often fail to own our power because we overlook and undervalue our achievements. Celebrating both major and minor victories is crucial; it helps us reconnect with our power and fuels our drive.

Research shows that it isn't just beneficial for your well-being—it also has the potential to positively influence both your emotions and performance. It can lower your cortisol level, reduce stress, and increase the "feel-good" chemicals in your brain—the neurotransmitters that also act as hormones to keep you happy and motivated. Celebrating our wins helps move them from short-term to long-term memory so that we don't lose them. When you feel good, you achieve more and are more productive. *That* is the cycle of celebration.

PRINCIPLE 3

## Own Your Voice

It's important to own your opportunity and know your worth. As an Only, you can make an impact in the room. But unless you speak up and use your voice, nothing will change.

Owning your voice isn't about just speaking up. It's knowing that what you have to say matters and can make a difference. And it isn't just about what you say to others; what you say *to yourself* matters too. It means finally realizing you don't have to find your voice; you already have it.

> Leveraging the power of being an Only means that when something doesn't serve you, you change it.

### Why You Don't Own Your Voice

Speaking up is hard for many people. We're afraid of what others will think about us. We fear showing up, being seen, and not being good enough. As an Only, it may be even more difficult to do these things. Some might feel the burden of representing an entire group or may not speak up in fear of standing out or "rocking the boat." It just doesn't feel safe.

Here are common reasons people hesitate to speak up:

- You could be in an environment where conformity is valued and feel pressure to fit in, or there are power dynamics at play and you don't feel you're in a position of authority.
- You may be scared that others won't listen.
- You've had experiences where you were ignored, criticized, or rejected.
- You might let perfectionism, overthinking, or even comparison hold you back.
- You don't feel ready and need more experience.
- You're someone who once confidently spoke up but now needs to reclaim that voice.

Whatever your reason, overcoming these barriers is essential for making an impact and owning your voice.

### Break Through Your Fear

You shouldn't necessarily want fear to go away; instead, you need to reframe it. You want to understand where it comes from and why you need it. You need to learn how to use your fear as your partner. Shift your focus away from yourself to your message, purpose, or mission, and develop tools to calm your fear through practice and preparation. Embrace fear as a catalyst for growth and let it drive you to deliver your message with greater clarity and impact.

For many Onlys, speaking up has been and continues to be a very real life-threatening experience. Activists and advocates for underrepresented groups often face risks to their lives and livelihoods when challenging the status quo and defending marginalized communities.

In everyday work situations and beyond, the sensation of being observed and potentially rejected can trigger a primal response, making us feel as though we are facing real danger. To overcome this, we need to shift our perception of fear.

Below are four ways to help you break through fear.

**1. Reframe fear as your partner**

The key to reframing and making fear your partner is to ensure you have the optimal level of arousal. "Optimal" is when fear works for you: your brain and body are energized and you feel a sense of clarity and focus.

**2. Shift your inner talk**

Studies show that talking to yourself in the second or third person; that is, using "you" or your own name instead of "I" or "me," boosts clarity, confidence, and performance; it flips a switch in the brain.

**3. Stop focusing on yourself**

Psychologists have found that people tend to focus on the negative quality of their voice recordings, magnifying imperfections that might go unnoticed by others. One way to break through your fear is to realize people aren't noticing you as much as you think.

**4. Focus on your message and mission**

Another way to break through your fear is to stay focused on your message and your higher purpose. What you have to offer—your stories, your insights, your wisdom, or your perspective in an everyday interaction—is a gift. What you want to say matters more than your fear.

### Reframe How You Talk to Yourself About Yourself

Most of us like labels. It's easier to relate to things when we can define them with a universal term. Unfortunately, the problem with labels is that they are *not* universal and can limit us in many ways. Using specific labels to describe certain behaviors can unintentionally create barriers that weren't there before.

How can you reframe how you talk to yourself about yourself? Start by taking a closer look at how you interpret the labels others assign to you, as well as those you give yourself. You need to reframe these labels so they empower you rather than limit your potential, ensuring they reflect your true identity. You must challenge your negative self-talk, self-lim-

iting language, self-criticism, and assumptions. Understand where these labels come from, their history, the context in which they came to be, and how they are evolving today.

Once you see how some labels describe parts of yourself that don't need fixing or overcoming, you can leverage them positively and see them as a strength rather than an obstacle. You may even realize that these labels no longer define you at all.

PRINCIPLE 4

## Own Your Communication

Owning your communication means you know how to communicate so that others will hear you, allowing you to navigate any environment, whether you're leading a team, pitching an idea, advocating for change, or even negotiating with your partner or children.

It's about more than just what you say; it's about how you engage with your audience to create meaningful impact and drive change. It means being heard and felt. It means that in our interconnected and digital world, you have the tools to be clear, confident, connected, and ready for any opportunity.

It also means that, as the Only, you can see your gift of being a bridge builder and know that you have the power to plant seeds of understanding, amplify the voices of others, and foster inclusive conversations.

Owning your communication is vital to harnessing the Power of the Only. By doing this, you not only overcome your own barriers and step fully into your potential but also pave the way for other Onlys to do the same.

### Connect With Your Audience

Connecting with your audience builds trust, enhances engagement, and makes your message more relevant and effective. When people feel understood, seen, and valued, they are more likely to hear you, allowing you to make an impact and move people to action.

To help you apply this in any setting, the YOU, Amplified! Connection Framework outlines seven steps for clarifying your message and forging meaningful connections with any audience.

- **Audience**. Know your audience—who you are speaking to and what you want them to walk away with.
- **Message**. Be clear about your message: what it is, what you want to share, and why you believe what you believe and do what you do.
- **Purpose**. Know your objective and what you hope to achieve in this appearance.
- **Lead**. Decide how you will show up and how others will experience your leadership.
- **Image**. Visualize the image you want to convey—through wardrobe, makeup, style, brand colors, or video background, if applicable.
- **Feeling**. Embody the energy you want to project and the feeling you want your audience to have.
- **You, Amplified!** It's all about you. Step into your amplified self.

### Be the Bridge Builder

Onlys are the bridge builders of the future, shaped by the unique experiences and challenges of being the only one in a room. These experiences foster a deep understanding and strength in connecting with diverse people and seeing perspectives others might miss.

In these polarizing and divided times, being a bridge builder is more important than ever. As you rise and show up more, especially in leadership, part of owning your communication is understanding how to navigate diverse environments, connect with different individuals, and recognize this power. From this strength, you can create opportunities for yourself and others and be an agent of positive change.

PRINCIPLE 5

## Own Your Future

Hard work and sacrifices are part of the job, especially early in our careers and when we start something new. But who does it serve when this behavior is self-imposed and unnecessary? When it's an unconscious pattern and a burden we put on ourselves rather than a required part of the journey?

Leveraging the power of being an Only means that when something doesn't serve you, you change it. It means *you* own your future. The foundation of owning your future is focusing on thriving, not just surviving. Thriving requires recognizing that the mindset, habits, and skills that brought you this far may not be sustainable or enough to propel you forward. Instead of clinging to outdated models of success, you create your own path.

Cultivating a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity is key to owning your future. When you shift your focus from merely surviving to actively thriving, you break free from

> You don't have to make history or be the first at something to have an impact. ”

outdated patterns, societal conditioning, and others' expectations. Instead, you create a future defined by what you desire and design for yourself.

### Create a New Vision

Are you trying to be everything to everyone all the time? Do you have this never-ending to-do list cluttering your brain? Do you set goals and achieve them, yet still feel like it's just never enough? Based on societal pressure and metrics, success is usually tied to achievement, and that can be incredibly exhausting.

In the beginning, the drive for "more" can propel Onlys forward. You might feel under scrutiny, underestimated, or like there is no room for failure. This pressure to prove others wrong can be a powerful motivator.

However, there comes a point when what once fueled your success—your perseverance, grit, relentless hustle, the need to be the best, pushing yourself to the limit, always caring for others, and saying yes to everything—can become your greatest obstacles. What protected us or were our strong suits can also hold us back from our true selves and potential unless we create a new vision of what success means to us.

When you don't take the time to create a new vision of success that fits your current life stage and continue to chase achievement or other old patterns, you can get stuck.

To create a new life vision where you are at your peak, reflect on your values and priorities. The following steps will help you clarify your priorities and define what matters most at this stage of your life.

1. Determine what's important to you now.
2. Pick the values that are a priority for you.
3. List the things that will help you live out each of those values.
4. List the things you want to avoid or eliminate.

### Guard and Heal Your Energy

As Onlys, we often face many obstacles, big and small, that are beyond our control. Over time, these challenges can wear us down and deplete our energy. Being an Only can lead to feelings of being isolated, undervalued, or misunderstood. You may also experience increased pressure or responsibilities and lack of support from your company or peers.

Whether being scrutinized or facing direct and indirect bias, feeling the need to advocate not just for yourself but also others, or being asked to take on extra unpaid work or initiatives, these factors can strain your emotional capacity to manage stress and process emotions, affecting your self-esteem, motivation, work, and overall life.

To own your future, you must guard your energy and honor your wellbeing. Guarding your energy means being aware of your environment, the information you are exposed to and consume, the people you surround yourself with, and what claims your time and attention, then understanding how all of it affects you.

It means that as you navigate spaces that aren't supportive, welcoming, or built for you, you can tap into your intuition to block out—not internalize—the negativity around you. It means you decide which emotions you want to experience and which you want to release. By doing so, you can cultivate the energy to appreciate the joy and beauty around you.

### Be Discerning

The Onlys who will own the future are the ones who can be discerning about information, people, and energies to embrace. You focus your attention on what truly matters to you and learn to block out all the noise from the past, the future, and external distractions that mute the knowing in your soul.

Discernment involves understanding what you should carry and what you shouldn't, deciding what aligns with your values and what doesn't, and determining what truly benefits you. It's about setting boundaries with clarity and purpose, ensuring that you remain aligned with your true self and goals. It means being able to say:

- I don't agree.
- This is not for me.
- I've done all I can.
- I've had enough.
- It's time for me to move on.
- It's time for me to do my own thing.

Many rooms are not made for you as an Only, and things may not be set up in your favor. You may not always have the same access, resources, or networks. While this may not be fair, you can still thrive if you have the awareness and tools to discern what applies to you and what doesn't and the agency to decide what you are and are not going to do moving forward.

Trust in your ability to steer your own course and own your future. Each decision, whether it leads you to move forward or take a step back, is a step toward greater self-discovery and fulfillment. Embrace the journey with all its ups and downs, knowing that each moment of discernment brings you closer to living a life that is genuinely aligned with who you are and who you aspire to become.

## Conclusion

It often takes time to fully see what was in front of us or inside us all along. All of us have so much power and wisdom from our past and present. But to access it, to step into the future we want to create, we need to recognize it and honor it in ourselves and in our ancestors.

I know being an Only can be lonely, but now you know you are not really alone and that it is not a weakness but your greatest strength.

You don't have to make history or be the first at something to have an impact. Realize that *what* you do, *who* you are, and *how* you show up matters.

You have the power. You've had it all along.

And now all you have to do is step into it.



**Angela Chee** is a media and communication coach, keynote speaker, and host of *The Power of the Only* podcast. An award-winning former TV news anchor and reporter, she brings more than twenty years of experience in media and public speaking. Chee has worked with major stations including KCBS-TV, KNBC-TV, and Fox 6 San Diego, and has appeared on networks such as E! and HGTV. She speaks for global organizations including Microsoft, Cisco, Intel, and JPMorgan Chase. Chee helps leaders communicate with clarity and confidence and amplify their unique voice. She lives in San Diego with her husband and two children.

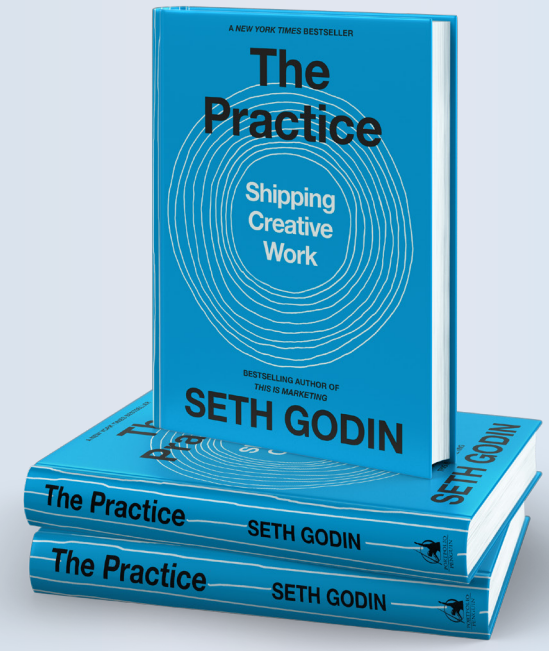
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# The Practice

Seth Godin

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Practice

By Seth Godin

Seth Godin is the author of 18 international bestsellers that have changed the way people think about work and have been translated into 38 languages - among them Unleashing the Ideavirus, Permission Marketing, Purple Cow, Tribes, The Dip, Linchpin, Poke the Box, and All Marketers Are Liars. He writes the most popular marketing blog in the world and speaks to audiences around the world. He is the founder of the altMBA, the founder and former CEO of Squidoo.com, the former VP of Direct Marketing at Yahoo!, and the founder of the pioneering online startup Yoyodyne.

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# Learn to Embrace Imposter Syndrome

Seth Godin knows a thing or two about putting his work out there. As the best selling author of 19 books and the voice behind one of the most widely read blogs on the entire planet, Godin understands that creation requires consistency above all else. ***The Practice*** is founded on the principle that writer's block is a myth. In it, Godin instructs writers, artists, and entrepreneurs in a tested approach to getting unstuck, overcoming the fear associated with sharing creative work, placing consistency over authenticity, and learning to embrace imposter syndrome as a natural part of the human experience.

Godin's dedication reads, "The magic of the creative process is that there is no magic." He believes that we all have passion and creativity inside of ourselves. What we sometimes lack is the empathy required to create work that contributes in a productive, but authentic and joyful way. There is an identifiable pattern amongst those who succeed in creative pursuits and in those who fail. *The Practice* serves as a guide to leverage that pattern of consistent pursuit and turn passion into creative work that needs to be shared.

## Why Shipping, Creative, and Work

Before getting into the meat of the matter, Godin explains why he chose the words "shipping, creative, and work" as the terms used throughout the book. The word "shipping" is used synonymously with the word sharing and he says that "it doesn't count if you don't share it." This book is not about journal entries that will never see the light of day. It's about creations that are put out into the world for the right people to consume at the right time.

He chose the word "creative" because he aims to separate us from "cogs in the system." We are "creators, problem solvers, and generous leaders" who are creating in order to make things better than they are right now. He makes no distinction between the creative work of artists, writers, or business leaders. Anyone who is making something new is creating.

The word "work" is used to show that this is a professional pursuit. Whether or not you are currently paid for the work is not of consequence. You are approaching the creation as

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if you are a professional and the work in and of itself, not the outcome, is the reason you are here.

## Trust Your "Self"

The world is full of distracting noise that prevents us from seeing a simple, but extremely powerful truth. "Creativity is a choice, it's not a bolt of lightning from somewhere else." At its core, creation is the result of having a desire to "find a new truth, solve an old problem, or serve someone else." We have control over our process alone. If we commit to practicing creation, we will live in service of making the world a better place and understand that "creativity is not an event, it's simply what we do, whether or not we're in the mood." Engaging in the process honors your own potential and allows you to enjoy the support of all other creatives who began the practice before you. You merely have to trust your creative self.

We are all on individual paths that are distinctly unique and ours. But many before us have found a way to share their perspective and make a difference. You can, too. It's all about finding the courage to be creative and the commitment to follow the pattern that those who paved the way are already implementing. The door is there. The practice will allow you to walk through it.

We live in an economy primarily focused on output. We are "brainwashed from a very early age" to believe that we must play by the rules of the system. We need to work hard, perform tasks, and in the end, we will be rewarded for our efforts. Godin posits what happens, however, when the world changes? What happens when the "prizes" we were taught to seek are suddenly "not as engaging as you'd like them to be?" What happens when the "emptiness of the bargain" becomes plainly obvious? In a changed world, you may find that you've been "busy sacrificing your heart and your soul for prizes, but the prizes aren't coming as regularly as promised." What then?

We must trust ourselves rather than the system. We must follow our own path, even if it is wholly imperfect. Godin shares a quote from The Bhagavad-Gita which says, "It is better to follow your own path, however imperfectly, than to follow someone else's perfectly." If we think about people who manage to make a real difference, they each have widely divergent paths but they have a common and overlapping practice. If we can learn to trust our hidden selves that make us and our point of view entirely unique, then we can "see the pattern, find our practice, and begin to live the process of making magic." You can make an impact. To do so, you have to "trust yourself enough to ship the work." It won't always work. It won't always make an impact. "Do it anyway. And then do it again. If you care enough, it's worth doing as many times as it takes."

When you make the decision to trust your self, two choices are combined. Firstly, you are making the choice to create something "that matters a great deal to someone," not to everyone. You choose to "be peculiar," meaning specific. Secondly, you are making the choice to "commit to the journey," not to the destination or output or outcome. You cannot control what the outcome is, only what you put into it. Not all of your work will "resonate" and that is perfectly fine. "Great work isn't popular work; it's simply work that was worth doing."

## The Professional

There is a difference between talent and skill. We are born with talents that we can choose to develop or not. We can develop skills. Professionals have skill in excess of talent. "Skill is rarer than talent. Skill is earned. Skill is available to anyone who cares enough." The practice asks us to put the effort required to develop our skill and in return, "we are rewarded with better." We gain "better taste, better judgment, and better capabilities." This is what separates the amateur from the professional.

To be clear, Godin does not put down the amatuer. He says it is "possible, admirable, and even heroic to be an amatuer." However, the amatuer works only for herself. She creates work for herself and exclusively finds joy in it. If you want to go from being an amateur to a professional, you must commit to the practice. You must do the work, show up and produce, even when you really don't feel like doing it. However, Godin begs us to "avoid the path of becoming a hack."

He writes that it may be true that any work is better than no work, we must bear in mind that "the posture of giving up your standards to get that work can quickly become toxic." When we place the value on being paid rather than creating something meaningful from a position of empathy and generosity, we risk turning ourselves off from the pursuit entirely. You become a hack when your primary goal is to "please the audience." If you lose your unique point of view, you become a hack. Professionals understand how to walk "the fine line between showing up with a generous vision and showing up trying to control the outcome."

An important responsibility you have as a professional is choosing better clients. A better client is not an easy client. They "demand better work, want you to push the envelope, win awards, and challenge their expectations." They will tell others about you and about your work. They will pay you more, on time. The problem is that most of us "don't trust ourselves enough to imagine that we deserve them." The trick is to "earn better clients by becoming the sort of professional that better clients want." You have to toss things out again and again and again until one day, you catch a better client. "When you trust yourself enough to turn pro, you're entering into a covenant with those you seek to serve. You promise to design with intention, and they agree to engage with the work you promised to bring them."

Professionals should not seek authenticity. When work is created with intention, it is by definition inauthentic. After all, a professional will create what the audience expects time and again, even when there is something else they would much rather be doing at that moment. Authenticity is not a prerequisite for professionalism and in fact, may be a detriment to shipping creative work into the world. Consistency and intention are far more valuable than authenticity for the professional.

What elements are involved in intentional action? There are six simple steps.

> Being creative is a choice and if you choose to engage in the process you will never be blocked.“

1. Figure out who the work is for, taking into account “what they believe, what they fear, and what they want.”
2. Be able to describe what change you are seeking to make in them through the work.
3. Commit to making that change in them and genuinely care about making it.
4. Send out work that “resonates with the people it’s for.”
5. Watch for the reaction from your audience to determine whether or not the work worked in the way in which it was intended.
6. Repeat.

## No Such Thing as Writer’s Block

Sometimes we look for an excuse to avoid shipping the work and really good excuses are quite easy to find and hide behind. Not having the proper credential in terms of education or experience is a very effective excuse. Fear is another excuse that is often masked with things such as a lack of time or some other constraint that won’t permit you to stick to the practice. Any excuse that works is a good excuse. Godin writes, “If it works on you, if it gives you a way to stall, to interrupt your practice and to avoid the truth of your work, then it’s now a good excuse.” Whether or not the excuse is real doesn’t matter as long as it worked.

Actual roadblocks stop everyone, not just you. Therefore, if you stop the practice or avoid the practice because of something that only affects you, “it is an excuse, not an actual roadblock.” Following this logic, Godin asserts that there is no such thing as writer’s block because “being blocked” is a chosen belief. Being creative is a choice and if you choose to engage in the process you will never be blocked.

“Writer’s block is invented” just as fears of certain bugs or beliefs in certain unverifiable phenomena are invented. We know that writer’s block is invented because it changes and is different for any person on any given day. Effectively, it is a choice just as being creative is a choice. When we choose writer’s block, it is a reflection of our uncertainty. There is no “manual or playbook” as you are creating something new entirely. It is easier and safer and more certain to choose being blocked. Writer’s block is a story we tell ourselves to avoid doing the work.

The great thing about stories is that they can change. “If the story isn’t working for us, we can find a better one to take its place.” We can rewrite the narrative that will help us get where we want to go. Writer’s block is a result that comes from the narrative we tell ourselves. “It’s not an actual physical or organic ailment, simply a story we tell ourselves, one that leads to bad work habits and persistent fear.” We simply have to stick to the practice. It’s impossible to get stuck if you are always in motion. Keep moving in the intended direction and leave writer’s block behind for good. “Good process leads to good outcomes.”

## Earn Your Skills

The Superman comic eventually bored readers because the writers would simply invent new superpowers for the hero to employ whenever a new obstacle got in his way. The real world doesn’t have superheroes and you can’t expect yourself to be superhuman. Instead of trying to be really great at everything, pick one thing that you can develop and use to make a lasting contribution. Over time you may choose to develop another superpower, but in the beginning start with just one. “Choose the skill you’re going to assert to the outside world.”

In order to earn your superpower, or your skill, “you’ll need to trust that this process makes it possible, and trust that you are the one to do it.” Likewise, you will need to stay actively engaged in learning, understanding, and applying your skill based on all available resources, of which there are more available now than ever. Your skill is earned and you cross the line from amatuer to professional when you have an understanding of both the pioneers and the current state of the work.

Seth Godin has long been recognized as a thought leader in marketing, leadership, change, and how ideas spread far and wide. *The Practice* is based on his wildly successful Akimbo Workshops, which have catalyzed change in the work of thousands upon thousands of people.

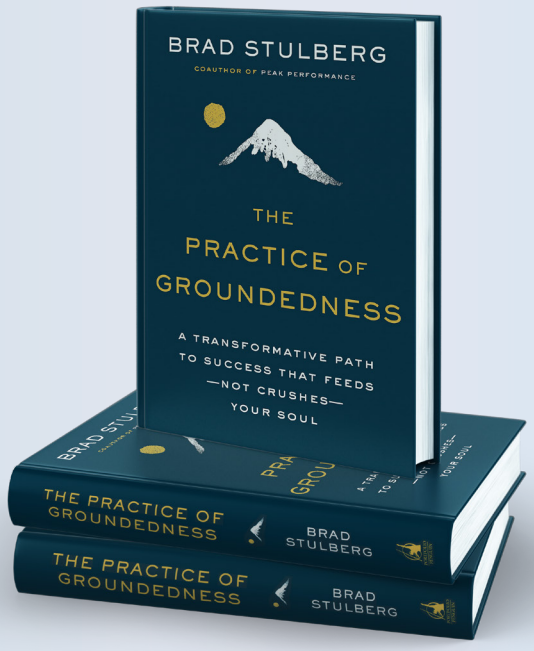
The book veers away from the prescriptive and sticks to the inspirational, offering readers bite-sized nuggets of wisdom that can be taken in any order. Organized into a numbered list of short, pithy, poetic paragraphs, it could just as easily be read as a daily devotional that is visited here and there when a lift is needed as it could be a cover-to-cover guide for getting going. Readers looking for the latter may want to opt for the workshop itself, which is sure to include a more actionable approach for putting *The Practice* into practice.

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# The Practice of Groundedness

Brad Stulberg

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Practice of Groundedness

By Brad Stulberg

Brad Stulberg researches, writes, and coaches on human performance, well-being, and sustainable success. He is bestselling author of *Peak Performance* and *The Passion Paradox.* His work has appeared in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, New York Magazine, Wired, Sports Illustrated, Outside Magazine, Forbes, and more. He is also co-founder of the Growth Equation, a multi-media platform dedicated to the art, science, and practice of performance and well-being (*www.TheGrowthEq.com*).

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# A Healthier, More Sustainable Model for Success

Brad Stulberg coaches business executives, successful entrepreneurs, leaders in medicine, and athletes of elite status. In 2019 he started to notice a disturbing trend among his clients. While he used to focus sessions with them on developing habits and routines that improve and sustain high-level performance, he was being pulled into conversations around being burned out or the desperate need to turn work off and take a restorative break, but not being able to take a real break, even for a weekend, without feeling "restless or insecure" about work.

This angst, as Stulberg describes it, is a "deep-seated need to always be pushing toward something, lest they feel a widening gap, a sense of emptiness in their lives." And this was not the only alarming feeling or state he was identifying in his clients. Many other clients reported feeling scattered and distracted, inside and out, entangling them in an endless loop of second guessing themselves, looking back to see if they did the right thing, looking forward to plan their next move, and "getting caught up in what-if scenarios."

The themes of restlessness and emptiness extend far beyond Stulberg's own client base. In his writing and research in the worlds of performance, well being, and life satisfaction he has come across this notion of wide reaching discontent in our culture. When viewed from the outside, these top athletes, intellectuals, and creative types seem to have it all. But on the inside, they feel something's not quite right at a deep level. They are "bothered by a lingering sense of dissatisfaction." They want to turn off "all the news and busyness and email and social media notifications" and stop focusing on what's next but when they do, they "feel unsettled and restless, fluctuating between aimlessness and angst."

Men tend to describe this as a constant pressure to be invincible and women tend to describe it as feeling like they are constantly striving to meet an impossible expectation. Stulberg calls is "heroic individualism" which is "an ongoing game of one-upmanship, against both yourself and others, paired with the limiting belief that measurable achievement is the only arbiter of success." You may do a great job of looking like you have it

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all together on the outside, but with "heroic individualism you chronically feel like you never quite reach the finish line that is lasting fulfillment."

Heroic individualism is a common way of life in today's world. In ***The Practice of Groundedness: A Transformative Path to Success that Feeds–Not Crushes–Your Soul***, author Brad Stulberg asserts that groundedness is the antidote to this widespread being untethered and dissatisfied. In it he lays the foundation for the main principles that define groundedness in the first part of the book. The second part of the book shows readers how to put those principles into action, with life changing results.

## The Principles of Grounded Success

Stulberg defines groundedness as "unwavering internal strength and self confidence that sustains you through ups and downs. It is a deep reservoir of integrity and fortitude, of wholeness, out of which lasting performance, well being, and fulfillment emerge." Groundedness does not ask you to let passion, productivity, or performance fall by the wayside. Rather, it makes these qualities steady so that all you are striving for is focused, sustainable, and fulfilling.

Your efforts are in line with your values, interests, and your authentic self. Only by being grounded, can you truly soar. Stulberg identifies and describes six principles that contribute to grounded success, which are evidence-based and exist at the "convergence between modern science, ancient wisdom, and the experience of happy, healthy, high-performing people."

**Acceptance:** You cannot move forward, wherever it is you'd like to go, until you take stock of and fully accept where you are right now. So many of us get burdened with the heaviness of life. Things get messy. Things happen that are completely outside of our control. People let us down. This harsh reality can be difficult to accept. When things are not going our way, it is easier to "default to magical thinking, convincing ourselves that we are in a better place than we are." This phenomenon is called "motivated reasoning" and it refers to our human tendency to "reason our way into seeing things as we'd like them to be" instead of how they truly are.

We see this play out routinely in the professional lives of people. They know they absolutely despise the job they are in, but they don't want to deal with the discomfort of finding a new one so they stay. Miserable, but employed. Even easier than that, we just ignore the hard feelings associated with what is going wrong all together. We reach for distraction and numbing and then wonder why we still feel bad. "We engage in frantic and compulsory activity" like thinking positive thoughts or buying stuff we don't need or sending out tweets. "We expect things to get better without ever acknowledging or accepting our true starting point."

To make progress of any kind, the first step "requires recognizing, accepting, and starting where you are. Not where you want to be. Not where you think you should be. Not where others think you should be. But where you are." Acceptance is critical to your present happiness and performance as well as a key component to changing your future.

**Presence:** Modern Western society highly values speed, efficiency, and being productive above all else. We use technologies that allow us to be online, and thus available, virtually all the time. Our economies are centered around products and services that are competing to "win over and control our attention." Rather than giving anything deep, direct attention, we flit from task to task, thought to thought, engaged in the act of being busy.

A prime example of this tendency is the myth of multitasking. Once celebrated as a defining characteristic on a person's resume, we know now that multitasking is not real. No one can engage in multiple activities at once. A multitude of studies have confirmed that multitasking is not doing multiple things at once. It is actually switching between activities, giving each activity attention one at a time but jumping back and forth between them. Spoiler alert! This does not improve performance at all. It actually hurts it, quite significantly.

It has been shown that when we multitask on two tasks, we are not getting twice as much done. In fact, we get "only about half as much done, with a lower level of quality and enjoyment." When we multitask, we do worse, not better. Conversely, if we do one thing at a time, it receives all of our attention and focus. In effect, we are being present in that moment giving that activity our all. And we perform far better as a result. And it's not just our performance that stands to benefit from us being present.

Research has shown that our emotional well being is vastly improved when we stop scattering our attention. "Constant interruptions and nonstop busyness exact a severe toll on mental health." We are far happier when we are "fully present" instead of doing something while thinking about something else. The more scattered we are, the "more likely we are to feel angst and discontent." The cure is to become present.

Being present is all about "being fully here for what is in front of you. Presence is a concentrated quality of mind that lends itself to strength and stability. If you deliberately practice presence, it can drastically improve your life, both personal and professional."

**Patience:** Counterintuitively, when we attempt to push things through and make things happen, sometimes the impact is for progress to actually slow down or stop altogether. In an effort to start seeing immediate results, we problem solve and try to fix things to keep it moving forward but that backfires on us. If you want to be effective, sometimes you have to practice patience.

This is not the kind of patience that is "equivalent to waiting forever without results." Instead, it is "a thoughtful and steady persistence that requires slowing down in the short term to go faster and farther in the long term." Instead of making things happen, you begin letting things happen. Patience is the best medicine to cure our tendencies to "hurry, rush, and overemphasize acute situations in favor of playing the long game." The results are more lasting, stable, and strong when they are anchored in patience.

**Vulnerability:** In the age of social media, we have all become experts at presenting who we want to be online, rather than who we really are. We "show up" in a display that communi-

> Groundedness requires us to just be ourselves."

cates that we have it all together and everything is just fine and dandy in our lives. Not only do we only post the things that we think portray us in the best light, we change our actual image through filters and photo editing. There is little authenticity left after such careful curation.

It leaves us wondering if we are the only ones who struggle, who are harboring secrets about the real state of our lives. Everyone involved, from those posting to those viewing, has their perception shaped and changed in subtle but constant ways. We are all "keeping up with the digital Joneses" and as a result, we never feel like we are enough or that we have enough. It creates a cognitive dissonance inside us where our internal and external lives don't mesh up.

Groundedness requires us to just be ourselves. The ticket to being okay with who you truly are is to be vulnerable. You have to be honest with everyone about who you really are, especially "when that means confronting perceived weaknesses and fears." You must place a priority on being completely open to "the good, the bad, the beautiful, the ugly." When you open up to your vulnerabilities and better yet, share them with the world, you become more solid and grounded.

**Deep Community:** Despite the fact that old-growth redwood trees stand more than 200 feet tall, their roots only go about six to twelve feet into the ground. They are able to remain standing in any kind of weather because their roots grow out, sometimes hundreds of feet, and become entangled with the roots of neighboring trees. Together, they survive. And humans are no different.

"We, too, are meant to be part of a network that is larger than us. We, too, thrive in collectives. We, too, are most grounded when we are enmeshed in tightly knit communities." Unfortunately, loneliness is an upticking trend in America. We feel like we are more connected than we have ever been, but it's a false promise. Our loneliness breeds higher stress, decreased quality of sleep, increased risks of numerous serious diseases, anxiety, depression, and inflammation. Loneliness is bad for our health and wellbeing. We are lacking community and it's starting to show.

"Our ability to survive, let alone thrive, relies upon being members of a tribe." It's time we turn our energy towards others, forming bonds, belonging to something bigger than ourselves, and making the world and our inner selves a better place. Deep community is a "basic human need" and it is necessary for groundedness.

**Movement:** There are innumerable studies that show the correlation between exercise and improved physical and mental well being. Movement can prevent mental illness and also treat it. Society has given movement a bad reputation through our "infatuation with gut-wrenching workouts, external appearance, and exercise as a punishment." This has created a distorted view of "our bodies and how we ought to use them" instead of allowing us to embrace genuine movement as a means to a better life.

Our bodies and our minds are integrated with one another. They are not separate stand-alone systems. What is happening in one has a very real effect on the other. When we regularly move our bodies "we do a better job of controlling our emotions, we think more creatively, and we retain more information." The science illuminating the very real connection between the mind and the body is starting to catch up to what the ancient Greeks knew intuitively. They have to be treated holistically, to promote health of both.

Movement is a principle of groundedness because it works to create "generalized well being, strength, and stability" in the body and in the mind. On top of that, movement supports the other foundational principles of groundedness. Whatever movement you engage in is not prescriptive. It just needs to happen regularly to reap its many rewards.

## Living a Grounded Life

It is one thing to begin to understand the principles of groundedness. It is a different beast altogether to live by them. The principles help you make the necessary mindshift, but living a grounded life requires that you start practicing them. We become what we do and the key to doing this life in a grounded way is effort.

You will still have bad days and good days. You will never be perfect at living the principles every moment of every single day. That is why it is called a practice. You just keep putting effort forth and the results will come. It's important to note that your focus should be on that effort, not the outcome you expect to get. Like the principle of patience, getting out of your own way is the way forward. Focus on the process, not the prize.

Upheaval, change, uncertainty, and challenge are a foregone conclusion is this thing called life. How we navigate those times is up to us. By living the principles of a grounded life, we are poised to take on anything. We are ready to make the most of our very short time here on Earth. We will live an intentional life of our own choosing, with two feet planted firmly on the ground.

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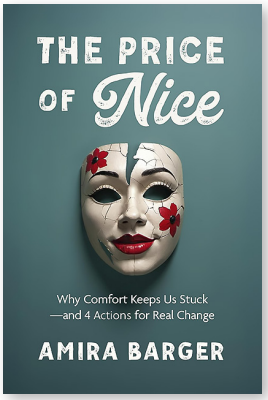
# The Price of Nice

Amira Barger

Executive Book Summaries®

# The Price of Nice

## Why Comfort Keeps Us Stuck—and 4 Actions for Real Change




*by* **Amira Barger**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We live in a culture that prizes niceness above nearly everything else: rewarding politeness, comfort, and agreeability while discouraging dissent, honesty, and disruption. This obsession shapes how we show up in our communities and, increasingly, in the modern workplace, where difficult conversations are avoided, inequities are smoothed over, and real problems are left unaddressed.

What's framed as kindness often becomes a mechanism for maintaining the status quo, muting critical voices, and slowing progress, leaving individuals disengaged and organizations stuck in cycles of superficial harmony rather than meaningful change. ***The Price of Nice: Why Comfort Keeps Us Stuck—and 4 Actions for Real Change*** offers a practical path forward. The book challenges readers to interrogate cultural norms around niceness and introduces a four-action, social-psychological model—think, feel, do, and revisit—to help people spot hidden barriers, engage in difficult conversations, move from discussion to action, and build accountability over time.

Author Amira Barger, a behavioral communications strategist, professor, and DEI advisor, draws on her work at the intersection of health equity, organizational change, and employee engagement, combining real-world experience and research, to show how individuals and institutions can disrupt comfort-driven habits and take concrete steps toward healthier, more equitable workplaces.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Understand how "niceness" can quietly reinforce inequity and stalled progress
- Learn the four actions to move from comfort to courageous action
- Gain tools for navigating conflict and facilitating honest workplace conversations
- Build sustainable habits for continuous learning, reflection, and improvement

## Introduction

*Niceness is a velvet glove over an iron fist*, stifling dissent and prioritizing comfort over progress. It conditions us to accept the status quo, protecting those in power at the expense of equity and opportunity.

As children, we're taught that being "nice" is everything. We allow niceness to shape our lives, relationships, and workplaces in ways that rarely serve us. But what if "nice" isn't as harmless as we think? What if it's the very thing keeping us from real progress?

Unchecked niceness is never benign. It is always, without exception, upheld because someone benefits from it, and from the toxicity that inevitably follows.

### Wholeness in the Workplace

Performative corporate gestures may check a box, but they merely preserve the status quo. Hispanic Heritage Month or Pride celebrations may bring festive decorations to the break room, but they don't shift hiring or promotion practices. Niceness signals change without delivering it.

Corporate culture conditions us to suppress discomfort and avoid conversations that disrupt this illusion of harmony. We are expected to adhere to a "professional decorum" that separates our personal lives from our work. This unspoken requirement to compartmentalize—to keep our personal beliefs, values, and even struggles out of the workplace—lies at the heart of performative niceness in corporate spaces.

Forced separation of the personal and professional is neither natural nor sustainable or even desirable. In fact, research by Harvard professor Amy Edmondson underscores that genuine collaboration and innovation rely on psychological safety: the belief that we can show up fully, speak honestly, and challenge norms without fear of retribution. When people feel safe enough to bring their whole selves to work, they're more likely to contribute, take risks, and surface the very truths organizations need to evolve.

### A Tool Kit, Not a Blueprint

To build something new, we need new tools. As a communications practitioner, I start by asking: *What problem are we aiming to solve?*

This clarifies our purpose and sets direction. It's followed by: *Who are we solving this problem for? Who do we need to influence, and what specific shifts in thought, emotion, or action do we want to inspire?*

To answer these questions, we investigate the motivations, values, and trusted voices of the people we wish to reach. By understanding their worldviews, we can craft messages that inspire wonder, resonate deeply, and mobilize action. Breaking down complex behavioral patterns into manageable component dimensions allows us to more easily identify and replicate opportunities for prevention, intervention, restoration, or transformation.

## ACTION 1: THINK

CHAPTER 1

## The Velvet Glove Comes Off

On the surface, being nice seems like an innocent, even admirable quality: a balm that soothes social interactions. But niceness often hides more profound problems. It's a learned behavior meant to keep things comfortable, avoid conflict, and preserve the existing order.

The truth is more complicated: It costs a great deal to be nice. I'm not suggesting we throw human decency out the window; no one likes an asshole. Instead, I want us to examine niceness as a *social construct*, not a natural or inherent truth, as one of many collectively agreed-upon ideas that shape our behaviors, relationships, and institutions.

### Do You Understand What I'm Saying?

Everyone's experiences shape how they interpret the world and the language they use, and assuming a shared understanding can lead to miscommunication, confusion, and disrupted collaboration.

Consider two terms that anchor my premise: *nice* and *nerve*. While it may not be obvious at first glance, these two familiar words actually represent starkly different approaches to navigating the world: one preserves the current norms, the other drives real change.

#### Nice

According to Merriam-Webster, some definitions of nice are *polite, kind; pleasing, agreeable; appropriate, fitting; well-executed*. We are not addressing nice from this defined vantage point, but as a social construct. You mustn't conflate or confuse the two. Nice, when prioritized above all else, is a trap. It can lead to:

- avoiding difficult conversations to preserve a false sense of peace

> When we solve for those most at the margins, we solve for everyone.

- tolerating harmful behavior because confronting it feels uncomfortable
- masking systemic injustices under a veneer of politeness

Nice emphasizes how things feel rather than how they are. While it soothes in the short term, it stifles growth, silences dissent, and upholds the current state of affairs in the long run.

**Nerve**

I think of the antithesis of "nice" as "nerve." Nerve has a wide range of definitions, from the physical receptors in the human body that send signals to our brains to feelings of agitation or irritability (such as when someone "gets on your nerves"). We will focus on this term as it relates more specifically to the *power of endurance or control; fortitude, strength; assurance, boldness; audacity*.

Unlike nice, which seeks to avoid discomfort, nerve leans into it, acknowledging that growth, justice, and transformation often require us to be uncomfortable, and even to make others uncomfortable. Nerve is:

- speaking up when silence feels safer
- challenging the status quo even at the cost of relationships or personal gain
- holding boundaries and advocating for opportunity despite criticism or misunderstanding

Nerve is about resilience and the willingness to act when it matters most. Where nice prioritizes agreeability, nerve disrupts. Choosing between nice and nerve isn't only about personal values or professional strategies. It's about the world we are building or failing to build for future generations.

## Understanding Mental Models

It is easy to overlook perspectives that fall outside of our own. We unconsciously rely on mental models when navigating more complex challenges, such as those involving language or systemic influences.

The underlying mental models are deeply ingrained beliefs that operate both consciously and unconsciously to shape how we interpret reality and make decisions.

Like the words we use, these internal frameworks reflect societal norms, historical narratives, and personal experiences.

Here are some common mental models that you may recognize when interpreting and articulating your experiences:

**Cause and effect**

- Belief: "If I work hard, I will succeed."
- How it shapes behavior: This model drives people to prioritize effort, but it may cause them to overlook systemic barriers or external factors.

**Confirmation bias**

- Belief: "What I already believe is true."
- How it shapes behavior: This model encourages people to seek information that supports their beliefs while ignoring contradictory evidence.

**Zero-sum thinking**

- Belief: "If someone else wins, I lose."
- How it shapes behavior: This model drives competition in areas where collaboration could create mutual benefits.

Mental models offer stability and predictability, but when applied to complex social issues, they can also reinforce harmful biases and inequitable outcomes. Because many people struggle to articulate (or even recognize) these models, outdated historical or cultural influences often shape how we interact with the world.

We start to see the world differently when we challenge our mental models. Anyone can change their mental models; it just takes a choice to do so. By making this shift, we can break down outdated ideas and build new ones based on inclusion, fairness, and shared understanding. All that's needed are the right ingredients: curiosity, reflection, context, and a willingness to try new things.

## Centering the Margins for Collective Good

There is a foundational mental model we must keep in mind: When we solve for those most at the margins, we solve for everyone. That's why change must begin at the edges, by elevating those most often overlooked, and ripple inward to transform the whole; because the most marginalized hold the truths and needs that should shape the center.

Some will undoubtedly resist this idea, misbelieving that fo-

cusing on *any* marginalized population means disregarding everyone else. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we center the needs of those who are often overlooked or underserved, we cultivate an environment that strengthens everyone, improving resilience and well-being across the board.

CHAPTER 2

## Nice by Design

From childhood, we're taught to be nice: play fair, share, say *please* and *thank you*. As we grow, niceness becomes a rule, a prerequisite for success and belonging in schools, workplaces, and society. But beneath this civility lies a tool of control, a product of historical and systemic conditioning.

America has historically been fixated on niceness, even when it hinders justice and equity. Born from colonial conformity and shaped by powerful institutions, this legacy persists today. One key concept, psychological projection, helps explain why many Americans resist confronting our past.

*Psychological projection* happens when people blame others for their own discomfort. It takes courage to ask questions, be introspective, and open yourself to the possibility that you've been wrong. Belittling others for doing what you are unwilling to do is just easier.

It doesn't have to be this way, though. Research shows there is a path to bridging ideological divides, and it's not paved with more facts or louder arguments. A 2024 study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* found that people are more willing to trust ideological opponents when those opponents speak from personal experience rather than citing statistics or generalized stories.

Us versus them has rarely accomplished any good. But the longer we avoid discomfort, whether on a personal level or within our institutions, the more deeply entrenched our problems become, and we keep reinforcing old systems even when those systems are unfair. Finding the courage is the first step toward building something new.

CHAPTER 3

## Society's Silent Partner

"Nice" is a contract signed in silence, subtly shaping our thoughts, feelings, and actions without us realizing it. Power dynamics, unspoken expectations, and the constant battle between authenticity and acceptance capture the universal challenge of navigating societal norms.

### The (Social) Proof Is in the Pudding

*Social proof* is the psychological phenomenon of looking to others to define what is acceptable or desirable. Humans are wired to emulate behaviors that bring approval or avoid conflict. In today's digital world, social proof plays out through curated social media feeds, where likes and shares subtly dictate what we value.

Niceness operates much the same way. This unspoken code of conduct pressures us to behave in ways that yield acceptance or avoid conflict, at the cost of authenticity. Over time, this standard becomes unquestioned. Recognizing these patterns allows us to disrupt them and make more intentional choices about how we engage with the world.

### The Chemistry of Compliance

If social proof shows us how niceness subtly pressures individuals, frameworks in psychology and sociology reveal the mechanisms that sustain it.

In psychology, particularly social and behavioral psychology, the focus is often on how societal influences shape individual behavior and thought processes. Relevant concepts include:

- **Social norms**: The unwritten rules we internalize to gain acceptance or avoid disapproval, like invisible traffic signs guiding behavior.
- **Behavioral conditioning**: Mechanisms like reinforcement and punishment (operant conditioning) that shape behavior and are influenced by societal expectations.
- **Conformity and obedience**: Psychological processes that encourage individuals to align their behaviors with group norms or authority figures.
- **Implicit bias**: Subconscious stereotypes shaped by cultural norms, like wearing tinted sunglasses that color your view without you realizing it.

In sociology, the discussion commonly centers on social or institutional influence mechanisms; frameworks intended to maintain order and cohesion within a society. Relevant concepts include:

- **Social control**: Formal mechanisms (laws, regulations) and informal triggers (peer pressure, cultural norms) that enforce conformity to societal expectations.
- **Structural functionalism**: A perspective that views societal structures (like legal systems, education, or the media) as serving a purpose in maintaining stability, but also as systems of control.

> The question isn't whether we should adapt, but how we do it.

- **Conflict theory**: A framework that emphasizes how societal control reflects power dynamics.
- **Symbolic interactionism**: Examines how social norms and roles are constructed through interaction, shaping behavior and identity.
- **Hegemony**: Describes how dominant groups maintain control by shaping cultural norms and ideologies, making them appear natural and unquestionable.

### The Undue Influence of Nice

Sacred values—deeply held principles like freedom, loyalty, or environmental conservation—shape human behavior.

They aren't just beliefs; they're core to identity. Neuroscience shows that when these values are threatened, the brain's logic center (the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex) essentially shuts down, while emotional and social judgment areas activate.

Like sacred values, niceness operates quietly, shaping our behavior in profound ways. It becomes an unspoken expectation: Stay agreeable, avoid confrontation, and maintain harmony. Over time, niceness traps people in passive acceptance, stifling authenticity and accountability.

### Institutional Manipulation

Media, politics, and education shape public opinion to preserve the status quo. By elevating niceness as a virtue, institutions condition individuals to see dissent as harmful. Schools teach "respect for authority," casting questions about injustice as insubordination, while governments label activists and whistleblowers as "un-American" or "radical."

This gaslighting erodes confidence in personal judgment, discouraging challenges to authority and sustaining harmful systems, especially in the workplace.

The result? A workforce and society disarmed of its ability to challenge oppression, trapped in a cycle of conformity masquerading as virtue, focusing on conflict avoidance at the expense of progress.

Institutions rely on niceness to mask exploitation, ensuring the system thrives even as it harms. Unmasking this manipulation is the first step toward progress.

## ACTION 2: FEEL

CHAPTER 4

# Flow or Crash

"Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend." This famous quote from Bruce Lee reflects his martial arts philosophy: letting go of rigid beliefs and being open-minded and flexible to adjust to the situation. Just like water adapts to its surroundings, so must we; the question isn't whether we should adapt, but how we do it.

Armed with an understanding of "nice" as a construct, our response can be to go with the flow or to meet that temptation head-on and crash. Otherwise, we risk simply being carried away by the current of niceness that pervades our society.

### Four Characteristics of Nice That Hinder Progress

Many behaviors that keep us stuck in a cycle of submission often go unnoticed. Recognizing them is the first step toward breaking free and creating change. Conditioned constraints we must overcome include:

- lack of awareness
- lack of accountability
- lack of agency
- lack of adaptability

We must question how and why systems work as they do, embrace hard truths, and take responsibility. Rather than avoiding discomfort, use it to grow. Challenge injustice, speak up, support others, and take even small steps toward change. Reflect on what works and what doesn't, and refine your approach to sustain meaningful impact.

### Outwit, Outplay, Outlast

In a society that has long prized conformity and discouraged dissent, authenticity has often invited punishment. Forced to conceal our culture, physical attributes, emotions, and language, marginalized people have developed various psy-

chological strategies, such as *tuning*, *covering*, *masking*, and *code switching*, as survival mechanisms.

These adaptations are rooted in a history of systemic oppression. Over generations, they have become ingrained habits. The flawed ideal of "colorblindness" is a product of this legacy, promoting the idea that seeing everyone as the same will dispel racism. While seemingly well-intentioned, it erases individual histories and lived experiences, weakening us by valuing conformity over the strength of diversity.

### When Nerve Is Used to Harm

A caveat on building your nerve: It can drive positive change, but also harm. Disruption for its own sake helps no one (again, no one likes an asshole). Worse, history is full of bad actors who've weaponized behavior change, using communication to sow division, consolidate power, and dehumanize others.

In a world where bad actors sow harm, our strongest response is to match their resolve with our own, creating a world where harm cannot thrive. The nerve to oppress is real, evident in policies, slogans, and movements that impede or roll back progress. But we have a choice. Having nerve isn't just about standing up to bullies; it's about standing up for something better and more just.

CHAPTER 5

## Start a Burn Book

In 2013, my then-employer brought in a consultant as we developed the next iteration of our five-year strategic plan. Her process included an unconventional exercise: keeping a weekly creative journal. The goal? To help us shift our perspectives on the problems we were solving and uncover new ways of thinking. So, not a "burn book" exactly, but it was more fun to think of it that way.

What initially felt like unwelcome homework became one of the most valuable tools I've encountered. Journaling daily allowed me to spotlight "rules" I'd internalized and unspoken norms I'd never questioned. Our burn books were not about pettiness or gossip, but about burning the assumptions that held us back.

As it turns out, journaling is a science-backed tool. This process creates clarity, strengthens problem-solving skills, and builds the mental agility to navigate personal and professional challenges. Think of it this way: Creating your own burn book doesn't just expose what's holding you back; it provides you with a tool to move forward.

### How Our Brains Make Sense of Experiences

In neurology, *conscious perception* is when your brain recognizes and makes sense of what you're experiencing: a sound, a sight, or a feeling. It's the brain "switching on the light bulb" and connecting the dots.

When it comes to our organizations, conscious perception allows us to recognize what's happening beneath the surface. We must train ourselves to see past the familiar ways of operating and identify the systems that have outlived their usefulness. This shift is crucial for changemakers because you can't fix a problem until you recognize it's there.

This is where the power of perspective comes into play. We can become so accustomed to the current state of affairs that we stop questioning it. We don't recognize the outdated processes or unchallenged biases that keep us from progressing. But once our perspective shifts, once we see the inefficiencies, inequities, or possibilities we missed before, we can't go back. The change is permanent, and so is the growth potential.

CHAPTER 6

## Dancing with the Devil

Where is the line between hero and villain? Who gets to decide? And what do those titles really mean? Here's how I break down those roles:

- **For the good of all mankind**. Many people, when asked to name a hero, might pick a celebrity, politician, sports star, or author. I define a hero as someone who acts without the promise of personal benefit or the chance to witness the impact of their efforts.
- **Some people just want to watch the world burn**. Villains are the antagonists no one admires. Their actions serve little purpose beyond self-aggrandizement, driven by an insatiable need for power, control, or personal gain.

Good versus evil. Light versus dark. Justice versus the systems that perpetuate inequity. But what happens when someone who seems complicit in the very system we're questioning starts challenging it themselves?

### Am I the Asshole Here?

A popular Reddit thread, #AITAH (Am I the Asshole Here?) is a very interesting sociological experiment that questions the nature of our interactions. But for me, it also resonated with a truth that I had long sensed but resisted acknowl-

> Sometimes, to be the hero, you have to be the villain in someone else's story.

edging. Wrestling with self-doubt, the lesson came slowly: Sometimes, to be the hero, I would have to be the villain in someone else's story.

I began my career as a communicator and fundraiser in the nonprofit sector with clear eyes and a full heart. I wanted to help people, have a meaningful impact on the world, and be an agent of sustainable change in a system that desperately needed it. Little did I know the hoops I would have to jump through to fund that change. Far removed from the philanthropic ideal I had imagined, I found the mission itself overshadowed as I navigated a labyrinth of social expectations and unspoken rules.

We spent too much time indulging wealthy donors, catering to their whims, and playing by their rules. My experience became a cautionary tale of how easily their trivial concerns overshadowed our critical work. But it also taught me this: Sometimes, you must risk the wrath of those in power. If you don't, you'll keep bending to their will, losing sight of what matters, or worse, losing yourself. In their world, they were the heroes: graceful benefactors, saviors of the less fortunate. But if challenging their performative philanthropy would make me the villain, maybe that was a title worth embracing.

## ACTION 3: DO

CHAPTER 7

### Status Update: It's Complicated

Throughout this journey, I've embraced a core belief: Question everything and everyone. Seeking answers is essential to understanding the world and imagining change. But what if everything I've been taught about heroes and villains is flawed? Am I meant to root for the villains now?

Maybe the real lesson is: It's complicated.

I would like to help us solve for this by proposing a third classification: the *antihero*. Not the hero we deserve, but the one we need. Our world isn't black and white; it's full of gray areas where multiple truths coexist, demanding a more nuanced perspective. An antihero acts out of necessity rather than altruism. Though perhaps not inherently driven by virtue, they navigate the messy middle ground to step up when others won't, confronting challenges head-on.

Antiheroes are catalysts for progress. They question the established order and force others to confront uncomfortable truths. In comic books, the antihero often utilizes questionable methods to achieve their goals. But taking on this role is not about causing harm; I am not giving you permission to act out of pocket. The difference is, *our actions will be righteous, but society will tell us they are wrong*.

#### Why Disruption Alone Isn't the Vibe

Disruption is the starting line, not the conclusion. It is incomplete and naive as a singular notion. It exposes inequities and challenges accepted norms, but after the dust settles, no benevolent overseer is waiting to ensure progress takes root.

This world—with all its flaws, injustices, and potential—is ours to break or build. Our progress can be charted in the systems we design, the stories we tell, and the legacies we leave.

#### Applying the Power of Communication to Drive Change

The cartoon *Captain Planet* taught a generation of kids to reduce, reuse, and recycle. The *Got Milk?* campaign made drinking dairy sexy.

These stories highlight a key insight: Communication isn't just about exchanging information. It's about shaping how people see the world and choose to act within it. The words, phrases, and symbols we use are far more than semantics; they are tools of influence and transformation.

If your company prides itself on excellence, integrity, or innovation, position DEI as an integral part of that identity. Make it clear that failing to embrace diversity is failing to live up to the company's own standards. Be willing to confront resistance directly. Use language that doesn't just "invite" inclusion but demands accountability.

In our communities, we can use communication to mobilize people toward collective action and challenge systemic issues like racism, environmental injustice, and economic inequality. Community campaigns work when they tap into shared values.

### The Mandate: "Have Nerve, Even If It's Not Nice"

Change requires us to communicate with intention, clarity, courage, and conviction. Communication shapes behavior, culture, and norms. But to drive the change we seek, we must be willing to disrupt comfort, challenge assumptions, and reject complacency.

Niceness may smooth the edges, but it rarely shifts the ground beneath us. Nerve bends the moral arc, tips the scales of justice, and creates a world where progress is not just possible, but achievable, because we choose to make it so.

CHAPTER 8

## Sweat the Small Stuff

Challenging entrenched systems is *hard*. It takes labor, collective effort, and courage to insist that something new can exist where only the old once thrived. Resistance demands perseverance and resolve.

This is what the system fears most: not loud, rebellious declarations, but the quiet determination of those who refuse to accept its terms.

Small resistance, even with the simplest tools, creates transformation, and the influence ripples outward. So, ask yourself: What would it take to clear a space for something new within your world, your workplace, your relationships, or yourself?

### Rebel *with* a Cause

I'm reminded of another icon, Rosa Parks, who could not have envisioned the impact that her act of resistance would set in motion. Her rebellion is often credited with being the ripple that turned into a tidal wave, the spark that lit the forest ablaze to awaken so many to the cause and incite momentum for the Civil Rights Movement. But why?

I believe it's because when she decided to stop playing nice, to refuse to be relegated to the back of the bus, she stood directly against the tyranny of the status quo and challenged the worldview of what would have been perceived as acceptable.

It wasn't just about dismantling injustice; it was about building a new, more just framework that serves everyone. A world where power is shared, not hoarded. A world where our actions reflect our ideals.

Building such a world demands accountability, imagination, and collaboration. It's unglamorous, messy, and rarely celebrated, but it is where lasting progress takes shape.

CHAPTER 9

## Break the Back Row Barrier

Some leaders operate from a scarcity mindset: fear of losing reputation, revenue, relationships, or relevance. Acting from this place of fear distorts how people think and act.

When we perceive resources as limited, we focus narrowly on immediate needs at the expense of long-term vision. Scarcity thinking results in fear-driven choices, holding us in reactive cycles and preventing us from imagining alternatives or taking bold action.

Yet scarcity is often more perception than reality. Shifting to an abundance mindset doesn't deny limitations; it reframes them. An abundance mindset reframes risk as a meaningful opportunity, fostering courage, creativity, and a broader perspective, allowing people to see the potential benefits rather than just the costs.

### Not Doing Nothing

The concept of inevitability is a trap we cannot afford to get stuck in. This mindset, consciously or unconsciously held, rests on the idea that no matter what we do or fail to do, the world will inevitably become better, fairer, and more just. This myth keeps us in a comfort-induced paralysis, willfully ignorant of the world's evils. We convince ourselves that if we wait long enough and keep our heads down, justice and equality will manifest on their own.

Progress is never the result of passive optimism. It's the product of deliberate, sustained disruption. The world evolves through solidarity, action, and an unwavering refusal to accept what is. The idea that justice will "just happen" is a dangerous delusion. The future we want is ours to build.

# ACTION 4: REVISIT

CHAPTER 10

## The Circle of Life

Progress along the Nice to Nerve Continuum is not a straight line; it's a circle. Change is not a one-time event but a continuous process of learning and adaptation.

At its core, revisiting hinges on the distinction between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset, shaping how individuals and systems approach change, setbacks, and progress:

- A *fixed mindset* believes character, intelligence, and abilities are static and tends to focus on goals viewed as easily achievable, avoiding failure to preserve a fragile sense of worth.
- A *growth mindset* thrives on challenges, prioritizing curiosity and viewing failure as a chance to stretch and improve.

Apathy and complacency are constant threats, tempting us to believe the work is done or that it doesn't matter. Revisiting is the antidote to stagnation, keeping us engaged and ensuring we continue to hold ourselves and others accountable. It embraces the impermanence of transformation, urging us to constantly iterate and refine strategies. It means facing discomfort and rethinking what we thought we knew. Growth demands it.

Revisiting is a tool for reclaiming the nerve that has been socialized out of us. Revisit your assumptions, narratives, heroes, and villains. Rethink your values and reimagine a more equitable world. Question every system and every actor within those systems, including yourself.

CONCLUSION

## Cost Analysis

Progress demands rejecting the compulsion of comfort in favor of community and collective courage. The compulsion of comfort isn't easy to overcome, but by recognizing and naming it, we take steps toward building a world that works for all of us. This is solidarity: working together across differences to demand that systems serve everyone, not just a privileged few.

*The decision is yours: Will you pay the price of nerve, or continue shouldering the cost of nice?*

Make no mistake, there is a cost to choosing nerve over nice.

### Paying the Cost

Stepping into the antihero role often strains relationships. Friends and colleagues, even family members who once stood beside you may retreat. This path tests even the most steadfast resolve. The cost is paid in sleepless nights, repeated battles, and the weight of knowing that doing what's right doesn't often bring immediate reward.

Nice keeps us compliant, comfortable, and complicit in the systems that harm us. The stakes of our compliance are not just stagnation; they're erosion. Erosion of our dignity. Erosion of our humanity. Every time we choose palatability over principle, we pay a quiet tax: a little less truth, a little less justice, a little less of ourselves.

This isn't about one moment of courage. It's about committing to a lifetime of resistance, one choice at a time. You cannot change everything, but you can change something. And that is enough, so long as you keep going.

*Leave people and places better than you found them.*

The question we must ask ourselves daily isn't whether we can afford to challenge the carefully constructed social order imposed on us; the real question is, *can we afford not to?*

The price of nice is comfort at the cost of progress. The price of nerve is discomfort in the pursuit of something greater.

I dare you to have the nerve.



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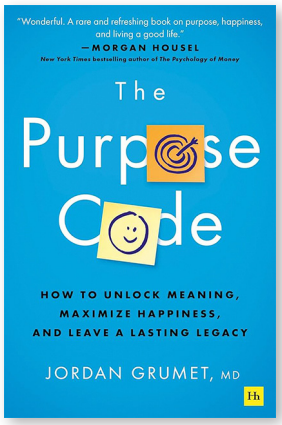
# The Purpose Code

Jordan Grumet

Executive Book Summaries®

# The Purpose Code

## How to Unlock Meaning, Maximize Happiness, and Leave a Lasting Legacy




*by* **Jordan Grumet**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Are you worried that you will go through life without ever finding your true purpose? You are not the only one. Having a clear sense of purpose has been scientifically proven to help people find happiness, longevity, and health. But paradoxically it is also one of the biggest causes of anxiety. So how can we make sure we find our purpose and get rid of anxiety to attain happiness and leave a lasting legacy?

In ***The Purpose Code***, veteran hospice doctor Jordan Grumet proposes that finding happiness is never about aiming for "bigger-than-life" goals that we may not be able to achieve. Instead, we can find our happiness in going after little P Purposes where the actual journey is what matters, more than the destination.

Grumet believes that true happiness comes from enriching activities that will help you connect with others and build communities. Instead of going after a big P Purpose that typically leads to disappointment and anxiety, try going after a little P purpose that will lead you to meaningful connection and a legacy to be proud of.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Distinguish between two distinct kinds of purpose, revealing why one path consistently leads to deeper fulfillment than the other.
- Identify your authentic purpose and how to climb to reach your meaningful goals, no matter your starting point.
- Understand the fundamental human insights behind meaning and purpose, in order to discover lasting happiness.
- Begin shaping a legacy that continues to make a difference well beyond your lifetime.

## Introduction: The Triumph of the Little Beckonings

Most people struggle to find their sense of purpose, and struggle even harder to integrate this vision into anything they would call happiness. Even though having a sense of purpose can increase lifespan, health, and happiness, it is also associated with anxiety in over 91% of people at some point in their lives.

For most people, purpose has become a kind of indecipherable code, sealing away true fulfillment and lasting happiness. But the purpose code is one that can be cracked. And anyone can do it.

The first step to cracking the purpose code is realizing that the purpose that brings meaning and contentment isn't that kind of purpose at all. It's not Purpose with a big, shining capital letter; it's purpose with a little "p." Small—but with a bigger, better, more meaningful impact on your life than the grandest imaginable all-consuming PURPOSE in bright lights. This purpose is found in small beckonings to pursue the things we are passionate about.

Purpose doesn't need to be something glamorous or difficult to find. In fact, it doesn't need to be something you find at all, but instead something you create.

## Part 1: The Duality of Purpose

Purpose is much more nuanced. We see that the search for purpose can be riddled with anxiety and loss as well as joy and happiness. To truly glean all the benefits, we must parse out these different aspects and differentiate between those which nurture us and those which hinder.

### Chapter 1: Is Purpose a Four-Letter Word?

If you ever need more uncomfortable silences in your life, all you have to do is bring up the topic of purpose. My podcast guests love discussing the what and how of building a prosperous business or lifestyle, but are loath to discuss the why. Many see purpose as nothing more than a four-letter word—something one doesn't talk about in polite society.

The scientific evidence is clear: having a sense of purpose leads to greater happiness, increased longevity, and better health. Yet time and time again, I am reminded by my readers and listeners that purpose anxiety not only is real, but often makes people think that pursuing purpose is futile. How do we resolve this quandary?

By exploring the scientific evidence and breaking down the crucial role that purpose plays in most of our lives, we dive into the heart of the purpose paradox: the challenge that purpose can be both life-affirming and destructive at the same time.

Anxiety associated with finding meaning is not only real, but rampant in today's society. There are many reasons why. All too often, we make one of two bad choices at this point. We either give up on purpose, or we chain ourselves to never-ending treadmills that do very little to fill our souls.

The key to cracking the purpose code is to realize that neither of those choices will bring us what we are looking for. The only way to do this is to recognize that purpose, in its simplest form, is not one but two different entities.

### Chapter 2: Why the Size of Your "P" Makes All the Difference

We fundamentally misinterpret the concept of purpose. It took many years and quite a bit of emotional heartache to reach the conclusion that I hope to convince you of now: when it comes to purpose, bigger is not better.

Most of our anxiety actually stems from what I call "big P" Purpose. Big P Purpose is overly focused on outcomes. "Little P" purpose, on the other hand, is the true creator of the wonderful health and longevity benefits that all those researchers have proven with their studies. It focuses not on the destination or the outcome, but rather on the path or process.

**Purpose With a Big "P"**

- It is goal oriented, as opposed to focusing on process.
- It often depends on an all-or-nothing equation. You either succeed or you don't.
- The bigger the goal, the easier it is to fail. These types of goals often rely on some mix of luck, timing, and good genetics.
- The anxiety that comes with such goals defining our purpose robs us of any enjoyment there might have been in the process of their pursuit.
- It is fleeting. The newness of a major accomplishment is only felt once. And once attained, the excitement of gain is replaced by endless worry over its loss.

Because of these shortcomings, it becomes obvious that when you embrace big P Purpose, you are actually embracing a scarcity mindset. Big P Purpose turns out to be pretty small minded.

> Unlike the big audacious goals we try to steal from other people, little P purpose is created and not found.

**How to Embrace Abundance with Little P Purpose**

Little P purpose embraces an abundance mentality. There is room for everyone—I mean everyone—to pursue that which brings them inner joy and happiness.

Little P purpose centers on you as an individual.

Little P purpose doesn't deny or detract from the joy of setting and achieving goals; it just doesn't depend on them.

Although we can choose what activities to fill our lives with, we can't always choose the outcome. Because of this, little P purpose is anything but all or nothing. In fact, it is all or all. There is no way to fail. And if you find these activities no longer fulfilling, there is no reason whatsoever not to do something else.

Little P purpose espouses the idea of incremental change. It recognizes that humans like the idea of progress.

And finally, little P purpose recognizes that people, as well as what they find meaningful, can change.

The ultimate outcome of focusing on little P purpose is that people have fewer regrets when they die. Instead of wishing they had achieved that which they didn't have the energy, courage, or talent to pursue, they can point to many daily activities that brought them joy and created meaning.

## Chapter 3: You Can't Find What Isn't Lost

Some of us are lucky enough to happen upon our purpose in an unexpected way. If this is not the case for you, however, there is no reason to feel distress. It turns out that average, everyday people like you and me can identify these important purpose anchors and build a fulfilling life.

Unlike the big audacious goals we try to steal from other people, little P purpose is created and not found. We create this type of purpose by concentrating on that which fills our souls, and then being intentional about taking action.

To do this, we will begin with an old hospice technique called the life review. This is simply a structured list of questions that helps people assess the important moments and themes in their lives. It also touches on regrets.

Sometimes we get so anxious about searching for purpose that we forget that we might have created it already somewhere in our lives. I challenge you to look at what you spend most of your time doing—even those things that you say you loathe. Are the embers of a flame hiding in plain sight?

Maybe they need just a wee bit of oxygen.

**The Spaghetti Method**

There are several other techniques to identify little P purpose in our lives. The first is to pay attention to the crazy ideas and inspired moments that pop up in the most inopportune times. I do believe that this is our subconscious urging us to pursue that which is really important.

If you find yourself still struggling, it is time to call for some help. The first and easiest solution is to ask family and friends. If family can't provide the answers, it might be time to bring in the professionals.

These techniques may not yield results. If this is the case, there is one more technique to try. The spaghetti method. That's right: throw a bunch of spaghetti against the wall and see what sticks. This is a shotgun-oriented trial-and-error process. Open yourself up to the universe and see what happens. This means saying yes to people and activities that you normally wouldn't say yes to.

## Chapter 4: Money Can't Buy Love, Purpose, or Happiness

As with the concept of purpose, the relationship between money and happiness is paradoxical—the evidence points to two opposite conclusions.

Research showed that more money makes us happier except past a certain level, and definitely not in poor countries or places where everyone equally enjoys the same economic boon. And furthermore, as income goes down, it is meaning and purpose rather than money that predict happiness.

A prospective study that has been ongoing for decades found that when it came to happiness, it was not money, achievement, career choice, exercise, or a healthy diet that

made respondents happy. It turned out, after 85 years of studying, that one and only one thing was a strong predictor of overall happiness: positive social relationships. Those who felt more connected to others lived longer and happier.

We feel fulfilled when we help people and are helped by them. When we nurture others and are nurtured by them. When we smile and laugh and teach and learn.

It is a virtuous cycle. Happiness leads to more meaning and purpose. Purpose leads to community and connections. Personal connections and social relationships create more happiness and longevity.

## Part 2: Meaning + Purpose = Happiness

Understanding purpose doesn't necessarily mean that we will be happier people. Here, I will completely redefine Aristotle's concept of happiness. While the ingredients are the same—meaning and purpose—we will turn them from abstract concepts into daily opportunities to take action.

### Chapter 5: Meaning and Purpose—Two Sides of the Same Coin

Meaning and purpose form two sides of the happiness coin.

Meaning is focused on cognition and our ability to connect ideas and make sense of our past. It is more thought oriented and less action oriented.

Purpose, however, is much more geared to action. Unlike meaning, purpose is present and future oriented. It's about both being in the moment and helping us project ourselves into the unknown.

To improve our sense of meaning, we need to come to terms with our past and draw connections between what seem like disparate events to feel a sense of connection and meaningfulness. When we struggle with such things, we can often find help through therapy and mental processing.

Once we move past the victimhood mindset, the present and future become limitless. We need this limitlessness as a backdrop for exploring a framework that can help better build purpose into our lives. Just knowing how to create purpose is not enough: we must then use that purpose to create happiness. The way we do this is called the climb, and it is the key to mastering the second half of the happiness equation.

### Chapter 6: The Climb

Although we may just be starting to take notice of our own internal whisperings urging us to a more gratifying way of living, it doesn't make taking action any easier. The climb will provide a template to help you transition smoothly while minimizing fear and providing guidance.

The climb depends mainly on two aspects:

- Filling our time with activities that are joyful or important to us. The nature of these activities is completely up to you. Every person can have a different anchor, and one person can have many anchors. The key is to identify those themes that light you up and then build climbs around them.
- Leaving room for incremental gain. Unlike a larger goal or destination, "incremental gain" means finding controllable ways to feel like you are making progress. The goal of improvement, again, is greater enjoyment or pleasure in your skill set. The goal is not to reach a higher peak or travel to another destination.

The Five Commandments (the Rules of the Climb):

- Your climb should never be goal oriented.
- Being on your climb must bring you joy.
- You cannot fail your climb.
- Climbs can incorporate incremental gain.
- Monogamy is optional when it comes to purpose.

There are several signs that a climb is no longer serving you. If you encounter any of these, it is time to re-evaluate if this climb is still a good use of your time:

- You are regretful of time spent on a particular climb because you would rather be doing something else.
- The climb becomes too goal oriented, and happiness depends on attaining that goal.
- The climb loses something irreplaceable as a result of factors that have nothing to do with you yourself, or even the activity.
- You may realize that pursuing this climb has not led to building a community and better connections.

### Chapter 7: What If You Can't Afford Climbing Shoes?

Naysayers will argue that pursuing purpose or engaging in the climb is a privilege that mostly belongs to the well-off. How do you start the climb if you can't afford a good pair of climbing shoes?

The benefit of becoming aware of your purpose and practicing these climbs is not only your own happiness, but also the happiness of those around you.

While money and time are not the only reasons people feel unable to pursue purpose in a meaningful way, they certainly magnify the contrast between those who are more and less privileged.

Why should this be so? While I don't have scientific data to back this up, I do have a theory: it all comes back to happiness. Happiness consists of both meaning and purpose. If you are struggling to make ends meet, trapped in a job you don't love, it is hard to find meaning in past struggles. You end up having more of a victim mentality.

How are you supposed to be able to climb? I humbly offer two opinions:

- First, try to embrace a single tiny climb, no matter how small. Use a few spare moments to do something that fills you up.
- Second, apply narrative therapy. Though you may not be able to afford a therapist yourself, how can you evaluate the major negative narratives that affect the way you think about yourself?

The benefit of becoming aware of your purpose and practicing these climbs is not only your own happiness, but also the happiness of those around you. This is how you will change the world. But you have to believe that you can. You have to let go of the excuses.

## Part 3: Small but Mighty—How Little P Purpose Changes the World

When I say "legacy," I am talking about the things you do today which last long after you have died, living on in the people who knew and loved you. How do we create legacy in a way that doesn't make us anxious, but also stands the test of time?

### Chapter 8: How the Little P(urpose) Supports the Big P(eople)

We have spent much of our time discussing big concepts like meaning, purpose, and happiness. Now I have to drop a bomb: I have misled you. Meaning and purpose are not the goal. Happiness is not the goal. What I really want for you is connections and communities. They are what winning truly looks like.

People themselves cannot be purpose. Although at times we will feel we are living for our parents, spouse, or children, becoming our best self means developing a sense of purpose outside of them. However, purpose does create strong bonds with those around us. Understanding and pursuing our purpose will automatically lead to the formation of community.

If we are intentional concerning our attempts, becoming part of various communities should be a walk in the park. Here are some suggestions about how you might go about doing that:

- Become your best you.
- Build what you want to see in the world.
- Sign up for a class.
- Volunteer.
- Become a fan.

It is in the building of community that we use purpose to establish legacy. We touch those around us and change them. And that change becomes like a pebble dropped into the ocean. The effects of the water displaced can be felt for miles and miles.

### Chapter 9: A Pebble in the Vast Ocean

Oftentimes, poor coping behaviors come from past trauma, but we can also inherit growth and abundance-oriented scripts that help us become better, happier, and more adapted.

Using tools like narrative therapy can help overcome poor coping skills if you have them. And just because you haven't inherited any of these generational growth scripts, doesn't mean you can't write them anew (with little P purpose)—and pass them down.

What if the model you provide for friends and family is one not of fear but of intentional living, filled with purpose and joy?

Like a ripple created by a pebble dropped in the ocean, could the water displaced ebb and flow for many years and miles? This is the legacy you create by pursuing purpose.

How to Become Purposeful About Legacy

To mangle a quote from the movie Fight Club: the first rule of legacy building is—we don't talk about legacy. Legacy is a byproduct of living a purposeful life and engaging authentically in these climbs.

There are, however, some important considerations when it comes to having your purpose impact your family and others:

- Live Out Loud
- Create Communities
- Volunteer
- Offer Services for Free

Take a moment to think what you would like your legacy to be for future generations. Are you acting accordingly today by pursuing your purpose?

### Chapter 10: Embrace Purpose, Erase Regret

No one wants to look back at their lives and wish they had behaved differently—acted with more courage and insight. Yet that is exactly what most of us do. Like purpose, regret is often a four-letter word.

For most of my hospice patients, it is unfortunately too late. For those not on their deathbeds, however, regret can be not only bearable, but a great motivator to living a more fulfilled life. Regret can be a gift.

Although we think of regret in pessimistic terms, there is quite a bit to be optimistic about. Regret grants us agency. Having agency has the potential to turn regret into purpose. We are one step away from beginning a new climb.

Failure and disappointment go hand in hand. When we set our goals so high that they are unachievable, we lose the agency to bring about the desired outcome. That's why I consider this disappointment instead of regret. Disappointment is actually worse.

By focusing on little P purpose, I was able to escape the mirage created by being a physician, and see clearly that there were true regrets (not disappointments) that I still had to address.

And that's exactly what I did. Years later, I can honestly say that I rarely feel regret in my life. Would I have any regrets if I died tomorrow? I can honestly say no.

Can you do the same? Can you recognize the disappointments in your life and differentiate them from the regrets? If so, can you start to accept the disappointments and act on those regrets today? There is no better time than the present. This is an essential step in cracking the purpose code.

## Conclusion: Be Like Roman, Not Like Mickey

If you are not seeing little P purpose in your life and the happiness it brings people, then you are not looking hard enough. You are not paying close enough attention to the people around you. My life is so full of those who have been examples of such purpose.

One of them is Roman, who found his purpose in buying and selling baseball cards. Roman lost his battle with cancer over 30 years ago. Yet his effect on me was profound. Thirty years later, I am still talking about him and what his little store meant to me.

But you know who has had almost no impact on my life? Mickey Mantle, whose baseball cards I so zealously hunted for during childhood, who broke countless records and undoubtedly was one of the premier players to have ever played the sport of baseball. I rarely think of Mickey Mantle; and even if I did, he has had no positive effect on my life.

In closing, I wish for you to have a life of little P purpose. I wish for you to use that purpose to build communities of people you love and who love you. I wish for you to impact so many people that, like the pebble dropped in the ocean, your legacy will last decades and centuries after you have left this world. I wish for you to be like Roman and not Mickey.



**Jordan Grumet**'s life took an unexpected turn after a profound personal loss reshaped his trajectory. The untimely passing of his father, an oncologist, sparked his journey towards a medical career. He completed his studies at the University of Michigan and earned his medical degree from Northwestern University. This path led him to specialize in Internal Medicine and ultimately to provide compassionate care for the terminally ill in hospice. Jordan's work weaves together medicine, finance, and the significance of purpose, making a profound impact on those seeking a meaningful life

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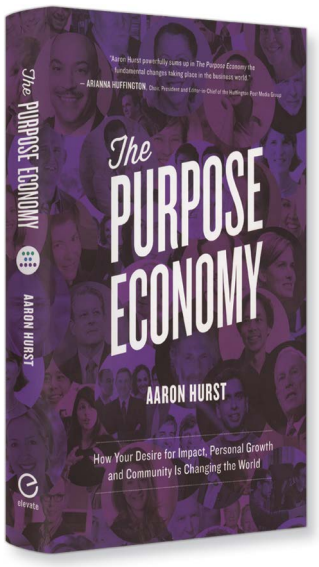
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# The Purpose Economy

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# The Purpose Economy

## How Your Desire for Impact, Personal Growth and Community Is Changing the World

by Aaron Hurst

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A series of shifts are happening in our economy: Millennials are trading in conventional career paths to launch tech startups, start small businesses that are rooted in local communities, or freelance their expertise. We are sharing everything, from bikes and cars, to extra rooms in our homes. We now create, buy and sell handcrafted products in our local communities with ease.

Globally recognized entrepreneur, founder of Taproot Foundation and CEO of Imperative, Aaron Hurst argues that while these developments seem unrelated at first, taken together they reveal a powerful pattern that points to purpose as the new driver of the American economy. It's an economy where value lies in establishing purpose for employees and customers through serving needs greater than their own, enabling personal growth and building community.

Based on interviews with thousands of entrepreneurs, *The Purpose Economy* shows this new era is already fueling demand for a whole host of products and services and transforming how millennials view their careers. Hurst offers a blueprint for a new economic era that is transforming companies, markets and our careers to better serve people and the world.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three types of purpose and how to achieve them for yourself and your organization.
- Industry trends that are creating value in the new Purpose Economy.
- How to go beyond creating a successful organization in order to build human-centered markets.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE PURPOSE ECONOMY**

**by Aaron Hurst**

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## SECTION ONE: WELCOME TO THE PURPOSE ECONOMY

## Introduction

The corporations that dominate society are a relatively recent invention, barely a 100 years old. The sector is still in its infancy, and the giant businesses that lead it, despite all their resources and systems, are far less resilient than people. You will likely live longer than the organization that employs you today.

If little of what we build or experience outlasts us, we can and should give ourselves far more permission to experiment and take risks. Few things cannot change. That means we possess much more power than we realize, but it also means that even if we make mistakes, they are impermanent and reparable. Things are done a certain way, until they aren't. You can be the one who makes the change.

How do we engage people to use their purpose to create meaningful change? People gain purpose when they grow personally, when they establish meaningful relationships, and when they are in service to something greater than themselves.

At the core of the Purpose Economy is people's need and desire to find their professional purpose. This presents an opportunity of unprecedented potential: an economy that will not only continue to generate jobs and resources but one that also has the capability to improve the lives of billions of people. But much of this potential lies in how we as leaders move forward and how we frame and invest in this new economy. It is, at its core, the first economy built for humans.

## The Purpose Economy

Powerful shifts in public desire are changing what we buy, how we buy it, from whom we buy it, why we buy it, and how much of it we buy. A generation of Purpose Economy pioneers, like Whole Foods Market's John Mackey and Virgin's Richard Branson, are challenging others to follow their lead and to create new frameworks both to do well and to do good, which raises the bar for the business community and turns successful theories into movements.

The Purpose Economy describes the new context and set of ways in which people and organizations are focused on creating value, and it defines the organizing principle for innovation and growth. It is an economy where value lies in establishing purpose for employees and customers — through serving needs greater than their own, enabling personal growth and building community. The Purpose Economy explains where markets meet movements, as individuals step out to create their own means of finding purpose through their work.

### Three Types of Purpose

The definition and nature of purpose is often misunderstood. There are three well-researched, core categories that consistently echo through the words of the professionals who applied to the Taproot Foundation: personal purpose, social purpose and societal purpose. Together, they represent the needs that the new Purpose Economy addresses.

**Personal Purpose:** We find purpose when we do things we love, attempt new challenges, and express our voice to the world.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

**Social Purpose:** Research shows that purpose is not a solo act. When it comes to meaning in life, relationships matter to humans more than anything else. They reinforce our sense of value, require us to engage, and ultimately help us grow.

**Societal Purpose:** The most powerful source of purpose comes from this concept: purpose comes when we know we have done something that we believe matters — to others, to society and to ourselves.

## The Ten Drivers of the New Economy

There were a special set of circumstances and key drivers that gave rise to the Purpose Economy and that continue to contribute to its growth.

**1. Human-Scale Technology:** Technology has evolved over the last 10 years, from enabling us to move online to now enabling us to find purpose online. The third generation of the web allows us to once again have human-scale markets. We can find services provided by people in our own neighborhood, read blogs by neighbors in our own community, and borrow money from like-minded people rather than big banks.

**2. The Maslow Millennial Effect:** Abraham Maslow famously put forward a pyramid model to explain human motivations, in which basic survival needs form the base, and others, such as self-esteem and creative expression, only become concerns, or needs, when the more basic ones are satisfied. The Millennial generation is increasingly known for its desire to make a difference, grow and share its passion with the world.

**3. Generation Disrupt:** Generation X entered the workforce during the dot-com boom and was trained to think big and use technology. They are now the generation in charge and are putting those talents to practice working on big purpose.

**4. Environmental, Economic & Political Turmoil:** Out of great disasters, whether environmental or economic, often come great opportunities. They inspire courage, invention and innovation. They also force us to redefine normal. We are seeing marvelously inventive new solutions emerging all around us; new models are being tested, hybrid styles of organization are being invented; and capital from both the private sector and the government is being redirected to the Purpose Economy.

**5. Longevity:** As they map out their next 30 years, Boomers are designing their second careers and again prioritizing the purpose they sought in their youth. This reimagining of retirement is directly tied to the fact that humans are now living longer than ever.

**6. Changing Families and Evolving Roles:** Both parents in most families now work, and one of the many consequences of this change is that we are hiring people in record numbers for the jobs highest in purpose — caring for our kids and aging parents.

**7. New Social Science:** The new field of positive psychology has dispelled many of the myths about success and purpose and is changing the way leaders think. Emerging research supports and fuels the changing role of management and leadership to help people find purpose and meaning, rather than just to move up the corporate ladder.

**8. Accelerated Globalization:** Information technology and air transportation have made the world a village. We have become much more connected to people all over the globe and been made much more aware of the problems so many people in the developing world are coping with. As the world has become interconnected, we are no longer free to look the other way about the impact we're having on people's lives around the globe.

**9. A Shifting Social Context:** Organizations and individuals are seeing the gap in what the government can accomplish and trying to step in to fill it.

**10. Blending of the Sectors:** The line between government, nonprofits and companies is blurring, and every sector is seeing purpose at the core of their future. It is increasingly difficult for business to be able to justify a myopic bottom-line strategy or for nonprofits to ignore the importance of market forces. What we expect of organizations is changing.

# SECTION TWO: PERSONAL PURPOSE —OWNING IT

## Purpose Is What Matters

How is success defined? For many of us, we focus on what we can most easily measure: money. Money does matter, of course, at least until we reach a "comfortable standard." We need a certain level of income to be able to meet our basic needs and remove acute levels of stress.

According to University of Pennsylvania professor Martin E.P. Seligman, what we should seek to achieve is well-being, not simply happiness, which he sees as being one-dimensional and fleeting. Seligman breaks down well-being into five areas: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment, or PERMA.

Positive emotion is the basis for having a pleasant life and includes things like warmth and pleasure — things we associate with basic happiness. Borrowing from the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, he also describes how you can be in a state of "flow," when you lose a sense of self-consciousness and are operating with all of your mental and emotional powers. This level of engagement requires deploying your highest strengths and talents.

Meaning is about who we are and how we are in the world. It is about more than the here and now, and it is about more than just the self. When we combine meaning with engagement, we find the pinnacle state of purpose, where our well-being is highest and most sustained. Purpose enables us to thrive; we need it in the activity we spend most of our waking hours doing: working.

### Learn, Earn & Return

During a recent TED talk, moral philosopher Peter Singer argued that the best way to change the world is to go into finance. You can make a lot of money and then give it away. And the best part is that you get rich, too. This is the fable of "learn, earn and then return."

The thinking goes something like this. The first third of your life is spent learning skills and about yourself, as you gain new experiences to help identify your path. The second third of your life is when you are in the heart of your earning potential and serving as a leader. The final third of your life is focused on giving back. It is when you reinvest in future generations and the world.

Apt as it may have been for another time, the "learn, earn and then return" model is inadequate for today. It no longer fits our society or the needs of new generations. A more useful and frankly gratifying model is to blend all three into every year of your career. We must constantly be learning, earning and returning. Continual learning is a constant of successful careers, and many of those who wait to give back never get there. And even if they do, they miss 30 or 40 years of the pleasure of living with a guiding larger purpose.

## Purpose Myth-Busting

So, how do you maximize purpose in your job? At the core is the understanding that not everyone derives purpose from the same things and that you must come to discover your own purpose. Most of what we understand about purpose at work comes from Hollywood. Stories are a powerful way to learn, but most of the stories we see on screen give us a romanticized view of the role of purpose in our work. They build myths about purpose that actually make it harder for us to focus on what matters.

**Myth One: Purpose = Cause.** One of the greatest barriers among professionals is the ubiquitous belief that they have to find their cause. So many of us who are looking for a cause think we have to find our one true calling. But seeking our purpose is about finding a direction, not a destination. **TRUTH: Purpose isn't a cause; it is an approach to work and serving others. Purpose is a verb, not a noun.**

**Myth Two: Purpose = Luxury.** Why do the poorest Americans donate 3.2 percent of their income to charity, compared to the wealthiest, who donate only 1.3 percent? Money often conflicts with finding purpose, as it creates a false substitute for defining success. **TRUTH: Purpose is a universal need, not a luxury for those with financial wealth.**

**Myth Three: Purpose = Revelation.** Connected to the myth that purpose is about a cause is the myth that we discover our purpose in one fell swoop. We are just walking along, minding our own business when — bam — our life's calling is transmitted to us like a bolt of lightning from above. **TRUTH: Purpose is a journey. It doesn't come as a revelation from above, but from living life awake and seeking new experiences.**

**Myth Four: Only Some Work Generates Purpose.** Work plays very different roles in people's lives. For some people, a job is simply a job. Those with careers care more deeply about their work as a way to get ahead within their profession or function. Those with callings fully integrate their work into their lives and values. **TRUTH: You can find purpose in any job. It is all in how you approach it.**

**Myth Five: Purpose = Easy.** Even when doing work that is making a big impact, if there is no skin in the game, the depth of purpose is diminished. **TRUTH: Purpose requires giving of yourself.**

## The WHO, HOW & WHY of Purpose

We have a language to talk about everything, from our education to our skills to strengths to our titles, but we don't have a shared way to talk about who we are and what matters to us personally. It is critical that you own your purpose and can articulate it powerfully as part of your identity.

When it comes to purpose at work, there are three core drivers that will determine whether we feel fulfilled in

what we're doing: who we serve, how we serve them, and why we serve them.

**WHO of Purpose:** As you seek to have more purpose in your career, this is the first area where you should seek clarity. Are you a doctor, a hospital administrator or policymaker? This isn't an intellectual question; it has to do with what turns you on and ultimately, what will allow you to create the most meaningful impact in the world.

**WHY of Purpose:** The foundation of our purpose is our moral view of the world. We are each driven in our work to drive progress toward achieving what we view as a moral utopia, where our values are universally achieved. It is our definition of progress, our motivation to move forward as a people. To simplify this framework, it is easiest to think of the moral foundations as they apply to work as being on a continuum between two moral poles. Researcher Jonathan Haidt frames the first pole through the lens of karma. Nature will ensure in the long run that everyone gets his or her just desserts. It is our job to get out of the way and let karma work.

