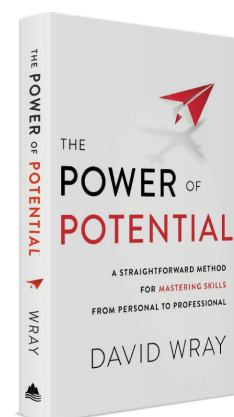


# The Power of Potential

A Straightforward Method for Mastering Skills  
from Personal to Professional

by **David Wray**



## Contents

Identifying Which Skill to Model

Page 2

Developing a First Draft Model

Page 3

A Moment to Dream

Page 3

Reaching Your Destination

Page 4

Don't Stop Now

Page 4

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We've all seen a talented individual in action and secretly wished we could achieve as easily and effortlessly as they seem to do. Well, you can! You can replicate any skill, as long as you understand both the visible and invisible workings that an expert utilizes when 'doing their thing.'

*The Power of Potential* is built around the idea that expertise and excellence isn't about luck or simply natural talent, but unlocking a defined system for identifying skills to model, laying the groundwork for development, choosing the right experts to emulate, and cultivating your skills over time.

Through this summary, you'll learn all about the seen and unseen ways that experts become smarter, better, more effective, and less given to insecurity and delays in their development. By the end, you'll have unlocked the power of your own potential—and discovered actionable tips for continuing your journey towards the top of the experts pile.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to identify the invisible processing through which an individual's world-view influences their actions.
- Unlock your ability to master the skills you really want and need.
- The real but invisible process of receiving information and reacting to it, even when we react to the same event differently each time.
- The tools necessary to harness these inner systems to your advantage.

## Identifying Which Skill to Model

Narrowing the process of skill development into specific areas of expertise spotlights several important interconnected aspects of the modeling process.

- Knowledge and insights are most likely to result from identifying and using a specific moment in time with each expert, which you will be selecting next
- Learning can be accelerated by focusing on a more specialized subject area. Don't be afraid to dig deep.
- Interconnected activities and micro-moments influence outcomes, even when it's not immediately apparent.
- Gaps in understanding the process, left unresolved, can negatively impact the likelihood of acquiring the desired skills.
- Ancillary skill development can be useful with regard to broader developmental objectives

## Laying the Groundwork for Your First Challenge

Now that you've identified your specific area of mastery, it's time to find experts to emulate. At its core, modeling is the process of identifying, codifying, and replicating excellence. When modelling, you should choose your expert mentors according to a few key themes that will determine their effectiveness for you:

- Your own objective assessment of an expert's skill level
- Expert's availability and time commitment
- Expert's openness to exploring the process in detail
- Expert's willingness to be gently focused by the interview
- Your personal ability to develop quick connections
- Your own comfort level with an 'I don't know what I don't know' attitude

## Choosing Your Experts

At this stage, the question arises of how many experts and aspiring experts to choose for developing a model. A good minimum number is five— three experts and two aspiring/ in-training experts.

Choosing more experts than needed will give you flexibility in the event that an expert backs out of their commitment.

Once you've selected potential experts, it's time to make

first contact using the method of the five Ws— who, what, when, where, why.

By this point, you have hopefully connected with your experts, delivered a crisp and clear message, finalized your participant list, and established a contingency plan.

## Preparing to Interview

When it comes to preparing for an interview with an expert you hope to incorporate into your model, there are seven key preparatory steps:

- Establishing a meeting time and place
- Outlining the meeting
- Recognizing your 'chosen moment' process steps (the moment when you'll obtain maximum value from the interview)
- Adapting to your expert's needs (knowing your expert)
- Making a mental road map of your objectives
- Organization your information collection method
- Knowing and managing yourself (preparing based on your own specific needs)

By this point you should be in a perfect position to conduct an interview in a way that will extract the greatest value for everyone involved!

## Conducting Your Interviews

Conducting successful interviews with experts depends on understanding the following five key concepts:

- The importance of rapport and how to develop and maintain it
- How the Personality Map (PM) can be used to get an outside-in look at how an expert masterfully performs
- The types of questions most likely to elicit relevant information from experts for subsequent use in the first draft model
- The TATE Model: A useful and structured method for organization the skill process
- An applied example of a TATE model

Our next step is to integrate all of this information gathered from the experts into a first draft model, one which you'll hone and develop into what will become your final draft model and which will serve as your guide to developing the skills and expertise you're seeking.

## Developing a First Draft Model

So, here you are, poised with your stack of notes, or your app with annotated notes, or digitally recorded files from each interview. What comes next?

The goal is to integrate the interview notes into a crisp and practical draft model. It's often easier to work backward rather than forward, so start with the end in mind. You need to create the model with a view to ensuring you are inherently addressing the following basic questions or objectives:

What are you seeking to achieve (or help others achieve)?

