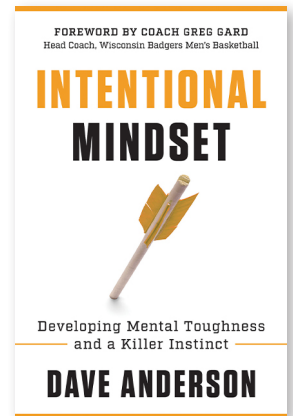


# Intentional Mindset

Developing Mental Toughness and a Killer Instinct

by **Dave Anderson**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

When we are not where we believe we should be in our lives, we can feel a sense of inspirational dissatisfaction nudging us toward something better, and more. This dynamic can create a mental tension where although we are grateful for what we have and have accomplished, we also sense that we can become better. In spite of this, we can too often display the same thinking and tendencies that year after year have held us back. If you are in this state from time to time, or feel stuck there now, you can move forward after you intentionally change how you think.

Just as improving a physique requires intentionality, consistency, time, evaluation, adjustments, and trade-offs, so too does changing and building a mindset that makes you continually superior in performance to your former self in life's most essential arenas. That is the essence and purpose behind *Intentional Mindset: Developing Mental Toughness and a Killer Instinct*. In it, Dave Anderson helps you become more intentional and less incidental when it comes to developing the killer instinct and mental toughness necessary to achieve your most essential goals.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The role killer instinct, mental toughness, and your WHY play in life
- The ten key success traits that are essential to building an intentional mindset
- The key aspects of each success trait
- How to continue your focus beyond the book

## Killer Instinct Gets You Started, Mental Toughness Helps You Finish

Think of killer instinct and mental toughness as the “one-two punch” that accelerates success and knocks out complacency, with killer instinct being the impetus that “gets you started” and mental toughness being the driving force that powers you to fight to the finish.

Deficient killer instinct and mental toughness are the core causes of achievement shortfalls most often attributed to conditions such as bad breaks, bad upbringing, wrong job, wrong boss, and more.

Unconscious complacency is an enemy of personal progress and growth. It gives stagnation a foothold in your life and can make the dreams you envision seem always out of reach or even impossible. An important first step to jumpstart or accelerate progress and growth begins with developing greater measures of killer instinct and mental toughness.

There are ten key success traits that are essential to building an intentional mindset that increases your killer instinct and mental toughness, which form the acronym ACCREDITED: attitude, competitiveness, character, rigor, effort, discipline, intelligence, tenacity, energy, and drive.

## The WHY Fuels the Way

When it comes to achieving bigger goals, having clear and compelling internal motivators that fuel killer instinct and build mental toughness is non negotiable. This is your WHY. It lays out what you want for yourself and who is counting on you to come through. It is more than your goals; it's all the reasons you want those goals.

## Attitude: Build a Stronger ABLE So You're Able to Go Stronger

The acronym ABLE represents attitude, body language, and energy. The thrust of ABLE is that attitude influences body language, and body language impacts energy levels. It all starts with attitude, which is defined as a settled way of thinking reflected in one's behaviors or one's prevailing outlook on life.

People with similar skills, knowledge, talent, and experience go through identical trials but choose to handle it in a completely different manner.

## Seven Key Aspects of Attitude

- 1. Responding well to negative things.** When negative things happen, instead of reacting quickly, take a few seconds to consider a more productive response, including a way to possibly benefit from it.
- 2. Not being easily offended.** Regard an offensive incident as not mattering enough to invite misery into your life by repeating it, responding to it improperly, avenging it, or dwelling on it. No one can offend you without your consent.
- 3. Demonstrate positive speech.** Words can inspire and words can destroy. Choose yours well.
- 4. Focus on what you can control.** What you give your attention to grows bigger. Don't waste time on things you cannot control or affect.
- 5. Maintain grace under stress.** Growth and maturity are shown in being able to experience negative or stressful emotions but not reacting to them.
- 6. Avoid blame and excuses.** Taking responsibility for your actions, your results, and your life can be uncomfortable but blame is the anti-focus. Excuses are the DNA of underachievers.
- 7. Make others feel better about themselves.** It takes a confident and secure person, and a selfless attitude, to shift one's thinking away from oneself and to build up others.

## Competitiveness: Go from Common Participant to Commonly Dominant

Within the context of Intentional Mindset, “competitiveness” is about competing with our former selves in a lifelong daily challenge for self-improvement in the ACCREDITED traits. The objective is to win victory over our former self. When you compete primarily with yourself, you continually raise your standards so that even if you fall short of your personal expectations, you blow away what others expected of you.

## Seven Key Aspects of Competitiveness

- 1. Today's attitude is superior to yesterday's.** Handle aspects of your attitude better with each new day than you did the day before.
- 2. Today's habits are superior to yesterday's.** Habits are behaviors that we repeat so often that

It isn't enough to know better.  
To grow, you must do better.

they are automatic. Building an intentional mindset is about developing the discipline to do more of the right things and the self-control to avoid what is unproductive.