The other pole doesn't trust that karma and nature will ensure that everyone gets what is coming to them. This other group sees natural forces as something more akin to entropy. They believe that without intervention, all groups and societies will move from order to disorder. It is only with intervention that we can be a moral society. We all sit somewhere in this continuum. It defines the underlying motivation behind our work.

**HOW of Purpose:** Even with the same moral foundations defining success, we approach the process of getting there differently. How we work is also tied to our view of the world and how we both solve problems and engage in the creative process. We can perhaps gain the most purpose in our work in how we approach it. These approaches include community-centered, human-centered, structure-driven and knowledge-driven.

Some people are always looking for ways to bring other people into an issue to help build ownership, community and awareness. Some people see every situation as an opportunity to redesign it in order to better serve needs. Some people are laser focused on learning and understanding everything about an issue before they move forward. Others look for potential efficiency gains in every line they wait in, and know there is a better way to design processes to bring out the best in people and keep their time focused on the things that matter.

To infuse purpose proactively into your work and life, clearly understanding what drives purpose for you greatly increases your odds of success. You need a mission, or better yet, a purpose statement. You need a short and powerful way to remember what matters.

## The Practice of Purpose

Researchers Susan Ashford and Ruth Blatt at the University of Michigan began their research looking at how people set goals and manage their time when they are self-employed. But as they talked to people, they found that the key issues raised by everyone weren't about time or goal management; what everyone wanted to talk about was how to manage purpose. That was their primary concern. How do I stay motivated and engaged? How do I feel like my work matters? When things get tough, how do I stick it out?

The prerequisite to effectively creating meaning was self-awareness. Understanding the drivers of purpose in your work is foundational to managing that same purpose. In talking to these professionals, Susan and Ruth found that they had implemented four different ways to make meaning for themselves. These become key to practicing purpose and keeping it front and center.

The first is task-focused purpose. It means loving the craft of your work and overcoming the small, task-related challenges. Those using the second approach were impact-focused and created ways to see their work as having an impact on others, part of something bigger than themselves. They considered the impact on society, other people and organizations.

Those in the third approach focused on their own identity. How did they develop a sense of who they are and where they were going? In defining different aspects of their jobs and boundaries, these professionals were able to gain a better sense of themselves and their values.

Finally, the researchers tied it all back to financial drivers of purpose. While money itself is not a purpose, often the reason we need the money is important and purpose-driven. These people see money as a means to enable them to achieve their most important purpose-based work — being part of a family.

### Job Crafting

Job crafting is a conscious or unconscious process of redesigning your own job to better align with your values, strengths and passions. Researchers have found that much of what brings meaning to a job is not the job itself, but what we bring to it. Traditional thinking says that the best way to find more meaningful work is to find a new job. But the theory behind job crafting points to another

solution — changing the job you're in to better meet your needs. Within job crafting, professionals can redesign not only their mindset but also their tasks and relationships.

Done well, this process stems from the WHO, HOW and WHY of what drives purpose. Once you have that self awareness, it is possible to intentionally redesign your job to make it substantially more rewarding.

## SECTION THREE: SOCIAL PURPOSE — THE PURPOSE ECONOMY ORGANIZATION

## The Purpose Economy Organization

Having a purpose or value proposition doesn't necessarily make a Purpose Economy organization. A Purpose Economy organization creates purpose for its employees and customers — through serving real needs, enabling personal growth and building community.

It is perhaps misleading to talk about a Purpose Economy organization as a binary label. There is no organization that you would say is 100 percent a Purpose Economy organization. It is a matter of degrees.

Take Google, for example. Larry Page and Sergey Brin founded Google with a strong commitment to creating purpose for people. Their products have improved countless lives by helping us access critical information when we need it, and their management remains deeply committed to creating positive social impact. At the same time, the rapid growth of the company has left many of its employees hungry for purpose.

Even the most successful organizations, those who are focused on creating purpose for people, have their challenges. A Purpose Economy organization is one that makes the creation of purpose their imperative, even if they struggle at times to realize their values and vision.

### Three Core Approaches

Purpose Economy organizations are emerging with incredibly diverse ways to emphasize purpose. Organizations that are thriving in the new economy integrate at least one of these three methods into their enterprise: 1) delivering purpose to customers, consumers or participants, 2) providing purpose to employees, and/or 3) building purpose throughout the supply chain.

An example of the first method is Harvard MBA Will Dean, who founded Tough Mudder and has built a rapidly growing business out of extreme obstacle courses "designed to test your all-around strength, stamina, mental grit and camaraderie." Over a million people around the globe have participated in these obstacle courses and have found the experience of training and participating to be one of powerful personal growth.

The second approach focuses on providing purpose to employees. Avon has been doing this for more than 125 years. It was inspired less by the needs of customers and more by a vision to make direct sales relevant to women. Avon was critical to building female independence in the economy and giving women a source of purpose. It has come a long way since then but has retained its core vision of empowering women through work.

The tea company Guayaki Yerba Mate is a compelling example of the third approach to purpose. They are building purpose through their supply chain — those people and companies that provide them with tea. The company's goal is to create 1,000 jobs and restore 200,000 acres of rainforest by 2020. They have built a network of certified Fair Trade tea growers that have created jobs for indigenous people in Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil.

## Purposeful Ventures – Five Opportunities

While the Information Economy has created many marvelous inventions and improvements in our society, one of the unfortunate side effects has been a loss of connection in many parts of our lives. But the Purpose Economy promises something different. Technology now has the potential to connect us in more authentic, meaningful ways, rather than isolating us. Here are five industry trends that illustrate how value is created in the Purpose Economy and how that will continue in the future:

**Retail:** In the Purpose Economy, we see the circumvention of traditional retail channels, which mark up goods at several points along the food chain. An increasingly robust direct producer-to-consumer retail capacity is emerging in which any individual can sell her wares at whatever price she determines. This new kind of commerce creates an appealing, person-to-person marketplace that empowers people to support independent artisans and allows them to find their own suppliers, which in turn lets them express themselves through the pursuit of products and producers that interest them.

**Real Estate:** Sharing has become a way to discover more meaning (and purpose) in our lives. Money that might have been spent on owning a big house or expensive car is freed up and can be spent on experiences. It also

connects us to each other in new ways, building trust and reciprocity and deepening relationships. Inspired in part by Starbucks and the mobility of office technology, more formal co-working spaces are popping up everywhere. There are now 800 such commercial co-working facilities in the United States, versus only 40 in 2008 and 300 only two years ago. Whether it's in our homes, our offices or community centers, as Americans, we are finding new ways of sharing our spaces and creating more purpose and meaning for ourselves and each other.

**Finance:** Finance looks almost nothing like it did a hundred years ago. J.P. Morgan built his financial empire by lending money to people based on their character and community standing. Money was lent to neighbors based on relationships, not collateral and loan-to-asset ratios. Banking was a community business. Entrepreneurs like Jeff Stewart have seen an opportunity to return to the roots of finance and live up to the ideals of pioneers like J.P. Morgan. Online social networks, he figured, could enable people again to borrow money based on their character and standing in the community. In founding Lenddo, he not only saw the opportunity to create a more sustainable and sane form of banking, but also to serve the 2 billion people around the world who are currently "under-banked."

**Education:** We are seeing a similar shift happening in education. Homeschooling is growing seven times faster than enrollment in traditional K-12 schools. While homeschooling isn't necessarily the solution, it is a harbinger of what is happening in the field and where America is headed. Parents want to create a rigorous and personalized educational experience for their children. Fortunately, new platforms and technology have made homeschooling manageable on many fronts. Like banking, education will return to a human-scale model based on relationships and personal needs, and it will be where much of the disruption in the economy and labor market occurs in the next few decades.

**Health Care:** Another field undergoing a radical transformation is health care, which also spent much of the last hundred years focusing on scaling and efficiency. Kaiser Permanente is a health care provider to 9 million Americans. They are working to use technology to strip out the paperwork that dominates medical offices today. Their vision is to go even further and implement technology to enable doctors to once again visit people in their homes. They are working to make telemedicine and in-home monitors the new norm. Health care will again be patient-centric. This patient-centric goal is combined with a larger shift in the medical community toward preventive care.

## Leading with Purpose

An emerging model, where an organization's community cuts across employee, contractor and customer lines, is increasingly common in the Purpose Economy. It is designed to build long-term communities that support the mission of the firm. But what's really radical about it is that at any given time, a member could simultaneously be a shareholder, customer and employee.

The blurring of customer and employee isn't only happening with 21st-century born companies. Even for companies like Ford, customers are increasingly driving sales, generating input for new services, and building the company's brand. Customers make up a crucial part of the value-generation process.

Marketing and HR have traditionally been the core functions in a company concerned with people. They both focus on how to attract and engage people in the mission of the company, and for a long time they have been able to operate in a largely disconnected fashion, but that is becoming less possible or desirable.

Smart companies today have started to think of these roles in less siloed ways, instead combining the functions to be in service of the larger community as a whole. By combining these functions, organizations are not only more efficient and effective, they become something far more important, more human-centered.

### Community Organizing

Community organizing is the art of motivating and leading people to lead themselves. It is leadership in its purest form. Or, as Harvard's Marshall Ganz more eloquently defines it, community organizing is "the act of accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty."

This kind of community leadership is essential to the success of an organization like Mozilla, where there is little distinction between employees, freelancers, volunteers and users. Everyone is part of the community. For example, volunteers do much of the technical support for their products, such as rolling out their mobile platform in Latin America with no staff on the ground, and training staff at cell phone stores on the new mobile browser. Volunteers, many of whom work 40 hours a week at companies like IBM, spend their nights and weekends searching for bugs in Mozilla's software.

### An Incremental Change — Leader as Conductor

For many, the jump to completely integrating a community may be too great a risk and too heavy a lift to do

all at once. Elance's Fabio Rosati uses a conductor as a metaphor for an incremental shift in how an organization can approach leadership that points it in the right direction. As he puts it, "A conductor is not someone who tells people what to do but rather someone who orchestrates work. A conductor is also an extraordinary motivator and is really good at understanding the skills of every person, and how these skills can be brought together."

## SECTION FOUR: SOCIETAL PURPOSE —MOVING MARKETS

# Market Movers

The Purpose Economy is about more than just profits; it's about creating meaningful impact in service of people and the planet. The great business challenge now is not just how to build a successful organization, but how to build more human-centered markets.

### The Five Ways to Move a Market

Technology is but one of five levers, including research and data, bright spots, public perception, and policy, all of which can effect markets in the Purpose Economy. Market creation requires that at least three of these levers be deployed at different times or simultaneously. They are the ways you remove barriers to adoption of the changes you want to make.

**Bright Spots:** Bright spots, or positive deviants, are examples of usually small-scale efforts that have achieved a remarkable result. They point to the possibility that something better is possible and create a starting place for thinking about replication and how to build or expand a market. As you consider how to move a market and address the barrier to a population adopting a change, a bright spot might be something already happening and just needing amplification, or it may be something you need to create.

**Research & Data:** Research is most often a tool to help create incremental shifts in a field, but it can also become a much more powerful level. In the context of the Purpose Economy, research can provide insights that inspire entrepreneurs to pursue markets as innovators. And, given that the Purpose Economy isn't only about the bottom line, research often defines how to measure non-financial success.

**Disruptive Technology:** Disruptive technology can include everything from new medicine to mobile applications. Like bright spots, it changes our understanding of what is possible and gives markets new tools to advance their growth. Information technology has certainly been doing this, with classics like WebMD to mobile applications that help organize responses to disasters.

**Public Perception:** People are unlikely to join a market if they don't know about it or have the wrong frame of mind about it. A great deal can be accomplished by changing public consciousness. A series of health-related marketing campaigns by former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg has brought about dramatic changes in the largest city in the United States, such as the ban on indoor smoking, and has led to the adoption of similar laws in other cities and countries.

**Policy:** When you change policy, which most often means changing public policy, you change the rules of the market. Changes in corporate policies can also have significant impact. Many companies have such a large footprint that when they change their purchasing or hiring policies, for example, they can quickly move a market forward.

These five market levers can and often should be employed in combination, and you can find these levers in action across industries and sectors.

Repairing the world and saving every being from suffering is an ambitious goal, but we must constantly set it as our true north. That said, both are brilliantly grounded ideas. In setting such unobtainable goals, we also directly have to admit that we will never achieve them, which grounds us in reality and forces us to bring humility to our ambitions within the Purpose Economy.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Purpose Economy* you'll also like:

1. ***Common Purpose* by Joel Kurtzman**. Common purpose is rarely achieved, but when a leader is able to bring it about, the results are outsized, measurable and inspiring.

2. ***Goals!* by Brian Tracy**. Specific advice to help executives and others achieve their personal and workplace goals. Clarifying your values and finding your "major definite purpose" is a key step.

3. ***Hacking Leadership* by Mike Myatt**. Myatt identifies 11 leadership gaps that can be holding leaders back and affecting their performance. The gaps include purpose.

· Book 232 of 269 ·

# The Resiliency Advantage

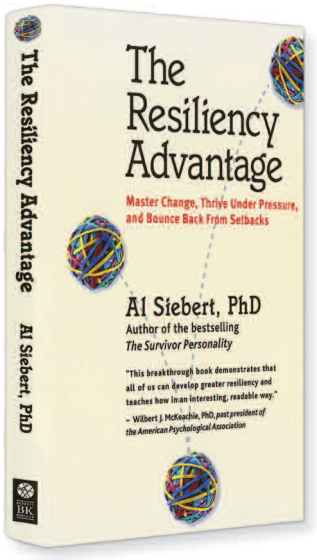
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Career & Self-Development

# The Resiliency Advantage

## Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure, and Bounce Back from Setbacks




by Al Siebert, Ph.D.

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Resiliency — the ability to adapt to life's changes and crises — is key to a healthy, productive life. Based on his deep knowledge of the new science of resiliency, Dr. Al Siebert explains how and why some people are more resilient than others and how resiliency can be learned at any age. Siebert details a unique five-level program for becoming more resilient. *The Resiliency Advantage* helps readers banish negative, self-defeating thoughts and break free from the roles of "victim" and "good child" while improving problem-solving skills, maintaining humor and optimism during rough times, and becoming both self-reliant and socially responsible.

These are challenging times. We are in a turbulent era. One in which too much change is happening too fast for many people. *The Resiliency Advantage* gives you a head start over those who don't want to learn skills for handling constant change and difficult developments. Siebert shows you how to sustain strong, healthy energy in non-stop change, bounce back quickly from setbacks and gain strength from adversities.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to sustain health, energy and positive feelings during the worst of times.
- How to improve your analytical, creative and practical problem-solving skills.
- How to strengthen your self-esteem, self-confidence and self-concept.
- How to develop the specific attributes and skills found in highly resilient people.
- How to sharpen your talent for serendipity — the ability to convert accidents and misfortune into lucky accidents and good fortune.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **THE RESILIENCY ADVANTAGE**

**by Al Siebert, Ph.D.**

**The author:** Dr. Al Siebert (1934-2009) was founder and director of The Resiliency Center. He was internationally recognized for his research into the inner nature of highly resilient survivors. He was an ex-paratrooper with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com or visit www.resiliencycenter.com

## Thriving in Today's World

Resiliency means being able to bounce back from life developments that may feel totally overwhelming at first. When resilient people have their lives disrupted they handle their feelings in healthy ways. They allow themselves to feel grief, anger, loss and confusion when hurt and distressed, but they don't let it become a permanent feeling state. An unexpected outcome is that they not only heal, they often bounce back stronger than before.

This is why resilient people usually handle major difficulties easier than others. They expect to rebuild their disrupted lives in a new way that works for them, and the struggle to overcome adversity develops new strengths in them.

### Learning to Be Resilient

The art of resiliency gives you a powerful advantage in today's world. Your learning will be most useful if you put together your own plan for developing your way of being resilient and don't restrict yourself only to what you read in this book. In the school of life, the responsibility is on the learner, not the teacher. ●

## Bouncing Back from Setbacks

Gert Lamfrom and Neal Boyle were college sweethearts. After they married, Neal began working in Gert's parents' small hat-manufacturing business. He learned the business well and eventually took over as its president.

In 1970, Neal died suddenly of a heart attack. Gert's grief was magnified by seeing that no one but her husband knew how to run the business and her parents were too old to come back. All their assets were in the business. If it collapsed, she didn't know what she could do to support herself, her parents and her son in college.

Gert decided she would do her best not to let their small business collapse. She asked her son Tim, a senior in college, to come home and help her save the company from bankruptcy. With debts mounting and workers to pay, they worked long days and on weekends to fill and ship orders.

The business stabilized and they decided to expand by making sportswear. Gert was ruthless in making certain every item was perfect before it shipped. The company, Columbia Sportswear, developed strong brand awareness in 1984 when it launched an advertising campaign that featured Gert as a stern taskmaster with incredibly high standards. The ads featured "Mother Boyle" peering over her glasses, admonishing son Tim to ruthlessly test the durability of Columbia Sportswear garments.

Under Gert's leadership, Columbia Sportswear did more than bounce back from near collapse. Over the years it grew from being a small hat-manufacturing company to become one of the world's largest producers of sportswear, outdoor clothing and ski wear.

### Who Is Responsible?

In the past, most private- and public-sector employees were hired and retained because they were easily controlled. Their upbringing oversocialized them into acquiescing to people in authority. The unwritten agreement was that if they cooperated, did as told and didn't cause problems when feeling upset with management, they would have a lifetime job with fringe benefits and a good retirement package. The arrangement worked reasonably well for most employees while it lasted, but that world doesn't exist anymore. It is now common to hear about excellent employees losing their jobs because of organizational downsizing.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor In Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Jeannette Scott**, Contributing Editor

When your life is disrupted by decisions or actions made by others, an essential question to ask yourself is, "Who is responsible for how well my life goes?" How resilient you are depends on your answer.

Resilient people don't wait for others to rescue them; they work through their feelings, set goals, work to reach their goals and often emerge from the resiliency process with a better life than before. Later, they say they are glad that their difficult situation happened.

## LEVEL ONE RESILIENCY

# Optimize Your Health: A Practical Action Plan

The widespread belief about jobs having harmful stress is an artificial "consensus reality." Articles, books and workshops about stress, while well-intentioned, sustain an illusion that something called "stress" is constantly assaulting and harming us. What most people call stress is really an internal, physical feeling of anxiety or strain that they don't like. This is not just semantics. Stress is the external pressure, strain is the internal effect.

Make a list of six or seven things that you feel irritated, upset or distressed about. Ask and answer questions such as:

- What pressures am I feeling?
- How is my work and my life different than it was a year ago?
- What is difficult for me now and what difficulties am I expecting?
- What feels distressing to me?

Take your time and be thorough. Write descriptive phrases.

The next step is to talk or write about how you feel about the items you listed. During difficult times, an important resiliency step is being able to express your feelings in healthy ways. You can't make feelings go away, but you can move through them.

Now list your positive experiences. List activities that revitalize and invigorate you. Ask yourself these questions:

- What do I have fun doing? What do I get enthusiastic about?
- What would I like to do that I keep putting off?
- Who do I enjoy sharing good experiences with?
- When do I sleep best at night?
- What positive aspects of my life am I ignoring?

### Decide to Cope Well with Challenges

After you've made your lists about what drains you and what revitalizes you, you are at a choice point. Are you going to take action or not take action to reduce your distressing, energy-draining experiences and increase pleasant, revitalizing experiences?

In the 1970s, some psychologists began to study the connection between internal, locus of control attitudes and fewer stress-related health problems. In 1975, University of Chicago Professor Salvatore Maddi began a 12-year study of 450 managers and executives at Illinois Bell Telephone, a subsidiary of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T).

The researchers found that the hardy executives and managers had three qualities:

- They made an emotional *commitment* to do their best to successfully handle the ongoing events and to help others.
- They believed they could influence the outcomes and actively worked to reach specific goals. This gave them a feeling of being in *control* of their job assignments and their part of the action.
- They felt energized and *challenged* to solve the problems and cope effectively with every difficulty.

### Decrease Negative Experiences

Look at your list of negative experiences. Pick one item and create an action plan to feel less vulnerable and more in control. Ask yourself: If I can't avoid it, change it or make it go away, what if I changed my response to it? What if I decided to stop letting it bother me?

You feel strained only by what you emotionally and physically attempt to deal with. Disengaging yourself from some things around you conserves your resiliency energy for more important challenges.

### Ask for Support

Everything you think and feel has an effect on your physical health; the quality of your interactions with others has an effect on your physical health. You recover better when you tell your family, a friend or a support group what you are feeling. If you feel overwhelmed and lack energy for handling the pressures, consider seeking professional help. Take this suggestion seriously. Anyone who tries to act as though he or she never feels upset or distressed is more fragile than people who admit they need counseling.

### Enjoy Strain Like a Good Workout

Notice that the Optimal Health Plan does not say to avoid pressure or strain. Without periods of strain we

lose strength and deteriorate. An optimal plan has you alternating the strains of intense work with periods of detachment, rest and relaxation.

## LEVEL TWO RESILIENCY

# Skillfully Problem Solve

Pioneering research conducted by psychologist Richard Lazarus established that effective coping includes both emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. The connection between a problem-solving response and resiliency has been confirmed many times. Research conducted by Mary Steinhardt at a division of the Motorola corporation found that employees who use problem-focused coping in a constantly changing work environment are more resilient, have good relationships with others and enjoy better health. Steinhardt's study also confirmed that the least resilient people do not cope well with their unhappy feelings, believe their jobs are full of stress and have more illnesses.

Robert Sternberg and his colleagues have conducted worldwide research to understand the kinds of intelligence that determine success in life. Sternberg, in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association in 2003, described three identifiably different kinds of intelligence used by people in almost every culture:

**Analytical intelligence:** Logic, reason and abstract thinking used to solve familiar problems.

**Creative intelligence:** Used to invent unusual solutions in new and unfamiliar circumstances.

**Practical intelligence:** Applied to solving situational, real-life problems. People who are "street smart" are individuals who have practical intelligence, although they may use logical and creative thinking as well.

### Analytical Problem Solving

First, develop an accurate understanding of the nature of the threat, challenge or difficulty. You accomplish this by asking questions such as: What is the problem? What are the facts? How serious is it? How urgent is it? How much time do I have? What additional information do I need? Is this a problem I can do anything about? Must I be the one who takes action?

Second, ask yourself, What do I want? What is my goal? What kind of outcome would satisfy me? Does my goal take into account everyone who would be affected?

Third, outline two or more possible ways to overcome the problem to achieve a positive outcome. Then look at the risks and potential negative effects of each of your solutions.

Fourth, take action. It is normal to feel a bit anxious when you do or say something you have never done before.

Fifth, look at the effects of the action you have taken. Ask questions aimed at getting accurate feedback.

Sixth, learn from the feedback you get. Reappraise your understanding of the problem and the situation.

Seventh, modify your efforts.

Eighth, re-evaluate the outcome. Can you now leave the situation and move on to other things?

Ninth, ask yourself what you learned from this.

### Creative Problem Solving

Creative solutions cannot be found using logical, analytical problem solving. Creative problem solving starts with feeling that an unusual, new solution is possible. Then you ask yourself many questions to free your imagination from the restrictions of normal thinking and assumptions. You have probably heard the phrase "thinking outside the box." It takes uncensored questions to break out of the invisible walls of socially approved thinking to let your imagination soar free.

### Practical Problem Solving

Many people without a college education are successful in life because they are very practical in how they handle the world they live in. Many people have an amazing practical intelligence with "things." Farmers and ranchers are known for their ability to keep farm equipment running using bailing wire and duct tape. In many large office buildings, the chief of building operations — the person who knows how to keep everything running — is not a college graduate.

The key point to understand here is to think beyond any difficulty, problem or adversity to your desired outcome. Build your plan on new or different actions you will take.

## LEVEL THREE RESILIENCY

# Strengthen Your Three Inner Selfs

Highly resilient people know they can count on themselves during rough times. They have inner strengths they know they can rely on. The differences stem from three core inner strengths essential to being resilient. These strengths begin to develop early in life.

As children play and have many different experiences, they gain a feeling of competence about doing certain things. Their actions may be athletic, learning words or numbers, or skills with computers or a musical instrument. Their competence leads to feelings of *self-confidence* when they anticipate their ability to succeed at certain things in the future.

During childhood we develop emotional opinions about others and ourselves. How we feel about ourselves is called *self-esteem*. If other children at school called you bad names, maybe your mother or father told you to answer back, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me." When you did this you were learning to protect your feelings about yourself by rejecting bad opinions of you held by others.

As we get older, we develop ideas about ourselves that create our *self-concept*. Who we think we are shapes our identity.

### How Your Three Selfs Let You Be Effective Without a Job Description

In resiliency workshops, I usually ask how many people have a complete, up-to-date job description. Most people laugh; a few people may raise their hands. An ability to be guided by an inner sense of professionalism is essential in today's workplace. Individuals with a self-concept of professionalism quickly find new ways to be useful, adapt rapidly, are self-motivated to learn new skills and so forth. ●

## LEVEL FOUR RESILIENCY

# Unleash Your Curiosity: Enjoy Learning in the School of Life

Curiosity is essential to resiliency. Why? For a simple reason: If you are going to interact effectively with a new situation, your brain must quickly acquire an accurate understanding of what is happening in your environment.

Curiosity can be viewed as a sort of "open-brained-ness." This open-brainedness does not distort new information with pre-existing assumptions or beliefs. Active curiosity lets you orient yourself to new developments.

People who have the best chance of handling new situations well are usually those with the best comprehension of what is occurring in the world around them. People with closed minds refuse to listen to information or feedback that they don't want to hear. It is not unusual for newspapers and magazines to run stories about how the executives of bankrupt corporations refused to listen to what their employees or customers tried to tell them.

### Three Kinds of Learning

It's useful to understand that you were born with the ability to learn in three different ways.

The first kind of learning is emphasized when students attend classes in school. What they learn is scheduled and controlled by teachers. A second kind of learning occurs from imitating effective people. The third way is self-motivated, self-managed learning; It is the learning that comes directly from your own experience. In the school of life, a skilled student can learn useful lessons from rough experiences.

Highly resilient people learn in all three ways. They learn in classes, learn from role models and learn useful lessons on their own.

A learning response is the antidote to feeling like a helpless, mistreated, abused, beaten-up victim. When life deals you a rough blow, you have two choices. One is to learn a valuable lesson; the other is to remain a wounded victim.

Experiences that feel like failures can break you down or be converted into growth experiences. Here is where the strengths of your three inner selfs play a critical role in determining which way your life progresses. If your self-confidence, self-esteem and self-concept are week, you interpret failure as a negative judgment about you and your incompetence.

### Learning: The Key to Mastering Change

Introductory psychology textbooks define learning as "a change in behavior that results from experience." This means that change and learning are inseparable; they define each other. The key to mastering change is to manage your learning. ●

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# The Power of Positive Expectations

Two leading researchers into optimism and pessimism, Charles Carver and Michael Scheier, explain that "optimists are people who expect good things to happen to them; pessimists are people who expect bad things to happen to them." Believing that good events will happen in your future is different than hoping that your current difficulties will get better in the future.

Optimism and pessimism both tend to be self-fulfilling prophecies. If you expect a good outcome, your brain

spots little events and momentary opportunities that can lead to that outcome. If you expect a bad outcome, your brain will have you thinking, feeling and acting in ways that lead to that predicted outcome.

Feelings of hope are tied to specific, immediate difficulties, while optimism and pessimism tent to be global expectations about things happening in the future.

### Humans Have Attitudes!

In the 1920s, some executives encountering resistance to change in their employees turned to the new science of psychology for help. George Mead and other social psychologists began studying the nature of attitudes in employees.

Mead said that, in humans, an attitude is a predisposition to react with a fixed way of feeling and thinking. It is a form of prejudice that can be either positive or negative about almost anything. Research into the development, purposes and functions of attitudes led to the finding that attitudes reach deeply into a person's identity.

### A Flaw in PMA Preachings

The term "positive attitude" is a widely used term in our popular culture, but is not a useful concept in psychology. Here's why.

A sales manager trying to stir a room full of sales people into enthusiastic action by exhorting them to have a positive mental attitude (PMA) is poorly informed about attitudes and how people develop them. Motivational speakers who urge people to acquire a PMA set many people up to experience failure, because repetition of positive thoughts alone seldom brings the promised success. Attitudes, as understood by psychologists, are not only mental. Most psychology textbooks define an attitude as having three components: cognitive, emotional and behavioral.

An attitude is an interwoven combination of mental, emotional and behavioral habits. An attitude is a person's habitual, reflexive way of thinking about, feeling toward and reacting to something. A person's attitude cannot be replaced by telling him or her to change what to think. But by choosing to practice thinking in a different way, a person can change an attitude.

A related challenge is that associated emotions and actions must also be changed, as well as the attitudes of groups important to the person. Some people may be open to consider changing their way of thinking, but it might cause them to lose important friendships and acceptance by others if they do.

### Leave My Attitude Alone!

No one can talk another person into changing an attitude, no matter how hard one may try — as many sales managers, parents and spouses know full well. It takes a long time to develop an attitude, and it takes conscious, applied personal effort to undo or change an attitude — as with any habit.

So, when it comes to the matter of attitudes, think "habits." Then you'll have a realistic understanding of what it takes for a person to change an attitude. He or she must want the change to occur and, as with any personal habit, the practiced effort will take many weeks or months before the new way becomes established.

### Learned Resiliency: Drawing on All Ways of Thinking

The starting point for resiliency often begins with asking questions such as, "How can I cope with this? What is still good in my life?" An amazing thing about your brain is that when you instruct it to look for something, it often finds it. If you define the situation too narrowly and think of it only as devastating to your life, then other aspects of your life that seem contrary to your mind-set won't reach you.

Joanne Hill lost 12 family members in four years. Joanne says, "There came the time when heartaches descended upon me like the locusts of biblical times. First I lost my husband, then my brother, followed by my dear stepfather, my mom, aunt, two uncles, stepmother, cousin, foster son and his partner, and finally, my son, who died of a heart attack. Multiple other family crises plagued us through those four years as well. My mother had Alzheimer's, cancer surgery and a broken hip. Everyone I loved seemed to need help."

Joanne says, "Concerned friends often asked me, 'How do you deal with all the grief, troubles and sorrow? How do you do it?' I delved into that question through journaling, meditation and prayer. I discovered that in every stormy time, I could find rainbows if I looked for them." ●

## Integrating Your Paradoxical Abilities

Why do some people achieve much more career success than others? David McClelland, a psychology professor at Harvard University, spent many years searching for answers to this question.

McClelland found that successful people work to achieve personal goals; they are not motivated to achieve

social indicators of success. Success, for them, is a feeling they enjoy when they reach their self-chosen goals. If a goal is imposed on you by others — teachers, family or bosses — you may receive praise and rewards for what you do, but will feel little personal success.

Through carefully controlled scientific research conducted on thousands of people in different cultures, McClelland found that he could predict a person's future from the way he or she daydreams about the future:

- They daydream about how they would feel reaching a certain goal. A girl learning to play soccer may daydream about playing on the U.S. Women's soccer team one day.
- They pick moderately challenging goals.
- They engage in both optimistic and pessimistic thinking about how easy and how difficult it will be to reach the goal. Plans include carefully monitoring their progress so they can make corrections if needed.
- They seek advice from experienced people before making a commitment to achieve the goal.

McClelland's research shows that high achievers do not charge ahead with unbridled optimism. People most likely to succeed at what they set out to do will spend time trying to anticipate everything that could go wrong. Before making a commitment to a goal, successful people try to predict the obstacles, difficulties, personal limitations, possible problems and barriers. They find out what they can learn from experts and experienced people. Then they devise ways to avoid the problems and difficulties or be prepared in advance, should they occur.

Bosses who declare they want to hear only positive thinking about a new project set their organizations up for big failure. This restrictive way of thinking, described as "groupthink" by psychologist Irving Janis, suppresses the kind of critical evaluation that can anticipate potential future problems. Salespeople who restrict themselves only to positive thoughts are more likely to fall into emotional pits of discouragement. In contrast, people most likely to succeed go through phases where they seem to be as negative as any person who is pessimistic all the time.

The key point to understand is that highly effective people can engage in optimistic or pessimistic thinking as they choose to.

A good analogy is the way that you use the hot and cold water faucets at a sink with one spout. When you want a drink of water, you can choose to turn on cold water and not allow any hot water into your glass. When you want to rinse a greasy pan, you can choose to turn on hot water without mixing in cold water. If you want to wash your hands, you can turn on both faucets and blend hot and cold water together. Similarly, when you reach the advanced levels of mental development and emotional intelligence found in highly resilient people, you can exercise inspiring optimism, practical pessimism or a blend of both.

Abraham Maslow pointed out that highly self-actualized people go beyond acting in selfish and unselfish ways. He said they combine both selfishness and unselfishness into the same activity. Maslow's insight had a powerful effect on my thinking. I began to see many pairs of opposite traits combined in highly resilient people:

- Creative and analytical
- Serious and playful
- Sensitive and tough
- Self-appreciating and self-critical
- Impulsive and thorough
- Optimistic and pessimistic
- Outgoing and introspective.

Counterbalanced personality qualities indicate that you have developed advanced emotional intelligence. The more pairs of traits you have, the more you have the mental and emotional flexibility essential for resiliency.

When someone does not handle life's challenges well, it is often because this person always thinks, feels or acts in only one way and would never consider doing the opposite. ●

## Allowing Everything to Work Well: The Synergy Talent

Some people have a desynergistic effect on others. When they are present, they drain energy from a group. You feel relieved when they're absent.

Some people have a synergistic effect wherever they are. When they are present, things work better for everyone. People who are highly resilient interact with others in synergistic ways.

During times of crisis and change, there are always a few solid people who are generous with their concern for others. Self-confident, resilient and compassionate, they provide reassurance and stability in chaotic situations.

A noticeable quality when you're a synergistic person is that you volunteer to help when there's trouble. You're a sort of "foul-weather friend." When things are working well, you may seem uninvolved, but when there's trouble, you show up, ready to lend a hand or take charge.

I'm not saying that everyone is either synergistic or desynergistic. The majority of people are not at either extreme. Most people just drift along with whatever is happening. Things are neither better nor worse when they are present or when they are absent.

A sign that you have developed a synergistic nature is that you accomplish more with less effort. Your life flows along pleasantly and smoothly. People who are synergistic think not of time management, but of energy management. They get all the important things done and still have spare time to do what they enjoy. ●

## LEVEL FIVE RESILIENCY

## Strengthening Your Talent for Serendipity

Serendipity, according to 18th century writer and politician Horace Walpole, comes from using wisdom to convert an unexpected event, accident or mishap into good fortune. He said that three elements must be present for serendipity to occur.

First, something unexpected or accidental happens to you. Second, your perceptiveness, good sense and wisdom (sagacity) lead you to discover the third element — an unexpected benefit, gift or blessing in what happened.

### Serendipity: Converting a Life-Disrupting Event into Good Luck

Serendipity is an advanced-level resiliency skill. Individuals with many basic resiliency strengths are often able to convert a life-disrupting experience into one of the best things that ever happened. This is more than bouncing back; while struggling to cope with a life-disrupting event, you find new strengths and may discover unexpected opportunities. You see that you can take your life or your career in a new direction that would not have opened up to you without the disruptive event. The adversity creates an opportunity for taking your life in a different and better direction than you expected.

An amazing thing about your brain is that when you instruct it to look for something, it often finds it. People who turn intrusive or unwanted events into accidental opportunities do so because they deliberately scan for those opportunities.

Many people confuse serendipity with good luck and synchronicity. Serendipity is not a lucky accident. An example of accidental luck would be to purchase a deteriorated old house and, when you begin to restore it, you discover an old painting hidden up in the attic that is worth more than what you paid for the house.

Synchronicity refers to extraordinary, meaningful coincidences where one feels that something more than chance is involved. Research by quantum physicists is opening many people to understand that we are all immersed in a connected sea of energies in which all things have a sympathetic connection. ●

## Our Transformational Breakthrough

Each of us lives in a constantly changing environment. We can make our lives difficult by denying, resisting or fighting against the ongoing process of change or we can adapt and flow with changes; it's our choice. By accepting that unceasing change permeates our lives and that many kinds of energy constantly swirl through and around us, we can free ourselves from being buffeted around like leaves in a storm.

### An Old/New Way of Being

Highly complex, resilient, synergistic individuals are always curious, exploring, trying new ways of doing things and learning. They maintain mental and emotional stability by keeping themselves in a state of mild disequilibrium. They are open to take in, examine and process new inputs, ignore or let go of what is not of value or interest, and move on to the next experience. Thus it is that they become accustomed to quickly taking in and processing new things that are happening. They can react to an unexpected change by welcoming it and converting it into a desirable life event.

We are born able to learn how to handle nonstop, disruptive change easily and naturally, and constant change is necessary and desirable for us as humans. We are most resilient when we scan new circumstances with curiosity, not knowing in advance what we will do, but confident that we will interact in ways that lead to things working well. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Resiliency Advantage*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Adversity Paradox* by J. Barry Griswell and Bob Jennings.** This summary reveals the incredible benefit of enduring life's challenges.
2. ***You Already Know How to Be Great* by Alan Fine with Rebecca R. Merrill.** Fine reveals his proven approach to achieving breakthrough performance through a process called G.R.O.W. (Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward).
3. ***High Altitude Leadership* by Chris Warner and Don Schmincke.** To thrive in today's business challenges and tomorrow's unpredictable risks, you need to become the type of leader whose career, team and company excels in the most extreme of environments.

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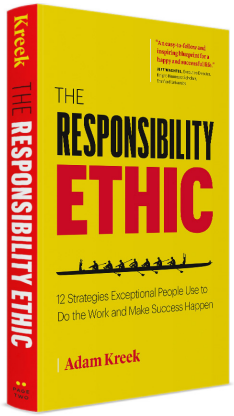
# The Responsibility Ethic

Adam Kreek

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# The Responsibility Ethic

## 12 Strategies Exceptional People Use to Do the Work and Make Success Happen




*by* **Adam Kreek**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In ***The Responsibility Ethic***, Adam Kreek explores the 12 key ways that a person can take responsibility in their life, in business, and in leadership. These 12 responsibility ethics span a range of areas, from taking responsibility for the fears and failures we all experience to mentorship, stress, leadership, and even safety.

Adam Kreek is a member of the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame for his gold medal-career as a champion rower. With eight Olympic golds to his name (and a host of other world championships), he translates the lessons learned in rowing and athletics to the world of business, leadership, and life.

Areas of focus within the book also include goalsetting, handling stress, professionalism in the workplace, recovering physically and mentally, improved communication, stronger resilience tactics, and others. Readers will come away with a deeper understanding for how they can take greater responsibility for their lives and work. The result is the greater ability to change problem behaviors, achieve real and actionable goals, and increase personal fulfillment in everything you do.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What it means to take responsibility and how "responsibility ethics" can change the way you see yourself and the world.
- How healthy stress and a confident attitude towards failure can transform your life and career.
- The importance of professionalism, communication, and mentoring in leadership and in your workplace.

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

## Why Responsibility?

The Responsibility Ethic exists to challenge and heal everyone who has been told to follow their dreams. We're sold the dream, but we don't read the fine print: hard work and labored action. We must transform our dreams into a vision and a plan, then move into action.

Take responsibility. Take action. Be a person who makes happiness and success happen.

The first step is to acknowledge that career, family, and life don't just happen to us. We, and only we, create our futures through our choices, actions, and conscious habits. Our daily choices have led us to today, and our choices today will take us in any direction we choose. We must take responsibility for building an environment that pushes us to act effectively. Get a coach. Ask a friend. Seek a mentor. Build a team.

Adopting the strategies in The Responsibility Ethic takes a lot of effort, and that's the point. We generate far more negative stress when our dreams are unaccompanied by hard action, when we shirk into the shadows instead of wading into troubled waters. It's time to stop wishing, hoping, and worrying— three overused excuses for inaction.

Focusing on what we can control gives us the energy and ability to leap when the next opportunity arises. You can either be someone with a strong internal locus of control and make things happen, or you can be a person with a strong external locus of control and let things happen to you.

What kind of person are you? Who do you want to be?

### Take Responsibility for Your Fear of Failure

All of us fear failure. We carry regret, shame, and other emotional baggage after any significant failure. But there's a powerful process that can help you or your team overcome that baggage and move forward, free from the fear of failure.

First, explore the facts. Take a step back and decouple the event from your related emotions. Facts and feelings are both important to consider, but they're two distinct beasts. Seek to understand each in full.

Too often, we rush through the step of reflection to avoid the discomfort of negative feelings. Rushing is counterproductive, as these emotions will resurface and hold you back in the future.

Next, it's time to learn. You are often the most creative on the rebound from catastrophe. What did you learn about your actions that helped or hindered your result? What did you learn from your reaction that served you well or otherwise? What did you do well? What could you change?

This process, in turn, will help you grow as you address how you'll put each learning into daily or situational action— turning fear and doubt into growth and action.

Too often, we rush through the step of reflection to avoid the discomfort of negative feelings.

## Take Responsibility for Your Goals

If you set, pursue, and achieve healthy goals, you will enter a satisfying space where hard work is easy— and even enjoyable. If you set, pursue, and achieve toxic goals, you'll end up numbing your emotions with vices. Strive to be your best self. Be clear on your destination. Satisfy your core needs. Set better goals.

In the face of low energy, we paradoxically need to imagine new ways of spending our energy that aligns with our values. We need a new challenge that relights our fire. The appeal of a positive future can be a gift in the present moment. From this platform, we can start small and work up the courage to set bigger and bigger goals. If we imagine too big and bright of a future, the challenge becomes too great, and we struggle to take responsibility. Our will evaporates. Instead, we need to find small wins to rebuild our confidence.

Finding small wins creates a positive feedback loop. You take responsibility for a small step and soon know that leap is possible.

### Take Responsibility for Sharing Leadership

The command-and-control model of leadership is dead and buried. Leadership is the ability to turn your vision into reality by enlisting the help and winning the hearts of others. It's time to share leadership. It's time to win together.

In the shared leadership model, instead of one boss at the

top of the hierarchy making all the decisions, vision and influence is distributed to every member of the team. The team has an extreme ownership of group outcomes. Where traditional leadership is static— one person is the leader until they are replaced— shared leadership is remarkably dynamic and powerful.

Shared leadership empowers people within a team to lead one another using their unique areas of expertise. It flows from commitments made at the top. Leadership that holds a strong bias to hierarchy and status is waning. Our modern world is becoming more complex and nuanced, and we need more collaborative leaders who believe in distributing control and direction, sharing it at all levels of an organization.

## Take Responsibility for Your Stress

Channeled properly, stress can be a positive and powerful force. Whether it's the nervousness we feel before going on stage to perform or the stress of a fast-approaching deadline, the anxiety that drives us to do more in less time can be one of our best friends. Many of us think of stress as negative, or something to be avoided. Rethink it. Harness the power of stress as performance energy.

Stress is something each of us must deal with on the job, but it's what we do under that pressure that defines the outcome for our organizations and for ourselves. We can build drive and energy to move through stress by reviewing our past. Look at your calendar week by week for one year and make a list of everything you've done in your life and business. We can look back at our year with regret or we can look back and see how far we've come. From there, you can track and stack your wins.

While some allow stress to overwhelm them, others use stress to motivate and push them forward.

## Take Responsibility for Your Professionalism

How can you be a Pro? A Pro delivers results. Amateurs can pursue an activity simply for the love of it and not necessarily for fame, fortune, or vocation. But when the stakes are high and we want to get something done right, it's time to call in the professionals. A Pro performs at the very highest level. In your key area of focus, do you behave like a professional or an amateur?

The professional has learned that success, like happiness, comes as a by-product of work. The professional concentrates on the work. The Pros do the work and, because of their ethic, have more influence over their results. Professionalism is a choice and its traits can be learned.

When you dedicate yourself to routinely doing your best work, you will find invaluable fulfillment. You'll be motivated to continue and take responsibility for your own professional dedication.

### Take Responsibility for Your Recovery

Effective recovery builds a store of energy and determination to power us through our next peak performance. Effective recovery opens our hearts to the softer, sweeter, and subtler side of life, which can be just as delicious as our achievements. Without adequate recovery, you will experience life-altering injuries, mental breakdowns, and broken relationships. Recover intelligently. Ensure your downtime allows for consistent uptime.

The best prescription for feeling awful is to sweat an hour every day for a month. Move. Sit in a sauna. Go somewhere hot. Eat right, move right, sleep right, get outside, meditate. Make sure you are coping with the right strategies. Start now. You will feel much better a month from now.

In the great outdoors, families are more cohesive, tough decisions become clearer, and the risk of heart disease and depression is markedly lower. It doesn't just sound nice— it's a scientific fact.

### Take Responsibility for Your Coaching and Mentoring

Mentors provide perspective, guidance, and inspiration. Coaches ask great questions that help us lead from within. You'd be foolish to think that your challenges and feelings are unique. They've been experienced by others before you, and others will have similar experiences after you. That's why mentors matter and coaches change lives. Get a coach, get a mentor, and be both for those you lead.

Research says it only takes on consistent year of action by a coach, leader, or mentor to make a significant change in someone's life. And when you or your team make the right kind of change, you gain an ethic that propels you faster toward your goals.

### Take Responsibility for the People in Your Boat

You can get far more done— faster and better and smarter— when you have a talented team aligned under a com-

mon goal. Working together with the right people brings joy in effort and top-shelf results. But this means recruiting and retaining great people and working with those who need help to get up to speed. Do that, and you'll create a team that's hard to beat.

Our limits are often imaginary. We find our real limits if we have the courage to break through. We find our limits if we have the courage to seek failure. We grow our limits if we seek failure with the support of a world-class team.

A great team needs a great leader on top and great leaders within. Choose your team wisely and be the kind of leader whom others will choose.

### Take Responsibility for Your Safety (and the Safety of Others)

Safety performance is not a priority; priorities change. Safety is non-negotiable. It's a core value. Every day, we eat, sleep, get dressed, work hard, get paid, and are safe. We lead safe teams because we care. We build safe cultures because we care. Bring your best self and remember that boring, mundane safety plans are not to be left on the dock.

What small actions and behaviors can you keep sharp to save lives? How can you tweak your on-site safety meetings to be more effective? How can you empower all employees to better use the lines of communication? How can you take better advantage of near misses and other safety moments?

These are the questions that will lead to a strong, robust safety plan.

### Take Responsibility for Your Communication

Communication is a key skill for any leader. We must be clear, frank, and transparent with our people, and our people need to respond in kind. Communication needs to take place the moment an opportunity or problem arises, not long after the fact. After all, the best communication is a two-way street, where team members carry on a dialogue as they work together—constantly sharing plans and exploring issues.

## Take Responsibility for Your Resilience

Change is motivated by two things: the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain. In pursuing a brighter future, we create the pain of challenge, self-doubt, uncertainty. When pain prompts change, we often resent the push and can wallow in self-pity. But what's worse than change? Staying still. Stagnation. Challenges of the mind. Facing ourselves, suffering as we move toward a brighter future, and being grateful for the motivation of pain strengthens resilience.

## Conclusion

Courage is the sum of fear and purposeful action. It's the courage to continue that will lead us to more peaks in our lives and more moments of peace. Success is not final. Failure is not fatal. Finding the courage to continue is what counts.



Adam Kreek is one of North America's top Management Consultants, and Executive Coaches. Adam has coached, trained, and taught hundreds of thousands of people including teams at Microsoft, General Electric, Mercedes-Benz, L'Oréal, Shell, YPO, EO, TedX, but most importantly, Adam walks the talk. Kreek runs two corporations—KreekSpeak Business Solutions and Ergo Sustainable Solutions, a low carbon initiative that connects small businesses with small governments. A two-time Olympian, Adam holds sixty international medals, including Olympic gold, and multiple hall of fame inductions.

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# The Secret to Peak Productivity

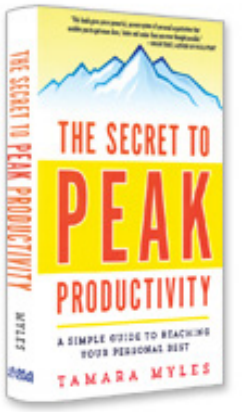
Tamara Myles

Career &
Self-Development

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# The Secret to Peak Productivity

## A Simple Guide to Reaching Your Personal Best




*by* **Tamara Myles**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Has your email inbox overwhelmed you? Are you losing the battle against clutter? Are important items on your to-do list not getting done? Do you ever envision achieving your business and life goals "as soon as you get control of your life"?

You're not alone, but it doesn't have to be this way.

In ***The Secret to Peak Productivity***, productivity expert Tamara Myles gives you invaluable tools and strategies that will enable you to take control of your life and achieve your goals. You'll learn how to break down all of your objectives into specific, relevant, and measurable daily tasks; master the three Ps of time management; establish an electronic organization system that works for you; and more.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to assess your own productivity strengths and weaknesses based on your own personal style.
- Techniques to tailor your own personal productivity plan to be more effective.
- Ways to get rid of clutter, including a rapid organization system for paper.
- How to enhance your productivity around the five parts of the Peak Productivity Pyramid: physical organization, electronic organization, time management, activity-goal alignment, and possibility.

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## Steps to Productivity

What distinguishes professional organizers is they transfer skills rather than simply complete tasks.

At every client appointment, professional organizers strive to transfer skills, teach systems and explain processes. They are committed to empowering their clients with the necessary skills to achieve their best organization system. Empowerment is always top of mind because consultants want their clients to achieve success. Success only happens when consultants explain systems and processes in a way that helps their clients organize their environments in their own way, and a way that works for them.

Nearly 90 percent of people who call for help initiate that first call because they feel overwhelmed by physical clutter. Some clients are happiest to have someone come in and clean up their offices, file their papers, make everything look tidy, leaving them with an office that's cleaner. Others welcome the opportunity to find a lasting solution for managing their incoming papers, mail and other documents. In other words, some clients call and want a Band-Aid for the symptom; others are ready to endeavor to find the root cause of the issue so that they can become empowered to develop lasting solutions to their productivity issues. Rarely is anyone ready to deal with the other issues, such as electronic clutter and time management, until a person's physical clutter is brought under control.

### Maslow's Pyramid

In his 1943 psychological research studies on what motivates people, Abraham Maslow discovered that there is a logical order of needs that have to be satisfied before people can be motivated to the next level. He identified five levels, starting with the most essential needs:

1. **Physiological**. The most basic needs that people experience are the essentials for their survival, such as air, food, drink, shelter, sex, and sleep. They need to satisfy these needs before they are motivated to be concerned about the next level.
2. **Safety**. Once people's physiological needs are met, then security becomes important, including personal and financial security, health, and well-being.
3. **Love and Belonging.** Next in the hierarchy of needs that motivate us are relationships, such as work, group, family, and partner.
4. **Esteem**. Both self-esteem and respect from others are among the needs identified in the next level.
5. **Self-Actualization.** The highest level that motivates people is fulfilling their greatest potential.

Most often, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is expressed as a pyramid, with the most essential needs expressed in the lowest level. People need to fulfill each level, starting with physiological needs, before being motivated to move up the pyramid and achieve the next level.

The strategy for fulfilling a more productive life follows a similar pattern. People have to satisfy, to some extent, competency with one level before they can move on to the next.

### The Productivity Pyramid

The Peak Productivity Pyramid™ System defines the motivational relationship among five areas of productivity. It is a holistic and comprehensive approach to productivity that starts with streamlining your basic organizational systems and moving up the pyramid, working toward developing goals for different possibilities in your life.

The Peak Productivity Pyramid System is a unique and proven framework to take people who want to improve their productivity through the journey of aligning their daily activities to their goals and objectives:

1. **Physical Organization.** The process begins with managing the accumulation of documents, magazines, mail, notes and books. In the business world, this is the primary need that draws people into improving their productivity.
2. **Electronic Organization.** Having systems in place for handling your online information — all the different ways we have to communicate, store and retrieve information electronically — is essential to success at the next level.
3. **Time Management.** This is the most common need associated with productivity. Time management involves managing tasks and appointments, to-do lists, calendars and what you do in a given day.
4. **Activity-Goal Alignment.** The tasks at this level are setting goals, both business and personal, and then aligning what you do each day to fulfill those goals.
5. **Possibility**. The fifth level of the Peak Productivity Pyramid is the culmination of mastering the previous four levels. Level 5 is not something to be achieved or a place to be; rather, possibility is the continual examination and goal-setting process on the path to fulfilling your potential.

Although it is a series of five levels, the Peak Productivity Pyramid is not always exclusively a linear path. Given the busyness of our lives, the distractions we experience and how our physical and electronic worlds are constantly evolving, there will always be ways to improve productivity:

- You can't always be sure what level is the best place to start. Where do you have mastery and where can you learn new skills that will help you be more productive?
- Even when you think you have mastered a level, there will be other skills to learn that will make you more productive. It is a good idea to check in periodically at each level to see if you are being as efficient as you can be.
- Possibility and activity-goal alignment are iterative processes and part of a continuous exercise to be certain you are achieving your ultimate goals.

## Level 1: Physical Organization

Clutter is the most common reason people first contact a professional organizer. No matter what else may be keeping people from reaching their goals and being effective and productive, without first clearing the physical disorganization, every other step in the Peak Productivity Pyramid System falls by the wayside. As Maslow would attest, it is hard to think about love when you're starving and cold. People who have an office that is cluttered are more likely to feel stressed each time they walk into their office. According to the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO), the average American spends one year of his or her life looking for lost or misplaced items.

### Getting Rid of Clutter

The first three goals in achieving physical organization are:

1. Get rid of as much paper as you can, so you minimize your space needs.
2. Store what you save efficiently, so you can find what you need.
3. Set up a system for handling your papers as they come in.

According to organizational expert Barbara Hemphill, one way to define clutter is to think about it as delayed decisions. When you fail to make a decision each time you handle a piece of paper, it becomes clutter. Stacks of accumulated paper are a result of delaying to decide what to do with each paper as it arrives. Every piece of paper that comes into your life falls into one of three categories:

1. You're going to shred or recycle the paper.
2. It's a document that requires some type of action, such as a bill to pay, an RSVP to mail, or a form to fill out.
3. It's something that you have to keep either for legal reasons or because you might need to refer to it.

These are the "Three To's" of sorting for all papers: to do, to keep or to toss. When you use the Three To's of sorting, then you can make decisions quickly for all your papers by placing them into one of just three categories.

The mistake most people make when they first tackle the task of organizing their stacks of papers is that instead of starting with three simple piles, they immediately try to sort everything into many different subcategories, such as financial, medical, and projects. When they tackle sorting that way, it takes much longer and can feel overwhelming.

Using the Three To's of sorting is similar to creating a big-picture view of your clutter; it's a way of doing top-level sorting. When you first sort into three piles, the goal is really to get rid of as much paper as you can. These days it's easy to retrieve information online. If an item is a manual or something you can go online and find, you can make the decision to toss it. If you know something is available elsewhere, get rid of it. If you have expired receipts or coupons, it's okay to let go and get rid of them right away. You won't have to make a decision about that piece of paper again later. Once you sort all your papers into these three stacks, you can then file the piles.

## Level 2: Electronic Organization

Electronic clutter is a result of the same lack of decision making as physical clutter and can be the source of a great deal of stress. The other compounding issue of electronic clutter is where to save your electronic information so that it is retrievable. Electronic organization is not just about making choices regarding the amount of information you keep; it's also about being able to find the one item you need when you need it.

### Seven Warning Signs

There are signs that let you know when you need to reassess how you're handling electronic files:

1. Exceeding your email storage space allotted by your company or online system, such as the 15GB limit on Google Gmail.
2. Feeling anxious about deleting something.

3. Forgetting whether you saved something.
4. Spending a lot of time searching for files because you don't know where you filed them or what you named them.
5. Seeing a lot of icons on your computer screen with no rhyme or reason.
6. Keeping thousands of digital photos, even the out-of-date, irrelevant or bad photos, without any labeling system (other than date).
7. Keeping outdated and unread email messages in your inbox.

## Organize Your Electronic Files

It is usually easiest to first organize your electronic files. That step will provide you a basic structure for filing incoming items, whether they are emails, attachments from emails, audio, video, documents or picture files. When organizing your electronic files there are two primary decisions:

1. How to structure your folders.
2. How to name your files.

Just as in managing your physical files, you need to decide what system you will use for your electronic folders and subfolders. The choices are similar:

- **Client folders**, which your computer will list alphabetically, if you start with the clients' last names.
- **Project files**, organized by project numbers (for businesses that track proposals) and/or by numbers assigned sequentially.
- **Folders by date**, many businesses track by date.
- **Financial and other business-operations files** (e.g., staff, taxes and so on).

If you find that you are frequently using the search function to find your files, then you are not naming, or organizing, your folders or files optimally. It is worth spending time to develop a system for file naming that works for you. The faster you can retrieve important information, the more productive you will be.

## A, B, Cs of Email Processing

In a research study cited by an IDC Report by Susan Feldman, entitled ***Hidden Costs of Information Work: A Progress Report***, the activities of email consume an average of 13 hours per week per employee. If you assume that the average knowledge worker earns $75,000 per year, that means that a company spends about $21,000 of that salary for that one employee to create, read and answer email. That's 28 percent of every employee's salary.

These statistics show how important it is to have a good email management system. Without one, you will realize a drop in productivity, an increase in stress and a requirement to work more hours. There are some simple steps you can take to streamline your approach to email and, ultimately, make you more productive. One method involves thinking of your email handling system as the email alphabet:

A = Access D = Delete

B = Batch E = Execute

C = Check F = File

Access your email at allotted times each day. Choosing when to process email depends on what works best for you. Typically, though, checking email four times a day tends to be enough for most people:

1. First thing in the morning—to make sure there is nothing urgent.
2. Before lunch—the natural break in the day makes it a less disruptive time.
3. Mid-afternoon—when you're ready for a stretch or preparing to go off to a meeting.
4. End of Day—so that you will only have fresh emails to check in the morning.

Batch process your email just like a physical pile of mail. Your electronic inbox should be the place you receive your email, and it stays there only until you process it.

Check each email, which doesn't mean you need to read each one. Often you can make a decision about an email from the subject line or from the first few lines of the message.

Delete as you check. If you read a newsletter and find that it is no longer relevant or has little to no value, then unsubscribe. You won't miss reading it, and you will no longer have to handle it. Delete everything that has no further action required.

Execute quickly whenever possible. Just as in organizing your physical papers, you only want to touch each email once. If you only need a few minutes for replying or forwarding a message, then do it immediately.

File only if you cannot delete or execute. The primary

reason to file an email is if it is a record of something, a decision, an instruction, a status report or something else you might need to refer back to at some future date.

## Level 3: Time Management

In their best-selling book ***Rework***, Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, the cofounders of 37 signals, complain about workaholics, explaining that they are people who "try to fix problems by throwing sheer hours at them… Working more doesn't mean you care more or get more done." They say that the real heroes are at home, even though the workaholics would like them to feel guilty for "merely working reasonable hours."

You probably already have a definition in mind of what time management means to you, but it comes with many different meanings.

Stephen Covey, in ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People***, says, "What does it matter how much we do if what we're doing isn't what matters most?" Time management is about doing what matters most first. It doesn't mean doing more things in less time. In fact, time management is creating systems or systematic practices for doing what is of greater importance, even if that means doing fewer things.

Another way to talk about time management is as choice management. We can't manage time. Time happens. We all have the same amount of time. We can, however, manage our choices in relation to the time that we have, what we choose to do with our time.

Just as with organizing, time management is a skill. It requires practice, and it, too, takes time, like learning a new sport or how to play an instrument. The good news is that we are capable of excelling at time management.

You just have to think long-term. You have to be committed to fixing systems and tweaking behaviors and routines, and just like with any other skills, the more you practice, the more you are aware of it, the better you'll become at managing your time.

### Three Ps of Time Management

No one-time management or organization system alone is good for even one person. Even if you find a system that resonates with you, you might need to mix and match techniques and get pieces of different systems until you find what works best for any given moment.

To achieve successful performance in Level 3 of the Peak Productivity Pyramid System, any plan should include the following three fundamentals:

1. **Plan**. Identify what you should work on, everything in your realms of need to do and want to do.
2. **Prioritize**. Identify what you should do first, second or never.
3. **Perform**. It is one thing to know what you should do and another to do it. Performing means committing to your plan.

You've probably heard the cliché that failing to plan is planning to fail. You can always change your plan, but you have to start somewhere.

You start by taking everything that is swirling in your mind and putting it all on paper or in your electronic system. Do a brain dump. Write down everything you can think of that is weighing you down and causing you stress. Your brain should be freed to think strategically and execute your plan, not to try to remember everything you need to do.

Once you have cleared your mind of the swirling to-dos, it is time to look at your list and decide what you are going to do, when and how. Start by quickly estimating how long you think it will take you to perform each task, project or activity on your list.

### Four Decision Categories

Remember, time management is choice management. We all have much more to do than time to do it, so you need to look at all your activities and decide which ones to allocate time to. There are four key ways to decide whether you will do something:

1. **Choose**. Identify what is important and essential for you to do.
2. **Remove**. You can take things off your list by saying "no." You can decide not to do some things.
3. **Wait**. You can push back doing tasks or activities until next month or a few months from now.
4. **Delegate**. You can delegate and have somebody else do something for you.

You choose to do a task when you enter it on your calendar with time allocated to accomplishing it. Once you have made your plan and you have added it up and decided what you are going to do, then you do it. As the saying goes, "Plan your work and work your plan."

### Prioritizing with Urgent and Important

By prioritizing your tasks and all your to-dos, you get a clear sense of which activities in your life are moving you forward, toward your goals and toward important things, so that important things don't suddenly become urgent.

To prioritize your tasks every day and into the future, it helps to answer the simple question, "What is most important for me to work on first?" Let's start by understanding what is meant by important and urgent:

- *Important* activities are of greatest significance or value. They are likely to have a profound effect on your success and will lead you to achieving your goals.
- *Urgent* activities demand immediate action or attention, but they are often not associated with your goals.

Using this simple classification, you can then further categorize your activities into four different boxes:

1. **Important/Urgent** — Activities you need to do:
   - Crises and other deadline-driven emergencies
   - Critical meetings
   - Project deadlines
2. **Important/Not Urgent** — Where success happens:
   - Preparation and strategic planning
   - Working on projects
   - Training and professional development
   - Exercise, relaxation and self-care
3. **Not Important/Urgent** — Activities that cause unnecessary stress:
   - Opportunities with a deadline
   - Requests for information or help
   - Self-imposed deadlines
4. **Not Important/Not Urgent** — Big timewasters:
   - Interruptions
   - Telephone calls
   - Meetings
   - Trivial busy work that occupies or wastes your time

The more you learn about time management and understand the value of your time, the more you will protect it and not let others "steal" your time with interruptions, unnecessary chatter and meaningless activities.

### Perform

Once you have planned and prioritized, you have to perform. There are, however, several things that keep us from performing at the optimal level. Whether you call them distractions, challenges, or timewasters, they stand between you and optimal performance. Examples include perfectionism, procrastination and multitasking:

**Perfectionism**. Among highly successful people, there is often a tendency to pursue perfection, which frequently leads to successful but suboptimal outcomes. Focusing on doing things right is fine but can lead to perfection paralysis, which means that if you're not completely sure how to do something or don't believe you are capable of doing it to perfection, you don't do it at all.

Focus on doing things adequately rather than right. Your perfectionism should be focused on things that really matter or your biggest priorities. Think about doing the right things adequately as striving for excellence, not perfection. Or think about adopting this slogan: Done is better than perfect.

**Procrastination.** Procrastination is delaying to start or finish a task (or several tasks) that should be a priority. The ability to overcome procrastination and tackle important actions can have the biggest positive impact on your life.

There are 10 different ways to overcome procrastination. These strategies are not new, and you will likely find them in other places, but they are worth repeating:

1. **Delete**. Is what you're working on something that really needs to be done? Perhaps you should delete the activity so that you can move on to what is important.
2. **Be positive.** Procrastination is usually tied to negative self-talk or when you say things such as, "I have to," "I should," "I must finish."
3. **Take the first step.** If you start the task right now, you remove all the anxiety and feelings of stress.
4. **Ask for help.** When lack of clarity causes procrastination, sometimes asking for help is all you need to do.
5. **Break it down.** Break down large projects into actionable steps. Huge assignments don't look as big broken down into the smallest steps possible.
6. **Follow the 25-minute rule.** To reduce the tempta-

tion of procrastination, each actionable step on a project should take no more than 25 minutes to complete.

7. **Give yourself a reward.** Celebrate the completion of project milestones, and reward yourself for getting projects done on time.
8. **Set and respect deadlines.** If you haven't been given a deadline for a project, ask for one or assign yourself a deadline, and write it down in your calendar.
9. **Remove distractions.** You need to establish a positive work environment that is conducive to productivity. Remove any distractions.
10. **Be accountable.** Having an accountability partner is one of the best ways to stay on track with tasks and projects.

**Multitasking.** Brain scan studies reveal that if we perform two tasks at the same time, we only have half of our usual brainpower devoted to each task. So when we multitask, we're only half there for each activity. The truth is, we can't do two jobs simultaneously. Our brains aren't capable of focusing on two separate things at the same time.

Instead, the brain switches rapidly between one task and another, which causes us stress and to lose concentration, as it takes time for the brain to refocus and concentrate on one task and then the other. Multitasking becomes ineffective and ultimately counterproductive.

## Level 4: Activity-Goal Alignment

When you hone your skills at the bottom of the Peak Productivity Pyramid, you become organized and you create the systems you need to help you to manage your environment better. Then you work to achieve time management, and you operate more efficiently.

All of these skills change how you manage your day, and you fall into control. But it's not until you develop goals and align them with what you choose to accomplish every day that you start making big changes in your life. You will find yourself living your life with purpose.

### Why Goals Are Important

Living a life with purpose means living each day thinking about the desired outcome. To do that you need to take a step back from the chaos of everyday life and see the bigger picture. What do you want to be when you grow up?

Setting goals doesn't have to be overwhelming. What if the day-to-day tasks that you do actually move you toward your goals? Sometimes, becoming aware of how setting goals helps to move you toward a better situation opens the doors for change.

### Developing Your Vision

To create an environment where you are working toward goals, you need to develop your vision, how you see yourself in the future, both in the short term and the long term. Think about who you want to become in all the different aspects of your life: work, family, spiritual, fitness, romance, and so on. Your goals have to take into account your entire life, not just a portion of it. After all, every choice has consequences, and in order for your goals to be realistic, something you really believe in, you must consider the entire picture.

### Six Steps to Goal Setting

Each goal should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART). If you've never used a SMART goals system, here are some simple steps to get you started:

- Commit by establishing goals that you want to achieve.
- Understand why this change is important to you.
- Set time aside to create your SMART goals.
- Break down tasks into specific activities that will lead you to fulfilling your goal.
- Schedule the time frame in which the goal will be accomplished.
- Assess and reassess whether each goal is still important to you. No goal is set in stone. Goals help you set the direction and keep you moving toward your vision.

### Paving the Way to Possibility

The first four levels of the Peak Productivity Pyramid focus on implementing changes in your environment and processes. They are all about the tangible things you can do to improve your productivity. There are also some intangibles that contribute to success and increased productivity.

The two most important attributes are **discipline** and **attitude**. Even if you have the best time-management system set up, your life will only change if you have the discipline to implement the practices. Attitude is another contributing factor.

If you have a picture of your success, whatever that means to you, there is a greater likelihood that you will achieve it.

## Level 5: Possibility

Within the context of the Peak Productivity Pyramid System, a *possibilist* is someone who embraces the emotion associated with change; someone who is aware that there are new possibilities out there and looks for the next one. A possibilist is constantly evolving to a new stage or state in life, always with a vision of living to their full potential.

In the previous level, you worked on setting goals to give your life direction and then learned how to break those goals into actionable steps, to ensure that what you do every day is moving you closer to achieving your goals.

The possibility level is not merely about setting goals but helping you look at your purpose. It gives you permission to dream, to pursue things that you never imagined before. It pushes you to strive for a life lived to your fullest potential.

### The Five Es of Possibility

One of the most frequently asked questions when faced with an open-ended vision of possibility is, "What is it that I really want to do or be? What is that big picture to me?" There are entire books devoted to helping people determine their life's purpose, develop life goals, create visions for a bigger purpose and so on. Yet there are some steps you can take to start the process for figuring out what you want to become:

1. **Enjoy**. Go back to something you used to enjoy doing but left behind.
2. **Engage**. Spend more time with people, friends, family, in your spiritual community, or in public service.
3. **Enable**. Spend more time paying attention to your health, home, and welfare.
4. **Evolve**. Spend more time and effort doing something you enjoy doing now, and take it to the next level.
5. **Explore**. Look for new challenges, something that you never dared to attempt, something that requires major changes in your outlook.

These five steps to fulfilling your possibility goals will ensure that as your productivity increases, your efforts will result in something that is more meaningful to you. Unless you make time to think about what if and what's next, you might never set the goals or make something new or different happen. Remember, possibility is about making things happen for you rather than waiting for them to happen to you.

Before you can start making changes, it is critical that you shift your perception of time. The truth is that we all have time. Time is the greatest common denominator because regardless of gender, social class, or race, we all have the exact same amount of time. Remember, time management is choice management.

Here's to a more productive you!

### IF YOU LIKED THIS SUMMARY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

- ***Extreme Productivity: Boost Your Results, Reduce Your Hours*** by Robert C. Pozen.
- ***Brief: Make a Bigger Impact by Saying Less*** by Joseph McCormack.



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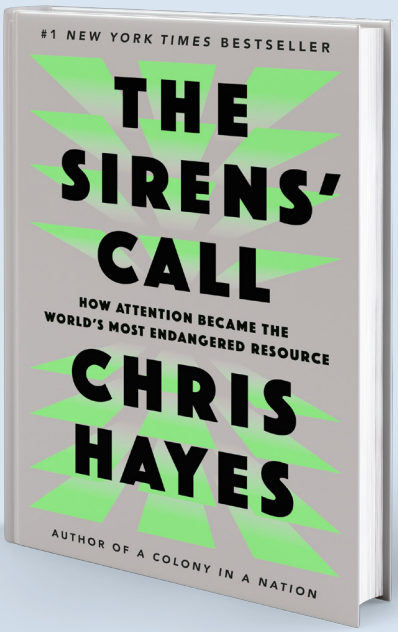
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# The Siren's Call

Chris Hayes

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Sirens' Call

**How Attention Became the World's Most Endangered Resource**

*By Chris Hayes*

**Chris Hayes** is the Emmy Award–winning host of All In with Chris Hayes on MSNBC and the New York Times bestselling author of *A Colony in a Nation* and *Twilight of the Elites*.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Wrest Back Control of Your Life

Chris Hayes opens his book, ***The Sirens' Call: How Attention Became the World's Most Endangered Resource***, with a discussion of the Sirens in Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*. Knowing the power of the Siren's call, the men aboard Odysseus's ship put wax in their ears so they would not hear the call. Odysseus did not because everybody knew he would want to hear the call. Instead, he had himself tied to his ship so that he could not go after the Siren's call once he heard it. Hayes states, "The Sirens of lore and the sirens of the urban streetscape both compel our attention against our will. And that experience, having our mind captured by that intrusive wail, is now our permanent state, our lot in life. We are never free of the sirens' call." This inevitable tie to our modern sirens is what Hayes's book centers around. For Hayes, control over one's attention is crucial. It is our most important resource, and it is also "the very thing that makes us human."

## What Is Attention?

Hayes believes that "attention exists to solve a problem, and the problem is information." While there is a seemingly unlimited amount of information in the world, one's attention is necessarily limited. He quotes William James's definition of attention as being "the taking possession of the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought."

Hayes highlights three forms of attention. The first is voluntary attention. This refers to attention we purposefully give to an act or thought, and examples of this are having a conversation and reading a book. "You focus, you listen, you train your flashlight of thought on something or someone." This type of attention requires a person to refrain from giving their attention to other thoughts or endeavors. The second type of attention is called involuntary attention. This can be exemplified through the sound of a police or fire truck's signal. Regardless of what a person is doing, this sound will involuntarily draw a person's attention. Hayes believes that there is a remarkable quality about this type of attention because when a person places their voluntary attention in one place, they suppress other information. Sounds like sirens, however, demonstrate that the mind is

still processing the background information the person is choosing not to focus on so that truly important stimuli can still get through. The third type of attention Hayes discusses is social attention. From a baby's earliest moments, they need attention to survive, and because of this, human beings are wired to desire social attention. A unique and important factor of attention that Hayes presents here but will come back to throughout his book is that it is easier to grab a person's attention than it is to keep that person's attention.

## The Problem of Boredom

Hayes discusses the problem of boredom. While we are currently in a state of too much information, when human beings have a dearth of it, they face boredom. "We are finicky creatures, and there's a tenuous equilibrium where we have just enough to occupy our minds, but not too little and not too much." We run the risk of being overwhelmed on one hand and restless on the other as he describes boredom as "a feral beast."

One problem with technology is that it provides us with so much information, and the more we have, the more we want in the same way that a drug addict eventually only becomes satisfied with more and more of their drug of choice. Hayes claims that the more information we access, the more we need access to in order to feel okay. He claims that those who do not live under industrial capitalism "spend a lot of time doing what we would consider nothing," spending a lot of time just sitting and thinking, and they do this without getting bored. The concept of boredom is "culturally, socially, and institutionally produced."

Tedium is a main driver of boredom, and what is considered tedious changes. For example, a new driver is not at risk of becoming bored because there is so much stimuli that they have to attend to. Experienced drivers, however, have become accustomed to this stimuli and are no longer aroused by it, and in such a way, an experienced driver can easily become bored. In industrialized nations, work does not revolve around the seasons as it once did, changing cyclically. Now the same person can do the same task year round, and this also can lead to boredom. Boredom is not relegated to just those working shift work, of course. Those with nothing to do because of excess leisure time and resources also succumb to boredom. Hayes attributes some of the rise of new technologies to a need to solve this problem of excess leisure.

Because people feel uncomfortable when both over and understimulated, idleness becomes a solution. He writes, "you can't busy yourself out of boredom, because the problem of boredom is deeper than just being occupied, it's your comfort with your own thoughts," and "ideally, thinking of nothing makes boredom impossible, because you've ceased chasing stimulation."

## The Pursuit and Attainment of Social Attention

The need for social attention is evolutionary. After all, as babies, if we failed to keep the attention of caregivers for even a very brief stint of time, our very lives were in danger. We needed our caregiver's focus to be on us. Hayes discusses the problems people face when they lack this attention by pointing to prisoners in solitary confinement. People can begin to lose their minds if they do not have any attention from anyone for too long.

Human beings spend more time in solitude today than in any other time in human history. Hunter-gatherer societies were communal societies. Part of the reason for the alienation people currently feel is due to our economic prosperity. The more wealth a person accumulates, the more they can separate themselves from other people. Home becomes too comfortable. People no longer need to see people in grocery stores now that they can have goods delivered. Children do not need to go to arcades because they can have world class video games in their homes. People can sit on their devices in their rooms alone rather than gather together to watch a movie.

Historically, people have come together to participate in joint attention. This occurs at concerts when thousands of people join together, all directing their gaze at the person on the stage. It goes back much farther than stadium concerts, however. Religious practice almost always involves people coming together to direct their attention on worship through music and speaking.

Throughout history, people engaged in two different types of relationships: those with close kin and those with gods. The first stemmed from social interaction while the latter stemmed from "our imaginative powers." A different type of attention is now available to many people, however, and that is attention from strangers. In the very recent future, only a handful of people could ever achieve fame and have the gaze of many on them. Now with the advent of social media and the concept of going viral, a person could always be at the bring of fame, however short lived it may be. Fame does not equate to love and approval, and many people find themselves at the receiving end of harsh comments and words by complete strangers because of parts of themselves they have put out into the world. The human being is wired to care what people think. After all, shared positive regard is part of the reciprocity that keeps relationships alive. This reciprocity is not possible in situations where the gaze only goes one way, but people still crave positive regard. People are far more affected by negative comments than by positive ones. The other problem that arises in one way relationships is that when we realize that people are gazing at us, we become aware of two selves: the one we perceive of ourselves and the one the rest of the world sees. This problem that was once the problem of the elite is now a potential problem for anybody in the age of the internet.

## The Problem of Alienation

Hayes next turns his attention to the concept of alienation. He opens the chapter discussing Taliban warriors turned bureaucrats. Once the Taliban seized control of Kabul, people who had been fighting for the militia their entire now had to do the work of governing, and this kept them behind desks most days all day, and this led to "endemic boredom, restlessness, and unhappiness." They missed the freedom their old roles gave to them, one going so far as to say, "I sometimes miss the jihad life for all the good things it had." These men often turn to the

> *Attention has always been the concern of humanity as what we pay attention to can be seen to be what makes up our lives."*

internet and social media just like countless other people do across the globe when faced with boredom.

Hayes writes that "alienation is a subjective experience of something that should be a part of us seeming foreign or alien to us." He compares our current state of alienation to how people felt as labor became a commodity when work moved from fields and to factories. What had once always belonged to the people, their labor power, now belonged to capitalists just as now, what always belonged to individuals, our attention, is being bought and sold by corporations.

Karl Marx wrote about the dehumanization that occurs with the deindividuation of labor, and this dehumanization leads to feelings of alienation. Once products began being produced in factories, shoemakers, for example, would never work on an individual shoe from start to finish. Rather, they would work on one small aspect of a shoe, never actually even seeing the end product. "The worker under capitalism is haunted by a subjective feeling of alienation; that which should be his is instead outside of him, and his own humanity, which should be his most precious possession." This, Hayes writes, is "directly analogous to the experience of what we might call attention capitalism."

Attention has always been the concern of humanity as what we pay attention to can be seen to be what makes up our lives. The change that has occurred in recent decades is that "attention is now commodified and can be traded, bought, and sold in sophisticated, instantaneous algorithmic auctions that price a second of our eyes' focus." This, he maintains, causes us to feel alienated.

Technology has also caused people to feel alienated because of the way people have begun to engage with it. At one point in time not all that long ago, watching a television show was usually a communal experience. At first this was because only a select handful of homes would have a television and multiple families would gather around that set. Even as most households acquired tv sets, people in one household still watched the same show together. Their attention was communally focused. Now, it is not uncommon for everybody in a home to be focused on a different screen, consuming completely different content. The only way to bridge this gap is through sharing content, but that moment is transient and requires more content to share in order to maintain connection.

## Historical Roots and Physical Analogies

Hayes writes about the difference between information and data. There is an unlimited amount of information available to us at any time down to individual leaves on particular trees. Hayes is interested in data, however, which he classifies as a specific type of information. Data is "that which has been generated or encoded by humans." Data is quantifiable. The amount of data in the world has increased dramatically over recent decades, and whenever we have internet connectivity, we are virtually presented with an unlimited amount of data. "The products of the information age are different" from the products of the industrial age, and a large number of jobs revolve around the manipulation of information.

Hayes compares the current information situation with that of our current obesity crisis. For millennia, food was scarce, so bodies learned to conserve it and people learned to seek it out. At least in the world's wealthy nations, the amount of food is pretty much unlimited, but people still continually seek it out and bodies hoard it. In a similar way and not too long ago, information was limited. People therefore sought it out and were attracted to it. Now, however, that a seemingly unlimited amount of information is out there, we are still seeking it out and gorging on it. We are breaking down, however, because we can only process so much information. The main problem with all of this is that information consumes attention. We have a fixed amount of attention, and that attention is precious.

To discuss the problem of spam attempting to hijack our attention, Hayes turns to Google. Google changed the way people interact with the internet, making it much simpler to find needed or desired information. Google saves time, and as such, it garners our attention. Hayes writes that if any product is "good at conserving our attention and sustaining our focus, then it's also a good place to try to wrench away our attention for other purposes, which will eventually be a vector for spam." Google attracted our attention, and our attention is a commodity, so Google began selling it through ads. Hayes writes that spam can never be defeated because any place there is attention, there will be spam. Hayes claims that "At any given moment, nearly all the interruptions, solicitations, and seductions that are attempting to grab our eye are things we want to ignore."

## The Pursuit of Public Attention

Hayes centers his discussion on public attention around three main characters. The first two of these are Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas and their notable debate. Of note to this discussion is the manner in which the debate occurred with each party taking at least an hour at a time to present his ideas before the attention was given to the other party. Lincoln and Douglas's audience was accustomed to reading the written word, and as such, they were able to follow lengthy oral arguments and complicated sentence structures.

This is in contrast today to the world of the soundbite. People, even those with the best of intentions, are often concerned more with attention than they are with content these days. This is because attention is necessary to even get a message across or to maintain a platform in which to spread a message. News segments, therefore, are often quite brief, so broadcasters can switch to newer content to continue to attract attention. The problem is that the shorter the amount of time a person has to present an argument, the more basic that argument necessarily needs to be. Complicated rationales find no room in a six minute television segment.

This brings Hayes to the third public figure he discusses in this chapter, Donald Trump. Hayes quotes writer, George Saunders, who in 2007 described a hypothetical man going into a dinner party with a microphone. This man says whatever he wants to just to get attention. Hayes sees this description as applying quite aptly to President Donald Trump. Hayes says that for the most part, politicians are very concerned with getting positive attention because they rely on favorability in order to be elected. This is not the case with Trump, however, as Hayes believes Trump likes to get attention in whatever way possible. Because President Trump is so effective at getting attention, he skews political discourse towards the topics he wants. While most people are acutely aware that it is important, in theory, to not give attention to trolls or people just seeking attention, it does not work to ignore President Trump because some of his comments are so egregious to some that they feel an imperative to stand against them. This leads to our climate where political discourse is frequently fragmented.

In addition to the problem of trolls, Hayes also discusses two other problematic forms of public attention: whataboutism and conspiracism. The former refers to a situation when a person points to, as a claim for their own case, their opponent's poor behavior or judgment in another area. Conspiracism refers to certain people's tendency to believe and promote conspiracy theories. Hayes believes this tendency is, in part, part of a person's desire to make sense of a complex world. Another reason for conspiracy theories, Hayes proposes, is that people are drawn to attention-grabbing ideas, and conspiracy theories are often much more attention grabbing than simple reality is. Hayes describes our current political discourse as "the burbling, insistent ruckus of a deeply unquiet mind." He believes that our "civic mental life… permanently teeters on the edge of madness."

## In Conclusion

As Hayes mentioned earlier on, complex theories and ideas cannot be stated in mere paragraphs or in sound bites. They take time and space if they are to be given the consideration they deserve. His book, which advances a complex theory of its own, allows itself enough space so that his opinions are clearly articulated and elaborated upon. As such, his book relies on thoughtful readership, not just an audience looking to be entertained by soundbite. Hayes's book is not just theoretical, however, and this is most evident in its closing chapter where he gives concrete solutions to the problems of divided attention. Some solutions are being spearheaded by individuals and grassroots movements such as people dedicated to reading The New York Times rather than viewing the online version and people committing to vinyl albums rather than flipping through streaming services. Other recommendations he explores are proposed policy changes and limitations on the amount of attention large corporations and tech companies can monopolize. This will take legislation and public support, but the outcomes could prove to be no less dramatic than those obtained by the labor laws of centuries past.

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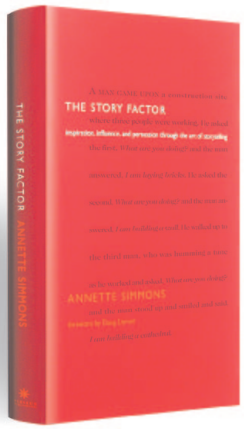
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# The Story Factor

Annette Simmons

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## Inspiration, Influence and Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling

# THE STORY FACTOR

By Annette Simmons

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*What's your story? Who are you? Where do you come from? What do you want?*

When you seek to influence others, you face questions like these. Whether you are proposing a risky new venture, trying to close a deal, or leading a charge against injustice, you have a story to tell. Tell it well and you will create a shared experience with your listeners that can have profound and lasting results. In this summary, you will learn how the art of storytelling will help you inspire, influence and persuade others.

✓ **You will explore the six distinct stories you must know how to tell.** These include, "Who I am," "Why I Am Here," "Vision," "Teaching," "Values in Action" and "I Know What You Are Thinking" stories.

✓ **You will learn what story is.** Stories, whether true or fiction, illustrate truths better than a recitation of facts. You will learn why stories connect on a human level and break though barriers facts never will.

✓ **You will learn how to tell a good story.** Storytelling is a skill you can develop. You will soon see how to tell a story effectively, using the right material, expressions and gestures.

✓ **You will discover how stories connect on a psychological level.** In the process, you will also see how you can use stories to connect with the unwilling, unconcerned and unmotivated people you need to influence.

✓ **You will see the power of being a listener as well as a storyteller.** Sometimes you can't influence someone until they have told their story and made you understand why they believe as you do. You will learn the tricks that make you a real listener, able to reach deep into your audience's psyche.

✓ **Storytelling Dos and Don'ts.** Finally, you will learn what you should and should not do as you tell the stories that inspire your audience to be influenced by your views and listen to your advice.

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# The Six Stories You Need To Know How to Tell

People don't want more information. They are up to their eyeballs in information. They want faith — faith in you, your goals, your success, in the story you tell. It is faith that moves mountains, not facts. Faith needs a story to sustain it — a meaningful story that inspires belief in you and renews hope that your ideas indeed offer what you promise. Genuine influence goes deeper than getting people to do what you want them to do. It means people pick up where you left off because they believe. Money, power, authority, political advantage, and brute force have all, at one time or another, been overcome by faith.

Story is your path to creating faith. Whether you tell your story through your lifestyle or in words, the first thing people look for before believing in you is trust. There are six types of stories that will serve you well if you want to create trust and faith. These are:

- **"Who I Am" stories.**
- **"Why I Am Here" stories.**
- **"The Vision" story.**
- **"Teaching" stories.**
- **"Values in Action" stories.**
- **"I Know What You Are Thinking" stories.**

Before being influenced by you, your listeners want to know, "Who are you and why are you here?" If you don't take the time to answer, they will make up their own responses, usually negative ones. It's human nature to mistrust and to believe that others look out for themselves. You need to tell a story that demonstrates that you are different, that you are trustworthy.

A story lets listeners decide for themselves whether they should trust you. If your story is good enough, people — of their own free will — conclude they can trust you and the message you bring.

### *"Who I Am"*

You don't have to tell a personal story as long as the story you do tell reveals something about who you are. For example, if you tell a story about Mother Teresa that reveals you understand gratitude and humility, you have told a "Who I Am" story. Your audience will conclude you aren't bound by ego. If the story you tell reveals you understand self-sacrifice, your audience will believe you can blend compassion with the desire for self-gain. If your story reveals you have learned to recognize your own flaws, they will believe you can be trusted to deal head-on with tough problems.

### *"Why I Am Here"*

Your "Why I Am Here" story needs to reassure the audience that you have good intentions. However, before you tell them what's in it for them, you must tell them what's in it for you. If you don't, they will suspect you have a hidden agenda. It's a big mistake to try to hide selfish goals. The CEO who makes 50 times the salary of his subordinates is foolish to begin a company meeting about the upcoming merger with a, "We are doing this for you" speech. People won't be influenced

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## Building a Cathedral

A man came upon a construction site where three people were working. He asked the first, "What are you doing?" and the man answered, "I am laying bricks." He asked the second man the same question, and he answered, "I am building a wall." He walked up to the third man, who was humming a tune as he worked. When asked what he was doing, he stood up, smiled, and answered, "I am building a cathedral." If you want to influence others in a big way, you need to give them a vision story that will become their cathedral.

**The author:** Annette Simmons is founder of Group Process Consulting, which specializes in helping organizations build collaborative behaviors. Simmons is also the author of *Territorial Games* and A *Safe Place for Dangerous Truths*.

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## A Businessman at the Hospice Explains: 'Why I Am Here'

A successful businessman who volunteers for an AIDS hospice uses a story about the Dead Sea to explain to other businesspersons why they should contribute their time and money to the cause. The Dead Sea and the very much alive Sea of Galilee are both fed by the same source, explains this businessman. However, the Dead Sea can only receive an inward flow, while the Sea of Galilee can flow out as well as in. Because the Dead Sea is prevented from flowing outward, the accumulation of salt has killed it. For this businessman, you can only be alive and thrive if you can give out as successfully as you can take in.

### The Six Stories You Need To Know How to Tell

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by those who treat them as if they are stupid.

#### *"The Vision"*

Once your audience is comfortable with who you are and why you are there, they are ready to listen to what's in it for them. Your job is to take your vision and transform it into the audience's vision. You have to take the time to find a story about your vision in a way that connects — a story that people can see. Tell it from a place of authenticity. Tell it with conviction. A real vision story connects with people in a way that shrinks today's frustrations in light of the promise of tomorrow.

#### *"Teaching"*

Whatever your role in life, you have certain skills that you want others to have, too. Whether you need to teach someone to write a letter, design software, answer a telephone, make a sale, or manage a group of volunteers, story halves the necessary teaching time.

Use story to get your message across, especially when you need to show both what needs to be done and how it should be done. For example, telling your new receptionist where the hold, transfer and extension buttons are will not make her a great receptionist. But telling her that the best receptionist you ever knew was Mrs. Ardi, who could simultaneously calm an angry customer, locate your wandering CEO, and smile warmly at the UPS man, gives a better picture of the skills you want her to display. Later, under stress, your new receptionist will ask herself, "What would Mrs. Ardi do?" rather than, "Where is the hold button?"

#### *"Values in Action"*

Without a doubt, the best way to teach a value is by example. The second best way is to tell a story that provides an example. Story lets you instill values in a way that keeps people thinking for themselves. "We value integrity," means nothing. But tell a story about a former employee who hid his mistake and cost the company thousands of dollars or a story about a salesperson who owned up to a mistake, and earned so much trust her customer doubled her order, and you begin to teach an employee what integrity means.