Who are you doing it for?

Why does it matter?

How do you plan to organize the process steps?

### Closing the Gaps

Closing the gaps between the first draft and the final version of your skill model involves road-testing the draft model, and learning how to identify and eliminate or reduce differences identified. There are two ways to do this:

Observe the expert in action performing the skill concerned

Perform a walk-through of the draft process model with each expert

Observation is typically the best method, because you not only see the perfect model in action, but there's also no filter (other than any inherent observational bias). You're seeing the skill you hope to model in its purest form.

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## Developing a Final Model

With gaps identified and dealt with, the final model is ready for development. The easiest starting point in this phase is to update and extend the process flow diagram, using the additional insights gained from the live walk-through (or second interview).

Specifically, look for distinct teaching moments for yourself within the walk-through. These reflective teachable moments serve three purposes:

To identify any residual skill steps that may not have surfaced beforehand during the expert interviews or walk-throughs

To reach 'in the moment' skill readiness. The more prac-

tical, the more effective it will prove in practice

To start shifting focus toward cementing the quiet confidence, the kind of confidence that draws the desired skill outcome to you and keeps it there

### Understanding Motivators and Styles

People have different motivations for pursuing skills and expertise. Generally, these fall into one of three categories, or somewhere along the spectrum between them. Consider which one describes you best, keeping in mind that you may not fall perfectly into a single category.

Are you a **Graduator**, who is a relatively conservative change agent looking to identify problems and achieve a desired outcome?

Are you a **Renovator**, who is a pragmatic agent of change looking to apply their skills to solving real problems they see in their life, work, and industry?

Are you a **Disruptor**, someone who wants to develop skills that will allow them to transform entire industries and maybe even the world?

The motivation behind your pursuit of your skills will help you determine the best path forward.

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## A Moment to Dream

Let's take a moment to apply a technique used by Walt Disney and countless others to turn their dreams into plans and their plans into reality.

First, choose three locations nearby your home or office. These should be places that are easily accessible. The first location is to dream, the second location is to plan, and the third location is to critique your plan.

### Dream

Step into your chosen location to dream and connect with your feelings of dreaming freely. Bring the big picture of your desired skill into your dream space. See yourself living vividly and without limitations, using an anything-is-possible attitude.

### Plan

Step into the location you chose for planning, then connect your dream to a concrete plan. Believe that your dream is fully realizable, and define a plan that will make it happen.

## Critique

With a plan in mind, step into the critique location and connect with your on-fire moment here. Take time to poke holes in your plan (not the dream, but the plan to achieve it) and see whether there is a better path forward.

## Prioritizing Your Focus

With your plan defined, it's time to address the next questions: With so many moving parts, where do you start first? What should you prioritize and how do you make that decision? If you can't do it all, what then? Are there any shortcut tricks that will accelerate the outcome?

Align your dream with your plan to develop a powerful visual motivator for the generative outcome you seek. If you don't have these plans yet, choose an example or make up your own for a relatively quick self-improvement activity.

## Reaching Your Destination

So, how do you know you've reached your destination and mastered your skill? Here are some typical criteria you (and people you trust) can use to assess where you stand.

Consistently successful performance: a track record of high and reliable performance of the skill in the past

Depth and breadth of implied knowledge, such as the ability to identify patterns and relationships between things, the ability to see things others cannot, the ability to anticipate outcomes, understanding complex concepts or systems, and making the complex simple.

Peer recognition and respect: being seen by experts in the field as an expert yourself. Getting expert attention may be

challenging; however, the power of social media can turn this around

Experience: the period over which the skill has been performed, typically measured in years. Generally, the longer a skill has been performed, the more perfected it is. Also consider the frequency of skill application, not just the number of years

Self-reflective: Experts can pinpoint their latest mistake in agonizing detail, typically because it eats away at them.

Credentials: Experts commonly hold professional certifications or licensing

## Don't Stop Now

Now, how do you turn your mastered skills into a lifetime as a change champion? Change champions are individuals who:

Understand and acknowledge the need and reasons for change as well as the ecosystem impacts that will result

Set clear outcomes that are accomplished via the planned changes

Understand and plan for things that may work for or against their journey

The possibilities are infinite and you can make a difference now! And, perhaps most crucially, have fun doing it!



For over twenty years, David Wray has been a passionate transformation and change management executive. He has worked with Fortune 100 companies and individuals throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Seeing firsthand how many people struggle—and often give up—while trying to learn new skills, he wondered why some manage it almost effortlessly. During this quest to understand the “differences that make a difference”, he discovered their secrets.

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