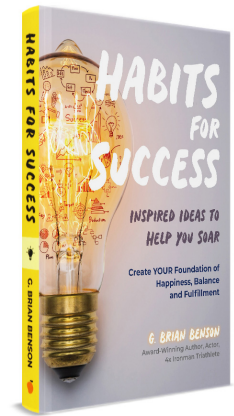


Habits for Success

Inspired Ideas to Help You Soar

by **G. Brian Benson**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many of us have been taught by society and our loved ones (as they were taught as well) that happiness and fulfillment come from fitting into a certain societal mold. The familiar model is to head to college, get a job, get married and have kids. Unfortunately, that expectation sometimes clashes with information we are receiving from our heart and intuition.

G. Brian Benson, in *Habits for Success*, stepped away from his family's business. The experience had nurtured and grown him, but he left the business he no longer loved in hopes of building a new, more stable foundation for the rest of his life.

There comes a time in all of our lives when it becomes more painful for us to stay mired in our old habits than to step outside our comfort zone and risk the unknown as we journey toward finding our true voice. Your true voice is the language of authentic fulfillment, joy, and happiness. While speaking your true voice, creativity flows, fears subside, and peace of mind prevails. Join Benson in the journey which Ram Dass calls "walking each other home." Create habits for living authentically.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The importance of building a strong life foundation.
- Your flourishing will positively impact others.
- Life balance relies on daily practices.
- Care of your body and mind are essential habits for success.

Start With Your Foundation

When we think of a foundation, we typically envision a building of some sort, perhaps a house or a skyscraper. When a house is built, the strength of its foundation is vital. The same is true for us. If we want to live authentically and be the best versions of ourselves and accomplish our goals and live out our dreams, the first thing we need to do is build a strong foundation.

An award-winning sand-castle builder explained her process. Interested onlookers often complimented her on the creative details of her work, but what those onlookers don't realize is that her most diligent efforts were spent on the building of a solid foundation. Generally, the first two hours of her process were spent analyzing the sand content, digging until the ideal grains were found, then saturating the sand and applying pressure to compact it into a solid formation. Only then could she get to work on the impressive detailing of her sand creation.

With a solid foundation, we achieve balance so we can make proactive choices instead of reactive choices.

Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

When we leave our comfort zones, we're taking a risk and opening ourselves up to the possibility of stress and anxiety because we aren't sure what is going to happen next. Shilpa Chatterjee says: "Although anxiety is not exactly something we go chasing after, a little bit of it can actually be healthy. A hint of anxiousness can push us to take risks, get more done, and continually better ourselves. Healthy stress acts as a catalyst for growth, motivation, and optimal performance."

When we step out of our comfort zone and challenge ourselves, we are provided with so many new gifts. We become more productive. As we expand our capabilities and break through barriers, we find new, exciting possibilities in our lives. Your creativity will increase as you have new experiences and learn and grow from them.

It's OK to Fail

Go fail a few times. Without failure, we wouldn't become the people that we are meant to become. It is such an essential part of building our foundation of success. You grow and build strength through the process of failure. While that doesn't make it any easier going through it, things do get better, and you will gain clarity. All successful people have had setbacks or bumps along the way to their success.

English novelist John Creasey received 753 rejection slips before he went on to publish 564 books. It took Thomas Edison ten thousand attempts to perfect the light bulb.

Get Creative

It is never too late to create. Georgia O'Keeffe worked steadily into her nineties, continuing her tradition of fine work. French impressionist Claude Monet painted well into his eighties, even after cataracts clouded his vision. Acclaimed architect Frank Lloyd Wright completed the design of the Guggenheim Museum in New York at age ninety-two—and Giuseppe Verdi wrote Falstaff, thought of as his most renowned opera, at the age of eighty-five. Get creative! Do what you love. You may just surprise yourself.

Make Room For Others

The beast that tells us that we are not enough is the same beast that keeps us separated from others. When we share our truths, pains, and imperfections, we shine light on our true essence. When we reveal ourselves, we stand unencumbered in truth; it brings us closer together as a community.

Let Go of Judgment

Benson led a workshop for twenty-one teenage boys who were incarcerated at a youth correctional facility in Oregon. Instead of having a lot of silence and looks of "why am I here" from the youth, he found many intelligent young men who couldn't wait to speak and share their experiences, their regrets, and their dreams.

Some talked about forgiving their peers or family members who played a part in having them incarcerated in the first place. Many told how they wanted to go to college and how they were going to make it happen. Some talked about wanting to raise healthy families even though it wasn't modeled for them while they grew up. Others spoke about forgiving themselves for the crimes that they committed so that they could move forward. Benson was reminded to never, ever judge a book by its cover. A strong foundation has no room for judgment.

Connect with Others

In today's fast paced, instant gratification world, where people's lives are broken down and validated into social media "likes" and "tweets," we may forget to take a long deep breath and remember what life is all about. One man who recognized this was a British hairdresser. He

Once I was in the habit of running early instead of running late, my stress and anxiety levels went down, and I was more ready for the day.

would walk the streets on his days off and volunteer his time, giving haircuts to the homeless. Through a simple act of connection, he was able to let these folks know that they have value and dignity. So, the next time you interact with a cashier at the store, walk by a person asking for help on the sidewalk, or make a deposit to the clerk at your bank, give them a smile and remember that they are just like you. Through connection, we live richer, more satisfying, and expansive lives.