A good test for yourself is to figure out how many stories you can come up with to demonstrate the values you profess to hold. This will be the first source of your "values in action" stories. You need as many stories as possible in your tool kit if you want to influence the values of others effectively enough to change their behavior.

#### *"I Know What You Are Thinking"*

Tell a story that makes people wonder if you are reading their minds. It isn't hard to do. If you have done your homework on the group or person you want to influence, it's relatively easy to identify their potential objections to your message. If you address their objections first, you disarm them. Often, the people you need to influence don't trust you and aren't ready to accept

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## The Piano Lesson: A Story of Values

Marti Smye, author of *Is It Too Late to Run Away and Join the Circus? A Guide for Your Second Life,* tells a values story based on the often neglected value of having fun at work. Marti's story involves her brother, who was also named Marti, and her father (named — what else? — Marti). Clearly Marti (the father) was a bit eccentric.

The story involves the piano lessons that Marti and her brother were forced by their mother to endure when they were young. The piano sat on the back porch, and both children dreaded practice time. (Her brother even wore his football helmet during practice in silent protest).

The torture continued for months until one day, her brother came running into the house saying, "Mom, come look, COME LOOK!" Everyone ran to the back porch to see the piano engulfed in flames as her father watched. Turning to the rest of the family, her father calmly explained, "I want my children to know that if it ain't fun, don't do it."

### The Six Stories You Need To Know How to Tell

*(continued from page 3)*

your advice. Instead, they may subtly attempt to sabotage your efforts. If you tell an "I know what you are thinking" story, you get to the heart of their objections up front and can begin building credibility that much sooner. ■

# What Is Story?

Clothing truth in story is a powerful way to get people to open their minds to you and the truth you carry. The naked truth sometimes must be dressed up to be seen. Consider what happens if you bluntly tell your boss his idea will never work. The reception will likely be less than gracious. Clothe your objection in a story, and it appears more gracious and prompts less resistance.

### *Story and Authority*

Story creates power. You don't have to be in a leadership position when you know the power of story. Like the sword of Excaliber, story conjures a magic power that does not need formal authority to work. As a storyteller, you borrow the story's power to connect people to what's important and to help them make sense of their world. You temporarily hold the power to gather people together for a common cause.

### *Narrative Truth*

A story is a narrative account of events — true or fictional. The difference between giving an example and telling a story is in the addition of emotional content and added sensory details in the telling. A persuasive story is any narrative account from your own experience, your imagination, a literary source or oral tradition that will accomplish any of the six story goals above.

Whether stories are factual or not, good stories always have an element of Truth in them. Truth with a capital T is the kind of Truth we recognize and know without empirical evidence. When you tell a Truth story, it acts as a tuning fork. Your listeners resonate with that Truth; as they remember their own experiences, they tune in to you and your message.

***Whether stories are factual or not, good stories always have an element of Truth in them.***

Stories are "more true" than facts because stories are multidimensional. Truths like justice or integrity are too complex to be expressed in a law, a statistic, or a fact. Facts need the context of who, what, when, why and where.

Consider this example. If you tell a manager to "stop criticizing employees," she may counter, "How else do I let them know they are making mistakes?" Your clear directive is superficial and without context. Your opinion does not communicate the Truth of treating people with respect and balancing positive and negative feedback. However, if you tell her, "In Washington, D.C., last week I had a Haitian cab driver who shared his grandfather's favorite saying with me, 'The man who beats his horse will soon be walking,'" you call her attention to a larger, deeper context — with a one-sentence story.

Life is more complex than ever. People construct walls to keep you out, no matter how well-intentioned you are. They simply don't want to learn about yet another thing they should be doing. Already overloaded and confused, they assume that your added request will only make things worse. Frustration and apathy is the norm. Here you are, trying to influence people who have defaulted to basic self-interest. They are either

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## Avoiding Alienation

Clear guidelines and rules alienate creative thinkers. Take, for example, an airline with rules about who gets bumped from a flight and who flies. If the airline has a formula based on frequent flier miles, fare categories and order of arrival, airline employees aren't exactly being invited to come up with creative solutions. When faced with an obviously angry customer, they have no option except to recite "the rules."

What if the training of airline customer service employees focused more on stories illustrating creative solutions to problems and less on the rules? The training, for example, could include the story of a counter person who was bullied by a man demanding, "Do you have any idea who I am?" The counterperson grabbed a loudspeaker and announced, "We have a passenger who doesn't know who he is. Could anyone who might help identify this passenger please come to the counter?"

The passenger in this story laughed. Of course, he could have become more angry. Whatever the outcome, the point would be made that when dealing with passengers, the airline expects its personnel to be creative — and even use humor if they believe it might be effective — rather than mindlessly intone rules.

### What Is Story?

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content in their little world or apathetic, frustrated and secretly cynical about you and your goals.

But when you offer a story that makes then feel curious again or helps them make sense of their confusion, they will listen. A story can transform the hopeless into a band of evangelists ready to spread the word. ■

## What Story Can Do That Facts Can't

A subtle but powerful shift occurs when you seek to influence people to make wise decisions rather than "right" decisions. When you decide to awaken sleeping wisdom rather than convince others you are right, you produce a much more powerful experience. If you trust that the wisdom is in the room, then your only job is to allow this wisdom to flow freely.

*And the wisdom is in the room.*

What people don't need are more facts. Instead, they need help finding their wisdom. Contrary to popular belief, bad decisions are rarely made because people don't have all the facts. They're made because people ignore the facts, don't understand them, or don't give them enough importance. Basic human emotions like anxiety, greed, exasperation, intolerance and apathy have hijacked their brains and directed them to the easy way out. More facts won't help them regain perspective. A story will. A story will help them figure out what all these facts mean.

People are not rational. Many decisions are based more on feelings than on rational, logical thinking. People decide they like a piece of art because someone they like likes it. They will select one item out of ten identical items and give a list of rational-sounding reasons why it is superior to the other nine. They then explain these decisions in a way that makes them seem rational — they irrationally believe they are rational.

### Story First, Facts Second

People have a natural tendency to interpret facts to fit their preconceived notions of how things work. These notions are the stories they have come to believe. If you present facts first, followed by your story, your audience will interpret the facts to validate their existing beliefs. But if you present the story first, and then the facts, the audience is more likely to fit the facts into your story.

### Japanese Businessman's Rational Approach Fails

A Japanese businessman learned a valuable lesson in the use of facts when he sent a memo to his American female counterpart advising her about appropriate attire for her upcoming visit to Japan. He provided her with the fact: "Do not wear red, tight-fitting clothes or low-cut blouses. Do not wear hosiery that is patterned or brightly colored. Do not wear perfume or heavy make-up. Do not wear dangling earrings or heels over two inches." She was miffed, to put it mildly. Her American "story" told her that this sort of communication was disrespectful. He would have been better off telling her the story of the woman who visited their office in a red dress and long earrings who was hit on by the Japanese men who assumed she was "easy."

### *Ten Situations Where Facts Are Inferior To Story*

● **One-D to Three-D:** You probably will seem very one dimensional to the people you want to influence, especially if they don't know much about you. Reciting a lot of facts about your educational and work background isn't going to help much. To come alive in 3D, your best bet is to tell a story that reflects who you really are. For example, if your role is to create a team, a story about how you grew up in a family of 12 and learned about teamwork firsthand will go much farther than reiterating that the company organizational chart shows you are the team leader.

● **Bear-Trap Questions**: The people you wish to influence have egos. If you get on the wrong side of one of those egos, he or she may set out to discredit you with a bear-trap question. If you respond by saying something unpopular, you are trapped. For example, if you are telling a group that "telling the truth" is going to improve work performance, you will be asked, "Are you saying we should always tell the truth?" A yes or no answer will either sound naive or sound as if you condone lying.

A story can defuse the situation and get the discussion back on track. You could talk about the time that a coworker was about to give his first presentation and asks you right before he takes the stage whether you think he will do a good job. Even if you have your doubts, you would tell him "yes" since this is neither the time nor place to say otherwise. Your story illustrates that you understand the nuances of truth-telling.

● **Tunnel Vision:** The people you want to influence

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## What Story Can Do That Facts Can't

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often suffer from tunnel vision. The facts you throw at them bounce right off. To help them, tell an extreme story. For example, a marketing executive might tell a "disaster story" about a delivery nightmare to make his world real to the manufacturing executive who doesn't want to look at marketing. Or a parent who tells his teenager about a friend he lost in high school in a car accident is more effective than one who recites accident statistics.

● **Saying It Without Saying It:** There are times you want to say something, but direct communication is unwise. For example, perhaps there is information you would like to share but confidentiality prevents you from sharing it. Story lets you communicate in the gray area by saying it without saying it (see box at right).

● **Stop Asking Me!** When you are in a leadership position, sometimes you find that your group depends a little too much on your advice. You cannot succeed in the long run if all you do is serve as the decision-maker. The others will never learn to make independent decisions. Tell a few stories that steer them in the right direction without giving them the answers.

● **Giving a "Demo":** Selling a product is much easier when you can give a demonstration. When you are selling an idea, a good story becomes your "demo." Take a trainer in a gym. Exercise is a tough product to sell. Health facts don't help. Everyone knows exercise is good for you. Success stories explaining before and after results are an ideal demo.

● **Telling Your Superior He Is Wrong:** There are times you can see a problem your superior doesn't see. Since it's a rare human being who warmly welcomes negative feedback, directly delivering bad news can be dangerous. A story can respectfully deliver bad news safely.

● **Don't Tell Me What To Do:** When faced with an impasse, the worst thing you can do is give directives. In fact, many people will technically comply with a directive in a way that assures failure. A passive-aggressive response is the likely outcome. A better approach is to tell a story that illustrates why you want things done your way.

● **Reasons Why Stories:** There are times you have to say "no." Telling a story *before* you say no will help the person who wants only to hear "yes" see your "no" in a different light.

● **Did Somebody Die?** A bad mood is like a bad smell. It can't be ignored and it can ruin a group's efforts. A story can go a long way toward destroying a bad mood. ■

### How to Say, "OK" Without Saying It

A manager in a telecommunications firm was hampered in Asia because of his firm's limits on his expense account. The manager could not entertain his Asian customers in the manner to which they were accustomed. The manager's boss commiserated, but could not tell the manager to break the rules.

The manager told his boss a story of how a salesperson in another firm was able to circumvent a similar problem by turning in his expenses after the sale was made. "Sounds like a smart guy," said the boss in response to the story. The message was clear: If the manager broke this particular rule but made the sale, he would probably be forgiven.

## How to Tell a Good Story

You can entice, inspire, cajole, stimulate or fascinate your audience, but you can't **make** someone listen to you. Instead, what you want to do is create curiosity. You want to catch and hold someone's attention. To prepare, you can develop the basic instruments of communicating. When you tell a story, your body and voice become the stage, actors, costumes, music and props.

Practice the skills that make up your presentation and you will be well on your way to being a great storyteller capable of influencing your audience.

### *Oral Language*

One of the first skills you must pay attention to is your use of oral language, including the use of gestures and facial expressions. Your face is a communication tool that transcends language and cultural barriers. You can communicate emotional content in a split second, whether you want to or not. The secret is that to deliver the appropriate emotion, you must feel it. Actors have long ago learned that they must conjure up joy in their minds before they can show it on their face. Don't bother to tell a story about hope unless you feel hopeful. Practice getting in the right frame of mind.

Facial expressions reinforce the emotional content of your message. Raised eyebrows and a roll of your eyes can substitute for, "I thought he was crazy," while a surprised look and dropped jaw means, "I was speechless." A good technique to master delivery is to watch a recording of yourself telling a story with the sound turned off.

### *Bring in the Senses*

Sounds, smells and tastes can also make their way into your stories. If there is wind in your story, purse

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## Story and Change

When a small southern town sets out to decide which street to develop first as part of its redevelopment plan — Martin Luther King, Jr. Street or Elm Street — an epic battle begins. The racially mixed city board has to deal with emotions and relationship dynamics going back 300 years. If the executive director forces a decision, she will likely find that months later nothing in the "approved" strategic plan has been accomplished. A better approach would be to give voice to all the divergent interests, including the community's. A quick decision does not allow the parties to test out the new story of downtown development. Instead, the constituents on each side of the controversy will come to believe that their representatives have sold out to the other side. A better approach would be to allow the stories of racial tension that surface as old wounds are opened to be told publicly until healing can take place.

### How to Tell a Good Story

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your lips and make the sound of wind. Chattering teeth make it cold. Mentioning chocolate chip cookies baking evoke childhood smells and tastes. Other storytelling devices include the use of timing and pacing. For example, a pause gives people a chance to think about what you just said and what you are going to say next. Silence acts as an amplifier for the sensory and emotional aspects of a story. ■

# The Psychology Of Story's Influence

At the core of the psychological models of how we influence others is the concept of self-interest. The self seeks to achieve what it wants — whether it's profit, destruction, justice, martyrdom or whatever. The psychological goal of influence is to connect your goals to your listeners' self-interest. Advertisers understand this. The story they tell is, "Buy our product and you will get what you want."

From a junkie to a multimillionaire to a soccer mom, people want what they want and their wants fuel the momentum of their thoughts and actions. The goal of an influential story is to connect their momentum to your goals. The jargon we use when talking about influencing people demonstrates this. We try to "hook them" and then "reel 'em in." However, if (to continue the metaphor) the fish don't bite, do you blame the fish? No, you look for better bait. By its ability to tap into the human needs we all share, a story makes excellent bait.

### *Connect Before You Convince*

Genuine influence occurs between people who feel comfortable with each other. Regardless of our differences — money, status, race, gender, experience, culture — as human beings, common understandings flow beneath our superficial differences. Telling a story that connects to any of these allows you to connect with any human being. The myths and fables that have lasted thousands of years lasted because people connect with them at a personal level.

One universal "want" is the desire to belong and to be acknowledged and seen. In our technological economy, human attention is a scarce resource. People need it, crave it, and will pay for it with their cooperation. When you tell a story that touches someone, you give the gift of human attention. Once you have connected, you are ready to move your listener, step by step, to see the world as you see it. ■

# Influencing the Unwilling, Unconcerned or Unmotivated

Your desire to influence is born of some belief that you know a better way. The firmer your conviction that you are right, the more susceptible you are to labeling those who disagree as wrong. People, of course, don't respond well to someone who believes they are wrong.

For example, environmentalists who don't want an incinerator for chemical wastes on the army base in their community calls the army a bully insensitive to the needs of the community. Yet the army needs to dispose of the chemicals, and have concluded the process is safe. To them, the activists are reactionaries.

A "we are right, you are wrong" approach will sabotage your ability to connect with the other side of the argument. You only have a chance of influencing the other group if you come to believe that they are honorable in their beliefs. That won't happen if you demonize them. Redefine the adversary as within your community. Find a story that acknowledges their point of view and good intentions; only then can you begin to break through their barriers.

### *Influencing the Cynical*

You may find yourself trying to influence cynical people who doubt your sincerity, your competence or your ability to deliver. You need to tell a story that proves the cynics wrong. Assurances and promises aren't enough. If you don't practice what you preach, you can forget about influencing the cynical.

Dick Mueller, CEO of the software company MTW

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## Influencing the Unwilling, Unconcerned or Unmotivated

*(continued from page 7)*

Corporation, knows that top-notch IT personnel tend to be demanding employees who value a good working environment — and are cynical of corporate promises. One way that Mueller uses to combat this cynicism is a story about health insurance.

Mueller describes the dread he used to feel when reviewing insurance providers every year. No matter which provider he chose, there were always complaints. Eventually, Mueller decided to delegate the choice to the employees who cared the most. He put the people who were the most unhappy with previous choices on a team and gave them 45 days to make the choice. Then he sat in a meeting room and learned about their decision with everyone else in the organization.

### *Influencing the Resentful*

Another tough audience are the resentful. This crowd nurses old injustices and uses them as justification for inaction. If you want to influence an individual or group mired in resentment, tell them a new story. They don't need a better understanding of the system, clearer instructions, more data, or a vision statement — they need to let go of their resentment. A story featuring a significant role for a peacemaker often helps bridge the gap resentment builds.

### *Inspiring the Hopeless*

Depression is at epidemic levels. A societal crisis of meaning has left many of the people you want to influence secretly hopeless about positive change. Whatever cause you are promoting, they believe that someone else besides themselves has the power to make change happen. They feel powerless.

Your job is to help them see their power, then influence them to use it. Find a story that sustains your own hope. Prepare for the long-term commitment needed to change a habit. Breaking out of feeling hopeless is hard. One classic hope story is the tale of Rosa Parks, who sat down in the white section of a Montgomery bus. Her action wasn't planned; her feet simply hurt and she needed to sit down. But her arrest and the subsequent boycott orchestrated by Martin Luther King, Jr. was enough to change segregation in the south forever. When others see that a small act can have profound impact, they begin to feel hopeful and powerful again. ■

## Storyteller Dos and Don'ts

Storytelling can be done well or it can be done badly. When it is done well, the storyteller sometimes gets a big head. But storytelling carries with it responsibility. After all, telling a good story will help you influence people. Don't misuse the skill. If you use story to cheat people out of their money, get someone fired, take rewards you don't deserve, or influence in an unethical way, your story will have a bad ending. Other dos and don'ts include:

- Don't act superior. Any act of superiority is an overt act of disrespect.
- Don't bore your listeners. Don't tell a story that's too long or goes nowhere.
- Don't scare people or make them feel guilty. Stories that use fear or shame to mobilize action can be counterproductive over the long run.
- Do intrigue and captivate.
- Do connect at the level of humanity.
- Do leave them feeling hopeful.

# Storylistening As a Tool of Influence

New ideas need room to grow. When old beliefs crowd new ideas out, the new ones wither and die. Listening to people lets them pour a little of the old thinking out so they can make room for new thinking. Most people who think they listen don't, or are doing it badly.

Genuine listening has a deep, transformative power. Try to remember the last time someone truly listened to you and you probably remember your mental defenses slowly fell away. As they did, you began to wonder about your uncertainties. Influencing you then became much easier.

Listening is hard. A good listener asks questions that are designed to make the audience revisit their beliefs, look behind their conclusions about how things are and work, unravel those assumptions, and draw new conclusions.

A car salesman trying to sell a lease will probably find listening more effective than persuasion. If the customer says he hates leases, the salesman asks why he feels that way and what specific experiences he has had with leases or what horror stories he has heard. If the salesman can stay quiet long enough, he will at least know what the customer's objections are and at best hear the customer ask why this lease is different. Listening is a great way to earn your turn to talk.

Some people are poor listeners because they think that asking too many questions is good listening. But asking lots of questions is a good way to destroy the flow of someone's story and the introspection the narrator is engaged in. Instead, let the stories flow. At the very least, listening to stories will make you more knowledgeable about the mental terrain of the individuals you want to influence. ■

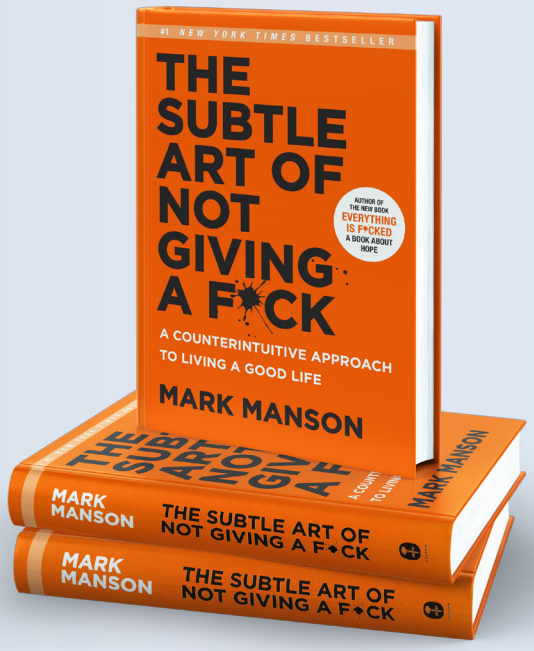
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# The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck

Mark Manson

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck

By Mark Manson

Mark Manson is a blogger, author and entrepreneur. He specializes in writing personal development advice that doesn't suck. His website MarkManson.net is read by over 2 million people each month. As of 2019 he had authored three books, two of which were *The New York Times* bestsellers.

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## Taking the Counterintuitive Approach to Live a Good Life

Our society holds to the notion that if we never give up and we persist in striving to achieve our dreams, we will eventually succeed. Part and parcel to that value system is a borderline obsession with maintaining "unrealistic positive expectations." Above all else, we should strive to be better, happier, faster, richer, sexier, and smarter. In ***The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck***, blogger and author Mark Manson categorically rejects these ideas.

Most "conventional life advice" is centered on positivity and happiness. This "fixation on the positive–on what's better, what's superior–only serves to remind us over and over again of what we are not, what we lack, of what we should have been but failed to be." We look in the mirror and tell ourselves we are beautiful because we believe that we are not already beautiful. We practice visualization about being more successful because we do not feel we are successful already. We research endless options to make more money because we believe we don't have enough money already. That has to change.

To be all that we can be, Manson asserts, we have to stop trying to be better. We have to accept who we are and honestly project that authentic person to the world. We have to embrace our shortcomings, share our failures, and be comfortable with it all. Further, achieving our goals, regardless of how we arrive at them, will not magically make anyone a great person. Manson says, "Self-improvement and success often occur together. But that doesn't necessarily mean they're the same thing."

We are bombarded with messaging that tells us that the "path to a better life is more, more, more." We are persuaded to give a f*ck about everything, all the time. From taking the best vacations or having the fastest car to watching TV on the best model, we are constantly reminded that we should care about it all. Manson guesses that these messages are so prevalent because they are good for business, not because they are good for us. Simply put, Manson writes, "While there's nothing wrong with good business, the problem is that giving too many f*cks is bad for our mental health."

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We are "overly attached to the superficial and fake" and we are dedicating our entire lives to "chasing a mirage of happiness and satisfaction." The real key to having a good life is to stop focusing on the more and to start putting energy and focus "only on what is true and immediate and important." We are "facing a psychological epidemic" in which we have lost sight of the fact that life sucks sometimes and that is perfectly okay. Manson lays out why we think this way and what we can do, right now, to start not giving a f*ck in all the right ways.

## Three Subtleties

First, some clarification. Manson is not suggesting that we go through life vainly attempting not to feel anything or to avoid seeking meaning. He offers three "subtleties" that explain what this looks like in practice.

**Subtlety #1:** Not giving a f*ck does not mean being indifferent; it means being comfortable with being different. People who are indifferent actually care far too much about far too many things and end up hiding in avoidance. They fear making meaningful choices and end up stuck in self pity. Here's the thing. People are going to care about things. It is in our biology. However, we have to intentionally choose what we give a f*ck about and let go of things that do not matter. We have to boldly live by our self-prescribed values, even when they make us different from the people around us.

**Subtlety #2:** To not give a f*ck about adversity, you must give a f*ck about something more important than adversity. People who tend to make a huge deal over trivial things don't have anything important to put their energy towards. We have to find meaningful, legitimate things that are worthy of our attention, focus, and yes, f*cks.

**Subtlety #3:** Whether you realize it or not, you are always choosing what to give a f*ck about. When we are young, we care about every little thing. Over time, we realize not to sweat the small stuff because they don't matter in the long run. Maturity allows us to become more selective in what ruffles us and to choose what is worthy of our attention. This simplifies life and is both rewarding and happy-making.

## The Feedback Loop from Hell

Our brains have an insufferable ability to drive us nutty, if we allow it. Manson asks if the following scenario sounds familiar. You feel yourself becoming anxious about a problem. This breeds more anxiety as you begin wondering why you are so anxious about this problem. Essentially, you are becoming "anxious about being anxious." "Oh no! Doubly anxious!"

Or let's say you get angry about little things quite frequently. Something inane sets you off and you respond as you always do, by getting bent out of shape. You realize you are getting pissy over nothing important so you start getting mad about being mad. This quickly turns into being mad at yourself for always getting mad at trivial nonsense. "You're angry at yourself getting angry about being angry."

Manson calls this the "Feedback Loop from Hell" and it "has become a borderline epidemic" in our society. We believe that we should always feel good all the time. When we experience anything negative we think there is something terribly wrong. We feel "overly stressed, overly neurotic, and overly self-loathing."

Manson attributes this to social media and consumer culture. All we have to do is tune into our Facebook feed and we are inundated with picture-perfect scenes from everyone else's perfect life. We have no choice, Manson says, than to "feel like something is wrong with us." Before we could hold the world in the palm of our hands, humans would feel bad sometimes. And they would say to themselves, "that's life."

Now we feel bad and we enter the Feedback Loop From Hell. We start feeling bad about feeling bad. The key is to "not give a f*ck." When you enter the loop, you can "short-circuit" it. Instead of thinking there is something wrong with you because you feel bad, you acknowledge that you feel bad, that that is totally normal and fine. As if "by magic" you "stop hating yourself for feeling so bad."

## 5 Counterintuitive Values

Our experiences are shaped by the values we place on them. What is happening to us objectively is often way different than "how we come to see the situation." Life is full of problems. We get to control what they mean and how they impact us, positively or negatively, by how we "choose to measure them." If we want to change the way we experience inevitable problems that can shape our lives for better or worse, we have to assign the correct values, or metrics, to those problems. Manson dedicates the rest of the book to explaining five counterintuitive values that lead to us giving a f*ck about the right things, and ultimately, making our lives better.

### 1. Choosing to be Responsible

We have little to no control over external circumstances. However, we "always control how we interpret what happens to us as well as how we respond." We have to take ownership of the things that happen to us, whether or not we caused the problem or it was thrust upon us from outside forces. We must develop the means to recognize that "we are always choosing." Deciding to own our problems is not to say that we are at fault for them. Manson explains that fault is in the past and responsibility happens in the present. It may be your ex's fault that your relationship fell apart, but it is your responsibility to get over the unhappiness you feel in the aftermath. It is to say that fault doesn't matter. It is to take controlWhen we choose to accept responsibility for our problems, no matter where they come from, we take the first step towards solving them.

### 2. Being Wrong About Everything

Throughout our lives, we are constantly wrong. We look back at our past decisions or beliefs or "truths" and understand absolutely that we had it completely wrong. And that is a good thing. Being able to look back and understand that you were wrong means that you are growing. Further, we are never, ever

> We will never get that perfect truth, but we can come close by aiming to constantly be open to our error and pursue being 'a little less wrong tomorrow' than we were today.

completely right.

"Growth is an iterative process." We do not simply flip a switch from being wrong to being right. "When we learn something additional, we go from slightly less wrong to slightly less wrong than that" on and on in "the process of approaching truth." We will never get that perfect truth, but we can come close by aiming to constantly be open to our error and pursue being "a little less wrong tomorrow" than we were today.

**3. Failure is the Way Forward**

Improvement happens only after a seemingly endless string of small failures. How well you succeed at something "is based on how many times you've failed at something." No matter what it is, if someone is "better at something than you are" it is likely because they have experienced more "painful learning experiences" in it than you have.

Most of us are programmed to avoid failure. We become afraid of it and that "confines and stifles us." Failure is something we should run towards, not run away from. If we can face great adversity and overcome it, we come out of the struggle "stronger, more resilient, and more grounded." If we refuse to get into the pain, we risk denying our potential. Manson points out that the "most radical changes in perspective often happen at the tail end of our worst moments." These crises shake us up and force us to take a hard look at the meaning of our lives and what needs to change.

**4. Rejection Makes Your Life Better**

Our culture places a high value on being as "accepting and affirmative as possible." We are taught to be open to everything, saying yes far more frequently than we say no. The problem with that is if we never reject anything, we stand for nothing. We have to reject something or we have no direction.

The world is full of possibilities. You have to say no to many of the alternatives so that you can go full force into whatever value is best for you. In order to have our own identity, we have to choose other identities to reject. "Rejection is an inherent and necessary part of maintaining our values, and therefore our identity." We are naturally drawn to honesty as human beings. The trick is to become comfortable "saying and hearing the word no" to bring more honesty into our lives and have healthier relationships with ourselves and others.

**5. Contemplate Your Own Mortality**

When Manson was nineteen years old, a close friend of his died suddenly in a cliff diving accident. Manson was, understandably, in deep grief and depression, the likes of which he had never imagined. He frequently had dreams of his friend with lengthy conversations which were vividly realistic. In the last such dream, he told his friend that he was sorry that his friend died. His friend replied something to the effect of, "Why do you care that I'm dead when you're still so afraid to live?"

After months of "nothingness," Manson woke up. He had a transformative understanding as related to fear, death, and truly being alive. In the face of the inevitability of death, there is no sense in avoiding pain or discomfort. We are all going to die so it is senseless to "give in to fear or embarrassment or shame." We have to go after the things that will make our lives meaningful. To not do so is to avoid being alive at all.

We start giving a f*ck about the right, consequential things when we understand that our own mortality makes life meaningful. Superficial values are seen for what they are, meaningless. We ask ourselves what mark we will make on the world, what legacy we will leave behind, and what influence we will have caused. Death forces us to look beyond ourselves to something greater, which is "the basic root of all happiness."

*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck* is the antidote to decades of participation ribbons, self-esteem awareness, and power of positive thinking promotion. Mark Manson unapologetically villianizes conventional self-help, placing at least partial blame on the pervasiveness of anxiety disorders and stress in our society on its cornerstone tennant, positivity. We are a culture filled with people who are completely uncomfortable with even the tiniest amount of discomfort. The time has come, urges Manson, for us to get comfortable with all aspects of life, including the not-so-pretty painful and shameful parts.

His take is open, honest, refreshing, and very frequently hilarious. The book is laced with personal anecdotes and historical perspectives that support his arguments and keep the readers eagerly turning pages for the next nugget. In a sea of superficial get rich quick schemes and guides to being happier, skinnier, or prettier, Manson's book is a stand out. He recommends, instead, that we be okay with looking squarely at our authentic selves and presenting that person to the world, warts, farts, faults, and all.

A self-help book for people who shudder at self-help, Manson helps readers get beyond the surface and focus on the things that are worthy of receiving one's lifetime limit of f*cks.

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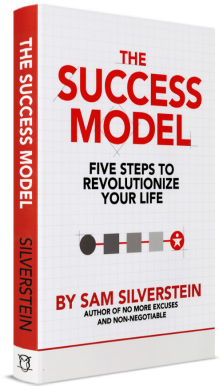
# The Success Model

Sam Silverstein

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# The Success Model

## Five Steps to Revolutionize Your Life




*by* **Sam Silverstein**

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## The Summary In Brief

Everyone seeks success—in family, in work, even in recreation and play. The major objective of ***The Success Model*** is to teach the techniques and thought processes and help you apply the proven methodology necessary to be successful in all the endeavors of your life.

***The Success Model*** will enable you to determine exactly what it is you want in life and help you achieve it. Since you cannot hit a target you don't know is there, it is important to know what it is that you are aiming for. Once you know what it is you really want, you can then apply the Success Model to achieve your success.

Author Sam Silverstein believes that there are a few key words that, when correctly understood and properly applied, will lead you to ultimate success. Words are extremely powerful. They can create. They can destroy. Understanding the key words to success is critical. It's not just what you know; it's how you use what you know that determines your ultimate outcome. The level of passion applied to each segment determines the effectiveness of your results and the amplitude of your success.

## In This Summary, You Will Learn:

- To identify the desires that will lead to success.
- How creativity, listening, and focus can yield change.
- That expectations, goals, and even crises can bring success.
- To use enthusiasm, service, and even failure for successful outcomes.

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

Many people go through life only dreaming of things they would like to achieve. The most successful people are those who work to minimize the difference between their dreams and reality. The Success Model can help you shrink that gap to realize your dreams.

## Desire Is The Beginning of Success

Desire is the first step of The Success Model. The "success energy" necessary to accomplish in life what you want to accomplish comes from your primary desires. This energy translates into the commitment and enthusiasm needed to follow through on your plans.

Desire is the beginning of all greatness. Lee Iacocca was fired by the Ford company, but his desire brought him back and he saved the Chrysler Corporation. Abraham Lincoln lost six elections and political nominations before becoming the President. The goal you desire must be so important that you will use all your skills and develop new ones to achieve success. Figure out what you most deeply want. Your primary desires will force you to knock so hard you will knock the door down. You will pick the lock if that is what it takes!

### Attitude

Negative attitudes can derail the power generated by primary desires. Focus on the target, not on the obstacle. Often, a golfer will be so concerned with a sand trap that his shot will go directly into the trap, as if he had aimed for it. He should have been concentrating on the green, his ultimate goal. Through what type of lens do you look at your surroundings? Does your lens, your attitude, brighten or darken your environment? A positive attitude will enable you to overcome challenges.

### Fear

Your brain can only process one thought at a time. If it is busy worrying, it can't be generating creative solutions. Free your mind to do the most productive things possible. Consciously or unconsciously, you will get and become what you think about. Those desires you are willing to "walk through fire for," will give you the courage to overcome your fears. Let the power of your desires fill your mind to address those fears.

### Motivation and Momentum

Internalizing motivation makes you the driving force in your life, putting you in position to maintain the energy necessary to meet your desires. To illustrate, wood has been replaced in some construction by PVC pipe. When wood is ignited, it will burn until there is nothing left. If a burning match is held next to the PVC, the pipe will burn, but when the match is removed, the flame on the PVC will go out. Wood will continue to burn after the match is removed. How deep is your motivation? Intrinsic motivation will provide the strongest push toward your primary desires. Be like wood. Sustain your own fire in order to always maintain forward momentum.

## Change Is Required

Change, the second step in The Success Model, can only be initiated as the result of a primary desire. The space inside your comfort zone is finite. The area outside the comfort zone is where change can happen. It has no limits. If a runner can run a mile in seven minutes and always trains in his comfort zone, he will always run a seven-minute mile. A commitment to change means opening your mind, realizing the need to make improvements in your thinking, habits, and behaviors to achieve your desires.

### Focus

Thomas Edison had 1,093 inventions patented. When asked about his unusually high productivity, he said that he worked on only one project at a time. He didn't move from project to project. He stayed focused. To stay focused, you must concentrate on the task at hand. Think about work when you are working, about play when you are playing, and about your family when you are with your family.

### Listen

Most people feel that as long as they are speaking they are in control. Actually, the opposite may be true. Only through listening can we learn. Listen not only to what people say but to what they mean. Listen not only to the words but also to how they are delivered. Pay attention to changes in pace. Listen for voice inflections.

It has been said that information is power. As your listening skills improve, you will get more out of each conversation, while at the same time, earning the respect of the person speaking to you. A positive relationship is based on effective, two-way communication. Success is built on positive relationships.

### Creativity

Creativity is the ability to generate solutions to problems, that when implemented, will move you closer to achieving success. The average four-year-old asks 437 questions a day!

This questioning leads to their creativity and gives them the ability to come up with solutions that, sometimes, adults can't see. Encourage your creativity. Ask questions. Acquire information for new ideas.

### Paradigm

In 1952, The Lipton Tea Company invented the rectangular-shaped, flo-thru tea bag. Forty years later Tetley Tea made a paradigm shift. They decided, "Tea cups are round. Why not have round tea bags?" After introducing the new product, Tetley's sales increased over 40 percent, becoming number one in the market!

Your paradigms dictate the way you see the world around you. You can have major improvements in your life by shifting your reference points. Evaluate your paradigms to open up new areas of potential growth. Don't say, "That's impossible." Say, "How can I make that possible?"

> Each time you emerge from a crisis you are better equipped to succeed than you were before.

## Plan for Success

The third step in The Success Model is the plan, a step-by-step program for reaching your goals. Some people like to "wing it," thinking that challenges will take care of themselves. However, the quality of your plan directly relates to your level of success.

If you live in New York and decide to go to Miami for a vacation, would you load up the car and drive off? How about a map? Which roads will get you to Miami? If you just start driving, you could end up in Chicago. However, if you have a smart phone and follow a predetermined route, drive at a steady speed, take planned breaks, and spend the night at pre-decided motels, the chances that you will arrive at the projected time and destination are pretty good. If you prepare for your vacation, why not plan for the primary desires in your life?!

### Expectations

If you place $40,000 expectations upon yourself, you will seek $40,000 results. If you have $100,000 expectations, you will work toward $100,000 results. How can you raise your level of expectations in the basic areas of your life—financial/career, health, education, family, social, recreation, and spiritual? What would your life be like if you were able to increase your performance just ten percent in each of these areas? Apply the success model to your new expectations.

### Crisis

Each time you emerge from a crisis you are better equipped to succeed than you were before. For example, to harden steel it is heated to temperatures as high as 1700 degrees Fahrenheit. Then it is placed in a cold bath. This tempering process hardens the steel and makes it twice as strong. When you face a crisis, it's as if you are being tempered. The proactive approach to crisis means anticipating the problems you may encounter during the execution of your plan.

### Fundamentals and Goals

Successful people have a knack for understanding and mastering the fundamentals in a given situation. They know that the little things are often the big things in any endeavor. People who take the time to learn the fundamentals will outperform those who underestimate their significance. Separate yourself from the crowd. Make sure you are a master of the fundamentals.

## Implementation Is the True Test

Implementation is the fourth step in The Success Model. When a captain gets ready to leave port, he picks his destination. Then, he maps out a course. As he sails along, he knows that the tides and winds may move him off course. He uses satellites for position readings to determine exactly where he is. If he is off course, he adjusts. Over the journey he may make several such adjustments before reaching his destination. This process is the same in your life. Your desire must push you to write out your goal and proceed on your journey. Once the methodology of success is learned, internalized, and implemented, you will be able to move through life achieving one goal after another.

### Enthusiasm and Passion

Notice that the only difference between the word "feast" and the word "fast" is the letter "e." Let's say the "e" stands for enthusiasm. "Enthusiasm" comes from the Greek word

enthousiasmos, which means "breath of life." When you breathe life into a task, you are going to enjoy doing it because you know it will help you achieve a primary desire. Your enthusiasm will become contagious to those around you. Your results will be greater than anticipated.

Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines, has been known for passion. He has dressed as Elvis and sung to his staff. He once settled a legal dispute by arm wrestling. For Halloween, he turned the home office into a giant haunted house. Kelleher's passion for his people and company are what has made Southwest the model airline in their industry. Passion is contagious.

### Failure

Jane wanted to be in business for herself. She saved money, took out a small business loan, and purchased equipment to open a small print shop. After one year, sales were not what Jane had projected, and her funds were running out. Jane's daughter asked Jane to print flyers for homecoming. Instead of flyers, Jane printed 250 promotional T-shirts. The shirts were a huge success. With the proceeds from those shirts, she bought more shirts. Shirt sales were so brisk that Jane sold her traditional presses and bought silk-screening equipment. Her business grew to be one of the largest sports specialty stores in the state! Instead of quitting, Jane modified her plans and pushed forward, meeting her primary desire of owning her business.

### Little

A local car dealer has found that it's the little things that make his service first-class. When a customer drops a car off, the service representative offers to drive the customer to work or to pay for a taxi. They call when the job is done or provide a free loaner car if they take longer than estimated. Finally, they call a few days after the service to check on the job. By doing the little things well, they are able to do a superior job and insure that they have satisfied customers. Sometimes, people look for shortcuts in life, which usually means they end up with average results. Little things can yield big results.

## Success Is the Reward

Success, the fifth step in The Success Model, is the positive results received from your daily achievements in pursuit of your primary desires. Results are the natural conclusion of the first four steps in The Success Model. What this means is that you only have to concentrate on 80 percent of The Success Model. If you properly apply the first four steps in your life, the last step, success, will take care of itself. We must increase our capabilities and always continue to grow. If we reach one goal and don't set a new goal, we will become complacent. Continued growth is necessary to maintain a feeling of self-satisfaction.

The promise of the future is a tremendous power that drives people to set goals and achieve great things. If you vividly paint the promise of the future, you can borrow the impact of that promise to affect your actions today. Use this promise, and what it holds for you and those you love, to drive you to dedicate yourself to success. If the promise of the future is great enough, then you will be willing to pay the price to achieve success.



Sam Silverstein is founder and CEO of Sam Silverstein Enterprises, Inc., a think tank dedicated to helping companies create an organizational culture that prioritizes and inspires accountability. He is both a sough-after speaker and the author of several books including ***Non-Negotiable and Making Accountable Choices***. He is an internationally recognized consultant, coach, and business advisor.A past president of The National Speakers Association, his client list includes such organizations as AFLAC, Lucent Technologies, the National Association of Home Builders, Prudential Insurance Company, and the United States Postal Service.

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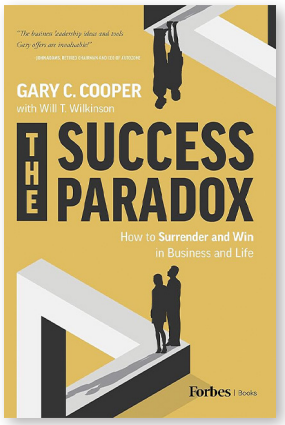
# The Success Paradox

Gary C. Cooper

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# The Success Paradox

## How to Surrender and Win in Business and Life




*by* **Gary C. Cooper**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Success can be a complex term to define. We all want to experience success in different ways. For some, it might be linked with money. For others, it might be about living a great life. Regardless of the kind of success we're looking for, have we paved the right path toward it?

The book ***The Success Paradox: How to Surrender and Win in Business and Life*** lays out a series of paradoxical strategies to help us not just survive but thrive. Personal anecdotes are weaved beautifully with deep revelations translating into a roadmap toward how surrendering can truly enable us to win in business and life.

Author Gary C. Cooper with Will T. Wilkinson urges us to begin doing the opposite of what we had been doing before and what we think we should do now. By laying out comprehensive exercises, they help us come out of our comfort zone regardless of how chaotic the beginning may seem.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The three principles of the Success Paradox.
- About powerful paradoxes that open new pathways for success.
- How to incorporate the Success Paradox Lifestyle or SPL.
- How to surrender and win in business and life.

## Introduction

Success is the accomplishment of an aim or a purpose. Paradox is a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well-founded or true. This book harnesses the power of paradoxes to help readers embark on their journey toward success that truly matters. It is organized in three parts, traveling through the three acts in the classic hero's journey.

Heroes often traverse a magical portal into a different dimension. Think Harry Potter or Avatar. They find a secret door, they learn a spell to cast, and they often find an ally to guide them. Here's your door, your spell, your guiding ally, all in one paradoxical invitation: Begin experimenting with doing the opposite of what you've done before and what you think you should do.

## Part 1

### Chapter 1: Three Principles

If we surrender our will to a higher power, "surrender and win" is the call sign for true success.

The Success Paradox Lifestyle (SPL) applies to the whole of our lives, not just business. It operates according to three principles: being authentic, doing good, and doing well.

"Being authentic" means asking the question, "What's most important to me?" If you ask me, what's most important to me now is being myself. Every addiction is an attempt to fix something on the inside with something from the outside. Changing things on the inside creates a ripple effect outside.

Your business should be about "doing good." It should be as much about helping others as it is about helping you. Being authentic flows through everything we do, helping others and generating abundance to share.

Profits are essential to growth and personal, corporate, and cultural health. But accumulation shouldn't be our primary. "Doing well" must be about helping people along the way.

### Chapter 2: Being Authentic

"Father is a Child to the Man," a William Wordsworth original, means that the character we form as children stays with us into our adult life. "Father rest child to the man" means that fathers influence their children to become adults like them or in opposition to them. It's necessary to disrupt that programming to become our authentic adult selves.

When my father died, I adopted his workaholic patterns, which almost killed me. I was trying to reach and exceed my father's goals. No matter how successful I became, I felt unworthy because I didn't know who I was. When a doctor told me I had less than a month to live, I was forced to change.

I was meant to live my life, not extend my father's, no matter how wonderful he had been. The most important thing to me is to be authentic. I remembered to use my Pause Button. Pausing can seem like being timid, but I learned that my partners and employees, and family don't lose confidence in me when I pause for a moment to make sure of something. This has become an important new habit in my long journey toward becoming a better human, a better businessman, and a better father to my four children.

### Chapter 3: Doing Good

We are separate individuals, right? Well, the Earth also seems flat, and the sun seems to revolve around the Earth. All is seldom as it seems. We are individuals, and we are connected, like waves in the ocean, and we are designed to help each other. So, why do we often wait for an emergency before we start doing that?

We are bombarded by a constant media stream that either overtly or subtly defines what is "normal" or "best." We are urged to compare ourselves to others and then buy something in order to become better or achieve more. Our modern and historical heroes (real and screen sized) always win. We hesitate to portray ourselves as needy or incompetent. We fear being devalued or even shunned if we dare admit that we aren't self-sufficient.

But self-sufficiency is a myth. We need each other. We learn our management strategies from our early family experiences. We are happiest when we are helping others. Empowering friendships supports us to become our authentic selves.

### Chapter 4: Doing Well

Putting social profit first (people and environment), results in financial profit without harmful side effects, but only when we are synchronized with the full profit system known as nature. Life is a profitable enterprise when everything and everyone wins.

For-profit corporations increase share value for stockholders. Nonprofit organizations create social value. Some companies, like ours, manage to do both. We are experimenting with a new model that we call "full profit." It's all about the profit-generating power of generosity.

Everything changes when we prioritize being authentic, which inspires us to help others, and results in doing well. We create a fundamentally different kind of profit: a reflection of our goodwill.

Imagine more and more individuals shifting their relationship with money and making their companies full-profit enterprises, putting profit before profit. They would do good, and they would do well. Profit is a reflection of doing good.

## Part 2

### Chapter 5: Finding Your Why

If you do want more, if you want peace, to feel like you're living your own life, to truly enjoy your success and sleep well at night; if you feel ready to explore the actual details of what it would look like to surrender and win in your life and your organization, then you're almost ready to rock and roll. But first, you have to find your why.

Why do you want to go down this road and not some other? In Start with Why, Simon Sinek wrote: "Very few people are companies can clearly articulate why they do what they do. When I say why, I don't mean to make money – that's a result. By why I mean what is your purpose, cause, or belief? Why does your company exist? Why do you get out of bed every morning?"

Understanding and answering your "whys" is often the first step toward making a positive change.

### Chapter 6: The Success Paradox Lifestyle

Expediency drives us to take shortcuts but kicking the can down the road doesn't get rid of the can. Eventually, we must be accountable for the repercussions of our actions. So, why not just do things right the first time?

According to recent brain research, "When you think about yourself, a region of the brain known as the medial prefrontal cortex powers up. The further out in time you try to imagine your own life, the less activation you show in the MPFC. In other words, your brain acts as if your future self is someone you don't know very well and, frankly, someone you don't care about."

What helps develop our future thinking skills is to simplify everything down to what truly matters. Our business, for instance, has only three components we focus on: being authentic, doing good, and doing well. These are the three principles of the SPL, a formula that helps deal with that brain problem.

### Chapter 7: Giving Up

To have more, we need to get more, right?

The answer is "yes" only when we limit our wealth to personal possessions. Nature operates on the principle of shared wealth. It revolves around giving and receiving our mutually profitable activities that sustain balance and health. So, as you progress with your life and business, always remember to give back in whatever way you can.

Another thing to give up is overdoing things or over-exhausting yourself. Our inability or refusal to rest creates a wall to success. We can push all we want, but work won't be fulfilling or enjoyable, even if we hit our financial goals.

Remember: give to receive, receive to give. "Breathing" is a simple metaphor to explain this paradox. During an asthma attack, it becomes difficult to breathe out, so air gets trapped in the lungs, which means there's no room to breathe in new air. That's what happens when we're reluctant to give. There's less room to receive. Likewise, when we struggle to receive, we have less to give.

### Chapter 8: Opening to Big Change

Pushing for what we want often blinds us from seeing that we already have what we need. Being grateful for what is restores our vision.

We sleep about a third of our lives, 230,000 hours during an average lifetime, yet most of us pay more attention and invest much more money in our cars than our beds. Likewise, another third of our lives is spent at work, about 90,000 hours on average before retirement. So why don't we invest more in the working environments of our organizations?

Change is hard. But once done, it can result in truly magnificent things. Fortunately for our organization, we learned about this in time to make major changes before the dysfunctional elements woven deeply into our company culture could sabotage us. The big change had to start at the top.

### Chapter 9: Answering a Cry for Help

We'd rather feel high than low, right? When we feel "high," we are bursting up against the ceiling of a boundless heaven the infinite potential of creative possibilities. When we are feeling "low," we are dipping our toe into the underworld of our unconscious mind, where, as Jung said, we become enlightened by making the darkness conscious.

Social media is like waking up in a mental asylum. You have no idea you're committed until you try to leave. It can give

us instant gratification, but at what price? Addiction to quick hits of dopamine. But real life can't be all highs and no lows.

Sure, social media can be a gigantic box full of "bad." But it can also be an equally huge opportunity to do "good." Aside from using social media for entertainment and fake friendships, we can tap into its power to make the world a better place.

## Part 3

### Chapter 11: What's Next for You?

Is reality objective or subjective? Why do things happen the way they do? We are not spectators; We are creators. And the best creating tool we have is our mind.

Business is where I give my gifts, and it may be the same for you, or you may thrive doing something completely different like music or dance, or snowboarding! If our educational systems were what they should be, our uniqueness would be encouraged, not constrained, and we'd learn how to give our gifts for the betterment of society.

But what happens when your mind's connection with universal intelligence gets blocked? We prioritize "doing" over "being" and use our willpower, disconnected from the source of life – often with the best of intentions – but we know where paving that road leads.

Using your mind, map, and compass to become an expert with the SPL requires commitment and follow-through. It requires you to create your map and compass and erase the structural tension between the way things are now and your vision for a preferred future.

### Chapter 12: What's Next for Your Organization

Seeing is believing, right?

Well, it turns out that the opposite is also true. "Implicit bias" is the official term that describes how our brains can blind us to the obvious when what we are looking for conflicts with what we believe we should see. When it comes to determining what's next for your inorganization, remember to tap into our top 18 recommendations for putting the SPL into action in your organization:

- House cleaning before growth
- Incentivize growth
- Develop your multiyear strategic plan
- Formulate your vision, mission, and values
- Develop your senior leadership team
- Create a succession plan for all senior leaders
- Transparency
- Communication
- Graduate from isolated silos to collaborating teams
- Used scorecards that everyone sees
- Improve your employee orientation process
- Maintain a relentless focus on people first
- Develop realistic performance standards
- Focus on purpose by staying true to your vision, mission, and values
- Be responsible, successful, and accountable enough that PE partners don't feel the need to interfere
- Let go of the vine
- Celebrate your wins and give recognition

## Conclusion: Surrender and Win

The end justifies the means, right?

That traditional approach invites conflict between personal and organizational values. In fact, whatever we do along the way will always show up in our end product. Chefs know this. Salt tastes different than sugar. Every ingredient influence taste.

So, embrace the lifestyle. Stay true to your vision, mission, and values. Live the "be, do, share" principles. Your results will naturally reflect your process. Remember the end is a beginning. You'll need to trust the process to experience the effectiveness of the Success Paradox for yourself. Enjoy experimenting with what you've learned and be surprised by the wonderful things you'll discover about yourself and your organization!



**Gary Cooper** is the Executive Chairman of Palmetto Infusion, the CEO & Founder of The Carolus Company. The companies he leads are on a mission to improve the lives of families and communities in the Carolinas and beyond. Gary built his businesses based on a set of core values: kindness, caring, laughter, and extreme generosity. He is an advocate of servant leadership. His career has been dedicated to providing healthcare that enables people to remain independent, and he enjoyed a great deal of success in home healthcare, home medical equipment, hospice, private duty nursing, home infusion, and ambulatory infusion clinics.

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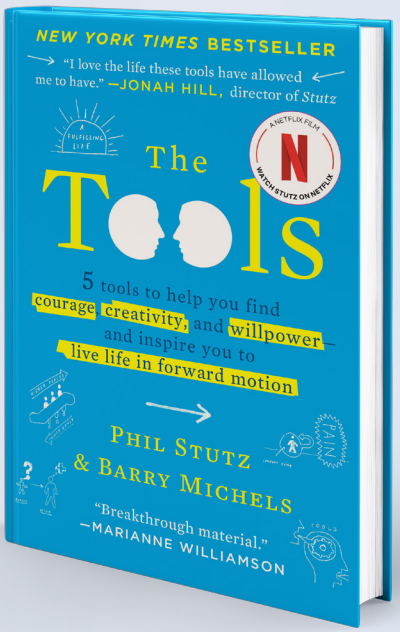
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# The Tools

Phil Stutz, Barry Michels

# BOOK SNAPS™

## Zooming In On Your Next Read




## The Tools

**5 Tools to Help You Find Courage, Creativity, and Willpower - and Inspire You to Live Life in Forward Motion**

*By Phil Stutz and Barry Michels*

**Phil Stutz** graduated from City College in New York and received his MD from New York University. He worked as a prison psychiatrist on Rikers Island and then in private practice in New York before moving his practice to Los Angeles in 1982. He is the subject of the Netflix documentary Stutz, directed by Jonah Hill.

**Barry Michels** has a BA from Harvard, a law degree from University of California, Berkeley, and an MSW from the University of Southern California. He has been in private practice as a psychotherapist in Los Angeles since 1986.

## Live Life in Forward Motion

Barry Michels starts the book he co-authored with Phil Stutz, ***The Tools: 5 Tools to Help You Find Courage, Creativity, and Willpower - and Inspire You to Live Life in Forward Motion,*** by discussing a patient he once had named Roberta. Roberta came into his psychotherapy practice and wanted something she could do right away to feel better. Michels was at a loss because his training did not prepare him to provide Roberta with any such tools. Psychotherapy took time, he was taught. His mentors all urged him to go back to Roberta and tell her that she would have to delve into her childhood to find the basis of her problems. This did not satisfy Michels, but he was not equipped to help her find any better solutions. Then he heard a lecture given by Stutz, and this changed his practice because Stutz gave Michels practical tools that people could implement immediately.

Stutz then goes on to say that he was interested in the questions Michels began to pose to him because he wanted to know where the tools came from. Stutz began developing his tools when he became frustrated with failures in his psychology practice. Eventually he decided that whenever a patient asked him for relief, he would address the problem immediately. He makes the point that his tools are not attitude adjustments. Rather, tools are actual behaviors people can perform to find relief. It took many attempts to find tools that worked. Once he was able to refine a tool, he could see positive results in his patients.

## The Reversal of Desire

The first tool the authors discuss is the reversal of desire. They begin this section by discussing a man named Vinny who could very easily make people angry with him. He sabotaged almost every opportunity that came to him. After time, it was revealed that Vinny disliked situations where he felt like his fate was dependent upon another person. The authors explain that many people spend too much time trying to avoid pain, and this is what Vinny was doing by sabotaging situations where he might be at the mercy of others. Many people avoid pain by using alcohol or drugs, pornography, or by spending too much time on the internet. The authors state, "The Comfort Zone is supposed to keep your life safe, but what it really does is keep your life small."

Michels states that taking action is what moves people towards the future, and once they take action, they activate what the

authors call the Force of Forward Motion. This is the first of five higher forces they discuss, and refers to how every living being "is evolving into the future with a sense of purpose." This force, however, only works if a person is willing to use it. Many people choose avoidance instead.

To explain the reversal of desire, Stutz tells the story of a very successful football player he knew in high school. This player was not necessarily more naturally talented than the other students. His success came because he was not afraid to get hurt. In fact, he would run right into the nearest tackler on purpose. Michels explains that this technique can be used in everyday life when people learn to desire what it is they avoid. Michels explains that people should visualize something they have been avoiding. Then he wants people to put the situation out of their mind and just visualize the pain. While continuing to visualize the pain, they want people to say "Bring it on," "I love pain," and "Pain sets me free." The authors explain that this is helpful because when a person moves towards pain, it shrinks. This tool should be used whenever a person has to do something they wish to avoid or whenever they find themselves thinking about doing something they do not want to do. The authors say, 'There is a hidden, inner strength that you cannot find unless you push yourself through adversity." The reversal of desire helps a person develop courage.

## Active Love

Active love is the second tool Michels and Stutz describe. They discuss what they call the maze which is the state people find themselves in when they get angry. Typically people either go on the attack or withdraw when they find themselves in the maze. The problem, they state, is not the original trigger but the reaction of the person who was harmed. The problems with the maze are that it is hard to get out of and it primarily hurts the person who is trapped in it. It can blind people to all the good in other people. The authors claim that one reason the maze is hard to get out of is because people are interested in fairness. They believe they will be letting people off the hook if they let go of their anger.

The higher force that Active Love employs is Outflow. One of the authors explains how when he was a child he got angry with his father as they headed out to sled in the snow. The author was so angry that he refused to go sledding or get out of the car. Eventually his parents gave up trying to coax him out of the car. At that point, he saw a puppy, and as he went towards the puppy, he was filled with overwhelming love. He says, "Everything felt different; it was as if the universe had suddenly tilted on its axis." His ill feelings for his father turned into positive feelings. He explains that this was a very particular kind of love called Outflow. This "is an infinite, spiritual force that gives of itself without restraint." Outflow is always there, the authors claim. A person just needs to tap into it.

A person should use the tool of Active Love whenever they are tempted to enter the maze. There are three steps to using Active Love. First is called concentration. Here, a person tries to gather up all of the love they can feel around them and concentrate it on their heart. The next step is called transmission. During this step, they should act as a conduit, transferring that love from this higher place into the world. The third step is called penetration. When the person feels that love enter the other person, they will feel an acceptance. Active love can be used any time a person feels injured, remembers past injuries, or is preparing to deal with difficult people.

## Inner Authority

When discussing Inner Authority, Michels and Stutz discuss insecurity. They say, "insecurity destroys people's ability to connect with one another." This is important, in part, because people give other people opportunities when they feel connected to them. They say that the reason insecurity is so hard to get rid of is because there is a second self hidden inside of everybody, and people are ashamed of this second self. They call this second self the Shadow. "The 'shadow' is everything we don't want to be but fear we are, represented in a single image." The authors explain that the Shadow is different from other archetypes as it does not affect how someone sees the world but rather affects how they see themself.

To find the shadow, the authors urge the reader to focus on being in front of a group of people who make them feel very insecure. Then the reader should push those feelings out in front of them and imagine the feelings with a face and body. This visualization is the Shadow. They believe that the Shadow "is the source of one of the most basic human conflicts." In short, everybody wants to feel that they have value, but they are ashamed of the Shadow inside of them.

The higher force at play with the Shadow is self-expression. This force propels people to express themselves in a truthful manner without caring what others think. "When you're connected to the Force of Self-Expression, a part of you speaks that's usually silent. You're speaking from your deepest, inner self," they say. As people grow into adults, they tend to turn from their inner self. Through this process, people turn their inner selves into their Shadows.

In order to use Inner Authority, a person should gather an image of their Shadow in their head. Next they should connect with it and then command the Shadow to listen as they approach the people who intimidate them. The authors want readers to use this tool any time they are preparing to be judged in any manner. They recommend practicing it first in situations that are less intimidating so they can gain experience with it before they approach larger challenges.

## The Grateful Flow

The authors discuss fear in this section. To explain fear to a patient, the authors explain how they told a patient to call to mind a fear. The woman described it as a cloud. The woman did this again with another fear and felt the same cloud. The authors call this the Black Cloud. They say, "When you worry incessantly, regardless of the subject, you're creating a negative energy that hands over you like a cloud." To experience the Black Cloud, a

> The more specific the question, the more ideas can be generated. . .”

person can close their eyes and call to mind worried thoughts. These should be repeated in intensity to mimic real anxieties. The person can then focus on their inner state and what it feels like. This is “a mild version of the Black Cloud.”

The problem with the Black Cloud is that it takes away peace, making everything into a crisis. Also, positive thoughts do not have the power that negative ones do, making the technique of merely replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts unhelpful. In addition, many people believe that their negative thoughts actually can help ward off bad things from happening.

The higher force that the Grateful Flow employs is gratefulness. Stutz explains a scare he had when, as a child, he thought he might have the same type of cancer that had killed his brother. When the tests came back negative, he was able to experience everything differently. He said that he “was in the presence of an all-giving power.” The authors name this power the Source. It is always there, and it is what created everything. This Source lives in the spiritual world. Gratefulness is the way in which people perceive the Source.

The tool the authors want readers to use when they experience fear is the Grateful Flow. To do this, first a person needs to think back to something beautiful that they did not create themselves. Then they should imagine the gratefulness they felt at the time. Finally, they should trace that gratefulness back to an “unimaginably generous force.” At first, people can list things they are grateful for. Eventually, however, they should try to feel gratefulness emanating from themselves when they think of what they are grateful for. The authors want people to pay attention to their thoughts and use Grateful Flow whenever they start to notice negative thoughts. This does not need to just be used with worry. It can also be used whenever thoughts are undirected. This process is especially helpful because people are always vulnerable in the physical world. They are not vulnerable, however, when they are connected to the Source.

## Jeopardy

The final tool the authors describe is Jeopardy. The authors notice that many patients eventually stop using the tools. They explain that people like to think that they are finished products, and when that happens, they believe they do not need to use the tools. They have an idea that there is a destination a person can arrive at where they will no longer have to work. This is not the case. They believe that deep down, everyone believes that there is one thing that they could achieve that would make all their troubles go away. The authors tell the reader to imagine this something and imagine it taking away all struggle. Then they say the reader should squash that visualization because it is not real. Exoneration, the name they give to the belief that one day everything will fall into place and struggle will become a thing of the past, leads to demoralization.

The higher force Jeopardy taps into is Willpower. The authors tell the reader that changing their life will be difficult. The other higher forces were outside of a person. Willpower needs to be generated within the individual. They say, “To act right now requires a sense of urgency. But urgency is uncomfortable. The only time we feel it is when we’re in jeopardy of losing something important.” People need to realize that their future is always in jeopardy as they are always at risk of stopping using the rules. This sense of jeopardy will encourage willpower.

To use Jeopardy, a person needs to see themselves on their deathbed. The person can imagine this dying version of themself getting up and yelling at them for not properly using their time. This will create the pressure to use the tools. Stutz says that people need “a permanent source of jeopardy.” People should use this tool when they feel demoralized and when they are experiencing success that can make them feel exonerated.

Throughout this book, the authors provide three main keys to each tool: the tool, the higher force behind it, and cues as to when to use it. Their hope was to create a highly practical book that people could use immediately to help them with their problems. They clearly lay out the steps and walk the reader through each tool, providing a clear blueprint for how to succeed. Michels ends the book by explaining that he was able to come to terms with the spiritual principles in the method that he had previously rejected because he realized they worked.

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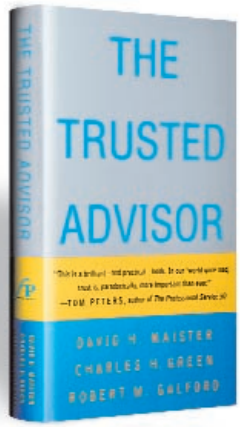
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# The Trusted Advisor

David H. Maister, Charles H. Green, and Robert M. Galford

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/ CAREER TECHNIQUES




By David H. Maister, Charles H. Green and Robert M. Galford

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### How to Create Trust-Based Relationships with Your Clients

# THE TRUSTED ADVISOR

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Do you ever find yourself asking one or more of the following questions:

- How can I get access to my clients more often?
- How can I cross-sell?
- How can I avoid being typecast, labeled as a specialist only in my main discipline?
- How do I get clients less focused on price?
- How do I get clients to play fairly with me?

The answers to these and other similar questions have the same basis — you must earn your client's trust; without trust, none of these ambitions can be realized. The authors of *The Trusted Advisor* know this truth from shared and individual experience, and they use that experience to both illustrate the need for trust in long-term client relationships and educate readers in the process of developing that trust with every interaction.

Among the things they reveal are:

- The distinct attributes of trusted advisors.
- The three core skills of trusted advisors: earning trust, giving advice and building relationships.
- The essential characteristics of trust in all business endeavors.
- How to develop trust in five essential stages: engaging, listening, framing, envisioning and committing.
- How to define client problems in a way that provides insight and a fresh way of thinking, both in rational and emotional terms.
- How to add value to a client's business by helping them envision an alternate reality — an ideal state in which their main problem is solved and their goals within and beyond the context of that problem are defined.
- How to build commitment to action and carefully manage your client's expectations of what will be required to solve his or her problem.

Are you ready to build stronger, more trusting relationships with your clients? If your answer is "yes," turn the page and get started ...

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# THE TRUSTED ADVISOR

**by David H. Maister, Charles H. Green and Robert M. Galford**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## What Is a Trusted Advisor?

A common trait of trusted advisor relationships is that the advisor places a higher value on maintaining and preserving the relationship itself than on the outcome of the current transaction. The advisor makes a substantial investment in the client, without guarantee of return, before the relationship generates any income, let alone any profit.

Sports agent David Falk helped create and build basketball superstar Michael Jordan into one of the world's most successful "brands." Falk has been able to sustain his relationship with Jordan in part because he has earned Jordan's trust, sacrificing guaranteed financial reward in order to grow the relationship. On two occasions (including once early in Jordan's career) Falk waived or significantly reduced specific fees, without being asked by Jordan, because he knew instinctively that it was what his client wanted — although Jordan himself would never have made such a request. Falk believes that is one of the reasons the two continue to work together, with Falk collecting four percent of Jordan's enormous earnings.

Trusted advisors tend to have a number of distinct attributes:

- They have a predilection to focus on the client, rather than on themselves.
- They focus on the client as an individual, not as a person fulfilling a role.
- They believe that a continued focus on problem definition and resolution is more important than technical or content mastery.
- They show a strong competitive drive aimed not at competitors, but at constantly finding new ways to be of greater service to the client.
- They consistently focus on doing the next right thing, rather than on specific outcomes.
- They are motivated more by an internalized drive to do the right thing than by their own organization's rewards or dynamics.
- They view methodologies, models, techniques and business processes as means to an end — they are useful if they prove effective for this client, and are discarded if they don't.
- They believe that success in client relationships is tied to the accumulation of quality client-contact experiences.
- They believe that both selling and serving are aspects of professionalism; both prove a dedication to helping clients with their issues.
- They believe that there is a distinction between professional and private lives, but that both lives are very personal. The two worlds are often more alike than they are different — and for some people, these worlds overlap to an extraordinary extent. ■

## The Three Core Skills of Trusted Advisors

In addition to the distinct attributes of trusted advisors listed above, we see three core skills emerge: the ability to earn trust, the ability to give advice and the ability to build relationships.

### *Skill #1: Earning Trust*

Trust must be both earned and deserved. You must do something to give people evidence that helps them decide whether to trust you. You must be willing to give in order to receive.

David Maister once had to hire a lawyer to probate a relative's will. He called several law firms and was treated to sales pitches about when the firms were founded, what they would charge and how many offices they had. Finally, he found a lawyer who, in the initial phone call, asked Maister how much he knew about probating a will. He then offered to fax Maister a comprehensive outline of the steps involved, including which ones to prioritize based on their urgency in the

*(continued on page 3)*

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## The Three Core Skills of Trusted Advisors

***(continued from page 2)***

process. The lawyer provided this information freely, earning Maister's trust by being generous with this knowledge and proving he was willing to earn the potential client's business.

At its core, trust is about relationships; people tend to trust one another if they are convinced the other is in for the long haul and not looking simply to maximize the short-term benefit of individual interactions. Trust is about reciprocity; you help me and I'll help you if you exhibit some form of caring, and if you provide some evidence that my interests are as important to you as yours are.

### *Skill #2: Giving Advice*

Many professionals approach the task of giving advice as if it were an objective, rational exercise based on their technical knowledge and expertise. Yet advice is not an exclusively logical process, but rather an emotional duet played between the advisor and client. If you cannot learn to recognize, process and respond to a client's emotions, you cannot be an effective advisor.

Consider the client's perspective in receiving advice, or in engaging professionals in general. Think about the personal risks (reputation, promotion opportunities, career issues) that accompany the responsibility for choosing and working with any outside provider for a risky or expensive engagement. If something goes wrong, the person who made the decision to go with the particular vendor or service organization is blamed; clients, therefore, tend to tread carefully when choosing professionals to handle their problems.

Because of this, the diagnosis and solution of a client problem cannot be performed without considering the sensitivities, emotions and politics of the client engagement. Regardless of how technical your field or discipline, the act of giving advice is dependent upon an intimate understanding of the personalities involved, and on the ability to adapt the advice-giving process to the specific individuals involved.

What clients frequently want is an advisor who will take away their worries and absorb all their hassles; what they often get, however, are professionals who add to their worries and create extra headaches by forcing them to confront things they would prefer to ignore. Since clients are often anxious and uncertain, they are looking for someone who will provide reassurance, calm their fears and inspire confidence. It can take some time for many advisors to recognize and develop the interpersonal skills required to address these concerns.

Once you have these skills down, you can begin the process of providing your client with valuable advice. Keep the following points in mind:

- **Find the right words.** We aren't always aware of how we come across to clients in conversations. What we intend to convey is sometimes not what gets communicated. To help develop this skill, rehearse a client conversation, with a friend or colleague playing the role of the client. Look for occasions to rephrase things differently, to avoid the perception of being unclear or pompous.
- **Ask the right questions.** Like a good teacher, your role when giving advice is to get your client from point A (what they know and understand now) to point B (an advanced state or deeper understanding and knowledge). You must have a firm understanding of point A and be able to take the client, step-by-step, to point B through a logical reasoning process. This process is most often phrased as questions: "Why do you think we have this problem?" "What advantages do you foresee for the different options?" "What benefits will occur as a result of our approach?"
- **Be mindful of politics.** It is sometimes necessary to suppress your own ego and allow a client to believe they came up with a solution, to avoid the hassles of corporate politics. One way to do this is to help the client understand all available options by explaining the advantages and disadvantages of several courses of action, then making a recommendation. This enables the client to make an informed decision based upon that information and your opinion.

### *Skill #3: Building Relationships*

To build a strong relationship, you must try to be understanding, thoughtful, considerate and supportive. Fortunately, there are some key principles of relationship building that apply both in personal and professional life. Among these are the following:

- **Go first.** You must give a favor to earn a favor, visibly displaying your willingness to make an investment in the relationship in order to earn the client's trust.
- **Show, don't tell.** A primary goal of any relationship-building activity is to create opportunities to demonstrate that you have something to contribute. For example, a professional firm, competing for business with Wells Fargo Bank, arranged for their proposal to be delivered in saddlebags. The same firm had a proposal for business with Domino's Pizza delivered by one of their people dressed up as a Domino's delivery person. The message was clear: "We are trying to treat you as special and unique."
- **Be sure your advice is being sought.** You must learn to hold back the urge to tell a client, "I know how to solve your problem; you need to _____." While you

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### The Three Core Skills of Trusted Advisors

*(continued from page 3)*

may be right, your advice will probably not be accepted. Clients don't always want advice; often, they simply want a sympathetic ear.

● **Earn the right to offer advice.** In a romance, there are rules of sequence; certain stages of the relationship are not appropriate until other stages have been met and passed. The same is true in business relationships. You must earn the right to offer advice to the client by first understanding the client's situation, then understanding how the client feels about it, then convincing the client that you understand both.

● **Say what you mean.** The most common form of communication breakdown (and a major source of lost trust) is misunderstanding about what has been said. Never assume the client is a mind reader. Say what you want and think. Don't hint around. ■

# What Is Trust?

Before we learn to increase the level of trust in our client relationships, it is useful to note the characteristics of trust:

● **Trust grows.** Trust rarely develops instantly, except in the face of powerful experience. Upon meeting someone for the first time, we are more likely to recognize that we like or respect the person, rather than trust them. Trust does not happen without work, volition or effort; it emerges from accumulated experiences over time. There is no quick fix where trust is concerned.

● **Trust is both rational and emotional.** In client relationships, trust is, on the one hand, based on a client's direct experience of the expertise brought to bear on that client's problems — a rational approach to the relationship. On the other hand, it is also based on the value placed on advisors for their support, dedication to the client's interests, and courage in constructively challenging the client — all emotional factors.

● **Trust is a two-way relationship.** Trust is a two-way street; you cannot create a trusted-advisor relationship on your own. Clients must participate and reciprocate, and they must do so of their own will — you can't force trust. Building a trusted advisor relationship involves not only straightforward discussions, rigorous decision making and conventional consultation, but also a number of other less structured moments of inspiration and epiphany.

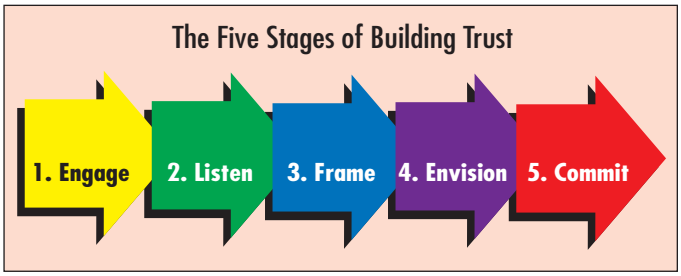
● **Trust entails risk.** The potential of trust violation is always present in a trusting relationship; the advisor's choice not to violate that trust is what makes the relationship special. Creating trust entails taking some personal risks — this is the essence of trust. If you're not a little scared on occasion, you're not taking risks. If you're not taking risks, you're not likely to create risks.

● **Trust is different for the client and the advisor.** Just because you can trust doesn't mean you can be trusted. However, if you are incapable of trusting, you probably can't be trusted. The ability to trust someone else is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for being trustworthy.

● **Trust is personal.** Although some companies try to attract customers by telling them, "You can trust us," there's no such thing as institutional trust. We don't trust institutions. We don't trust processes. We trust people. Trust requires being understood and having some capacity to act upon that understanding. Organizations are incapable of doing either; only their people can do so. Brand name recognition and reputation can get an institution on anyone's short list, but only a person can keep it there. ■

# The Development of Trust in Five Stages

It is important to understand how trust-based relationships are developed; indeed, when examined closely, you can see five essential stages that lead, consistently, to trusting relationships.




### *Stage 1: Engage*

While some believe that the trust-building process begins with listening, something must come first: an initial connection between the advisor and client that sets the stage for the client to want to discuss his or her need. This connection requires an investment on the part of the client — an investment in time and energy to take a risk on the would-be advisor (something the client would not do unless they sees some likelihood of good results in return).

Engagement is the stage in which it first occurs to clients (new or current) that perhaps you might be able to help them find a solution to a specific problem. Specificity is important. Not even your current clients will respond to you just because you listen; they must believe that you have something to offer them on a spe-

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## The Development of Trust in Five Stages

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cific issue in order to open up to you about it.

### *Stage 2: Listen*

Effective trusted advisors are very good listeners. Indeed, listening is essential to "earn the right" to comment on and be involved with the client's issues. We must listen effectively and be perceived to be listening effectively before we can proceed with any advisory process. Advisors make two common mistakes when listening to earn the right:

● **Overly rational listening.** Listening to "earn the right" is very much an emotional as well as a rational process. When you take the time to listen to the client, then absorb what you hear and use it to build the relationship, you display a level of caring that is essential to being a trusted advisor. Listening is not a "soft" skill; at the end of the day, you want the client to be able to look you in the eye and know that you won't let things go by that aren't in his or her right interest.

● **Overly passive listening.** Good listening is an active undertaking, a continual back-and-forth acknowledging that each person in a conversation is being heard and understood. The kind of acknowledgment could be a verbal cue (an "Mm-hmm," or "I see," etc.) or body language, depending on the content of the message.

### *Stage 3: Frame*

Framing is the act of crystallizing and encapsulating the client's complex issues and emotions into a problem definition that, in an objective manner, provides both insight and a fresh way of thinking about the problem. It is usually the most challenging of the five steps, although often the most rewarding. Framing involves identifying and enunciating the essence of the issues at hand — usually something that is hidden, critical and/or fundamental.

There are two kinds of framing: rational and emotional. Rational framing consists of distilling a complex set of issues down to a few critical variables. It can be done in such deceptively simple ways as generating a list, drawing a diagram or sketching out a process or approach. It is a critical component of effective advising, but it is hardly sufficient. Emotional framing enables advisors to raise emotional or political issues related to a client problem in such a way that the issues can be addressed without doing harm to the process of solving the problem (which they would eventually do, if ignored). Emotional framing is first and foremost about the courage to take personal risk and surface hidden emotions — a difficult task that is made easier when you remember that it is the client's emotions that must be framed, and not your own.

One useful technique for emotional framing is called "naming and claiming," which is characterized by three factors: 1) an acknowledgment of the difficulty of raising an issue; 2) an acceptance of the responsibility for raising it; and 3) a direct statement of the issue itself. This technique addresses the embarrassment that stems from speaking what hitherto may have been "unspeakable," or too uncomfortable to be stated. Using emotional framing is the equivalent of dynamiting a stream that has become clogged to the point of dysfunction.

Most initial attempts at framing, especially those made by clients, are often laden with blame: "I can't get so-and-so to listen to me," or, "We need better training." Blame gets in the way of effectively framing an issue, and of effective advising in general. You must systematically tell the truth and eliminate blame, in order to

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## What Good Listeners Do

What do good listeners do that makes them good listeners?

- ✓ They probe for clarification.
- ✓ They listen for a story, and for unvoiced emotions.
- ✓ They empathize.
- ✓ They summarize well.
- ✓ They get rid of distractions while listening.
- ✓ They keep the client talking by asking for more details that help them understand.
- ✓ They look (not stare) at the client as the client speaks.
- ✓ They encourage by nodding their head or giving a slight smile.
- ✓ They ask how they might be of help.
- ✓ They are aware of and control their body movement (they don't move around, shake their legs, fidget with objects, etc.)

### *What Good Listeners Don't Do*

On the other hand, good listeners don't:

- ✓ Interrupt.
- ✓ Respond too soon.
- ✓ Editorialize in midstream.
- ✓ Jump to conclusions.
- ✓ Judge the speaker.
- ✓ Try to solve the problem too quickly.
- ✓ Take calls or interruptions in the course of a meeting.

## Emotional Framing

Being willing to move from blame to responsibility is a risky endeavor. "Naming and claiming" allows responsibility to be accepted in a manner that actually reduces personal risk. It makes judicious use of responsibility-taking caveats such as the following to negate the risks involved in claiming an issue:

✓ **"It's probably just me, but …"**
✓ **"I'm sure you've covered this before, but …"**
✓ **"You've probably thought of this already, but …"**
✓ **"I'm not sure if this is on point, but …"**

Having posed enough responsibility-taking caveats, say the thing that needs to be said. Only by emotionally framing difficult issues can you realize the enormous payoffs that come from handling problems openly and moving forward.

## The Development of Trust in Five Stages

*(continued from page 5)*

maneuver toward full ownership of a blame-free problem statement that can be acted upon, evaluated and transcended.

### *Stage 4: Envision*

Contrary to what many might think, once a problem is defined, the next step is not to solve it. A problem can have many solutions, depending on what clients want to achieve, or for which state they want to aim. Together, you must jointly envision (in as rich a detail as possible) how the end result might look without prematurely giving in to the temptation to solve the problem.

Envisioning entails addressing at least three questions:

- **What are we really aiming for here?**
- **What will it look like when we get there?**
- **How will we know we are there?**

When done successfully, envisioning is usually the point in the process where clients begin to understand their own true goals, defining those goals in such a way that they can realistically be committed to achieving them. Successful envisioning takes people out of the technical, problem-solving, high-risk perspective with which they approach most problem-solving and into a new perspective, one that encourages freedom and creativity, creating great value in the process.

For example, United Research (a consulting firm that later became part of Gemini Consulting) used envisioning to great effect in the 1980s and early 1990s. As part of its sales process, the organization asked large numbers of people in client organizations a series of leading questions:

- **Could things be different around here?**
- **If so, could they be better? How?**
- **What would things look like in this better future?**
- **What would have to change for that to happen?**
- **Where would the benefits show up?**

As people spent time on this envisioning step, they articulated in great detail how things might look in a world where the major problems facing them had been solved, or a major opportunity attained. In doing so, they took an abstract concept of a "better world" and created a concrete vision of their ideal situation, enabling them to work toward making it a reality.

In a two-person, trust-based conversation, you can jointly focus on a mutually attractive future, unencumbered by the problems of the present, enabling you to break down barriers and build bridges to that ideal future. It should, however, be recognized that even acknowledged problems cannot always be solved, as a matter of the client's choice. The client may determine that the benefits of the future state are not worth the effort, or that the problem is one he or she can live with.

### *Stage 5: Commit*

The dictionary gives two meanings of the word commitment: 1) an agreement or pledge to do something in the future; and 2) the state or instance of being obligated or emotionally impelled. The first definition is about action; the second is about an emotional state. It is the second definition that keeps us in the realm of the personal and emotional, which is what commitment should mean in the context of trust.

If you follow the trust-building process, by the time you get to Stage 5, the problem has been framed to everyone's satisfaction, and the vision you wish to attain is clear. What must follow is a series of conversations that will determine:

- **what stands in the way of achieving the solution,**
- **what the involved parties are willing to do about it,**
- **who must be brought into the loop,**
- **what roles each person must play,**
- **what information you need,**
- **when and how to check in on progress,**
- **what key deadlines loom ahead.**

The client must understand the details of implementation, what difficulties loom ahead and what new behaviors might be required to address those difficulties. Trust, in this case, is enhanced by the advisor's openness and candor, sharing his or her experiences in an effort with which the client may be unfamiliar. It can be

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## The Development of Trust in Five Stages

*(continued from page 6)*

tempting, for example, to leave out discussions of risk at the beginning of an assignment. These conversations are essential, though; to leave out an explanation of the pitfalls of an endeavor might be viewed by the client as arrogance or secrecy.

A central part of building commitment to action is carefully managing the client's expectations about what is and is not going to happen to solve the problem. To manage expectations well, you must do the following:

- **Clearly articulate what you will and will not do.**
- **Clearly articulate what the client will and will not do.**
- **Define the boundaries of the analyses you will perform.**
- **Check with the client about areas in which or people with whom the client does not want you to be involved.**
- **Identify precise working arrangements.**
- **Agree on methods and frequency of communicating.**
- **Decide who should get which reports, how often those reports will be delivered and how they will be used.**
- **Decide what milestones and progress reviews are needed.**
- **Decide how success will be measured, both during and at the end of the process.**

Commitment in the context of the trust process is both joint and personal. The advisor must forge a two-sided, truly joint commitment, not one that arises simply from a shared workload calculation. To do this, the advisor must propose solutions that deepen the linkages on both the rational (or content) side and the emotional (or personal) side, strengthening the relationship between the two parties. ■

# What's So Hard About All This?

There are many reasons people find it difficult to fulfill the trusted advisor role, among them:

**"It's all too personally risky."** That's right. It is risky, and if you don't do it with careful balance, it will also come off as flaky and embarrassing. Careful balance is key — as are awareness, focus and practice. The fact that it doesn't get done often is an opportunity, not a problem. It's a chance to distinguish ourselves. Risk is the essence of creating intimacy.

**"Content is all."** The fact that professional services firms often breed a culture of content expertise and mastery means very little if the client doesn't trust you. Truly great professional service firms haven't just made an adjustment to a trust-based approach; they are (or will be) built on it.

**"The process sounds so s-l-o-w! My budget won't allow for this!"** This makes two false assumptions. First, it assumes that clients won't pay for counseling time. In truth, clients more readily perceive the value of counseling because it is done with them, in their presence. Secondly, this concern assumes that time spent advising a client must be recouped on the current assignment. In truth, effective counseling can be among the best means of generating future revenues. ■

# The Lieutenant Columbo Approach

Sometimes a metaphor concisely captures and conveys meaning better than words. Such is the case with Lieutenant Columbo, the television homicide detective played by Peter Falk for three decades. The Columbo character embodies a number of characteristics that can be useful for successful advisors.

Although his rumpled appearance and aloof manner

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## What Skills Are Required to Build Trust?

The five stages of trust building require different skills that the trustee must accomplish:

- ✓ **Engaging requires the skill of being credibly noticed.**
- ✓ **Listening requires the ability to understand another human being.**
- ✓ **Framing requires creative insight and emotional courage.**
- ✓ **Envisioning requires a spirit of collaboration and creativity.**
- ✓ **Commitment requires the ability to generate enthusiasm and manage over-enthusiasm.**

Individuals you encounter might have divergent opinions as to which stage is the most important, but there is no "key" to the process, no "magic button" that stands above the others — each stage is essential to the trust-development process. The point in the process at which a client might articulate a key moment depends largely on the issue at hand and on the approach of the advisor.

## The Lieutenant Columbo Approach

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hardly seem imposing, Columbo actually has an instinctive knack for drawing out the criminal and confirming his (correct) suspicions. He disdains official police methodology, preferring to go for customized, on-off situational engagement, allowing the criminal to let down his guard. Columbo uses his style to eradicate a preconception, thereby setting the other party at ease; this is his genius, and it is what an advisor must emulate.

Often, client interactions boil down to, "you expert, me dummy" exchanges, sending out deep, layered psychological echoes that may include resentment, awe, jealousy, competition and so on. Because there are things at stake, the client may also have a sense of criticality, of impending something. Advisors may also have on display visual trappings of their expertise — a framed degree, a new technological toy, etc. — that causes unease on the part of the client.

Columbo neatly punctures these trappings, praising the "client's" intelligence, dismissing the seriousness of his capabilities, and thereby lowering the "client's" inhibitions. The "client" is then willing to talk openly and honestly, describing things as he perceives them and not as he wants others to perceive them. Information is offered; personalities emerge; progress toward resolution can be made.

Columbo's genius lies in neutralizing expectations about himself, stripping away illusion and pretension, subordinating his ego at the service of the "client." And, of course, he always wins. ■

# The Quick-Impact List to Gain Trust

What are the things you can do to gain trust that have the highest impact, or fastest payback?

**1. Listen to everything.** Force yourself to listen and paraphrase, in order to get what the client is trying to say.

**2. Empathize (for real).** Anyone who understands us has earned the right to engage in discussion, even debate; anyone who empathizes with us has earned the right to disagree and still have our respect. Listen to where the client is coming from, understand that perspective and acknowledge that understanding.

**3. Note what the client is feeling.** Note what clients say and do in your interactions with them. Make careful deductions about what their feelings might be. Acknowledge your own feelings and voice them as well, but carefully.

**4. Build a shared agenda.** Whether you're in a large or informal meeting, share your ideas for an agenda and ask the client to add their ideas as well. This creates buy-in and shows you have a "we, not me" attitude.

**5. Take a point of view.** Go out on a limb with an idea or perspective, even if you're not entirely sure of it. Such articulation stimulates reactions and crystallizes issues, serving as a catalyst to draw ideas out of your client.

**6. Take a personal risk.** Put yourself "out there" for your client — reveal something about yourself, even though such revelations carry with them risks of personal loss, even ridicule.

**7. Ask about a related area.** Advisors who notice and express interests outside their particular realm of experience make an impression on their clients. They show that they care enough about the client to not merely focus on the narrow realm of their professional issues and interests, but to expand that focus to address a wide array of client needs.

**8. Ask great questions.** Open-ended questions allow you to probe for client needs without artificially framing the client's response or biasing them one way or another. The objective is to hear what the speaker has to say, in the speaker's own terms. By doing this, you show the speaker respect by allowing him or her to set the frames of reference, not contorting them to fit your viewpoint.

**9. Give away ideas.** Expertise is like love — not only is it unlimited, but you can destroy it by not giving it away. It cannot be scanned into a database; rather, it is the uniquely human ability to redefine a problem and come up with creative solutions for solving it. It is what a successful advisor brings to every situation, and it only gets better with practice.

**10. Return calls with unbelievable speed.** Getting back to the client, fast, could be the most trust-creating thing you do. No one expects it, and it demonstrates how much you value your client.

**11. Relax your mind.** Critical meetings with your client can be stress-inducing environments; it is crucial to rid your mind, however temporarily, of internal distractions prior to entering into such situations. One way to do this is to concentrate on a piece of wisdom or key question, such as the following:

- **It's about the client.**
- **Who am I thinking about?**
- **The problem is rarely what the client said it was at first.**
- **Who am I serving by my present approach?**
- **What am I afraid of here?**

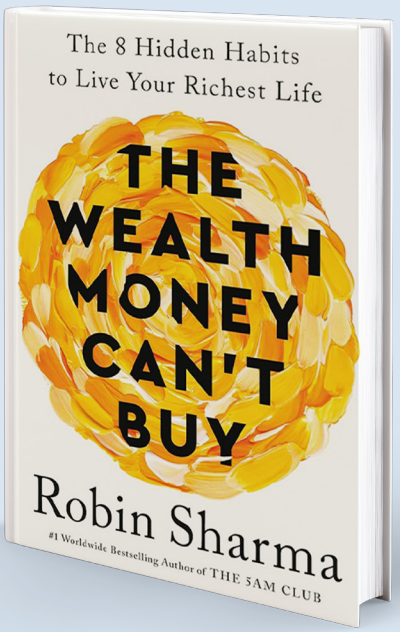
Think about one saying or question at a time. Write out your feelings about the one you choose, or talk through it, aloud, prior to a client meeting. Doing so will help cleanse your mind of distractions or internal conflicts prior to heading into a potentially stressful situation. ■

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# The Wealth Money Can't Buy

Robin Sharma

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## The Wealth Money Can't Buy

### The 8 Hidden Habits to Live Your Richest Life

*By Robin Sharma*

**Robin Sharma** is one of the world's premier speakers on Leadership and Personal Mastery, recently named one of the World's Top Leadership Gurus. As a presenter, Sharma has the rare ability to electrify an audience yet deliver uncommonly original and useful insights that lead to individuals doing their best work, teams providing superb results and organizations becoming unbeatable. For nearly 20 years, many of the most well-known organizations on the planet, ranging from Nike, GE, Microsoft, FedEx, PwC, HP and Oracle to NASA, Yale University and YPO have chosen Robin Sharma for their most important events, when nothing less than a world-class speaker will do.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Discovering Real Wealth

What is wealth? Most would argue that it is the collection of a lot of material goods, titles, and things that will make our lives easier or better. Wealth, when defined this way, results from a job with a large, healthy salary that allows us to live this luxurious life. We have been told since we were young that this should be our chief aim. We should focus on gathering money and other things so that we can be wealthy. But what if there was a different definition of wealth? One that encourages us to rethink what wealth is and strive to live in a way that will make us feel more fulfilled and help us to have a more significant impact on the world around us.