- 3. Today's focus is superior to yesterday's.** It is vital that we consistently work to give attention to the activities and people that matter most.
- 4. Today's discipline is superior to yesterday's.** Discipline fuels habits and subordinates temporary feelings to a better future. The key is to prioritize your future over your feelings.
- 5. Today's knowledge is superior to yesterday's.** Enlarge your knowledge base and make yourself more valuable so you can add more value and achieve the valuables you have outlined in your WHY.
- 6. Today's drive, energy, and motivation is superior to yesterday's.** When your WHY is clear and compelling enough, you will be on fire from within. Provoke and channel drive. Clarify and embolden motivators. Feed and manage energy.
- 7. Today's results are superior to yesterday's.** The ultimate day would be one that sees fruit borne from past efforts, in addition to good seeds planted for future results.

When you build an intentional mindset, every day is more exciting, meaningful, challenging, and energizing than the day before. You approach each day not to get through it, but to gain from it, building the mental toughness and killer instinct you need to convert your most compelling WHY into a thrilling and fulfilling reality.

## Character: Cultivate a Rock-Solid Moral Code

Character can be defined as the moral and/or ethical traits that make up the individual nature of a person. Character is influenced by many things throughout our lives, but especially by our values and belief systems.

Strong character protects and helps leverage assets like talent, skills, knowledge, and experience. It ensures assets you have are applied rightly, with correct motives, even when life gets difficult or things do not go your way.

### Seven Key Aspects of Character

- 1. Be honest in words and deeds.** Honesty is about being truthful but also encompasses freedom from deceit. Telling half truths or giving false impressions pricks the conscience, too and a guilty conscience is a mindset massacre.
- 2. Accept responsibility.** Taking responsibility for your decisions, actions, results, and life allows you to learn and improve, build trust, and earn respect from others and yourself.
- 3. Keep commitments.** Strong character is about doing what you said you would when it is not easy, cheap, popular, or convenient to do so. If others continually discover they cannot count on you, they are prone to reconsider whether they need you at all.
- 4. Give complete effort at work.** You cannot afford to let yourself slack at your role because the stakes are too high. Doing less than you can eventually makes you less than you are.
- 5. Put others first.** Putting others' welfare above your own demonstrates a serving spirit that builds your own self-esteem and confidence.
- 6. Control your tongue.** Misspent words misuse energy and divert focus away from a *WHY* that matters most and onto a *what* that often means little or nothing.
- 7. Remain humble and teachable.** There is no way you will put in the time and effort to develop an intentional mindset if you do not see the need for improvement.

Character leverages your skills, knowledge, talent, and experience by helping you stay out of your own way so you

can maximize those assets. It isn't enough to know better. To grow, you must do better.

## Rigor: Design a Relentless Daily Regimen

Rigor applies to having a highly structured daily routine that allows you to get more of the right things done, both consistently and with excellence. An intentional mindset helps you purposefully identify and execute your priorities on a given day and consciously work to improve your ability to perform them.

The goal of rigor is to develop better routines in all key areas of life. Rigor compresses focus and energy into what matters most, every day. It fosters discipline and enables consistency.

### Key Aspects of Rigor

- 1. Schedule priorities in advance and successfully execute priorities.** Stop trying to squeeze your priorities into the day, and instead schedule your priorities and work the day around them.
- 2. Today's daily routine is more effective than yesterday's.** Underachievers spend much of their life living in "someday." The problem with residing there is it takes all the pressure off performing well today.
- 3. Make productive use of downtime and commute.** What you do in that time can make your WHY more attainable or create obstacles that can stall or reverse progress.
- 4. Budget time to improve.** Life does not improve by accident and learning, like so much that is worthwhile in life, cannot be left to chance. Set daily time aside to improve yourself.
- 5. Make time to add value to others.** Make time every day to encourage, equip, share, help, listen to, mentor, and coach other people. Adding value to others will challenge, stretch, and refine you in a way that makes you move valuable, too.

Rigor requires the killer instinct to embrace structure, follow processes, and attack your stated priorities each day. It also mandates mental toughness so that when things get tough during the day, or you get off track, you can remain tenacious and resilient and complete them regardless.

## Effort: Work Harder Smarter and Smarter Harder

People are fond of evaluating work ethic based on the number of hours or days they are at work instead of whether they are doing the most effective things intelligently and with vigor during those hours and days.

Working harder smarter means doing the right things with excellence and continually finding ways to improve them. Working smarter harder is about giving complete attention and effort to those high-impact activities, rather than doing them half-heartedly.

