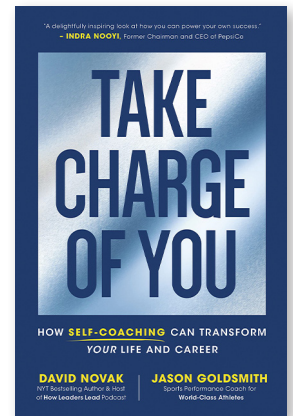


Take Charge of You

How Self-Coaching Can Change Your Life and Your Career

by David Novak and Jason Goldsmith



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Everyone wants to find success in their life and career. The question is how to get there. Many coaches won't tell you that you can actually *coach yourself* to success. The importance of good coaching has been studied and written about for some time now. It can help people see themselves and their experiences more clearly, respond to situations more effectively, expand their knowledge and capabilities, and help them define what they need to do and stay on track. Good coaching can help them reach more of their potential and become the best they can be. Yet, despite all the known benefits, good coaching doesn't seem to be practiced all that much.

The need is clear. There are a lot of people out there that don't like their jobs, are launching their own businesses, opting for freelance and gig work more often, and working remotely. All of this means many are without a manager or mentor on hand to act as their coach. In ***Take Charge of You: How Self-Coaching Can Transform Your Life and Career***, David Novak and Jason Goldsmith show you how to take the responsibility for coaching into your own hands and give yourself what you need to succeed, grow, and lead a more fulfilling life. It's time to *take charge of you* and learn how to self-coach.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- 4 key questions to ask yourself to start a self-coaching conversation.
- How to develop a self-coaching mindset.
- Transformational insights for your self-coaching plan.
- 3 strategies to keep you committed to your Single Biggest Thing.

The Self-Coaching Conversation

Ask Yourself Some Key Questions

If you are interested in this topic, it probably means that you are searching for something. Perhaps you are not fully satisfied with how things are going in your career or your life. Maybe there's a goal you'd like to reach or an issue you'd like to resolve, but you're not quite sure how to get there. Or maybe you're pretty happy but want to continually up your game.

It's situations like these where a good coach can really come in handy—to help you gain perspective, develop a plan, work through the inevitable hurdles, and provide inspiration and motivation to see things through. So that the growth and change you're looking for can become more than just a hope or desire. So that it can take shape and become reality.

If you're going to coach yourself through all that, where do you start? Coaching starts with a conversation. You have to get to know the person you're coaching—about who they are, what they want, what they believe is getting in their way.

With that in mind, you will be guided through a kind of conversation with yourself so we can begin to do two important things that will be key to your self-coaching journey:

1. Gain a better understanding of how best to coach the unique individual that is you.
2. Figure out what we will be coaching toward.

Key Question #1: What's Getting in the Way of Your Joy?

Many of us are in the habit of ignoring or pushing past our feelings, especially when they are unhappy ones like misery, or even feeling stuck or uninspired. But we can also look at feelings as simply a source of information about ourselves.

They can help us gain insight into what's going wrong or what's going right in our lives, whether we're on the right track or headed in the wrong direction. With that in mind, we will start with the particular feeling of *joy*.

Why start with joy?

It may sound like an impractical or unsubstantial word, but think about the difference between doing something *because you have to* and doing something *because you want to*.

Those *have-tos* are the things we often complain about, rush through, get to only after a lot of procrastination, or avoid altogether when possible. The *want tos* are the things we

willingly make time for, can't wait to do, and put our best effort towards because we enjoy them so much.

In terms of an organizing principle for continual growth and development, pursuing joy will lead you to be more successful.

You need to find your Joy Blockers.

Key Question #2: What Would Grow Your Joy Personally and Professionally?

You probably have a natural sense of what joy means to you. Researchers who study joy generally define it as an intense positive feeling. It's high energy and exuberant. People who love what they do feel energized by it. People who don't feel the opposite.

Joy has an energy to it, one that can snowball, leading to more and more things you find yourself driven to do. So as you explore this second question, keep the definition of joy in mind. It's not just about what makes you happy, but what makes you feel energized and alive. You need to find your Joy Builders.

Key Question #3: What's the Single Biggest Thing You Can Imagine That Would Grow Your Joy Personally or Professionally?