In ***The Wealth Money Can't Buy: The 8 Hidden Habits to Live Your Richest Life***, Robin Sharma reveals the habits that will help the reader to live a beautiful, enriching life. He admits that his philosophy on what makes a great life differs significantly from others in the personal development field. Still, he hopes that what he shares will inspire the reader to create a life of far more incredible beauty and connection than they experienced before. In reading this book, readers will discover how to live a full life with a new appreciation of what wealth really is.

Sharma shares that he wrote *The Wealth Money Can't Buy* because of the suffering of the people in the world who think and feel that they don't have enough and that money will make them happy and/or solve their problems. Money isn't bad, and Sharma states that having it will allow the reader to live the way they desire, but asserts that it isn't the only form of wealth we need to strive towards. While money is essential to live, it should not be everything.

While they are each related in different ways, the 8 forms of wealth are broken down into separate sections and still further into chapters in which he shares the hard-won wisdom he has gained throughout his life. They are each based on habits that he encourages readers to embrace and apply to their lives. The Habits are Growth, Wellness, Family, Craft, Money, Community, Adventure, and Service.

## The 1st Form of Wealth: Growth: The Daily Self-Improvement Habit

In this section, Sharma invites the reader to face their unfaced fears and to stop denying themselves the opportunity to grow

and experience a more meaningful life than they currently are. He encourages readers to appreciate themselves, something others might see as vain. In appreciating themselves, they can more effectively journey forth to who they want to be and become the most excellent version of themselves. He tells the reader to change their narrative and stop letting fear and the scars of their past hold them back from the growth that will propel them to the life they've been dreaming of.

**Difficult Is A Good Thing**

While personal growth might sometimes feel challenging, he says it's supposed to. He says that while change is hard in the beginning and messy in the middle, it will be amazing and beautiful in the end. If it were easy, there would be no value in acquiring a new skill or accomplishing a challenging goal. The change being worked toward is worth the frustration, setbacks, and pain that might be experienced along the way. As the reader experiences this growth, Sharma encourages the readers to keep a daily journal for several reasons, including increasing one's inner clarity, noting down ideas, recording moments of one's life that are too magical to forget, and reading a wide variety of books to gain as much knowledge as possible.

**Growing Despite The Pain**

Sharma encourages the reader to honor the scars they have gained along their journey from the experiences and people around them. Each scar is a lesson learned, and a gift gained that will shape the reader into the person they were always meant to be. He also shares that it is best for the reader to let go of any resentment they might hold and instead forgive and expect the best from the people around them. In doing so, they not only open themselves up to growth, they also invite the people around them to grow as well.

## The 2nd Form of Wealth: Wellness: The Steadily Optimize Your Health Habit

Sharma is adamant that the reader's health is a form of wealth. He believes that if one doesn't feel well (emotionally, physically, mentally, and more), the material wealth that is gained ultimately means nothing. He encourages the reader to prioritize their whole health to enjoy their lives more fully. Over the course of this section, he shares several ideas that he has applied to his life that have helped him feel better and enjoy life more fully.

**Keeping it Clean**

Many of Sharma's ideas might seem common knowledge, but they are often overlooked because they go against the narrative society now follows. He encourages the reader to prioritize getting out in nature, meditating, and moving their bodies and shares that doing these things, among many others, will result in the reader feeling healthier and more able to apply themselves to the things they are passionate about. The reader can also learn how to add years to their lives to do the things they love and spend more time with the people they love.

**Learning from the Past**

He enthusiastically shares some ways that others have bettered their lives throughout history. While it is the societal norm to rush from thing to thing as though running a race, he encourages the reader to slow down, retrain themselves to breathe like samurai, and prioritize their spiritual health. Doing these things and seeing them as a form of wealth will help the reader experience a life they never had before.

## The 3rd Form of Wealth: Family: The Happy Family, Happy Life Habit

Sharma says that having the love of one's family is one of the greatest and sweetest rewards that one can achieve in life. It is possible to be materially wealthy, yes, but if it is not accompanied by the love and support of family and friends, then one is poor indeed. Taking the time to invest in healthy relationships with loved ones will enrich not only the readers' lives but also the lives of the people around them.

**Relational Investments**

Sharma encourages the reader to show the people around them how much they mean to them, even if it means doing something others might perceive as unusual or outside the norm. By purposing to show the people around them what they mean, it will encourage them to do the same to those in their lives. He goes beyond surface-level empathy and says to learn how the reader's friends see the world and to purposefully understand what is important and valued to them and why. Build others up so they, in turn, can do the same.

**Hard Isn't Always Healthy**

While he does want the reader to take the time to invest in their relationships and, therefore, live a more prosperous life, Sharma is firm in saying that it shouldn't always be hard. He states that the reader needs to first state their non-negotiables, protect their priorities, and, if they are in a space where those around them are constantly defeating them, end the relationship. In order to live a healthy, prosperous life, the reader must "teach" others how to treat them and not allow others to abuse or walk over them.

## The 4th Form of Wealth: Craft: The Work as a Platform Habit

Every individual has an innate sense of searching for a purpose, and many will try to fulfill that longing with their work. However, instead of being content with working and simply seeing a job as that and nothing else, Sharma tells the reader that they should instead focus on mastering their craft and purposing to build a rich life. There is great dignity to be found in working, and rather than seeing it as something to get through, it should instead be seen as the means to cultivate the beautiful life that is desired.

**Finding Magic**

A job doesn't simply have to be a means to an end, and Sharma

> *. . . rather than seeing [working] as something to get through, it should instead be seen as the means to cultivate the beautiful life that is desired."*

invites the reader to change their approach to work so they can experience a fuller work experience. Each individual is responsible for discovering their gifts and purposefully sharing them with the world. They must see it as a superpower and not let anything, including themselves, stand in their way of mastering it. It's also important to continue learning, growing, and reading so they do not fall into the trap of complacency that has trapped so many others. Even when others aren't watching or appreciating the work that is being done, the individual doing it with passion can feel peace and joy in what they have accomplished.

**Growing Pains**

It would be easy for them to get discouraged by not immediately experiencing the success they are longing for, but Sharma encourages the reader to expect them and use that as motivation to continue to get better. This will build a foundation to propel them forward so they can refine their genius so that when they share it with the world around them, they have an even more significant impact than they might have otherwise thought possible. Great success takes time, and there are many lessons that can be learned along the road that will serve readers well as they grow.

## The 5th Form of Wealth: Money

Having enough income to live life on their own terms is important, but that will not make the reader truly wealthy. Sharma gently shares that it is vital for the reader to know when they have enough so that money doesn't own them. Too many get lost in the trap of always looking for more, and that holds them back from experiencing the freedom that wealth can provide and from being grateful for what they have.

**A New View**

Sharma states that it is essential for the reader to understand that wealth should be a gateway one can walk through. In doing so, the reader will be able to free themselves from a prison that will ultimately destroy their happiness and potentially that of their families. They must learn how to see their money in a new way and utilize it in a way that serves them on their journey to creating the life they have been dreaming of. Readers must also learn how to renew their own strengths so that they are able to be more energized and invested in the work that they do. When the reader are living their healthiest lives, they are able to make better choices so their money serves them more effectively.

**What is Truly Important**

Sharma encourages readers to remain humble, be grateful for what they have, and abstain from jealousy. These are among many things that will keep individuals from living their fullest, wealthiest lives. What does having a considerable sum of money matter if it is enjoyed alone because they are greedy, selfish, jealous, or simply rude? Sadly, Sharma shares that those who enjoy great wealth without friends and family around them often don't enjoy what they have painstakingly collected. Ultimately, what is meant for the reader will come to them, and they will be able to enjoy a full life when they understand what makes them genuinely wealthy.

## The 6th Form of Wealth: Community: The You Become Your Social Network Habit

Community, Sharma shares, isn't just the neighborhood that the reader resides in, the area they live in, and the people they come into direct contact with. Instead, the humans around will help define the individual's net worth and self-worth. These individuals will be the ones to encourage and build up or discourage and disappoint. By investing in those around them, the reader has the potential to see doors open for more significant opportunities.

**Unwrapped Gifts**

It might surprise the reader that in a society that values physical gift-giving, sometimes giving a gift and investing in others is most special when shown in expected ways. Sharma states that something as simple as keeping your word, writing a thank-you note, wishing others a great day, or showing up on time is a way to invest in others and build relationships. Doing so will encourage others to do the same and will result in a revolution of sorts, where people are more supportive and appreciative of each other. Relationships, particularly when they are curated in person, are a true and underappreciated form of wealth.

**The Great Unknown**

It doesn't take much to invest in and encourage people, and Sharma is adamant that the reader should invest in those they might never see again. The great unknown doesn't just speak to a place that hasn't been explored yet but also the person that has yet to be. By taking the time to talk to someone and treat them with dignity and respect, the reader is honoring and helping them grow into the best person they can be.

## The 7th Form of Wealth: Adventure: The Joy Comes from Exploring, not Having Habit

Sharma enthusiastically shares that he believes that adventure is a form of wealth and that rich memories are more precious than

any sum of money that can be collected. He states that this form of wealth is more focused on restoring a sense of curiosity and magic so that the reader is spiritually enriched. He encourages purging one's possessions so that one feels free to explore without stress and the energy drain one might be experiencing.

**Staying Put**

Sharma shares that one way to explore is by reading and watching documentaries. Doing so allows the reader to explore the world and gain a new appreciation for it and those who inhabit it. It will also expose readers to new thoughts and ideas from a wide variety of time periods and cultures. He also encourages the reader to speed a year "going ghost" so that they can focus on pulling back and experience tremendous personal growth that will prepare them to view the world in an incredible new way.

**A Little Danger Can Be Good**

However, there is a flip side. Too often, the comfort zone wins, and people are stuck living their normal, safe routines, never exposing themselves to the unknown. Sharma encourages the reader to challenge that and live a little dangerously, even going so far as to live like a pirate! By purposing to step outside of their comfort zone and pursue their passions, readers will add to their lives in ways they might not have otherwise.

## The 8th Form of Wealth: Service: The Life is Short So Be Very Helpful Habit

In this final chapter, Sharma passionately shares that few virtues will give the feeling of fulfillment that having a positive impact on the world does. He restates that there is nothing wrong with being financially successful, but there must be a balance when acting out the eight forms of wealth that he has shared, and that is what he hopes the reader will learn to apply to their lives. By sharing what they have and purposing to make the world a better, more generous, and more beautiful place than before, readers will experience a new form of wealth they never had before.

**Learning what Lasts**

Sharma hopes the reader will understand that they don't need a lot of stuff to be happy, particularly since it will only last a lifetime and not beyond. When that thought is kept in mind, he hopes it inspires individuals to live out their dreams, live graciously, and encourage those around them. When they are able to do that, a ripple will go out that will influence others to do the same and brighten their corner of the world.

**A Right Attitude**

It is all too easy for others to influence the attitudes of the people around them, whether for good or ill. Sadly, others might have a head knowledge of that but do nothing to change the way they interact with others. Sharma hopes that the readers realize that they don't have to let the attitude of others negatively impact their day and that they don't have to accept what they are being offered. They can choose to reflect the joy and light that they have inside of them and leave the choice to accept it up to the other individual. The kindness that is displayed can help others reevaluate and have a better day than before.

***The Wealth Money Can't Buy: The 8 Hidden Habits to Live Your Richest Life*** by Robin Sharma is an enjoyable, easy-to-digest, and apply read that draws the reader in. Sharma is an energetic, personable writer who is passionate about helping those who pick up this book. His conversational writing style draws the reader in and makes them feel he is sitting in the room and talking directly to them. Sharma shares stories, anecdotes, and wisdom in a gentle, easy-to-read way and explains his thoughts in a way that readers can readily apply to their lives so they can experience each of the different types of wealth that he discusses in his book. He states that he is not a guru or a prophet; he is simply a man who has knowledge and experience to share with the world in hopes of making those living in it able to live a fuller, more prosperous life.

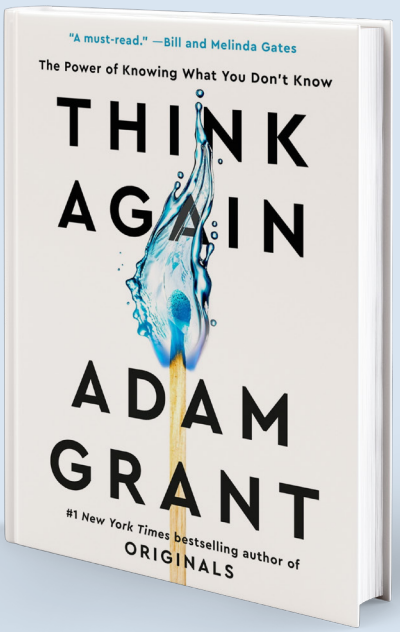
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# Think Again

Adam Grant

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Think Again

### The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know

*By Adam Grant*

**Adam Grant** is an organizational psychologist at Wharton, where he has been the top-rated professor for seven straight years. He is one of TED's most popular speakers, his books have sold millions of copies, his talks have been viewed more than 25 million times, and his podcast WorkLife with Adam Grant has topped the charts. His pioneering research has inspired people to rethink fundamental assumptions about motivation, generosity, and creativity.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Rethink and Unlearn

We all have preconceived notions about the way the world spins. We have opinions and ideas and are hard-pressed to give them up because the conviction of correctness is so strong. But what would happen if we took the time to second-guess those convictions? What if we changed our way of thinking to be more like a scientist, where we tested our theories, and instead of digging our heels in our raging, we explored those ideas? Maybe even accepted them?

In ***Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know,*** Adam Grant invites the readers to challenge the way they think. He states that part of the reason the general population struggles to rethink is that we would instead be settled in the comfort of the things we know rather than allow the doubt to cause us to squirm. He calls this cognitive laziness because rethinking styles, decor, and more so we can stay up with the latest trends is easy. Rethinking our knowledge and opinions, however, isn't easy.

It can be challenging to drop the knowledge gained over the years, but Grant invites the reader to do just that because it might cause them to miss things that are becoming problems in their lives. He calls this mental flexibility, and his goal in Think Again is to explore how rethinking happens and how this can happen by speaking with those he considers to be some of the world's best rethinkers.

He does this by breaking *Think Again* into three sections for the reader. Doing this makes it easy for the reader to understand what is being said and digest it to see how it applies to their lives. The first section is about the reader opening their minds and learning to see things in a different light. The second is about the reader motivating others to do the same and open their minds. Finally, the third section shares how to build communities of individuals who are lifelong learners.

Throughout the book, Grant shares examples of great re-thinkers. He does this to show the reader that it can be done and why it should be done. He closes the prologue by saying that the hallmark of wisdom is knowing when to drop some of our tools and treasured parts of our identity. In doing so, the rust is removed, the dust is displaced, and the world and its problems are seen and addressed in a new way.

Beginning with "Why"

Grant begins by sharing that when most people think of the term "mentally fit," the word "intelligent" comes to mind. However, in today's turbulent world, the reader must use a different set of cognitive skills, usually left in the mental tool shed to rust: the ability to rethink and unlearn how to address a situation.

He states that the reader doesn't just hesitate to rethink an issue; they are nervous about the very thought of rethinking. Part of the problem is the ease of hanging on to prior beliefs (cognitive laziness) and the fear of admitting that things might have changed; facts were proved wrong, and now something new must be learned. It's uncomfortable to do this, so digging heels in has become the norm.

Refusing to rethink or stretch one's cognitive ability is a common mistake. Grant encourages the reader to adopt a new way of thinking that includes mental flexibility. When this is done, the reader has a better chance of facing and conquering an obstacle others might not have.

## A Personal Update

Why is it difficult to rethink? The idea of the unknown may cause worry. Or is it because change is uncomfortable, and staying put is too convenient? People would often rather the world change to suit themselves and might be unwilling to adapt when faced with something new. Adapting needs to happen, however; when this isn't done, something or someone will likely get left behind in this ever-changing world.

It's usually easy to see when someone else needs to rethink. Often, people are quick to adopt one of three mindsets, preacher, prosecutor, or politician, when trying to convince someone of their wrongness. They deliver sermon-like dissertations and courtroom-worthy arguments or use every persuasive campaign trail debate when convinced of one's rightness and another's incorrectness.

Can something else be done? Grant says there is a fourth, necessary option: to think like a scientist, to address the situation by being willing to see things from a different perspective in a quest for the truth, and to reserve the mental space to change views based on presented information.

Grant comments that he hopes his ideas will encourage readers to develop their beliefs. It's an encouraging invitation out of stagnation and into a place of evolution and growth.

## The Right Kind of Confidence

Just as there are blind spots in cars when being driven, there are also blind spots in knowledge. The problem comes when they go unrecognized, resulting in false confidence that can hinder a desire to rethink. It becomes difficult to rethink or relearn what we need when this happens. The good news is that with the right kind of confidence, it is possible to spot those blindspots and learn to see oneself more clearly. It is essential to recognize the mental blind spots and then revise thinking accordingly.

Grant shares that many want to use a Goldilocks method of finding that sweet spot but that it's not the best way to be confident. It's necessary to remain grounded so that one can believe in oneself and still have the humility to question whether the correct tools are being used to achieve one's goal.

When confident humility has been learned, it will improve the quality of rethinking. When doubts creep in, they can cue the reader to enhance their cognitive toolkit.

## When Being Wrong Is Alright

Grant says that when one is attached to one's beliefs, it is harder to recognize the flaws in one's opinions. A type of detachment needs to happen, and he shares two varieties for the reader to try. The first requires a detachment of one's present self from one's past, which can lead to a place where the reader is mentally healthier over time.

The second requires the reader to detach their opinions from their identity. When their identity is based on their values—core principles such as integrity, freedom, and security—they can remain open about what can update them in light of new, presented evidence.

These two forms of detachment will help the reader grow and relate to the people around them. Being wrong is not always a negative experience. Sometimes, it leads the reader to a place where they discover something new and exciting.

## Taking a Different Approach

When readers gain the ability to rethink for themselves and open up to a new way of learning, they are also presented with a new opportunity: they now have the chance to convince others to rethink in a new way. Often, challenging the thoughts of others is done in an adversarial way. The result that follows is usually the other person digging their heels in, shutting down, and refusing to consider a new way of thinking or new ideas. In exploring a new way of personal thinking, the reader will then be able to convince others in a more collaborative way that will invite them to think more like a scientist.

This takes practice, though, and much self-reflection. Grant realized this when conversing with a former student and being called a "logic bully." Instead of thinking like a scientist and being willing to consider a different point of view, he was thinking like a preacher and a prosecutor and ended up alienating his student.

He shares that to succeed in changing someone else's mind, one must first be willing to be open to the stance of the person with whom one is debating. This is about more than making a good argument. It's about making sure that the reason for convincing someone else to change is right and changing the way an argument is carried out. When this is done, a common ground is more likely to be found, leaving those involved in a more positive place.

It's essential to learn this skill and show others that the desire for growth, openness, and willingness to learn are mutual. Simply presenting someone with a reason to change their mind isn't

> *". . . a critical way to help others rethink their views is to ask them to consider their opinions if they were living in a different reality."*

enough and might not work, but it needs to be done in a way that doesn't feel like an ambush.

Grant draws the reader in by sharing a story of his own failure as he goes on. Why is this important? This makes him relatable to the reader because it conveys his humanity and fallibility, and he does this in a genuine way.

Where to start?

It is important to start with a conversation to understand how change can happen and how the cycle of overconfidence can be broken. What would a conversation do? It can lead to common ground and help establish a common identity. However, a conversation must go further because common ground may not always be enough.

Grant shares that he turned to the psychology of peace, which helps to establish empathy. Through several examples, he shared that learning about individual members of a disliked group and forming positive opinions about them in an ideal world could change how the group is seen. Sadly, typically, the individual of that group is seen as an exception to the rule, and negative opinions are held, so go back to the drawing board many will go.

## Seeing Things in a New Way

Grant states that a critical way to help others rethink their views is to ask them to consider their opinions if they were living in a different reality. For example, what views might they hold fast to if they were born in a certain time period or to a family that is a fervent supporter of a particular team?

This way of thinking helps people gain humility as they reflect on how certain changed circumstances might have led them to live a completely different life. When that curiosity begins to seep in, they are opened up to a place where they can find some new commonalities to displace the stereotypes that are there.

Grant also shares a practice that has been called motivational interviewing, which focuses on helping others find their motivation to change (rethink). Three key techniques are involved in this that are extremely helpful:

- Asking open-ended questions.
- Engaging in reflective learning
- Affirming the person's desire and ability to change,

This needs to be done accompanied by an attitude of humility so that the cycle of overconfidence can be broken and others can see the new opportunities around them in a new light.

When trying to convince someone to change, Grant shares a critical caveat: When conversing with someone who is successful in changing their mind, it is essential to ask oneself not just if they're proud of what they achieved but how it was achieved.

## A New Community

Learning doesn't stop when a diploma is handed out at graduation. Or at least it shouldn't.

It might not always be comfortable, especially since information is abundant and only a few clicks away. However, the problem comes when that information isn't accurate, and only the extremes are presented (which then polarizes issues even more).

This is called "binary bias," and it happens when a topic is presented as simply black and white as if there are only two sides to it that should be discussed. Instead of being open to different perspectives, human nature tends to seek clarity by simplifying a complicated subject.

So, what can be done to combat this way of thinking? Grant shares the good news that there is an antidote, and it comes when a range of perspectives is explored on a given topic. He uses the imagery of looking at the issue through the lens of a prism, multifaceted and complex. When this is done, the reader is more likely to rethink their stance and look at it through a gaze of curiosity.

Grant wants the reader to be able to rethink well so that they can continue to learn as they go through different stages of life. It's hopeful to think that the possibility for us to change and grow does not stop when graduation happens, and a career begins. There will always be something new to learn, but there must be a willingness and openness that accompanies it.

Does it have to be complicated?

Complexity is not always negative, and it is possible to communicate complex topics well. One way to do this is to look at how scientists communicate: They include in their presented research the caveats that they have found along the way. Grant shares that this is a type of porthole in how they think and the research that they have done.

Acknowledging that a topic is complex, Grant states that it doesn't make it less convincing but makes it credible, particularly in social sciences. It shows that the researcher hasn't picked out the pieces that will best support their argument and instead has explored a variety of views to share with the world.

## Productive vs Unproductive

When presenting a complicated topic, a lack of emotional range can sometimes hinder a conversation. This is quite the opposite of what might be common, though, and it's vital for the research to understand how people can share their emotions in a charged conversation. When this is done, there is a higher potential for rethinking and understanding another's point of view.

A hindrance to this happens when a binary bias controls one's emotions. Binary bias doesn't only play a role in relation to topics. It can affect how one feels about a situation or a topic. Just as it is possible to see a presented topic through a prism-like lens, it is also possible to see emotions that way. It can lead to a place of frustration as well as curiosity. It can cause sadness and mix it with excitement at a new discovery.

When thinking like a scientist, one has the opportunity to discover new truths that will lead to both personal and communal progress and growth. Sometimes, this can cause confusion, but that can and should cause one to pause to recognize the cue that something new is to be learned or discovered.

## Conclusion

*Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know* by Adam Grant is a read that is very encouraging and inviting. It is an invitation for the reader to change how they think without name-calling, belittling, or oversimplifying how this can be done. He genuinely cares about how the reader thinks and what their impacts can be on the world at large. It encourages the reader to seek outlets for new knowledge and shows them how to do this in a healthy and effective way.

Grant is humble in saying that he wishes he had thought about some of these things in his previous publications. This is a refreshing show of humanity and his willingness to practice what he shares with the world. In the epilogue to the conclusion, he shares moments of rethinking he experienced when writing *Think Again*.

He believes that rethinking can and should happen. It is more likely to happen in a culture that is passionate about learning instead of staying stagnant. He also says that it's not necessary to totally upend one's life in order to rethink. Small pivots in rethinking one's position can end up having a huge impact, both personally and on the people around them.

Grant closes by saying that rethinking is not just a way for the reader to update their knowledge or opinion base—it goes much deeper than that. It takes humility, doubt, and curiosity to start down the path of rethinking, and the result? We will have a new tool to help us lead a more fulfilling, learning-led life. He also shares the thought that if people put on their scientist goggles a little more often, the world might be a better place, but if the reader disagrees, he closes with an open-ended question: "What evidence would change your mind?" showing his willingness to step into a place of continued growth.

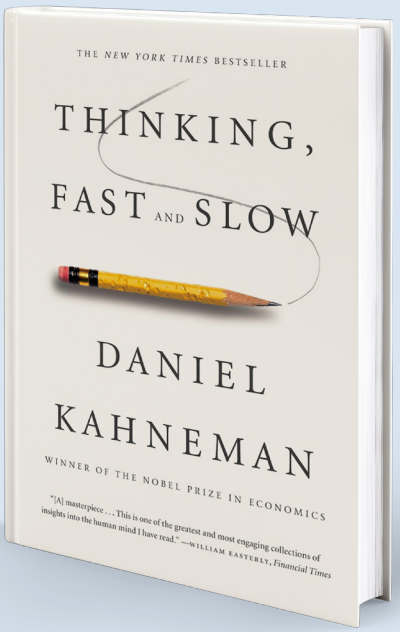
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# Thinking Fast and Slow

Daniel Kahneman

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Thinking, Fast and Slow

By Daniel Kahneman

Daniel Kahneman is Eugene Higgins Professor of Psychology Emeritus at Princeton University and a professor of public affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He received the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for his pioneering work with Amos Tversky on decision-making. He is the author of the international bestseller, *Thinking, Fast and Slow.*

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*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Two Systems that Drive the Way We Think

For the better part of the 20th century, behavioral psychologists attribute most human actions to the simple fact we, as human beings, are essentially ignorant of ourselves. While these radical, revolutionary aspects of Freud and others have been molded in a different direction, the ramifications of their work linger to this day. What if the reason we act irrationally in some situations and more cogent in others isn't rooted in some repressed emotion, but rather due to a more dualistic nature of thought?

This is the heart of Daniel Kahneman's revolutionary tome, ***Thinking, Fast and Slow***. For Kahneman and others subscribing to his (and his longtime professional colleague, Amos Tversky's) viewpoint of there being two systems of thought: fast, and slow, one is rather intuitive while the other is slow, basking in effort, and deliberate. When we understand our thought processes on a more intimate level, then, according to Daniel Kahneman in this book, we will be able to "improve the ability to identify and understand errors of judgment and choice, in others and eventually in ourselves, by providing a richer and more precise language to discuss them." Bad judgments, as Kahneman also notes, create damage. This book provides a better, deeper understanding of the nuances that affect each and every impression, thought, judgment, and reaction people face on a daily (even every second) basis, and that's merely the starting point.

## Part 1: Two Systems

The moment you turn the page to this first part, you're met with an image. Your reaction is expected. It's anticipated. What's more, it's natural. Your initial reaction to the still image highlights the first system, or System 1 in Kahneman's book. This is innate, fast, responsive. Right after that, you're shown a basic mathematical problem, and an explanation about how most people will need to slow-think the solution. Because of the nature of the stimuli, each person's responses will shift from either fast, or slow, thought. This is the essence of the two system approach and Kahneman masterfully dives deeper, as though drawing back layers of an onion to reach the heart of the matter. Psychologists have long debated and investigated these two modes of thinking, especially as they relate to the image you'll

be presented and the math problem.

What Kahneman digs at is the essence that the fast response is grounded in more automatic instinct, or nature. This doesn't mean that a person responds to stimuli based on their biology, but rather the confluence of their experiences. The reaction is almost instantaneous, leaving little to no room for introspection. The other response requires conscious effort and thought to process.

Within these two processes, Kahneman identifies two characters, which one may relate to 'characters of thought' (or thought processes). Kahneman cleverly points out that too often people are quick to identify with System 2, as though they are the staring role in their thought processes, yet there is no separating an individual from both System 1 and System 2. In other words, when a person thinks they are more slow-thinking, careful, deliberate in their processes, they are deluding themselves and overlooking a vast, powerful, and inherent aspect of their nature. System 2 is slow and for any form in our human nature that tends to be slow, it wears out more easily. When that happens, it becomes much more willing to accept whatever System 1 tells it to think or react. Yet, at the same time, System 1 prefers to simplify, to break down complex issues in a quick, simple nugget, and that can often lead to unfair or unjust judgments.

By first understanding the two system approach to thought and reactions, this book leads the reader down a narrowing path to better understanding of their

## Part 2: Heuristics and Biases

Life is a confluence of large and small components, just as any research studies tend to be. The larger a sample size of a study, for example, to more reliable the results tend to be. Most of us have experienced this, especially in recent years with regard to political polling. While Kahneman doesn't fall into the trap of politicization of his work, he uses others, including the rate of kidney cancer and marbles. However, for the purposes of our review, let's focus on political polls. The larger the polling sample, the more evenly distributed against the backdrop of a population, the more accurate and reliable it tends to be. On the other end of the spectrum, the small the sample and more skewed to one angle or another, the less reliable and trustworthy it becomes.

Seeking to solve problems or understand why groups of people act or react differently in various situations requires heuristics, and will naturally be impacted by bias. Bias leads to what Kahneman and Tversky termed the 'anchoring effect'. Because of preconceived or planted information, even if it has nothing to do with the actual topic, will directly influence thought processes, regardless of one's background, culture, or history with education or the topic at hand.

One example used involved housing prices. For the average consumer who may not have direct knowledge of local housing markets (as a Realtor would, for example), the listed house price will immediately impact a person's perception on its value, or worth. Even for someone who wants to resist such anchoring, they will be less empowered to push back, simply because the listing price immediately and directly influences the perception of its value.

Tversky and Kahneman created a number of stories through the years of their research, including one about Linda. They created the background of her story, then shifted her profession, and sought to understand how respondents would view her, her politics, her appearance, and so forth. As Kahneman writes, "Life presents us with many occasions to forecast." When we allow System 1 to dominate, biases take over. Yet, even when System 2 is targeted, too often bias infiltrates our thoughts to influence reactions, which is why it becomes critical to be aware of such things.

## Part 3: Overconfidence

One of the overarching themes in Kahneman's book (more often slipping in through the fabric of each story, topic, and chapter, but not often so bold as to push itself onto the reader) is the risk of overconfidence. There is an illusion of understanding among most people. We have a tendency to make many assumptions on a range of topics. The more education or experience we may have on given topics, the more confidence we build. In our efforts to make sense of the world around us, we seek out stories or facts or historical data that fits into our preconceived worldview, which, in turn, manifests itself in even more overconfidence, leading to greater chance of moving from System 2 thinking to System 1, or for System 1 to insert itself into every situation.

One of the key examples Kahneman utilizes in this book involves scientific journals. As he noted, "Scientific journals occasionally publish exchanges, often beginning with someone's critique of another's research, followed by a reply and a rejoinder. I have always thought that these exchanges are a waste of time. Especially when the original critique is sharply worded, the reply and the rejoinder are often exercises in what I have called sarcasm for beginners and advanced sarcasm."

What a colorful and direct example of not only bias and System 1 thought imputing itself into the center of his idea, but also in how overconfidence, especially from experts, directly influence our own thought processes. While he goes on to explain about a collaborative effort with someone whose ideas opposed his own, Kahneman -perhaps unknowingly- supports his own assertion regarding confidence, expert status, and the impression that can (and often does) leave with the average audience. In this case, how many of you will now view scientific journal replies or rejoinders in an unbiased, non-judgmental manner?

Through a careful and deliberate lead of the reader through numerous examples of bias and reason, Kahneman gets to the core of this section, which involves the challenge many of us deal with when faced with emotion and rational thinking. When we rationally know something is unlikely to work out, but our emotions are stirring us to action, too often we tend to dive in against odds to pursue some venture, which can have some positive, but more often negative results. He explains why as he closes out this section.

> The duration of one's life, ultimately, doesn't seem to be what matters most to others, but rather the quality of those years..."

## Part 4: Choices

By the time Kahneman digs into this section on choices, he's made it clear in other areas of the book that he doesn't agree much with many economists or financial 'experts,' mostly because, as he commented, of the 'psychological assumptions of economic theory.' He uses a quote from Bruno Frey, a Swiss economist in the 1960s and 70s whose book Kahneman read, highlighting the opening salve, "The agent of economic theory is rational, selfish, and his tastes do not change."

As Kahneman notes, "I was astonished." He viewed this as insight that economists and psychologists were studying two completely different worlds. To him, people are not fully rational, nor are they completely selfish, and to make such presumptions misses a key marker that could help others make some vital, yet difficult choices. Throughout this section, several theories are presented and though they can appear complex on the surface, each highlights key components to better understanding human choice.

When he discusses Rare Events, one of the examples used was from his time in Israel. At the time, there were 23 bombings between December 2001 and September 2004, killing 236. With about 1.3 million people riding buses, the risk of being blown apart on a bus was very small, but people avoided buses as often as they could.

Even though logically they were relatively safe, emotionally people were taking greater lengths of avoid such travel. Or risks. We also begin to notice that people react to certain issues or topics based on the way they are framed. Language, the way words are used, have long been known to influence perception and reaction, and these all have prolific impact on the choices we make each and every day.

## Part 5: Two Selves

The closing salve of Kahneman's prolific book focuses on two selves, or two utilities, as he describes them: experienced utility and decision utility. While the things one person experiences may differ from another's it's those experiences that affect their choices, their reactions, and their decisions later on.

One key question he posed was, "How much pain did Helen suffer during the medical procedure?" This is a wonderful, yet simple anecdote almost every single one of us can understand. Each person experiences pain differently, so while you may rate a specific kind of headache as being 'mild,' another may rate it 'severe'. Experienced utility will change based on numerous factors. Kahneman uses temperature as a quick example, which is influenced by multitude factors, including cloud cover, position of the sun along the latitudinal lines (ie. seasons), time of day, ground cover, and more.

At the end of the day, people care about the experiences of others, and there are several wry examples expounded upon in this section, but for some clarity, one involved knowing that a scientist had his or her work proven to be false after they had died. We may feel sorry for them, as though their efforts and life's work were wasted, or a missed opportunity, although that individual would have no concept of what actually happened.

We care about having and leaving a good story for others to hear about. Perhaps Kahneman had Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey* in mind when he wrote this section, because he mentions, we "all care intensely for the narrative of our own life and very much want it to be a good story, with a decent hero." The duration of one's life, ultimately, doesn't seem to be what matters most to others, but rather the quality of those years, as highlighted by a study conducted by a contemporary of Kahneman's.

Marriage is one of the final examples he uses in his book, and perhaps it is noteworthy here, for how many of you have heard the jokes about how 'life ended' for the one after he (or she) was married? Life satisfaction seems to drag downward after the initial, emotion-filled first year of marriage. But why?

Perhaps it's the balance between System 1 and 2 at play, the quick reaction to 'marriage' equaling happiness and bliss, and then longevity with your best friend. Yet every marriage demands work, just as every effort worth making demands better understanding of the thought processes we go through.

While Daniel Kahneman's book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* is long and detailed, it is the quintessential tome on reason and thought for anyone who desires to understand the human mind, how we process information, and seek fair balance rather than incorrect judgment in life.

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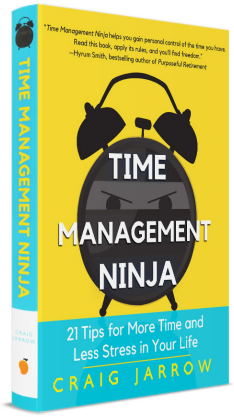
# Time Management Ninja

Craig Jarrow

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Time Management Ninja

## 21 Tips for More Time and Less Stress in Your Life




*by* **Craig Jarrow**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In modern life, the world is filled with countless distractions and drains on our time and energy. Whether these come from external factors or our own bad habits, these distractions can leave us constantly feeling like there aren't enough hours in a day. But the truth is that there's plenty of time in the day where we struggle in organizing and optimizing the way we use that time.

***Time Management Ninja*** teaches 21 essential principles for improving time management skills, covering everything from how to make time for what matters and the tools necessary to do it to making time for your passions and letting go of the things you can't change. In the end, you'll find yourself better equipped to take on whatever the day throws at you because you'll have planned and prepared for it all. That's the power of becoming a time management ninja.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to manage time more effectively to get more done and be happier doing it.
- How to prioritize tasks, stop procrastinating, and be productive instead of just busy.
- How to clean and declutter your life to make yourself happier and less distracted.
- How to accept the parts of your life you can't change so that you can live your life to the fullest.

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

## Introduction

These days, our lives appear to be an endless marathon of busyness. It feels like there is never enough time to get to what's important, which means we have even less time to do what we actually enjoy.

But it's your time. You don't have to give it up and away. You don't have to let others steal it— you're in control. It's time to do something about the time crisis and the technology takeover. It's time to better manage your life. Inevitably, you will experience less stress as you begin to unplug from the endless stream of distractions.

### Time Management Should Make Time, Not Take Time

When it comes to time management, the simplest solution is the best. Common sense and practical tools will make you more successful than a system that takes weeks to learn and years to implement. Managing your time should be quick, effortless, and efficient.

A good rule of thumb is, "If your time management requires a flow chart, it is too complicated." Are you really going to refer to a chart every time you are trying to get organized? It definitely shouldn't take you thirty minutes to prioritize and sort your to-do list into a matrix. A good set of necessary weapons, used with discipline, will beat a complicated system any day of the week.

## Four Productivity Weapons You Need

Your productivity depends on four essential weapons. Making sure they're always readily available will help ensure that you're staying on top of your time management needs.

#### To-Do List

A to-do list is crucial for tracking your tasks and obligations. It helps you remember your tasks so that your mind is free to work on what is immediately in front of you.

#### Calendar

Your calendar should track your schedule and remind you when and where you need to be. While you're living in the now, your calendar can follow your appointments that are days, weeks, or even years in advance.

#### Address Book

Having contact information is so imperative for us to be able to communicate with others and connect. Your address book captures those contact details so you'll have them at your fingertips at all times.

#### Notebook

A good notebook records your most important information. The idea is that you have one notebook to record your notes so that you're not writing things down in random places or on Post-It notes that can get easily misplaced.

## Your To-Do List Should Be Your Best Friend

Your to-do list should track tasks so you can concentrate on your work. Keep one universal list and prioritize it to ensure you work on the most critical tasks first. Capture all tasks, whether big or small, as soon as they arise. Feel free to reorganize your list as necessary. You should also constantly ensure that your list is with you at all times.

The bottom line is that you want to keep your list close and let it fulfill its purpose—tracking all of your tasks. If it's not with you and readily available, you won't be able to capture those fleeting tasks as they pop up.

### Make Appointments With Yourself And Your Work

For most people, their schedule is entirely filled with things they need to do for other people. To take back control of your time, you need to take control of your calendar. Always remember, it's your time first. Too often, individuals' calendars are merely lists of other people's priorities and work. Make sure you use your calendar to schedule for yourself and your priorities.

### Write It Down Now, So You Don't Have to Remember It Later

Whether you use physical or digital means, taking notes is absolutely essential for keeping your thoughts and ideas organized and accessible. Many people make the incorrect assumption that if an idea is good enough or important enough, they'll just remember it. That's not the case.

Keeping a notebook, even a digital one, is essential. Taking notes also has the dual benefit of improving your own memory. By writing it down or typing it out, you actually increase your chances of remembering the information. And if not, it's still there in your record. Don't limit what you keep in your notebook—anything important has its place.

## Planning Is Good, Preparing Is Better

It only takes a few minutes to come up with a plan that can save you hours later—and that's generally all the time it should take. Don't take an hour planning out the next two hours—spend just a few minutes outlining what the following day will look like. You're more likely to stick to that plan.

Once you have a plan—prepare. Preparing for what you know is ahead will help you hit the ground running when the time comes.

### Be the Early Bird and Get a Head Start on the World

Being an early bird is a choice, and it's a skill that can be learned. Everyone makes excuses for sleeping in, but the truth is that all it takes is deciding to do it. You'll get better at it much faster than you think.

If you find yourself scrambling for time and battling distractions, you'll be amazed at what you can do while the rest of the world (and its distractions) are still asleep. However, being an early bird requires more than just waking up early. It requires you to have a routine and to be purposeful with your early hours, and also requires you to be smart about your sleep habits. You can't go to sleep at midnight each night and maintain an early bird pattern.

## Do Tasks Until Done

This is a fairly simple concept, but it can be challenging in execution. It's human nature to try and multitask, or to avoid the mentally taxing job of actually finishing a task. But humans are actually quite poor at multitasking, and you'll get more done if you stay with a task until it's finished. Undone tasks can incur penalties and other life consequences and multitasking often leads to more work started at lesser quality.

### Put It Away Now, and You'll Know Where It Is Later

Everyone with a rational brain knows that clutter doesn't happen all at once. It builds up, sometimes quickly, as a result of individual decisions. You decide not to put away a certain item. Then the next. Before you know it, your office, bedroom, or entire home is an array of items that are distracting and intruding on your ability to focus.

Putting things away when you're done with them, saves time looking for them later. Your possessions need to have a place to call home, so you'll always know where to find them. In this role, containers can be a very effective way to store supplies, kits, and more.

### The ABC Method of Cleaning

In the world of cleaning, the ABC method stands for 'Always Be Cleaning." This might sound like misery for some, but hear us out. Always Be Cleaning simply means that you find small, fifteen-minute messes or decluttering tasks you can complete on a regular basis. This helps avoid having to clean-up ninety-minute monster messes. Tackle small jobs every day of the year and you'll never have to devote entire days or weeks to massive cleaning tasks.

### One Extra Task a Day Keeps Procrastination Away

Designate one task each day that you have been avoiding or were probably going to push off. Do that one extra task today and give it utmost priority. Doing it earlier in your day will motivate you and prevent a more significant disruption of your activities. Follow this powerful nugget of wisdom and you'll finally be able to trim your task backlog, one task at a time. This means you can address tasks that may not be urgent now, but will become urgent if ignored.

### Never Confuse Busy with Productive

Busyness doesn't necessarily mean you're actually getting things done. You can do less and still accomplish more when you focus on real priorities. Remember— haste doesn't produce results. Focusing priorities delivers real value and real results.

### You Can't Finish If You Don't Start

It's vital to keep in mind that you'll never accomplish goals that you never begin. Someday never comes along unless you make it today. Talking about goals doesn't move them forward— your goals need deadlines, or else they'll remain just dreams. A small step forward each day is progress.

### Realize You Are Stronger Than You Think

External factors don't determine your abilities or performance— your internal beliefs do. Only by exceeding limits set for yourself can you then set new and more rewarding ones. But to do that, you have to become comfortable leaving your comfort zone. Ask yourself which areas in your life have limits that need to be tested. Ask whether you're too comfortable with the current status quo, and whether that's left you feeling unsatisfied? Then, take action.

### Know You Are What You Do Every Day

When we're procrastinating or avoiding our goals, we tell ourselves that one day doesn't matter. That's true—every day matters. Good habits, repeated day after day, build you up. Bad habits are self-destructive. Those habits are made a day at a time, and a routine ensures that you consistently practice your habits. You truly are defined by the things you do every day, for better and for worse. Make it for better.

### Use Your Tech for Good, Not Evil

Technology can be a recipe for distraction or a tool for productivity and focus. Make sure it's the latter. Always remember that tech is for your convenience, not to make it easier for the world to pull you in a hundred different directions. Don't let gadgets run your life— turn off interruptions, beeps, and ringers when you're focusing. Prioritize people (and yourself) over your technology.

### Make Choices or Life Will Make Them For You

The ability to make a choice is the greatest gift and a most precious right. If you don't make choices, the river of life will make them for you. Think about what you want and make choices that lead you in that direction. Don't wait for a perfect time—make those choices now. There's also never a perfect choice, so don't get paralyzed by the need to make perfect decisions and actions.

## Passion Makes You More Productive

Research is clear—when you're doing things you truly care about, you're much more likely to be productive and focused. That doesn't just apply in the moment—when your free time is filled with enriching and engaging habits and hobbies, you're more likely to be driven and focused during your work time. Carve out time for your hobbies and passions. It won't just make your life happier, it will make you more productive when you work.

### Let It Be (You Can't Do It All)

Despite all of these productivity improvements you're set to make in your life, you'll still have to accept that certain things won't get done. Don't overcompensate by taking on others' responsibilities, and don't drop your tasks or pick up unneeded ones. Saying no sometimes will give you a renewed sense of self-worth.

### Don't Create Your Own Life Friction

The world has plenty of its own stressors and slow-downs without you adding them yourself. Many problems aren't really problems, just tasks that need to be addressed. There are very few true emergencies in life, and many of the things you worry about can be safely ignored. Reduce unnecessary friction wherever you can, and unavoidable friction will seem more manageable.

### Live Your Life Or You Won't Have One

What's the point of all this time you've saved yourself if you don't use it to live life to the fullest? Live in the present, note the past, and plan for the future. When you do save time, don't use that saved time to fill it with unnecessary tasks. Focus on what matters most, and you'll become a true time management ninja.



Craig Jarrow is the author of ***Time Management Ninja*** - the blog rated one of the top 3 "most influential in productivity today" by Biz 3.0. While widely accepted as one of the best business blogs for information on time management, productivity, technology, and goal-setting, Craig's conversational style coupled with his easily implemented tips make him a favorite for anyone who wants to "Win the battle against wasted time, disorganization, and all other things evil..."

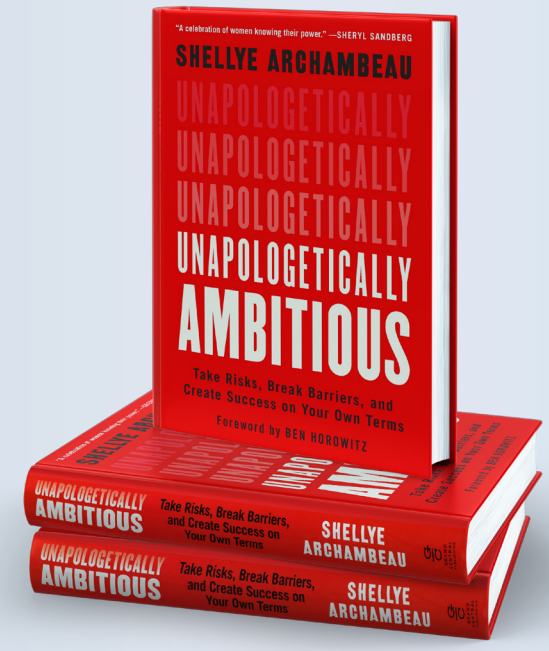
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# Unapologetically Ambitious

Shellye Archambeau

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Unapologetically Ambitious

By Shellye Archambeau

Shellye Archambeau is one of high tech's first female African American CEOs and has been featured frequently in Forbes, the New York Times, Business Insider, and more. Formerly an executive at IBM and President of Blockbuster.com, Archambeau was recruited to be the CEO of a then-struggling Silicon Valley startup, which is now MetricStream, a recognized global leader in governance, risk, and compliance software solutions. She currently serves as a Fortune 500 board member and holds board seats at Verizon, Nordstrom, Roper Technologies, and Okta.

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# Go After What You Want - Unapologetically

Shellye Archambeau is the product of a family that had "limited means and high ambitions." As a student at Wharton she set the lofty goal of becoming a CEO. After catapulting herself through the ranks at IBM, she became one of the first female African American tech CEOs in 2003 at the age of 40. She cannot count the number of times she has been asked, particularly by women and people of color, how she did it. The simple answer is, "ambition." "Ambition supported by conscious choices" got her to where she is today.

Archambeau's book is the result of gathering those "values, experiences, lessons, ideas, strategies, and actions" into one place so that others can do the same. In ***Unapologetically Ambitious,*** Archambeau gives readers permission to blow past the "solely supportive roles others expect them to fill" and instead, forge their own path, rising to whatever heights their ambitions demand, including all the way to the very top. It asks readers to question what they really want from life, what values they live by, what lifestyle they desire, and what they find fulfilling. It provides practical strategies, tools, and approaches to make our actual lives match the answers to those all-important questions. It empowers us to go after what we want, unapologetically.

## Getting Around Imposter Syndrome

Each of us is born into a unique set of circumstances that can help or hinder our ability to succeed. Archambeau believes that regardless of where we begin, we can put ourselves on the track to achievement. Rather than letting the fates decide, we can effectively create our own luck by "setting a goal, creating a plan, developing the right skills, maintaining the right attitude, and aligning everyday choices with those goals." We can gain wisdom that will last a lifetime from these early lessons.

In early childhood, we all view ourselves as being pretty much the same as everyone else around us. This does not hold true forever, however. Around the age of six, research shows that we begin conforming to gender stereotypes and begin seeing and organizing our lives around differences between us. This is true in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity. We look to the adults in

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our lives to confirm or deny our attitudes towards sex, race, and how those demographics impact us. This shows itself in our tendency to choose friends that are similar to us and to believe that we are unable to do certain things because of our race or sex. If we are never shown that we can break any and all molds, we may unwittingly form ideas about ourselves and others that are difficult to change. Experiences in our early life can lead to "imposter syndrome," which is "what happens when you start believing what an unjust society says about you."

Imposter syndrome is very common among girls and women, especially those of color, but it can develop in anyone who seeks to break barriers and enters "unfamiliar territory." It subconsciously gives you a sense that you don't belong and that you don't deserve the success you have achieved. Imposter syndrome pops up when you get a promotion that you feel you aren't qualified for or someone compliments your work and you can't take it at face value. It constantly whispers, "one day, they're going to realize I'm not as great as they think I am."

Imposter syndrome can "severely undermine your aspirations." Achievement requires risk taking. You cannot take those risks if you don't have faith in yourself and your abilities. Through education and hard work you may acquire a wealth of skills and knowledge, but it means nothing if you don't have the confidence to apply them. The good news is that you can overcome the limitations of imposter syndrome. Here's how:

Step One: Understand that you are not alone. Countless "accomplished people" feel like imposters. If they can find a way around it, so can you!

Step Two: Become aware of the "critical and self-doubting" voice inside your head that tells you that you cannot do something. Understand that this voice is not speaking the truth. Don't believe the false narrative those voices create.

Step Three: Learn to take compliments and wins at face value. When someone recognizes your worth in the form of a promotion or praise, understand that it is happening "because you deserve it."

Step Four: In all things, "adopt a "fake it 'til you make it" mentality." This will help you project confidence, even when you feel anything but confident. Put your game face on and know that over time, you will know what you are doing and won't have to fake it anymore.

## Sticking to the Plan, One Choice at a Time

One major misstep that is made by so many of us is the failure to devise a plan for reaching our goals. Knowing where you want to end up is a huge step in the right direction but without a clear plan on how to get there, you will likely end up lost along the way. Archambeau recommends making conscious, strategic choices that align with your goals to bring you ever closer to realizing them. A logical, fully thought out plan can serve as the guide when presented with a decision to go in one direction or the other. This recurring need to make a choice means trading short-term gratification for a far greater future success, and it pays greatly.

One way to ensure that you make choices that are in line with your goals is to not flounder on your own. When you need help or are faced with uncertainty, reach out to those who can provide support. If you are struggling with a concept in school, ask your professor for clarification. If you are unsure what role or area of work you would like to pursue in your career, talk to people who are already in those roles to see what the job really looks like day to day. Archambeau urges us not to "struggle in silence." It gets us further away from our goals and reflects a lack of strategy.

Women are especially vulnerable to perceive the act of asking for help as cheating. It is not cheating and it does not make us inadequate. Archambeau says that she has "known many women who have gotten stuck in their careers because they were unable to master a skill they could have delegated, unwilling to delegate a task someone else could do, or unwilling to seek guidance when they needed it." Don't make the same mistake.

Another way to support conscious decision making is to foster self determination in yourself. Archambeau defines self-assurance as "the ability to say yes to yourself when most people around you are saying no. It's the power of believing in your own ability to make choices about your life–and not just to make choices, but to make them responsibly." Self assurance allows us to make the sometimes surprising discovery that our potential is always greater than we once imagined. We can foster this in ourselves by fulfilling needs in the three psychological areas of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Competence has to do with the ability to handle yourself, navigating familiar situations with a degree of confidence and skill. Autonomy is living with the sense that you are in control of your own destiny and the knowledge that the choices you make impact your life and your interests directly. Relatedness is about feeling like you have a place in the world and that you fit in with others. A deficiency in any of these areas means "you'll be more likely to struggle or withdraw from challenges." On the other hand, developing yourself in these areas leaves you more "prepared to set your own life goals and reach them."

There will be times when you will not want to make the choice that you know you must make in order to stick to your plan. These will be difficult and trying times. Archambeau shares that long before she even became pregnant with her first child, she planned to take five weeks maternity leave and get back to work and the path she laid out to become a CEO. However, as the clock wound down on those five weeks she found the prospect of leaving her baby at home almost impossible to bear. But she put her faith in the plan and reminded herself that she had to trust it. She and her husband had "strategized in accordance with her ambition" and when she remembered that, it helped her get back on track. When the trade off is viewed as a conscious choice rather than a sacrifice, it makes all the difference.

> The roles in your personal life will never be fully separate from your roles at work."

## Forget "Work/Life Balance"

Archambeau plainly states that she is not a big fan of the phrase, "work/life balance." In fact, she "hates it." Here's why. The word balance "implies a fixed equilibrium" like the scale of justice with only two sides. Life is much more complicated than that. If balance is the metric we use, we are "bound to feel like we're failing." "We need a different metaphor" that accounts for "all the overlapping responsibilities of career, family relationships, friendships, self-care" and any other facets or circumstances particular to our particular life. Archambeau prefers to use "work/life integration" instead, which is more inclusive and descriptive of reality.

To make life work, we don't "put on one hat and take off another." We wear all the hats, all the time. The roles in your personal life will never be fully separate from your roles at work. Shellye Archambeau is a wife, CEO, mom, friend, volunteer, mentor, mentee, and more all at the same time. Finding a way to integrate those various roles into one meaningful, workable life is the goal.

In order to achieve that integration, you must explore all options. Ask things like, "Where can you make room for the things that are currently a priority? Who can help you get it done? How can you accomplish multiple things in one action?" Striving for balance is limiting while aiming for integration is empowering.

## Top Five Tips for Improving Your Odds

Archambeau believes that anyone can get what they want if they strategize and follow their plan. That being said, she fully recognizes that the hill is inherently steeper for some of us than others. Opportunities for women and minorities have improved immensely since she was starting out, but the comparative odds of success are still not that great. In order to increase your chance of success, follow the five tips she says are her "best advice for improving your odds."

1. Find Your Mentors: "Mentoring is one of the best ways to improve your career progress and opportunities." Unfortunately, most of us go about it the wrong way. Traditionally, mentoring is a formalized process. The mentee asks a potential mentor if they will serve in the role and if the mentor has the time and desire, they accept. Mentor and mentee meet infrequently and frankly, nothing much comes out of the relationship. Archambeau has a secret. She found the most meaningful mentors by skipping the formalities and instead, simply "adopted them, treating them like a mentor without ever formally asking."

2. Build Your Network: People who network achieve higher levels of career success. Your first network may very well be your own family and you should lean on them and get as much support as possible. Your friends, colleagues, community groups, and online connections are all part of the network you already have. Continue growing that network, always looking for opportunities to connect with others, and you will soon have a vast pool of contacts to leverage when you need help.

3. Find the Current: Wherever you aim to end up, there is a clear and flowing current that will take you to that place. When Archambeau decided she wanted to be a CEO, she investigated how the power flowed to that position. Once the current is identified, you can jump into it and allow it to propel you forward. "Sail past the opportunities that will lead you into the weeds and take the opportunities that will move you toward your goals."

4. Take Risks: Regardless of the path you choose, you are going to encounter risks along the way. If you attempt to avoid risks all together, your opportunities will be limited. No doubt you've heard that with great risk comes great rewards. This is true with your ambitions as well. That doesn't mean risks should be taken lightly or jumped into blindly. In order to turn risks into rewards and not mistakes make sure you have that support system in place, trust yourself, and measure your fears against facts.

5. Plan Your Life: You have a long life ahead of you. You've got to plan for the big picture goals you have or you will never achieve them. Archambeau recommends taking a hard look at five major areas in your life and making a plan for how you want them to play out. Those areas include "getting your first job, marriage or partnership, career planning, having children, and long-term life plans."

Anyone who finds themselves grappling with what to study in school or how to forge a path towards an audacious goal, who are eager to climb the corporate ladder or looking to change directions midstream will find Archambeau's book an invaluable resource. Centered around her family and personal experience, the book reads more like a conversation between mentor and mentee than a guide on goal achievement. Her advice is delivered candidly but in a heartfelt way, convincing readers that she really cares about what happens to them, believes that they can do anything, and understands the hurdles they will face on the journey.

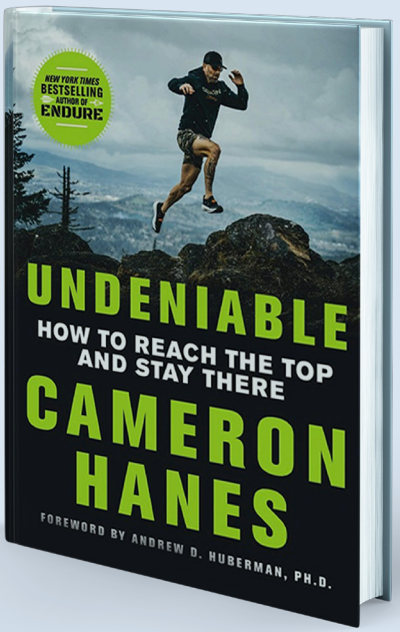
As one of the very first African American tech CEOs in America, she understands better than most people how to swerve around obstacles and not let anything stand in your way. Archambeau's unique voice is an important one to hear, especially for young women and minorities that aim to blast their way into a more inclusive future.

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# Undeniable

Cameron Hanes

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Undeniable

**How to Reach the Top and Stay There**

*By Cameron Hanes*

Cameron Hanes is a passionate bowhunter who dedicates himself year-round to preparing for the physical and mental challenges of hunting in the remote wildernesses of the West and Alaska. He shoots his bow daily, trains in the gym seven days a week, and runs 200+ mile ultramarathons in the off-season to push his limits in pursuit of becoming the "Ultimate Predator"—a goal he acknowledges is unattainable but drives his relentless effort. Known for his intense discipline, Cameron has inspired millions through his writings, TV appearances, and social media.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Undeniable Grit, Unmatched Results

Cameron Hanes is a bowhunter who prides himself on facing the toughest challenges he can find. Every day he is committed to shooting, running, and lifting in order to become the best he can. He started running and lifting to help him with his hunting as hunting the toughest terrains and predators on the planet takes significant stamina and strength. He has come to realize that becoming the best and doing what most others think is impossible is not as much about innate ability as it is about being able to withstand pain in service of a greater good. In his book, ***Undeniable: How to Reach the Top and Stay There***, he tells his own story as well as that of other people he deems undeniable, those whose success and determination cannot be denied. In his ten chapters, he tells the stories of these individuals as he illuminates key lessons that can be of use to readers and to anyone in search of greatness in any arena.

## The Value of Suffering

In his first chapter, Hanes discusses resilience. Suffering is inevitable, he writes. Hanes believes that part of his success can very well be attributed to the fact that he is "good at suffering." He has lived through difficult circumstances including the divorce of his parents as a child. Chris Williamson, one of the people Hanes spoke with, had a similarly difficult time as a child. Williamson was teased at school and was bullied. Hanes quotes him as saying, "Most of the high performers that I know about are coming from a place of insufficiency… They're trying to prove something to that parent, that teacher, that bully, that group of friends or whoever from their childhood that they actually are worthy of love or praise or acceptance or admiration." Suffering will happen in everyone's life. Hanes believes that the best way to prepare for these unplanned sufferings is to choose your own suffering.

Balance is a popular phrase in culture today, and it is often extolled as being a virtue that leads to peace and contentment. Hanes questions the worship of balance, however. Discussing people who exercise and also indulge in sweets in the name of balance, Hanes notes how these people are quite different from undeniable people. Undeniable people will not reach the

heights they do by putting balance above all else. Additionally, he does not know if peace can be found with balance, at least not for him. Hanes does not feel peace when he is not pushing himself. For example, he writes "I have a hard time sleeping because I'm like, 'I should be putting in miles, doing work. I'm wasting time sleeping.'" He likes ending his days physically exhausted. His efforts do not go unrewarded in part because they are what prepare him for extreme adventure hunts. He writes, "We put ourselves in those positions over and over and over again. Places of pain and pressure. Moments where we felt miserable. Hours of being on our own." Suffering, for Hanes, comes with a reward.

## Determination and Focus

Hanes turns to determination which becomes crucial when obstacles present themselves. Those who become undeniable choose to do more than anyone else they know or know of. Hanes writes about Nedd Brockman who decided as a young adult to run "50 marathons in 50 days" to raise money to help those living in poverty. Brockman could not see any reason why he could not do this even though a doctor called him and told him that both he and the medical professionals he spoke with said this is an impossible feat. Brockman remained undeterred, telling Hanes that "There are always people who say you can't do that because they put their own limits on it." Not only was Brockman able to complete his 50-day streak of marathons, but he did it while continuing to work his job as an electrician. He believes he thrives when he has made up his mind to do something, and his plan is always simply to "find a way." This is the same lesson Hanes has learned bowhunting, writing "One thing I have learned over the years is that successful bowhunting is more about overcoming obstacles than anything else."

Along with determination, focus is important both in bowhunting as well as in performing any high level feat and in living an undeniable life. Bowhunting is a high pressure sport. It is about performing at your best during the most difficult of circumstances. Because of this, Hanes has learned to incorporate distractions into his training to best learn how to perform during crunch time. For example, he sometimes shoots through his truck window so he can better learn to eliminate distractions. Another high pressure situation he put himself in was to cut the ribbon of a Cabela store that was opening up in his hometown. There would be thousands of people there, and it would also be televised. While this is not a particularly difficult shot, he knows that people miss easy shots all the time especially when under the effects of adrenaline. This is not just in bowhunting, as Hanes explains that most basketball players would prefer to try to make a game-winning shot during normal game play than from the free throw line because of the pressure the free throw line presents.

While Hanes admits that not all people desire to become undeniable, he says that those who do "have to force [themselves] to focus under extreme pressure." Fear, Hanes states, is often the biggest deterrent to focus, and as such, high performers must learn to overcome their fears if they want to perform at elite levels. One of the best ways to overcome fear is through preparation. Not every element can be controlled for, but Hanes always tries to prepare for any obstacles he can anticipate. This allows him to focus when the time comes for performance. The good thing about focus is that it gives people a place to put their energy.

## Consistency and Discipline

While determination and focus are crucial aspects of success, consistency is of equal value. Hanes defines this trait "as the quality or fact of staying the same at different times." Hanes spoke with Joe Rogan on the latter's podcast, *The Joe Rogan Experience*. Hanes told Rogan that his daily routine is to "Lift, Run, Shoot." Hanes went on to explain that this is his routine seven days a week. He does not take any days off including Sundays.

Hanes tells the story of Nick Bare. He was an average athlete growing up and while he suffered at a young age from an eating disorder, he was able to overcome that and enter the Army. When he left the Army, he solidly claimed that he would never again run another day in his life. Surprisingly to him, however, he came to see that he missed running. Eventually he came to run 100-mile races. He credits part of his success with something that happened to him while he was training for a marathon. He was eighteen miles into the training when he started to question everything he was doing. He was suffering. He chose to continue going because, in his mind, if he quit on this, then he would have nothing to stop him from quitting in other areas of his life. This led to his motto of "one more" because after he finished that difficult eighteenth mile, he was able to successfully finish his training. For Bare, making a decision and sticking to that goal is the key to success. Courtney Dauwalter who competes in Tough Mudder echoes this sentiment when she tells Hanes, "It's tiny, consistent blocks that you're adding, or grains of sand on the pile. Like you're just putting one more grain on there, one more tiny block each day, but that consistency is a huge thing." She goes on to say that someone pursuing the goal of running five miles should not start out trying to run five miles but rather should start out simply by running around the block. The grains of sand add up over time.

Any undeniable person must have discipline. In his chapter on discipline, Hanes specifically writes about self-discipline. Part of this self-discipline is being able to avoid sabotaging oneself and undoing hard work through poor choices, specifically regarding food and drink. Many of the outliers Hanes spoke with had to overcome addictions of various kinds. Hanes quotes Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Not Taken," when he writes, "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood." Hanes believes that we all come to a "fork in the road, where we face having to choose which path to take."

At one point in his life, Hanes life motto was "same shit, different day." When he was seventeen, he found himself sleeping wherever he could when his mom, stepdad, and siblings moved away, but he chose to stay in Oregon. While he had different living situations over the next few years, his low self-esteem combined with his low ambitions and expectations did not take him far. He drank frequently. He hit a low point after crashing his truck, and it is then that he realized he could either choose

> *Evergreen companies are concerned with Pragmatic Innovation. They seek continuous improvement."*

the trailer park or the mountains. He says that all of the outliers he spoke with faced a similar fork in the road. "Sometimes to be undeniable, you have to choose to *deny yourself* of something," he writes. He no longer drinks any alcohol because it will affect his training. Hanes ends his chapter writing, "Whatever talent you have – and we all have some untapped talent inside of us – if you don't sacrifice, then you won't reach your full potential. That's what they call wasted potential. Don't ever live with that."

## Confidence and Tenacity

Confidence is "a feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities." Hanes knows the importance of confidence. He has had to have confidence in himself in his bow hunting and also in his more public work and when working with brands. He tells the story of one time his confidence paid off for him. He had been working with the brand Under Armour for a while. Up until 2018 he had been going bowhunting, and then the film about that hunt would come out months later. He did not want to work with this model anymore. Instead, he wanted crews to accompany him on his hunts so that he could post one-minute clips on his social media every day to show his followers what he is doing. He truly believed in this vision of his, so he was adamant to make it happen regardless of the difficulties inherent in it. Under Armour agreed. The task was without challenges and a significant expense, but in the end it was worth it as the film that came of it, *Cam's Bull of a Lifetime*, "is the second most popular video on [his] YouTube page, with over four million views." "Success, confidence, self-belief – it's a mindset. You have to find it in the morning and carry it up the daily mountain," Hanes writes.

Confidence must be combined with tenacity, "the quality displayed by someone who just won't quit – who keeps trying until they reach their goal." Hanes opens his chapter about tenacity by discussing a commercial he did for Under Armor in which he had to face a snarling wolf. The filmmakers told him that this 11-year-old wolf had been trained since it was five weeks old. In order to get the wolf to look fierce and to snarl, they had to give it meat multiple times and then take it away. Hanes was warned that the wolf could not be used in any other capacity the rest of the day because it would remain too angry. Hanes saw a lesson in this, writing that even after all that training, "he was still a wolf. He still had that tenacious heart beating inside of him."

Hanes then describes MMA and UFC fighter, Michael Chandler, as "an example of tenacity in action." Chandler did not always have the confidence to act with tenacity, however. When he was younger, he was a walk-on to the wrestling team at the University of Missouri. He worked harder than everybody else on the team, but he never truly believed he deserved success. His outcomes matched with his belief in himself, and he eventually came to believe that he would have to believe in himself if he was to ever succeed. Chandler knows that he may always suffer with confidence even though he has proved himself to be undeniable, but he believes that "everybody has something that they need to work on. Everybody has these doubts and fears and insecurities." Hanes ends his chapter by writing that he is the person that he always wants to beat. He does what he does for himself.

## Passion, Toughness, and Purpose

Passion is key to success at very high levels. Hanes writes about neuroscientist, Dr. Andrew Huberman. One night Huberman gave a talk at the University of Oregon that over 500 people attended. Hanes finds it shocking that this many people attended a talk given by a scientist. Huberman is known for his podcast *Huberman Lab* and is a celebrity of sorts. Huberman always loved learning from a very young age. He often got teased because of just how invested he was in his interests and the degree to which he spoke about them. He struggled in his teen years after his parents divorced, and he admits to having bad attitudes in college. He was bitter that teachers were not able to instill an excitement in him about what he was learning, but one day he decided that he was going to do what needed to be done even if he did not have the most amazing professors, going so far as to memorize textbooks. He earned his Ph.D. and became a Stanford professor in Neurobiology. It took Huberman decades to get to where he is right now, but he learned that he is capable of doing hard things. Huberman was lucky in that he found his passion when he was young. The key is to find that passion and to be intentional about following it.

When writing about toughness, Hanes uses the phrase "Roy Tough: Unable to be broken; able to endure hardships and misery for reward." The Roy that Hanes is referring to is his deceased friend Roy Roth. Hanes tells the story of when he and Roth were out on Kodiak Island. They were in a tent after hunting very difficult terrain for twelve days and were thinking about their successful trip and discussing what they would eat when they returned home. They wanted pizza and cheeseburgers. Suddenly Roth realized that he still had a deer tag, and he was determined to stay, saying that a hamburger was not worth leaving when he had the tag. "Roy was committed to *more success* and willing to stay in the wild of Kodiak Island alone to achieve it. The next day Roy ended up arrowing his biggest buck." Hunting in Alaska is significantly more difficult than hunting in the lower 48 is, and according to Hanes, Alaskan Roth "set the bar for toughness."

The last principle Hanes writes about is purpose. He believes that to truly live an undeniable life, a person must have a purpose and must be willing to accept criticism if others disagree with that purpose because it is purpose that gives everything in life meaning. Hanes's life and career has not been without its critics. He finds people even criticize the attention he brings to bowhunting as these people wish the world of bowhunting to remain smaller. Hanes does not agree with them. After all, if nobody had ever introduced him to the world of bowhunting, where would he be? He wants to spread love of the sport that has made such an impact on his life.

One person Hanes respects greatly for her sense of purpose is Hawaiian Tulsi Gabbard who is a veteran, former US representative, and former presidential candidate. Gabbard began working for a better world as a teenager when a landfill was proposed "over one of the largest water aquifers on the island." She formed a nonprofit to fight this landfill, and she continued to serve her community in different capacities throughout her life, always inspired by a desire to serve God and to serve others. She eventually joined the world of politics, but this was never her ambition; it just seemed to her to be the best way at that time to serve people. Of her faith she says, "It's everything. I draw strength and clarity and courage." Every day she prays to God to help her be of service to others. This faith and her desire to be of service helps her when she faces inevitable criticism. This keeps her focused because her happiness derives from her service, not from the approval of others.

Hanes book, *Undeniable: How to Reach the Top and Stay There*, is one of inspiration. It tells story after story of people who were able to complete the seemingly impossible. These people are willing to submit themselves daily to suffering and to sometimes overwhelming obstacles so they know that they have done what very few or any other people can do. While Hanes believes that anybody is capable of undeniable success, he notes that there are key attributes and mindsets that the truly undeniable carry, and these are the attributes he illustrates in his book. This is not a how-to book of simple principles for success. Rather Hanes shows his readers how people achieve true success through his own gift of storytelling. This book leaves the reader with all the inspiration they need to go about achieving their own wildest dreams, to become undeniable, and to never shrink in the face of an obstacle.

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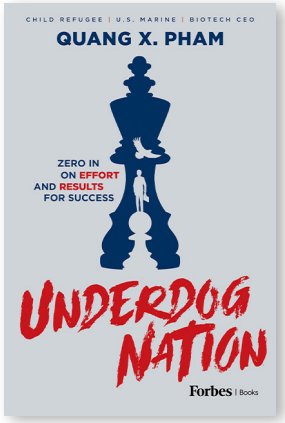
# Underdog Nation

Quang X. Pham

Executive Book Summaries®

# Underdog Nation

## Zero In on Effort and Results for Success




*by* **Quang X. Pham**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

How do you reach success? Do you have to work hard? Or do you have to get lucky?

None of these. What you need is the underdog approach.

In his book ***Underdog Nation: Zero In on Effort and Results for Success***, Quang X. Pham uses his own extraordinary life story to show how the underdog approach works: by putting in the effort and analyzing the results.

Following this concept helped Pham move from Vietnamese refugee to pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps, to founder of Cadrenal Therapeutics, one of the most successful biotech startups in recent years.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Discover the underdog formula for success
- Understand how building your success is similar to an airplane's approach to landing
- Learn how to analyze and accept your past identities
- Find out how to turn failure into a source of future success

## Introduction

When I look back at my life, from the decisions my parents made to leave Vietnam, to my choice to join the Marines, to my choice to go into pharmaceutical sales, to my choice to become an entrepreneur, I see that two simple ideas have always been at play: Effort and Results. ER. And going back to the ER.

Look at any underdog, and this has also been their approach. They put in the effort. They looked at the results. And then they adjusted their efforts until they finally achieved the results they wanted.

Being an underdog means people don't expect much from you— certainly not a success story. Most people want to back the top dog. So I'll let you in on a little secret: Don't try to be like most people. Be your underdog self.

### Chapter 1: Start with Success

Life has taught me that your best approach is often to start by assuming success. This may sound counterintuitive, but underdogs go into the fight assuming success.

Your first step in success is to define success first. If you let others define success for you, it becomes a moving target. You will either never hit it, or even if you do, it will never bring you the satisfaction promised.

What sets underdogs apart from everyone else is their willingness to take action and risk.

Therefore, the framework is what I call the underdog approach. And rather than complicate success, it relies on the simple equation:

Success = Effort x Results3

In the equation of success, we have to face the fact that there is a clear relationship between your effort and your decisions. Good effort alone is not enough. It's about the right effort.

Let's not pretend this means everything magically works out. Without results, it doesn't matter how much effort you pour in. The math has to add up.

Where you lack experience, you can turn to the people you admire who are ten steps ahead of you: the Admirables. They're the people you admire specifically because they embody a version of the success you have defined.

### Chapter 2: Coincidence of Destiny

When you're facing a sudden disruptive change you have to think on your feet and adapt. Adaptation is rooted in survival. No one adapts in the midst of a comfortable environment. So when coincidence comes your way and disrupts the status quo, you have to make a choice.

Once you adapt, only then do you have the chance to adopt. And that means to assimilate. With adoption, you start making choices not from a necessity to survive, but from the opportunity to thrive.

A thriver never wants a handout. You thrive through your efforts. You have to adopt the attitude and behaviors that will get you there, even when others might not understand, especially those who look and talk like you.

Opportunities will come along if you put in the effort and results for the destination you want. But it will require some discomfort. It will require you to integrate yourself into the right environment around the right people.

The secret to integration is that you need to be a little bit of an outsider and an insider. If you're already an outsider, then you have to accept the norms, expectations, and the creed of the society or organization you find yourself in. You can't make changes as an outsider. Only insiders can do that. Changes come within.

Yet you have to maintain enough of your outsider's perspective to see the challenges that need to be fixed. Otherwise, you will sink to the status quo. As an outsider-insider, you can set yourself apart—and know when to pivot.

## Avenue of Approach 1 Commit

### Chapter 3: Love What You Do Until You Can Do What You Love

Maybe you're reading this book because you feel stuck or jaded. The first action you have to take is to heighten your self-awareness. Wherever you are now, you have to make the best of it. Right or wrong, you make a decision. You take yourself to the ER and pivot as needed. And you commit to excellence until you reach your jumping-off point.

What if you don't have a jumping-off point determined yet? What should you do if you realize you're on the wrong track? Maybe you feel like you have no options, but you actually do. Start identifying the skills you want to grow in. Even when you are making an industry or career shift, there are skills in every job that you can transfer over to the next role.

You need to feel like you're contributing to the success of

Several underdog strategies can help you love what you do until you can do what you love.

the organization, even when you know it's not forever. Because the success you have there will be the building blocks for your destination.

Several underdog strategies can help you love what you do until you can do what you love.

The first is time management. It's human nature to do the easiest tasks first, but underdogs fight that nature. They do the most important stuff first. When you prioritize the most important tasks, you're aligning your efforts to your results.

The second strategy is to build a rationale around every task. Even when you don't see how the skill could possibly help you in the future, create a reason.

The third strategy is to aim high. When people jeer at you for aiming high, look for the ones who cheer. Find your supporters.

### Chapter 4: Individual Accountability

Teamwork doesn't happen if the members of the team don't take individual accountability for their role within the team. There is a responsibility to do your best because if you don't, you're not only letting yourself down, but you're negatively impacting everyone else around you.

Individual accountability doesn't happen without emotion. You have to actually care about the outcome. When emotion is missing, then the work is an obligation, not a calling. Only when you have a sense of individual accountability can you take responsibility.

Practice taking responsibility even when there is no immediate payoff for doing so.

In some ways, success and failure should be treated the same. If you take all the credit in success, then you should do the same with failure. The problem is that when failure happens, many people are prone to play the blame game.

Overcoming the blame game is a personal choice. It starts by taking yourself to the ER—recognizing how your efforts created the results you see.

When the results are what you hoped for, take accountability by making a plan to repeat the success. When the results are not what you hoped for, take accountability for your failings so you can improve upon them.

The power of failure is how it gives you the chance to make accidental discoveries. Failure helps transform coincidences into destiny. When you have your clear definition of success, you can recalibrate your effort and results no matter how many failures or rejections you encounter.

### Chapter 5: Be Ready When Your Number Is Called

One of the great underdog stories of all time is that of the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" Olympic hockey team who bested the Soviet Union—a team who had gone undefeated in the Olympic Games since 1968.

Coach Herb Brooks's goal for the team was simple—he wanted the U.S. to be the best-conditioned team on the ice. This belief is reflected in two of his most famous quotes:

- "Success is won by those who believe in winning and then prepare for that moment."
- "Great moments are born from great opportunities."

You can't say it better than that. When you prepare, great opportunities and great moments follow. None of us can control the timing of the opportunity, but we can control the preparation piece of the equation through our efforts.

So the real question we all must answer is "Will you be ready when your number is called?"

Many people believe they are prepared. The problem is that they are indeed preparing and putting in the effort, but all for the wrong purposes. Or without any purpose at all. This leads only to burnout, frustration, and all too often, hopelessness.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Take yourself to the ER. The power of preparation comes full force when seen through the lens of effort and results.

So much of preparation is about developing confidence, not

only in yourself but in others. The wonderful thing about confidence is that you can build it at any time from wherever you are. You have the internet at your disposal to develop your credentials within your industry, network with the people you want in your circle, and develop your reputation.

## Avenue of Approach 2 Confront

### Chapter 6: Identifying Barriers

Everyone's emotional barriers look different. And it's human nature to bury them, to want to hide your cards from the world. But you can't play the game if you're not willing to put the cards down in front of people.

The most difficult barrier is when you're in a situation with no obvious course correction to take. This could include being let go from a job—maybe even your dream job. That's when you'll have to do the most difficult task of all—facing your emotional triggers.

Unresolved personal issues will become triggers, and they can be set off in the most unexpected ways.

To deal with your own emotional triggers, you have to be highly cognizant of your past identities. This is true in any field, whether you're a military veteran entering the private sector, a teacher transitioning into owning a business, or a professional athlete leaving the game. Those past identities are part of your story and your glory, but if you don't become aware of the emotional triggers attached to them, they will hold you back from the new identity you need to form.

As much as is humanly possible, take the time to identify your emotional triggers. Think back to the times when you experienced fight, flight, or freeze. What happened? By revisiting those moments from a safe distance, you can gain some perspective and be better prepared for the next time they come around.

The greatest barrier facing any of us doesn't look like a barrier. Complacency. And the greatest danger with complacency is that it can reverse success.

Complacency skews your efforts. It tells you that you're already doing enough. It tells you that you don't need to learn anything new.

And on all counts, it's wrong. Complacency will undo all your effort and results. It will pull you into self-sabotage mode and make you vulnerable to both internal and external threats.

Your ultimate enemy isn't a toxic boss, lack of opportunity, or competition. It's complacency. And no one can fight it for you. You alone have to confront it.

### Chapter 7: Clearing the Path

People like to say, "Leave the past in the past. Move on. Don't reopen old wounds." The problem is that the advice fails to acknowledge how the past can be a cage. And no amount of looking forward will get you out of the cage. What you need is the key. Only then can you move forward.

Though it sounds counterintuitive, sometimes you need the emotional trigger to spur you on to find closure. At some point, you will have to confront your past. You cannot avoid it forever.

When you look back at your professional journey thus far, you likely have regrets. In all of these, finding closure can help you create your next opportunity. You can rise again like a phoenix.

Everything described here requires immense mental stamina. Mental stamina is about knowing when you're feeling out of whack. It is forward thinking to fight complacency. Just like with a long-distance race, you don't build up mental stamina overnight. It's a process. The more situations where you have to be mentally tough, the more resilience you develop, the more stamina. You'll be more prepared for the journey ahead.

## Avenue of Approach 3 Course Correct

### Chapter 8: From Loser to Winner

My first sense of being a loser happened at my first Little League baseball game. A fly ball sped toward me, I missed the catch in the lights, and the ball struck me so hard in the chest it knocked me to the ground.

Everyone laughed. Being laughed at made me extremely uncomfortable. I took it as a challenge. In my mind, I said, Let me show you, and I dedicated my efforts to learning everything I could about baseball.

By the next spring, the story had changed. At our first practice game, I was the lead-off batter—and hit a homer over left field.

But I've also experienced going from winner to loser. You can still be a winner, even in the midst of a failure. But it starts with a decision to course correct by finishing what you start.

It sounds ridiculous to be grateful for failure. But if failure teaches you to be more dedicated, then it becomes a source for gratitude.

Despite your best efforts, the results still may not be what you hoped for. When that happens, you can still course correct. Choose to see failure as an asset. It creates a brand of motivation that perpetual winning can never do. And that's why underdogs are so powerful—because they have learned how to course correct by redefining success. But also by redefining failure.

The psychology behind failure is fascinating. Many athletes have spoken about being more motivated by the fear of failure than the desire of winning. Failure allows you to course correct rather than become a part of your identity. Never let failure define you. Redefine failure as something to be grateful for.

It sounds ridiculous to be grateful for failure. But if failure teaches you to be more dedicated, then it becomes a source for gratitude.

Gratitude is always aligned with ownership. It's impossible to be grateful for something that isn't yours. When you have personal ownership in the failure or success of a business, it becomes much more difficult to drop out. You're far more grateful for what you create.

### Chapter 9: Overcoming the Darkest Days

You don't get to quit the darkest days when they come. You don't get to quit difficulty or setbacks. We all have to face them.

The darkest days don't have to define you, but they are pivotal. What matters most is the next step. How do you overcome the darkest days? What are the course corrections you have to make after defeat?

Most people are "on the fence people." They have no strategic plan for their lives, so they straddle. That's the beauty of the darkest days—they push you off the fence. Once you fall, then you have the choice to get up. You have the choice of resilience.

What do you do when the darkest days involve defeat? You'll find three paths to take on the other side of defeat:

PATH 1: DROPPING OUT

These are the people who live in the "if only …" for the rest of their lives. Instead of going to the ER by looking at their effort and results, they abandon the course altogether. They live in a state of victimhood and blame everything and everyone for their lack of success.

PATH 2: RETURN TO STATUS QUO

The people who return to the status quo do so because they would rather live with the devil they know than face the unknown. The problem is that the status quo becomes comfortable, and once you're comfortable, you can become complacent.

PATH 3: DIG DEEPER

The third path is for the underdogs. These are the people who learn from their defeat, go to the ER to analyze their effort and results, and then make the proper adjustments. They are digging deeper to unleash their underdog energy.

You'll find two types of persistence in the world—intelligent and unintelligent. Intelligent persistence pivots on what the right efforts are, not always what the most logical or smartest efforts would be. But you can't know what that is if you haven't defined success through the lens of your purpose and values.

## Avenue of Approach 4 Build Credibility

### Chapter 10: Establishing Professional Credibility

Credibility is only developed one way—through action. People must be able to see the proof.

Yet this is a major gap for many driven individuals. They believe they are ready for the next step and yet they have not put in the work to establish their credibility through actions.

But how do you start filling the credibility gap? When possible, you can solve the experience problem by being ready when your number is called. You never know when the opportunity will come, so be prepared by doing the extra.

When you don't have much experience yet, then use the experience you do have to compensate.

What you know is important. But who you know is invaluable. When you have a credibility gap, then one of the best solutions is to borrow someone else's credibility. Consider what happens when you provide a potential employer with your list of references.

In today's digital world, it's never been easier—or more important—to network. Your online profile isn't just a digital résumé for people to stumble across—it's your strategic credibility builder.

Not everyone is going to believe in you. That's good. When people don't believe in you, your inner underdog thrives. And criticism, when filtered correctly, helps you close your credibility gaps.

We all make mistakes, so when criticism comes along, assess whether there is a gap you haven't filled yet. Is there some area where you need to improve more than others? This type of criticism is valuable because it helps you find those blind spots and address them faster. When you close that gap, you only become more credible.

Likewise, no one can perfectly avoid all conflict. Nor should you. Conflict serves to make you stronger. The right amount of conflict helps expose the gaps and develop both your credibility and the company's credibility.

### Chapter 11: Navigating Your Identity

Much of life finds you navigating between identities, and it's not uncommon that you reach a crossroads where two identities come into conflict with one another—and you have a choice to make. Most people passively take whatever identity is put upon them. Underdogs fight for their identity.

If you allow others to shape your identity, then you also allow them and the environment to define success for you. But no one else can tell you who you are—or who you will be.

Think for a second about your definition of success. Envision your future self. What is the gap between your identity now and this future identity?

You can't build your future without proving yourself in the present. And you can't prove yourself in the present by only relying on the past. Reshaping your identity doesn't mean you eradicate who you were. Rather, your old identity becomes the building blocks for who you need to be now and in the future.

### Chapter 12: Aligning Personal Purpose and Company Mission

According to research, only 9 percent of New Year resolution makers can say they stuck with them. To become part of the 9 percent of underdogs who succeed with their goals, you must have purpose.

In my experience, purpose is a choice. Whether you're in leadership or not, you always have the choice to set personal goals that complement the organization's objectives.

Throughout your professional journey, you need to regularly revisit your personal purpose and how it complements the mission and purpose of the organization you're working for. Don't allow misalignment to go unchecked. Recognize it early and take proactive steps to either close the gap through your efforts— or when necessary, to seek out the environment with a mission more closely aligned to your purpose. Remaining in misalignment is a one-way ticket to burnout and missing your next opportunity.

## Conclusion: The ER Approach in Action

The beauty of the Effort and Results approach is you only need the honesty and accountability to take ownership of your effort and results. When that is paired with purpose and commitment, then you will unleash the underdog within.

In a world where most people settle for lives shaped by chance and complacency, commit to being the underdog. Zero in on your effort and results, and success will follow. Because there are no losers in the Underdog Nation.



**Quang X. Pham** has been a war child refugee, a combat Marine veteran, top-producing biotech salesman, and successful serial entrepreneur. As a perpetual underdog, he is the first American of Vietnamese heritage to become a US Marine aviator and lead a biotech IPO on Nasdaq (CVKD)— Cadrenal Therapeutics, a biopharmaceutical company developing tecarfarin, a novel blood thinner for patients with rare cardiovascular conditions. He is also the author of A Sense of Duty: Our Journey from Vietnam to America and has received the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year® award.

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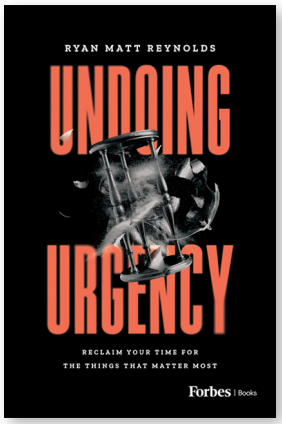
# Undoing Urgency

Ryan Matt Reynolds

Executive Book Summaries®

# Undoing Urgency

## Reclaim Your Time for the Things that Matter Most




*by* **Ryan Matt Reynolds**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Hemingway wrote using a technique that has come to be known as the iceberg principle, in which characters' words and actions—everything observable to the reader, above the surface—allude to deeper thoughts, feelings, and motivations that the author leaves mostly unsaid. People are much better at concealing the anxieties, stresses, and struggles that lie beneath the surface, at least until those things threaten to pull them under completely.

In ***Undoing Urgency: Reclaim Your Time for the Things That Matter Most,*** Ryan Matt Reynolds teaches readers how to handle those stresses and fears that bring people down. Many times, people are the ones holding themselves back. With this guide, readers can distinguish what is holding them back and how to fix it. The book helps people discover their core values and how those feed into their priorities. Setting long and short-term goals can be easy with a clear plan and can help everybody reach their potential.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY:

- Discover what is holding people back in being successful.
- Create core values to help drive yourself.
- Set long-term and short-term goals to reach your potential.
- Learn about action items and how to create them to maximize your time with minimal effort.

# Part 1: Drowning

## Undue Urgency

Status is the perception one has of himself or others, which may be founded or unfounded. Value is mostly built when no one is looking.

Urgency is an emotional response to high stakes, a ticking clock, and the fear of losing. Like fight-or-flight, urgency can be a good thing. It can motivate people to take action when action is needed. Without a plan to deal with it, urgency can become all-consuming. Undoing urgency can change how you spend your time and the return on your efforts by letting you focus on what truly matters most.

## Don't Prioritize, Deprioritize

Rather than confront the culture of busyness, we've turned it into a status symbol, where the picture of success usually means someone who "has no life." Successful people are often busy people, but busyness does not equal value, even if we think it makes us look important.