### Seven Key Aspects to Effort

- 1. Do all that you can without holding back.** This aspect pertains to bringing all that you can to your vocation day in and day out.
- 2. Execute the most essential tasks.** Effective execution is not just about getting a lot done, but getting the right things done. Doing more of the wrong things well, and often, cannot be declared as progress.
- 3. Raise your basis.** Your basis is any routine that, while productive, does not challenge you as much as it once did because you have mastered it. Raising your basis involves increasing the most productive activities within a routine.
- 4. Invest effort in growth.** Go beyond budgeting time to improve and give all you have to the time you budgeted.
- 5. Don't spend major time on minor things.** You must limit things that are prone to rob our time if we let them.
- 6. Say "no" to low-return things.** These can be former activities or bad habits you overlook, walk away from, and renounce or avoid altogether. Avoid what is unproductive whenever possible and escape when it is thrust upon you.
- 7. Give all-out effort in various life areas such as family and exercise.** Any area you want to improve in your life requires an intentional mindset just as it does at work. It's about getting from the moment, not just getting through it.

Working smarter harder and harder smarter is an intentional, richly rewarding lifestyle that endows the doer with levels

You will not grow or progress by repeating the same old stupid things. You can grow and progress doing new stupid things and learning from them.

of self-esteem, self confidence, killer instinct, and mental toughness that are unattainable to those content to do just enough or who occasionally extend themselves, but only when it suits them.

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## Discipline: Become a No-Nonsense Master of “No’ing”

Despite that discipline can sound like a punishing and restricting force that saps joy from your life, the opposite is true. In the context of this work, discipline can best be defined as an activity, regimen, or exercise that improves a skill, habit, or attitude.

Discipline is freedom, a morale builder, a bridge between where you are and where you aspire to be. No champion in any endeavor credited being undisciplined as their secret to success. A defined WHY makes it easier to know what to say “yes” or “no” to each day. “No” is a wonderful word, and highly disciplined people are “Masters of No’ing.”

### Key Aspects of Discipline

1. **Execute a pre-work mindset and/or exercise routine.** This can be as simple as reviewing your WHY, reading or reciting affirmations, examining the day’s priorities, or listening or reading to something inspirational or motivational. With exercise, it’s all about challenging yourself to finish strong and resist the urge to rack the weight early.
2. **Execute commitments regardless of how you feel.** When you don’t feel like executing key tasks or keeping other commitments but decide to do it nonetheless, you will feel even better about yourself than on the days you wanted to do them.
3. **Say “no” to shortcuts and instant gratification.** We are prone to repeat behaviors again and again until the wrong action has become a habit lethal to growth. Our actions have compounding effects, regardless of whether they are productive or unproductive.
4. **Spend less time with undisciplined “surf-**

**ing.”** Turning your head from an important task for just a moment can easily become an hour or even the entire day.

5. **Say “no” to excessive idle conversation and waiting/wishing/whining.** Limit or eliminate pursuing or listening to gossip, unmeaningful conversations, whining and complaining, or discussing personal problems with anyone the problem does not directly involve.
6. **Get off track less often than yesterday.** We all get off track from time to time. The challenge is to do it less often. The key to getting off the track less often is to be completely clear about what the track is in the first place.

Eliminate unproductive options to your downtime or daily routine to thus narrow your focus in a way that stimulates more discipline.

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## Intelligence: Grow Your Smarts Before Stupidity Starts

If we know what to do but fail to do it, we are not just being lazy, forgetful, or apathetic; what we are doing lacks common sense and is, thus, stupid! To grow your potential you must become more intentional about doing more of what you know, learning better ways to do it, and doing it consistently.

You will not grow or progress by repeating the same old stupid things. You can grow and progress doing new stupid things and learning from them. In fact, this ability is a mark of intelligence.

### Seven Key Aspects of Intelligence

1. **Acquire new knowledge** in an area relevant to improving your key life sectors like finances, relationships, health and fitness, or spirituality.
2. **Practice or improve skills.** Prioritize strengths you are making stronger and focus on secondary abilities you have that are not at skill level, working to upgrade them.

3. **Ask for feedback** with the humility, killer instinct, and mental toughness needed to do so.
4. **Act on feedback** with the intent to make it work, not prove someone else wrong.
5. **Execute your action plan** and priorities before, during, and after work.
6. **Try new things.** It makes one uncomfortable which is essential to growth.
7. **Learn from mistakes.** We can turn the cost of our mistakes into bargains when we grow because of them and convert what we learned from them into results.

If there were ever an area of life where “it takes two” is true, it would be in applying both aspects of intelligence: acquiring and applying skills and knowledge. You must not only apply what you know works, but must also leave your comfort zone, continue to learn better and more relevant things, and also apply those. The consistent application of what is no longer optimal is not going to get you to your WHY.