This question is about choosing a destination that we will be coaching you toward. To answer it, you are going to use the work you have done examining your Joy Blockers and Joy Builders.

And then, when considering all those joy related things, this question becomes about focus and selection: Which one thing will bring you the most joy—that's your **Single Biggest Thing (SBT)**. That's the destination we will coach you toward.

Your SBT should feel big, important, impactful, even aspirational. There is a difference between setting a goal and choosing a destination.

A goal might be to lose five pounds or get into the habit of exercising five times a week. The destination might be to improve your overall health to the point where you feel like you're living your best life.

So allow yourself to think big, think boldly, and see where it takes you.

Key Question #4: What Would It Mean if You Accomplished Your Single Biggest Thing?

It is so important to love what you do and to show that each

People think of a coach as the person with all the answers, but a good coach is really more of a seeker.

and every day. How much better would life be if you did? Create a picture of your own that describes what it would be like to achieve what you want most in life.

The Self-Coaching Mindset

Open Yourself Up to Growth

Self-coaching requires adopting a new way of thinking that we call the *coaching mindset*. A *coaching mindset* is when your mind is open to whatever is going to drive your growth or performance. That means avoiding the trap of preconceived notions of prejudging what's going to happen.

Instead, you want to be continually searching for the next insight that's going to move you forward and closer to your destination.

People think of a coach as the person with all the answers, but a good coach is really more of a seeker. Seeking knowledge to better understand the people you coach (even when it's you) and the things that impact them is how coaches come up with new ideas, insights, and innovations that can help.

In many ways what you're trying to do as a coach is keep your mind open enough to continue that conversation you started with yourself earlier. You want to be flexible in your thinking and ready to explore, rather than believing you already have the answers to how you're going to accomplish your Single Biggest Thing—or even if it's possible.

When we set out to achieve something, especially something big, there are a lot of things that can get in the way or send us off course. Our own minds may be the biggest culprit. That's why adopting a coaching mindset early in this process is crucial to your success going forward.

There are four key aspects of a coaching mindset. To be a good coach, you have to know how to draw on your capacity for:

- 1. Belief:** knowing you can do it, even if you've never done it before
- 2. Neutrality:** belief paired with an ability to suspend judgment long enough to search for the insights you need to make good decisions
- 3. Awareness:** an ability to become conscious of what your mind is focused on at any given moment and an ability to shift that focus where you want it to go
- 4. Self-knowledge:** knowing yourself is crucial to your growth and development

The Self-Coaching Plan

Uncover Transformational Insights

Having a destination is not the same as knowing how to get there. What do you do first? What do you do next? What could stand in your way? These are the kinds of insights you need in order to figure out how to get from where you are now to where you want to go.

Make Sure Your Destination is Purposeful

First things first, take another look at your SBT and see how it holds up against the values and purpose you defined for yourself. If it doesn't hold up, that should provide some insight into where you have work to do.

The key thing here is to make sure—to the best of your abilities with what you know right now—that the destination you will be working toward is worth your time and effort.

Sometimes we set our sights on something because it's what we think we should be doing or because someone else thinks it's what we should accomplish. That kind of destination is going to be a lot harder to reach than one that feels purposeful and brings your joy along the way.

Learn to Ask for Insights

One of the best tactics you can use to start gaining insights into how to reach your destination is to ask for them from people who have done something similar or simply from people you admire and respect. Collecting outside opinions is a great place to start when you're not sure what to do next.

What to Do with Unwanted Insights

Just because you ask someone for their insights doesn't mean you have to take their advice or adopt their opinions. No one except you can decide whether the advice is good or worth following.

If you find yourself having doubts or even getting upset about an insight someone has shared, remember your coaching mindset and take some time to become more aware.

Be curious about your reaction rather than just rejecting the insight outright. Are you feeling that way because it wasn't the right advice for you? Or is there something else getting in the way of accepting sound advice?

Become an Avid Learner

You can still gain insights from others even when you can't ask them directly for advice. Avid learners who are constantly on the lookout for new ideas and insights and consult a wide range of sources to find them.

Understand How Your Mind Might Not Be Helping You Succeed

To reach your destination, you also need insight into how to tackle any roadblocks that stand in your way. The roadblocks are going to be different for everyone, but no matter what you encounter, the signal that something could be getting in your way will often begin as a feeling. Or it may come to you as a kind of voice in your head. These are roadblocks and know that they are coming.