Clean Up Your Disagreements

Do you have unresolved issues hanging over you? We are human; it happens. But to truly free ourselves of the pain, anger, guilt, or confusion we are holding onto, we need to make our best effort to clear things up. Which means to forgive the other person and move on or try to patch things up so you can go back to being friends or productive coworkers. This is so important for our mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Not to mention the strength of our foundation.

Strive For Balance

Just like the juggler with too many balls in the air, the more things we have going on in our life, the more difficult it is to keep everything going without dropping the ball. As the pace of our lives accelerates, so does our need to stay in balance. It is simple daily practices that maintain our foundation.

Be Kind

Wayne Dyer once said, “It’s better to be kind than to be right.” Watch how everything improves when you are genuinely kind. Next time you’re given the opportunity to let someone merge into your lane while driving, don’t hesitate. You’ll feel better, they will be appreciative, and the positivity shared will inspire others to do the same.

It doesn’t have to just be on the freeway—help someone out at the grocery store or hold the door when entering a building. Say hello to a stranger, make a donation to

someone less fortunate, or pay a compliment to someone who looks like they could use one. Kindness is another form of beauty and an essential part of your foundation. Share it, spread it, and be it.

Leave Ten Minutes Early

How often do you find yourself rushing late to work or someplace else where you need to be? How does it make you feel? Stressed? Angry? Guilty? There’s a very simple technique you can use to eliminate all of those unwanted feelings that come from being rushed. Try leaving ten to fifteen minutes early. (Simple, right?)

The author relates, “When I started leaving ten minutes early to go to work, I noticed the difference immediately. I arrived at work feeling much more peaceful and balanced. I was ready to start the day. Prior to leaving ten minutes early, I would be scrambling in to work, usually carrying a load of anxiety and stress. I would start those days feeling behind and definitely not in flow. Once I was in the habit of running early instead of running late, my stress and anxiety levels went down, and I was more ready for the day. Allow yourself that extra time; you will be glad you did. If you live in Los Angeles like me, better make it forty-five minutes!”

Attitude of Gratitude

Try and give thanks for all that comes your way, the good and the bad. You may ask, “Why would I want to give thanks for something bad that happened?” Well, we are here to learn and grow, and the greatest learning opportunities usually occur during trying experiences. Be thankful for them, and the new and hopefully wiser you who came out of a tough situation.

The trying times will eventually pass, and you will be better prepared the next time they come around, or even better yet, you can help someone else going through a tough time with your experience. Take the challenge to write down five to ten things a day that you are grateful for every morning. Watch your spirit lift!

Take Care Of Your Instrument

Taking care of ourselves is probably the most crucial task that we are given, yet I don't think enough people give it the importance that it deserves. If your health fails, it can outweigh everything else that's going on in your life.

Drink More Water

Did you know that 60 percent of our bodies and 75 percent of our muscles are made up of water? Is it any wonder that a lot of people get headaches or feel fatigued when they are under-hydrated? Water not only provides us with invaluable sustenance, but it also helps flush out our system, which in turn allows our body to run more efficiently and provide us with more energy. Being adequately hydrated is well worth the trouble of having to make a couple of extra pit stops during the day.

Get More Sleep

According to Thomas Dekker, "sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together." Are you getting enough sleep? Please don't think that by taking another hour of sleep each night, out of the 24 hours we have available, that you will be less productive. It has been proven that those who are sleep deficient work more slowly and make more mistakes along the way. Getting more sleep will in turn give you more energy, make you more productive, and probably a much happier person.

Go Exercise

Need a little more energy throughout the day? Want to lose a few unwanted pounds? Want to think more clearly and be more productive? Go get some exercise. If you are just beginning, it could be as simple as going for a walk three days

a week. Make whatever you do a habit. There are many ways to get some exercise that don't require special knowledge or skills. For example, gardening, swimming, going to a park and throwing a Frisbee, and walking are just a few.

Eat Better Eat Less

If you are struggling for energy during the day and feel very sluggish after you eat, then you might not be making the best food choices for your body. Listen to your body; it will tell you what works for it and what doesn't. What is good? Moderate intake and a balance of fruits, vegetables, grains, and poultry/ fish/nuts—clean and unprocessed foods. Eating better/eating less is an incredibly important part of keeping your foundation intact and solid.

Meditate

Do you want to feel calmer, carry less stress, have more energy, and be more tapped into your intuition? Give meditation a try. Meditation gives our brain a rest from the busy life and schedule that most of us lead. When we are in the space of feeling balanced and rested, we are better able to pay attention and listen to our intuition, our highest form of intelligence. Why wouldn't we want to tap into that?

Greatness is already within all of us. Sometimes we just need to peel away a few layers and do some inner housework to access it. Look within, be open to new ideas, and practice new habits. Remember to laugh along the way, pick yourself up when you fall down, and know that it's a journey, not a destination.



G. Brian Benson is an award-winning author, coach, inspirational TEDx speaker, actor, radio personality, and filmmaker. His mission is to wake up the world with conscious, thought-provoking media that inspires. As a 4x Ironman triathlete and cross-country bicyclist, Brian knows the value of hard work and never giving up on his dreams, a message he shares with audiences through each of his creative avenues.

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