THE EISENHOWER MATRIX

Without practice, most people do not automatically distinguish between the urgent stuff that makes us busy and the important stuff that adds value to their lives. The Eisenhower Decision Matrix removes personal whims from the process by helping classify every task on our list. It's a rectangular array of two rows and two columns into which you can sort every item on your to-do list by whether it is urgent or not and whether it is important or not.

The first actionable step for deprioritizing the unnecessary urgency in your life: build an amazing list of tasks. Now, take that list and assign every task to one of the four quadrants in the Eisenhower Matrix.

Eliminate – Not Urgent/Not Important

Delegate – Urgent/Not Important

Efficiency – Urgent/Important

Enjoy – Not Urgent/Important

Make your list. Then, immediately start deprioritizing the unimportant tasks.

## Stop Making Excuses

THE REFINING POWER OF VOLUNTARY HARDSHIP

The myth of overnight success is one of the most harmful perceptions in business, health, and personal growth. The overnight success story is the opposite of the mindset and work that makes progress possible: the voluntary hardship of success. You learn, you train, and you work to get better. Even then, value only follows when you consistently make hard choices. That is the idea behind voluntary hardship.

VOLUNTARY HARDSHIP

Voluntary hardship is the means that justifies the ends. It's the hard work of pursuing your values that gives those values meaning. In this way, voluntary hardship is intrinsically virtuous—part of the collection of core values that add up to a well-lived life.

THE FOUR DERAILMENTS

1. Fear: There are three types of fear that fuel urgency and make up excuses against voluntary hardship: fear of success or failure, fear of risk, and fear of trust and its expression in micromanaging.
2. Chaos Derails: Chaos is the product of being in survival mode. Chaos derails because it distracts. A chaotic life is overflooded with urgency.
3. Self-Medication and Vices Derail: The reality is that hardship, even voluntary hardship, can be stressful. Vices anesthetize against hardship, not only derailing your goals but also harming your health, family, and relationships.
4. Stubbornness: Stubbornness is a rejection of personal responsibility and authority. The root of the problem is the rejection of personal responsibility for a lack of progress.

## Your Calendar is Not the Problem; You Are

CALENDAR AS TRUTH-TELLER

You can use your calendar as a health marker concerning how you use your time. Your calendar is a truth-teller. When it's too full of the wrong kinds of tasks then it's time to examine your habits.

DO A TIME AUDIT

Every kind of audit is tedious, but most will not be as immediately useful as a time audit. The concept is simple: track blocks of time, every fifteen to thirty minutes, every day for one week. You just need a consistent account of every twenty-four hours for seven days. Accurate time auditing will help you in a few different ways. It will show you those minor tasks that should take less than three

Is urgency ever a good thing? The answer is “yes.” Urgency can be a useful tool, but it is always unsustainable as a primary motivator.

minutes but tend to occupy whole blocks of time. It will also help you take note of when you are distracted or trying to focus on too many things at once. Identifying a central goal or task for a block of time reveals where your time is going much better than hindsight.

FOCUSED WORK: DEALING WITH THE URGENT/IMPORTANT

Focused work comes in many flavors: deep work, flow state, productivity, grit, and generally getting things done. Every type of focused work comes down to habit-building and creating the states most conducive to maximizing your output and the quality of your work. The first thing to learn for focused work is how to eliminate distractions. When it’s time to tackle those Urgent/Important tasks, it is necessary to wall yourself off from the outside world. By creating an intentional space, even a temporary one, you learn to signal to yourself that it’s time to focus.

Pomodoro Technique: The technique is simple: work for twenty-five undistracted minutes. Take a five-minute break. Repeat as necessary.

Practice Aggressive Deadlines: Aggressive deadlines will compress those tasks down to their actual size rather than letting them linger and take up more of your day than is strictly necessary.

Preplan Your Day: Planning your day means breaking everything down into fifteen- and thirty-minute time blocks and giving each block a job. Tasks that will take you three minutes or fewer always come first. Just get those done, regardless of their relative importance or urgency. Next, prioritize your Urgent/Important tasks for the day and assign those to the earliest blocks.

Build a Consistent Routine or Schedule: Perhaps the best habit you can build is the overall framework of your day through a consistent routine or schedule. The specific schedule is much less important than consistency.

WHEN TO EMBRACE URGENCY

Is urgency ever a good thing? The answer is “yes.” Urgency can be a useful tool, but it is always unsustainable as a primary motivator. What makes urgency work for you—rather than bury you—is clear priorities, a clear end date, and action items and metrics for completion.

## Part 2: Build Your Game Plan

### Identifying Your Core Values

Defining core values is the process of calling your shot. It means defining the highest ideals for yourself to act as guidelines for goals, actions, and other decisions.

WHAT ARE CORE VALUES?

When we create core values, we are creating personal standards. These are the rallying points for your long-term goals, actions, and decisions about how to spend your resources, and you are the standard bearer whose job it is to hold those core values high. First, core values require radical self-honesty. Second, don’t confuse core values with their respective attributes. Every person may express their core values in different ways. Finally, start at the end. Reputation and legacy make up the lens of this exercise.

CORE VALUES AND VOLUNTARY HARDSHIP

It is important to create these core value statements in an environment of thoughtful reflection. Later, when you are contemplating goals or making important decisions with real-world consequences, you reference these core values and tune your most immediate reactions to them, letting them act as an unwavering guide.

CORE VALUES: REPUTATION AND LEGACY

Core values are a blend of our needs and wants. Taking ownership of your reputation and legacy will keep you within the bounds of realistic core values. This also highlights the imperatives of your core values—the goals that your core values help you accomplish.

STEP ONE: DEFINING YOUR CORE VALUES

The only things you need to define your core values are time and thoughtfulness, both of which require no skill.

STEP TWO: PRIORITIZE

The next step is to put your core values in order from the highest priority to the lowest priority. All core values are important, but some will have a natural priority.

## Goals Maketh the Game Plan

The GAME Plan begins with Goals, followed by the Actions and Metrics that turn those Goals into active projects, and then the Execution strategies that bring this system together.

GOAL SETTING: DISCIPLINE, MOTIVATION, AND HABITS

Discipline, motivation, and habits make up a progressive spectrum for what fuels consistent, difficult decision-making. If you are disciplined, you choose hardship because the intrinsic value of that hardship exists apart from the expected outcome—the choice and the work itself are the rewards. If you are motivated, you choose hardship because the perceived benefit of the outcome is greater than the perceived cost of the choice. If you've built great habits, you choose hardship because that choice has become your default response to adversity.

WHAT ARE GOALS?

The strongest Goals weave together core values, aggressive deadlines, ambitious but attainable progressive steps, and objective standards for success. Break down Goals into two categories: long term and short term.

SET YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS

For each of your core values, ask yourself, "How much change is needed?" to more closely align with your core value statements and "How much change is possible?" in the next three to five years. The more that needs to change, the higher the priority. Similarly, the sooner you can positively affect a core value, the higher the priority. Next, for each core value, starting with the highest priority, ask yourself, "What are the one or two things you can do in the next three to five years that will make the biggest impact on that core value?" The answers will make up your long-term Goals.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

Determine each of the major actions, tasks, stages, or accomplishments that add up to the long-term Goal. For this step, you must think systematically. Each short-term Goal should have a deadline and a way to measure progress.

## Minimum Effective Dose for Maximum Impact

Before getting into the details of identifying the specific Actions that support the short-term Goals, this is the overriding principle used to select those Actions that will have the most impact and give you the most return on investment (ROI) for your time, energy, and money.

MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSE (MED)

Uncertainty is a normal part of chasing goals, and it's easy to fall in love with complex solutions when you are unsure of the next step to take. You can replace trial and error with a MED approach, using a systematic strategy for identifying Actions, allocating resources, and controlling variables. For the GAME Plan, we do not just want to identify the smallest steps to take; our aim is to look for the MED for maximum impact.

MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSE: SIMPLE. NOT EASY.

We want to simplify our Goal into Actions that manipulate as few variables as possible while making great progress. MED seeks to trump overly complex and complicated ideas from the get-go. To do this, we identify and control the variables and then work to find the sweet spot for the maximum impact of our actions.

VARIABLES: TIME, ENERGY, MONEY

Most goals in business, health, and life rely on three primary resources: time, energy, and money. These make up our primary variables any time we create or organize Action items.

Time: When allocating time, think of the priorities that will make you a person of action, meaning you should look for big changes that are possible with short time allocations.

Energy: Energy as a resource recognizes the intangible cost associated with certain tasks. You must ask how much effort something takes, how specialized the required skill set, the amount of stress that will result, and other intangibles that affect your ability to sustain the level of investment.

Money: There is always a cost to doing things, but the cost does not always have to be monetary. MED requires that you think more like a CEO, whose primary job is resource allocation between time, energy, and money as they relate to relationships and problem-solving.

MED FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

1. Simplicity over complexity.
2. Economy over excess.
3. Effort over easy.

Finding the sweet spot for maximum impact is not as easy as it sounds.

FINDING THE SWEET SPOT

Finding the sweet spot for maximum impact is not as easy as it sounds. It is an exercise in exploring the possibilities of diminishing marginal returns and growth potential for the investments of your time, energy, and money and possible economies of scale.

MAKING MISTAKES

You can minimize mistakes and their associated costs by starting small and paying attention to the data available as you make changes. But you can never be afraid to make mistakes altogether.

### Actions Focus the Game Plan

GAME Plan Actions are where we learn to direct our focus and capture the natural urgency of a deadline, turning it to our use for meaningful, purposeful work.

ACTIONS MAKE UP THE GOALS

Actions are not merely a list of tasks to be done but the component pieces of each Goal, crafted from MED principles, allocating resources with care, and using the process for finding the maximum impact for our resources.

GAME PLAN ACTIONS: CHARACTERISTICS

- Clear and Specific
- Testable
- Meaningful
- Limited in Scope
- Quantifiable/Objective
- Predictive

With these characteristics in mind, start to envision each step that will lead to a GAME Plan Goal and write those steps down as GAME Plan Actions. Each Action must meet the following criteria:

1. Actions should identify what needs to be done, by whom, and when.
2. Actions must be written to track progress and allow you to mark them as completed (or not) at the deadline.
3. Actions must follow MED principles:
   - Each Action uses only one resource or adjusts one variable at a time.
   - Each Action is designed to make a significant impact with the fewest resources.
   - Each Action anticipates improvement in some meaningful measurement.
   - Actions are tested and retested to find their maximum impact when necessary.

TAKE ACTION

Now, it's time to list your Action items. For each of your GAME Plan Goals—the short-term Goals you've created to guide your actions over the next three months to a year—you will list three to four Action items that, when completed, will practically guarantee you meet the Goal.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Create three to four Actions that support each Goal.
2. Focus on output: Actions that move the needle the most in the least possible time.
3. Set aggressive deadlines.
4. Use MED prioritization.

## Part 3: Executing the Game Plan

### Metrics for Measuring Success

Metrics will give you an overarching measure of the health of your GAME Plan or company and are divided into two categories: (1) Targets, which are measured by Targets to Improve (TTIs), and are the objectives that will represent the future successful completion of actions, and (2) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are the metrics that give you a snapshot of the health of a company or GAME Plan in real time.

METRICS AND TTIS: FROM QUALITIES TO QUANTITIES

Creating Targets and assigning Metrics to your GAME Plan accomplishes a few important things. First, it sets the goal-posts steadfast, so you can confidently make and Execute your GAME Plan. Second, Targets connect your daily efforts to your core values. TTIs are an active, not passive, use of Metrics.

METRICS THAT MATTER

Metrics and Core Values: We want to be careful not to get too distracted by Metrics, especially those that do not tie back to core values.

Problem Solving: If a Target does not move or improve, there are two troubleshooting steps. First, assess your effort through a lens of radical self-honesty. Second, if the Actions are being completed with the requisite effort, then determine whether the Action can move the needle of that Metric the way you thought it should.

## Execution: Game Plans in Action

GAME PLAN FUNCTION AND FORM

It is easy to get excited about a new way of getting things done; believe me, I know. But without committing to a consistent plan of Execution, you are most likely to get stuck in your everyday routines without experiencing any real change.

"E" IS FOR EXECUTION

GAME Plan Execution is a process for generating a chronological and comprehensive task list for every step of every Action.

Annual: The annual GAME Plan is the least detailed because it hovers high above the daily work down in the trenches, focusing instead on the major Goals and Actions needed to meet long-term GAME Plan Goals.

Monthly: The monthly GAME Plan brings the perspective closer to the daily work.

Weekly: The weekly report is the feet-on-the-ground-level work, highlighting major progress on GAME Plan Actions, noting obstacles that still lie in the way, and planning for focused, efficient work the following week.

Daily: At this level, you review the task list, add new items, and remove completed ones every day.

## Putting it All Together

CREATE YOUR CORE VALUES

1. Identify your valued attributes
2. Categorize and define your core values
3. Prioritize your core values

SETTING LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM GOALS

1. Set long-term Goals for each high-priority core value
2. Set three to five short-term Goals to support each long-term Goal

ACTION ITEMS

1. Create three to four Actions that support each Goal
2. Focus on output
3. Set aggressive deadlines
4. Use MED prioritization

EXECUTION SCHEDULE

- Annual. Create a thirty-thousand-foot GAME Plan for the year with the top three to four Goals and the three to five Actions that make up each Goal.
- Monthly. A review of the previous month and updated GAME Plan for the next month.
- Weekly. Create a weekly report organized by priority and active Goals.
- Daily. Review the task list, add new items, and remove completed ones.

People can choose the easy path every chance they get and still find success and comfort in life. Usually, that will come from some luck, support, or innate talent that can be leveraged with minimal work, but it is possible. What is impossible without hard work is cultivating and carrying the joy of a life well lived.

That is the difference between happiness, which is fleeting, and joy, which lasts. Once you unbind the important work from the urgent and enticing distractions, you can examine your core values—how you want to look back at this life. From there, break down the steps that will get you to that version of yourself.

Identify the major Goals that will mark progress on that path, and start doing the work that will get you there. It is a simple but meticulous process. When done well, there will be value in the work because the work is driven by your values.



Ryan Matt Reynolds is a former professional strongman, gym owner, successful strength coach, podcast host, and the Founder/Owner/CEO of one of the largest online fitness platforms in the industry (Barbell Logic), where the focus is on redefining and reforming the antiquated personal training model and replacing it with white-glove personal, professional online fitness coaching from the best expert coaches in the world. More importantly, Matt has built a home and community in the heart of the Ozarks, Springfield, MO, with his wife of 25 years, Rachel, and two children, Cailin and Kinsley.

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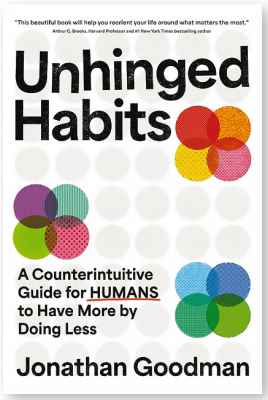
# Unhinged Habits

Jonathan Goodman

Executive Book Summaries®

# Unhinged Habits

## A Counterintuitive Guide for Humans to Have More by Doing Less




*by* **Jonathan Goodman**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many high-performing people feel quietly stuck. Calendars are full, purchases add up, and progress appears steady, yet something essential feels absent. The modern habit loop rewards busyness and accumulation, even when it crowds out meaning. Over time, this creates a life that looks successful on paper but feels misaligned in practice. The real problem is living on autopilot—following routines and definitions of success that were never consciously chosen.

***Unhinged Habits: A Counterintuitive Guide for Humans to Have More by Doing Less*** argues that the answer is not doing more but doing less with greater intention. At the center of the book is strategic subtraction: removing habits, goals, relationships, and possessions that dilute focus and satisfaction. Rather than chasing constant balance, the author proposes embracing seasons of focused intensity, deliberate imbalance, and periodic reassessment. By committing to fewer priorities and clearer trade-offs, readers can align short-term actions with long-term fulfillment while remaining present in what matters now.

Drawing on his experience building multi-million-dollar businesses while traveling with his family, Jonathan Goodman offers practical frameworks for rethinking work, money, friendship, and love—arguing that a deliberately unbalanced life can ultimately be a richer one.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Learn how strategic subtraction can create more clarity, wealth, and fulfillment
- Understand why consistency alone often fails, and when intensity matters more
- Reframe success around seasons, not balance, to reduce guilt and burnout
- Build deeper friendships by investing in fewer, more meaningful relationships

INTRODUCTION

## The Secret Hidden in Plain Sight

Our lives have three priorities: money, health, and relationships. It's rare to have all three going well at the same time. Young people often have relationships and health, but no money. In midlife, we often have health and money, but no time for relationships. When old, we're often rich in money and relationships, but poor in health.

The challenge we all face is balancing short-term desires with long-term planning. It's getting the order right: setting us up for a bright future without missing the magic in the present.

What follows is a practical framework to identify what truly matters in your life and the courage to eliminate everything else. You'll learn how to break free from society's outdated expectations, your own bad habits, and the incessant pressure to do more.

Instead of constantly adding commitments, people, and things to your life, you'll become a master of the art of strategic subtraction, creating space for what's essential and discarding what's not.

It's easy to fall into patterns—lazily accepting even the silliest additions to our lives and never reassessing whether something helps us, hurts us, takes up space, or, in this case, makes any sense. We keep things as they are simply because that's how they've always been.

I call this the *Slinky Effect*: when we get so used to the silly, invisible habits running our lives that we don't even notice them anymore. And *that's* the problem.

In a modern world designed to distract us, we don't actively architect our lives. We default into them. Most people think the solution to feeling overwhelmed is to do more, optimize better, and work harder. That's wrong. You need to do less, but with more intention.

If your days are full yet not fulfilling, it's time for you to examine your life honestly and, perhaps, break some bad habits.

CHAPTER 1

## Birds Never Sing in Caves

No matter how deep down the achievement rabbit hole you are, it's possible to dig your way out—to walk about wide-eyed like a kindergartner, excited once again about the littlest blade of grass, with days filled with surprises.

Philosopher Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Birds do not sing in caves." And neither do we. When you explore with intention, you cease to become intent in your complacency.

Exploration isn't about geographic distance but about the internal journey of breaking free from the caves of our own making: those comfortable, predictable routines that dull our senses and shrink our world.

When you explore with intention, you break free from those caves of comfortable routine. But stepping outside our routines requires overcoming a powerful human instinct: the desire for safety and predictability.

This often means ranking safety third, behind growth and experience, not first and not even second. This doesn't mean being reckless. It means recognizing that avoiding all risk is itself the greatest risk.

When you approach life this way, you'll discover that exploration isn't just about going to new places but about becoming more fully alive wherever you are. You'll begin to see opportunities where others see only risk. You'll develop your awareness, adaptability, and openness to the unexpected.

### Laws of Living Lost

Accept that you'll get lost. Accept that you're already lost. Explore. Try stuff. Because the more that you try stuff, the more you'll be forced to *figure it out*. And the more you figure it out, the more confidence you'll gain in your ability to figure it out.

Exploration is not just about going to new places but about a profound process of identity reconstruction. Each time we step outside our comfort zone, we're not merely collecting experiences; we're actively rewriting our internal narrative.

When you allow yourself to become temporarily "lost"—whether in a foreign city, a new skill, or an unfamiliar social context—you suspend the rigid definitions of who you believe yourself to be. You become malleable. Adaptable. Your sense of self is no longer a fixed point but a fluid landscape of potential.

### Where Challenge Meets Enjoyment

What if uncertainty isn't something to fear but a resource to be cultivated? An exploration mindset is less about having all the answers and more about becoming comfortable with not knowing. Here are a few reframes:

- Uncertainty is an opportunity. The unexpected isn't

> The more you figure it out, the more confidence you'll gain in your ability to figure it out.

a threat. It's an invitation to discover something new about yourself.

- Prolonged comfort is dangerous. Stagnation grows moss.
- Failure is information. Instead of letting it get you down, consider what you learned to avoid or what you will do differently next time.
- Flexible intentions are better than rigid expectations. Set adaptive goals. View your path as a compass, not a GPS.
- "I wonder what I might discover" is more useful than "I already know." Cultivate radical curiosity.
- Ask naive questions and drop preconceptions. Set your ego aside and embrace a beginner's mindset.

Despite the long-term benefits, we don't explore as much as we should. Instead, we exploit too much of what we already know. That's because exploiting is predictable and proximate in contrast to exploring, which is distant, uncertain, and often negative in the short term.

### The Explorer's Compass

Modern life often chains us to predictability, but exploration doesn't require scaling unmapped mountains. It starts with a simple framework I call the *Explorer's Compass*: a guide for intentionally introducing uncertainty into your life.

**1. Instruments**

Just like early mountaineers carried essential tools, you need your own personal instruments. These aren't physical objects but capabilities such as language, physical preparedness, and a mental toolkit.

**2. Risk Spectrum**

Create a personal risk assessment that helps you incrementally expand your comfort zone:

1. **Safe experiments** (low risk): try a new restaurant without checking reviews, take a new route to work.
2. **Moderate challenges** (medium risk): join a class in something you've never done, volunteer for a project at work outside of your expertise.
3. **Bold adventures** (high risk): solo travel to an unfamiliar country, start a side hustle in a new industry.

**3. Trajectory**

Exploration isn't about having a perfect map but about understanding your general direction. This means setting loose, flexible goals and remaining open to unexpected detours.

**4. Reflection**

After a bout of exploration (big or small), take fifteen minutes and ask yourself three questions:

1. What unexpected thing did I learn about myself?
2. How did I just introduce meaningful uncertainty?
3. In what way did my comfort zone just expand?

Remember: the goal isn't constant upheaval but a sustained openness to the unknown. Exploration is less about the external journey and more about your own internal willingness to be surprised.

Everywhere you turn, you are being limited. This can change. But you can't just know yourself intellectually. You must also know yourself experientially. Shake off the shackles that remind you who you are or whom you think others think you are and explore being somebody else for even the shortest bit of time.

Exploration is not a destination. It's not a checklist of experiences or a collection of passport stamps. It's a way of being—a commitment to remaining perpetually curious, perpetually uncertain, and perpetually alive.

CHAPTER 2

## Define Your Season

Life's too short. The moment you focus on one thing, an unshakable guilt for not doing another rears its ugly head. I offer a radical, almost unhinged, alternative to the myth of balanced improvement: a seasonal approach where focused intensity on a single priority replaces scattered consistency across many.

By embracing intense seasons of growth followed by periods of rest or maintenance, you'll make transformative progress in what matters most while keeping guilt at bay. This isn't about doing more; it's about doing less, with greater intensity, at the right time.

With each season of intensity, your old ceilings will become your new floors, continually circling each element at a higher level—a lightning strike permanently impacting the landscape versus a series of unimpactful sparks.

Whatever it is you want to excel at, whether it's your career, your family, your fitness level, a personal passion, your social life, define it and clearly prioritize it by placing it at the top of your to-do list.

This type of maniacal focus is unhinged, almost deranged. None of this is likely to be sustainable long term, either financially or temporally. It doesn't need to be. It's not possible to be in season all the time.

Intensity is for gaining. Consistency is for maintaining. You can't have one without the other.

### Ten Thousand Iterations

Success in anything isn't the result of ten thousand hours. It's the result of ten thousand iterations. That's obviously not an exact number, but the idea is correct. You don't need a perfect plan up front; you sketch. Like a folded piece of paper, the first fold is stiff and awkward, but each subsequent fold over the same crease line becomes easier and faster.

What if true consistency isn't about doing the same things every day but rather consistently honoring the natural rhythms of intensity and recovery our bodies and minds require?

What I propose is that the most sustainable approach is one that plans for both. And so, at any given time, we must be selective about which priority we want to focus on, pursue it aggressively, and be okay with just being okay at anything else—for the time being.

### We're Wired to Have Seasons

Living a seasonal life is nothing new. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors worked hard in the spring, summer, and fall to collect food, then spent the winter mostly living off their stores. During that time, they rested and, I imagine, spent more time with family and community.

The invention of the lightbulb, combined with the clock, caused natural time to take a back seat to artificial time. Every day became the same: nine to five. In the search for efficiency, we've become more machine, less human. It's mechanistic. Unnatural. No wonder we burn out.

We're wired to have seasons: stops, starts, periods of work followed by periods of rest.

It's natural to work hard and go all-in on one thing, obsess over it, and get tired. Tired is good. But then you need to rest, recover, and sketch a different line, renewing your energy like a sprouting spring flower in early May.

Whenever you enter a season, create an off-season checklist. Things that need to get done in order for you to feel comfortable committing obsessively on your priority. It keeps your fear-based brain at bay, knowing that what has to get done is getting done.

Of course, you'll miss the mark sometimes. When you get off track, when your brain jumps into fear mode, when the walls feel like they're closing in, look at your checklist, take a deep breath, and get back on track.

Every iteration gets you closer to *your* perfect. With each season, you'll become more aligned with how you work best, more focused on your priority, and more energized because you'll be doing more of what fuels you and less of the accumulated crap that inevitably builds up over time.

CHAPTER 3

## Make More Mistakes

The more we know, the less we tend to admit we don't know. The older we get, the less we explore, learn, and experience, and the smaller our world becomes.

That's because the older we get, the more pressure we tend to feel to optimize the life we're living for productivity, efficiency, and certainty. But what if the path to more meaning isn't found through ever-increasing productivity but through periods of strategic (un)productivity?

The more you know, and the more you've achieved, the more you'll feel pulled to move throughout the world with the self-directed expectation that you *should* have the answer. With life, there is no right or wrong answer. The best you can do is make a best guess. And so, you must program yourself to go into almost any situation where, even if you don't know everything, you won't have an unhealthy level of false confidence.

Said another way: admit your ignorance.

### Seeking Serendipity

Productivity isn't the struggle; having something worth being productive for is. Admittedly, saying yes to more isn't productive. It does, however, lead to more serendipity.

> Exploration is less about the external journey and more about your internal willingness to be surprised.

There's an old saying that "the unlived life is not worth living." An overly productive life isn't worth living, either. But an unbalanced life can be—because it's full of meaningful work, serendipity, exploration, and wonder.

What holds us back from embracing more serendipity? It's often our misperception of risk.

Most decisions in life are framed incorrectly. We treat small choices with the same weightiness as permanent ones. And most decisions are small. To break this pattern, we need a better framework for understanding which choices are consequential and which aren't.

### Hats, Haircuts, and Tattoos

There's a simple decision-making framework, originally popularized by author James Clear, that sorts choices into three categories based on how reversible they are:

- **Hats** – move quickly; decisions are easy to reverse
- **Haircuts** – risks worth taking
- **Tattoos** – consider carefully; decisions are hard to reverse

If the outcome risk is low, you can move quickly and try a lot of things. The harder the outcome is to reverse, the more energy, thought, and preparation should be used.

Most experiences you say yes to are merely hats to try on, yet you treat them like permanent tattoos, overcompensating with a decision-making process that's too slow, too deliberate, and too choosy. Not because it's the smart thing to do, but because you're scared of what might happen and have never stopped to consider the worst that *could* happen.

Whatever you want to try, consider whether it's a hat, haircut, or tattoo. When you recognize that most opportunities are just hats you can try on, it opens you to periods of intentional exploration.

### Seasons of Yes

*Seasons of Yes* are powerful ways to break out of routine. They're deliberate, time-limited periods, where you commit to saying yes to opportunities, invitations, and experiences you'd normally decline. It's not about reckless abandonment of boundaries but rather a strategic expansion of your comfort zone to break entrenched patterns and discover new possibilities for yourself.

Specifically, Seasons of Yes work well for four types of people:

1. **Professionally stuck** – you've achieved some success but feel trapped in a routine and notice your enthusiasm for work fading.
2. **In transition** – you're going through major life changes and need to rebuild or reimagine your identity and community.
3. **Overly optimized** – you've become so focused on efficiency and productivity that you've engineered serendipity out of your life.
4. **Seeking identity** – either earlier in your journey as a recent graduate or during a major career transition.

CHAPTER 4

## Choose Your Hard

Much of our current culture celebrates escaping work, suggesting that the goal is to earn an effortless life. But what if that's exactly backward? What if the goal isn't to eliminate hardship but to choose the right kind of hard?

There are two types of activities: finite and infinite.

Finite activities aim at terminal states. Getting married is finite: it's done when you're wed. Writing a book is finite: it's done when you tap the final key.

Infinite activities don't aim at a terminal state. It doesn't drive toward finishing. It describes the process, which never truly completes.

In our future-focused society, we're trained to be finite. Always striving to get *there*, never *here*—thinking about the past, driving toward the future, and leaving the present curiously unoccupied.

### Finding the Good-Tired Sweet Spot

When it comes to money (and your job), there's such a thing as enough. We've got to stop the goalposts of excess and desire

from moving. With work, however, the moment one project finishes, find the next to drive toward. Keep those goalposts moving so long as you find the infinite within the finite.

Don't seek an easy life. Choose your hard. If you don't, it will manifest in depression and listlessness in ways you won't expect. Doing the work makes you worth a damn, regardless of whether you get paid or how much.

Let me be clear: I'm not suggesting you should find joy in financial hardship or pretend that structural barriers don't exist. They do. But within even the most constrained circumstances, you have a critical choice about whether you maintain your agency or allow it to be stripped from you.

Here are a few choices you get to make, regardless of the hand you were dealt:

- **Approach vs. avoidance**: You can fully engage with necessary work or mentally check out while doing it.
- **Growth vs. stagnation**: You can look for learning opportunities within constraints or simply endure them.
- **Connection vs. isolation**: You can build relationships within difficult circumstances or withdraw into private suffering.

None of these choices eliminate hardship, but they change how hardship affects you. When options are limited, choosing your hard might simply mean choosing to be fully present in your current struggle rather than mentally escaping it.

Choose meaningful work over empty leisure. Choose energizing exertion over dulling comfort. Choose focus over scattered distraction. These choices won't make your life easier, but they will make it better.

People talk about work-life balance. I've never liked that. Balance is binary. Too precarious. If you're in balance, it means that you can also be in imbalance. I prefer the term "work-life harmony." A flowing state where you roll with the punches as they come. Expect the unexpected. Build tolerance to life's intolerances.

CHAPTER 5

## The Paradox of Abundance

Being driven to succeed can often lead to living a mediocre version of life. Workaholism is how you lose yourself, not how you find yourself. At the time, it can feel entirely justified. Sadly, the only people who will remember that you worked late will be your kids.

It's easy to fall into the trap of marginal thinking, justifying to yourself why you should make an exception "just this once." And perhaps if it really were just this once, then that wouldn't be a problem. But it never is, is it?

The real game of life is internal. There's no big bad boss. We're *our* only enemy. It's like Tetris, where getting a high score depends on a strong foundation. Good choices divide; bad choices multiply.

None of this is to say that you should knowingly do a bad job or reduce your output. Instead, you have to stop believing that the answer lies in figuring out how to do more. The counterintuitive way to have more is to do less but to do it better by making the hard decisions about what to do with your time and accepting its trade-offs.

Money and success aren't change catalysts; they're amplification agents. If you're adventurous, money will help you go on more and greater adventures. But if you're not, it won't.

If you're a good person—moral, generous, caring, loving, and well-adjusted—money and success will amplify all that's good. If you're selfish, driven by greed, absorbed by envy, unhappy, lonely, and overworked, then no amount of money will change you.

Owning too many things doesn't enhance our lives; it paralyzes and exhausts us. Abundance, therefore, is a paradox.

### Price Versus Dignity

Philosopher Immanuel Kant framed this distinction perfectly: there's price and then there's dignity. Anything with price can be replaced. It's a means, not the end. Dignity stands above price. It's the end, not the means. Over time, wisdom lies in exchanging more things with price for things with dignity.

The longer you spend chasing things with price while postponing things with dignity, the harder it becomes to escape the trap. Every decision you make becomes evidence of who you are, creating a self-reinforcing loop through your identity, network, and habits.

### Your Plan Versus Reality

Life has a way of going well for people who do stuff and not going well for people who sit at home and plot and plan and make excuses for not doing stuff yet. Even if it goes awry, you'll learn something if you do something.

If you ever go back and do a full accounting of your life,

> To maximize what matters most, you've got to minimize everything else.

you'd find that almost everything good that happened to you was the result of random things you learned and random experiences that you had that got mashed together in a way impossible to explain or reproduce.

Think about a recent mistake that you made. Surely it challenged you and strengthened your resolve, teaching you a thing or two about yourself, about others, and about how your world works. Maybe it changed your path, setting you down the road you're on now. Do you actually regret your mistake? Or, with the benefit of hindsight, are you oddly grateful for that terrible thing that happened because of what it taught you, how it strengthened you, and what it led to?

CHAPTER 6

## The Joy of Fewer Friends

Eighty-five years of research from Harvard University concluded that your relationships are the single greatest predictor of your happiness—not money, career achievement, the number of countries you've visited, or the size of your home. In a world obsessed with productivity, followers, and networking, we've forgotten something essential: the depth of our connections matters more than their breadth.

People come and go, living their lives and passing through yours. Don't feel guilty for letting loose friendships lapse. It's perfectly okay to enjoy a fleeting moment with another while simultaneously appreciating that almost every relationship you have had (and will ever have) is short-lived.

### The Garden of Friendship

Think of your social life as a garden that you cultivate with grass, flowers, birds, and trees. Like any good garden, it contains different types of plants and visitors, each playing a unique role in the ecosystem:

- **Grass** – professional connections that provide basic coverage and practical support.
- **Flowers** – seasonal acquaintances who bring joy when your paths naturally cross.
- **Birds** – one-sided relationships with people you watch but who don't know you exist.
- **Trees** – true friends who remain steadfast across all seasons.

In a busy life, you can't realistically maintain too many true friendships; just a couple or, in my case, one. To that person, the highest compliment you can pay is "You are useless to me." Perfect friendship must exist outside your job and ambition with no agenda attached.

You've got a true friend if they pass these three tests:

1. **Uselessness** – they do nothing for your professional or social ambitions.
2. **Effort** – they go out of their way for you even if it doesn't make sense, just because.
3. **Celebration** – they are genuinely happy for you when things go well.

Go ahead and maintain friendships of all types. But research from the University of Michigan indicates that the number of friends we have doesn't meaningfully impact our well-being. Instead, all you need for higher levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and lower levels of depression are two relationships: a spouse and one true friendship.

CHAPTER 7

## Find Your Missing Half

The most successful relationships aren't built on similarity but on complementarity. Differences, when respected and leveraged, create a relationship stronger than the sum of its parts. We're drawn to people like us, yet ironically, it's our differences that make relationships thrive.

The happiest couples round out each other's personality. You need compatibility, but not necessarily a great deal of it. More than anything, you need complementarity, shared values, and respect for the other person's individuality.

Complementarity isn't just about fitting together like puzzle pieces. It's about creating space for each other to grow. Strong partnerships demand that both people develop themselves independently to strengthen what they build together.

The people who love you want to celebrate with you but don't know how. Left to their own devices, they'll wait for a

positive outcome—a job promotion, the sale of a business, an award—and celebrate after the fact. But it's the process they should be celebrating, not the outcome.

However, it's not your loved one's responsibility to figure out when and how to celebrate. It's yours. A simple way to add richness to personal or professional growth is to design shared experiences at waypoints that signify process wins along the way of achieving individual goals.

These experiences follow a structured framework anyone can use I call the *4S Celebration Protocol*:

- **Shared** – involves someone you care about
- **Scheduled** – is set for a specific date
- **Sacred** – commits both people to showing up
- **Significant** – feels special, not routine

This protocol embodies intentional life design. It creates structures that align your actions with your values. It ensures the journey itself becomes rewarding. And it's a way to celebrate the growth and differences that bring people together.

CHAPTER 8

## The Profound Power of Ruthlessly Editing Your Life

Every item you own demands a piece of you: your money to buy it, your space to store it, your time to maintain it, and your attention to worry about it. The career you've built can slowly become your prison. Your devices, designed to connect you to everything, can disconnect you from what matters.

Much of your story has already been written for you: where you were born, how you look, your natural attributes. You can't control the start of it, and it is true that some stories are fairer than others, but you can control the end.

You are not the author of your life, but you can be the editor. Great editing prides itself on subtraction, not addition—on discipline through omission. In a world pushing you toward more possessions and more commitments, your greatest freedom comes from strategic reduction. To maximize what matters most, you've got to minimize everything else.

*The Three Spheres of Intentional Minimalism* is a framework for identifying where life naturally accumulates excess and where thoughtful reduction can restore focus and clarity:

1. **Physical space** – the visible stuff that fills our homes
2. **Mental bandwidth** – the invisible decisions consuming our attention
3. **Identity** – the roles and personas fragmenting our sense of self

Start small. Try the Ten-Minute Minimization Challenge. Set a timer for ten minutes and choose one small space (a drawer, a shelf, your phone's home screen). Ask just one question: "Does this help me maximize what matters?" Not, "Might I need this someday?" That's fear talking. Do this daily for a week. You'll remove dozens of items from your life. More important, you'll strengthen your minimization muscle.

### Freedom

Freedom is optionality—the opportunity to fail, the ability to do what you want, when you want, with whom you want, and the knowledge that you can move on even if you decide not to. Ultimately, freedom is control. If you want to be free, you must keep your walking costs low. Walking costs come in three forms:

1. **Financial costs** – debt, recurring payments, lifestyle inflation that requires your current income
2. **Relational costs** – obligations, social expectations, commitments to energy vampires
3. **Identity costs** – titles, status, and self-perceptions you've invested in but no longer serve you

For each category, ask, "What's one thing I could eliminate that would increase my freedom without reducing what truly matters most?"

When you let yourself become owned by your belongings, your work, or your ego, you become suffocated by your own selfishness. By minimizing needless choices, unnecessary necessities, and your attachment to empty extravagances, you maximize your time, your energy, and your money to share with others. That's how you take control.

And when you're in control, you become free.

## Conclusion

Books attempt the impossible task of making order out of disorder and chaos. Yet they are never the truth itself; life remains inherently unpredictable. Happiness, I've discovered, is not a destination but a direction—an ongoing, iterative search that requires sorrow to appreciate joy, pain to appreciate pleasure, and effort to appreciate rest.

The world hasn't changed much in the past thirteen years during which I've gotten married, had three children, and traveled for a total of almost two thousand days. If anything, it's gone farther off the rails. But I've changed. I no longer experience it in the same way.

To paraphrase David Brooks, freedom isn't an ocean to explore. Freedom is a river to cross so that you can make a home somewhere on the other side, and fully commit to someone and something.

The best use of life is figuring out a way to spend as much of it as possible with the people you love.



**Jonathan Goodman** is an entrepreneur, author, and educator who builds businesses while traveling the world with his family. Over thirteen winters, he has explored dozens of countries with his wife and three children, challenging conventional ideas about work, education, and family life. Goodman is the founder of multiple multimillion-dollar companies and is known for helping professionals build sustainable businesses that support meaningful lives. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Men's Health*, *Forbes*, *Robb Report*, *Entrepreneur*, and *Inc.* Goodman lives in Toronto and continues to write, teach, and share ideas about entrepreneurship, freedom, and family-centered success.

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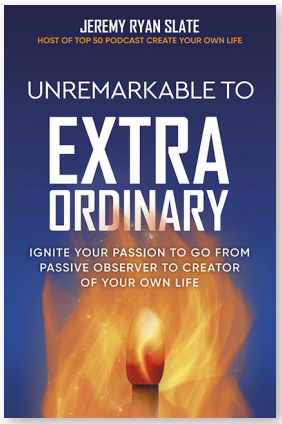
# Unremarkable to Extraordinary

Jeremy Ryan Slate

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# Unremarkable To Extraordinary

## Ignite Your Passion To Go From Passive Observer to Creator Of Your Own Life




*by* **Jeremy Ryan Slate**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What does it mean to be extraordinary? Why are successful people often the most extraordinary of the lot? How can you harness your own extraordinary power?

By taking us through the kaleidoscope of inspirational life lessons, ***Unremarkable To Extraordinary: Ignite Your Passion To Go From Passive Observer to Creator Of Your Own Life***, teaches us how to be truly extraordinary. You learn about why courage makes all the difference, how each failure brings a new experience, why opportunities must be created, what having a vision means, what we don't know about responsibility, and how leadership is the duty of every extraordinary individual.

Author Jeremy Ryan Slate presents extraordinary stories, facts, and takeaways to break down exactly what the journey toward becoming extraordinary looks like. Most of us haven't yet tapped into "the extraordinary" inside us and the author gently pushes us to find our own extraordinary.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What makes someone extraordinary.
- The core elements to become an extraordinary.
- How to harness your courage and create your opportunities.
- How to have a vision and be a leader.

## Introduction

This book comes from research I've carried out in addition to nearly one thousand interviews I've conducted with world-class performers and newsmakers. A lot of what the book unfolds comes from my direct conversations with these individuals.

Although this book is meant to be read straight through, it is structured in a way that you can jump to a specific chapter if you're looking for help in a single area. Here, you'll encounter four things to aid your journey – extraordinary takeaways, extraordinary facts, extraordinary stories, and extraordinary reads.

This work is not just meant to inspire but to show you what is possible and help you see your path for yourself. It is meant to be an adventure. We'll dive into the important details that the lives of extraordinary people include and help you draw parallels in your own life. Here's to your adventure into the extraordinary.

## It Takes Courage

The single greatest component of being an extraordinary human being is courage. We all are born with the same elements – talent, looks, and more. Some have a little more, some have a little less. But we all have an equal shot to reach our greatness. Up to this point in your life, you may not have been courageous. But this is, in fact, the perfect time to start.

JJ Virgin, the New York Times bestselling author and one of the most famous names in the fitness industry, knew that failure could not be an option for her. She knew that she could pay for her son's medical care only if she was successful.

Maybe you take courage for your loved ones in life as JJ Virgin did for her son. Or maybe you become courageous for your own success. However, you define what is courageous for you. It took me 32 years to make the decision to be courageous. Courage for me was more about speaking my mind and not speaking to please others. For you, it may be starting with a schedule to reach a goal. Whatever age you are in life, now is the perfect time to start.

## Your Mo Lewis Moment

You must understand that there will always be adversity in your life. You cannot control adversities or opportunities. They will happen.

Though I've never been a Boy Scout, the goal is for the Boy Scout motto, "always be prepared," to become your motto. It is critical to be prepared for every eventuality when the time comes. When an opportunity comes, you cannot say, "I wasn't ready," Instead, be ready for the day opportunity presents itself, because it will.

The story of Tom Brady, arguably the best quarterback ever to play in the NFL, is the greatest example of preparation meeting circumstances. Brady's position was never solid as he was competing with New York Yankees' prospect Drew Hensen for playing time.

Brady wasn't the most athletic, didn't have the biggest arm, and thanks to his competition with Hensen, wasn't seen as a future star. Despite the odds, he continued to work on his craft until he got the opportunity to become the starter in the second game of the 2001 season. From there on, he led the Patriots to a Super Bowl championship that season, in addition to five more as the Patriots quarterback.

## Don't Follow Your Passion

I mentioned with Mike Rowe, "Don't follow your passion, but do bring it with you." In other words, find something you're good at – this could be a skill or vocation that can produce something – then, continue to work at it until this skill becomes effortless.

Most successful people I've spoken to had multiple attempts at greatness. Sometimes it wasn't the first, sometimes it wasn't second or even the third. But eventually, they figured it out. To me, experience is the most valuable teacher.

Self-education is one of the most common things in every successful individual I've spoken to – from Grant Cardon to Kevin Harrington. Extraordinary individuals don't depend on the traditional education system but on the School of Hard Knocks.

Don't be afraid to get knocked around, like Grant Cardone, put in the work every day, learn from every single experience, and be willing to educate yourself. Don't be afraid to fail. But just make sure you're learning.

## Learning from Failure

The fear of failure keeps many from even trying. However, those who are truly extraordinary have tried many things. They didn't hit a home run the moment they held the bat.

They had to put up with losses. And those times they lost turned out to be some of the greatest learning experiences

Baseball royalty Nick Swisher almost didn't get drafted. When he went on his first recruiting trip to West Virginia, the size of the players made him feel football would not be his sport. He went 50 rounds only to know he didn't get drafted. What more could he do? Well, he went from a non-drafted player out of high school to a first-rounder out of college. Eventually, and of course, after several failures along the way, he was finally a part of the New York Yankees, the winningest franchise in major league baseball.

For many, it is dwelling on the losses that actually ends their dreams. But losses are inevitable. Figure out what you can learn from them but don't live them. Use losses to plan for the future and as Nick Swisher says, "If it wasn't for losing, we wouldn't know how great winning is."

## Done Is Better Than Perfect

Extraordinary people have the drive to just make it happen. One of the weaknesses we all share is wanting to make everything perfect. But how can you focus on getting something done when all your focus is snatched away by the illusion of perfection?

The speed with which Mike Lindell, the founder of MyPillow, grew his company is incredible. To go from 10 employees to nearly 500 in just 40 days doesn't seem human. But it shows what a little grit and someone that is truly self-made can do when they grasp an opportunity.

Sometimes we pour in too much attention on just how perfect something is, and that waiting keeps us from ever getting it out there. Had Mike worried about how perfect the first infomercial was, his product may have never gotten out!

Don't spend your time deciding if something is an opportunity or not. Just go for it. What's the worst that could happen? If you fail, you'll always have the opportunity to try again later.

## Create Your Own Opportunities

Many of us expect an opportunity to show up at our front door, But many times, it doesn't work like that. Sometimes, you have to find an opening, grab the opening, widen it, and realize you are going to create the opportunity to fill that space.

It is something great athletes have done for years, but something great businesspeople have not always notoriety for. If you look at many of the extraordinary people that we have spoken to, when the door was closed to them, they didn't just wait for a new one to open. They built a new door. Moral of the story? To be extraordinary, you have to be willing to see opportunities everywhere.

## Define Your Success. Don't Let Others Define It for You

Extraordinary people don't make decisions based on what others do. They don't select their life plan based on what others want.

The truth is, you're never going to have everything figured out in life. That's just not how it works. For someone to be extraordinary, they really must have the drive to keep working at it until they figure it out. They may not know exactly what they want to do but they know they have big goals for their life.

Not caring what other people think can perhaps be the most difficult thing to do. Doing what people say may bring you praise. However, if you truly want to be extraordinary, you cannot live on praise. On your journey to become extraordinary, there will not only be no praise, but you'll face true hatred for what you're doing.

Don't let the opinions of others stop you from being extraordinary. Their own limits will try to limit you. Instead, remember to always reach for the stars, and once you've hit them, drive past the heavens.

## Past, Present, and Future Vision

When you're stuck in surviving right now, you can't see three inches in front of your face, let alone seeing your future. This is why it's best to have a job while you're building something or to have your first business running before you build a second.

Sure, looking to the future when you're trying to survive today is a difficult skill to learn. But every successful entrepreneur believes in mastering this one skill. Powerful entrepreneurs like Jayson Waller have managed to figure out how to not get stuck in the past or the present so they can be the ones to put the future together for us.

Ordinary people fight their past and try to survive in the

present. Extraordinary people put the future first. So, be the one that builds the future.

## Be the One to Tell Your Story

No one is going to tell your story for you. No, telling your story is not synonymous with "boasting" – something we were taught as kids.

When you really look at it, to live is to communicate. If you're not communicating, then you're not living, and if you're not living, then there's no way you're going to grow. To be extraordinary is to understand you're not boasting. You're simply doing what you need to do to survive – telling a story.

Become responsible for your own story, get good at telling it, and tell it to those that matter. Alexander the Great conquered the known world before the age of 30. Did he wait for others to tell his story? He did not. In fact, he brought his own publicist or scribe, Arrian to all his campaigns.

Never hesitate from telling your story. Remember, those who tell you not to promote your own achievements are afraid of what you may achieve.

## Radical Responsibility

Being fully responsible for your own life is both the scariest thing to learn and the most empowering thing to learn.

A great example of radical responsibility is motorsports. But when you truly dissect it, many of us deal with life and death every single day. If you don't stop at the stop sign, you could cause an accident. If you don't pay your taxes, you could go to jail. If you don't take all the precautions, someone could get hurt.

Many things we complain about most often come down to responsibility. How responsible can you get when it comes to your own life? There is a big difference between what's easy and what's responsible. If you don't like your current job, it's easier to blame the opportunity than to have the ability to make the opportunity work for you.

Once you start understanding how you can be more responsible, not blame others, and stop playing the victim, only then can you kickstart an extraordinary life.

## The Duty of Leadership

I have found far too often that people who insist on having the title of a leader are men and women that do not actually lead. It is those that have humbled themselves and worked on themselves every single day that have the right to lead others.

When it boils down to it, real leadership is about having others respect you so much that they will follow you and listen to your authority. A real leader does not lead out of fear, because eventually, fear-driven leadership will consume the leader herself.

A true leader, on the other hand, puts the interest of those she leads above her own. Leaders have a responsibility for leading those who follow them to a better future than the one they currently have – not one of less freedom, not one of control, but a future for the betterment of mankind. If you want to lead, figure out for yourself what leading this planet to be a better place looks like. Whatever you choose to do, do it with courage. Lead now to make the future your own.

## Conclusion: Finding Your Extraordinary

At the end of the day, being extraordinary is like a kaleidoscope. Better yet, it's like a mosaic. It takes small pieces of a large collection of skills that we work on every single day.

To be extraordinary is to be able to look into the future when others are stuck in the moments of today. The core elements of an extraordinary life include: courage, your mo lewis moment, don't follow your passion, learn from failure, done is better than perfect, creating your own opportunities, define your own success, have a future vision, have a duty to lead, tell your story, be radically responsible.

All I want for you is greatness and an extraordinary life. Make these lessons the change you need to move forward to become extraordinary.



**Jeremy Ryan Slate** is the founder of the Create Your Own Life Podcast, which studies the highest performers in the world. He specializes in using podcasting and new media to create trust and increasing leader status. Jeremy was named one of the top 26 podcasts for entrepreneurs to listen to in 2017 and 2018 by CIO Magazine, top podcast to listen to by INC Magazine in 2019. His podcast has been downloaded over 2.5 million times. He's also a contributing editor of New Theory Magazine and Grit Daily.

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# Unsafe Thinking

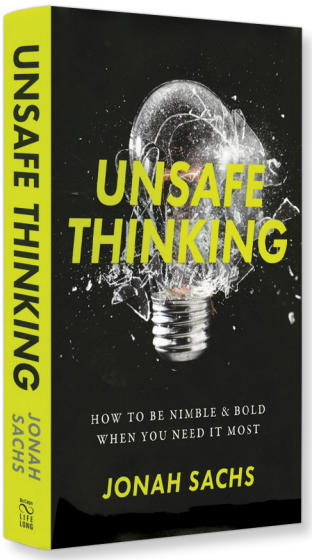
Jonah Sachs

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# Unsafe Thinking

## How to Be Nimble and Bold When You Need It Most




by Jonah Sachs

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

How can you challenge and change yourself when you need it most? We're creatures of habit, programmed by evolution to favor the safe and familiar, especially when the stakes are high. This bias no longer serves us in a world of constant change. In fact, today, safe thinking has become extremely dangerous.

Through stories of trailblazers in business, health, education and activism, and leveraging decades of research on creativity and performance, Jonah Sachs reveals a path to higher performance and creativity for anyone ready to step out of their comfort zone.

*Unsafe Thinking* is full of counterintuitive insights that will challenge you to rethink how you work. Sachs reveals, among other key points, why your area of deep expertise is often where you'll find your biggest blind spots, why anxiety can be fuel for creativity, and how collaborating only with those that share your values stunts your creativity.

An inspiring and accessible read, *Unsafe Thinking* has the power to change the way you approach both your work and your life.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To recognize — and break out of — the "safe thinking cycle."
- To find the perfect balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
- To keep exploring and avoid falling into the "expert's trap."
- When to trust intuition and when to challenge it.
- To build an organization that embraces intelligent risk.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **UNSAFE THINKING**

**by Jonah Sachs**

**The author:** Jonah Sachs is an author, speaker and viral marketing trailblazer whose work helped spur the 21st-century values revolution. His pioneering new approaches to digital media were critical in bringing the ideals of social change to the forefront of business and popular culture. He is also the author of *Winning the Story Wars*, and his work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, FOX News, the Sundance Film Festival, NPR and *Fast Company*.

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## Courage

### The Safe Thinking Cycle: Why We Stick to Our Guns When We Know We Shouldn't

Unsafe thinking is the ability to meet challenges with a willingness to depart from standard operating procedures; to confront anxiety, tolerate criticism, take intelligent risks and refute conventional wisdom — especially one's own views — in order to achieve breakthroughs.

In a rapidly changing world, unsafe thinking is an indispensable skill. But it doesn't come naturally because the basic structures of the human mind prejudice us against changing ourselves and how we approach problems.

When facing an unfamiliar challenge, we often know we need to open our minds to a wider field of possible solutions because the status quo clearly will not suffice. At the same time, the threat we feel switches our brains into survival mode, which tends to make us cling to the familiar and engage in safety-seeking behavior.

The pernicious dynamic of clinging to the familiar and safe is captured in the safe thinking cycle. The first step of the cycle, threat awareness, gets triggered in many ways. We feel it when we get negative sales information, a customer or client complains, or our boss criticizes our work. Even success leads to threat awareness, paradoxically, because it propels us onto bigger stages, with greater challenges and higher stakes. It is impossible to live our lives, let alone try to accomplish anything of value, without triggering threat awareness along the way.

In step two of the cycle, the perception of threat causes a spike in what neuroscientists call cortical arousal, a state of increased wakefulness, vigilance and focus. We need this to react quickly and decisively to physical threats, for example. But a low arousal state is better for creative thinking. With all our cognitive systems running at normal, we're free to let our attention roam to where our curiosity takes it, and this fosters creative insights.

When we confront a challenge that feels threatening, we no longer have the option of staying consistently in low arousal. We are programmed by evolution to respond with high arousal because of the need for speed of action in dealing with many of the threats our early ancestors faced.

Take the case of a new competitive threat at work, say, from a fast-emerging new technology. Though we may perceive that our old ways of operating aren't adequate for this new challenge, and we may feel a desire to "open up," our brains scream at us to shut down our range of options and take safety-seeking action. These are short-term fixes that we believe will hold off the threat and lower our anxiety.

We tell ourselves that once we've handled the immediate threat, we'll have the luxury of being more expansive. Unfortunately, we're unwittingly priming the cycle to repeat. Following an old course of action in the face of new challenges sets us up for even more threat and thus more anxiety and arousal.

### Fear as Fuel: How to Embrace Anxiety and Break the Safe Thinking Cycle

Mahatma Gandhi, now a global symbol of courage in the face of danger, wrestled mightily with the fear of not fitting in and being judged.

Well into adulthood, Gandhi suffered debilitating shyness. He never became entirely comfortable with social interaction, but he came to see his struggles with himself as an important source of his power. As he grew older,

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor; **Kylie O'Connor**, Graphic Designer; **A. Imus**, Contributing Editor

Gandhi spoke of his shyness, which had once brought him tremendous shame, as one of his key assets. To his trait of speaking hesitatingly and slowly, for example, he attributed the fact that he hardly ever regretted a word he had said. That, he reflected, was a key to his leadership.

We all feel anxiety when setting out on a new and uncharted course. How we contend with that anxiety makes all the difference.

Trying to stop ourselves from feeling anxiety only makes the cycle more pernicious. Psychologists call the act of suppressing negative emotions "experiential avoidance." People spend enormous amounts of energy trying to master the art. But the effort is worse than useless. Experiential avoidance actually has the effect of exacerbating unwanted emotions.

Rather than trying to avoid or fight our anxiety, those who study its nature say we should learn to become more comfortable with the discomfort of it, which lessens the impulse to react in a fight-or-flight fashion and frees us to be more creative in our responses to challenges. But how can we build up this tolerance?

Cognitive psychology has shown that the simple process of becoming aware that we're having an automatic, emotional reaction and coaching ourselves to accept the feelings rather than trying to avoid them can be extraordinarily powerful.

If we can welcome a bit of discomfort with a belief that it is a necessary signal of the potential for growth, we can feel the cortical arousal, give it a moment (or a day) to pass and then retake control of our actions. With a foundation of courage and a mindset that embraces rather than shrinks from anxiety, we can learn to master discomfort and change long-held thinking patterns.

# Motivation

### Mastering Motivation: How to Energize Yourself and Others to Stay on the Edge

The popular understanding of motivation tells us that to sustain our energy while taking the risk of breaking with the herd and to pick ourselves up from failure, we must be driven primarily by passion for the work we're doing, or as psychologists say, we must be intrinsically motivated.

This notion doesn't come out of nowhere. Teresa Amabile shook the world of creativity research by demonstrating how children lose their creative edge when offered a reward for their work. The London School of Economics studied 51 companies using pay-for-performance plans and found that these bonuses actually decreased employee effectiveness. But can we really expect to achieve a state of pure intrinsic motivation without quitting our jobs and heading for the Himalayas?

Yes, there are times when a focus on rewards can be absolutely deadly. But there are smart ways to use intrinsic and extrinsic motivation together to amplify the energy and commitment required to keep ourselves in the demanding zone of challenge and creativity.

Researchers have concluded that when offered rewards in ways that make us feel manipulated, coerced or controlled — which is how our bosses and society tend to impose extrinsic motivators — we lose motivation. We feel like pawns in someone else's game and give up or act in counterproductive ways.

But when we understand that the two types of motivation and rewards are offered in an upfront way that doesn't feel manipulative, we can make choices about how we respond to rewards. We come to treat them as fun, enjoyable bonuses rather than tools of control. Thus, the external rewards only serve to increase our intrinsic drive.

If we're smart and have established a base of love for what we do, we can use the desire for money, esteem, status or freedom in just the right way to boost motivation.

Intuit, the financial software giant, uses what it calls an "Unstructured Time" reward for top innovators. If you perform at a high level, you'll get significant chunks of time to explore and play wherever your passions lead.

### Finding Your Source: Why We Need to Love the Challenges We Face

Every day people get stuck in the face of new and critically important challenges. All too often, they lose their drive to succeed and settle for the mediocre. They fall back on the familiar rather than take the risks needed for success. Why is that?

Psychological science tells us not simply that a healthy dose of intrinsic motivation is important but where intrinsic motivation actually springs from. And it provides clues for how we might imbue any team's work with focus, energy and love of the process.

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi uses the term "flow" to describe the psychological state we enter when the conditions of high challenge and high skill emerge. He has shown that when the level of challenge just barely exceeds the level of skill, this lays the groundwork for producing a state of heightened focus, creativity and determination.

If we add to this mix clear goals and the ability to get consistent feedback on our progress, Csikszentmihalyi

has demonstrated, flow consistently emerges. Despite exertion and hard work, people in flow feel a sense of love for the task they are involved in and are far more likely to invent novel and useful solutions. Flow is a key source of intrinsic motivation.

Throughout the act of creation, we can achieve and stay in flow by checking in regularly to assess our answers to these three questions:

- Do I (or we) know what success really looks like? Flow theory asks us to take the time to be very specific about what our targets are and how we'll know we're achieving them.
- Can we get regular feedback to know if we're making progress? If we receive feedback with a sense of unattached curiosity (positive feedback is a great sign we're making progress; negative feedback is a great chance to learn), we're increasing our chances to create flow.
- Do we have the skills to match this challenge? It makes sense to do the equivalent of an equipment check as we set off on our journey. We can begin by mapping out the phases of a project from first conception to execution and refinement. For each phase, or even for each necessary task, do we believe we have the specific skills we need? Or will the challenge be too much of a stretch in spots? If we can identify those places ahead of time, we can plan for them.

## Learning

### The Explorer's Edge: How to Pursue Expertise Without Falling into the Expert's Trap

Being unprepared for an exam is one of the most common nightmares people experience. In fact, dream researcher Tony Zadra says this nightmare is not just experienced by those who go through life truly underprepared but is particularly common among the highly educated and successful.

We are right to fear not having expertise when we need it. And we need it often. It's extremely difficult to create anything of value in a field without first becoming something of an expert.

Why then, if expertise is so indispensable, do experts so often lead us astray? Why are experts so slow to update their views in the face of new evidence? And why do relative beginners sometimes beat experts at their own game? The answers to these questions are critical because, throughout the process of creation, we must constantly decide whether to rely on or question our expertise, to deepen what we know or seek entirely new ideas, to see the world through the eyes of the expert or the beginner.

Decision-making researcher Gary Klein points out that while expertise can make us enormously efficient at playing an established game, it can also make us slower to realize when the game has changed and less able to respond to those changes. For example, expert bridge players have been shown to have more trouble than novices in adapting when important rules, like who gets to lead, are suddenly tweaked.

Rice University researcher Erik Dane says one of the most effective things we can do is put ourselves in situations where we're novices. Get out more and explore. It's a key way, he says, of taking the rigidity out of overdeveloped knowledge networks. Time spent in the unfamiliar can enhance anyone's creativity significantly.

Why do so many of us stay comfortably in our own domains, inadvertently becoming more fixed and rigid? The culprits are two drives we humans have trouble resisting: ego attachment and urgency. Learning to master them can open the space to explore much more broadly and get out of the kind of safe thinking that keeps us stuck.

### Ego and Urgency: How to Tame the Urges That Keep Us From Exploring

It's 2007, and Vineet Nayar has just been appointed CEO of HCL Technologies, a global IT services company based in India. His first public appearance is about to get underway. Nayar steps onto the stage as a crowd of 4,000 employees murmurs speculation about what the new boss is going to say.

Nervous anticipation fills the room because Nayar is taking over in uncertain times. The firm has recently grown rapidly to 55,000 employees, and major challenges are on the horizon. HCL is going through the growing pains of transitioning from cut-rate outsource IT provider to aspiring global player, and that will mean having to compete with giants like IBM for some of the world's most demanding customers. Few feel that the company is ready.

Nayar faces the room and smiles. Suddenly, a popular Bollywood tune blasts through the auditorium. The boss begins bopping his head and awkwardly wiggling his portly, middle-aged body. He is dancing! He descends the stage and boogies his way down the aisle. The employees, nervously at first, begin clapping their hands over their heads. Now they're cheering as he pulls people out into the aisle to dance with him. He shimmies all around the room, employees crushing in

behind him, and when he returns to the stage, sweaty and out of breath, the crowd erupts in a cheer.

After performing another number on stage to more raucous approval, Nayar composes himself. He begins to lay out his vision for totally upending the company's management structure, giving more autonomy to frontline employees. He says that he has laid out the bones of the plan but still wants his employees to speak up and challenge it — that their input is vital.

He recalled later, "Those words sounded very different coming from a sweaty man who had just proved in public that he couldn't dance than they would have coming from the emperor at the podium." His goofy ploy worked. An animated, two-hour discussion followed.

Nayar wasn't dancing only for the employees that day; he was also playing a psychological trick on himself. The company's board had given him carte blanche to drive change however he saw fit. But he feared thinking he knew exactly what to do. He wanted to find a way to make sure he listened, genuinely and with a flexible mind, to any and all ideas shared. By humbling himself with his wacky dancing, he primed his psyche to be receptive. After dancing, he felt he had less of an expert's image to defend, having already showed how imperfect he was.

It feels good to be an expert. It's a mark of accomplishment, intelligence and hard work. It brings us esteem and makes us feel needed. And that, just like overactive pattern recognition, can lead us, unwittingly, down the path to entrenchment.

As we come to identify with what we think we know, our identities and our egos can become attached to the unique knowledge networks we've constructed, leading us to want to defend our expertise from any challenges, whether from new information that runs contrary to our accumulated knowledge or from people questioning our views.

The endpoint of this path is closed-mindedness and overconfidence. The problem of overconfidence and closed-mindedness in areas we believe we have expertise is all the more troubling because we so generally tend to credit ourselves with having more expertise than we do. Many studies have documented this phenomenon, often referred to as the "better-than-average effect." For example, 93 percent of US drivers rate themselves as above average behind the wheel. Even drivers currently laid up in the hospital for accidents they themselves had caused were similarly found to overestimate their abilities!

This data may explain a rising appreciation for humble leaders who act like explorers rather than experts. Instead of making their employees feel uncertain and unguided, according to a 2013 study from the University of Washington and the State University of New York, Buffalo, humble leaders were far more likely to have engaged, satisfied and loyal employees.

## Flexibility

### The Power and Perils of Thinking With Your Gut: Why We Need Intuition and How It Often Leads Us Astray

By their very nature, counterintuitive ideas lead the way to possibilities few others are interested in considering, and this is a key reason that, according to esteemed creativity researcher Robert Sternberg, they can be such rich sources of creative breakthrough. Because analysis alone can't prove an unusual idea is right, proceeding demands a heavy dose of intuition.

What we commonly call "intuition" actually refers to a couple of very different mental processes that we experience in very similar ways. The first we might simply call subconscious processing, in which our brain is logically analyzing information in the background of our conscious attention, and when it arrives at a sense of coherence, an intuition bursts forth. This type of intuition uses similar neural pathways in the brain as those used for conscious thinking, so its conclusions, while hard to explain and justify, can be as "smart" as those derived by our conscious mind.

The second source of intuition relies on what Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky have famously referred to as "heuristics," mental shortcuts that we use to quickly and efficiently make sense of a complex world. In other words, snap judgments. Heuristics are hard-coded deeply in our psychological makeup, often regardless of experiences we've had. We don't learn these shortcuts so much as we're born with them. For example, we intuitively "know" that things that happen in close succession and close proximity are probably related through cause and effect (even when they're not).

Like subconscious processing, heuristic thinking tends to transmit its findings through the body and through feelings. The instantaneousness of both processes also makes them feel quite similar. Subconscious processing often takes considerable time, but because we're not aware that our brains are working in the background, the resulting intuition may feel like it happens all at once. Heuristic thinking, on the other hand, does happen at lightning speed.

Intuition can be powerful in helping us recognize patterns in conditions of complexity and when speed of

decision making is vital, and that intuition is an indispensable part of creativity. But we've got to be alert about false intuitions that can trap us, leading us to decisions based on biases we would never consciously embrace.

### Harnessing Intuition: How to Recognize Faulty Intuition and Hone Your Instincts

Kahneman and Tversky have demonstrated that what feels like intuition can often just be faulty heuristic thinking or bias. For example, "availability bias" is a thinking flaw that causes people to consistently overweight the importance or likelihood of things that are easy to recall. Familiarity bias pushes us, for example, to prefer investments in the known over the unknown, even when the numbers don't work in our favor.

These cognitive biases are devilish and difficult to overcome. But they aren't alone in skewing our intuition. Because intuition travels to our attention along our emotional highways, it can often get muddled and polluted by feelings that have their own, often unhelpful, agendas.

If we want to find and invest in counterintuitive breakthroughs, abandoning our intuition altogether hardly seems reasonable, but if it's so often flawed, is letting it guide us ever advisable?

Robin Hogarth, a leader in the field of intuition research, advises, "Emotions are data that need to be explained." In other words, we should treat our intuitive insights like ingenious hypotheses. We shouldn't ignore them. We also shouldn't feel sheepish about openly discussing them with our colleagues. Intuitions belong at the front of the line of our attention when making difficult decisions in uncertain environments. But we should never trust our intuitions until we've questioned them, pressure-tested them and patted them down, searching for cognitive and emotional bias.

Hogarth says that intuition is a learned and trainable skill. We develop intuition over time based on our experiences and the rewards and punishments we receive for using it. And that means the environments in which our intuitions develop are of critical importance. A "wicked learning environment," in Hogarth's terminology, gives us slow, ambiguous or misleading feedback, while a "kind learning environment" gives us plenty of timely, clear and accurate feedback.

When we form an intuitive judgment, we should ask ourselves, "Am I getting this intuition in a kind or wicked learning environment?" If the environment is kind — that is, you've been in it long enough to understand it, it provides lots of clear and direct feedback, and it hasn't changed much over time — Hogarth says, you should be more inclined to trust it. If the environment is wicked, your intuition deserves a far more skeptical eye.

### Leaping into the Counterintuitive: How to Tackle Difficult Problems With Unexpected Solutions

Counterintuitive insights can grow logically from stepping back, finding those places where conventional thinking is broken, and then creatively attacking the problem from a new angle. To do that, however, we must begin with a willingness to work through the discomfort of accepting that some of our most basic beliefs about how the world works might be leading us astray.

We can use a set of established tools to optimize our ability to entertain more seemingly outlandish ideas. Here's how:

**Embrace cognitive dissonance**. What are the inconvenient truths of your industry or your company? Think of the inconvenient truths you dig up as starting points for engaging in productive cognitive dissonance rather than as obstacles to avoid.

**Reformulate the problem**. Before spending any more time trying to solve a particularly difficult problem, ask if you must solve it to reach the end you're seeking. Might you solve other problems instead that will achieve the same result? Might subtle reformulations of the problem open new doors?

**Bring in an outsider's mindset, or simply an outsider**. We can all benefit from inviting outsiders into our solution-finding or leveraging our own knowledge from other, unrelated fields.

**Listen to, then test intuition**. We should not dismiss counterintuitive approaches simply because they defy conventional wisdom. We should capture them as they appear in our creative processes, even when they come from our own mysterious intuitive thinking. Once they do emerge, we must then test them rigorously.

**Present ideas as minimally counterintuitive**. An interesting body of research demonstrates that people tend to tune in to, remember and talk about ideas that strike a happy medium. Known as minimally counterintuitive concepts, they tend to be rather mundane in most ways but to have one or two features that break expectations.

Airbnb launched as AirBedandBreakfast, emphasizing that people all around the world were already opening their homes to strangers by running bed-and-breakfasts. Early Airbnb hosts were nothing at all like professional

bed-and-breakfast owners, but the analogy made the new model feel safer and better established in renters' minds.

## Morality

### When Wrong Is Right: Why Being Creative Means Sometimes Bending (or Breaking) the Rules

Classrooms, companies and governments set rules for many good reasons, such as to increase predictability, minimize risk and create harmony. In contrast, new, breakthrough ideas are usually unpredictable and risky and upset established patterns. That's why companies and managers so often talk about how much they value creativity, then reject it once they see it, forcing creative individuals to lie, cheat and steal to bring their ideas to life.

Writer Ira Chaleff brought the term "intelligent disobedience" to the business world's attention, inspired by his observations of how guide dogs are trained to behave at work. Imagine a blind woman and her trusted dog. For the duo to function, the dog must be instantly responsive to his owner and make her goals his own.

What happens, though, when the owner tells the dog to step off the curb, but the dog sees a car coming that might kill one or both of them? Amazingly, without abstract thought or verbal language, guide dogs can be taught to disobey with a commitment to a higher purpose. They will ignore a direct command that goes against the best interest of the team. Without that ability, neither owner nor dog would be remotely safe.

So how can we bring intelligent disobedience into our organizations without getting our heads chopped off? Research shows that it's a two-way street. As employees, we can cleverly increase our chances of getting away with rule-breaking with a few critical strategies. And as leaders, we can design our organizations to benefit from rather than punish positive rule-breaking behavior.

First, be open about dissatisfaction with creativity-killing rules. While pushing back on company policy can get us labeled as troublemakers, we're far more likely to make enemies by resisting in secret.

Next, it's important to articulate the pro-social value of breaking a rule rather than the personal reason for doing so. Managers are more likely to forgive a violation committed in the interest of customers, co-workers or society as a whole rather than to help an individual employee achieve a personally important goal or rectify a private grievance.

### Creating With the Enemy: Why We Need Friends Who Look Like Foes

In a surprising and widely quoted experiment, the University of Michigan's Scott E. Page and Lu Hong of Loyola University showed that groups selected at random tend to be more effective at solving complex problems in fields like business, public policy and education than even handpicked groups of the best and brightest experts.

"This is because the random group is more likely to contain a diversity of approaches to these tasks," explains Page. The experts are all likely to follow similar strategies and duplicate each other's work. But the random group, because its members have different perspectives and ideologies, Page says, will more quickly overcome any shared weaknesses.

"If we're in an organization where everyone thinks in the same way, everyone will get stuck in the same place. But if we have people with diverse tools, they'll get stuck in different places. One person can do their best, and then someone else can come in and improve on it."

These findings should throw up warning signals for the growing number of organizations proudly declaring that they hire for cultural fit over skills (Google calls their cultural fit Googliness). We want to keep negative, destructive personalities off our teams, but how quickly can culture fit come to mean people who think like we do, care about what we care about and employ the same mindsets we do?

## Leadership

### Unsafety in Numbers: How to Break Consensus and Infect Others with the Confidence to Take Risks

Over a 20-month period, the University of Richmond's Dejun Tony Kong watched 42 teams take on a difficult change-management consulting project. He found that the teams made of highly agreeable people not only performed worse than more cantankerous teams but often couldn't tell when things were going wrong. They judged their satisfaction with their team based on how good it felt to be together rather than what they were getting done.

Teams with a few disagreeable individuals showed a different pattern. Not only did they perform better, but their satisfaction tended to track well with their results. Feeling good came not from getting along but from making progress, and so they had a functional internal compass to guide them to success.

The first takeaway here is that we should stop spending so much energy trying to make others feel good, and if nobody else is doing it well, we should strive to be an occasionally disagreeable member of any group we're in.

But Kong's study also highlights another important and subtle rule about teams: Success derives from disagreement but not of the sort that depresses a team's satisfaction in working together.

We need not denigrate, embarrass or resist our teammates to break out of the trap of agreeableness. So how can we disrupt harmony without destroying morale? One way is to gamify disagreement by finding mechanisms that both encourage and depersonalize controversy.

A low-tech solution for gamifying disagreement is the use of red teams. The term comes from military war games in which the blue team represents our side and the military strategies we are considering using in the real world.

The red team takes the role of the enemy, and its job, of course, is not to make the blue team feel good about itself. Red team members are supposed to expose every possible flaw in their opponents' plans and defeat them if possible.

Despite the fierce competition, everyone playing the game knows they're actually on the same side with a common goal of making the chosen strategy better, and there's a culture of respect for those who run excellent red teams even though they occasionally best their colleagues or superiors.

This kind of approach can work for any group.

### Rewarding the Nonobvious: How the Right Incentives Fuel Breakthrough Creative Teams

When Steve Kerr took over as head coach of the Golden State Warriors in 2015, the NBA team was already one of the best in the league. The year before they had gone a very respectable 51–31, but they had lost in the first round of playoffs, leading to the firing of head coach Mark Jackson.

Once Kerr had earned their trust by showing respect for their accomplishments, he says, he proceeded to shift the team's focus to the important activities that usually get overlooked. "We were last in the league in passes per game," he said. "We weren't involving everyone. So we started to celebrate and reward the number of passes we made. I would read off the stats each night, and the team got really interested. We went from 245 a game to 315, and that had a huge impact on our ability to win."

By celebrating not just those who scored and made the highlight reels but those who contributed to group success, Kerr took the team from 51 to 67 wins and an NBA title in his first season.

To instill a sense in our teams that it's safe to take risks, a focus on incentives that reward effort and not just results is critical. Research indicates that we can begin by specifically rewarding contributors who pursue thoughtful but disruptive lines of experimentation (regardless of where they lead). We can give credit to those who share their negative results, recognizing that in doing so they're saving the larger group from repeating their mistakes.

And we can provide incentives based on group rather than individual performance, allowing for some members to risk hitting dead ends while still sharing in the larger group's success.

Groups must be constantly cultivated to allow for disruption as well as incentivized to step beyond the bounds of safety. And that takes a constant focus from leaders at all levels. When it's done right, the payoff is profound.

So many conventional notions of what it means to be a leader, a creator or a disruptor are just plain wrong. If we want to adapt to a changing world, we need to attune our internal role models to the latest science and to our times.

Perhaps the most important thing you can do is try confronting challenging situations with a new internal role model, to ask yourself when you face the unknown, "What would an unsafe thinker do?"

And then do it.


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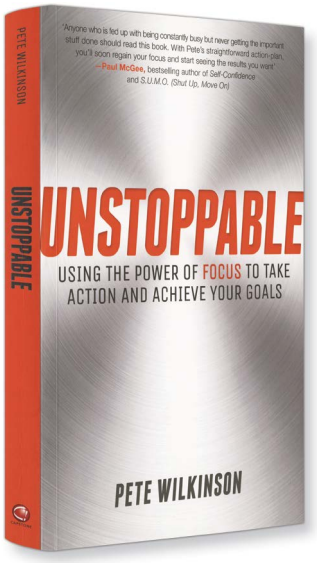
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# Unstoppable

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# Unstoppable

## Using the Power of Focus to Take Action and Achieve Your Goals

by Pete Wilkinson

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Be determined. Be driven. Be Unstoppable. Don't just coast through life — power through. Stop making plans that don't come to fruition. Everyone's busy, but nobody's getting much done. It's time to start achieving our life goals and not letting life itself get in the way.

Get organized. Lead. Build relationships. Deliver results. With training from accomplished business coach and endurance triathlete Pete Wilkinson, you'll learn how to hone a razor sharp focus, keep driving through to the finishing line and become what you've always wanted to be. You'll learn how to be more productive, expand your support system and make things happen. You'll discover your strengths and weaknesses and how to leverage one and delegate the other.

Dust off your aspirations, and drag them into the light. Get rid of the frustration, regain your focus and start making your goals a priority. *Unstoppable* gives you a roadmap to your very best destination.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How your habits can be one of the biggest factors in whether you are able to achieve your personal and professional goals.
- How to develop a 1-3-5 action plan, including one Vision, three Core Objectives and five Goals for each Core Objective.
- The four key execution skills you need to create your unstoppable system.
- Seven steps to take to power your performance through the next 12 months.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **UNSTOPPABLE**

**by Pete Wilkinson**

**The author:** Pete Wilkinson's professional career started 18 years ago with senior management roles in retail. Wilkinson has managed a large team of 300 people, along with having P&L responsibility for a $46 million business. He has also run his own retail business with a much smaller team. He is massively passionate about ambitious, professional people achieving their potential and spends his time in his business delivering keynote presentations, leading workshops, and partnering with chief executives and managing directors. Wilkinson has an MBA from Newcastle Business School.

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This book can be purchased at amazon.com.

## PART ONE: THE BEGINNING

### Why Develop an Unstoppable Attitude?

When you compete in a challenge like an ultra-endurance triathlon, you have to be quite fit. But you don't even stand a chance of reaching the finish line inside the 17-hour cutoff without realizing that your mindset can dramatically affect your attitude.

You have been into a store, bank or medical surgery and a member of staff displayed the wrong type of attitude. You can then turn the corner and visit another business and have a completely different experience. It's amazing to consider that some businesses don't address these traits.

There are lots of components that come into play when you are developing your attitude for endurance racing. You have to consider your nutrition, your physical training, your mental strength training in winter and dealing with setbacks such as mechanical failure with your bike. All of these go into the pot of building the attitude that you will be successful on the day of the race.

#### Change It Up

The same approach applies when developing your attitude for your business and life. Where you are now is not where you have to stay. Change is inevitable, but growth is optional. You are the one person who can decide how you respond to that change.

One of the greatest characteristics of winners is that they develop the expectation of success way before there is any evidence to support that success is certain. They simply believe that they will be successful. Tom Peters (business speaker and author of *In Search of Excellence*) said that belief is pointless without the right toolkit. Developing your Unstoppable system and 1-3-5 Action Plan is an exciting journey, admittedly very challenging at times but still exciting.

When you have developed your foundation 1-3-5 Action Plan (one Vision, three Core Objectives and five Goals for each Core Objective) and then developed the key skills to maximize the application of your 1-3-5, you will be far more confident, your belief will increase and you will have developed your Unstoppable system.

## PART TWO: THE FOUNDATION

### Becoming Effective is All About Your Habits!

Having a solid foundation is critical to the success of your life and business. Many people start a business without giving enough attention to the foundation upon which it is built. You've heard of the phrase "built on shifting sand." But be honest. How much time have you given to your business foundation?

The Eiffel Tower in Paris is a beautiful sight. The tower was built by the engineer Gustave Eiffel, and one French mathematics professor thought it would collapse at a height of 748 feet. It was thought also that it would only last 20 years; it's still standing strong over 100 years later.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Executive Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Ashleigh Imus**, Senior Editor **Eileen Spatz**, Contributing Editor

One of the main reasons the tower is still a beacon of French pride is because of how Eiffel designed its foundation. Gustave intricately designed the tower's foundation, which is composed of cement and stone placed at an exact angle so that each of the four curved piers of the tower with an inward tilt of 54 degrees would maximize wind resistance and exert a perpendicular thrust to its foundation.

So, it is fair to say that the level of focus and detail that Gustave Eiffel displayed in designing the tower is the key reason why it is still standing today.

Look at your business and your life, and build a similar style foundation. If you have a large business that has departments, what are the foundations like within those departments? When you do build that solid foundation, your business will be more stable, more profitable and far more successful.

But most people don't do that. Most people have a notion of what they want to achieve, a vague idea of what success looks like, and just start the process of delivering. This isn't to say that taking action isn't vital; it is. However, most business owners come in on a Monday morning and just start doing what they have always done largely in the same way and expect a different result. That is not going to happen. This way of approaching your business is opportunistic. If you want to be successful in your business or even in general life, you need to get strategic!

### Set "Stretch" Goals

Completing an ultra-endurance triathlon is a really big achievement. For you it may be a 10k run, a double triathlon or learning a challenging new skill or language. The key is that you push yourself to shift out of your comfort zone. All too often we get comfortable in our lives and our businesses. When we get comfortable, we can start to coast. That's the absolute worst thing that can happen to a high-performance person like you. We need to be pushed, and we need to be challenged. The last thing you want to do is flick your cruise-control switch.

Stretch goals are a great way to make sure you don't flick your cruise-control switch. What stretch goal could you set right now that you will complete in the next 90 days? A stretch goal is something that when you achieve it, it will deliver a quantum shift in performance for you and your business. It might be launching a new product, writing a book, learning an instrument or acquiring a new strategically significant client (someone who is ideal and really gets what you do and will pay you the correct fee).

All too often when we're doing something difficult or when we consider doing something difficult, we often focus on the feeling while immersed in the task instead of the great feeling we'll experience when we've completed the task. If instead you aim to build the habit of connecting to the outcome rather than to the task, you will take more action on what you need to take action on and achieve more.

When you get control of the thoughts that occupy your mind and keep focused on the positive ones, you'll get momentum on your side and make far more effective progress. You can go on, you can get control of your thoughts, you can switch them to be positive and you can get through it.

Learn to control the thoughts that occupy your mind; be focused and consistent, and you'll be Unstoppable.

### Are Your Habits Serving You?

Before we can get started with building your 1-3-5 Action Plan, we first need to look at how you are operating currently. If 47 percent of what we do is habitual, it's important that we assess our habits and rituals and check if they are serving or strangling us.

A habit is something that we do on a regular basis until it becomes so easy that we can do it without thinking. Some of your habits will be good, and some will be not so good. It takes about 21 days to form a new habit. Address any bad habits, and you'll open up a whole new range of possibilities for you to use your strengths.

It's worth remembering that successful people have successful habits. Sit and think for awhile about who you respect in business and life. Think about what they do (their habits and rituals) that enables them to be successful. Then build a picture of yourself having and displaying that habit.

If we want things to change, then we must change, so identify and correct bad habits. Think about this for a moment: The reason your business is doing so well is because of you — well done! But the reason your business is only doing so well is because of you. We really need to take responsibility for where we are in our businesses and our lives in general. A major area to take responsibility for is our habits, and remember that every bad habit needs to be replaced with a good habit. Your habits will determine your future; what you do today will affect what you receive tomorrow.

## Your Crystal Clear Vision

Now it's time to start building your 1-3-5 Action Plan. The first component of becoming Unstoppable is Vision. Having a crystal clear Vision is the start. How clear do you see the big picture? People talk about being pulled toward

their Vision rather than having to push all of the time. Plus, when you have clarified your Vision, you will find it easier to engage others in your plan.

Many business owners say that they have a Vision. These corporate Visions tend to be about the business and often don't even mention the customer and what they are going to receive. All your business is about is delivering a result that your customer feels is worth more than they pay for that result. Just make sure that what you deliver has a higher value (can be perceived) than its monetary equivalent.

If you don't have a crystal clear picture of the type of life that you'd want and a crystal clear picture of the type of business that you'd want, how on earth could you create it? You could end up like the many business owners who finish each week not feeling fulfilled in their business because they are not engaged and motivated about what the big picture is and what they are in the process of creating.

Become Unstoppable, and get crystal clear about your Vision.

### Achieving Crystal Clear Focus

In order to maximize your progress and multiply your resuts, we're going to clarify your Vision.

Here's where the excitement starts. Your Vision is going to give you an overall focus. It's going to frame what you do every single day. It's going to pull you towards success the way gravity pulls an apple to earth.

Your Vision is going to be engaging. It's going to incorporate what you do, who you do it for and what they'll get. It's going to say what you'll receive and what you'll be able to do with what you receive. It's going to clearly and succinctly describe what success means to you and WHY you want it.

Your Vision is the real starting point. Because of that, we're going to get it right. I've created this seven-step process for you to follow so that you can create a powerful, big Vision for yourself:

**Step 1:** Create your picture. Have a go at drawing what you would like to create. Think about the different components that would make up an ideal business and structure for you.

**Step 2:** Collect some photographs of the things you would like to have in your life.

**Step 3:** Describe what a perfect day looks like.

**Step 4:** Imagine what life will be like when you achieve your Vision.

**Step 5:** Measure your success. Have a figure to focus on that means something to you.

**Step 6:** Get clear about the value you're going to deliver. If you are struggling to come up with some of the values and benefits of what you do, then you can always ask some of your existing clients.

**Step 7:** Write down your own first draft of your business/life Vision.

Clarify and then read your Vision weekly; you need to connect with it and keep it front of mind. This is going to drive all of your actions. Can you imagine how much more you will achieve when you start your week really motivated and have your Vision at the center of what you do?

## Your Three Core Objectives

You now have your Vision. You've created a simple, succinct statement of what success looks like to you. Now is the time to chunk it down.

The overall purpose of creating your 1-3-5 Action Plan is so that you have a proven plan that enables you to take focused action on a consistent basis so that you become exceptional and ultimately Unstoppable. Action is the essential ingredient in life; only what you think about, talk about and then do something about will actually come about.

With your Vision being so grand, you'll be wondering where to start. This is where your three Core Objectives come in — chunking down your Vision to make it more achievable.

You may be wondering why we have three Core Objectives. The reason we have three is because if you are like most business professionals, you probably have more to do than you have time to do it. Your focus is being spread too thinly, and your efforts are being diluted to the point where, in some weeks, you begin to wonder what impact you have had.

Having three Core Objectives will ensure that you cover the main objectives that are needed to achieve your Vision, and this is where you are going to direct your attention and focus. If you undertake a task that doesn't directly contribute to one or all of your Core Objectives, then you need to question why you are doing that task. Because your three Core Objectives are central to the completion of your Vision, the majority of your time should be spent on achieving them.

### Creating Your Three Core Objectives

Starting with Core Objective One, you need to ask yourself, "What is the first thing that absolutely needs to be in place for you to reach your Vision?" An example would be, if you were a chiropractor, then focus on the

number of clients on a particular payment plan which contributes to turnover. If you were a trainer or coaching professional, Core Objective One may be how much income you want from a particular income stream or product line in a 12-month period.

Core Objectives of this nature emphasize that you are only going to achieve Core Objective One by helping people to do or have something before they pay you. Whatever business you are in, you need people. That may be people to support you, people you support or people you identify as paying clients.

Before you dash off and write your Core Objective One, there are three main things that your objectives need to be: they must be core, they must be specific and they must be written like you've achieved them.

Core Objective Two should be focused on process and system. Thinking about your Vision, what process and system would need to be in place? Looking critically at your business Core Objective Two could be about having a proven delivery system that enables you to grow your business and achieve your Vision.

If you are a manufacturing or retail business, your Core Objective Two could be about how you deliver your product. It would be the development of a system or process manual that enables you to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

Core Objective Three is your final objective. Core Objective Three could have to do with the person you need to be to achieve the success and the Vision you have set. You may have to develop some brilliant new habits. You may have to acquire new skills. You may have to make far better use of your time.

It's possible that your Vision is about reaching and having an impact on many people, far more than you impact on today. If that is the case, having a Core Objective to focus on in that area could be critical.

Be careful your Core Objectives are not just simple goals. They are meant to stretch you and not be something you could achieve with your eyes shut. When you've set your Three Core Objectives, keep focused on taking action to achieve them; keep making progress.

## Your Five Goals

One of the major reasons why people don't get to where they want to be is because they can't see a route. Let's design some signposts so you know where you're going and you can measure the inevitable progress you'll soon be making. This is why it is crucial to set goals.

This is the critical stage where we start to nail down what needs to be done every day that will enable you to reach and achieve your magnificent Vision. The three main things your goals need to be are

**1. Stepping stones.** If you were to look back earlier at my ultra-endurance triathlon 1-3-5 Action Plan, you'll see that my goals were stepping stones to achieving that particular Core Objective. Your goals should be stepping stones that emphasize your own desire to make progress. Your goals are also going to be dynamic. This means that you will replace them as you achieve them.

When you achieve one of the goals in your 1-3-5 Action Plan, highlight it in bold italics so that you know you've achieved it and feel a little satisfaction for a short while. You then replace it with another goal to focus on, always making progress.

**2. Action orientated.** Next, your goals are going to be action orientated. We're going to set your goals so that you've absolutely got to take some action in order to achieve them.

Action is the essential ingredient in life; only what we think about, talk about and then do something about will actually come about. It is certainly the people who "do" who succeed. Make sure you create stepping stones to lead to something bigger; develop the action habit, and you'll make an amazing amount of progress.

**3. Outcome focused.** Finally, your goals will also be outcome focused. If you are going to make the very best of yourself, one of the things you need to do is ensure that you always have an outcome in mind. This is why your five Goals for each Core Objective are going to be outcome focused.

### Be a Goal Achiever

It's not enough for you to just set your five Goals for each Core Objective. It's vital you take action to achieve those goals; don't be a goal setter; be a goal achiever.