### Tenacity: Hone a Rock Hardheadedness

Knowing when to persist and when to change your methods or course will be in direct proportion to the sharpness of your WHY. The clearer you get about what you want and why you want it, the more prone you are to adhere to the disciplines and principles that will take you there and avoid or discard what will not.

#### Key Aspects of Tenacity

1. **Stay on track despite obstacles.** Engage your hardheadedness to return to the priority at hand, building your mental toughness, confidence, and resolve.
2. **Persist through tasks with excellence despite distractions.** When you have a setback, you still need to execute a priority and not do it casually or incompletely. You must do it very well.
3. **Keep going when you feel like quitting.** Set the bar high and expect more of yourself.
4. **Refuse to take “no” for an answer when pursuing a goal.** Learn from rejection, mentally regroup, and take another shot.
5. **Have encouraging self-talk.** What you say to yourself influences tenacity or surrender, confidence

or compromise, drive or defeat.

When you feel stuck in the middle of a long and tough journey, you may not be able to see how or when you can possibly finish, but you don’t have to know that much or see that far. All you need to see is how to get to the next step in front of you. And then choose to take that step. Then repeat. That is tenacity.

### Energy: Fuel a Fanatical Focus and Fight to the Finish

Energy provides the physical stamina to remain productive for the duration, and the mental fortitude to stay locked in and engaged so you can think clearly and execute well during the process. It is essential to become a more intentional daily manager of your physical and mental energy. This begins with your morning mindset routine and persists through the rituals, challenges, objectives, tasks, problems, and opportunities each day presents.

#### Key Aspects of Energy

1. Increase mental strength by building and guarding your mind throughout the day.
2. Don’t engage in evening activities that drain your energy tomorrow.
3. Stay mentally locked into the tasks that matter most by refusing the bait of distraction.
4. Power through when physically tired without “resting” at work.
5. Eat energizing food and stay hydrated.

When it comes to building, replenishing, and managing your daily energy levels, decide in which life areas your current habits or tendencies are your biggest foes. Be intentional and create a simple and workable action plan to address your self-afflictions.

### Drive: Become a Driven Driver, Not a Driver Who’s Driven

A “driven driver” is one whose motivation comes from within and powers them to drive toward their WHY daily. On the other hand, a “driver who’s driven” is one who must be prodded, cajoled, bribed, threatened, or otherwise motivated by outside forces. Drive can be considered a baseline

killer instinct. While drive prompts you to attack opportunities, especially those that come your way, killer instinct motivates you to seek out or make those opportunities.

### Seven Key Aspects of Drive

- 1. Do a quality job of reviewing your WHY.** Don't miss the impact that comes with visualizing each element of your WHY and strengthening the emotional connection that takes you from merely reading the goal to seeing and feeling it.
- 2. Choose and review your landing place.** Your landing place is your guard against getting off track. It is your couple of key priorities for that day that give you a place to come back to if you deviate off course.
- 3. Don't require external motivation.** You cannot control whether you get noticed, complemented, rewarded, or applauded. If you are dependent on it, you are turning the motivational keys of your life over to people and things beyond your control, which is a recipe for personal powerlessness.
- 4. Focus enough on the goals that matter most.** It requires significant discipline and mental intentionality to set aside or subordinate what is good or great to pursue relentlessly the goals that matter most.
- 5. Focus enough on what you can control.** Giving time, energy, and focus to aspects of life you cannot control dampens your drive because feelings of helplessness and powerlessness ensue.
- 6. Feel unstoppable despite conditions.** Tough conditions can cause you to take a shortcut, give up, enroll in the blame game, or lose emotional control. Rise to

the challenge, power on, remain unfazed, and execute priorities with excellence despite adverse conditions.

- 7. Avoid undriven people and drive-draining activities.** The thinking of an undriven person is a bad or wrong fit for anyone wanting to develop their killer instinct and become more mentally tough. Undriven people may make you feel worse about yourself, mock or put down your efforts because it makes them feel uncomfortable, or fill your head with unproductive nonsense.

Identify drive-draining activities or people that you need to limit your time with or avoid altogether. Decide on a substitute activity to put in their place. Remember that even trading in ten minutes per day of drive-drainers for something more productive compounds substantially over a lifetime.

### The ACCREDITED Course: Tailor Your Ten Weeks

If you choose, you can continue your journey to accelerate your mental toughness and killer instinct by taking the ACCREDITED course. In it, you will spend one week developing and evaluating each of the ten ACCREDITED traits discussed in *Intentional Mindset*, focusing on the key aspects of each trait and you will evaluate your daily performance using a progress report found on the Learn to Lead site.

As is true with so much of your life that determines your future, what you do from here is your choice. With an intentional mindset you will raise your basis, narrow your focus, subordinate your feelings to your future, and add both years to your life and life to your years.



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