Learn to Listen to Yourself

The clue that something in your head is getting in your way will sometimes be obvious and other times be quite subtle.

The first thing to do when you pick up one of these clues is simply to pause and accept it. This can be challenging, but it's also essential to building the kind of self-knowledge needed to discover how and when your own mind might be getting in the way.

When we are aware and intentional about our thoughts and actions, it is possible to change our perspective about what's getting in our way.

The Self-Coaching Journey

Take Insightful Action

The path to achieving something new will always be a

question mark until we walk it. So what do we do with that question mark?

We can start by admitting we won't have all the answers up front and we don't need to. It's not a reason to get stuck or hold ourselves back. Instead we can take action to move ourselves forward, step by step, in spite of not having all the answers.

But that doesn't mean taking action for action's sake. It's an important distinction. We want to take *insightful actions*; that is, actions that are both informed and inspired. As you take action toward achieving your Single Biggest Thing, strive for a balance between the two: information and inspiration.

That balance is about having your feet on the ground and your head in the clouds at the same time. You can't achieve anything new unless you have some of both.

Define Your Current Reality

Before you start plotting your journey, make sure you have a clear view of where you're starting from—your current reality. Some steps on your path will be more joyful than others, but doing big things takes hard work and sometimes requires trade-offs.

When you know where you are and you know where you want to go (that's your SBT), then the task becomes about plotting the route from here to there.

Bring Your Focus Down to What to Do Next

Setting an SBT can be overwhelming. Your list of goals and the roadmap you have begun to create may feel long, incomplete, and even messy at this point.

If you try to think about all the things you have to do all at once, it can lead to confusion, distress, or even cause a shutdown because there's too much to consider.

A more effective approach is to simplify focus on the process. Focus on the next step you need to take to move closer to your destination.

Track Your Progress

As a self-coach, you're going to have to track progress for yourself. The process is going to be different depending on the kind of destination you're aiming for, but it's crucial for two very important reasons:

1. Tracking progress shows you what's working and what isn't so you can course correct or take more

It's not difficult to do some real damage to our belief in ourselves if we don't learn to manage those negative voices in our heads.

effective actions in the future.

2. Tracking progress provides inspiration and motivation because when you can see yourself making progress, it makes your far-away destination feel more real and attainable.

Learn How to Talk to Yourself

Inspiration is essential to helping sustain yourself on what could be a long and challenging journey. That's why it's important to be conscious of how we talk to ourselves about what we do and our efforts to be successful.

We can send ourselves off course more easily than many of us realize. It's not difficult to do some real damage to our belief in ourselves if we don't learn to manage those negative voices in our heads.

The Self-Coaching Habit

Commit to Constant Improvement

No process is worth very much if it isn't sustainable. You need to keep yourself motivated, on track, and moving forward as you continue to coach yourself to your Single Biggest Thing, and then on to greater and greater heights.

Making a consistent effort so often makes the difference in our success. Even the best-conceived ideas, dreams, goals, plans, and strategies mean very little if you don't follow through with them.

Build in Positive Motivation

Too many people leave their motivation up to chance. They wake up in the morning, think about how they're feeling, and act accordingly. But guess what? If you do that, there are going to be days when you just don't feel like it—whatever it is to you in that moment. Leaving your motivation up to chance guarantees there will be times when you don't follow through.

That's because motivation doesn't just happen. Contrary to popular belief, it isn't something you just wake up and

will yourself to have. If you have trouble staying motivated from time to time, that doesn't make you weak—it makes you human.

If you want to stay motivated, it works best if you build that motivation into your process. That way you can't help but feel motivated to keep pursuing your SBT, even when things get tough or when your energy or belief wanes.

There are three strategies you should put in place before you need them to help sustain your motivation. Don't wait until you have a bad day or a setback to do these. Do them now so that when rough patches come—and they will come—you have strategies in place to turn to.

Strategy 1: Remind Yourself What Matters

It can be really easy to get caught up in the day-to-day minutia of what we need to do and where we need to go, thereby losing track of big-picture things like our SBT, our purpose, and the values that really matter to us. That's why, wherever and whenever possible, we believe it's important to surround ourselves with reminders of these things.