We know that what we focus on magnifies, so if you've got your 1-3-5 Action Plan with you close at hand and you focus on it, then the results you experience will magnify and multiply.

You've now identified and written down your 15 Goals (five goals for each of your three core objectives). You have made sure that these are stepping stones, action orientated and outcome focused. Your goals are what you're going to focus on on a daily basis. Write them out; imagine you have achieved them; make your goals what you are thinking about.

When you start using your 1-3-5 Action Plan, we need to turn the whole thing on its head. You're going to work

on a daily basis on the five Goals for each Core Objective; then they will lead to completing your three Core Objectives, and they will enable you to achieve your Vision. So, although you created your 1-3-5, in execution it becomes 5-3-1.

## PART THREE: THE EXECUTION SKILLS

## The Four Key Skills You Need

There are many skills that are needed in order to become a success.

Tom Peters said, "Leading yourself may be toughest of all." It's all too easy to let yourself off, to ease back and never ever flick the cruise-control switch! The key question many of us need to ask ourselves more often is, "If I was the very best version of myself, what could I achieve?" When you answer this, you must do something about it!

The four key execution skills that make up the remaining elements of your Unstoppable system are

**1. Leadership.** You cannot make the best of yourself and your circumstances without developing your leadership skills. After you have developed your leadership skills, it is very important that you make the most of your time.

**2. Personal Organization.** Personal organization is a skill that requires many hours to develop. You'll get far more done. You can concentrate on the important stuff and avoid wasting precious time.

**3. Relationship Building.** Focusing on relationships is key. In a successful business, the emphasis should be on the relationship and not the transaction. Relationship building is about getting better at strengthening and deepening relationships.

**4. Key Strength Development.** We all have key strengths, and the degree to which we utilize and set our businesses up to make use of this key strength will be the final piece in achieving your grand Vision and making the very most of yourself.

We are not looking to become perfect in any of these skills; we are looking only to make progress in these areas in order to make the very best of our 1-3-5 Action Plan.

## Skill One: Leadership

Leadership is keeping things as simple as they can be. It's not about overcomplicating things — it's about results. It's about achieving the big picture. It's about deciding what result your organization, your family or your sports club want to achieve, and it's about engaging yourself and those around you with effective communication to "come on board" and deliver that result.

The first people you engage if you have a team are the team. Ask yourself now, "How well have you engaged your team?" Be honest. Does your team know where you are heading? Does your team know what progress has been made and how they are performing? Do you have a structured performance-management process in place where good performance is rewarded and poor performance is highlighted and acted upon?

Being able to execute is essential. There are times when you are doing things in your business that are not glamorous. There will be times when you as the leader may want to do something else, and being the leader may mean that no one is going to kick you in the backside if you don't execute.

When you become skilled at building rapport, people feel comfortable around you, and they feel you're on their wavelength. All of this leads to you becoming a more effective leader, and with your being a more effective leader you'll improve your business results.

When you develop your leadership skills and actually "lead" your team, you'll be light-years ahead; plus you'll find it easier because with an engaged team, you'll start to develop leaders at all levels of the business structure.

## Skill Two: Personal Organization

We can't actually manage time — just what we do with our time.

Why is it that some people just seem to get more done? Is it because they are luckier? Is it because they have a larger team? The reason some people just seem to get more done is because

**1. They plan.** You should plan for at least one week at a time. It is not effective to come into the business in the morning and think, "What should I do today?" That is not making the most of your time. Because you have developed the successful habit of reading your 1-3-5 Action Plan at least every week, you'll know what you should be working on. At the end of the day, do a quick review. Have all your tasks for the day been completed? Is there anything to carry forward? By doing this, you are concentrating on what is important and giving yourself the best opportunity of success.

**2. They stay focused.** It seems that being overwhelmed at least some of the time is a prerequisite of run-

ning a small business. The key is to focus on what matters. The kicker is that, although there are critical things, hard things, that must be done, our natural impulse is to gravitate to more enjoyable, possibly easier, more comfortable tasks. A simple habit is to focus really hard on the outcome you will get from doing the hard thing.

**3. They prioritize.** People who are personally organized work on what is important, not the stuff that is urgent. Because you now have your 1-3-5 Action Plan, you have identified the important stuff that needs to be done for you to reach your Vision. Ask yourself if doing a certain task will take you closer to your Vision. If it will, then it is important; if it won't, it should be done after the important stuff is completed.

**4. They are consistent.** The great thing with consistency is that when you decide to be consistent, you immediately see the results. Be clear about what you are going to do each day, and reward yourself for your little breakthroughs. Keep a picture in your mind of what your outcome, your Vision, is going to be, and commit to doing some of the things that just need to be done.

**5. They manage their distractions.** One of the easiest ways of not being consistent is to allow distractions. By identifying three things that have recently distracted you this week, you can consider how to manage these distractions in order to remain consistent. What little process can you implement that manages your distractions?

**6. They are clear about what they want to achieve.** Time-effective people have a clear picture. Be clear about what outcome you want for each day; be clear what outcome your want for each week and month. When you are on a mission, you don't want to waste time. You have a purpose, and your purpose is to achieve your Vision so that you can have the life and business that you want and you deserve.

## Skill Three: Relationship Building

For you to reach your Vision in your 1-3-5 Action Plan and make the most of yourself, you are going to have to focus on relationships with your clients and those around you. You are going to have to adopt the mindset of continuously looking for ways to enhance, strengthen and develop those relationships.

The key point to remember when it comes to business relationships is value, and value is in the eye of the beholder. If you have a good product and it delivers what it is supposed to deliver, then you will be adding value to your clients/customers. Have you asked your clients how they rate the experience of your services or product? Do you regularly request testimonials from satisfied customers that can be shared?

How do you ensure that the customer is happy and satisfied? How do you find out if they have feedback that could help you improve your product or service? If you can add value to your clients and customers and be seen as an integral part of their business or life, then you are in a great position to enjoy lifelong beneficial relationships.

What can you do to develop your customers and clients into raving fans? A raving fan is someone who actively wants to see your business improve. Happy, loyal customers will go around and become ambassadors of your business; they'll promote it for you.

When you value your client relationships, you'll follow up with these people properly and develop a relationship with them where you demonstrate value up front.

## Skill Four: Key Strength Development

Have you ever worked out what your key strengths are? It's not something people often do. Go ahead and ask five people who you have either worked with closely in the past or who you work with now what they think your three key skills are.

We also need to identify what we are weak at, and instead of working on these weaknesses we have to find creative ways of delegating our weaknesses.

### Key Strengths of an Effective Leader

There are the four key strengths that an effective leader should have. These are the strengths that will enable you to lead effectively within your business and make the very best of yourself and your team. These four key strengths are

- **Executing.** Too many people fall down with execution. Getting things done and carrying through with a project is important.
- **Influencing.** Being able to influence your team so that they perform at a desired level is key. Influence your customers by using good communication skills so they realize if they have a problem, you can and will support them to find a solution.
- **Relationship building.** It's important to remember that no one became successful by themselves and that we all need other people in our businesses and our lives. Being strong at building relationships is a way to build that support team so you reach your goals.

• **Strategic thinking.** Being strategic is about looking ahead and deciding on a course of action. Thinking strategically is about building the big picture and not allowing yourself to get bogged down with the details too much.

## PART FOUR: THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

## Seven Steps to Take

You've come a really long way, you now have a foundation plan in place and you've upgraded your skills. Here are the seven key steps that will ensure the next 12 months are fantastic:

**Step 1. What's worked and what hasn't?** The first thing to do when planning a new year in business is to look back at what has been working and what has not. Let's start with what hasn't worked. Be honest: What have you done in the last year or in the last six months that didn't work? What have you spent time on that didn't produce the desired result?

You will be doing many things that are working well for you, and it's important to identify what they are. From a leadership point of view, this is about recognizing the good things you do so that you keep doing them.

**Step 2. Success for the next 12 months.** There are some key areas in your life that you need to work out what success looks like to you. The purpose of doing this is to decide in 12 months' time what would be a good result in these areas. They include health, wealth, family, relationships and contributions.

Now we're going to look in more detail at your business success for the next 12 months. What does business success look like to you? Ask yourself, "What sales figure did you deliver? How many customers did you support? What profit level did you achieve?" When you have entered a number or result for the questions that are relevant, the next step is to come up with a simple method of tracking the result.

**Step 3. Product review.** How happy are you with the range of products you have? Are there gaps in your product portfolio? Could you ask your clients and customers what product they would like to buy from you? Could you look at other people and companies that occupy your space and identify anything they are offering that you are not?

The purpose of carrying out a quick product review is to understand that it is our products that are going to deliver value to our clients. The results we deliver for our business will be directly impacted by the level of value we deliver to our clients.

**Step 4. People review.** Every business is a people business. If you haven't got a team, build one! What can you do to ensure you have the right people in your team for this year? What action can you take to fill a skill gap or a development gap?

If you have a need for some people in your business to do a certain function or support you with a certain project, you can come up with some creative ways to get that support.

**Step 5. Time review.** When you look ahead at the year and assess how you use your time, the most important thing you can do is make sure you're spending most of your time working in the area of your strengths.

Are there any activities that you regularly spend time on that are not giving you a good enough result? You have to assess your time usage so that you have the time to spend working on and with your 1-3-5.

**Step 6. Message review.** Moving forward this year, what is going to be the key message you want to communicate? This message has to be clear and understood by your target audience, your client avatar. Remember that if you are targeting everyone, then you are targeting no one.

What are some of the things you want to be known for this year? Make sure what you are doing day in, day out of every week this year is in line with your message.

**Step 7. Actions.** Thinking is good, talking is better, action is best! It all comes down to taking action. When you spend a little time looking at what worked well and what didn't and also assessing your products, your people, your time and your message, you'll be in an excellent position to maximize your strengths and multiply your results.

I hope reading *Unstoppable* will be the start of your journey towards achieving exceptional results in life and business.

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Unstoppable*, you'll also like:

1. ***Triggers*** by Marshall Goldsmith. How can you overcome the triggers that cause you to behave in ways you'd rather avoid? Goldsmith offers six engaging questions that can help you enact meaningful and lasting change.

2. ***Leadership Blindspots*** by Robert Bruce Shaw. Shaw helps leaders identify weaknesses, threats and other vulnerabilities that can impair effectiveness and results.

3. ***Hacking Leadership*** by Mike Myatt. Myatt identifies 11 leadership gaps that can be holding leaders back. He provides strategic advice for everything from purpose and culture to knowledge and innovation.

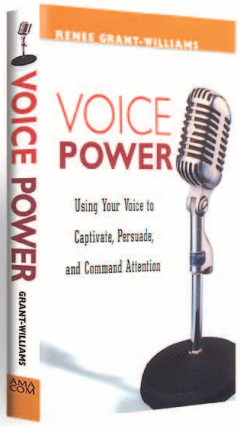
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# Voice Power

Renee Grant-Williams

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER TECHNIQUES




By Renee Grant-Williams

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## Using Your Voice to Captivate, Persuade, and Command Attention

# VOICE POWER

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*While everyone has a voice, not every voice is one that gets attention — a personal weakness often overlooked. The concept of "dressing for success" — creating the right appearance — is second nature by now. However, most people are unaware that their voices account for one-third of the total impression they make on others (the other factors are appearance and message).*

*Throughout your working life, you will be constantly using your voice — either to your advantage or disadvantage.*

*In this summary, Renee Grant-Williams, who has worked with U.S. senators, business executives and sales professionals, as well as numerous pop recording stars, shares her techniques for improving the quality of your voice. These techniques will help you train your voice to maximize your effectiveness in any form of speaking — speeches, sales presentations, and even telephone and voice mail messages. You can learn to improve the tone and resonance of your own voice to make your presentations more dynamic and powerful — and successful.*

*Your voice is one of your most important assets. Make sure your voice is one that people want to listen to — a voice that commands respect and gets attention.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

✓ **Learning to Breathe — Correctly.** Paying attention to how you're breathing is the first step to improving your voice's impact on others. It's simple but not always easy.

✓ **Full Body Support.** Proper posture is essential for building a rich healthy voice to project confidence and assurance.

✓ **Voice Delivery Techniques.** Learn how professional singers and actors mold their words for the most impact.

✓ **Writing and Delivering Your Speech.** Gain practical advice for writing, rehearsing and delivering your next speech — whether it's to one person or to an audience of 100.

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# VOICE POWER

**by Renee Grant-Williams**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR NATURAL VOICE

# The First Step: Learning to Breathe

The path to a rich, full and commanding voice begins with the most basic of skills: breathing. This article examines the mechanics of our breathing, and the major impact of breathing on the quality of our voice.

### *The Goal: Passive Breathing*

Athletes and opera singers have used various breathing techniques to get the most out of their performances. These techniques have had many names over the years — reverse breathing or breath play, for example — but common to all of them is a natural, unlabored or passive breathing. This naturalness or passiveness is what you are trying to achieve.

### *Producing a Tone*

With each intake of breath, the diaphragm, the large, thin muscle that rests beneath our lungs, relaxes and flattens, creating a vacuum. Air flows into our lungs, thus filling the space.

When we speak, we use the diaphragm to push the air back out of our lungs. It passes over the vocal cords, causing them to vibrate and produce a tone. (Think of whistling through two blades of grass.) All of our speech comes from these tones.

It sounds simple. However, listen to your own breathing and that of others around you — you'll hear shallow breathers, chest-heavers, gaspers, and so forth.

With a full-length mirror, a chair and a tape recorder, you can take a simple test to see what kind of a breather you are.

Standing in front of the mirror, take a deep breath. As you do so, notice what happens to your mouth, shoulders and chest. Do this a few times and then answer the following questions:

**1. Did you breathe through your mouth or nose?**

**2. Where did you "stash" the air you breathed in?**

**3. Did your chest expand or your shoulders rise?**

**4. Can you describe how the air got from the outside of your body to the inside?**

Some voice instructors will tell you to breathe only through your nose or only through your mouth, but the important thing is to do what is most comfortable or natural for you.

The second question — where did you stash the air you breathed in — is key.

Most often, people find that they breathe into their chests so that their shoulders get filled up. But remember the diaphragm — that's below the lungs (and therefore below the shoulders and chest!). If you saw your midsection expand as you inhaled, good; but you need to bring that breath even lower. Aim for right below your waist. Find your belly button and then walk two fingers down from there. That's where your air needs to go for the most passive breathing.

The bottom line: Don't gasp, draw, suck or pull the air into your body. Just relax, open your mouth and let the air fall in.

### *The Benefits of Passive Breathing*

Passive breathing gives you a richer, fuller voice. Breathing into the lower body allows the vocal cords to relax. Shallow breathing, on the other hand, makes you sound breathy and weak and adds to tension around the neck. Concentrating in the throat, shallow breathing also cuts off resonance and makes your pitch rise. ■

**To learn about the health benefits of passive breathing, go to: http://my.summary.com**

**The author:** Voice coach Renee Grant-Williams is president of Music Services, based in Nashville, TN. The subject of a CBS profile, Grant-Williams has appeared on network, syndicated and cable television programs. Grant-Williams is also a member of the National Speakers Association, and has written for and appeared in numerous national publications.

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# Use Your Entire Body To Support Your Voice

Speaking involves an interrelated group of muscles. Taken collectively, the system of muscles that help create the voice is called *support.*

Resonance is the way the sound vibrates in the body.

Support and resonance work together. Energy is needed to create tone, but the trick is finding the right source of energy that does not compromise the resonance.

Most people use their throats to create sound, but this damages the body's resonance. Instead of relying on the throat alone, you need to draw the energy for sound from your entire body. This is called *full body support.*

Below is a step-by-step method to help you develop full body support for your voice.

### *The Buzz on Full Body Support*

1. **Locate with your fist again the spot two fingers below your navel where you take the air you breathe in.** Exhale and relax the lower abdominals to let the air out. At the same time relax your jaw and open up your throat to let in a new supply of air.
2. **Press in with your fist, contracting the lower abdominal muscles around the air while making a short buzzing sound.** The buzzing sound should start in your lower abdominals, not your throat. Stay relaxed above the waist.
3. **To stop the buzzing sound, relax your abdominal muscles, open your jaw and throat and let a new puff of air fall back in.**
4. **Ideally your chest should be relaxed (as well as your throat and jaw) and your hips should be tucked under you, as if you were lifting something heavy.** In a sense you are lifting something — your voice.

The point of this exercise is to illustrate the concept of supporting your voice with good posture and to keep the jaw and throat area relaxed.

### *Focus on the Midsection*

After you've mastered the buzzing "Z" sound, do this exercise with some other sounds. The idea is to keep your energy centered in the middle of your body.

Balance on the balls of your feet and press into the floor with your legs and lower body. Try the EEE sound in this posture. Try NN, AH, MM. If your voice begins to sound thin, it's because you're putting too much pressure on your jaw. Focus your strength into the center of your body, into the legs and feet.

Try also the OH and VV sounds. If you are dropping back correctly on your hips and keeping your chest loose, your legs and lower body will almost automatically compensate by tightening underneath you.

## Rate Your Voice Power

Score yourself on the following six statements to rate your voice power:

1. **Others let you finish talking without interrupting.** Always (4) Usually (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never (0)
2. **You speak without being asked to repeat yourself.** Always (4) Usually (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never (0)
3. **People seem to remember what you say.** Always (4) Usually (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never (0)
4. **Others are quick to act on your suggestions and commands.** Always (4) Usually (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never (0)
5. **You find it easy to change people's minds.** Always (4) Usually (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never (0)
6. **At the end of the day your voice still sounds fresh.** Always (4) Usually (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom (1) Never (0)

### How Did You Do?

If you scored:
20-24 — Have you considered running for office?
15-19 — Your voice is clearly an asset.
10-14 — There is hope, but the competition isn't worried.
5-9 — Ever wonder whether you're invisible?
0-4 — Good luck! You're going to need it.

### *Keep Your Head Forward*

Try this exercise: From a normal position, whistle. Then, tilt your head back to look at the ceiling and whistle again. This time the sound loses resonance. While most people don't stare at the ceiling when they're giving a speech, it is a reminder to not "lead with the chin." Rather, arch your entire head slightly forward so that the sound can resonate freely.

### *Engage Your Mind*

Once you're comfortable with these breathing support and resonance exercises, it's time to get your mind engaged as well. Visualize ahead of time how you want your voice to sound and then use these techniques to create it. This gives you a pallet of voices to use in different situations.

Once you have mastered these techniques you can manipulate your voice to give it either a rich tone, or one that is mellow and soothing, or a tone that is commanding and precise. When you control your voice, you are better able to keep people focused on what you are saying. ■

**To learn how Elvis Presley's lip curl enriched his voice, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## VOICE DELIVERY TECHNIQUES

# How to Create Drama, Command Attention And Make an Impact

In the first part of this summary, you learned the secrets of breathing, resonance and support to make your voice an asset, rather than a liability. Depending on what you are trying to achieve, your voice can be rich and full, mellow and soothing, warm and sincere, clear and precise, commanding, and in control.

In this section, you will learn about delivery techniques that will further increase the power of your voice. You will learn how to use consonants, pauses, volume, tone, speed and pitch to your advantage.

### *Consonants*

Just as a singer holds our attention by the way he or she holds onto and drags out the sound of consonants, we can make consonants work for us when we speak. Consonants highlight the emotion of our message.

Here's how: Rather than simply speak louder when we want to emphasize something, we should lll-engthen the consonant sound at the beginning of the word we want to emphasize. Just think of Tony the Tiger telling us how "great" Frosted Flakes are and you get the picture. The long R creates suspense, making us want to know more. Or think of Sinatra's "Start sprrr—eading the news…"

In speaking we do not pronounce every syllable. In fact, we unconsciously tend to "speed listen" and skip to only the important words or sounds. As with reading, we gauge where we think the sentence is heading and mentally fill in the blanks.

Therefore, as speakers, we need to decide which are the important words we want to stand out for our listeners. Those are the words we need to elongate. You can double your impact by emphasizing the consonants at both the beginnings and ends of the high-value words. Want to drive home that "Sales must be up next quarter"? Try saying it, "Sales mmm-u-sssttt be up next quarter."

### *Rhythm*

Speech, like music, has a natural cadence or rhythm. Look at the word "me." At first glance you might think it only has one syllable. But it has two distinct sounds — M and E. The problem is you can only emphasize one sound within each beat. The way we naturally speak, we place the emphasis on the vowel — the E. This means that the M goes before the beat. But to highlight the consonant M (that is to emphasize the word "me") means that you have to give up something to keep the beat. The preposition "to" gets shortened, and we say, "This is important t'MMM-ee."

### *Pauses*

Like the elongated consonant sound, you can also create power pauses to build suspense and grab attention. The key is in placement of such pauses. Use pauses when you want to give your listener(s) time to think — particularly when what you are about to say is unexpected, unusual or possibly shocking. Pausing before a word gets listeners ready for something unexpected; pausing after a certain word gives them time to let the new idea sink in. Such pauses can also be used to express powerful emotions.

Think of Henny Youngman's delivery of his famous line, "Take my wife // please." Without the well-placed pause it has a totally different meaning. Likewise, think of speech without any spaces as "the fine print," such as the taglines you hear at the end of most car commercials, "Pricedoesnotincludedealerprepchargestaxes…"

### *Variations on a Theme: Volume, Tone and Speed*

The goal in speaking is to get people to listen, keep them listening, and eventually get them motivated to take

*(continued on page 5)*

## Rx for a Healthy Voice

Once you've learned what your voice can do for you, find out what you can do for your voice — to keep it healthy:

**Get plenty of rest.** Think of the four R's of a good night's rest—revive, recover, replenish and relax.

**Drink plenty of water.** The tissues of the throat and its mucous membranes need adequate moisture to stay resilient and flexible. By drinking enough water the cells in your mouth and throat can flush out impurities. We need two-and-a-half quarts of water a day, some of which we get from food. Ideally, we should be drinking eight glasses a day, more if we have a cold or fever.

**Use a humidifier.** It is essential that you keep the water fresh — clean and disinfect it once a week.

**Watch what you eat.** Be aware that some foods and beverages (i.e., caffeine and alcohol) can dehydrate you. Also, alcohol and sugar can give you unpredictable changes in your energy levels throughout the day. Greasy and fatty foods can cause gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) or heartburn. This backup of stomach acids into the throat can literally burn the sensitive membranes of the throat.

## Delivery Techniques: How to Create Drama, Command Attention and Make an Impact

*(continued from page 4)*

action. To make your speech as compelling, dynamic and meaningful as possible, learn to adjust your volume, pitch and rhythm to create your own style.

**Volume.** First of all, maybe your volume is too low. If an audience has to struggle to hear you, eventually they will give up trying. Tape yourself speaking to gauge if you need to speak louder. There are times when varying the volume can be used. Dropping your voice commands attention almost as much as if you suddenly began to shout. Beware, though, that shouting's effect wears off quickly. Be careful, also, not to let your sentences drop off into a silent abyss as they near their conclusion.

**Tone.** The choice of tone affects how what we say influences others. Warm tones are calming; use this tone to diffuse tense situations. Even when you are tense use the passive breathing techniques outlined here to avoid shallow breathing. Your listeners will be able to read your body language, and passive breathing techniques will help your remain calm and centered.

**Speed.** By varying the speed (or tempo) of your speaking, you can apply a conflict-resolution structure to your voice's rhythmic pattern. Use different tempos for different situations. For your major points, slow down — by using silent pauses and long consonants. This allows your main points to resonate with your audience. To set your audience up for a major point, speed up your introduction.

Become familiar with your natural speaking pattern. Don't overuse one pace or pattern, because listeners will become bored and can tune out. Vary the length of your phrases. In most cases, you want to avoid a strict monotone voice.

### *Pitch*

Pitch is defined as "the difference in the relative vibration frequency of the human voice that contributes to the total meaning of speech" (with thanks to Webster's Dictionary). A voice like Lauren Bacall's or Kathleen Turner's, low and rich, gives the impression of authority. A higher pitched voice, in contrast, implies youth and inexperience. When you need to convey wisdom and authority, lower your pitch — but stay within your own natural limits. You don't want to sound phony. Using the technique of support will keep your body resonant. Especially when lowering pitch it's important to keep your jaw loose. Raising your pitch can help highlight certain words when you need to convey energy and enthusiasm.

### *Getting an Edge*

You can use all of the techniques discussed above to make your voice more distinctive to your listeners. In today's media-saturated world, people are inundated with more messages (visual, auditory and tactile) than they can absorb. Creative use of tone, pitch, pauses and elongated consonants can give you an edge in getting people's attention. ■

**For more on elongated consonants, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Avoid the Valley Girl Syndrome

Beware of the Valley Girl Syndrome. This occurs when you lift your pitch at the end of every sentence, like you know?

Also, be careful when you need to drop your voice a pitch. That can signal the most irritating of all human sounds — the whine. The dissonant arrangement of notes that are never resolved is what makes whining so annoying.

## The Sound of Silence

English is not the primary language spoken by most of the business world. When you are speaking to others who do not know your language as well, use of silence can help. These pauses give listeners time to translate, so be sure to place appropriate pauses before and after the most important information. Don't hurry. Avoid flowery language. Make sure to get confirmation from your listener that they understand.

In some cultures, people find silence uncomfortable. As a reaction, people tend to fill in any silent pauses with chatter or a string of annoying "ums." Especially in negotiating sessions, silence can be a powerful tool. In Asia, use of silence has long been recognized as an effective tactic at the negotiating table. During your next conversation, try waiting a few beats after the other person has stopped talking before responding. This will convey the impression that you're thinking carefully to what they've been saying. Not only is that a complement to the other person (their ideas are so deep and insightful), but it also buys you some time to gather your response.

Conversely, have you ever seen a movie where a powerful person is portrayed as being "chatty?" If you want to be taken seriously, stop and count to three before giving a response. Use silence as a way to help you gain control in a conversation.

## APPLICATIONS OF VOICE POWER

# Preparing Speeches That Make People Listen

No one enjoys giving a speech. In fact, it's the top-rated phobia in America. Fear of giving a speech ranks higher than fear of dying in some studies. In this section, we will examine the process of writing and giving a speech, using the voice techniques already described. The steps are:

- **Writing the speech — phrasing decisions and constructing a phrasing schematic**
- **Developing your own physical presence**
- **Neutralizing stage fright**
- **Rehearsing**

### *Writing Your Speech*

As you write your speech, keep in mind what kind of pace you want to use when delivering it. In general, long sentences slow down your pace while short ones pick up the tempo. A slow increase in pitch, volume and tempo gives you forward energy. When well constructed, this pattern can help make your point more compelling as you build to your conclusion. Or you can start out with normal-length sentences, and then make them shorter and punchier as you come to your conclusion.

### *The Schematic*

To help remind you of the pacing and tempo you want to use, incorporate marks to indicate phrase breaks and accents into your text. Even if you don't plan to read from the pages while delivering the speech, it will help during your rehearsals. Be sure to double space.

First, read your entire speech aloud to find out which information you'll need to highlight. These are the words you'll want to emphasize with long consonants, or changes in volume, pitch or tone. Experiment out loud until you feel comfortable that your delivery method matches the intensity you want the information to convey.

One system of phrase notation is to use double forward slashes // to indicate a pause, CAPITALIZATION to indicate a rising in pitch or volume and **boldface** to indicate a long consonant. Read the following quotes using the schematic:

"Work is the meat // in the hamburger of life."

"Work is the MEAT // in the hamburger of life."

"WORK // is the meat // in the hamburger of life."

As the composer of your speech, you decide how to emphasize which words. Take your time when building your speech's schematic. It can be a powerful way to give your listeners new ways to think about your ideas as well as direct them to the points that are most important to you. This exercise will also help you learn your speech.

### *Personal Presence*

Before you utter the first word of your speech, your audience has already started making up its mind about you. Your first impression on them is visual. How you carry yourself sets the tone. To create a powerful impression, here are some suggestions on how to carry yourself:

- **Balance on the balls of your feet**
- **Tuck under slightly for support**
- **Keep your shoulders down**
- **Arch up with the back of your neck**
- **Keep your chin down**
- **Look up from below**

It's no coincidence that these same positions for creating a powerful presence are the same ones used for building support and resonance.

### *Rehearsals and Neutralizing Stage Fright*

Having several run-throughs of your speech can help ease any nagging fears. One suggestion is to think of all the mistakes you could make when delivering your speech — then act them out. Practice giving the worst speech of your life. Some people find it's actually quite difficult to make mistakes. In any case, practice, while perhaps not making perfect, can at least relax you. If possible, videotape yourself giving a rehearsal. Then review, several times, paying attention to visual and verbal gestures and stances. Don't clasp your hands behind your back (this throws your body out of alignment); you

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## Show Time!

As you step up to the podium, you will not be relaxed — but you must appear relaxed. Let passive breathing keep anxiety from taking over your voice. Take 10 low relaxed breaths to center yourself.

Once you've relaxed, you can begin your speech. Be sure to avoid a tone of voice that alienates your audience by talking at them instead of to them. Use a conversational style of speaking. Speak as if you were talking intimately into the ear of one person. During the speech, focus on individuals, talking directly to that person.

Remember the techniques you've learned, such as pacing, variety, timing, consonants and moments of silence. But don't focus so much on technique that you forget why you're speaking and what you're saying. You want to be polished, but not mechanical.

## Preparing Speeches that Make People Listen

*(continued from page 6)*

can't use support in this position. Keep your arms and shoulders loose and free.

Some practical tips for preparing for the day of the speech:

- **Avoid caffeine (it dries out the throat).**
- **Eat something light at least two hours before the speech — but skip dairy products (they are mucus-producing and will make you sound as if you need to clear your throat).**
- **Drink plenty of water.**
- **Visualize yourself making the speech.**
- **Practice voice warm-up techniques.** ■

# When Your Speech Is a Sales Call

Even if your job title doesn't include the word sales, all business comes down to selling yourself and your ideas. You're trying to motivate others to follow your actions or recommendations. Just as you prepare to give a speech, use these same voice preparation techniques when planning for a one-on-one or group meeting. If the business speech is your solo, consider the sales call your duet. The only catch is that you're not exactly sure of the words or music. For this reason, sales calls are much more volatile and improvisational. You're not the only one in control.

But there are tools you can use. Just as you learn as much as you can about your client before the meeting, you can go through the voice preparation, resonance and full body support techniques. Your voice is the most powerful tool you have to project confidence and assurance.

### *Establishing the Relationship*

If people like the sound of your voice they will want to listen to you. Creating resonance in your voice helps you establish a good relationship with your client.

Once you've researched your client's issues and needs, write these out in schematic form, using the money-word consonants and power pauses to bring attention to what you want your client to remember the most. Tape record yourself to make sure you've covered everything.

### *A Friendly Opening*

The opening is crucial in any sales call, particularly the cold call. People make up their minds within the first three notes, or beats, of your message. Your objective at this stage is to create a friendly atmosphere, using an upbeat tone. Listen to the tempo of the client's response. It will tell you want they expect from the encounter. Listen also for the client's pace and style, and respond in kind. This will help you build trust.

Don't let the friendly chatter stage go on too long. Lower your tone to indicate you're getting down to business. Bring out the consonants for clarity and the power pauses for impact. Your client, like most people, will tend to respond in the same tone you are using. Remember to leave time for the client to respond. You should be doing more listening than talking at this stage.

### *Asking for the Sale*

When it's time to ask for the sale, be concise and specific. It may be appropriate to raise your pitch and volume slightly. Some people even move physically closer to the client when asking for the sale. Make sure you don't over-do it, though. If you're moving into some-

*(continued on page 8)*

## How to Use Voice Mail Effectively

Voice mail is a fact of life in business today. You can use the voice techniques discussed here to make your voice mail messages really count.

Preparation is the key. When the call is an important one, try these six steps to make sure you leave a voice message that will get you the results you want:

1. **Write down what you want to accomplish with this call or message — what is it you want to see accomplished, changed, put into action or concluded by this message.**
2. **Have the information you'll need during the call or message (notes from your last meeting, product information, etc.).**
3. **Organize your message into a sequence of topics in order of importance.** With different voice mail systems, you have different amounts of time to leave your message.
4. **Ask for a specific action.** Be clear by using voice color, consonants and rhythm to highlight your most important issues.
5. **Be prepared to wait for a response.** You may even need to leave one or more messages. Have notes ready so you remember what you said in the first message. You may even mention that you will try calling them back at a certain day and time.
6. Finally, **decide when to stop playing phone tag.** You can leave a message that is very direct, suggesting a meeting time and place, or a number for them to call you to confirm that they received your message. Be brief. Nobody likes long voice mail messages.

### When Your Speech Is a Sales Call

*(continued from page 7)*

one's physical space, make sure you lower your volume so you're not invading on two fronts. Once you've asked for the sale, use the power of silence to give the client room — and time — to say "yes."

Soft sales are more relationship-based. You may have a longstanding history with certain clients, but not every visit or call results in a sale. The focus of your visits or presentations is to give a positive view of your company and its products or services. Naturally, you'll want to make sure your voice is one they look forward to hearing. ■

**For tips on making the sound equipment support your voice, go to: http://my.summary.com**

## Using Your Voice on the Job

Whether or not you are in a voice-intensive job, such as radio broadcasting, your way of speaking has a significant impact on how you are perceived and on the opportunities for any advancement. Whatever your profession, good speaking skills are essential; unfortunately, there is not much formal training in this area. This article looks at a few areas where your voice plays a crucial role on the job.

### *Voice Power for the Rising Executive*

Executives need a voice that commands respect and projects authority. Your voice needs to convey the sense of being in control; in difficult situations, it must be able to show dissatisfaction without reflecting anger and be able to calm the emotions of others. It is important to use the same tone when talking with subordinates as with superiors. Strike a balance between sounding condescending while showing concern and sympathy when appropriate. Some people have a distinctive sound or accent to their speech that can work in their favor. Barbara Walters' slight lisp is her unique trademark. Perhaps because of it, she is always careful to speak slowly and clearly.

Managers and executives are also often called upon to motivate employees for less-than-enviable tasks. For anyone who wants to advance in a corporation, such skills are essential. To be a great motivator, your speech needs to not only touch the hearts and minds of others, but also literally stir them to action. Even if you are not motivated yourself, as a business leader, you will need to sound that way. The tone of your voice must be able to convey how anything negative (i.e., working weekends) can be turned into something positive (i.e., meeting new company goals and gaining more market share). Having your pitch rise at the end of your sentences will indicate increasing energy and enthusiasm.

### *Telephone Etiquette*

When your only means of communicating is via the telephone, you have no visual clues to help assess the other person's moods or responses. Use listening skills to help you set the pace of the conversation. Speak clearly and use frequent pauses to invite responses. Visualize the person you are speaking to and project your voice through the mouthpiece. ■

## Voice Skills for the Job Interview

Everyone knows the importance of researching a company they will be interviewing with, developing a clear idea of why they are the right candidate for the position, anticipating likely questions, and preparing appropriate responses.

Don't stop there. Your voice represents a third of the total first impression you will make with the interviewer. Put enthusiasm in your tone that shows you want to learn more about the company, the position and opportunities for advancement. Ask a lot of questions and practice good listening skills.

Silence is indeed golden. Don't offer any unnecessary information.

Consonants can be used to highlight the positive aspects of your qualifications and work history. Pacing is important; you need to communicate personal credibility while bonding with your interviewer.

## In Small Groups, Concentrate on Intimacy

When presenting to a group of less than 10, use a technique that professional singers use: concentrate on intimacy. Act as if you were singing/speaking into the ear of one person. Become a part of the group. Use inflection in your voice to allow frequent questions from everyone. This will help you identify the key decision makers within the group. Watch the interactions among the group.

When presenting to more than 10 people at a time, you can't count on conveying intimacy, but rather you need to use more of the techniques for giving a speech: full-body support and a resonant, committed tone. If you need to be seated during such a presentation, you can practice support by sitting forward in your chair, placing yourself in the three o'clock/twelve o'clock quadrant, with one leg in front and the other off to the side (and a little behind you). Press into the floor, balancing with the balls of your feet.

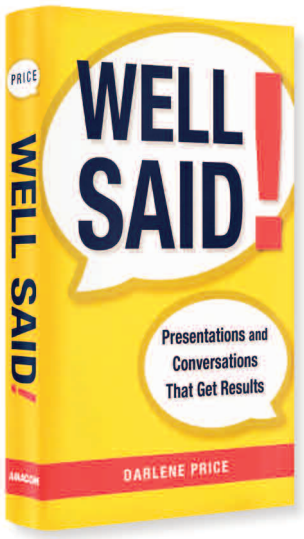
# Well Said!

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# Well Said!

## Presentations and Conversations That Get Results




by Darlene Price

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

For many people, presentations are one of the most difficult parts of their job. Whether it's speaking to a roomful of people, explaining your budget to the CEO, pitching to a potential client, leading a departmental meeting or presenting remotely via the Internet, otherwise effective and valuable employees struggle to drive home their message and persuade their audience. Even experienced presenters can fall flat on their faces when the stakes are high.

Rambling, nervousness, excessive detail, overreliance on slides, lack of focus on the audience: These are all common problems — and all easily corrected with *Well Said!*, the complete how-to-do-it guide to delivering targeted, memorable presentations that get results in every business situation.

The key to truly great presentations is to understand your audience's point of view and to tell them what's in it for them. *Well Said!* helps you make this crucial audience assessment, then carefully analyzes the mechanics of stellar presentations. It is packed with tried-and-true tips, tricks and techniques based on the author's extensive experience, industry research and client surveys.

Believe it or not, you can become comfortable — even enthusiastic — about presenting yourself and your message with clarity, credibility, and confidence by following the expert guidelines in *Well Said!*

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to stop worrying about protecting your presentation and start connecting with your audience.
- Ways to organize your presentation with persuasive logic and an effective structure.
- How to ensure a dynamic, confident delivery every time that will engage and involve your audience.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: **WELL SAID!**

**by Darlene Price**

**The author:** Darlene Price is the president and founder of Well Said, Inc., a training and consulting company specializing in high-impact presentations and effective communication.

*Well Said! Presentations and Conversations That Get Results* by Darlene Price. Copyright © 2012 by Darlene Price. Summarized by permission of the publisher, AMACOM. 256 pages, $21.95, ISBN 978-0-8144-1787-4.

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For additional information on the author, go to www.summary.com.

## The Most Important Element of All

When I conduct executive-level presentation coaching programs, I often begin by waving a crisp $100 bill around the room. "You'll win $100 if you can answer this question correctly: What is the most important element of every presentation?"

The correct answer? The audience. In the hundreds of presentation coaching programs I have conducted, fewer than 10 people have won that $100 bill.

By getting to know your audience first, addressing what is important to them, and solving their issues, I promise you'll win much more than a $100 bill.

Here are 10 critical questions to ask about your audience:

1. Who are they?
2. What are their expectations and why are they here?
3. What are their main issues and challenges?
4. How does your message solve their problem?
5. What do you want them to do?
6. What is the single most important idea you want to communicate to the audience?
7. How much does your audience already know?
8. What are your audience's attitudes about you, the topic, and the environment?
9. What are their personality types?
10. What objections or questions might this audience have?

As you analyze your audience using the 10 critical questions, there are multiple resources to help fill in the blanks. Here are a few ways to gather critical information about your audience:

- Send out a questionnaire or survey.
- Read the latest articles relating to your audience's industry, company or interests.
- Visit their facility, store, or office.
- Study their competition.
- Converse and mingle with participants as they enter the room.
- Ask questions during the presentation to gather on-the-spot feedback.

## How to Persuade a Decision Maker

The skill of persuasion is critical in presenting to decision makers. To be successful at affecting the beliefs and actions of others, you must not only understand what motivates people to act, but also how to use that knowledge to your advantage. As a general rule, people are motivated to act based on four reasons or four key payoffs. Think of them as the Four Ps of Persuasion: profit, pleasure, power and prestige.

I asked 237 senior leaders in Fortune 100 companies, "What qualities do you dislike most in speakers who present to you?" Here are the 10 biggest complaints:

1. Gives too much information.
2. Rambles on.
3. Fails to tie the message to the audience's key business drivers.
4. Lacks confidence and enthusiasm.
5. Hasn't done any homework.
6. Doesn't anticipate audience questions and objections.
7. Fails to ask for what the speaker needs from the decision-maker.

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**Rebecca S. Clement**, Publisher; **Sarah T. Dayton**, Editor in Chief; **Andrew Clancy**, Senior Editor; **Amanda Langen**, Graphic Designer; **Corbin Collins**, Contributing Editor

8. Responds defensively to decision makers' feedback.
9. Lacks an executive image.
10. Doesn't teach anything new.

The three top communication qualities deemed most promotable and persuasive are: Clarity, Conciseness and Credibility. Practice the Three Cs to convince decision makers: Be clear, concise and credible. ●

## Establishing Credibility

Enthusiasm is the outward expression of sincerity, and sincerity is an inner quality that one radiates.

The decision makers in your audience use three senses to evaluate you and your credibility: sight, hearing and touch. I call these the Visual, Vocal/Verbal and Relational Factors of perception.

First, the Visual Factor considers how the audience sees you. The goal is to hone your body language, dress, appearance, grooming, executive presence, the room setup and environment. You need to be intentional and conscientious about everything the decision makers see.

Next is the Vocal/Verbal Factor — how your audience hears you. The objective in this area is to enhance your voice tone, vocal variety, and use of persuasive words and phrases while applying persuasive logic to your presentation structure. Every word and phrase you say reinforces the audience's perception of you as authoritative, intelligent and well prepared.

The third sense, touch, is the basis of the Relational Factor. It refers to how the audience feels about you. Do you and your message "touch" them in a meaningful and positive way? Your audience focus, customized message, friendly demeanor, humor and attention to detail create trust and emotional appeal. ●

## Crafting Your Presentation

A persuasive presentation consists of three sections, delivered in this order:

**I. The Opening** (tell them what you are going to tell them): Set the stage by providing your audience with a well-organized opening consisting of three key elements: introduction, attention-getter and executive preview. Quickly establish your credibility and enthusiasm, and clearly state the purpose of the presentation. The attention-getter is a magnetic tool that keeps them watching or listening. Startle them with a surprising statistic or fact related to their industry or your topic. Ask a rhetorical thought-provoking question followed by a pause. Use humor, which may include an amusing personal story, funny saying, witty example or clean joke. The executive preview shows that you are organized and prepared with a well-thought-out plan. They immediately see that you are going to lead them down a logical path and not waste their time.

**II. The Body** (tell them): The body of your presentation consists of three elements: key points, supporting material and transitional statements. Select three key points. There's an age-old principle in communicating that suggests when things come in a pattern of three, they are inherently more satisfying, easier to remember, even funnier. Add supporting material: feelings and facts; abstract and concrete; heart and head. A persuasive presenter seeks first to connect on an emotional level by eliciting positive feelings; then he or she offers concrete evidence to confirm those feelings. Transition statements between key points notify the listener that you are about to change the course of direction. It leads your audience from one key point to the next.

**III. The Close** (tell them what you just told them): Conclude your presentation with a powerful, persuasive close that consists of three key elements: summary, call to action and appreciation. Summarize the key points and benefits of your message. Tell your audience exactly what you want them to do in response to your message. And, finally, thank them for their time and attention.

Presenters who follow this proven format enjoy more successful outcomes. It makes it easier for you to prepare, present and persuade. It makes it easier for the audience to listen, remember and respond. ●

## Developing Content That Involves and Engages Your Audience

As adults, we are active, hands-on learners. Give your listeners an opportunity to participate and engage in the learning process. Adult learners want presentations that focus on real-life problems and tasks rather than academic material. Learning is active: "Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand."

Though their styles may vary greatly, memorable speakers have one thing in common: they know how to create a connection with their listeners. Here are 20 proven techniques to help you do the same:

1. Conduct a pre-session survey.
2. Invite introductions.
3. Record their wish list.
4. Request a response or ask a question.
5. Show a photo.
6. Play a video or audio clip.

7. Use creative props.
8. Set up a demonstration and invite audience members to participate.
9. Conduct a quiz or host a game show.
10. Give away prizes.
11. Ask the audience questions during the presentation.
12. Use activities, games or exercises.
13. Ask for volunteers.
14. Play fill-in-the-blank.
15. Facilitate a discussion.
16. Focus on benefits to the audience.
17. Provide practice or application opportunities.
18. Use learning aids.
19. Use humor.
20. Tell a story to illustrate your points.

A big part of your job as leader and presenter is to motivate people to reach certain goals; to influence their thinking; to adopt your point of view. You will need to engage their emotions. A good story is key. The "five-part STORY method" crafts the tale into a concise and meaningful engagement opportunity:

1. **S**: Set the scene with time, place and characters.
2. **T**: Tell the trouble. What's the obstacle, conflict, problem or scary part of the story?
3. **O**: Overcome the obstacle. What is the climax of the story?
4. **R**: Reveal the reward. What was the happy (or unhappy) ending? What lesson was learned?
5. **Y**: You-focus. Ask a question or make a point that transfers the story to the audience and their action. Employ a *you* question, such as, "Have you ever... ?" ●

## Designing and Presenting Effective PowerPoint Slides

Despite the ample criticism that surrounds PowerPoint, I like the tool and recommend using it when the message calls for it. The key to remember is this: You are the message. Slides do not persuade, inspire or connect with an audience — only people do. Therefore use slides to support you, not replace you, upstage you or distract from you. Don't use them as your notecards or crutch.

Here's a condensed checklist of my PowerPoint best practices in the areas of design, rehearsal and delivery of slides:

- Face the audience, not the screen.
- Ensure readability by using a 28–30 point font.
- Follow the 6x6 Rule: limit text to six lines of copy per slide/no more than six words per line (36 words total).
- Use compelling, relevant photos.
- Manage time and number of slides with the two-minute average.
- Rehearse with slides using the pyramid approach: must say (10–15 seconds); need to say (60 seconds); want to say (if time permits, 2 minutes to 2 hours).
- During your presentation, black out the screen periodically.
- Seamlessly navigate to any slide by using a printout of numbered slides. ●

## Preparing for a Powerful Performance

Truth be told, you don't want to get rid of the butterflies because they are carriers of energy and enthusiasm. Adrenaline is your friend. The key is to control, harness and focus that surge of adrenaline so that it works for you. Control your nervousness and anxiety by practicing STAGE MIGHT:

- **S**mile.
- **T**alk positively to yourself.
- **A**cknowledge the three audience truths: They believe you're the expert. They want you to succeed. They don't know what you're going to say.
- **G**reet and meet the audience before you speak.
- **E**xercise lightly beforehand.
- **M**emorize the first and last minute of your presentation.
- **I**nteract with your audience immediately.
- **G**ive. Give. Give. Focus on giving to the audience.
- **H**old a dress rehearsal.
- **T**rust yourself.

Most of the time, what presenters give the audience is their rehearsal presentation. Think about it this way: If you have not practiced the entire presentation beforehand, you are giving a dress rehearsal — and it shows.

Here are some techniques you can employ to make sure your presentations are not dress rehearsals, but award-winning performances:

- Visualize your success.
- Record and listen to the main parts of your presentation often to familiarize yourself with the content.

- Stand up and deliver your presentation aloud.
- Deliver it to a dress-rehearsal audience in the actual setting if possible.
- Videotape at least one rehearsal, followed by playback and evaluation.
- Time the presentation.
- Rehearse often enough to be comfortable, but avoid over-rehearsing.
- Memorize the first minute and last minute of your presentation to create a positive first and last impression.
- Repeatedly recite the top three to five benefit statements and the main ideas of your presentation.
- Anticipate tough questions the audience may ask.
- On the day of the event, arrive early and do a technical run-through. ●

## Using Effective Body Language to Show Confidence

When you present, you send two kinds of messages to your listeners: verbal and nonverbal. While you may be communicating verbally through the words you speak, a more memorable message is conveyed nonverbally by your body language and voice tone. You cannot avoid sending nonverbal messages to an audience, but you can train yourself to send the right ones.

In body language, you are equipped with at least five powerful tools to communicate your message:

**1. Eye communication:** Eye contact is the most important nonverbal tool you have; it is the cement that bonds a speaker with his or her audience. There is no surer way to break that bond than by failing to look into the eyes of your audience members. A lack of eye contact implies a list of offenses: disinterest, detachment, insecurity, insincerity, shiftiness or arrogance.

**2. Facial expressions:** When you speak, your face serves as a billboard communicating to others your attitudes, feelings and emotions. People recognize almost every emotion simply by observing a person's facial expressions. A genuine smile conveys interpersonal warmth, empathy and friendliness. If you smile easily, your audience is likely to as well.

**3. Gestures:** Gestures are the punctuation marks of body language. They support your message and help the audience interpret your meaning. When used effectively, gestures increase a listener's understanding, attentiveness and retention. Gestures serve as a positive, effective outlet for extra adrenaline. Loosen up and let your body move naturally.

**4. Posture:** Good speaking posture involves your whole body from head to toe. It's a revealing indicator of self-assurance, attitude and energy level. Good posture aligns your body to optimize breathing. This allows you to project your voice more effectively. Try the following: Pull in your stomach. Balance your weight evenly. Keep your head and chin up.

**5. Body movement:** Meaningful body movement is a tremendous asset to your delivery style. Here are a few guidelines on how to move with meaning: Step away from the lectern. The more of your body the audience sees, the more of your message they believe. Have a mobile microphone so you are free to move. Change your body position to transition between points. Step forward for emphasis. Avoid pacing or swaying. Move to both sides of the room to be equally accessible. ●

## Conveying a Professional Image Through Dress and Appearance

Dressing appropriately not only makes a great first impression, it also affects your credibility as a speaker and as a person.

• **Executive attire for women:** Wear a two-piece matched skirt suit or pantsuit. Choose a conservative color, such as navy, dark gray, dark brown or black. Ensure that all garments are pressed and have a well tailored fit. Wear a silk or cotton blouse. Solid light colors work best. Jewelry should be minimal.

• **Executive grooming for women:** Make sure your hairstyle is current, neat and clean. Apply makeup sparingly, but do use it. Business etiquette guidelines suggest not wearing any scent at all.

• **Executive attire for men:** Wear a high-quality wool suit, well tailored in dark pinstriped or plain tones. Make sure your jacket is buttoned when you're standing or walking. Do not close the bottom button. Ensure that your tie is tasteful and, preferably, made of 100 percent silk. The size of the knot should be small. A 100 percent cotton, long-sleeved, pointed-collar business shirt in white or blue is a traditional safe choice.

• **Executive grooming for men:** A classic haircut is best. Keep it short, neat, clean and current. The clean-shaven look is most common among business executives and tends to create the best first impression. If wearing a beard and/or mustache, keep it short and neat. And, clean, well-manicured nails solidify respect. ●

## Speaking with the Voice of Authority

Your audience of decision makers is influenced by what they hear. If they are distracted by the way you talk, they will miss your message and fail to take the action you want.

The key to discovering your best voice is cultivating six key vocal qualities:

**1. Use a listener-friendly tone of voice**. Tone is how you say something. Your tone is your most important voice attribute because it conveys your emotions and attitudes. Set a microcassette recorder beside your telephone and click it on when you answer. Afterward, play back the recording and listen for your tone of voice. What feelings and attitudes do you hear?

**2. Control your pitch.** Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of your voice. Speaking in the lower register of your voice range sends the message of credibility and command. Think of your voice as a musical instrument. Sing the *ah* sound at various pitch levels, traveling up and down your vocal scale. Recite the letters of the alphabet while ascending and descending within your range. This exercise builds awareness of your various pitch levels and builds confidence to use more of the lower tones available to you.

**3. Calculate and vary your pace.** Pace, or rate, is how quickly or slowly you speak. The average rate of speech for most presenters is 150–160 words per minute. It's a rate that is quick enough to keep the listener interested, yet not so fast that it loses or frustrates the listener.

**4. Use volume to speak up and speak out.** A timid, weak, or inaudible voice is not persuasive. You have a message and a purpose for presenting it, and you have earned the right to be heard. Give yourself permission to project your voice with confidence.

**5. Use inflection to influence decision makers.** A monotone voice is a listener's No. 1 pet peeve. The remedy is inflection — adding special emphasis to a word by modulating your tone, pace or pitch.

**6. Practice articulation to speak clearly.** All words are pronounced correctly and each syllable is enunciated intelligibly. Warm up your mouth muscles by practicing a few tongue twisters. ●

## Leveraging the Language of Leadership

Effective leaders use language that captivates, motivates and persuades others. They take a position and state a point of view with words and phrases that strike at the very heart of an issue.

In my professional opinion, the three most compelling words in the language of persuasion are one's own name, "you" and "your." "You" answers the audience's unspoken question: "What's in this for me?" Often the least persuasive words are first person pronouns, such as "I," "me," "my" and "mine."

It may help to think of a presentation as dining with a companion. If you talk about yourself the whole time, your friend will likely become exhausted (if not bored and uninterested) because everything is all about the speaker, not the listener.

To lead is to act. When you speak with action verbs you connect the audience to your proposed outcome. Through your verbs, you create momentum, drive and energy.

Be sure to employ plenty of benefit words and phrases. The decision makers in your audience buy benefits, not features or functions. Never assume that listeners will figure out for themselves what the benefits are. ●

## Handling Q&A with Credibility and Finesse

With all the preparation and hard work you put into your presentation, answering the questions should be easy. However, for many, the Q&A session strikes fear and dread in their hearts. Here are a few tips on how to approach this critical and interactive aspect of your presentation:

• *Adopt and convey a positive attitude.* Take on a mindset that embraces interaction with the audience — including objections, feedback and discussion.

• *Anticipate the questions your audience is likely to ask.* Write down these questions and think about the answers.

• *Rehearse your replies aloud.* Rehearsal will greatly reduce your nerves and help portray you as the expert you are.

• *Prepare questions you want to answer.* This is a tried-and-true technique used by masterful politicians. To segue smoothly, you can say, "One question I am often asked is …"

• *Give the audience guidelines.* Let them know when you would like them to ask questions.

• *Display confident, open body language.* When you take a question, be sure to turn toward the questioner.

• *Listen carefully to the entire question.* Be patient. Force yourself to listen to the entire question and make sure you understand it.

• *Repeat the question.* This habit is the sign of a pro. By repeating or paraphrasing every question, you ensure that everyone in the room hears it.

• *Follow the K.I.S.S. Formula.* Keep your answers short and simple.

• *Answer only the question that was asked.* Many presenters dig a hole for themselves by bringing up information that was not requested.

• *Conclude with a rehearsed summary.* Don't end your presentation with the Q&A session. As the presenter, you get the last word. Make sure your last words are actionable and memorable. ●

## Planning and Conducting Powerful Conversations

Your most basic responsibility as a leader is to connect with those around you. You are listening and talking with people; you are having conversations. Ideally, those conversations are powerful, influential and meaningful. Are your conversations creating the outcomes you desire?

You can learn to achieve results by following four basic but important steps:

**1. Establish mutual objectives and purpose.** An effective leader goes first and gets the ball rolling, especially if the topic is emotionally charged or laced with conflict. The critical success factor in the step is sincerity. Be open, approachable and transparent. Your candor and authenticity create an emotional connection with people that in turn gives them the green light to open up and express what they want to accomplish.

**2. Express mutual needs and wants.** The second step — the critical success factor — is seeking understanding. An effective leader seeks to understand the other person; to gain clarity by probing for his or her wants and needs. The second part of step two is clearly stating your own wants and needs. In advance of meeting with the person or group, clearly define your own desired outcome in your own mind.

**3. Explore new possibilities.** The key success factor in step three is curiosity. All too often, leaders skip this critical stage. Their results-oriented personality urges them to jump directly into an action plan. It's critically important, however, to invest some extra time to imagine all the possible options and alternatives. A great leader challenges his or her team to stretch their thinking and go beyond textbook answers.

**4. Commit to mutual action.** The key differentiator between powerful conversations and the ordinary run-of-the-mill variety is measurable outcomes. Action is the critical success factor in this step of the process. It's critical that all action items are clear and explicit, and that each person commits to his or her to-do list. ●

## Writing Emails That Get Results

Make sure your emails get the attention and response they deserve with these best practices for effective emails:

- Make the subject line clear and meaningful.
- Keep your message short.
- Communicate first things first.
- Tell recipients what action you want them to take and give due dates.
- Organize your points using bullets or numbers.
- Make sure your intent is clear: start with your conclusion and then explain.
- Use proper "Netiquette" and email formatting. Show thoughtful consideration for the other person.
- Realize your email is not private. ●

## Facilitating Effective Meetings in Person and via the Telephone

For some companies, meetings are highly valued and considered to be vital vehicles of critical information.

The following tips and techniques will help you run effective, efficient meetings, whether in person, by phone or by video conference:

• *Don't meet if you can avoid it.* Don't just have a meeting because it's Monday morning, or because you haven't met in a while and feel as though you should.

• *Determine your objective and agenda.* Complete this phrase and you'll have your objective: "At the end of this meeting, I want this group to _____." Use the agenda to set clear expectations and communicate accountability.

• *Invite the right people.* Make sure the right people are there. You need no more attendees than that. Be selective and invite only those people who can significantly contribute to the outcome.

• *Limit and prioritize topics.* Cramming too much content into a meeting dilutes the impact of each topic and restricts participants from quality discussion and feedback. Rank the topics from most to least important on the agenda and cover them in that order.

• *Encourage involvement.* Encourage all attendees to participate and contribute. Invite people to speak. If a person is attending, that person is responsible for contribut-

ing. Consider assigning everyone a task prior to the meeting.

• *Prepare a strong opening.* Craft a well-planned opening, as you would for a formal presentation. As a leader, you need to convey enthusiasm.

• *Manage the time.* The true sign of a professional is to start and end the meeting on time. Do not spend time recapping for latecomers. Display a clock. Don't allow the agenda to be derailed.

• *Bring the meeting to a close.* Leave 3 to 5 minutes for the summary. Briefly recap each topic. Gain agreement on tasks, timelines and responsible individuals.

• *Follow up promptly.* Solicit feedback regarding the meeting's purpose, topics, process and outcomes. Find out what worked and what could be better next time. Prepare and distribute a meeting summary. ●

## Delivering Winning Webinars

Effective webinar presenters must rely more heavily on voice and visual aids as the primary communicators. The following guidelines are designed to help you improve your ability to present powerfully and persuasively in the virtual presentation environment.

Before the webinar, plan, prepare and rehearse. Ideally, schedule the webinar to begin at 15 minutes past the hour. Times such as 10:15 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. are optimal to ensure participants' availability before or after lunch. Keep your presentation relatively short — typically no more than an hour if possible. Arrive 30 minutes early to ensure proper technical setup.

Open with a captivating attention-getter. Design and use more slides for a webinar than you would in a face-to-face presentation. Stand up to present; exude enthusiasm and use an upbeat tone of voice. Use a high-quality headset or handset; avoid the speakerphone.

Interact with your audience frequently and change a visual element every 30 seconds. Close with a compelling summary and call to action. After the webinar, follow-up appropriately. Ask for feedback or conduct a survey to improve your next webinar. Send an email thanking attendees for their participation. ●

## Leading Team Presentations

Use the following guidelines for planning, rehearsing and delivering winning team presentations:

• *Appoint a strong leader or captain.* The team leader is responsible for total project management from concept development through the final presentation. Whether it's content, structure, presenters or logistics, the captain takes full responsibility for the overall outcome of the presentation.

• *Decide on three clearly defined goals.* Make a list of goals, then narrow it down to those that are most important. Focus on the three most essential goals you as a team want to achieve with this specific audience.

• *Prepare, prepare, prepare.* Know your audience. Organize your individual presentations as if they were each part of one continuous presentation delivered by several people.

• *Optimize individual strengths.* Assign each team member specific responsibilities regarding content, delivery, visual aids, research, handouts and deadlines — based on each person's strengths and expertise.

• *Ask the lead presenter to facilitate Q&A.* The leader should respond immediately with a brief answer and then direct the question to the member who is best equipped to elaborate.

• *Rehearse as a team.* It's critical that the team practice together. It's the best way to ensure a high level of comfort with the presentation and each other. A full dress rehearsal with visual aids is a must for successful team presentation.

• *Remember, you are always on.* In a team presentation, everyone is being watched, even when they're not presenting. Stay alert. Listen. Show interest in what's being said. Pay attention to the audience. You may pick up signals that help you gauge audience response and then tailor your comments and presentation accordingly. ●

## Afterword

Effective presentation and communication skills will not only get you noticed, remembered and promoted more often and more quickly than any other skill set, they will also help ensure that you get more of what you want and deserve in life. By acquiring these abilities, you will begin enjoying a whole new level of success — personally and professionally. ●

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Well Said!*, you'll also like:

1. ***Speaking as a Leader* by Judith Humphrey.** Learn how to make the most of your daily communications, creating a presence as a genuine leader.
2. ***The Power Presenter* by Jerry Weissman.** Weissman reveals powerful strategies for anyone who has to stand and deliver.
3. ***Resonate* by Nancy Duarte.** Duarte offers a new way of structuring a presentation and connecting with an audience.

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# Whatever It Takes

Brandon Bornancin

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Whatever It Takes

By Brandon Bornancin

Brandon Bornancin is a serial salesperson (sold over $100M in sales), a two-time, seven-figure tech entrepreneur, motivational speaker, and 18x, #1 best-selling sales author who is obsessed with helping you maximize your sales success. Today Mr. Bornancin is the CEO & Founder at Seamless.AI, a software platform that delivers the world's best sales leads with the first real-time B2B sales search engine powered by artificial intelligence. Seamless.AI helps salespeople, marketers, and entrepreneurs globally find accurate emails, cell phone numbers, and pitch intelligence for any professional in the world. Seamless.AI helps over 150,000 (and counting) companies flood their calendars and generate millions in sales.

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## Create the Life You Want On All Fronts

In the world of sales, success requires a special combination of attitude and implementation. When a go-getter says they will do whatever it takes to earn business and achieve the life they dream about, they actually have to get out there and do the work. They must be ready to act in big ways.

Brandon Bornancin is an author, CEO, and Founder of Seamless.AI, a Top 50 LinkedIn Startup. In ***Whatever it Takes: Master the Habits to Transform Your Business, Relationships, and Life*** he shares his secrets to success with an unmatched energy and passion that will inspire you to get out and make things happen.

There are many books out there that share success stories and inspire us to want more out of our business, relationships, and personal lives. Bornancin's book is different. His book is motivational, to be sure, but it also provides practical solutions and steps you can start taking today to create the life you want on all fronts, no matter what is happening in the world around us.

During the pandemic, Bornancin's company grew an astounding 300% and 50 of his employees received promotions. He credits their success to the principles he shares in this book. This book will fire you up and tell you how to keep the flame burning over the long term, even during times of unprecedented uncertainty.

If you are ready to make a complete transformation in your personal and professional life, there is no better time than right now and there is no better book to begin your journey than *Whatever it Takes.*

## Preparation

Sales training, courses, experts, and books all set out to help you achieve your goals but many of them miss the mark. At times contradictory and at other times outright confusing, Bornancin recognized that much of what he was consuming to get better was just like jumping on the bandwagon of the latest fad diet. The results were limited and never lasted. One of the missing ingredients was the importance of preparation. Specifically, you have to fully commit to the process and to the work, holding nothing back.

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You have to overcome the biggest obstacles to your success, which lie within your own mind. "Your habits, mindset, beliefs, and choices can be changed at any time–no matter who you are, where you are going, what you believe, or what you are going through." The first step is to prepare yourself for a radical shift by eliminating self-defeating thoughts. You have to stop telling yourself that you can't do it or that you don't deserve it. Never listen to these thoughts again. Believe that you have exactly what it takes to become successful and that you deserve that success. Eliminate every and all excuses and decide to do the work.

We all hold a set of beliefs that help shape who we are and what we value. The problem is that some of those beliefs hold us back, rather than help us move forward. "Success in life is based on about 10 percent of what happens to you and 90 percent how you respond, believe, and react." Confronting and eliminating those responses, beliefs, and reactions that do not serve you are a major part of becoming prepared to do whatever it takes.

Naturally, the beliefs that limit you will be different from the beliefs that limit someone else. It's a very personal thing. However, Bornancin has encountered some that show up again and again and stand in the way of becoming fully prepared for maximum success. Get rich quick schemes should be ignored. If you want to get rich, you have to do the work and it will be anything but quick or easy. Eliminate the false promise of these systems.

Many people are bogged down in regrets from the past. You have to let the past go and focus on creating a future of your own making. Regardless of what happened in your childhood or the failures you encountered as an adult, you can still make the future you want. But you have to cut loose the regrets or complaints about what happened earlier.

Finally, too many people focus on saving money instead of making money. Becoming overly focused on saving instead of making and investing money leads to a scarcity mindset. Scarcity thinking breeds anxiety and holds you back. "You can only save so much money with what you make. However, your earning potential is limitless. Don't save money. Focus on investing in ways to make more money."

## Mindset

Your mind is fully in control of what you can and will achieve. What you think about and focus on actually becomes your reality. This is powerful. You can use your mindset to dream and achieve big or you can use it to stay small. The choice is entirely yours. You get to define your destiny. Whatever you believe will "make or break you." Bornancin asks you to "free your mind and your heart to dream big so you can believe that anything is possible."

The first critical mindset shift is to move from playing defense to playing offense. What he means by playing offense is that you need to "go all out to maximize your sales, marketing, product development, customer success, branding–you name it." Strive to grow your prospect list so much that you do not rely on one customer. You need a "wide portfolio of investments you've made with all of your activity, time, effort, capital, and resources."

Goal setting is a major component to getting the right mindset for success. Bornancin recommends SMART goals, which are defined as being specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time based. You must set SMART goals for every area of your life, be it sales figures, the number you want to hit on the scale, or the state of your relationship.

Once you have goals set, you must set out to achieve them with an insatiable appetite. You have to go all out, each and every day, putting in the hard work that is required to get what you want. "There is no way to sugarcoat this." If it were easy to make seven figures in sales, everyone would achieve it. Before you start, ask yourself if you are "willing to invest 1,000 hours into mastering this and working on this every day to become the best that you can be." If the answer is no, you will not be able to do it. You have to give it your all and never, ever give up.

## Habits

Having the right mindset to succeed is a massive step in the right direction but your aspirations will fall short if you don't turn those mindsets into action. You have to drop bad habits and foster the best habits for success. You cannot maximize your potential without walking the walk. Making a habit out of giving it your all is the only action plan you really need. Bornancin shares some specific habits that have helped him do just that. Everyone needs a "guiding light" that focuses their efforts each and every day. For Bornancin, he aligns his actions with his vision through asking himself a series of questions, taken verbatim from the book:

1. Does this help maximize my wealth?
2. Does this help maximize my health?
3. Does this help maximize my potential?
4. Does this help positively impact 1 billion people?

If he can answer those questions in the affirmative, he moves forward. If he cannot, he does not. Simple as that. Your guiding light will differ from his and from anyone else you know. Design them with your integrity in mind and "execute tasks aligned with your guiding light."

Once your guiding light is developed, you can take an inventory of your habits. "Identify the habits that are moving you towards your goals and double down on augmenting them." Habits that are moving you away from your goals should be minimized or eliminated completely. It's hard work and it will not be fun. As the saying goes, old habits are hard to break. But breaking them is critical to staying true to your guiding light and achieving what you want to achieve. When you practice a new habit that is tied to your guiding light, celebrate that! It will help fuel your fire to keep moving forward.

Prioritization is the next crucial component. Each and every day you need to make a complete list of tasks that need to be accomplished. Those tasks must be ranked "with clarity and confidence. Focus on the activities that will generate the greatest return versus the ones that will have minimal impact."

> Work and act the way that you expect others to work and act."

Communication with your contacts must be an ongoing effort. You have to actually care about them as human beings and communicate that care on a regular basis. If they only hear from you when you want to sell them something, they will not be open to talking to you at all. "Your prospects and your network need to know that you care so much about them and that you would do whatever it takes to maximize their success, even if it means taking a bullet for them."

## Secrets

Bornancin has a set of secrets that he is willing to share with his readers. These are practices that are far too often evaded or ignored by people who think they are doing what they must do to hit that target. The secrets are closely tied to values and integrity and they can be harder to live by than you might think.

Leading others, which becomes necessary once you achieve a certain level of success, is far more complicated than just leading yourself. "Work and act the way that you expect others to work and act. Bring the team up. That means considering the tone of every message you send–in person and in writing–so it aligns with how you want people to see you and how you expect them to act."

The team, not you personally, should be given recognition and credit when things go right. Nothing good happens without the full effort of the whole team. Recognize them for their effort and valuable contributions, regardless of what percentage of the work they did to make the outcome happen. When it comes to mistakes or failures, the opposite tact is better. Be the very first person to take responsibility when things go wrong. "Your team will respond with greater loyalty and admiration and will assume their own responsibility because they will respect you for accepting the ultimate responsibility for the group's performance."

The greatest secret that Bornancin can share with you is something we have all heard before but he means it and it bears repeating. "Do what you love and love what you do and you will never work a day in your life." He personally puts in 14 to 18 hours a day, every single day of the year. He does not take breaks. He shows up, day in and day out for one very simple reason: he absolutely loves what he does.

When he says you have to do what you love, he means "you really need to figure out deep down what you love and go do that all day long." The key to making this aspect work is learning everything you need to learn and giving yourself access to all the tools you need to succeed.

Rest and recuperation are necessary, especially when you are putting in long days every day of the week. Bornancin and his super-productive lawyer wife cannot take long vacations. Five days into a week-long trip they become bored and anxious to get back to their work and routines. Instead of taking one long vacation every year, they opt to take four mini vacations throughout the year. Every quarter, which works perfectly for sales professionals, they take a short vacation to celebrate all that they achieved in the previous 90 days. This "rejuvenates the mind, body, and soul and prepares them for the next 90-day sprint."

Finally, you must pose some big questions to yourself that will ensure you do not lose your way when your life changes alongside your success. Instead of being driven solely by money, "start doing things because of your mission, your vision, and your purpose to change this world for the better." Focusing on this much bigger purpose will keep you motivated and inspired for the rest of your life. Bringing other people value instead of bringing fatter checks to your bank account makes your relationships mutually beneficial. As a bonus, the money starts flowing faster, too!

When Bornancin was a college student, growing his first startup and achieving wild success, his personal life was turned upside down. His mother was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's that took her memories, her communication ability, and with it, her future goals and aspirations. She was waiting–for the right time or the right conditions to reach for her dreams. She never got the chance because of disease. Bornancin learned that life doesn't wait for you. Nothing is guaranteed. If you want something, you have to get out there and take it. And that is what he is hoping you will do with the help of his book.

There are no excuses, only results. The time is now to start living your dream. No matter what is going on in the world, no matter what you have experienced in the past, you are in control of your destiny. You just have to fully commit, own your life, and make it happen. "The biggest mistake you can make in this life is to think that you have all the time in the world because you do not." You have to do whatever it takes, starting today. If you can do that, you can do anything.

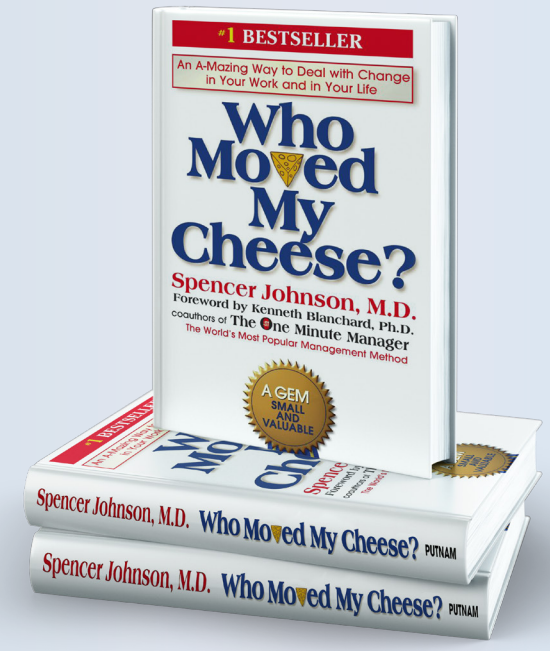
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# Who Moved My Cheese?

Spencer Johnson, M.D.

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Who Moved My Cheese?

*by Spencer Johnson, M.D.*

Spencer Johnson, M.D. was one of the world's most respected thinkers and beloved authors. His 13 international bestselling books also include An A-Mazing Way to Deal with Change, The One Minute Manager co-authored with Ken Blanchard, and The Present. Dr. Johnson is often referred to as "the best there is at taking complex subjects and presenting simple solutions that work." He was Chairman of Who Moved My Cheese? LLC, a company devoted to helping people and organizations change successfully.

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# Sometimes Things Change… And So Should We

## The Legacy

*Who Moved My Cheese?* was written over two decades ago and still sells steadily around the globe. The book's riotous success was an utter surprise to the publishing world, particularly after its slow start. But author Spencer Johnson, who died at the age of 78 in 2017, knew he had something special. He worked tirelessly giving presentations and talks about the book and word began to spread about the big promise contained in the pages of this little book.

Executives started recommending it and companies started ordering the book for their employees, including Southwest Airlines who purchased nearly 30,000 copies. The book became a fixture on bestsellers lists with millions of copies sold in countries far and wide. Simple as the story may be, *Who Moved My Cheese?* has been credited with changing lives, saving marriages, and catapulting careers all over the world.

## The Premise

This classic business parable aims to teach readers how to react to change in the most beneficial and meaningful way possible. The story features four characters:

- **Sniff:** a mouse who senses change early on
- **Scurry:** a mouse who springs into action as soon as change is noticed
- **Hem:** one of the Littlepeople characters who out of fear denies that change is happening
- **Haw:** the other one of the Littlepeople who adapts to change realizing it can lead to something better

These four funny characters find themselves in a Maze searching for Cheese, but changes keep happening that make finding the Cheese a challenge. The "Cheese" in the story represents the things that people look for, sometimes all of their lives: a big house, ample money, good health, peace within, freedom to do what they wish, or even just the time and energy to pursue a hobby.

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Reviewed by Kristen Sears Cudd • Order #FBR0520B

The "Maze" represents where humans spend all of their time in pursuit of Cheese. It could be the place a person lives, where someone works, or the relationships they have.

The characters represent the simple and complex parts of ourselves—both of which have advantages in different applications. Every person has their own Cheese and every person believes that getting the Cheese will lead to happiness. When we have the Cheese, we are very attached to it. When we do not, we are lost or even traumatized.

## The Story

Johnson set the scene for his story by telling readers about the four little characters "who ran through a Maze looking for Cheese to nourish them and make them happy." The mice, Sniff and Scurry and the Littlepeople, Hem and Haw, spent time in the Maze each and every day looking for their own special kind of Cheese.

Sniff and Scurry were simple-minded, as to be expected of mice. Hem and Haw were more complex with many emotions, beliefs, and desires when it comes to Cheese. Despite their differences, their early days in the Maze were very similar. They got up early every morning, outfitted themselves in jogging attire, and ran into the Maze looking for the right kind of Cheese.

Sniff and Scurry used "the simple trial-and-error method of finding Cheese." They would rush down each corridor of the Maze and see if there was any Cheese there. If there wasn't, they moved quickly to the next one. Sniff used his sense of smell and Scurry used his speed. The pair often went the wrong way, got lost, and had mishaps but in time, they eventually found their way.

The Littlepeople found life in the Maze more challenging as "their powerful human beliefs and emotions took over and clouded the way they looked at things." Ultimately, however, all of the characters found what they had been searching for "one day at the end of one of the corridors in Cheese Station C."

Things were easy for all of the characters now. They knew exactly where to find their Cheese and could easily navigate to it every day.

Even still, the mice kept up with a rigorous routine, rising early every morning as they had always done, racing their way to Cheese Station C. The mice even performed checks to make sure the Cheese supply was still ample and that nothing had changed at Station C.

The Littlepeople fell into a bit of a different routine as time passed, though. They started sleeping in a little later and took their time getting to Station C. They became comfortable and even complacent. They regarded the large stock of Cheese as their very own.

They came to believe that they deserved the Cheese, as they had worked long and hard to find it. Despite the fact that they didn't really know where the Cheese came from or how long it would last, they felt secure that the Cheese would always be there and for a long while, that was the case.

Hem and Haw were so comfortable in their success that they didn't see what was slowly happening right in front of them. Their supply of Cheese was dwindling to the point of disappearing altogether.

Sniff and Scurry, on the other hand, had taken the time to keep up with their routine and never take their Cheese for granted. They looked around Station C every day and noticed that things were changing over time. When the day arrived that there was no Cheese at all at Station C, Sniff and Scurry were not at all surprised, but Hem and Haw were aghast.

Sniff and Scurry got right to work, lacing up their running shoes and setting out in search of New Cheese.

Hem and Haw, on the other hand, felt they had been scandalized. They stormed around claiming that it wasn't fair. They demanded to know, "Who moved my Cheese?" They were stunned in disbelief. They wondered how this could have happened. "It wasn't right. It was not the way things were supposed to be."

When the Littlepeople returned the next day to Station C to find that it was still empty, they began to think about their problem. They debated whether or not they deserved this, deciding that they definitely did not. They argued with one another over why this happened. Cheese was extremely important to the Littlepeople so they intended to take a long time figuring out what to do next.

Meanwhile, the mice were well on their way to finding New Cheese. Driven with the simple purpose of finding it, they explored all options, including areas of the Maze they had never seen before. Eventually they arrived at Cheese Station N, where they found a big supply of New Cheese.

As time wore on, Hem and Haw became irritable, frustrated, and increasingly worried. Haw had a flash of determination and told Hem they should get out of Station C and go in search of New Cheese. But alas, Hem discouraged him, saying they were too old to try New Cheese and didn't need to get lost or make fools of themselves. Despondent, they returned to Station C each day to find it empty.

Finally, they decided to at least turn over every stone at Station C and make sure there really was nothing left. They got some tools and started working. They got up early, stayed long hours, and worked very hard to find Cheese at Station C. Of course, their search came up empty, but their futile efforts finally uncovered a revelation. They were doing things the same way over and over again, but nothing was getting any better. That had to change.

Haw asked himself, "Where am I more likely to find Cheese? —here or in the Maze?" He knew the answer. He visualized himself going into the Maze and was surprised when the thought put a smile on his face. He imagined that he would get lost from time to time, but his courage swelled as he realized he could find his way out of any missteps. With this newfound strength he said, "Sometimes, Hem, things change and they are never the same again. This looks like one of those times. That's

He came to understand that this unexpected twist, this change, could lead to something better than what he had before.

life! Life moves on. And so should we." With that, Haw ventured into the unknown to search for New Cheese while Hem remained paralyzed into inaction by his fear.

While Haw searched for New Cheese he had time to reflect on what went wrong with the Cheese in the first place. He began to realize that he could have avoided being taken by surprise if he had only been more in tune with the Cheese. If he had taken time to stop and check in with his supply of Cheese, he may have noticed it was becoming depleted. Also, he noticed that if he was taking action in this new direction, he felt much better than if he stopped and let his mind return to fear. He became free the more he moved in this new direction. He pictured all that he could gain from this new search rather than what he had lost in the old one.

He came to understand that this unexpected twist, this change, could lead to something better than what he had before. This gave him strength and energy to move ahead with more enthusiasm and speed than ever. The more he let go of the pain and regret involving the old Cheese, the more New Cheese he would find. He was sure of it.

Haw began to understand that his beliefs were changing. He used to think that it was best to avoid anything new and scary. His search for New Cheese taught him that "the fear you let build up in your mind is worse than the situation that actually exists."

His thoughts used to be clouded with worry and he used to focus on all the things that could go wrong instead of all the things that could go right. He was coming to see that change is natural and is going to happen whether you are expecting it or not. "You can believe that change will harm you and resist it. Or you can believe that finding New Cheese will help you and embrace the change." You get to choose which way you believe.

After a long while of searching, Haw finally arrived at Cheese Station N where he found the most abundant supply of Cheese he'd ever seen, and he found his old buddies Scurry and Sniff.

Haw thought often about his friend Hem and wondered if he would be able to convince him to change if he ever ran into him again. He decided that Hem would have to learn the lessons on his own. Everyone has to come to see the advantage of change for themselves.

## The Lessons

The story of Sniff, Scurry, Hem, and Haw is laced with lessons that can be applied to someone's professional or personal life.

Some of those lessons include:

- Keep things simple. Overcomplicating matters can lead to stagnation.
- When things change, don't get bogged down in worry and fear. Be flexible and move forward quickly.
- When change happens, there are other opportunities out there. You just have to get out there and search for them.
- When we become too comfortable with things, we can miss the subtle cues that things are changing.
- Sometimes you need to let go and move on to stay healthy, well, and happy.
- Change does not always have to come from an external source. There are times when you should initiate the change yourself.

Even though it was originally published more than twenty years ago, Johnson's message has never been more relevant. Change happens. Now more than ever, society is learning that we need to be adaptable, flexible, and able to handle the stress that comes along with unavoidable change. Further, some of the changes that are forced upon us can lead to a happier, healthier, more well-rounded life. Every company and indeed, every person, who wants to stay competitive and thrive in an ever-evolving future must be able to react to change in a healthy, productive way.

Of course, the messages and lessons conveyed in the story are presented in simplistic terms to the extreme. However, some would argue that this characteristic is precisely why this parable endures, being just as popular today as it was two decades ago. Historian Mitch Horowitz called it "the consummate American self-help book."

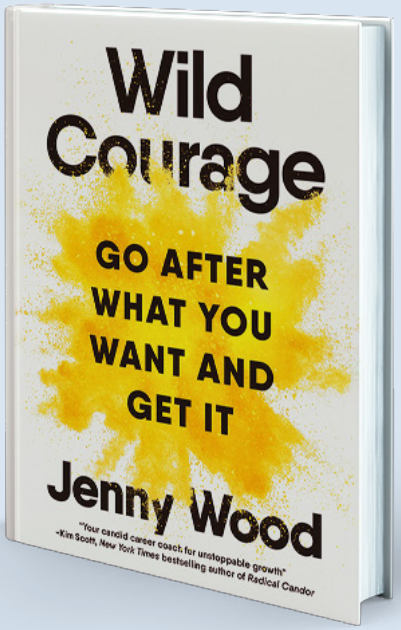
*Who Moved My Cheese?* helps people release negative energy around change and find profound benefits that can impact their career and personal lives, now and well into the future. It has done just that for countless people all over the world over the course of decades. Although we all understand that not all change is good, we can all agree that our ability to learn how to live in the face of changes, small and great, leads to a more enjoyable life. Johnson's story drives that point home in a memorable, actionable way.

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# Wild Courage

Jenny Wood

Book Snaps™
In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.




## Wild Courage

### Go After What You Want and Get It

*By Jenny Wood*

Jenny Wood is a Google executive, founder of Own Your Career, speaker, writer, mom, and pilot, known for her fearless approach to life and work. After a bold move that led to marrying a stranger she met on the subway, she committed to always pursuing what she truly wants. Her writing has appeared in Harvard Business Review, Entrepreneur, Inc., and Forbes. She holds a B.A. in Economics and International Business from Brandeis and was a research associate at Harvard Business School. Jenny lives in Boulder with her husband and their two children.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

# Rewrite Fear, Reclaim Your Power

Fear can be difficult to move past. When faced with pursuing one's desires, it often whispers reminders of failures, what-ifs, and more, and those can be crippling. This can lead to missed opportunities, resulting in promotions and projects being passed on to others. Unacknowledged fear puts life on hold, but it's not too late to change that. Fear doesn't have to have the last negative word.

But what if fear says that what is being chased after is too valuable to let go? What if that fear can be harnessed to propel us towards the desired success? If fear can be acknowledged, felt, and set aside, there is room for courage to pursue what is desired.

In ***Wild Courage: Go After What You Want and Get It***, Jenny Wood encourages her readers to live life with courage, pursuing what they truly want and fighting against the fear that would hold them back. She says that money, talent, or anything else is standing in the way of one's success but themselves. Since that's the case, there is only one obstacle to overcome, and that's the mindset of fear, which tells them not to reach for what they desire. It can, and likely will be, uncomfortable, but taking agency and viewing fear as a compass pointing in the chosen direction will lead to the ability to follow one's ambitions and achieve the goal.

The desire to fit in is ingrained from childhood, so when the decision is made to strike out on a different path, it is natural to fear what others will think or say. It's time to take action, despite fear, and summon the necessary courage to succeed. That begins with having a mindset of success before success comes. Once the fear of not succeeding has been pushed aside, the fear of being labeled must also be addressed, specifically the labels associated with breaking social norms to achieve one's goals: **Weird**, **Selfish**, **Shameless**, **Nosy**, **Manipulative**, **Brutal**, **Reckless**, and **Bossy**. These traits don't stand alone. Each trait is linked to each other throughout *Wild Courage* and it's easy to see how they are related and lift each other up. Having the courage to utilize one of these traits will lead to having the courage to utlizing each of them in day-to-day life

Wood transforms these labels into Traits that are powerful principles for success and are the title of the chapters. She purposefully puts these in bold to differentiate these positive Traits

from the negative connotations they are associated with. Each chapter of *Wild Courage* is laid out in a way that makes it accessible for the reader to reference a particular thought or idea that Wood proposes quickly. Chapters always begin with a definition of the trait being discussed and then conclude with Trait Traps, which are barriers to help bring attention to when these strengths are potentially turning into weaknesses. She states that each Trait requires nothing other than courage to achieve the set goals, and that courage will only grow the more it is utilized.

## Weird

Being weird, like all of the Traits that are discussed in *Wild Courage*, is often thought of negatively. It's thought that fitting into societal norms is better and will make fewer waves, but while this may be true, it can be harmful. Sometimes, aspects of what makes humanity unique can be overlooked in the pursuit of what others want, and that can lead to a loss of creativity, new ideas, and individuality.

Everyone is unique, and in that lies their greatest strengths and ability to utilize them to further their career by highlighting those aspects of themselves and working to reach their goals. Being true to themselves will help to avoid being forgotten on one's chosen career path. When trying to impress others, playing it cool might work alright in high school, but outside, playing it hot is a commitment to bringing energy and creativity to the spaces that need them. Taking a calculated risk, such as speaking up in a meeting, even if it might not be the right thing to do at that moment, can help ensure your name is at the top of the list for new opportunities.

It's also essential to push past the discomfort that comes with leaning into **Weird**. It can help carve out a path to reach goals, rather than waiting for the opportunity to fall into the sphere of influence randomly. By discovering what piques interest and identifying areas that need improvement, that knowledge can be shared with leaders and managers so they know who to share opportunities with when they arise.

## Selfish

Being selfish is generally discouraged and thought of as bad, but when it comes to protecting oneself and moving into places where opportunities will come, being **Selfish** means advocating just as strongly for oneself as well as colleagues and friends. In order to be **Selfish**, it is essential to learn how to say no to the small things that do not serve to advance the ultimate goals. It might feel scary, but it will show others dedication and necessary, valuable contributions to the team.

Purposing to be **Selfish** also means acknowledging needs and wants and doing what is necessary to meet them, even if it feels uncomfortable. Yesterday's ambitions need to be aligned with today's, and that means making decisions based on day-to-day experiences so that they serve long-term goals. If there isn't a spark of excitement or energy about what has been worked toward, it's time to revisit whether this is still something that needs to be worked toward.

It is also essential to be **Selfish** when thinking about potential jobs and the managers that will be interacted with. The acronym START stands for Style, Thoughtfulness, Attitude, Responsiveness, and Transparency. By evaluating opportunities with these qualities in mind, particularly when speaking with managers, it will be easier to ensure that the reader is **Selfish** and has the allies they want and need.

## Shameless

**Shameless** means that a new strength and courage are put behind the exertion to bring dreams and goals into reality. There are times when shame is an appropriate emotion, but it can quickly become toxic and manifest itself as anxiety or stress, which takes a significant mental and emotional toll. To combat this, it's time to discover Power Assets and learn how to leverage them. Label and name the top three strengths and share them with managers, mentors, and anyone else who can have a positive impact on one's career. It is possible to experience a new level of confidence and demonstrate how they can be utilized to achieve success.

It's essential to reframe thoughts surrounding shame so it has an appropriate place and doesn't force unnecessary burdens to be carried. This can be done by utilizing the Truth and Tales tool, which encourages examining the situation and recording the facts of what happened. Once that has been done, separate the tale being spun and then reframe it in a **Shameless** way, one that sticks closer to the facts and leans more towards a neutral, if not positive, approach.

Learning how to speak up can be hard because sometimes, uncomfortable truths might be shared. Questioning the inner voice that staying quiet is better than sharing what is needed is essential, and it will help your confidence grow. It may feel uncomfortable to be the first to ask questions at a meeting, but it will encourage growth and discourage the addition of unnecessary words to what needs to be said. It will also encourage the reader to celebrate their wins in a society that often discourages them. Celebrate the wins, both large and small, and shut down the negative self-talk and insecurities that need no space.

## Obsessed

When work feels important and doing less than one's absolute best threatens the moment of the project, it's a sign that it's the right thing. In this new definition, being **Obsessed** means setting a new, higher standard and not accepting anything less. Instead of coasting, select an item from a to-do list and promise to give it complete attention until the task is completed. Be purposeful about the work that needs to be done, and when faced with a new project or objective, create a planning document to show stakeholders that it's being taken seriously and not being procrastinated.

Getting others involved in the building process is vital, but it must be done effectively and efficiently. Start sending the meeting agenda to team members so they know what to expect when they come into the meeting, and it will be easier to stay on track. The IKEA effect shows that if team members are involved,

> *Success at anything requires putting in a lot of work, and mistakes will be made. However, what matters is continuing to move forward and working towards progress."*

the meeting output is better. Consistency is key when being **Obsessed**. Showing up and purposing to do the thing well, yes, but also learning how much output each task needs so life can be broken down into attainable chunks of time, so the exertion a task takes doesn't lead to burnout.

## Nosy

It is ingrained from childhood that being nosy is a bad thing and asking too many questions isn't a good thing. Being **Nosy** means being insatiably curious and digging deeper than others might. It can be a practical asset and a sign of a great leader. It can also result in answers to questions that others may not know how to ask. Being **Nosy** also helps negate moments of awkwardness when meeting someone new, as the focus is on the other person and their wants and needs, rather than inward.

It can also be helpful to flip the script and, instead of starting sentences with "I", start by focusing on the other person. By placing the emphasis on others and not saying "I", they will be more engaged by feeling the genuine warmth that is being shown. Asking questions, even if they feel basic or obvious, can be a decisive move because people typically enjoy sharing their thoughts and ideas. By inviting them to do so in a **Nosy** way, it allows them to share and provides the asker with the knowledge they are seeking. This doesn't mean to ask questions when the answer is already known; instead, lead with humility to support the other people in the room.

Being **Nosy** also means watching others and picking up the traits that they do well. A conversation doesn't necessarily need to happen, particularly if they are too senior a leader to ask for mentorship. If that is the case, purpose to observe them and make notes. Doing this will make it possible for their skill sets to be acquired and utlized in toolbox of the observer.

## Manipulate

This word is often associated with a negative connotation because it is perceived as a means of exerting control over others. **Manipulate**, as defined by Wood, means having the courage to influence other people and lead with empathy. To maintain and sustain relationships, it's essential to minimize strain and tension, making it feel effortless. Figuring out the office politics at play and then learning how to **Manipulate** those in charge, investing and connecting with them, is essential and will eventually lead to having a seat among them.

Even if the initial instinct is to ignore office politics and pretend they don't exist, it is vital to squash those feelings and figure out the flow of power in the office. This can be done by talking to others to understand who needs to be consulted with to ensure a project succeeds, mapping out the those who have the power to move a project forward or stop it in its tracks and finally, to seek power. Purpose to find ways to be at the table and make sure that it isn't just everyone else's voice that is being heard.

Being fluent in influence is an essential part of **Manipulating**, extending it, and exerting it, and this needs to be done in every direction. Wood states that power grows through proximity, so it's essential to be visible, present, and network with all team members, including skip-level managers, potential mentors or sponsors, and peers. Building influence can also happen by being authentically generous with others in the organization, not just with time and being purposefully available, but by sharing gifts, ideas and praise.. Being generous is an underused and easy way to build relations with others and it also simply feels good to give to and invest in people.

## Brutal

While being brutal typically means being sarcastic, biting, or blunt when interacting with others, here it means having the courage to protect one's time and energy so they can be focused on what is truly important. Creating and maintaining firm boundaries can be difficult, but it is key to prioritizing what matters most, which means being **Brutal**. Part of this means saying no to performative work, where the focus is on being responsive because it isn't clear what efforts matter to the outcome, and focusing on saying yes to the rewardative work. This is the work that may require being unresponsive at times, as the focus is on major business outcomes (e.g., ensuring an important report is completed instead of rushing from meeting to meeting, leaving other work undone).

Another way to be **Brutal** is to let go of the need to always clear out the emails that are sitting in the inbox so there are no unread or replied emails.. Emails tend to multiply and become overwhelming, so Woods recommends following the Four F's. Using Filters to sort through emails so newsletters, casual communication, and more are in their correct space. Next, focus on emails only during specific time blocks throughout the day. Before going on vacation, feel Free from the burden of catching up on emails upon one's return. Finally, before replying to an email, take a moment to address what feelings have arisen so that the immediate heated response doesn't come back to impact future relationships.

When the workload threatens to become overwhelming, it is often a knee-jerk reaction to focus on the big-ticket projects and then delegate the smaller tasks. Instead of doing this, be **Brutal** and drop those smaller tasks. Delegating and deferring those

smaller tasks postpones the invetiable, so without announcing it, focus the energy on the bigger, more important projects and let the less importance quietly disappear.

## Reckless

Being **Reckless** means having the courage to take calculated risks and becoming comfortable with moving in low-risk/high-reward ways. Because there are so many options and paths to take, it is necessary not to become too trapped focusing on the what-ifs and the possibilities. Feeling a little dangerous in the world is a good thing; instead of waiting until tomorrow to start taking risks, start today. Success at anything requires putting in a lot of work, and mistakes will be made. However, what matters is continuing to move forward and working towards progress.

It's also important to note that not feeling totally ready is a good thing. Being 100% ready for the task leaves no room for spontaneity, and there is a risk of losing passion for the project at hand. Every task should present a challenge that will ultimately lead to growth. Preparation and planning are essential, but don't let them be hindered by fear and prevent forward progress. Make moves toward a goal, and then work to map out a path to reach it. Setting aside ten minutes a day to work towards the objective, particularly for new ventures, will allow for opportunities for growth and action, rather than stagnation.

## Bossy

Being bossy doesn't sound like a good thing and is often associated with words like domineering, dictator, and worse. However, being **Bossy** is totally different. It requires humility and courage to listen to others in the room and then lead well. Leaders aren't supposed to have all the answers; that distinction belongs to team members. Instead, leaders are supposed to ask questions so they can help others succeed.

It can feel scary at times, but an essential part of leadership is letting the others on the team do their job. This means relinquishing whatever control that had been previously clung to and helping and allowing others to shine. Doing the day-to-day tasks only requires half of one's attention, and communication is necessary in every direction possible. Coaching the team to success means being the coach of a successful team, and that is a positive thing.

Particularly for those new to leadership roles, it is vital to be humble and shadow team members. This will allow the leader to get to know their team members' strengths and weaknesses, and prevent any awkward blunders. Whether the work is being done virtually or in a physical office, take the time to get to know the other team members and invest in learning about each person's role and their preferred working style.

In *Wild Courage: Go After What You Want and Get It*, Jenny Wood shares nine traits that often carry negative connotations and are typically suppressed in today's world. Throughout the book, she teaches how to transform what are perceived as unfavorable traits into positives and how to leverage them to become a better leader. In addition to this, she also shares how these traits, even when used positively, can trip the reader up and become a weakness. Each chapter ends with a Trait Trap, which serves as a simple barrier to alert readers when these strengths are turning into potential weaknesses.

*Wild Courage: Go After What You Want and Get* is a positive read that encourages readers to step outside their comfort zone to achieve their dreams and live the lives they want. No more looking for affirmation or permission, those who follow Wood's guidance decide to take action despite whatever fear they may feel. They have the courage to move forward and achieve their goals.

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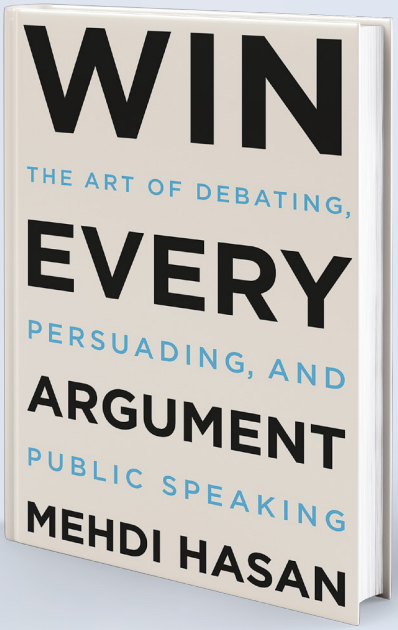
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# Win Every Argument

Mehdi Hasan

# BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read




## Win Every Argument

**The Art of Debating, Persuading, and Public Speaking**

*By Mehdi Hasan*

**Mehdi Hasan** is an award-winning British-American journalist. He is the host of The Mehdi Hasan Show on MSNBC and NBC's streaming channel Peacock. Hasan is a former columnist and podcaster at The Intercept and a former presenter on Al Jazeera English, and his op-eds have also appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Post.

## Know Your Argument

Mehdi Hasan's goal in ***Win Every Argument: The Art of Debating, Persuading, and Public Speaking***, is to help his reader do just that. Hasan has made a career of arguing, and he does not believe arguments should be shied away from. He considers them "to be the lifeblood of democracy" as they help with problem solving, opening people up to new ideas, and discovering new ideas. He believes it is important to know one's own argument as well as the argument of the opposition. He quotes John Stuar Mill's *On Liberty as Mill* says the same. Hasan's goal, however, is not all about persuasion and logical arguments. In fact, at one point he argues for the use of what is frequently known as ad hominem attacks which are usually considered to be logical fallacies. Hasan breaks his book up into three sections.

In section one, he defines ethos, logos, and pathos, and helps his reader get the audience's attention as well as become a better listener. In part two, he shares techniques with his reader, and in the third section, he explains what people need to do in order to prepare to debate. He ends his book with an explanation of how to bring this all together.

## Debate Basics

Hasan begins his first section by talking about the importance of knowing one's audience. This is important as different pieces of support will win over different audiences. He encourages debaters to know the make up, size, and demographics of the audience. While a debater should tailor the types of support provided to the audience, they should also tailor the language and even the voice volume used when presenting ideas. He does not condone changing a thesis because of an audience but rather just changing the way the argument is presented. Part of appealing to the audience is making sure to get their attention. He believes the first sentence a speaker says is important in grabbing attention. Speakers also need to be sure to make eye contact, praise the audience, and attempt to bond with the audience.

Hasan also believes it is important to bring emotional appeals to an audience rather than just facts and figures. He says, "our feelings rarely care about the facts." Because of this, facts alone will not win an argument. He discusses Aristotle's three modes of persuasion. These are ethos, which relies on the credibility of the speaker, pathos, which relies on emotional appeals, and

logos which relies on reason. Aristotle believed all three were equally important, but Hasan believes that pathos is the most important of the three modes. He quotes Antonio Damasio as saying that human beings are "feeling machines that think." Stories are one way that speakers and debaters can appeal to pathos. Quality pathetic appeals use careful language in an attempt to show rather than tell.

Hasan discusses logos in more detail in his chapter entitled, "Show Your Receipts." This involves both finding evidence and citing sources. The first part of this task is to actually get what he calls receipts, or facts and proof. A person can also create their own proof by citing something the opponent said previously in the argument against them. It is important not just to have proof to undermine the opponent's credibility; it is also important to time when a person delivers these receipts.

People concerned with formal logic such as professors in a classroom will advise people to avoid attacking their opponent's character. Hasan is not concerned with helping people formulate formal academic arguments. Rather, he is interested in helping people learn to win arguments. Because ethos, the credibility of the arguer, is part of Aristotle's three modes of argument, Hasan finds it very helpful to attack the credibility of the opponent; after all, if they are not credible, people will not take their arguments as seriously. These ad hominem attacks can be abusive like those Donald Trump uses. They can be circumstantial meaning that they can point out an opponent's biases, or they can be tu quoque meaning they point out the past words of an opponent to call into question their current case.

An example of this is when liberals point to pro-life Republicans supporting abortions in personal life while rejecting the pro-choice argument in political life. These ad hominem tactics do not prove the logic of an argument to be wrong, but they do call into question the veracity of the opponent. If someone is attacked with an ad hominem, Hasan says they can either call it out as an ad hominem fallacy, they can concede their argument and make apologies for past mistakes, or they can go on the attack with their own ad hominem attack.

## Tools for Debate

In his next chapter, Hasan discusses the absolute necessity of listening well. People prefer to speak rather than to listen, particularly in debates. This is harmful, however, because people cannot appropriately respond to what is being said if they have not listened first. Hasan writes that there are two types of listening: critical and empathetic. Critical listening requires evaluating what is being said. Critical listening can help a debater recognize false claims and fallacious arguments and find places where they must concede points to the opposition. Empathetic listening is important when an audience member is speaking. It requires the listener to try "to see the world through that person's eyes." Hasan says that to improve empathetic listening a person can stay present to the speaker, make eye contact, and ask the right questions.

Laughter is another important tool for the debater, according to Hasan. Audiences appreciate humor. Laughter, in fact, can bring an audience together, helping them to identify with the speaker. Hasan is not against getting laughs at the opponent's expense. In fact, Hasan quotes Mary Beard as saying that Cicero, one of the best orators in ancient times, used to use ridicule to get the upper hand. Humor can open up an audience to a speaker's points because it can make the audience like the speaker better. It also serves to lighten the mood. Sometimes jokes can be planned out, but a debater also needs to be prepared to be spontaneous. He does warn against being offensive, however, as well as against telling too many jokes.

One tip Hasan gives is to use the rule of three. He explains that people understand and remember ideas given in three parts. Again he goes back to Cicero to show how ancient this technique is. He says that one benefit of the rule of three is that audiences will naturally clap before the third item is given, such as in Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech. A person can organize a speech around the rule of three by including a beginning, a middle, and an end, and making sure to introduce three main points in the introduction and repeat them in the conclusion.

Next Hasan moves on to what he calls his judo moves. He discusses the imperative to sometimes be willing to yield. Sometimes this yielding can actually help a person win an argument. One of the ways a person can gain an upper hand is by admitting to concessions. Sometimes an opponent makes a valid point. By admitting that the opponent is right, a speaker can frequently throw the opponent off their game while making the audience see the speaker as being both reasonable and rational. Hasan discusses synchoresis which occurs when a person concedes one point in order to make a more important one. He then discusses that sometimes having the last word is not as important as people think it is. He prefers to speak first when there are multiple speakers because he can debunk opponent's arguments before they are even made. Judo moves that put an opponent off balance should be used sparingly so as not to be overdone.

Next Hasan discusses the zinger. To exemplify the zinger, Hasan mentions how often Dan Quayle used to mention how he had as much experience as JFK did. Eventually after Quayle had said this numerous times publicly, Lloyd Bentsen responded by saying, ""Senator, you are no Jack Kennedy." This zinger is considered to be one of the biggest moments in vice presidential debate history. A zinger is something that is intended to throw a person off guard. They are used to leave opponents "red-faced and speechless." Hasan's suggestions for using zingers are for the speaker to be prepared, practice the zingers when possible, and to keep them short. Timing is key.

Hasan also thinks it is beneficial to set booby traps. One way to do this is through using an opponent's own words against them. This often requires a lot of research, and it can be used effectively when first asking a person if they agree with something without telling them that the words came from a statement they previously made. Then when they disagree, the speaker can inform them that these were their own words from the past. This can be effective because often people give so many interviews that they simply cannot remember everything they

> . . . a speaker never budges when confronted with a gish galloper."

have said. Another way that a speaker can trap their opponent is with a question that they will not be able to answer. Here he gives an example of when he stated the number of Tibetans that have been killed in the last sixty years. Zhang, the person he was interviewing, said that number was wrong, so Hasan asked him what the number was. Zhang was not able to answer the question, and Hasan used this to prove that he, then, should not be questioning the studies.

Hasan uses the term gish galloper and quotes the Urban Dictionary's definition as "spewing so much bullshit in such a short span that your opponent can't address let alone counter all of it." It is much harder to counter false claims than to make them, and as such, the gish gallop can be effective in debate. Hasan gives his reader tips for when they encounter such a rhetorical situation. First, he suggests that a person pick their battles. All of the claims simply cannot be addressed, and as such, it is important to hone in on which ones to pursue.

He suggests finding "the weak links in the chain." This works best when there is one clear, definable worst argument presented in the gish gallop. It does not work as well when a cohesive argument is given. He then goes on to recommend that a speaker never budges when confronted with a gish galloper. Often the gish galloper is trying to muddy the water rather than actually win people over. It is important not to allow the speaker to move on to new points or evade questions. Another tactic is to specifically call out the person for the gish galloping that they are doing.

## Being Confident, Calm, and Prepared

The final section of Hasan's book details what should occur behind the scenes in order for the reader to win an argument. Hasan starts by describing the importance of confidence, and then he presents some tips for increasing this confidence. One of these is to visualize success while with as much detail as possible. Next, he suggests taking risks such as volunteering to speak in situations and participating in arguments with friends. FInally, he says it is important to surround oneself with positive and encouraging people. Body language, voice projection, and eye contact are all crucial elements for a speaker.

Being calm is also important, says Hasan, in an argument because, among other things, it gives the speaker the best chance to get their point across. He gives numerous strategies, including breath control and laughter to help with this. In regards to self-talk, he recommends people speak to themselves in the third person which helps them think of themselves in the same ways they think about others.

Winning arguments is something that can be taught, he maintains. As an example, Hasan writes about Winston Churchill who, as a child, had a stammer, a lisp, and was shy. He worked on all of these and spent so much time rehearsing and practicing his speeches, that he rose to become an excellent orator. For his reader, Hasan recommends recording and watching back videos of their own speeches, sometimes without the volume, to see how they present to the audience. In regards to voice, he encourages his reader to focus on pitch, power, pace, and pause as these all affect how a message will get across.

After discussing the importance of doing the homework and understanding one's opponent and argument, Hasan closes out his book discussing the importance of a great ending to a speech. The ending is an excellent place to include pathos which helps draw the listener in. It is also a good time to summarize the main points of the argument, but it is important not to include new arguments at this point. Also crucial, to Hasan, is avoiding just ending an argument after the final point.

Hasan's book is not a theoretical book on rhetoric or logical arguments and fallacies. Rather, it is a practical book, written by a master of debate, whose purpose is to help readers win arguments. The book walks the reader through the entire process of debate, from the preparation and practice phases through actually delivering a speech or argument. The book does not just tell the reader what is important but gives the reader practical tips that help them to implement these crucial aspects into their own speeches. Hasan discusses the importance of lists of three, and many of his recommendations come in groups of three, leading to a well-organized, cohesive, and easy to understand and implement guide to winning arguments.

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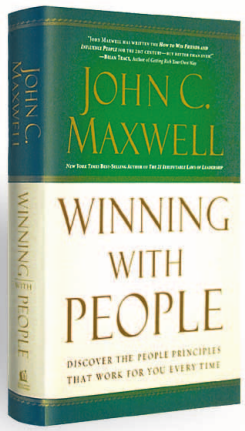
# Winning with People

John C. Maxwell

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By John C. Maxwell

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### Discover the People Principles That Work for You Every Time

# WINNING WITH PEOPLE

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*What does it take to win with people? Good relationships are the foundation for achievement. Relationships are more than just the icing on the cake in life: They* are *the cake — the very substance we need to live successful and fulfilling lives.*

*Many people fall into the trap of taking relationships for granted. That's not good because our ability to build and maintain healthy relationships is the single most important factor in how we get along in every area of life. Our people skills determine our potential success.*

*In this summary, renowned leadership expert and author John C. Maxwell describes how anyone can improve his or her relationship skills. With 25 "People Principles" that anyone can learn and use anywhere he or she might be, Maxwell shows how relationships can be created and strengthened for success in work and life.*

*Fortunately, Maxwell explains,* anyone *can learn to become a people person and succeed in the things that matter the most. This summary provides the tools needed to immediately improve existing relationships as well as cultivate strong, exciting and new ones. The skills used plus the relationships chosen equal success.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ Better ways to prepare for relationships.
- ✓ How to examine ourselves.
- ✓ How to connect with others by focusing on them.
- ✓ How to put ourselves in other people's place.
- ✓ Ways to build mutual trust.
- ✓ How to make an investment in other people.
- ✓ Better ways to create synergistic, win-win relationships.
- ✓ How to increase your odds of winning with others.

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# The Readiness Question: Are We Prepared for Relationships?

Not everyone has the skills to initiate, build and sustain good, healthy relationships. Many people grow up in dysfunctional households and never have positive relationships modeled for them. Some people are so focused on themselves and their needs that others might as well not even exist. Still others have been hurt so badly in the past that they see the whole world through the filter of their pain. Because of huge relational blind spots, they don't know themselves or how to relate to people in a healthy way. It takes relationally healthy people to build great relationships.

## *The Lens Principle*

Who you are determines what you see and the way you see it. What is around us doesn't determine what we see: What is within us does. And who you are determines how you see others. If you are a trusting person, you will see others as trustworthy. If you are a critical person, you will see others as critical. If you are a caring person, you will see others as compassionate.

The way you view others is determined by who you are. If you don't like people, that really is a statement about you and the way you look at people. Your viewpoint is the problem. If that's the case, don't try to change others. Don't even focus on others; focus on yourself. If you change yourself and become the kind of person you desire to be, you will begin to view others in a whole new light. And that will change the way you interact in all of your relationships.

## *The Mirror Principle*

People unaware of who they are and what they do often damage relationships with others. The way to change that is to look in the mirror. Consider these truths that we must learn about ourselves:

**Self-Awareness.** Human nature seems to endow people with the ability to size up everybody in the world but themselves.

**Self-Image.** Your image of yourself restricts your ability to build healthy relationships. A negative self-image will keep a person from being successful. If those with a poor self-image do somehow achieve success, it won't last because they will eventually bring themselves down to the level of their own expectations.

**Self-Honesty.** Comedian Jack Parr quipped, "Looking back, my life seems like one big obstacle race, with me being the chief obstacle." What can save us is a willingness to get honest about our shortcomings, faults and problems.

**Self-Improvement.** Critic Samuel Johnson advised that "he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition will waste his life in fruitless efforts and multiply the grief which he purposes to remove."

**Self-Responsibility.** No significant accomplishments can be achieved by individual effort. However, every significant accomplishment begins with the vision of one individual. Once we possess the vision, we must take responsibility for carrying it to others.

## *The Pain Principle*

German poet Herman Hesse wrote, "If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What isn't part of ourselves doesn't disturb us." When hurting people lash out, it is in response to what's happening inside them more than what's happening around them. They feel or believe something negative within themselves. The problem is that people who don't believe in themselves will never succeed, and they will also keep those around them from succeeding.

Not only do hurting people hurt others, but they are also

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## The Readiness Question: Are We Prepared for Relationships?

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easily hurt by others. As you interact with others, remember this: Any time a person's response is larger than the issue at hand, the response is almost always about something else.

If you find yourself dealing with a hurting person, don't take it personally. Look beyond the person and the situation for the problem. Try not to add to his or her hurt. Forgive those who lash out at you, try to help them and move on.

### *The Hammer Principle*

Psychologist Abraham Maslow observed, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." People require more judicious treatment than that. When little things bother us, our primary objective must be putting our personal agendas aside and building relationships. When tempted to use overkill, the following four Ts can help you temper your behavior:

**Total Picture.** If you come to conclusions long before the problem has been detailed, you should listen, ask questions, listen again, ask more questions, listen some more and then respond.

**Timing.** Noted hostess and writer Lady Dorothy Nevill observed, "The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

**Tone.** People often respond to our attitudes and actions more than to our words. Many petty conflicts occur because people use the wrong tone of voice.

**Temperature.** The size of a problem often changes based on how it is handled. If the reaction is worse than the action, the problem usually increases. If the reaction is less than the action, the problem usually decreases.

### *The Elevator Principle*

People can be the wind beneath our wings or the anchor on our boat. People who add value to others almost always do so intentionally. Adding value to others requires a person to give of him- or herself. That rarely occurs by accident.

In relationships, receiving is easy. Giving is much more difficult. We all want to be a positive influence in the lives of others. If you want to lift people up and add value to their lives, keep the following in mind:

- Lifters commit themselves to daily encouragement.
- Lifters know the little difference that separates hurting and helping.
- Lifters initiate the positive in a negative environment.
- Lifters understand life is not a dress rehearsal. ■

### How to Develop a Softer Touch

- Let the past stay in the past.
- Ask yourself, *Is my reaction part of the problem?*
- Remember that actions are remembered long after words are forgotten.
- Never let the situation mean more than the relationship.
- Treat loved ones with unconditional love.
- Admit wrongs and ask forgiveness.

## The Connection Question: Are We Willing to Focus on Others?

All human beings possess a desire to connect with other people. The need for connection is sometimes motivated by the desire for love, but it can just as easily be prompted by feelings of loneliness, the need for acceptance, the quest for fulfillment or the desire to achieve in business.

To fulfill our desire for relationships, we must stop thinking about ourselves and begin focusing on the people with whom we desire to build relationships. When you stop worrying so much about yourself and start looking at others and what they desire, you build a bridge to other people and you become the kind of person others want to be around.

### *The Big Picture Principle*

People who remain self-centered and self-serving will always have a hard time getting along with others. To help them break that pattern of living, they need to see the big picture, which requires perspective, maturity and responsibility. Here are some steps to follow:

**Get out of your "own little world."** Go places you have never gone, meet the kinds of people you do not know, and do the things you have not done before.

**Check your ego at the door.** If your focus is always on yourself, you'll never be able to build positive relationships.

**Understand what brings fulfillment.** Ultimately, the things that bring fulfillment involve others. A person who is entirely self-focused will always feel restless and hungry because he or she separates him- or herself from what's most important in life: people.

### *The Exchange Principle*

Instead of putting others in their place, we must put ourselves in their place. When we fail to see things from the perspective of others, we fail in our relationships.

To become better at making the exchange, at seeing things from another person's perspective, do the following:

**Leave "your place" and visit "their place."** Do whatever you can to change your perspective. Listen to people's concerns. Study their culture or profession. Read in their areas of interest. Or literally visit their place.

**Acknowledge that the other person has a valid viewpoint.** People's belief systems and personal experiences are diverse and complex, and even if you do work to see things

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## The Connection Question: Are We Willing to Focus on Others?

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from another person's point of view, there will still be differences of opinion. Working to find the legitimacy of another person's point of view stretches your thinking.

**Check your attitude.** It is always easy to see both sides of an issue about which we are not particularly concerned. It is much harder when we have a vested interest in it. When that's the case, we are often more concerned with getting our way than connecting with others.

**Ask others what they would do in your situation.** The key to the exchange principle is empathy. When you have empathy with others' points of view, it becomes much easier to connect with them because they know that you care.

### *The Learning Principle*

Each person we meet has the potential to teach us something. All of us can learn things in unlikely places and from unlikely people. But that's only true if we have the right attitude. If you have a teachable attitude, you will be positioned well to learn from others. Then all you will need to do is to take the following five steps:

**1. Make Learning Your Passion.** Management expert Philip Crosby notes, "There is a theory of human behavior that says people subconsciously retard their own intellectual growth. They come to rely on cliches and habits. Once they reach the age of their own personal comfort with the world, they stop learning and their mind runs on idle for the rest of their days. They may progress organizationally, they may be ambitious and eager, and they may even work night and day. But they learn no more." If you desire to keep growing, you cannot sit back in a comfort zone.

**2. Value People.** People don't learn from people they don't value.

**3. Develop Relationships With Growth Potential.** Find people who are especially likely to help you grow: experts in your field, creative thinkers who stretch you mentally, and achievers who inspire you to go to the next level.

**4. Identify People's Uniqueness and Strengths.** Philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson remarked, "I have never met a man who was not my superior in some particular." People grow best in their areas of strength — and can learn the most from another person's area of strength. For that reason, you can't be indiscriminate in choosing the people you seek out to teach you.

**5. Ask Questions.** Learning begins with listening. The best way to learn is to watch others and ask questions.

### *The Charisma Principle*

People are interested in the person who is interested in them. According to Dale Carnegie, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you." Carnegie's teachings in *How to Win Friends and Influence People* include:

- **Become genuinely interested in other people.** People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- **Smile.** If you want to draw others to you, light up your face with a smile.
- **Remember names.** A person's name is the sweetest and most important sound to that person.
- **Be a good listener.** Encourage others to talk about themselves.
- **Talk in terms of the other person's interests.** Treat others the way *they* want to be treated.
- **Make the other person feel important.** Become sincerely interested in others.

### *The Number 10 Principle*

All people have potential. Everyone you meet can be a 10. Believing in people usually brings out the best in them. If people believe in themselves, they can reach their potential and become the individuals they were created to be. If you've been hurt or disappointed in the past, don't let that negatively color your attitude in the future.

Philosopher and poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, "Treat a man as he appears to be and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be."

### *The Confrontation Principle*

Caring for people should precede confronting people. Conflict is like cancer: Early detection increases the possibility of a healthy outcome. While intellectually it's simple to resolve conflict, emotionally it can be difficult. It requires honesty, humility and dedication to the relationship. Take these steps when confronting someone:

- **Confront a person only if you care about that person.** It is more productive to go into a confrontation keeping the other person's interests in mind.
- **Meet together as soon as possible.** Putting off confrontation only causes the situation to fester.
- **First seek understanding, not necessarily agreement.** The person who gives an opinion before he or she understands is human, but the person who gives a judgment before he or she understands is a fool.
- **Outline the issue.** Be positive, describe your perceptions, state how this situation makes you feel, and explain why this is important to you.
- **Encourage a response.**
- **Agree to an action plan that clearly identifies the issue and spells out concrete steps that will be taken.** The action plan should include a commitment by both parties to put the issue to rest once resolved. ■

# The Trust Question: Can We Build Mutual Trust?

Philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship."

Why do many personal and business relationships fall apart? The reasons for such breakdowns are many, but the cause that outweighs all others is broken trust.

### *The Bedrock Principle*

In his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis says, "Integrity is the basis of trust, which is not so much an ingredient of leadership as it is a product. It is the one quality that cannot be acquired, but must be earned. It is given by co-workers and followers, and without it, the leader can't function."

That can be said not only of leaders and followers, but also of all relationships. Developing trust is like constructing a building. It takes time, and it must be done one piece at a time. As in construction, it's much quicker and easier to tear something down than it is to build it up. But if the foundation is strong, there is a good chance that what is built upon it will stand.

If you desire to build your trustworthiness — and as a result, your relationships — remember:

**Trust begins with yourself.** If you are not honest with yourself, you will not be capable of honesty with others. Self-deception is the enemy of relationships.

**Trust cannot be compartmentalized.** Many people today try to compartmentalize their lives. They believe that they can cut corners or compromise their values in one area of life and it won't affect another area. But character doesn't work that way. And neither does trust.

**Trust works like a bank account.** Mike Abrashoff, author of *It's Your Ship*, states, "Trust is like a bank account — you have got to keep making deposits if you want it to grow. On occasion, things will go wrong, and you will have to make a withdrawal. Meanwhile, it is sitting in the bank earning interest."

### *The Situation Principle*

Never let the situation mean more than the relationship. It is more rewarding to resolve a situation than to dissolve a relationship. Any time a person puts the situation ahead of the relationship, it happens for one reason: loss of perspective. People are always more important than mere things. Our property, our position and our agenda are transitory.

Whenever we experience a rough time in a relationship, we need to remind ourselves of why that relationship is significant to us in the first place. Also, we must keep in mind that there is a big difference between a situation that occurs once and one that occurs again and again.

### *The Bob Principle*

If Bob has problems with Bill, and Bob has problems with Fred, and Bob has problems with Sue, and Bob has problems with Jane, and Bob has problems with Sam, then Bob is usually the problem.

Every problem starter is like a fire lighter. And each of us is like a person carrying two buckets. One is filled with water and the other with gasoline. When we see a problem fire being lit, we can choose to douse it with water and put it out, or we can throw gasoline on it and make it worse.

If you have someone who creates and spreads problems, respond with a positive comment, show your concern for the person being criticized, and encourage steps toward resolution. Not everyone will respond positively to your suggestions. But if you have a strong connection with a Bob or you are in a position of authority with him, then ask him to THINK before he speaks using this acronym:

| | |
|---|---|
| **T** | Is it true? |
| **H** | Is it helpful? |
| **I** | Is it inspiring? |
| **N** | Is it necessary? |
| **K** | Is it kind? |

If he can answer yes to all of these questions, then it's appropriate for him to proceed.

### *The Approachability Principle*

Being at ease with ourselves helps others be at ease with us. People miss many opportunities for connection and the chance to build deeper relationships because they do not make themselves approachable. Approachable people usually exhibit the following seven characteristics:

**1. Personal warmth.** Approachable people truly like people. To be approachable, you need to generate personal warmth toward the people you meet.

**2. Appreciation for the differences in people.** Approachable people appreciate people for who they are and what they have to offer.

**3. Consistency of mood.** Approachable people are even-keeled and predictable. You know what you'll get because they are basically the same every time you see them.

**4. Sensitivity toward people's feelings.** Although approachable people are emotionally steady, they might not expect others to be that way. They tune in to the moods and feelings of others, and then adjust how they relate to them.

**5. Understanding of human weaknesses and exposure of their own.** Approachable people are honest about their abilities and shortcomings. They are willing to be told not what they want to hear but what they need to hear.

**6. Ability to forgive easily and quickly ask for for-**

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## The Trust Question: Can We Build Mutual Trust?

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**giveness.** Approachable people quickly ask for forgiveness and easily grant it to others.

**7. Authenticity.** Approachable people are real. They engage with others on a genuine level, and don't pretend to be someone they're not. They don't go out of their way to hide what they think and feel. They have no hidden agenda.

### *The Foxhole Principle*

We face many kinds of battles in life, and the "foxholes" we sometimes inhabit come in many shapes and sizes. These foxholes can include the home, a business, a sports team, a small group, a platoon or something else. When preparing for battle, dig a hole big enough for a friend. The foxhole is for you and a friend, not a friend alone. You can ask a friend to fight with you, but you should never send someone else to fight your battles. And you should be willing to fight for any friend whose help you would request.

You might have many friends, but not all of them will be foxhole friends. For that matter, you will not be that kind of an ally to everyone in your life either. Foxhole friendships are special. Even before the battle, simply knowing that someone believes in you and will fight for you is uplifting. People who climb down into the foxhole with you see things from your point of view and they express empathy for your situation. That makes them not only a great help, but also a great comfort. ■

For additional information on trusting those who have broken trust, go to: http://my.summary.com

# The Investment Question: Are We Willing to Invest in Others?

Are you willing to invest in other people? You may build a beautiful house, but eventually it will crumble. You may develop a fine career, but one day it will be over. You may save a great sum of money, but you can't take it with you. You may be in superb health today, but in time it will decline. You may take pride in your accomplishments, but someone will surpass you.

Relationships are like anything else. The return you get depends on what you invest.

### *The Gardening Principle*

All relationships need cultivation. You cannot neglect a relationship and expect it to grow. That's not to say that all relationships are the same and need the same amount of attention. The nature and purpose of the relationship will determine the energy and time needed to cultivate it.

You can start to cultivate a healthy, growing relationship by focusing on the following six things:

**Commitment.** Every long-lasting relationship suffers strains and setbacks. No two people agree on everything. Even the best friendships can expect to face conflict. The question is: What are you going to do when trouble comes?

**Communication.** A relationship begins with easy communication. It deepens with more difficult communication. And it is sustained with intentional communication.

**Friendship.** Critic Samuel Johnson remarked, "If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone; a man, sir, should keep his friendship in a constant repair." That goes for old friendships as well as new ones. We sometimes take for granted the people closest to us, and as a result, we neglect to try being good friends to them first.

**Memories.** Shared memories are a wonderful source of connection and bonding for people.

**Growth.** When you begin any friendship, it is filled with promise. But you have to find ways to keep it fresh and strong so that it continues to have potential and not just good memories.

**Spoiling Each Other.** Voltaire wrote, "If the first law of friendship is that it has to be cultivated, the second law is to be indulgent when the first law has been neglected." Let your friends and family members know how much you care as often as you can.

### *The 101 Percent Principle*

Sometimes building relationships is an uphill battle, and connecting with another person can be particularly difficult. How do you connect with people when you seem to have nothing in common with them? Can you build relational bridges in such circumstances? And if so, can the relationships be healthy, long-lasting and productive?

When the connection is difficult, you must find the one thing the two of you can agree upon. You can do that with just about anybody. The problem is that many people naturally take the opposite approach; they look for differences. Why? Sometimes it's due to natural competitiveness; people are often looking for an edge. Sometimes it's to make themselves stand out and to find their own distinctiveness. Other times, people focus on differences because they feel threatened by others.

When connection is difficult, you must find the one thing the two of you can agree upon. The greater the differences, the more important it is to focus on what you agree on. Once you do, give it 100 percent of your effort.

### *The Patience Principle*

The journey with others is slower than the journey alone. Here are the steps you can take to become a more patient person in relationships:

**Prioritize patience as a virtue worthy of develop-**

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## The Investment Question: Are We Willing to Invest in Others?

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**ing.** Oft-quoted Arnold Glasgow stated, "You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not smashing it." In the long run, you will find that patience with people is beneficial to you. But you may not see a return right away.

**Understand that it takes time to build good relationships.** Relationships of any depth take time. The more people involved in the relational circle, the longer it takes.

**Practice the exchange principle.** Each of us thinks our circumstances warrant special consideration — people should be extra patient with us. Instead, put yourself in the other person's place and be extra patient with him or her.

**Realize that people have and create problems.** When you decide to develop a relationship with another person, it's a package deal. You don't get to take only the good stuff and reject the bad. Try to give others the same kind of grace you'd like to receive for your shortcomings.

**Identify areas where people need patience with you.** It's a good idea for us to know what ours are.

### *The Celebration Principle*

The true test of relationships is not only how loyal we are when friends fail, but how thrilled we are when they succeed. Everyone identifies with failure. The problem is that because people so readily identify with failure, they sometimes have a hard time connecting with success. And if they don't identify with success, they may resent it.

Frequently the very same qualities that prevent people from achieving success — emotional insecurity, a scarcity mind-set, petty jealousy and the like — prevent them from celebrating others' successes. They constantly compare themselves to others and find themselves wanting.

How do you learn to celebrate with others instead of ignoring or undermining them? Realize it's not a competition. You must be willing to look at things from other people's point of view. When they achieve something that is important to *them*, celebrate with enthusiasm. Celebrate successes others don't yet see. Sometimes people make great strides and aren't even aware of it.

### *The High Road Principle*

We go to a higher level when we treat others better than they treat us. If you're slinging mud, you're losing ground. There are really only three roads we can travel when it comes to dealing with others. We can take the low road where we treat others worse than they treat us. We can take the middle road where we treat others the same as they treat us. Or we can take the high road and treat others better than they treat us.

The low road damages relationships and alienates others from us. The middle road may not drive people away from us, but it won't attract them to us either; it is reactive rather than proactive and allows others to set the agenda for our lives. The high road helps to create positive relationships and attracts others to us; it sets a positive agenda with others that even negative people find difficult to undermine.

High roaders understand that it's not what happens to you but what happens in you that really matters. Newscaster David Brinkley observed, "A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him." They commit to traveling the high road continually. Nearly anyone can be kind in the face of unkindness every once in a while: It's more difficult to sustain a high road attitude all the time. High roaders recognize their own need for grace, and extend it to others.

High roaders set higher standards for themselves than others would. They make excellence their goal. They care more than others think is wise. They risk more than others think is safe. They dream more than others think is practical. They expect more than others think is possible. And they work more than others think is necessary. ■

## The Synergy Question: Can We Create a Win-Win Relationship?

Some relationships add value to both parties, and that is rewarding. When both parties enter into a relationship with an investment mind-set — after having connected and built trust with each other — a win-win relationship can result.

The wonderful thing about win-win relationships is that they can be forged in every area of life and in all kinds of relationships: between husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors, and bosses and employees. If both parties sustain a giving attitude and both are having their needs met, then the relationship can become something truly special.

In the long run, lopsided relationships don't last. If one person is doing all the giving and the other is doing all the receiving, the giver will eventually become worn out. And ironically the taker will become dissatisfied because that person will feel he or she is not receiving enough. The only way to build a positive, long-lasting, synergistic relationship is to make sure everybody wins!

### *The Boomerang Principle*

When we help others, we help ourselves. Those who invest in others give and then receive. They believe that success comes from being helpful, caring and constructive. They desire to make everything and everyone they touch better, and they understand the best way to accomplish that is to give of themselves. To enrich the world and become someone who invests in others, you must:

**Think "others first."** Good, healthy, growing relationships begin with the ability to put other people first. Begin

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## The Synergy Question: Can We Create a Win-Win Relationship?

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every relationship by giving the other person respect — even before he or she has had a chance to earn it.

**Focus on the investment, not the return.** Investors in people are like investors in the stock market. In the long haul, they will benefit, but they have little control over what that return will look like or how it will occur. But they *can* control what and how they invest.

**Pick out a few people with great potential.** When people prepare to make financial investments, the wise ones don't put all their money into a single stock or fund. They diversify by investing in several areas. But good investors don't spread themselves too thin. They know they can give only so much time and attention to each particular investment. Wise investors in people follow a similar pattern. Pick only as many people as you can handle with intensity, choose only people with great potential for growth, and choose only people whose need for growth matches your gifts and talents.

**With their permission, begin the process.** You cannot help someone who does not want your help. The stronger the relationships and the greater the trust, the higher the likelihood that the investment process will work.

**Enjoy a return in due season.** When people's motives are pure and they genuinely desire to add value to others, they cannot help others without receiving some benefit. The return may be immediate, or it may take a long time, but it will occur. And when it does, the relationship begins to resonate with synergy.

### *The Friendship Principle*

Most people underestimate the power and importance of relationships in regard to business and career. They try to learn the most recent management fad, focus on product quality, or create programs and systems to improve productivity or increase repeat business. These things are helpful, but the real key is relationships. Never underestimate the power of friendship when it comes to doing business.

As soon as you understand the way that relationships affect business, you begin to realize that all business relationships are not created equal. Here are the four levels of business relationships:

**People Knowledge.** Your understanding of people helps build your business. All the product knowledge in the world won't help someone without people skills. Nor will technical expertise. Nor will the ability to build a brilliantly efficient organization. If individuals don't possess people skills, they very quickly hit a ceiling in their effectiveness.

**Service Skills.** Barry J. Gibbons, author of *This Indecision Is Final*, writes, "Between 70 percent and 90 percent of decisions not to repeat a purchase of anything are not about product or price. They are about some dimension of the service relationship." How you treat the people with whom you do business really matters, especially in a competitive market.

**Business Reputation.** Writer Howard Hodgson said, "Whatever business you are in, you are in a business of relationships. That's why your reputation is your greatest asset."

**Personal Friendship.** Your friendship with others builds your business. The highest level of business relationships is reached when people like your business, but more important, they like you!

### *The Partnership Principle*

Working together increases the odds of winning together. Try to build relationships with everyone, but forge partnerships with only a few. Those closest to you determine your level of success. Move from simply working with good, capable people to partnering with difference makers. Find capable people with the same passion and mission as yours who also need others to make a difference. This will lead to many rewarding relational partnerships and together you will do things that make a positive impact by helping others.

Every person possesses one of two mind-sets: scarcity or abundance. People with a scarcity mind-set believe that there's only so much to go around so you have to scrape for everything you can and protect whatever you have at all costs. People with an abundance mind-set believe there's always enough to go around.

### *The Satisfaction Principle*

In great relationships, the joy of being together is enough. A lasting relationship begins as a healthy relationship. The following four factors help to create the right climate for relationships where simply being together is enough:

- **Shared memories create a bonded environment.**
- **Growing together creates a committed environment.**
- **Mutual respect creates a healthy environment of trust and servanthood.**
- **Unconditional love creates a safe environment.** ■

**For additional information on personal friendship, go to: http://my.summary.com**

### SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**If you liked *Winning With People*, you'll also like:**

1. ***The 8th Habit* by Stephen R. Covey.** Covey explains that the crucial challenge in life and work is to find our own voice and inspire others to find theirs.
2. ***Winners Never Cheat* by Jon M. Huntsman.** Huntsman describes how readers can learn to listen to their moral compass, build teams with high values, share success and take responsibility.
3. ***Bringing Out the Best in People* by Aubrey C. Daniels.** Daniels, a psychologist, shows what keeps people working at peak performance: positive reinforcement.
4. ***First Things First* by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, and Rebecca R. Merrill.** The authors show you how to stay focused on what really matters in life, live by your principles and find your mission.
5. ***Crucial Confrontations* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler.** The authors offer the skills it takes to resolve pressing problems.

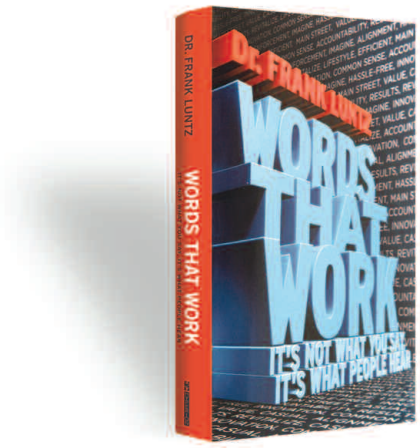
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# Words That Work

Dr. Frank Luntz

SOUNDVIEW Executive Book Summaries®






By Dr. Frank Luntz

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### It's Not What You Say, It's What People Hear

# WORDS THAT WORK

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*Why are some people better than others at talking their way into a job or out of trouble? What makes some advertising jingles cut through the clutter of our crowded memories? What's behind winning campaign slogans and career-ending political blunders? Why do some speeches resonate and endure while others are forgotten moments after they are given?*

*The answers lie in the way words are used to influence and motivate, the way they connect thought and emotion.*

*In this summary, language architect and public opinion guru Dr. Frank Luntz raises the curtain on the craft of effective language and offers priceless insight on how to find and use the right words to get what you want out of life.*

*Luntz draws much from his experience in the political arena, and he has played in a role in how we describe various current issues. For example, it was Luntz who turned the term "estate tax" into the more politically charged "death tax." He also reframed "drilling for oil" into "exploring for energy." In his book, Luntz explains how these subtle shifts in word usage can mean the difference between success and failure.*

*Whether your goal is to boost company sales, win political office, inspire your employees or get the raise you deserve, Luntz has something instructive to say about how language can help. Every day is a battle of perception, and in this book, Luntz demonstrates how to win by transforming mere words into an effective arsenal.*

*In this summary, you will learn:*

- ***How the right words can give you the edge in any venture.***
- ***How to avoid common mistakes in your messages.***
- ***How we all submit to the power of language, whether we know it or not.***
- ***How you can achieve better results by narrowing the gap between what you intend to convey and what your audiences actually interpret.***
- ***How to go beyond your own understanding and look at the world from your listener's point of view.***

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# WORDS THAT WORK

**By Dr. Frank Luntz**

## — THE *COMPLETE* SUMMARY

## It's Not What You Say…

You can have the best message in the world, but the person on the receiving end will always understand it through the prism of his or her own emotions, preconceptions, prejudices and pre-existing beliefs. It's not enough to be correct, reasonable or even brilliant.

The key to successful communication is to take the imaginative leap of stuffing yourself right into your listener's shoes to know what he or she is thinking and feeling in the deepest recesses of his or her mind and heart. How that person perceives what you say is even more real, at least in a practical sense, than how you perceive yourself.

Just as a fictional work's meaning may transcend authorial intention, every message that you bring into the world is subject to the interpretations and emotions of the people who receive it. Once the words leave your lips, they no longer belong to you. The act of speaking is not a conquest, but a surrender. When we open our mouths, we are sharing with the world — and the world inevitably interprets, indeed sometimes shifts and distorts, our original meaning.

Examining the strategic and tactical use of language in politics, business and everyday life, this summary shows how you can achieve better results. The critical task is to go beyond your own understanding and to look at the world from your listener's point of view. In essence, their perceptions trump the "objective" reality of a given word or phrase. What matters isn't what you say, it's what people hear. ■

## The 10 Rules of Effective Language

The rules of language are especially important given the sheer amount of communication the average person has to contend with. We step out of our houses each morning into a nonstop sensory assault: advertising and entertainment, song lyrics and commercial jingles, clipped conversations and abbreviated e-mails. A good deal of noise also comes from inside our homes, from our televisions to our sound systems to our computers and iPods. How do you make people hear your words amid all this chatter?

Here are the 10 rules of successful communication:

**Rule 1. Simplicity: Use Small Words.** Avoid words that might force someone to reach for the dictionary, because most Americans won't. The average American did not graduate from college and doesn't understand the difference between *effect* and *affect*.

**Rule 2. Brevity: Use Short Sentences.** Be as brief as possible. Never use a sentence when a phrase will do and never use four words when three can say just as much.

**Rule 3. Credibility Is as Important as Philosophy.** People have to believe it to buy it. If your words lack sincerity or if they contradict accepted facts, circumstances or perceptions, they will lack impact.

**Rule 4. Consistency Matters.** Repetition. Repetition. Repetition. Good language is like the Energizer Bunny. It keeps going … and going … and going.

**Rule 5. Novelty: Offer Something New.** In plain English, words that work often involve a new definition of an old idea. At a time when cars and the promotion of them were expanding in size, Volkswagen took exactly the opposite approach in design and in message. It

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**The author:** Dr. Frank Luntz was named the "hottest pollster in America" by *The Boston Globe*, and "has a special expertise, one that happens to be in demand these days," according to *The New York Times*. His advice is sought by CEOs of Fortune 100 companies, political candidates, public advocacy groups and world leaders. Luntz has supervised more than 1,200 surveys and focus groups in 20 countries, and has engineered some of the most potent political and corporate campaigns of the last decade.

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## The 10 Rules of Effective Language

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worked because it made people think about the product in a fresh way.

**Rule 6. Sound and Texture Matter.** The sounds and texture of language should be just as memorable as the words themselves. A string of words that have the same first letter, the same sound or the same syllabic cadence is more memorable than a random collection of sounds.

**Rule 7. Speak Aspirationally.** Messages need to say what people want to hear. The key to successful aspirational language for products or politics is to personalize and humanize the message to trigger an emotional remembrance.

**Rule 8. Visualize.** Paint a vivid picture. From M&M's "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand" to Morton Salt's "When it rains it pours" to NBC's "Must See TV," the slogans we remember for a lifetime almost always have a strong visual component, something we can see and almost feel.

**Rule 9. Ask a Question.** "Got Milk?" may be the most memorable print ad campaign of the past decade. A statement, when put in the form of a rhetorical question, can have much greater impact than a plain assertion.

**Rule 10. Provide Context and Explain Relevance.** You have to give people the "why" of a message before you tell them the "therefore" and the "so that." Without context, you cannot establish a message's value, its impact or, most importantly, its relevance. ■

# Preventing Message Mistakes

Few words — indeed, few messages of any kind — whether in politics or in the business world, are ingested in isolation. Their meanings are shaped and shaded by the regional biases, life experiences, education, assumptions and prejudices of those who receive them. Communicators too often forget this, or absentmindedly acknowledge it but then continue obliviously, making assumptions about where their audience is coming from, figuring that whomever they're pitching their product or policy to is just like they are. They learn too late that most Americans are not denizens of Capitol Hill or the executive suite.

Never lose sight of whom you are talking to — and who is listening. Remember that the meaning of your words is constantly in flux, rather than being fixed. How your words are understood is strongly influenced by the experiences and biases of the listener.

### *How You Define Determines How You Are Received*

Positioning an idea linguistically so that it affirms and confirms an audience's context can often mean the difference between that idea's success and failure. The fact is, not all words with similar definitions prompt the same response.

In politics, for example, Americans will often come to diametrically opposite conclusions on policy questions, depending on how the questions are phrased — even if the actual result of the policies is exactly the same. In effect, positioning an idea doesn't merely "frame" it so that it carries a certain meaning; it actually defines the terms of the debate itself.

For example, by almost two-to-one, Americans say they are spending too much on *welfare* (42 percent) rather than too little (23 percent). Yet an overwhelming 68 percent of Americans think they are spending too little on *assistance to the poor*, versus a mere 7 percent who think they're spending too much. Think about it: What is assistance to the poor? Welfare! So while the underlying policy question may be the same, the definition — welfare versus assistance to the poor — and positioning make all the difference in public reaction.

Communicators need to put themselves in the mind-set of their audiences: what social status people occupy, what they've heard in the past, what their level of education is and what gender they are. All these things affect how people will receive a message. ■

# Old Words, New Meaning

The definitions of words change with the generations. Americans are constantly creating new words even as they give old words new meanings. To create words that work, you have to pay close attention to the vitality of the language.

You have to understand how people use words today and what those words have come to mean. The English language is general, and creating words that work in

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## Keeping Up With the Language

Here are some examples of the way language has changed over the years:

| WAS | IS NOW |
|---|---|
| Used Car | Pre-owned vehicle |
| Secretary | Administrative Assistant |
| Housewife | Stay-at-home mom |
| Stewardess | Flight Attendant |
| Waiter/Waitress | Server |
| Caretaker | Estate Manager |
| Garbage Removal | Sanitation Services |

## Old Words, New Meaning

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particular is a living, dynamic, shifting challenge; being aware is essential when it comes to effective communication.

### *Misuse of Words*

One reason why the definitions of words have blurred or changed over time is simply because of their misuse. There are a growing number of examples where the incorrect meaning of relatively commonplace language has become more widespread than the original intention or definition.

A good example is the word *peruse*. Most people think that to peruse something means to "scan or skim it quickly, without paying much attention." In fact, this is the exact opposite of what peruse really means: "to study or read something carefully, in detail." But the word has been misused so often by so many people that this second sense of it — the exact opposite of what it actually means — has finally been accepted as a secondary definition, and as far as most people know, it's the only definition.

It's one thing to insist on proper usage in a piece of formal writing, but if you're speaking or communicating informally — whether to your customers or your constituents — it's really more important to be understood. This is not to say that you should knowingly misuse the language; instead, just find a simpler, more readily understandable way to convey what you have to say. ■

## Effective Communication

Arriving at the best language isn't enough in and of itself. The majority of human communication is nonverbal. It involves not only symbolism and imagery but also attitude and atmosphere.

Those character attributes that make up personality — that describe someone's affiliations and sympathies — are a critical component of communication. When they clash with a listener's expectations, the most precise, tailored and on-target language in the world won't save you.

The most powerful messages will fall on deaf ears if they aren't spoken by credible messengers. Effective language is more than just the words themselves. There is a style that goes hand-in-hand with the substance. Whether running for higher office or running for a closing elevator, how you speak determines how you are perceived and received. But credibility and authenticity don't just happen. They are earned.

# How 'Words That Work' Are Created

While most researchers depend on focus groups to understand the *why* of a topic, Luntz writes that he prefers "Instant Response Dial Sessions"— also known as "People Meters" — because he believes they multiply the benefits of a traditional focus group.

The differences between dial sessions and traditional focus groups are significant. Dial sessions have more participants than a focus group, typically about 25 to 30 people. They're conducted classroom style, and last longer — usually three hours. Dial sessions are much more expensive than focus groups. A typical dial session in 2006 ran from $27,500 to $40,000, while focus groups were as cheap as $7,500 and rarely cost more than $12,000.

In a well-constructed dial session, it is not uncommon to contact more than 1,500 people to fill the 30 slots. Luckily, e-mail is making it increasingly possible to reach and recruit the right people for an affordable cost.

What truly differentiates a dial session from a focus group is the dial technology itself. The dials are the research equivalent of an EKG that measures a combination of emotional and intellectual responses and gets inside each participant's psyche, isolating his or her emotional reaction to every word, phrase and visual.

Participants hold small wireless devices that are about the size of a remote control. Each device has a computerized numerical display that ranges from 0 to 100 and a knob about the size of a quarter on the front that they turn up toward 100 (more positive) or turn down toward 0 (more negative).

They do this on a second-by-second basis based on their immediate, visceral, personal reactions to what they are seeing — a videotaped speech, commercials, snippets from a television show or movie, even a live presentation or conversation. Those reactions are collected in real time on a computer and are displayed as a line superimposed on the tested video. Every time the line spikes or plunges, something was said or shown that caused a significant reaction and deserves further group exploration.

Dial sessions provide deep insight into behavioral and emotional patterns that cannot be captured in telephone surveys. Many of the "words that work" most likely came from a dial session. ■

# Be the Message

The importance of authenticity cannot be overstated. Whether your arena is business or politics, you simply must be yourself. Few things in this world are more

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## Be the Message

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painful than a politician or a CEO trying to act cool. Employees and voters see right through such bad-faith attempts to connect and bond with them.

By all means, show, don't tell. Reveal your personality. Be the message rather than narrating it. But, above all, be *authentic*.

### *The Corporate CEO as Messenger*

The business world is particularly plagued by shoddy language. Employees and customers are inundated with jargon and "ad-speak," cliches and windy phrases that signify nothing and are forgotten even before they are remembered. It's stunning how poor communication skills can be, even at the highest levels of corporate America.

The CEO is often the de facto messenger for the company he or she leads — the living, breathing embodiment of whatever product or service it sells; that's not always a good thing. Right now, there's a Fortune 20 CEO out there who is leading a crumbling manufacturing behemoth and doesn't realize that his own unintelligible public statements are contributing to its collapse, and he is certainly not the exception.

Two CEOs, one current and the other retired, stand head and shoulders above the rest in how their language embodies the companies they run, the management style they typify and the leaders they are.

Jack Welch, the venerable former CEO of General Electric, truly practiced what he preached. A tireless worker, Welch led the expansion of GE into the powerhouse corporation it is today.

Linguistically, Welch was a dedicated follower and communicator of two of the rules of effective messaging: repetition and relevance. The incredibly powerful and personal "GE, we bring good things to life" ad campaign was launched under his watch, and it perfectly matched his laser-like focus on success.

Steve Jobs, Apple's past and current CEO, is another winner because of his larger-than-life persona and his candid assessment and lasting impact on the human condition. The parallels between his life and the company he created are remarkable.

His twice-occurring rags-to-riches story is one that should be taught at every business school because it demonstrates the power of personal conviction — and that conviction has defined Apple as well. Responding to a critic who asked why he thought his overly ambitious development plans could be achieved, Jobs declared, "Because I'm the CEO and I think it can be done." His unrelenting can-do language and spirit are a perfect reflection of Apple. ■

## The Most Recognized Slogans

In a recent national survey, the most recognized product and corporate taglines included:

- "You're in good hands." Overtly visual, aspirational, and recognized as Allstate's slogan by 87 percent of the American public.
- "Like a Good Neighbor." Recognized as State Farm's tagline by 70 percent, this slogan is aspirational, as well as memorable with a jingle written by Barry Manilow.
- "Always Low Prices. Always." Extremely repetitive and unquestionably credible, Wal-Mart's tagline is identified by 67 percent.
- "Obey Your Thirst." A relatively new tagline for Sprite, recognized by 35 percent of the population because of its novelty, twist of language and visualization.
- "Think Outside the Bun." Taco Bell's tagline is recognized by 34 percent, for reasons similar to Sprite's.
- "i'm lovin' it." The latest and greatest for McDonald's, is already at 33 percent despite being only a year old, because it hits more than half of the rules: simplicity, brevity, credibility, aspiration and relevance.
- "What's in your wallet?" This rhetorical question from Capital One earns a 27 percent recognition level.

# Words We Remember

Words we remember are not the common words of common people. They are the political, corporate and cultural words that have been burned into our brains. Some are serious, others frivolous. They are words that will always be with us. Forever.

Much advertising saturation — and our subsequent ability to recall it — is involuntary. That's one of the definitions of words that work: We remember them even when we're not trying. The Doyle Dane Bernbach agency's 1959 campaign for Volkswagen, titled "Think Small," was named by *Advertising Age* as the top ad campaign ever. Just two words, brief and simple, but the contextual surprise signaled a new sophistication of American advertising, marking a subtle but influential shift in the way products would be sold from then on.

### *Accessible Language*

Accessible language rules. The best advertising taglines abide by the 10 Rules of Effective Communication and are therefore easily remembered.

The power of poignant language is immense, but the destructive power of an ill-thought sound bite is unending and unforgiving. Successful, effective messages — words and language that have been presented in the

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## Words We Remember

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proper context — all have something in common. They stick in our brains and never leave, like riding a bicycle or tying our shoelaces. Not only do they communicate, educate and allow us to share ideas — they also move people to action.

Words that work are catalysts. They spur us to get up off the couch, to leave the house, *to do something.* When communicators pay attention to what people hear rather than what they are trying to say, they manage not merely to catch people's attention, but to hold it. ■

# Corporate Case Studies

Words that work in business don't merely inject themselves into memory and compel you to act; at times they actually mean the difference between millions of dollars and billions of dollars.

The one component that virtually all successful corporate communication efforts have in common is the decision to take a proactive approach. In today's anti-corporate, distrustful and highly politicized environment, there's a simple linguistic equation: Silence = Guilt.

### *Wal-Mart and Vons*

For years, Wal-Mart did not respond to an increasingly serious set of public, community, legal and governmental challenges, and now finds itself on the defensive in neighborhoods where it wishes to locate or expand, and at open war with public interest groups that once hailed the company for low prices and job opportunities.

Vons, the Southern California division of supermarket giant Safeway, consciously made the decision to encourage its store directors *not* to talk to employees or customers about labor issues in the run-up to the terribly destructive strike in 2004, and it paid the price in employee agitation and an angry consumer marketplace during and even after the strike.

### *A Clear and Immediate Response*

Regardless of the facts, even if it's unfair to do so, it's only human nature for audiences to regard silence as a tacit admission of wrongdoing. Every attack that is not met with a clear and immediate response will be assumed to be true.

Whether in the midst of an employee strike, corporate scandal or just a bad quarterly financial report, a company's communication with the public must be proactive, consistent and ongoing. Whether a difficult event is about to take place — or a crisis has just landed in your lap — the rules are the same. The key word is *more:* more conversation with the affected community rather than less, more information rather than less and more details rather than fewer. If the words are right, there is no such thing as overkill.

One of the best examples of an industry tackling its greatest image weakness and turning it into its most beneficial strength just by changing a single solitary word (two letters, really) is the *gaming* industry — formerly known as the *gambling* industry. ■

# Political Case Studies

Back in 1993, when Rudy Giuliani was in his first successful campaign for mayor of New York City, he was pressed by his advisers to talk about *public safety* rather than *crime* and *criminals.* Polling with the voters of New York showed that the public placed a higher priority on *personal and public safety* than on *fighting crime* or even *getting tough on criminals.*

There is an important distinction. *Fighting crime* is procedural and *getting tough on criminals* is punitive — and that's certainly important. But *safety*, although somewhat abstract, is definitely personal, and most of all aspirational — the ultimate value and the desired result of an effort to fight crime. And so Rudy Giuliani adopted not just an anti-crime message but a pro-public safety agenda — and his success in New York City led to the reframing of the way Americans think about crime, criminals and a safe, civil society.

Words that work don't just happen. They are uncovered and utilized only in cases where someone cares enough to apply the principles of effective communication to an issue or cause. ■

# Myths and Realities About Language and People

Here are five great myths about Americans and the realities behind them:

**Myth: Americans Are Educated.** False. Fewer than half of Americans have graduated from college. Only 29 percent of adults in the United States over the age of 45 have a bachelor's degree or higher, and only 27 percent of adults over the age of 25 are college educated.

**Myth: Americans Read.** False. Polls, dial sessions and focus groups show again and again that nobody reads. In 1985, 67 percent of households subscribed to one or more newspapers. By 2001, only 43 percent of households received a newspaper. In 2005, only one in four Americans said they read a magazine recently, versus one in three in 1994.

**Myth: American Women All Respond to Messages Like … Women.** False. It is true that there are real dif-

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## Myths and Realities About Language and People

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ferences in men's and women's policy priorities, and one great ideological divide: Women typically put more faith in the government than men, so they are less hostile toward Capitol Hill. Once you get beyond this one generalization, though, it's a profound mistake to treat women as a single, monolithic bloc.

**Myth: Americans Divide Neatly and Accurately Into Urban, Suburban and Rural Populations.** False. Over the past five years or so, Americans have seen the emergence of a fourth, new category: affluent homeowners with growing bank accounts, growing families, larger big-screen televisions and a bigger outlook on life. They are moving far away from the country's urban areas, and even from the conveniences of the suburbs. Welcome to exurbia, a marketer's dream.

**Myth: American Consumers Respond Well to Patriotic Messages.** Wrong, sort of. There is an essential perceptual difference between "American patriotism" and "American pride." To some, patriotism connotes arrogant, obnoxious, xenophobic, red-white-and-blue, America-can-do-no-wrong jingoism. American pride, on the other hand, has a far more universal appeal. ■

# What We REALLY Care About

Words not only can determine how we feel, they can also determine what we achieve. And what we hear often defines exactly what we want.

Words that work are powerful because they connect ideas, emotions, hopes and (unfortunately) fears. There are dozens of priorities, principles and preferences that matter to all of us, no matter what our political leanings. Taken together, these elements comprise the semantic terrain we all share, and their importance extends well beyond politics. No matter what communicators are selling, those who establish the correct tone by presenting their ideas in terms of these three keys to American thought and behavior will arrive at the right words.

One word that bridges the partisan divide is *opportunity*. It is unifying, alienates fewer people, and gives out a practical impression. ■

# Personal Language for Personal Scenarios

In most situations in life, the immediate reaction is the only reaction that matters. When we meet someone new, whether at work or in a social situation, we begin making judgments instantaneously, based on dress, mannerisms, body language, demeanor and dozens of other small details.

This process of reasoning and judgment is subtle and often subconscious, but it never stops: It is the basis of words that work. The meaning of words and actions resides in a kind of flux, their appropriateness never fixed, forever contingent upon individual, unique circumstance. And those circumstances are set by what may be the most important aspect of communication: context. ■

**For additional information on Americans and principles, go to: http://my.summary.com**

# 21 Words and Phrases for the 21st Century

The words that follow are not superficial, timely or contingent on the ephemeral circumstances of the moment. These words cut to the heart of Americans' most fundamental beliefs and right to the core values that do not change.

**1. Imagine.** This word evokes something different to each person who hears it. No matter what your company's product or service, the word "imagine" has the potential to create and personalize an appeal that is individualized based on the dreams and desires of the person who hears or reads it.

**2. Hassle-free.** When it comes to how we interact with products, services and people, "hassle-free" is a top priority.

**3. Lifestyle.** This word is incredibly powerful because it is at the same time self-defined and aspirational — everyone defines and aspires to his or her own unique lifestyle.

**4. Accountability.** Americans universally want corporations held "accountable" for their actions as well as their products and how they treat their customers, their employees and their shareholders.

**5. Results** and the **Can-do spirit.** When we buy something, we want to know that it's going to provide a tangible benefit — something that we can see, hear, feel or otherwise quantify. And if results are the goal, the "can-do spirit" is the effort.

**6. Innovation.** This word immediately calls to mind pictures of the future. It leads to products that are smaller or lighter or faster or cheaper … or bigger, more resilient, stronger and longer lasting.

**7. Renew, Revitalize, Rejuvenate, Restore, Rekindle, Reinvent.** These are the so-called "re" words,

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## 21 Words and Phrases for the 21st Century

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and they are incredibly powerful because they take the best elements or ideas from the past and apply them to the present and the future.

**8. Efficient** and **Efficiency.** In the bargain-hungry environment in which we live, efficiency is a significant product advantage.

**9. The right to …** Americans have always been committed to the concept of rights.

**10. Patient-centered.** This concept describes what most people want out of their health care. It is the most effective umbrella term for anything related to medicine involving human beings.

**11. Investment.** "Spending" suggests waste. "Investment" suggests the responsible handling of resources.

**12. Casual elegance.** This expression best defines what Americans want when they travel, more than any other attribute.

**13. Independent.** This word means having no constricting ties, no conflicts of interest, nothing to hide.

**14. Peace of mind.** This term is a kinder, gentler, softer expression of "security" that is less politicized, more embracing and all-encompassing.

**15. Certified.** We want and need ironclad agreements that what we buy won't fail us months or even days after our purchase.

**16. All-American.** America is all about progress and innovation, two ways in which the third largest distributor of semiconductors and a top-10 supplier of electronic components, All American, has used its patriotic image to outgrow the competition and become an industry leader.

**17. Prosperity.** This word encompasses the idea of more jobs, better careers, employment security, more take-home pay, a stronger economy and expanded opportunity.

**18. Spirituality.** When appealing to a broad audience, evocations of "spirituality" are more inclusive and therefore more politically effective than are generic references to "religion," specific denominations, or even "faith."

**19. Financial security.** Sadly, financial freedom is more than most of us are hoping for at the moment. Financial security is still attainable.

**20. Balanced approach.** Just as professing your independence from partisanship and ideology will win you credibility points with the public, so too will arguing for a balanced approach to our nation's problems.

**21. A culture of …** By defining an issue or a cluster of issues as part of a metaphorical culture, you can lend it new weight and seriousness. Social issues have been supplanted by cultural issues, which sound less threatening and judgmental.

In the end, how these words are used and delivered is almost as important as the words themselves. Style is almost as important as substance. ■

For additional information on the concept of imagination within companies, go to: http://my.summary.com

## … It's What You Hear

For most people, language is functional rather than being an end in itself. It's the people that are the end; language is just a tool to reach them, a means to an end.

But it's not enough to simply stand there and marvel at the tool's beauty. You must realize it's like fire, and the outcome depends on how it is used — to light the way, or to destroy.

The real problem with our language today is that it's been so coarsened. Words and expressions once considered vulgar have become a part of the common speech, their original meanings all but forgotten.

The issue is that our language has become so unimportant and disposable that we feel we can say anything we want whenever we want to, and after it is spoken it disappears into the ether.

Beyond the vulgarity of such talk, there's a harshness to it — a disturbing discourtesy, even viciousness, that's relatively new in American life. We seek out words to divide, demean and putdown. Negativity feels more pervasive than ever before. Surrounded by such meanness and abrasiveness, there is much to be gained by being upbeat and optimistic. Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. Negativity can work, but a solid positive message will triumph.

To be successful with the words that work of the 21st century, you will have to become comfortable with them. You have to live the words; they have to become you. As Roger Ailes, the greatest media guru of the 20th century, so accurately put it: "You are the message." ■

### SOUNDVIEW RECOMMENDED READING LIST

**If you liked *Words That Work,* you'll also like:**

1. ***Made to Stick*** **by by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.** The Heath brothers provide a practical guide to effective communication and explain how great ideas stick around.
2. ***Naked Conversations*** **by Robert Scoble and Shel Israel.** Blogging is the latest frontier for businesses to embrace in an effort to further connect with customers.
3. ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There*** **by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter.** The corporate world is full of intelligent executives, but few will ever reach the top and, according to Goldsmith, subtle nuances make the difference.
4. ***Success Built to Last*** **by Jerry Porras, Stewart Emery and Mark Thompson.** Through interviews with 300 successful individuals, the authors uncover the secrets of their accomplishments.
5. ***The Power of You!*** **by Scott Martineau.** Martineau shows that fulfillment doesn't come from success at work or happiness at home; it comes from both.

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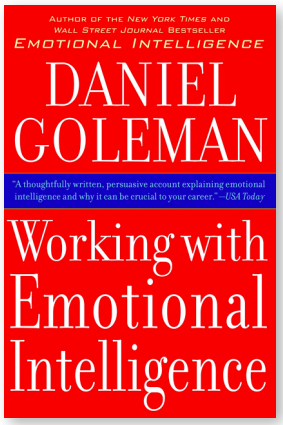
# Working with Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman

Executive Book Summaries®

Career & Self-Development

# Working with Emotional Intelligence




*by* **Daniel Goleman**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The secret of success is not what they taught you in school. What matters most is not academic excellence, not a business school degree, not even technical know-how or years of experience. What distinguishes star performers from the mediocre is *emotional intelligence.* Emotional intelligence is actually a set of skills that anyone can acquire, and in this practical guide, renowned researcher and author Daniel Goleman identifies them, explains their importance and shows how they can be fostered.

The higher a person's position, the more emotional intelligence matters — it is crucial for successful leadership. As Goleman documents, it's the essential ingre-dient for reaching and staying at the top *in any field,* even in high-tech careers. And organizations that learn to operate in emotionally intelligent ways are the companies that will remain vital and dynamic in the competitive marketplace of today — and the future.

Comprehensively researched, crisply written and filled with fascinating infor-mation from the front lines of business, ***Working with Emotional Intelligence*** offers good news to the employee looking for advancement and a wake-up call to lead-ers, organizations and corporations.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How emotional intelligence works and why it can be crucial to your career.
- How to connect a wealth of new understandings to the riches of older wisdom.
- An entirely new way of looking at the root causes of many of the ills of our families and society.
- How to achieve what it takes to succeed in your career.

## The New Yardstick

The rules for work are changing. We're being judged by a new yardstick: not just by how smart we are or by our training and expertise, but also by how well we handle ourselves and each other. This yardstick is increasingly applied in choosing who is hired and who is not, who is let go and who is retained, who is passed over and who is promoted.

The new rules predict who is most likely to become a star performer and who is most prone to derailing. And no matter what field we work in currently, they measure the traits that are crucial to our marketability for future jobs.

These rules have little to do with what we were told was important in school; academic abilities are largely irrelevant to this standard. This new measure takes for granted we have enough intellectual ability and technical know-how to do our jobs; it focuses instead on personal qualities, such as initiative and empathy, adaptability and persuasiveness.

The research distills with unprecedented precision which qualities mark a star performer. And it demonstrates which human abilities make up the greater part of the ingredients for excellence at work — most especially for leadership.

In a time with no guarantees of job security, when the very concept of a "job" is rapidly being replaced by "portable skills," these are prime qualities that make and keep us employable. Talked about loosely for decades under a variety of names, from "character" and "personality" to "soft skills" and "competence," there is at last a more precise understanding of these human talents and a new name for them: emotional intelligence.

## Competencies of the Stars

Emotional intelligence skills are synergistic with cognitive ones; top performers have both. The more complex the job, the more emotional intelligence matters —if only because a deficiency in these abilities can hinder the use of whatever technical expertise or intellect a person may have.

Take, for example, an executive who had been brought in to run a $65 million family-owned business, the first president from outside the family. Shortly after the executive was hired, a researcher, using an interview method to assess the executive's ability to handle cognitive complexity, determined his capacity was the very highest — a "level six," someone smart enough, theoretically, to be CEO of a global firm or head of a country. But during that interview the conversation turned to why he had to leave his previous job: He had been fired because he had failed to confront subordinates and hold them responsible for their poor performance.

"It was an emotional trigger for him," the researcher said. "His face got red and flushed, he started waving his hands — he was clearly agitated. It turned out that his new boss — the owner of the company — had criticized him that very morning for the same thing, and he went on and on about how hard it was for him to confront low-performing employees, especially when they had been with the company for a long time." And, the researcher noted, "while he was so upset, his ability to handle cognitive complexity — to reason — plummeted."

In short, out-of-control emotions can make smart people stupid. As Doug Lennick, an executive vice president at American Express Financial Advisors, said, "The aptitudes you need to succeed start with intellectual horsepower — but people need emotional competence, too, to get the full potential of their talents. The reason we don't get people's full potential is emotional incompetence."

### The Emotional Competence Framework

The great divide in competencies lies between the mind and heart or, more technically, between cognition and emotion. Some competencies are purely cognitive, such as analytic reasoning or technical expertise. Others combine thought and feeling; these can be called "emotional competencies."

An emotional *competence* is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work. There are many paths to excellence.

**Personal Competence.** The 25 emotional competencies fall into five categories. The first three categories contain personal competencies, which determine how we manage ourselves:

- **Self-Awareness: Knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions.** Self-awareness competencies include emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence.
- **Self-Regulation: Managing one's internal states, impulses and resources.** This category includes self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability and innovation.
- **Motivation: Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals.** Motivation competencies

include achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism.

**Social Competence.** The last two categories contain social competencies, which determine how we handle relationships:

- **Empathy: Awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns.** Empathy competencies include understanding others, developing others, a service orientation, leveraging diversity and political awareness.
- **Social skills: Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others.** This category includes influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities.

## The Hard Case for Soft Skills

A recent study assessed the importance of emotional competence for executive and leadership positions in business. Based on research with hundreds of top executives at 15 global companies — including IBM, PepsiCo and Volvo — the results were stunning.

Just one cognitive ability distinguished star performers from average: pattern recognition, the "big picture" thinking that allows leaders to pick out the meaningful trends from the welter of information around them and to think strategically far into the future.

But with this one exception, intellectual or technical superiority played no role in leadership success. At the top executive levels, everyone needs cognitive skills, to a certain extent, but being better at them does not make a star leader.

Rather, emotional competence made the crucial difference between mediocre leaders and the best. The stars showed significantly greater strengths in a range of emotional competencies, among them influence, team leadership, political awareness, self-confidence and achievement drive. On average, close to *90 percent* of their success in leadership was attributable to emotional intelligence.

To sum up: For star performance in all jobs, in every field, emotional competence is twice as important as purely cognitive abilities.

For success at the highest levels, in leadership positions, emotional competence accounts for virtually the entire advantage.

## The Inner Rudder

The ability to read subjective currents has primordial roots in evolution. The brain areas involved in gut feelings are far more ancient than the thin layers of the neo-cortex, the centers for rational thought that enfold the very top of the brain. Hunches start much deeper in the brain. They are a function of the emotional centers that ring the brain stem atop the spinal cord — most particularly an almond-shaped structure called the amygdala and its connected neural circuitry. This web of connectivity, sometimes called the extended amygdala, stretches up to the brain's executive center in the prefrontal lobes, just behind the forehead.

The brain stores different aspects of an experience in different areas — the source of a memory is encoded in one zone, the sights and sounds and smells in other areas, and so on. The amygdala is the site where the emotions an experience evokes are stored. Every experience that we have an emotional reaction to, no matter how subtle, seems to be encoded in the amygdala.

### The Source of Gut Feeling

As the repository for everything we feel about what we experience, the amygdala constantly signals us with this information. Whenever we have a preference of any kind, whether for ordering risotto rather than the sea bass special, or a compelling sense that we should dump our shares in a stock, that is a message from the amygdala. And via the amygdala's related circuitry, particularly nerve pathways that run into the viscera, we can have a somatic response — literally, a "gut feeling" — to the choices we face.

This capacity, like other elements of emotional intelligence, can grow stronger with the accumulating experiences life brings us. The classic term for this strengthening of our guiding sensibility is *wisdom*. And people who ignore or discount messages from this repository of life's wisdom do so at their peril.

### Self-Awareness –– Competencies

Intuition and gut feeling bespeak the capacity to sense messages from our internal store of emotional memory— our own reservoir of wisdom and judgment. This ability lies at the heart of self-awareness, and self-aware-ness is the vital foundation skill for three emotional competencies:

- ***Emotional awareness:*** The recognition of how our emotions affect our performance and the ability to use our values to guide decision-making.

- ***Accurate self-assessment:*** A candid sense of our personal strengths and limits, a clear vision of where we need to improve and the ability to learn from experience.
- ***Self-confidence:*** The courage that comes from certainty about our capabilities, values and goals.

## Self-Control

The single most striking finding from brain studies of people under stress — like giving a talk in front of a critical audience — shows the emotional brain at work in ways that undermine the workings of the brain's executive center, the prefrontal lobes, located just behind the forehead.

The prefrontal area is the site of "working memory," the capacity to pay attention and keep in mind whatever information is salient. Working memory is vital for comprehension and understanding, planning and decision making, reasoning and learning.

When the mind is calm, working memory functions at its best. But when there is an emergency, the brain shifts into a self-protective mode, stealing resources from working memory and shunting them to other brain sites in order to keep the senses hyperalert — a mental stance tailored to survival.

During the emergency, the brain falls back on simple, highly familiar routines and responses and puts aside complex thought, creative insight and long-term planning. The focus is the urgent present — or the crisis of the day.

While the circuitry for emergencies evolved millions of years ago, we experience its operation today in the form of troubling emotions: worries, surges of anxiety, panic, frustration and irritation, anger, rage.

### The Managed Heart

The notion of emotional self-control does not mean denying or repressing true feelings. "Bad" moods, for instance, have their uses; anger, sadness and fear can become sources of creativity, energy and connectedness. Anger can be an intense source of motivation, particularly when it stems from the urge to right an injustice or inequity. Shared sadness can knit people together. And the urgency born of anxiety — if not overwhelming —can prod the creative spirit.

Emotional self-control is not the same as overcontrol, the stifling of all feeling and spontaneity. In fact, there is a physical and mental cost to such overcontrol. People who stifle their feelings, especially strong negative ones, raise their heart rate, a sign of increased tension. When such emotional suppression is chronic, it can impair thinking, hamper intellectual performance and interfere with smooth social interactions.

By contrast, emotional competence implies we have a choice as to *how* we express our feelings. Such emotional finesse becomes particularly important in a global economy, since the ground rules for emotional expression vary greatly from culture to culture.

### Self-Regulation –– Competencies

Self-regulation — managing impulse as well as distressing feelings — depends on the working of the emotional centers in tandem with the brain's executive centers in the prefrontal areas. These two primal skills —handling impulse and dealing with upsets — are at the core of five emotional competencies:

- ***Self-control:*** Managing disruptive emotions and impulses effectively.
- ***Trustworthiness:*** Displaying honesty and integrity.
- ***Conscientiousness:*** Dependability and responsibility in fulfilling obligations.
- ***Adaptability:*** Flexibility in handling change and challenges.
- ***Innovation:*** Being open to novel ideas, approaches and new information.

## What Moves Us

People who find their work exhilarating perform at their best. The key to that exhilaration is not the task itself, but the special state of mind created as we work, a state called "flow." Flow moves people to do their best work, no matter what work they do.

Flow blossoms when our skills are fully engaged and then some — say, by a work project that stretches us in new and challenging ways. The challenge absorbs us so much we lose ourselves in our work, becoming so totally concentrated we may feel "out of time." In this state we seem to handle everything effortlessly, nimbly adapting to shifting demands. Flow itself is a pleasure.

Flow is the ultimate motivator. Activities we love draw us in because we get into flow as we pursue them. When we work in flow, the motivation is built in —work is a delight in itself.

Flow offers a radical alternative to the widely held ideas about what motivates people at work. This is not to say that incentives don't matter; they are key as prods or ways to "keep score." There is, of course, value in reviews and promotions, stock options and bonuses —as there is with basic salary. But the most powerful motivators are internal, not external.

For instance, when people kept a journal of how they felt while they performed a range of tasks throughout the day, one result was clear: They felt better doing work they loved rather than work they did only because they were rewarded for it.

Traditional incentives miss the point when it comes to getting people to perform at their absolute best. To reach the top rung, people must love what they do and find pleasure in doing it.

### Motivation –– Competencies

Three motivational competencies typify outstanding performers:

- ***Achievement drive:*** Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.
- ***Commitment:*** Embracing the organization's or group's vision and goals.
- ***Initiative and optimism:*** Twin competencies that mobilize people to seize opportunities and allow them to take setbacks and obstacles in stride.

## People Skills

Sensing what others feel without saying so captures the essence of empathy. Others rarely tell us in words what they feel; instead they tell us in their tone of voice, facial expression and other nonverbal ways. The ability to sense these subtle communications builds on more basic competencies, particularly self-awareness and self-control. Without the ability to sense our own feelings— or to keep them from swamping us — we will be hopelessly out of touch with the moods of others.

Empathy is our social radar. Lacking such sensitivity, people are "off." Being emotionally tone deaf leads to social awkwardness, whether from misconstruing feelings or through a mechanical, out-of-tune bluntness that destroys rapport.

At the very least, empathy requires being able to read another's emotions; at a higher level, it entails sensing and responding to a person's unspoken concerns or feelings. At the highest levels, empathy is understanding the issues or concerns that lie behind another's feelings.

### Empathy –– Competencies

Because of differences in how well we have learned the basic skills of social awareness, there are corresponding differences among us in workplace competencies that build on empathy. Empathy represents the foundation skill for all the social competencies important for work. These include:

- ***Understanding others:*** Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns.
- ***Service orientation:*** Anticipating, recognizing and meeting customers' needs.
- ***Leveraging diversity:*** Cultivating opportunities through diverse people.
- ***Political awareness:*** Reading the political and social currents in an organization.

## The Arts of Influence

Influencing another person's emotional state for better or worse is perfectly natural; we do it constantly, "catching" emotions from one another like some kind of social virus. This emotional exchange constitutes an invisible interpersonal economy, part of every human interaction, but it is usually too subtle to notice.

The *emotional* economy is the sum total of the exchanges of feeling among us. In subtle (or not so subtle) ways, we all make each other feel a bit better (or a lot worse) as part of any contact we have; every encounter can be weighted along a scale from emotionally toxic to nourishing. While its operation is largely invisible, this economy can have immense benefits for a business or for the tone of organizational life.

In the world of work, no matter the business at hand, emotional elements play a crucial role. Emotional competence requires being able to pilot through the emotional undercurrents always at play rather than being pulled under by them.

The most effective people in organizations naturally use their emotional radar to sense how others are reacting, and they fine-tune their own response to push the interaction in the best direction.

### Social Skills –– Competencies

Social skills, in the essential sense of handling *another person's* emotions artfully, underlie several competencies. These include:

- ***Influence:*** Wielding effective tactics of persuasion.
- ***Communication:*** Sending clear and convincing messages.
- ***Conflict management:*** Negotiating and resolving disagreements.
- ***Leadership:*** Inspiring and guiding.
- ***Change catalyst:*** Initiating, promoting or managing change.

## Collaboration, Teams and the Group IQ

What makes a team perform better than the best person on it? That question is key. Outstanding team performance raises the "group IQ" — the sum total of the best talents of each member on a team, contributed to their fullest. When teams operate at their best, the results can be more than simply additive — they can be *multiplicative*, with the best talents of one person catalyzing the best of another and another to produce results far beyond what any one person might have done. The explanation of this aspect of team performance lies in the members' *relationships* — in the chemistry between members.

A study of 60 work teams in a large American financial services company found that many elements mattered to some extent for the teams' effectiveness. But the single dimension that mattered most was the human element — how members interacted with each other and those the team connected with.

### Social Coordination –– Competencies

Several competencies of star performers are rooted in the basic human talents for social coordination:

- ***Building bonds:*** Nurturing instrumental relationships.
- ***Collaboration and cooperation:*** Working with others toward shared goals.
- ***Team capabilities:*** Creating synergy in working toward group goals.

## A New Model of Learning

Cultivating emotional competence requires an understanding of the fundamentals of behavior change. The failure to take this into account wastes an immense investment in development and training each year. Today, millions upon millions of dollars are being wasted on training programs that have no lasting impact —or little effect at all — on building emotional competence. It amounts to a billion-dollar mistake.

When heads of development at Fortune 500 companies were asked what makes it difficult for them to evaluate their own training programs, the most common complaint was the lack of standards and yardsticks available for training in the so-called soft skills like emotional competencies.

To help change this, the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations was founded *[Daniel Goleman was co-founder]*, a coalition of researchers and practitioners from business schools, the federal government, consulting firms and corporations. The consortium has searched the scientific findings on behavior change and studied exemplary training programs, to create basic guidelines for the best practices in teaching competencies based on emotional intelligence.

Here are some of the resulting guidelines:

- **Assess the job.** Training should focus on the competencies needed most for excellence in a given job or role.
- **Assess the individual.** The individual's profile of strengths and limitations should be assessed to identify what needs improving.
- **Deliver assessments with care.** Feedback on a person's strengths and weaknesses carries an emotional charge.
- **Gauge readiness.** People are at differing levels of readiness.
- **Motivate.** People learn to the degree they are motivated and making the competence a personal goal for change.
- **Make change self-directed.** When people direct their learning program, tailoring it to their needs, circumstances and motivation, learning is more effective.
- **Focus on clear, manageable goals.** People need clarity on what the competence is and the steps needed to improve it.
- **Prevent relapse.** Habits change slowly, and relapses and slips need not signal defeat.

- **Give performance feedback.** Ongoing feedback encourages and helps direct change.
- **Encourage practice.** Lasting change requires sustained practice both on and off the job.
- **Arrange support.** Like-minded people who are also trying to make similar changes can offer crucial ongoing support.
- **Provide models.** High-status, highly effective people who embody the competence can be models who inspire change.
- **Encourage.** Change will be greater if the organization's environment supports the change, values the competence and offers a safe atmosphere for experimentation.
- **Reinforce change.** People need recognition — to feel their change efforts matter.
- **Evaluate.** Establish ways to evaluate the development effort to see if it has lasting effects.

## Best Practices

Though almost every development program for emotional intelligence includes at least a few of these "best practices," optimal impact comes from their added potency when used in combination.

These guidelines offer a state-of-the-art blueprint for teaching — and learning — emotional intelligence.

- **Assess the job.** One basic question needs to be asked and answered before any training is undertaken: What does it take to do this job superbly?
- **Assess the individual.** In general, the ideal evaluation relies not on any one source but on multiple perspectives.
- **Deliver assessments with care.** If there ever was a task that called for emotional intelligence, giving people the results of 360-degree evaluations is it; empathy, sensitivity and delicacy are essential.
- **Gauge readiness.** If people are not ready to take action, forcing them will lead to disaster: the sham of going through the motions only to satisfy others, resentment rather than enthusiasm, quitting.
- **Motivate.** The more motivated people are to learn, the greater the effectiveness of the training for them.
- **Make change self-directed.** We change most effectively when we have a plan for learning that fits our lives, interests, resources and goals.
- **Focus on clear, manageable goals.** Breaking goals into smaller steps offers easier challenges —and successes.
- **Prevent relapse.** People need to be warned at the outset of training that they are likely to experience bad days when they revert to their old habits. Show them how to learn valuable lessons from those slips.
- **Give performance feedback.** Knowing how we are doing keeps us on track. Feedback means that someone notices whether — or how well — the new competence is being used and lets us know.
- **Encourage practice.** People learn a new skill more effectively if they have repeated chances to practice it over an extended period of time than if they have the same amount of practice lumped into a single, intensive session.
- **Arrange support.** Mentoring can serve as a coaching forum for boosting emotional competence.
- **Provide models.** We learn by watching others; if others can demonstrate a competence, they create a living classroom for us.
- **Encourage and reinforce.** A fledgling competence needs to be expressed during the actual situation at work in order to take hold.
- **Evaluate.** Establish sound outcome measures, especially for the competencies that were targeted in training, and include job performance measures.

## The Emotionally Intelligent Organization

An emotionally intelligent organization needs to come to terms with any disparities between the values it proclaims and those it lives. Clarity about an organization's values, spirit and mission leads to a decisive self-confidence in corporate decision-making.

An organizational mission statement serves an emotional function: articulating the shared sense of goodness that allows us to feel what we do together is worth-while. Working for a company that measures its success in the most meaningful ways — not just the bottom line— is itself a morale and energy raiser.