Take charge by building a motivational space. Pick a spot that you look at often and place there a card with your SBT written on it, as well as ones with your purpose and values. That will keep these things top of mind. Pictures, awards, notes, and anything that holds value to you works, too. Visit this place often, not just on difficult days when motivation needs a boost.

Strategy 2: Connect with Your Future Vision

Paint a picture for yourself of what it would mean to accomplish your SBT. Visualize what your future would look like if your SBT happened and imagine how it would make you feel. Pay particular attention to what you think it will feel like to succeed. Then ask yourself how you can bring a bit of that feeling into your life on a daily basis.

Despite the fact that our culture tends to prioritize our logical side over our emotional one, it is our feelings that tend to motivate us more often than facts. So pay attention to your feelings, and make an effort to be more intentional

about cultivating the positive ones that will keep you motivated over the long term.

Take charge by choosing how you want to feel today. First thing in the morning, ask yourself, “How do I want to feel today?” Maybe the answer is similar to feelings such as joyful, playful, connected, or grateful. You get to decide with whatever comes to mind.

Set an intention to bring that feeling into your day as much as possible. To get started, ask yourself: What’s one thing I can do today to feel this way? Make an effort to do that one thing. And then do another and another after that.

Keep coming back to your intention throughout the day, and look for ways to cultivate that feeling. Make this a daily practice, every morning, and see what happens.

Strategy 3: Go Public

Going public is a tactic that makes your goals, large and small, feel more urgent and keep them top of mind. You can go public by telling people what you want to do and asking them to hold you accountable for doing it.

It changes our thinking when we know someone is watching our progress. And when our belief or energy wanes, drawing on others can help us get it back.

It does matter, however, who you share with.

While it’s not always possible to anticipate people’s reactions, it’s best not to share with someone who is going to undermine your intentions or someone who researchers describe as “lower status”—meaning their opinion isn’t that important to you.

This is a good place to draw on that self-knowledge you’ve been developing throughout this process and consider what you need most to get and stay motivated. We are not all the same and we do not have the same motivational needs, so remember that as you consider who to confide in. What would resonate most for you? Ask yourself what you really need to sustain your motivation.

Take charge by sharing your intention. Identify at least one person you can confide in about your SBT. Consider what you now know about the subject, as well as your self-knowledge, and make sure you choose someone who is likely to be motivating to you personally. Reach out today and ask the person to check in with you regularly about your progress as you work toward your SBT.

A Word About Procrastination

We all have a tendency to procrastinate at some point or another. Procrastination is often thought of as a time-management issue, but research suggests it’s more often an emotional-management issue.

Some of the most common reason people procrastinate are:

- **Confusion:** You are not clear about what you need to do or how to do it.
- **Discomfort:** What you need to do feels scary, boring, difficult, or unpleasant in some way that makes you want to avoid it.
- **Distraction:** Perhaps because you are feeling confused or uncomfortable, or simply because of the overstimulated way in which most of us live our lives today, what you need to do gets lost or buried under a mountain of other things.

The more you can avoid the feeling of procrastination, the better off you will be. Of course, that’s not always possible, so the following tip will help you when you find yourself already in a procrastinating state of mind.

It’s called the Five-Second Rule, and it’s adapted from a bestselling book of the same name by Mel Robbins. It’s pretty simple: If you notice yourself procrastinating, then you must act on what you’re procrastinating about within five seconds. Count 5-4-3-2-1-GO! And then start doing whatever you have the instinct to do first.

Choose the first thing in mind and then start doing it. Not only does this help move you from procrastination, but it also helps build momentum—because action tends to lead to more action!

As a final word, here is something that can take your success to a new level: *Coach others the way you have learned to coach yourself.* You can get even more out of the coaching skills you practice by applying them to more than just yourself.

Knowing how to coach yourself is invaluable for your own growth, but it is also the first step in being able to provide wisdom and inspiration for others to succeed. As you take charge of you, use what you have learned in service of others.



Jason Goldsmith emphasizes combining the mental and physical aspects of optimal performance. As founder of Goldsmith Performance, Jason has coached multiple Major champions and numerous top-fifty golfers.

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