### Managing Emotions Well

One largely ignored pulse of an organization's viability can be read in the typical emotional states of those who work there. Sounding the depths of emotional currents in an organization can have concrete benefits.

Consider a gas plant division at Petro Canada, the country's largest oil and gas refining company. "Guys in the gas plants were having a wave of accidents, some fatal," said a consultant who was called in to help. "I found that in the macho culture of the petrochemical industry, guys never acknowledged their feelings. If someone came to work hung over, preoccupied over a sick child or upset by a spat with his wife, his workmates would never ask how he was doing that day or if he was OK enough to be sharp on the job. The result would be that the guy would be inattentive and cause an accident."

With this basic insight into the human cost of ignoring emotions on the job, the company initiated a series of workshops for crews "to get them to see that how they are feeling has consequences — that *this matters*. They saw that they had to look out for each other, and they were doing themselves and everyone else a favor if they checked in about how they were doing. If someone was off that day, they needed to say to him, 'I don't think I can work with you today.' And their safety record improved."

## The Heart of Performance

Perhaps the strongest argument for the economic advantage of emotional intelligence in organizations can be read in data generated by Jac Fitz-Enz at the Saratoga Institute, in a project sponsored by the Society for Human Resource Management. Since 1986 the institute has collected data from nearly 600 companies in more than 20 industries, detailing policies and practices. They analyzed top companies, selected for profitability, cycle times, volume and other similar indexes of performance.

Searching for what these outstanding companies held in common, the institute identified the following basic practices in managing "human assets" — their people.

- A balance between the human and financial sides of the company's agenda.
- Organizational commitment to a basic strategy.
- Initiative to stimulate improvements in performance.
- Open communication and trust-building with all stakeholders.
- Building relationships inside and outside that offer competitive advantage.
- Collaboration, support and sharing resources.
- Innovation, risk taking and learning together.
- A passion for competition and continual improvement.

This list is intriguing because of the clear similarities between these organizational practices and the emotional competencies that typify top-performing individuals.

But here these same capabilities have ended up on a list generated by observing top-performing companies, not individuals. Just as with individuals, organizational competencies can be thought of as falling into three domains: cognitive abilities, in the sense of managing knowledge well; technical expertise; and managing human assets, which requires social and emotional competence.

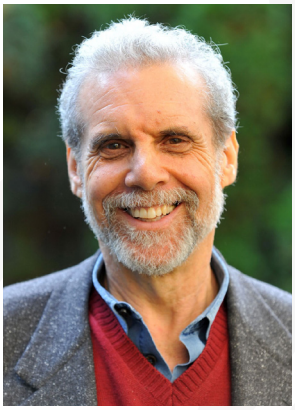
## Some Final Thoughts

The good news is that emotional intelligence can be learned. Individually, we can add these skills to our tool kit for survival at a time when "job stability" seems like a quaint oxymoron.

For businesses of all kinds, the fact that emotional competencies can be assessed and improved suggests another area in which performance — and so competitiveness — can be upgraded. What's needed amounts to an emotional competence tune-up for the corporation.

At the individual level, elements of emotional intelligence can be identified, assessed and upgraded. At the group level, it means fine-tuning the interpersonal dynamics that make groups smarter. At the organizational level, it means revising the value hierarchy to make emotional intelligence a priority — in the concrete terms of hiring, training and development, performance evaluation, and promotions.

To be sure, emotional intelligence is no magic bullet, no guarantee of more market share or a healthier bottom line. The ecology of a corporation is extraordinarily fluid and complex, and no single intervention or change can fix every problem. But, as the saying goes, "It's all done with people," and if the human ingredient is ignored, then nothing else will work as well as it might. In the years to come, companies in which people collaborate best will have a competitive edge, and to that extent emotional intelligence will be more vital.



Daniel Goleman is the author of *Social Intelligence* and the best-seller *Emotional Intelligence* and a co-author of *Primal Leadership.* He received his Ph.D. from Harvard and reported on the brain and behavioral sciences for The New York Times for 12 years.

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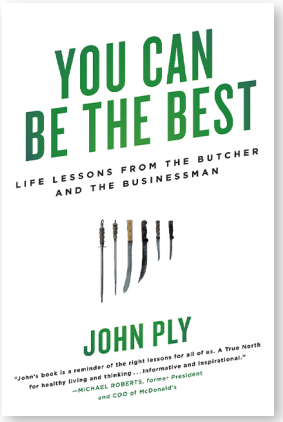
# You Can Be the Best

John Ply

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# You Can Be the Best

## Life Lessons From the Butcher and the Businessman




*by* **John Ply**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We all have different ideas of success. We even take different paths toward success. But those who are truly successful have one thing in common: they know how to be the best.

The book ***You Can Be the Best: Life Lessons From the Butcher and the Businessman*** lays out a fascinating exploration of what constitutes success, the journey that can be taken to reach it, and the measurements to confirm it.

Author John Ply opens his heart to share with us valuable personal stories about his and his father's life journeys. By laying out a clear roadmap toward becoming the best, the book helps us unlock our true potential and become the best version of ourselves.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to become the best.
- How to pursue your passion by using your tools.
- How to always find a way.
- How to be kind, grateful, generous, and never give up.

## Introduction

"What is success?" This seems like a simple question to answer but people often get it wrong. Our idea of success has been distorted. Because of this, people waste time and energy chasing the wrong things. You need to know two things about success:

- Success is not about financial wealth
- Success is not absolute

Success is about total happiness. It is also about accomplishment and achieving your dreams and goals. Everybody has a different starting line toward success, which is why success looks different for everybody.

But how do you achieve success? The answer is simple: be the best. Don't try to measure yourself up compared to others. Instead, reach your full potential and be the best you.

## Chapter 1: Become the Best

One of the first lessons I learned from my father was to be the best. For him, no matter the job, there was never a reason to do it less than your very best. If you are going to do something, you should do it 100 percent and shift all your focus to a single goal.

Sometimes, we may pick the wrong goals. The goal we set for ourselves is not the goal we actually need to succeed. We underestimate what we're capable of and limit our potential by setting our sights too low. But if you strive to become the best, you give yourself room to unlock and discover your true potential.

When it comes to achieving your goals, however, there are no guarantees. You may or may not reach your ultimate goal on that long and bumpy road. But that's not the point. The point is to see how far you can go. You don't want to go through life not trying, because one of the worst things you can do is lead a life of regret. Even though there are no guarantees, it's important to strive to become the best because your goal is your compass that will guide your decisions.

It doesn't matter where you start. We're all dealt different cards in life. You might wish you had been dealt a better hand, but life doesn't come with re-deals. But wherever you are in your journey, whatever cards you've been dealt, you can become the best. When you continually focus on becoming a better version of yourself, the exterior parts of your life have a way of improving. Be the best "you," and everything else tends to take care of itself.

## Chapter 2: Pursue Your Passion

Success is defined internally. Only you can decide what it means for you. That's why it's so important to pursue your passion. Make your passion your career. Look within yourself, and you'll find the path you're meant to follow.

While it's important to pursue your passion as your career, it's equally important to not allow your career to take over your identity as a person. We don't have one singular passion in life. We have passions, plural. If you identify yourself based on your career, even if that career is a passion for you, you're limiting yourself. You're not giving yourself room to pursue all your passions and live your most successful life.

But sometimes, people lose their passion, and that's a sad thing to watch. If a person has lost their passion, it means, somewhere along the way, they've forgotten how to have fun. If you've lost your passion, take the pressure off yourself. Stop worrying about the external results and just have fun.

Passion and drive are closely connected. If you lost your passion, you'll lose your drive and if you're driven by wrong things, you'll end up killing your passion. To keep passion in your heart, you have to be driven by the right things. When you're struggling, all you have to do is listen to your heart and trust your gut. You know best the right path for you.

## Chapter 3: Use All Your Tools

There are some who believe an artist is only as good as their tools, while others believe blaming the tools is merely an excuse. The truth, however, is somewhere in the middle. Talent and skill will take you far. But if you don't build a deep understanding of all the tools you use, you will never live up to your full potential for success.

In life, you start with commitment, get closer with strategy, overcome obstacles with recovery, and bring it home with consistency, ending with the completion of your goal: achievement. These are your tools for success. Three of the most important strategies in life include:

- Measure your results to figure out what's working and what isn't and adjust accordingly.
- Incentivize performance so you don't lose motivation and stay focused on working towards your goals.

- Assess and adjust because no matter what you achieve, there's always room for improvement. Ask yourself two questions, "Do I need to do anything differently?" and "What can I do to get even better?"

Use your life's tools again and again, keep sharpening them consistently, and success will come.

## Chapter 4: Never Give Up, No Matter What

When you're faced with challenges and you're thinking about giving up, ask yourself, "What do I have to lose?" If you think about that question, the answer is usually nothing. And don't forget to ask that all-important second question: "What do I have to gain?" If you give up halfway, you'll never find out.

Anything new you take on is going to be challenging. If you let something push you down, and you stay down, then you're making a choice at that moment. But if you choose to get back up every single time you get pushed down, you're making the choice to believe in yourself and your ability to learn, grow, and improve.

Never giving up is about attitude. Keeping a great attitude and thinking positively is crucial for a winning mindset and success. If you can go through life with a positive and enthusiastic attitude – whatever it is you're doing or whoever you're with – it's infectious. Positive things tend to happen to people who think positively and all that leads to the ultimate definition of success. So stay positive and never give up, no matter what.

## Chapter 5: Find A Way

No matter your goals, there's always going to be some kind of obstacle blocking your path. Success never comes easy, nor should it. The important thing is to always find a way.

In my nearly four decades of entrepreneurship, I've met countless people who say they dream of launching their own businesses. But they never do it. Why? They're afraid to give up their comfortable jobs and steady paychecks, and who can blame them? They're stuck because the security is too risky to give up. They're fearful of the unknown and afraid of what they could possibly lose.

If you really want to start a business of your own, be prepared to sacrifice. Finding a way also means you don't wait for opportunities to come to you. You take action to create your own success. Doing this can be uncomfortable, but that's simply what it takes.

Opportunities hit us smack in the face every day but of the 1 percent who see an opportunity, 99 percent will not act on it. To take advantage of opportunities, you have to keep your awareness level up and remain open to life's possibilities, and you must be willing to act.

Remember, life owes you nothing. If you expect something from the world around you, you will almost always be disappointed. Instead, recognize that life owes you nothing, so whatever you want out of this life, it's up to you to find a way to achieve it.

## Chapter 6: Be Honest and Trusting

Life and success ultimately come down to relationships, and relationships are built on honesty and trust. Your word is everything. If you make a promise, keep it. People can't trust you if they can't trust your words.

Honesty is fundamentally about trust and trust is a two-way street. Aside from receiving trust, you will need to give trust as well. If you go through life withholding trust, then you're going to eliminate hundreds of great possibilities. You'll end up closing yourself off to relationships and opportunities that make life so interesting and richly rewarding. But if someone behaves dishonestly, it's time to take the trust away. Remember, the measure of your honesty is how you act when it gets difficult.

Dishonesty can stick with you for a long time. Sure, none of us are perfect human beings. Yes, you'll make mistakes. But what matters is how you own up to them. You may not always be able to correct your mistakes, but you can always learn from them. It's never too late to start being honest and doing better.

## Chapter 7: Be Kind

The philosophy of kindness should be deeply ingrained in our lives. Being kind doesn't have to be as extreme as sacrificing your life for another. It can be as simple and easy as keeping our mouths shut.

Avoid tearing other people down not only for their sake but for your own. Those who say unkind things about others tend to have something in common: they're not happy.

When you voice unkind thoughts aloud, you're just feeding into negativity, and reinforcing your own unhappiness.

The first step in being kind is to focus not on others, but on yourself – specifically, on your mindset. Whenever you feel inclined to say something unkind about a person, ask yourself why. Focus on getting rid of the negativity so you can treat yourself and others with kindness.

A successful business must treat three groups well: its employees, its customers, and its suppliers. Think of it as a three-legged stool. If one leg is missing, the company is never going to be great. If two legs are missing, the company will most likely not succeed. And if all three legs are missing, well, you're basically doomed. The same lesson can apply to any career or even your personal life.

## Chapter 8: Be Grateful

True success cannot be measured externally. It is something internal, a feeling of satisfaction and pride in one's life. Being grateful and showing gratitude along your own journey to success is how you will become and feel like your very best self.

Most people are unhappy or dissatisfied simply because they don't appreciate what they have and what they've achieved. The secret to fulfillment isn't to keep acquiring more things. It is to be grateful every time. Gratitude is simple: you need to want less and do more.

No matter where you fall on the wealth spectrum, there's always someone with far less or far more. Ultimately gratitude is a choice. You can choose to complain, or you can choose to be grateful, and being grateful will always bring you more joy and happiness.

## Chapter 9: Be Generous

Life can be hard and lonely. We all have times when we could use a little help, and you never know much a small moment of kindness and support could mean to someone.

When we think about generosity, our minds typically go straight to money. If you have money to spare, then, by all means, be generous with it. Generosity, however, is about so much more than just money. The most valuable thing we all can give of ourselves is our time and our spirit. You don't have to be rich to make a difference in people's lives.

True success is being able to look back on your life and recognize that life is not measured by material possessions or the money you've accumulated, but by the joy you've brought to others. If you can do good to just one person, then you should consider that a success.

## Chapter 10: Do Good

Doing good is rewarding in and of itself. It is also our duty because none of us make it through life without receiving help. Helping each other is the greatest tradition of our species. This is the thing that sets us apart from all other life on Earth. When you do good for others, you do good for yourself. Someone helped you, so you help others, and they will help yet more people in the future, and on and on!

## Conclusion

I made you a big promise at the start of this book. I told you that you can be the best. I truly believe that, and I hope by now you believe it too. Because the thing about that promise is that I'm not the one who can keep it. You are. I've shared the lessons with you, and now it's up to you to put them into practice. You can do it. One day at a time, far and sure, you can be the best!



**John Ply** built a company from scratch that became the best in the industry--twice. First with Priority Food Processing, a service provider to the food industry, then with Insight Beverages, a company he started to become a customer of his first! John was determined to build these companies to "be the best" because that was the first lesson he learned from his father. And now he's teaching others to be their best.

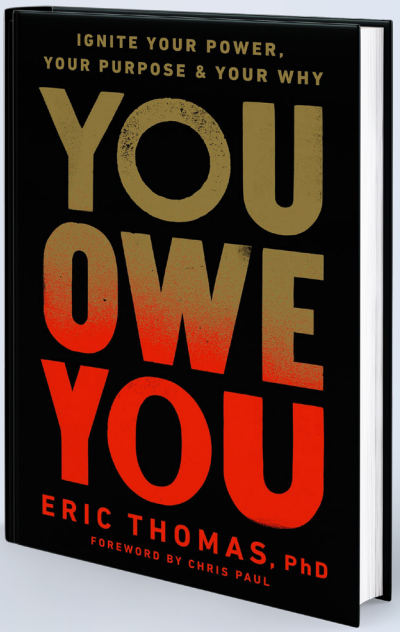
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# You Owe You

Eric Thomas

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## You Owe You

**Ignite Your Power, Your Purpose, and Your Why**

*By Eric Thomas*

**Eric Thomas,** part coach, part preacher, all grind, is one of the world's best known motivational speakers. In addition to reaching millions on YouTube, he works with many top businesses, the NFL, the NBA, the NCAA, and dozens of individual teams and players, as well as schools and prisons across the country. He has a PhD in education from Michigan State.

# Become the CEO of Your Life

Eric Thomas worked his way from being a high school drop out with no clear path for what he wanted to do with his life to being a renowned, sought-after motivational speaker. He has spent his life preaching in his church and speaking to people all over the country. He first gained far-reaching notoriety when he had a Youtube video go viral. In this video he tells the story about a man who goes to visit a guru. The man asks the guru what the secret to success is. The guru tells the man to go to the beach the next morning. The man does just that, but when he arrives, the guru pushes the man's head under water and holds it there while the man flails about frantically. Eventually, the guru releases the pressure on the man's head, and the man comes up gasping for breath. The guru then asks the man what he wanted to do most of all when he was under water. The man replied that what he wanted most was to breathe. The guru says that the man will be successful when he wants something as much as he wanted to breathe.

This video was on the web for quite awhile before it gained fame. It was eventually included in motivational videos and set to music by others. Thomas shares this story as well as other secrets to success in his book, ***You Owe You: Ignite Your Power, Your Purpose, and Your Way.***

Thomas makes his points and advances his tactics to success by telling his own life story and how he has used these principles successfully in his own life and in developing his own business as a motivational speaker. He starts out with the message "that you are the only one who can change your life. You are the person who determines your value. You are the only person who can truly choose your purpose and find your path to greatness." He explains that he spent time feeling like a victim. He turned his back on his family and made himself homeless. At one point, he did not even have a GED to fall back on. Eventually, he was able to own his power and propel him to where he is now as a successful speaker and Ph.D.

Thomas goes on to explain his childhood to illustrate just how important it is to take ownership of one's own life. His grandparents lived during the Jim Crow era where they were not even allowed to share many spaces with white people. His mother came from a place that was so impoverished that Thomas says that it "was basically slavery in all but name" as they had to

give up a good share of their crops to the landowner just in order to survive. His mother was very smart but got kicked out of high school for becoming pregnant although she was still able to earn her diploma. Thomas shares all of this to show how he came from a place of instability. Nothing was ever expected of his mother. All they could focus on was survival. His mother met Jesse Thomas and the two married.

One day, Eric Thomas was going through some paperwork and found his birth certificate. Through it, he realized that Jesse Thomas was not his biological father. This led the young Thomas to believe that he could not trust anybody. It made him feel like a victim, and he acted in such a manner. Despite talking to counselors and therapists, Thomas was not able to overcome his anger in the short term. Eventually one day Thomas broke, and he left home, staying in empty warehouses, homeless by choice.

The lesson Thomas derives from this story is that all people will find themselves in situations that are unfair or unsettling in life, and all people will have their feelings hurt. He insists throughout the book, however, that "feelings are not facts." He wants people to know that they can have their feelings, but they need to avoid being victims. Getting rid of feelings of victimhood allows people to take ownership and responsibility and to claim control over their own lives.

Thomas then goes on to dispel the myth that anybody is ever really alone in life. He is adamant that the world is not conspiring against anybody. To explain this, he talks about how he started to spend time at a church run by Pastor P.C. Willis. The pastor's family made Thomas feel like he had a chosen family, and this along with his freedom made him feel powerful. Thomas says that "where your focus goes your energy flows." As such, he tells his reader not to focus on who failed them or who was not there because this inhibits a person's ability to see the people who were there for them and who did not fail them.

Once a person has overcome victimhood, it is important for them to find their superpower. Thomas tells a story of going to camp when he was a child. He did not want to go away for the week, but his mother was sure it would be good for him, so she insisted. When he came back, the boy was ecstatic, and the people at camp loved him. His mother was told that he was one of the most connected kids they had ever had at the camp, and that he was the only one who could get the white kids and the Black kids to play together.

Thomas uses this story to show that he was always the hip-hop preacher. It is important, he maintains, to be able to harness your superpower to one's advantage. He maintains that sometimes we do not even realize when we are gifted in an area because it comes so naturally to us. We have to be able to tune out the outside world in order to tune into our super power. The world can criticize superpower and misunderstand people. Thomas tells of a time when he gave up the violin because his friends did not approve in order to illustrate this. It is important to tap into oneself in order to tune out these opinions and distractions of the world.

Thomas then goes on to say that "Your why is what takes your superpower to the next level." A person's why is their reason for doing something. Thomas's why is his wife, Dede. One day about a year into their dating relationship, Dede told Thomas that she had gotten into college and was going to leave for Alabama. Thomas decided to join her, and with the help of his pastor, he was able to earn his GED and gain admission to Oakwood College with Dede. Then and to this day, Dede is his why.

While at Oakwood, Thomas took advantage of multiple opportunities. He started to teach GED classes as well as to become a substitute teacher. He also started traveling with lobbyists and was doing speeches introducing the mayor. He was doing well in these capacities despite not doing well academically. Eventually Dede became pregnant with their oldest child, and Thomas was able to discern the reason behind his reason. In order to discern a person's reason behind their reason, Thomas suggests asking why you want what it is you want. Once Thomas understood his reason behind his reason, he stopped playing in life and became serious.

He then goes on to discuss walking within your purpose. Oakwood College is an HBCU or historically Black college or university. Its campus is purposefully separated from the rest of the nearby community to keep the students safe from racially motivated violence. Thomas and his friends decided they wanted to set up a ministry they called Bell Tower. They had no assets, and yet they were able to stand by the bell tower in the middle of campus, and Thomas would preach to people as they walked by. Thomas does not believe in preaching to people who do not want to hear. At Oakwood, people could stop and listen or they could walk by. Many stopped to listen. Thomas realized that he was a powerful speaker, and he used this knowledge to walk in his purpose. He goes on to explain that purpose needs both structure and standards. These two are necessary if a person is to use their superpower and fulfill their why.

Also important, according to Thomas, is to put oneself in miracle territory. He says that "Miracles happen when you put yourself in the way of them." He tells multiple stories of times when he took one opportunity and another greater one developed from it. One such time was when he was offered a position at Michigan State University. Neither his father nor his wife believed he should take it. They ended up deciding to go to MSU anyway, and the time there was tough at first. It ended up, however, being the jumping board for what he would later achieve in life. He ended up earning both a masters and PhD at the university.

Receiving miracles, he says, is not a passive act. He explains how people can become quite aggressive playing the lottery or gambling while not paying nearly attention to the areas in their life where they could actually succeed. He knew he wanted to be a speaker, and as such, he started trying to put himself in the venues where the people he wanted to emulate were. At first, this was not as a speaker, but he would work in whatever capacity they needed in order to get himself into miracle territory.

Thomas extols the importance of education. He explains that where he grew up, success meant finding a blue color job at a

## Expression must go along with education and knowledge in order to truly thrive."

factory. At MSU, he worked as an academic advisor. He saw many young Black students who faltered because the university, and academia in general, was not prepared to meet their needs or focus on their success. He realized that with many of these young Black students, the university could come up with a predictive GPA before they even started, and this often showed that they were unlikely to ever graduate. He was able to come up with a counseling program at MSU that could help these students succeed. Knowledge is not all about formal education, however. He encourages people to look into any avenue of learning or information available to them about topics they are passionate about because "When you embrace education, you begin to see opportunities that were seemingly not there before." Knowledge, he says, can help give people control over their lives in spite of changing circumstances.

Expression, he says, must go along with education and knowledge in order to truly thrive. Thomas began to understand the importance of language and communication as he saw great famous speakers who came before him like Martin Luther King Jr. He then goes on to discuss code-switching which refers to the way in which people use different language and communication styles depending on their environment. He says that this is something everybody does everyday. He claims that the best people learn the languages of the environments they are in and incorporate them into their own communication. This allows them to thrive in their environment while staying true to who they are.

Thomas works with athletes, and he explains that sometimes players who are traded often excel. This is because they want to prove their worth. This adversity actually helps them to grow. He then goes on to discuss a church that he was the pastor of. The people there wanted him to change his style, but his church was successful, and he wanted to remain true to his principles. Ultimately, they had him removed from the church. This led Thomas and his wife to create their own ministry. He uses both of these examples to prove that sometimes we have to give up what is good to get something that is great.

In regards to business and seeing oneself as a business, he says that it is important to not only put oneself with people in the business but to also know one's own worth. To exemplify this, he talks about how his rates for speaking increased once someone told him that he could charge much more for his services. He simply had to believe in himself and his worth. He then goes on to say that it is important to keep perspective once dreams start coming true. He writes of professional athletes who feel lost once they make it to the NBA. They had been fighting for this for as long as they could remember and they sacrificed so much for it, and when they got there, they did not know what to do with themselves.

Thomas tells the story of a time when he turned down the best paying gig he had been offered because the company insisted he wear a suit and a tie. Thomas said that this was not who he was, and despite his partner's disagreement, they turned it down. Eventually he was offered a gig for the same amount of money where the company requested that he arrive in his regular clothes as that is what people know him for thanks to his Youtube videos.

In this book, Thomas tells the story of his success in an effort to help his readers find and develop their own success. Through his anecdotes, he makes his lessons clear and shows how they are applicable to life. Each chapter ends with both some questions for thought and a challenge to help the reader successfully put these principles into work. Always, he maintains, a person must be true to themselves and look inside to truly succeed.

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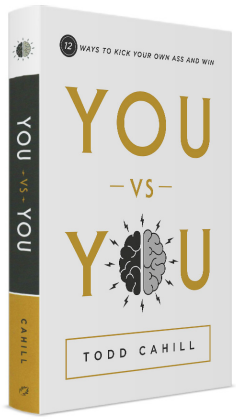
# You vs You

Todd Cahill

soundview
Executive Book Summaries®

# You vs You

## 12 Ways to Kick Your Own Ass and Win




*by* **Todd Cahill**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

As you strive for improvement in life—more income, a better relationship, a bigger business, or a better body—the most important battles you will face are the battles against yourself.

Author Todd Cahill highlights important battles that keep us from success. From his experience as a life and leadership coach, Todd explains how to isolate the specific battles we all face and then sheds light on how we can practically overcome them. Overcoming them doesn't mean becoming invincible; it means having the wherewithal to kick our own ass when needed. ***You vs You*** shows you how to face these battles, and it allows you to make conscious choices not to let your battles defeat you.

Each battle includes three parts. Return isolates the issue; admit where you are in the struggle and how fighting it affects you. Redefine helps you think about the battle differently. If you redefine what it means, you can start to relinquish its power. Repeat is the choice you make every day to become the best you. Return to the issue, redefine its meaning, and repeat the cycle to keep winning.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To isolate the issues that hinder your success.
- That redefining the battles provides motivation to win.
- Daily choices may be small, but drive the outcome.
- Your future success starts with today's choices.

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

## You vs Your Success

Winning the You vs You battle takes a concerted effort to stop spending time trying to impress others and instead spend it doing the things you are meant to do, the things that move you. The authentic you will be the one that steers your future.

### Return

Winning the battle between you and your success requires that you first figure out what success means. What could you accomplish that would make you feel like you could drop the mic and walk off the stage with nothing left to prove? Of more than 2,000 Americans interviewed in a recent survey, 90 percent believed success was more about happiness than power, possessions, or prestige; 66 percent cited "good relationships with friends and family"; and 60 percent said, "loving what you do for a living." Only one in five said monetary wealth meant success.

Determining what success means to you means examining what sacrifice you're willing to make to fulfill your desires. When asked about her perspective on fame and success, Taylor Swift said, "Playing stadiums. . . walking down the street . . . I'd choose playing stadiums. It's a trade-off. You pick one. You don't sit there and go, 'Oh, I wish I could have all the good things in the world and none of the bad things.' It doesn't work like that." The key to winning the battle is to pursue only the sort of success that requires trade-offs that don't diminish the best you.

### Redefine

Don't think about an unreached goal as failure. Think about it as time-released success. What would happen if we gave ourselves permission to fail? Better yet, what if we not only expected it but embraced it?

Author Stephen King thrived on rejection. In his early days as a writer, he posted rejection slips from publishers above his bed for motivation. At nine years old, future megastar Beyoncé and her hip-hop group lost a Star Search competition. Basketball legend Michael Jordan missed more than 9,000 shots in his career. To offset the inevitable deterioration, as it pertains to failure and success, one must keep moving!

### Repeat

There is you, and there is your list of achievements. To ultimately win the battle, you can let what you've done refine you, but you cannot let it define you. If you ask people who fit the conventional definition of a successful individual, many will tell you that their achievements aren't what make them feel accomplished. Instead, they often talk about relationships, well-being, and societal impact—who they helped, who they loved, who loved them. You're a balancing act, and you're doing a damn good job.

## You Vs Your Freedom

### Return

Bob Dylan wrote these words: "A hero is someone who understands the responsibility that comes with his freedom." What consumes your mind, controls your life. We all have the same opportunities to create freedom.

In the U.S., in 2014, 21.5 million adults battled substance abuse, and almost 80 percent of them also struggled with alcohol use. More than one in three adults were diagnosed as obese. As many as 750,000 young people revealed a gambling addiction. About 6 percent of women and 5.5 percent of men admitted to being compulsive buyers. People are anything but free.

Three types of freedom define us. Freedom from is past-oriented. Groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous help addicts have freedom from addiction. Freedom to is rebellion and ego-driven. Freedom for is what inspires revolutions. Nelson Mandela, although imprisoned, functioned with this type of freedom. Freedom for is not just casting off one's chains but living in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

### Redefine

Your ability to win the battle between you and your freedom hinges not only on how you view your freedom but also on how you use it.

There's a fable about a famished wolf and a well-fed dog. The wolf sees the dog, compliments him on his beautiful coat, and asks how he looks so well fed. The dog tells him that he is given food day and night and sleeps in comfort in a lovely home. The wolf asks what the dog does in return for all the luxuries, to which the dog replies that he guards the house. In fact, he would have to hurry home once nightfall came, for his master counted on him to watch the place at night. The wolf was envious and told him how he lived in the woods and endured constant heat, insects, and hunger. The dog invites the wolf to live at the house with him and his master and says they can share the guard work.

The wolf is excited as he imagines the food he will soon eat and the comfort of a roof over his head, but as they head back to the house, he notices the hair on part of the dog's neck is worn away and asks him how that came about.

"Oh, it is nothing," says the dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it." "Is that all?" said the wolf. "Then goodbye to you, Master Dog."

The wolf is not willing to trade his freedom for a life of comfort, but the dog isn't the victim here. The dog simply has a different kind of freedom: he is free from worry and solitude and rich in pride and purpose. And he has a different view of freedom: to him, having a servant's heart doesn't make him a slave.

Most people use their freedom to do what they want, when they want, how they want, where they want. However, if you only use your freedom on yourself, if you never venture toward freedom for, you just might be the one who ends up imprisoned.

### Repeat

Instead of just using your freedom to develop into a better version of yourself, use it to develop others into better versions of themselves. What do you feel crushed by? What do you want freedom from? When you get it, think about what you're going to do with it. You don't have to fully understand freedom to want it, but you do have to be ready to take responsibility for the path you walk after you get it. Is your endgame freedom to or freedom for? Are you going to start a rebellion or a revolution?

## You Vs Your Health

### Return

You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Health is often not valued until sickness comes. Do you only appreciate being healthy until you're not? When's the last time you gave your body a big, giant thank-you?

What has impressed you about your own body? Maybe you've given birth. Excelled at a sport. Memorized the periodic table. Overcome an illness. Functioned during the day after getting no sleep the night before. Quit smoking. Run a marathon. Your body is imperative to your success. The body fuels the mind. The mind fuels your beliefs. Your beliefs fuel your worldview. Your worldview fuels your opportunities. Your opportunities fuel your success. So, to think your health has little to do with your success is either incredibly ignorant or utterly arrogant.

### Redefine

Winning the battle between you and your health means training your body to work for you instead of letting your body work against you. People are prioritizing their health and investing in themselves and their longevity. Winning the battle is only possible if it's won on your own terms. It cannot be prioritized because society tells you it should or because you want to relive the glory days of your pre-middle-age physique. Besides the benefits of taking care of yourself, your body deserves it. It never stops working for you, so why would you stop working for it?

### Repeat

Love the process and not just the result. Commit to moving every day. Walk a mile, run a mile, bike a mile, row a mile, etc. Do a mile every day for seven days, and you will see progress. Ultimate health is about daily progress, not perfection. Small changes over long periods of time produce the biggest results. Set goals you can attain. Once you reach a goal, set another one. Enjoy the process of getting your body and mind to function at their full potential.

## You Vs Your Relationships

### Return

Nothing will shape your life more than people. Humans aren't meant to do life alone. Our basic human needs for social interaction and sensory stimuli stem from the reality that we're social creatures who crave connection.

On a remote Italian island, super longevity is common to both sexes. Psychologist Susan Pinker started her research of the people with the genetic profiles. She found that genes account for just 25 percent of their longevity; the other 75 percent was lifestyle. In every house she visited for interviews, she found a kitchen party. The people were always surrounded by extended family, friends, neighbors, the priest, the barkeeper, the grocer. They were never left to live solitary lives.

The top two predictors of a long-lasting life have to do with your social life. Close relationships are the people who you can call at a moment's notice, who will visit you in the hospital, who will sit with you if you're having an existential crisis, who will celebrate your successes or help shoulder your burdens. Those people, your close circle of friends, can prolong your life.

### Redefine

When it comes to you and your relationships, you must be willing to fight for the good ones and remove yourself from the toxic ones. The old adage says, "Show me your friends, and I'll show you your future." King Solomon said it more directly some 4,000 years ago: "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but the friend of fools suffers harm." The company you keep can bring you up or bring you down, make you better or make you worse.

### Repeat

Take initiative to invest in relationships that either build you up or build others up. To win the battle between you and your relationships, you must master the art of balance. A healthy relationship is never one-sided. If you pour out too much without being poured into, you'll crash. Conversely, if you allow yourself to be poured into too much without pouring yourself out, you will become self-centered and insignificant to others. You must give and take, seek and bestow forgiveness, and choose every day to keep making the investment.

## You Vs Your Future

### Return

Let the hope of tomorrow inspire you but be driven by today. Winning the battle between you and your future starts with not living with your head in the clouds. You can have the future in mind, but loosely enough to be able to maintain a firm grip on the words and actions you are responsible for now.

### Redefine

The purpose of life is to live a life of purpose. If you don't, the battle between you and your future is already lost. Viktor Frankl was a Jewish neurologist and psychiatrist living in Vienna, Austria, when the Nazis deported him, his wife, and his parents to a concentration camp in 1942. Victor became the family's sole survivor. His famous book, Man's Search for Meaning, tells the story of how surviving the Holocaust led him to discover the importance of finding meaning in all forms of existence, even the most brutal ones, and thus, a reason to continue living. What we can learn from Frankl is endless: resilience, forgiveness, selflessness, courage, empathy. He never made it about himself.

### Repeat

It's never too late or too early. Right now is the best time. To win the battle between you and your future, you must relinquish the anticipation of the future itself. You must have the wherewithal to realize that tomorrow is not promised, and you must live right here, right now, with purpose. What are you going to do? Who are you going to be? Every You Vs You battle will challenge, shape, and strengthen you.



Todd Cahill launched Beyond Driven with the expressed purpose of teaching and equipping others. Through this proven system, his life coaching and leadership training has helped hundreds of people create a 6-figure income by launching and building their own businesses. Todd focuses his energy on guiding people along their journey by creating a step by step plan, designed to help them find and achieve their true purpose.

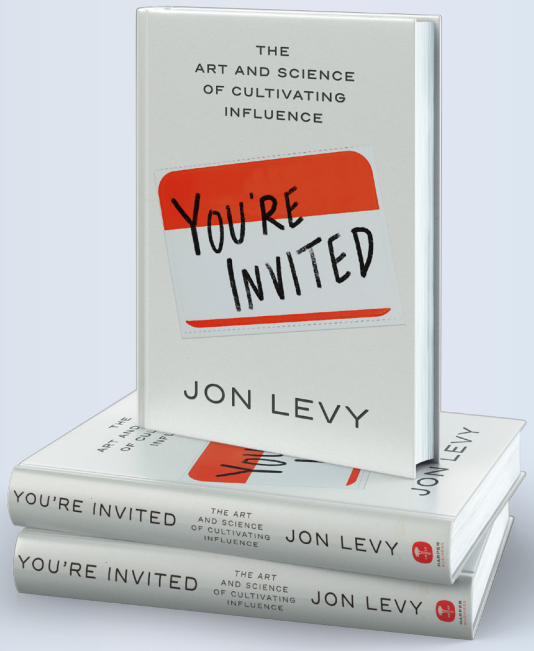
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# You're Invited

Jon Levy

BOOK SNAPS™
Zooming In On Your Next Read




## You're Invited

By Jon Levy

Jon Levy is a behavioral scientist best known for his work in influence, human connection, and decision-making. More than a decade ago, Jon founded The Influencers Dinner, a secret dining experience for industry leaders, from Nobel laureates, Olympians, celebrities, and executives to artists, musicians, and the Grammy-winning voice of the bark from "Who Let the Dogs Out." Guests cook dinner together but can't discuss their careers or give their last names. Once seated to eat, they reveal who they are. Over time, these dinners developed into a community. With thousands of members, The Influencers is the largest community of its type worldwide.

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# How the People Around You Define Your Success

On the surface, founder of Weight Watchers Jean Nidetch and abolitionist Frederick Douglass wouldn't seem to have much in common in terms of their struggles, achievements, and legacy. Despite the incredible differences between their journeys and accomplishments, they were both able to succeed because of a startling similarity in their approach. "They found a way to bring people together and create deep and meaningful connections between them."

Author and consultant Jon Levy draws this connection based on a powerful idea of success that has driven his personal career and changed thousands of lives through his work with some of the world's largest organizations. "The fundamental element that defines the quality of our lives is the people we surround ourselves with, and the conversations we have with them." Levy learned this principle at a seminar at just 28 years old and it was life changing. In ***You're Invited: The Art and Science of Cultivating Influence***, he asks readers to join him in adopting this philosophy and improving their own lives, careers, and organizations.

When we connect with other people who have similar goals, struggles, or needs, we form communities, in which we can feel safe being open and vulnerable, build trust with one another, and provide support to each other. Within those communities we find the ability to amplify the results we could achieve alone. Habits, emotions and behaviors, both good and bad, are essentially contagious within groups. If we surround ourselves with others whose beliefs and values and lifestyles are admired, we increase our chances of adopting those habits, emotions, and behaviors ourselves.

This potent concept explains the wild success of Weight Watchers as well as the massive and quick spread of the abolitionist movement in the late 1830's. Making meaningful connections between people who can impact your life and the issues that you care about is a universal strategy. Far before social media, influence was the means by which directional change took place, in personal lives and society as a whole. Levy's book is about putting that potential to work for you.

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## The Influence Equation

Levy developed what he calls the Influence Equation to define how influence is created and amplified by those in our chosen or formed communities. It says:

Influence = (Connection x Trust) Sense of Community

Levy explores the factors of trust, connection, and a sense of community that are at play when we seek to establish a relationship with another. Trust "is willingness to be vulnerable." Researcher at the Trust Project at the Kellogg School of Management Dr. Kent Grayson says that trust is made of three basic pillars:

1. Competence, which is "the ability to do something successfully."
2. Honesty/Integrity, which is being truthful and honest as a person or company.
3. Benevolence, which is "acting with your best interests in mind."

These three pillars are foundational in your ability to draw people to you, your business, or your cause, the degree to which your team members work well together, and how influential you can become. Understanding how these pillars function is, therefore, essential. When there is a breach in any one of these pillars, the relationship can be damaged and in need of repair. However, not all breaches are treated equally. Failures in competence are more easily overlooked or forgiven than breaches in integrity or benevolence, for example.

In order to establish trust quickly, savvy influencers must rely on something called the IKEA effect. The theory says that even though IKEA's products are not necessarily the most sturdy or long lasting pieces of furniture on the market, customers are fiercely devoted to the pieces they own. This is because those people put forth a tremendous amount of effort and hours into assembling the furniture, which come with notoriously confusing instructions. That experience cultivates an attachment.

This phenomenon can be extended to create attachments between people as well. We see it at play in armed services boot camp where newly-uniformed military members are put to the test with extreme discipline, challenges, and demands. Through this experience, they become bonded at a life or death level with those other members of the military who are going through it with them. We also see this effect at work when looking at the pledge activities of sororities or fraternities. After going through humiliating, difficult, and even dangerous events with one another, pledges are entirely devoted to and care deeply about one another.

The IKEA effect can be leveraged to quickly build trust with the people you hope to involve in your life, too. Obviously you are not going to treat potential clients or donors to a grueling or totally overwhelming activity but you can apply the principle to the problem of establishing trust quickly. You just have to find a challenge you can invite others to join that requires people to work together. In doing so, they will inevitably provide support to each other, which is a surefire way to establish trust between individuals. When others receive and give support to each other in a benevolent way, bonding takes place at a far faster rate than typical.

Merely wanting to connect with someone and actually getting them to connect with you are two different things all together. In order to connect with influential people, you have to understand what it is they themselves value. By focusing on what they care about instead of what you care about, you are taking a benevolent approach and that is far more effective than the selfish one.

## Cultivating Connection

Levy recognizes that it would be impossible to discover what motivates each individual person with whom you wish to connect. Instead, he recommends organizing those potential connections into four distinct groups that will guide how you approach them for connection.

The first group is "Global Influencers" who have a reach that spans the entire globe. These are your mega celebrities and hugely powerful people in politics or even royalty. People in this group are in exceedingly high demand and thus are surrounded by large teams of people dedicated to keeping the machine running. Oftentimes, every waking moment of their lives is scheduled and protected. This, naturally, makes it very difficult to establish a connection with a global influencer.

Levy discovered a surprising way to connect with this upper echelon group in what he calls the "ubiquity approach." "The ubiquity approach is simple: if you connect and develop a trusted relationship with people in their inner circle, in time you will become part of their community and you will be pulled in as a trusted member." After all, Levy reminds us, "if you are friends with the presidents of Tesla, SolarCity, SpaceX, and Neuralink, it won't be long before you are hanging out with Elon Musk." An interesting point to note is that the inner circle of a global influencer is frequently made up of industry influencers, which will be discussed next. The key to making headway is to allow plenty of time for your relationship with the connected industry leaders to develop before even attempting to connect with the global influencer.

The second group are called "Industry Influencers" who are established leaders in a particular field or industry that are sometimes, but not necessarily, well known outside of their group. CEOs at FOrtune 100 companies, for example, are hugle influential in their industries but they are not household names like Queen Elizabeth or Beyoncé. As mentioned, a global influencer's inner circle is frequently made up of people in this group. More importantly than their ability to reach a global influencer is the fact that they are often the better person to connect with as they are more involved at a hands-on level with the "day-to-day priorities and intricacies of what can and can't be done" with any organizations or causes related to the global influencer.

Levy identifies four qualities that "consistently get the attention of industry influencers and draw them in." The degree to

> The ticket to reaching people that can influence those at a community level is to add value to their lives."

which you put on an event or experience that mixes up the four or leverages one more than the other is entirely up to you and the circumstances, but the more of them that are included, the greater your chances of success. Those qualities are: generosity, novelty, curation, and awe. Being generous involves giving more of your time, money, or attention than was expected. Novelty is when something is new or different enough for us to be interested but not so outlandish that it becomes off putting. There is a sweet spot between the two that must be found. Curation relates to the intentional choosing of the right mix of people to get the right results you are seeking. Finally, awe is a highly-desirable emotion because it is so rare. If you can inspire awe in an industry influencer, they will be more apt to connect with you. Striving for this encourages us to think big.

The third group is "Community Influencers" who hold sway over organizations, religious or cultural groups, or creatives who have built a strong and devoted following. The ticket to reaching people that can influence those at a community level is to add value to their lives. Levy sticks to the acronym SOAR to guide relationship building at this level. Provide people with skills, opportunities, access, or resources and they will flock to your event or experience and connections will be formed.

Finally, "Personal Influencers" are those who impact your own life directly, such as your family, close friends, teachers, or coworkers. As previously discussed, behaviors and habits are contagious among personal connections. To influence those with whom you are personally connected, Levy recommends connecting them with others who have a skill, habit, or behavior that you'd like your personal connection to adopt. This tends to be far more effective than addressing them directly on something like losing weight or quitting smoking. Over time, these shared goals will create a "community of positive influence."

## Creating a Path

This section of the book puts the pieces of the Influence Equation together in a simple approach that applies it to real life. In essence, Levy explains what we need to do with the Influence Equation now that we understand its parts. It accounts for human behavioral quirks that are exploited by some of the biggest brands to create a path for people to take on a journey they will love.

To illustrate this point perfectly, Levy shares how visitors to Disney World are taken on a literal path to enter the park after paying the entrance fees. The average park visitor earns an average salary and thus, paying the entrance fee to the park represents a large expenditure that can be quite uncomfortable to the person laying out the cash. Many experience buyer's remorse shortly after the register accepts their payment.

To counteract this and avoid having throngs of angry, remorseful park visitors entering for a day that should be filled with fun and memory making, Disney created a work around. Instead of walking right in, visitors must take a twenty-three minute ride on a monorail or ferry boat that carries them to the iconic front gates of the Magic Kingdom. The length of the ride is, not coincidentally, just enough time for visitors to get over their buyer's remorse, which results in longer stays at the park and, of course, more money spent while they are visiting.

The path at Disney was created by design, taking into account the buyer's-remorse quirk of human behavior. Your own path will also need to be intentionally designed to take those you want to influence on a ride that they are sure to enjoy. "By taking into account all the amazing irrationality of human decision making, we can create better connections, greater levels of trust, more influence, and stronger communities." The end goal is to take people down a path that is appealing to them logically and emotionally and that "gets them where they need to end up."

Levy's book lays out a clear prescription for how any person can leverage the power of connection and community to influence others for a greater purpose. During the course of writing it, he came to realize that the fastest and perhaps easiest way to approach any problem is by extending an invitation. When someone accepts your invitation, they are immediately invested in whatever it is you are presenting or offering. When a person commits in this way "the context shifts from someone wanting them to participate to actively saying they want to engage." This is a magic-making dynamic.

With You're Invited: The Art and Science of Cultivating Influence, Jon Levy is extending a personal initiation to each and every reader to "participate in a life-changing experience." No matter how much money you make or what level of success you have achieved, each of you has what is necessary to connect with other human beings. There is no more critical time to make these connections than the present, which represents the most lonely and isolated time in human history. Connecting, communing, and influencing others is the positive path to a happier, more fulfilled, healthier, and successful life. The first step is to accept the invitation Jon Levy has extended to you. The second is to reach out to another, with an invitation of your own.

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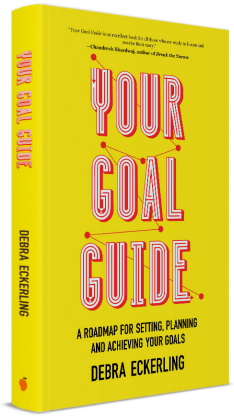
# Your Goal Guide

Debra Eckerling

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# Your Goal Guide

## A Roadmap for Setting, Planning and Achieving Your Goals




*by* **Debra Eckerling**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What stops you from achieving your goals? Not enough time? Not enough motivation? Not a clue as to what you want to do? You're not alone. It's difficult to focus on your goals when you have to invest time and energy you don't really have into something that may reward you down the line. However, if you make your goals a priority and work on them for short periods of time, you will eventually reach your desired destination.

Over the years, author Debra Eckerling has helped people around the world set and achieve goals through strategizing, troubleshooting and offering resources, encouragement, and deadlines. She has developed and polished goal-setting and productivity techniques and adapted them into a simple roadmap. In ***Your Goal Guide***, she shares this method with readers to figure out what they want and how to develop a plan to get it.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to determine your ultimate dream, goal, or desired accomplishment.
- What processes you can use to identify optimal options and possibilities.
- How to establish goals, benchmarks, and tasks that will get you to your destination.
- How to stay motivated and energized along the way.

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

## Determine Where You Want To Go

Go back in time. Think about those things that have stuck with you –the ideas that roll around in your head and show themselves every now and again. Now's the time to take them out to play. Maybe the life you want has nothing to do with the life you have. In order to change that, you start with one question: What do you want? And only you can answer it.

### Exercise 1: GoalTopia

Open a dedicated notebook or computer document and write "GoalTopia" at the top. Underneath, write "GoalTopia 1." What's your ultimate dream, goal, or desired accomplishment? Write down the first thing that comes to mind.

Now, give it some thought. Meditate. Set a timer for fifteen minutes. Close your eyes, clear your mind, and let your thoughts wander. Time's up. Write your next header, "GoalTopia: Take 2." Answer the question again: What's your ultimate dream, goal, or desired accomplishment? Write it down. If necessary, repeat this process a few more times.

Once you are happy with your potential GoalTopias, read through the list. Do you see similarities? What keeps popping up? This could have to do with your job or career, industry, family, health, wealth, lifestyle, or a combination of them all. After some consideration, from your list, identify the GoalTopia – or combination of GoalTopias – you want to focus on and write it down under the header: "Ultimate GoalTopia."

### Exercise 2: Your Current Biography

A bio is a document that shares your accomplishments, experience, and expertise, along with your strengths and values. It is written in narrative form and should be in your tone and style, showing some personality along with your professional background. It's the public's first impression of you and a good way to remind yourself of all you have done and what you want to achieve.

To assist you, try some simple tricks to make the process of writing your biography easier. Go to a networking event. After you've spent an hour or so introducing yourself to a bunch of new people, your background will be in easy recall mode. Still stumped? Ask your friends and peers to give you their unique, unbiased perspective. Find previous bios of yourself on your blog, company website, or LinkedIn and read them.

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Current Bio."

Label and fill in the following sections: Employment History; Education, Organizations, and Certifications; Successes; Strengths; Challenges; Skills; Personal Details or Anecdotal Information. Take the information and turn the high points into a 150-300 word bio written in third person.

### Exercise 3: Your Future Biography

The next step in this process is to figure out your future. Identify what additional skills, education, and relationships you need to pick up or develop along this journey. When you see the distance between your current life and your future, you can begin to chart your course. Your future biography should reflect your ideal persona once you reach your yet-to-be-determined destination.

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Future Bio."

Label and fill in the following sections: Future Work Experience; Education, Organizations, and Certifications; Successes; New Skills; Personal Ambitions. Use this information to write your biography 1, 3, or 5 years from now. Copy your future bio into your Trip Map.

### Exercise 4: Create Your Mission Statement

Your mission statement is a summary of your goals and values, as well as the driving force behind them. Furthermore, once you know your mission, you are able to set long- and short-term goals that reflect it. Since your mission statement combines your biography with your ultimate goal, you've done a lot of the legwork already. It's just a matter of putting all the pieces together, mixing them up, and adding one more.

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Mission Statement."

Answer the following questions as concisely as possible:

- Who are you? What is your work, education, and personal background?
- What are your values? What principles are important to you?
- What are your unique qualities? What talents and skills define you?
- What do you ultimately want? What is your goal?
- Who does it serve and why? What is the value to others?

Once you've answered these questions, use the information to create your mission statement. For example, I am a (adjective) person who enjoys (talent) and excels at (skill) who wants to help (demographic) (do this) in order to (reason). Once you have your mission statement, add it to your Trip Map.

### Exercise 5: Create Your Motto

It can be helpful to turn your mission statement into a motto that you can use as a barometer for making decisions that relate to your goals. Take 5-7 keywords from your mission statement and create a memorable phrase that will stick with you.

## Explore Different Destinations

Although you know what your GoalTopia looks like, you are just getting started. Now you need to go through the process of investigating different possibilities. The legwork, which includes writing, research, and outreach, will help you identify options.

### Exercise 6: Directed Journaling

Directed Journaling is a technique that helps you work through any sort of concept, decision, or problem. This method is effective because, when you put your ideas in writing, you are able to look at them objectively, move things around, and determine the best course of action.

In your calendar, schedule five or more fifteen-minute sessions for journaling. Spend that focused time writing out your thoughts, answering a specific question or series of questions. What should I do? What do I want? What changes do I need to make? These are the kinds of questions your Directed Journaling will answer. Your stream of consciousness will identify numerous scenarios that could lead you to achieve GoalTopia.

### Exercise 7: Common Themes

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Common Themes."

Read the first day of your journal entries and jot down five things that stand out.Repeat this for each of your journal days. Now compare your lists. What ideas showed up on most days? Are there any obvious omissions? What did you learn about yourself? Take your answers and assign them a common two-to-three-word theme. Examples include Career Change, Climb the Corporate Ladder, or Start Side Hustle.

Your theme will help you home in on what actions to take, interests to explore, or lifestyle elements to change as you get closer to identifying your specific destination.

### Exercise 8: Identify Options

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Options."

Based on your journal entries and notes, make a list of five possibilities of what you can do in service to your theme.

Answer the following questions:

- Why does this interest me?
- How will it serve my mission and motto?
- In what ways is it a good fit for my theme?
- Which of my experience and skills can I use or transfer to pursue this?
- What additional education, support, or resources will I need to obtain.

Use your answers to narrow your options down to three finalists. These are the options you will research extensively.

### Exercise 9: Research

Take your top three options from the previous exercise and extensively research them. Find out who the leaders in the field are, what education is required, and what resources exist within the field. Think about any connections you may already have to each option and reach out to them.

### Exercise 10: Select a Destination

Now that you have carefully researched what it takes to get to your different options, you have enough information to make a Destination Decision. Review all of the exercises you have done so far and see how each option relates and is aligned with your mission, motto, and theme. Ultimately, ask yourself, "Do I want to do this?" From your answers, you should be able to determine your destination.

## Brainstorm Your Route

Now that you have selected a destination, you get to decide how you are going to get there. You will brainstorm all the goals, benchmarks, and action items you believe are necessary to get to your destination.

### Exercise 11: Goals Brainstorm

In your notebook or document, write down all of your professional and personal goals. The reason to set both is

because they work in tandem. If you get stuck, look at your future bio, mission statement, journaling pages, or options exercise to see if you missed anything.

### Exercise 12: Organize Professional Goals

Separate your master list into two categories: Professional Goals and Personal Goals. Take your list of professional goals and identify which are long-term and write each on a separate page. Now, put any short-term goals from your list under the appropriate long-term goal. Now, add benchmarks, or mini-hurdles, under each short-term goal. Under each benchmark, write out the tasks necessary to accomplish it.

### Exercise 13: Organize Personal Goals

Personal goals complement professional ones. When you do things to improve your personal life, it impacts your career, and vice versa. Map out your personal goals in the same way you have mapped out your professional goals into long-term, short-term, benchmarks, and tasks.

### Exercise 14: Priorities

Prioritizing is simple. When trying to decide what takes priority, ask yourself: Is it exciting? Is it necessary? Is it urgent? From your extensive list, choose three of the long-term goals that will lead you to GoalTopia. Next, choose three long-term personal goals. Now zero in. Choose three short-term professional and three short-term personal goals that you will tackle first to make those long-term goals happen.

### Exercise 15: Choose Alpha And Beta Projects

Even though you prioritized, you can't pursue all of your goals simultaneously. What you can do is choose alpha and beta projects. Alpha projects will take center stage because they are more timely and important to keep you moving towards GoalTopia.

## 5 Of 7 Rule

While the idea of working toward your goals every day is good in theory, it's not always realistic since you have plenty of other professional and personal responsibilities. Long-term goals take time.

The 5 of 7 Rule helps you take the pressure off yourself as you work toward your goals while continuing to juggle everything else going on in your life. Work toward your GoalTopia five out of every seven days each week. This enables you to keep your objective top of mind while giving you ample downtime. It eliminates the fluster you feel when life happens and you need to skip a day or two.

Everyone deserves happiness in their lives. If you don't have it, you can do one of two things: be okay with being miserable or do something about it. For those at a crossroads who've decided to make a change, good for you! But don't stop there. That decision is a huge first step, but you need to do the work and follow through. Nearly anything is possible. You just need to take the time to figure out what you want and commit to making it happen.



Debra Eckerling works with individuals and businesses to set goals and manage their projects through one-on one coaching, workshops, and online support. A professional writer, communications specialist, and project catalyst with more than 20 years of experience, Debra is the founder of Write On Online, a live and online community for writers, creatives, and entrepreneurs and host of the #GoalChat Twitter Chat.

***Your Goal Guide: A Roadmap for Setting, Planning and Achieving Your Goals*** © 2020 Debra Eckerling. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Mango Publishing Group. 290 pages, ISBN 978-1642501506 Summary copyright © 2020 by Soundview Book Summaries®

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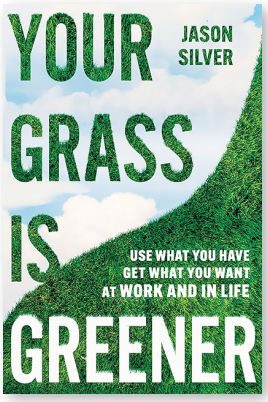
# Your Grass Is Greener

Jason Silver

Executive Book Summaries®

# Your Grass Is Greener

## Use What You Have. Get What You Want. At Work and in Life.




*by* **Jason Silver**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The old saying that the grass is always greener on the other side captures a familiar frustration at work: the belief that fulfillment, balance, or success lies somewhere else, in a different role, company, or career. Many professionals feel stuck between wanting more satisfaction and fearing the cost of chasing it. But what if job satisfaction was a skill that can be practiced and mastered, just like any other skill?

***Your Grass Is Greener: Use What You Have. Get What You Want. At Work and In Life.*** argues that lasting improvement does not come from changing jobs, but from changing how you work. Drawing on his experience as a startup advisor and public speaker, author Jason Silver shows how people can use strengths they already possess to improve efficiency, reduce stress, and enjoy their work more.

The focus is on practical tactics such as improving communication, speeding decision-making, and aligning daily tasks with what you do best—methods that help you become more effective without sacrificing your life outside the office. These tactics are designed to be applied immediately, using strengths and habits you already have rather than requiring sweeping changes or major trade-offs. As work improves, success follows more naturally, and the resulting confidence and satisfaction spill over into personal life as well. Over time, these small, controllable changes compound, creating a more sustainable and rewarding way to work and live.

## IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Learn how to improve job satisfaction without changing roles or employers
- Find out how to use existing skills to work more efficiently and with less stress
- Examine practical methods to reduce miscommunication and progress faster at work
- Acquire a mindset shift that turns everyday work into a source of life satisfaction

## Introduction

Shortly before her 37th birthday, my sister lost her battle with cancer. Losing Rachel sent me into a spiral. I fell to pieces, slowly picked them all back up again, and through her death have been learning more about how to better live my own life. I challenged every assumption I had about how I was living and focused on my own well-being more than I ever had before.

Over time I started to feel better in life and turned my attention to work. A similar deep dive upended everything I thought I knew about how I was supposed to work, and in the process, helped me find a better way. One that allows me to continue to work hard, but enjoy myself more along the way.

### How to Work—and Live—Better

Research has shown that enjoying your job isn't just a nice perk. The more you enjoy your work, the better you do at it. You're more creative and you build better relationships with your colleagues too. Studies also show that the joy you feel at your job spills into the rest of your life. When you enjoy your work, you have more energy for everything else. Simply put, working better is the key to unlocking a better life.

Workplace statistics paint a clear picture: the way we're working today isn't working.

- Productivity is lower than ever.
- About 8 in 10 people have burned out at least once at their current job.
- 77% of employees feel disengaged from work.
- The "Great Resignation" and "quiet quitting" have become so popular as to be routinely newsworthy.

If, like so many others, you're struggling at your job today, know that you can turn it around. Whatever job you have and however it's going for you today, finding ways to work better will bring you big benefits both at the office and outside of it.

### The Secret to Better Work

*Work smarter, not harder.*

Does anyone even know what that actually means? Are you waking up every day trying to work dumb? No, you're not. The problem isn't you or what you're capable of; it's that no one has ever really explained *how* you're supposed to work smarter at work.

This book breaks down nine of the most impactful tactics for working better across these three opportunity areas:

- How to do five days of work in four (without working until midnight)
- How to enjoy your day-to-day work more (without changing jobs)
- How to progress faster without (waiting for a title or promotion)

What you'll learn works because each tactic is focused entirely on what you control—no waiting for your boss to approve a new project, spending months interviewing for a "dream job" that may never come, or holding yourself back anymore.

CHAPTER 1

## How to Eliminate Miscommunication

Miscommunication in the workplace costs the US economy upward of $1.2 trillion every year. Aside from productivity, miscommunicating just feels bad. A recent study showed that most employees (69%) can point to a specific, recent miscommunication at work that left them feeling more stressed or anxious.

When one of my favorite campaigns we ran at Airbnb resulted in a scheduling error involving the NBA, the NHL, and Bruce Springsteen, I realized this was because I'd made a classic blunder of communication: I assumed others had interpreted my words how I'd intended them to be interpreted. I'd forgotten one of the most obvious and important rules of communication—different people hear the same words differently. Why does this happen?

The answer is obvious, yet all too often forgotten. We're all different from each other. We all think differently. We all hear things differently. Different people can hear the exact same instructions and produce completely different results.

The problem isn't if you're understood, it's *how* the other person understands you. There are two types of miscommunication:

- **Visible miscommunications** – occur when you speak and can immediately tell you're not being understood. The other person looks at you funny or replies to your email with a confused emoji. So, in the moment, you reword your message and try again.
- **Invisible miscommunications** – occur without your awareness. They happen when you've been understood

> Enjoying your day-to-day work is a self-reinforcing multiplier for your career.

but misinterpreted. These are the miscommunications that cost us because you only discover them after you've wasted time and effort going in the wrong direction.

Solving for invisible miscommunications in the moment, before the wasted work and effort, is where you can get back hours every week.

### The Solution to Invisible Miscommunications

To stop invisible miscommunications, you have to find a way to make them visible. You want to make them obvious in advance so you can fix them before paying the price of doing the wrong work. Using the brief back, a proven communication tactic, can help here.

The brief back asks a listener to repeat back what they heard in their own words. This immediately reveals whether an invisible miscommunication has taken place. You will unquestionably know how the other person interpreted your meaning because they'll have just told you.

There are basically two approaches to deploying brief backs: the safe way and the asshole way. Consider these examples:

1. "Tell me what I just told you. I want to make sure you were listening."
2. "Can you let me know what you took away from this conversation so I can be sure I did a good job getting my point across?"

Guess which one works better?

Option 1 is condescending, passive-aggressive, and rude. I don't recommend asking for brief backs this way. From much trial and error, I learned that the key when asking for a brief back is to focus on yourself, not on the other person.

The brief back should confirm that *you* did a good job of communicating, not that the other person did a good job listening. The idea is that if something went wrong then it's on you, not them.

Notice the focus of Option 2: "I can be sure I did a good job." This clearly signals to the other person that you're looking for feedback on the job you did and not checking on something they did or didn't do. I've rarely if ever seen anyone have an issue with being asked for a brief back.

CHAPTER 2

## How to Speed Up Slow Decision-Making

How many times have you felt frustrated with slow decision making at work? You know what you need to do, but you're stuck waiting around for someone else to make a decision so you can move forward. Or you get called into a meeting to discuss a topic that should have been decided days, if not weeks, ago.

It feels like the more people involved in a decision, the more it seems to slowly grind to a halt. But do more people always mean you'll move more slowly? Too many cooks in the kitchen isn't the problem. Teams can make good decisions quickly, even big teams.

As humans, we want to agree with one another because we care so deeply about getting along. Our brains are wired for consensus. Yet we're actively building teams that create more controversy.

As we add more people to our teams and they bring a greater diversity of thought, we are actually creating the conditions for more disagreement. We need diversity, but with diversity necessarily comes differences of opinion. Left unaddressed, this is what slows down decision-making.

So, the question is: How do you adapt your decision-making approach to leverage the superpower of diversity without the slowdown of always having to agree?

### For Faster Decisions, Learn to Disagree Better

Though it might feel somewhat paradoxical, better disagreement leads to faster decisions. Here's the secret: your team can be in alignment without being in agreement. Faster decision-making happens not in spite of disagreements, but *because* of them.

The following three essential tactics can help you productively disagree so you can make decisions faster as a team:

**1. Decide who decides**

Always stop and ask, "Who is making this decision?" before diving into the decision itself. This single tactic alone will save you hours of wasted effort. You'll be surprised how often

the actual decision maker isn't clear and how much faster you'll move once your team has that clarity.

**2. Collect context, not opinions**

Groupthink refers to the challenges we face making decisions in group settings. To make good decisions at pace, your goal is to collect the diverse context of what everyone is thinking while reducing the probability of bad decisions from groupthink. Since it's subconscious, you can't entirely stop groupthink from happening. You can, however, rethink what you and others say to reduce the likelihood that it occurs.

**3. Seek alignment, not agreement**

Great teams can recognize genuine disagreements and decide to move forward together anyway. The idea is to share your thinking and argue vehemently, but once a decision is made, support it as if it were your own. This tactic may be the most difficult because it requires you to hold two competing points of view in mind at the same time: that you disagree with a decision and *fully* support it.

CHAPTER 3

## How to Take Back Control of Your Time

How often in your life and at work do you put other people's requests above your own? How long does it take before your week gets away from you and you have no time left for what *you* need to get done?

We all know we need to say *no* more, but it's really hard. No one ever explains how to do it well. What if you could learn to say *no* more effectively, with less guilt and less fear of judgment from others?

### Why You Don't Say No as Often as You Should

You, me, and anyone else with a human brain pretty much sucks at estimating how long a task will take. Psychologists call it the *planning fallacy*, and it effectively means we expect to get way more done than we actually can. How often do you get through a day or a week with a completely finished to-do list?

Thanks to the planning fallacy, most of us take on too much, setting ourselves up for failure and over allocating our time before a week has even begun.

Conventional wisdom tells you to focus on your methodology—to optimize your time better—but the key to better prioritization isn't methodology; it's psychology. It's a mindset shift to focus on *what you won't do* that makes you more effective at what you will do.

It's incredibly hard to intentionally not do something. The same is true at work. Even when you tell yourself not to, you still wind up checking your email in a meeting or letting a "quick" conversation expand into an hour-long, off-topic brainstorm. It's much more difficult to have the discipline not to do these things.

Your to-do list doesn't tell you what not to do. Shifting your mindset to focus on clearly defining what you won't do is exactly what you need to make more progress on what you will do. When you know what not to do, you're better able to avoid distractions and stay focused on what matters most. It's also easier to take much-needed breaks because you know when you've done enough.

### Write a Not-To-Do List

If you plan to take on too much before your week even begins, it's only going to go downhill from there. That's why we're going to take your existing to-do list and complement it with a not-to-do list.

To set yourself up for a great week, open up your long to-do list and spend fifteen minutes first thing on Monday doing this:

1. Pick your top three most important priorities. *You only get three.*
2. Put everything else on your not-to-do list. *Yes, everything else.*
3. Only add more to your to-do list if your schedule is wide open after blocking out time for your top three priorities. *Remember the planning fallacy: your top priorities will take longer than you expect.*

Having so few to-dos and so many not-to-dos will probably make you feel like you're going to underachieve at first, but your results will tell a different story. Clearly articulating your non-priorities in a not-to-do list helps you keep focused and has a number of bonus benefits as well:

- Your mental health will improve.
- Your expectation management will improve
- Your organizational skills will improve.

The purpose of upfront clarity is to help you be more intentional throughout the week.

As requests and tasks come up throughout the week, compare them against what you've already written down. If it's

> If you want lasting happiness and more joy on the job, you have to focus on improving how you work and not just what you're working on. ”

on your not-to-do list, then don't do it. If it's something you think you need to do, go for it. But before you do, choose what it will replace on your to-do list. Don't just add it on top of everything else.

CHAPTER 4

## How to Promote the Imposter in You

When you feel the self-doubt of imposter syndrome, you might see it as a problem—something you need to get rid of to feel better. That doesn't work. Imposter syndrome isn't a light switch you can turn on and off.

When you try to ignore the feeling that you don't belong, it usually feels worse and you perform worse as well. That's why we're going to completely flip the script. You'll learn how to use the same imposter syndrome that feels like it's holding you back as the very thing that propels you toward more impact and a deeper feeling that you do belong.

You've experienced imposter syndrome if you've ever:

- felt self-doubt
- had trouble acknowledging your success
- been worried that you'll be exposed as a fraud because you're not as good as other people think you are

The textbook definition of imposter syndrome adds that these feelings happen despite verifiable and objective evidence of your success.

When you try to turn your self-doubt off, you usually wind up feeling worse. Stop trying to fix it. There's more to imposter syndrome than what prevailing wisdom would have you believe. It's not some bug in your source code that needs to be corrected. It's a feature to be embraced. When you stop trying to turn it off, imposter syndrome can bring you benefits rather than burnout.

Research has shown that when you experience imposter syndrome, you tend to compensate by becoming more "other-focused." You listen better and ask more questions. When you do, you become more interpersonally effective and people like working with you more. In other words, the very concerns you have about not belonging help you build more belonging. The right amount of imposter syndrome makes you a better teammate.

### The Question Is the Answer

Researchers at Harvard University found that people like you better when you ask more questions. When people like you better, you'll feel a greater sense of belonging.

Despite their superpower, most of us don't recognize questions as the pathway to interpersonal success. We don't ask enough questions. Instead, we have it backward. We tend to focus more on answers, thinking this will make us seem smarter and more valuable. But answers aren't better.

What really has value in workplaces today is figuring out the *right questions to ask*. Not only do great questions pave the way for great answers, but they're also one of the best ways to learn and build relationships.

Research found that follow-up questions consistently performed the best in terms of how much they make people like you. Follow-ups encourage people to elaborate their points while showing your colleagues that you are listening to them. You can't ask a follow-up question if you weren't listening in the first place, so when you ask one, you're sending a strong signal that you were paying attention.

CHAPTER 5

## How to Measure Your Joy on the Job

Enjoying what you do at work isn't just important because it feels good. Research has shown that when you enjoy your job, you have more impact, are more creative, and you build better relationships with your colleagues.

Enjoying your day-to-day work is a self-reinforcing multiplier for your career. The more you enjoy your job, the more impact you have. The more impact you have, the more you'll enjoy your job. And so it goes, onward and upward from there.

Work joy also spills outside of the office into your life overall. When you feel good at work, you feel better across the rest of your life as well.

### You're Measuring the Wrong Variable

*Hedonic adaptation* is our shared, human tendency to revert to a base level of happiness following any meaningful event. Like getting a big promotion or landing that fancy new job you've always wanted, winning the lottery is a milestone. Just think about your last major win at your job. I bet you felt great. Did you feel the same way the next day? The next week? At your next performance review? That's hedonic adaptation at work—and it's why milestones are the wrong variable to focus on.

I firmly believe that anyone can experience more joy in their job, but we have to flip our notions of what leads to more enjoyment. Generally, we all focus on career milestones. You think about the goals you want to achieve, the promotions you plan to land, and the projects you'll need to work on to get there. If you want lasting happiness and more joy on the job, you have to focus on improving how you work, not just what you're working on.

### Do You Enjoy Your Moments?

When you're asked "Do you enjoy your job?" your brain plays a trick on you. A growing body of literature shows that humans are quite inaccurate at recalling how they've felt in the past. It's called *affect recall bias*.

This is another reason why traditional performance reviews don't help you do anything about your on-the-job experience. Broad reflections over long time periods don't match how you actually feel about your work day-to-day. If you really want to know if you're enjoying your job, you need to measure your moments and ask yourself how you're feeling as close to your day-to-day experience as possible.

CHAPTER 6

## How to Unlock More Joy at Your Job

The reason why many people don't like their work as much as they could is because they're not doing their work in the best way *for them*. Forget working on best practices. You need to find the practices that work best for you. When you do, you can use what you're already great at to find more enjoyment in the job you already have.

If you're going to find and keep on a path that makes you happier at work, you're going to need something to help you find your way. To discover your optimal professional path, you need a career compass.

A career compass reorients you toward how to enjoy your job every day. When you have a task to complete, each of the four points of the compass will show you how to get your job done in a way you'll both enjoy and excel at. When you can apply at least one of the points, you're in good shape. Two will feel great. Three will feel even better. And employing all four will reward you with maximum enjoyment on the job. Here are the four points of your career compass:

- **Love**. The more you do what you love, the better it will be for you personally and professionally.
- **Leverage**. The more you use skills you're already great at, the better you'll do and feel.
- **Learn**. The more you improve skills you care about, the more you'll enjoy your job, and the better you'll get at it too.
- **Less**. The more you avoid what you don't love doing, aren't great at, and have no interest in improving, the better you'll feel.

For a career compass to be applicable to your day-to-day tasks, you'll need to customize the four cardinal points so they relate to what's unique about you.

### Keeping on Your Path

*Be present. Stay in the moment.*

There's a reason for these sayings. Studies show that you're happiest (and most effective) when you're focused on the here and now. Though you likely know what sayings like *be in the moment* mean, figuring out how to apply them is much harder.

You can use your compass to help you stay in the moment. Anytime you get a new task, use your compass to figure out how to make it happen. When you find yourself getting distracted away from your day-to-day work—stressing about milestones, worrying that you're doing things differently than everyone else around you, or simply disliking what you're doing—you can again turn to your compass and let it guide you back to the best way to work for you.

CHAPTER 7

## How to Make Better Decisions

No matter how hard you try, you will never fully control the outcome of your decisions. In fact, the only aspect of the decision-making process you have complete control over is how you make your decisions themselves. When you im-

> Ignorance might be bliss,
> but it won't make you any better. ”

prove your approach to making decisions, you maximize the chances of getting the outcomes you want.

Your brain *is* a mess of tangled legs, or at least a mess of 100 billion neurons and their 25 quadrillion pathways. With so many routes to take, your brain evolved to find the fastest, easiest way to make decisions.

The problem is that efficient thinking is rarely the most effective thinking. Anytime you're making a decision, your brain is finding ways to skip the hard work. These mental shortcuts are known as *unconscious biases* because you can't know when they are happening to you.

You can't eliminate biases from your thinking entirely, but you can take different approaches to lessen their effects. What you need is a way to step back and force your brain to do something it doesn't want to do—think deeply about your decisions.

Asking the right questions can force your brain to do the right thinking. When you start by evaluating the factors of a decision, you become primed to think more analytically. It's this initial priming that improves your overall decision-making.

### Use Factors to Make Better Decisions

Instead of listing pros and cons, list *factors*. A factor doesn't tell you which option is better; it tells you how to think about which option is better. Listing factors will help you think through the important aspects of your decisions while priming your decision-making to be more analytical.

Once you've listed the relevant factors to any decision, you can then use a simple but effective thought routine to make your choice. You can use it for any decision, big or small.

1. List every relevant factor in your decision
2. Make a mini-decision based on each factor alone
3. Make a final decision considering all of the factors together

This routine works because it helps you avoid the mental shortcuts that hurt your decision-making. By listing the relevant factors first, you avoid letting less important information sway your opinion—like how many pros or cons there are. Then, the routine forces you to think deeply about what decision you would make considering each factor as if it were the only one. Having that thinking done before you holistically consider all factors together will make your final decision better.

CHAPTER 8

## How to Get More Feedback

Tough feedback is hard to hear, but it's always better to hear it than not. When you know about it, you can do something about it. Ignorance might be bliss, but it won't make you any better. Research has shown that more feedback helps you learn and develop new skills faster, improves what you're able to achieve, and increases your overall motivation as well. It's also been shown that teams with free-flowing feedback significantly outperform those without.

As conclusive as the evidence is that feedback supercharges people's growth, it's equally clear that most of us aren't getting enough.

Giving feedback comes with social risks, and because we're unsure how someone may take our feedback, we often decide to play it safe and keep it to ourselves. You can be the change you want to see in your workplace by taking the first, sometimes scary, step of giving more feedback to others. The more feedback you give your colleagues, the more of it you will get for yourself.

### How to Give More Feedback

- **Give better feedback**: To keep your feedback in a safe zone, steer clear of right and wrong. Don't get into a situation where your comments can be perceived as correct or incorrect, because that's where arguments happen and feelings can get hurt.
- **Give positive feedback**: One of the best ways to give more feedback—especially at first while you're getting used to giving it—is to focus on positive feedback.
- **Ask before you give feedback**: One final tip to help you share more feedback is to ask in advance. Remember, you're almost certainly underestimating someone's desire to hear your feedback. Rather than assume

they don't want to hear what you have to say, ask them and find out for sure.

### How to Get More Feedback

As you give more feedback, more of it will naturally come back to you thanks to reciprocity bias. But remember, feedback is just as hard for others to share with you as it is for you to share with them.

- **Ask for feedback in advance**: Asking in advance gives people the chance to prepare and makes it easier for them to share it with you because they know you want to hear it.
- **Listen to understand**: When someone gives you feedback, they're doing something that isn't easy. When receiving feedback, focus on listening and making sure you understand, not debating whether the feedback is justified.
- **Close with gratitude**: Try to end every feedback conversation with gratitude. A simple thank you goes a long way.

CHAPTER 9

## How to See Opportunities Everyone Else Misses

The problem is, thanks to confirmation bias and a simple trick of language, we're holding ourselves back every single day without realizing it. Opportunities to advance more quickly, both in terms of professional accomplishment and personal growth, are all around us. We just miss them.

The moment you hear the word *can't*, confirmation bias kicks in. This particular unconscious bias, yet another of the 180 we all have, unknowingly leads you to look for or interpret information that is consistent with what you already believe. Rather than exploring potential, when we hear *can't*, our brains actively avoid the possibility and we move on.

Here's the truth: very few achievements are impossible. But the flip side is this: many achievements aren't feasible.

The key to seeing opportunities others miss is differentiating between possibility and feasibility. People regularly say something *can't* be done when they really mean it *shouldn't* be done. This subtle difference makes all the difference.

### The Question You Should Be Asking All the Time

To see opportunities others are missing, ask yourself: What would need to be true?

When you're faced with a hard goal—something that can't be done or an idea someone else thinks is never going to happen—make a conscious effort to stop and think. Move from declarative statements about impossibility to exploratory conversations about feasibility.

This works because that single question shifts your focus from confirming all the reasons an opportunity won't work to exploring the specific details that would need to be true to make it happen. The question forces you to actively consider the possibilities. Once you have a tangible list of what would need to be true, you can more consciously decide what to do next.

CONCLUSION

## Gutted, Grateful, and Greener Grass

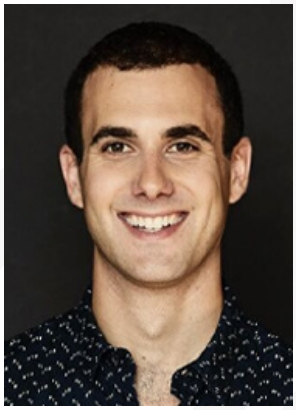
Changing what you do on its own doesn't address the true root challenge if you want to accomplish more and feel better about it along the way. The secret to better work—and a more enjoyable life as a result—is to change *how* you're working. Using the skills you already have to improve the work you already do. This leads to the most lasting change because any improvement in your underlying approach carries forward to the next project, team, or entirely new job you do in the future.

Avoid looking at the grass elsewhere and expecting it to magically be greener. You already have a job that can be your dream job; you just need to do it differently. You already have the skills you need to work smarter, not harder. You just need to use them differently.

Do whatever you need to do to remind yourself that you have the power to change how you're working. Other people can help you, but you certainly don't need to wait for anyone other than yourself to decide to work differently and transform your job into one of the most positive drivers in your life overall.

You already have everything you need to get what you want at work and in life.

Your grass *is* greener.



**Jason Silver** is a multi-time founder of companies and a multi-time founder of kids. He is driven by helping modern employees and teams discover better ways to work, with surfing a close second. An early employee at Airbnb, he also helped build an AI company from the ground up before the field gained mainstream attention. Today, he advises a startup portfolio valued in the billions on how to build enduring companies where people genuinely enjoy working. A sought-after speaker, instructor, and advisor, Silver focuses on making work a meaningful driver of positivity. His children regularly remind him how much he still has to learn.

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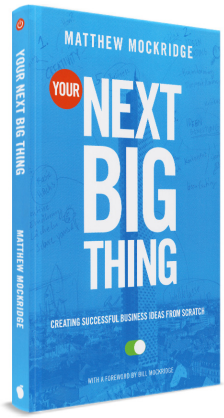
# Your Next Big Thing

Matthew Mockridge

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Executive Book Summaries®

# Your Next Big Thing

## Creating Successful Business Ideas from Scratch




*by* **Matthew Mockridge**

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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

You may think that you lack creativity, are unable to learn, or are incapable of getting good ideas. Many people think that way about themselves, so don't worry. It is possible to work through the complexities of successful creativity. Doing so will help you find your ideas and develop presently undiscovered abilities along the way.

In ***Your Next Big Thing: Creating Successful Business Ideas from Scratch***, author Matthew Mockridge offers tools and proven methods that will allow you to produce groundbreaking ideas and summon unexpected accomplishments – ones that may change your life forever.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- What features must be present for an idea to be a "next big thing."
- How to think about creativity in a way that leads to scalable business ideas.
- Practical idea-generating tools that you can implement immediately.
- How to evaluate your ideas to see if you should pursue them or not.
- Practices that should be incorporated into your daily life to increase your ability to realize your big idea.

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## Attributes Of A "Next Big Thing"

Before you can understand how to develop your "next big thing," you must first understand what attributes make something a truly "next big thing." These attributes or values will be used as a guide or checklist when considering different proposals. A real "next big thing" includes all or some of the following features:

Meaning and Value: It costs time, money, and attention. It becomes an integral part of the founder's life and is closely connected to a team, environment, customers, and partners.

Fairness: It must consider the principles of morality and ethics. Is it legal, fair, and honest?

Problem-Solving: Big problems set the stage for big ideas. Your next big problem will open up a market that has big potential.

Scalability: Can the idea scale, grow, and function, even without the founder standing next to it?

Optimized Risk: It generates profits inversely proportional to the risk. It does not financially paralyze you and clearly tells you when to collect your chips and leave the table.

## Thoughts On Creativity

The following thoughts about creativity are actionable and fool-proof.

Where are your ideas coming from? You don't come up with ideas. Ideas come to you. Ideas come from the sum of everything you are exposed to—they are the product of your environment. Go for a walk, talk to new people, read books that challenge you, and visit new places, and you won't be able to save yourself from good ideas.

Being creative means discovering and improving—not just inventing! Creativity does not automatically mean inventing something new; it often simply means discovering something and then making proper use of it. Find existing opportunities, rearrange them, and improve them!

Can you learn or inherit creativity? Not everyone is born creative, but every person you encounter, every setting or situation you experience, can set in motion creative thinking. Expose yourself to unfamiliar situations—crazier, newer, sharper, and more drastic experiences result in more innovative ideas.

Must you always be an expert? Creativity does not result from an expert performing a miracle, but from a design "ecosystem" based on the right team and on a mix of perspectives, new and old. Not knowing something is impossible makes it once again possible!

The flash of genius—does it actually exist? Suddenly, out of nowhere, a winning idea! Apparently a million-dollar moment, but what is missing? The efforts that preceded the insight. The subconscious part of our mind incubates ideas. Sooner or later, the moment comes when the idea is mature. Many people interpret this moment as a "flash of genius." The actual idea, however, arrived via subconscious processing.

## Idea-Finding Tools

These razor-sharp practical tools and theories immediately produce ideas.

1. $100 Per Day: Make it your goal to generate five ideas that could raise $100 today. Then think, how can you make your basic ideas bigger?

2. Go. Stop. Breathe. Go!: Be aware that you have finite energy that you must leverage to the best of your ability. Step away from the task, gain insights, and come back to it later. Devote some time to reflection on a regular basis.

3. Brainstorming, Mind Mapping, Etc.: These tools force you to activate your right brain, the part responsible for creativity and imagination, so that you can visualize your thoughts in an unlimited way.

4. Divergent vs. Convergent Thinking: Before you start thinking about your next idea, clarify what kind of thought path you want to use to get to your goal. In a divergent thinking process, a person or team produces as many different results as possible for later evaluation. With convergent thinking, the desired result is predefined and the aim of the team is to move in the direction of the goal.

5. Five Perspectives: All strategically relevant perspectives need to be considered. Obtain five contradicting perspectives to arrive at important insights about your idea.

6. Sleep Well!: During sleep, subconscious mechanisms take place that we do not perceive. These can be incredibly valuable if you know how to leverage them. Give yourself ample sleep and during the day, try to remember what your subconscious worked on or processed during the previous night.

7. Write it Down: Make sure you always have a medium at hand so that you can immediately capture your situational

genius. When an idea shoots into your head, write it down before it disappears as quickly as it came.

8. Fifty Ideas: Quickly come up with fifty basic ideas. Don't focus on quality as the potential combinations can be gigantic.

9. Matthew's Creativity Cocktail Technique: The role of this technique is to unlock creative bandwidth and reveal an idea's untapped potential. Take basic ideas and shake them up, check them from all angles, pull, stir, push, and change them until something very special emerges.

10. Expose Yourself to New Things: When you break away from the norm and old processes, the fresh wind and slight insecurity will keep you on your toes. You'll find stimuli and inspiration in the places outside the situations you already know.

### Idea Evaluation Tools

When you get an idea, should you pursue, adjust, or throw it out? These tools allow you to effectively and efficiently make that decision.

1. Critics: The person who least likes your service, product, or idea is the most important person you need to consult with in order to move forward. The critic will tell you what didn't work, what was bad, or what was good but could work better.

2. Potential Customers: Marketing, idea development, and strategies are always more effective when you start with the customer. Put yourself in the shoes of the customer, find out what they need, and give it to them.

3. Systems vs. Humans: Good ideas are replicable, systematic, transferable, and scalable. Create ideas based on systems, not people. Make yourself replaceable, systematize all processes, and transfer the risk and implementation to as many different bodies as possible.

4. Solve Problems, Don't Treat Symptoms: It's always easier to grow out of a niche than to develop a new one. Talk to your customers and solve their problems. They will often give you your next big idea.

5. The Competition: You must be able to objectively understand whether your idea has elements that are implemented better or worse than the competition. This understanding will sharpen your strategy and determine your plan.

6. Journey Five Years Into the Future: Follow the timeline of your idea far ahead into the future. Take a close look at everything, come back to the present, and set your course to get there.

7. Start at 100: If you produce a lot of really bad ideas, you will also —statistically speaking—generate many good ones. Your first 5, 10, 100 ideas are easy routes and unexciting. At idea 100, the easy paths are no longer open and you are forced to fight against short-sightedness, lack of experience, and insecurity. In these remote corners of your mind, the great treasures lie buried.

8. Your Creative Friend: Creative types look deeper, see more, and think differently than others. Show them your idea and then just listen. Your idea can go deeper, and your creative friend can show you how.

9. Auditioning for Ideas: Your idea must make the cut three times to get the part. Take them rigorously through three rounds of scrutiny. The one that makes it to the end is your next big thing.

10. What Would it Cost You to Quit?: Evaluate your idea in terms of the potential cost of your exit. Do not move forward if the costs of your exit are too high of if you could invest your budget more efficiently on another idea.

## Success Thoughts

The following processes need to be in practice in order for you to remain productive, effective, and on course for the long-term realization of your next killer idea.

1. Flow and Meditation: You have flow when you don't think about what you're doing; when it just happens. It's much more subconscious than conscious. Meditation can help you get to your subconscious and experience flow in any situation. Regular morning meditation sends you into the day strengthened and ready.

2. Journal of Joy: Get a notebook and write down what you are thankful for, proud of, and who you helped each and every day. This inner dialogue and personal retrospection is the basis for real happiness and your best life.

3. Fitness: Fitness is one of the best productivity tools available. Physical training releases endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin. This makes you strong, healthy, productive, and well-balanced.

4. Nutrition: Your body reacts immediately to what you provide it. Learn what you need to feed your body every day in order to feel well. Eat clean, get smart, and feel

great. It all begins with your nutrition.

5. The Winner's Routine: There is routine at the heart of your best day. Certain things have to happen for you to feel really good. Determine what those things are and reproduce a winning routine every day. Plan exactly what needs to happen in order to make yourself happy and fulfilled and then let your system make it happen.

6. The Willpower Muscle: You can train your brain like a muscle and make it really fit and strong. The part of your brain that is responsible for willpower is the prefrontal cortex. It can be trained by doing again and again the things you want to anchor in your life, and that you will need in order to grow and be fulfilled.

7. You Get All the Things You Focus On: If you ask yourself why something is not working, it's not going to work. Focus on growth, opportunities, big goals, and impressive developments, and that's exactly what will happen.

8. Smile: In the body, a simple smile produces endorphins and "feel good" neurotransmitters. A smile smooths any social situation helping you and the other person feel security, serenity, joy, and happiness. Give everyone you meet a smile and you can't imagine how good you'll feel and how much positivity you'll get back.

9. Shock Yourself: Create situations that turn your status quo completely on its head and give yourself a breath of fresh air. The next time your thoughts aren't really sharp and you feel burned out, shock yourself with something you wouldn't otherwise do. Go out, jump, scream, dance, and tell your body you're flipping a switch. Everything old is suddenly washed away by the adrenaline rush and now you're ready.

10. Go Where Your Fear is the Greatest: You have to do exactly those things that make you really nervous, because that's when your feeling of success and your sense of victory over your own limitations will be at their highest.

## A Leader T-O-D-A-Y

The secret sauce of every idea and every company is leadership. Here are five building blocks for the world-class leader in you.

**T**otal Devotion: Don't do what is easy, do what is right. Push hard, even when no one is watching.

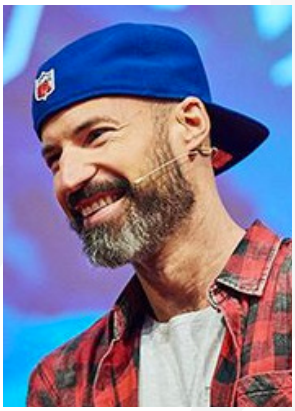
**O**pen Emotion: It's not weak to show emotion; it shows character and real courage.

**D**ifference: Make a small difference by being nice, positive, and over delivering.

**A**ll-Star Teamwork: Make real human connections with your team. Deal openly, honestly, and supportively.

**Y**our Decision: Make a decision to do things today that you will thank yourself for tomorrow. It's the things you don't do and the opportunities you don't use that will tear you apart.

Carefully chosen and arranged, the individual practices and systems presented here are indispensable tools for constructing your most creative work—and your best life. By examining the structure of success, back to its logical source, you can construct "your next big thing."



Matthew Mockridge studied international business and management in Miami, FL, USA but returned to his home country Germany, to start and later sell what has been called "the Facebook of live entertainment." He now gives catchy keynotes about the whole thing (mostly wearing a cap and sneakers), for the likes of PHILIPS, RE/MAX, Lufthansa, MERCK and SHELL.

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