

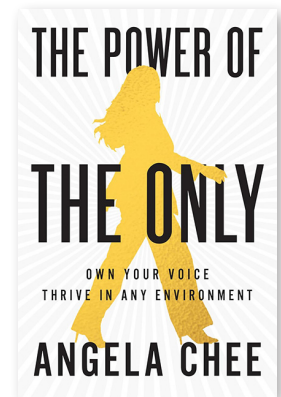


Executive Book Summaries®

The Power of the Only

Own Your Voice, Thrive in Any Environment

by **Angela Chee**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

If you've ever felt the strain of being "the Only" in the room—the only woman, person of color, unconventional thinker, or outsider by background or experience, you surely know that sense of difference can create self-doubt, silence strong ideas, and limit visibility. Too often, people who feel they do not fully belong hold back, despite a desire to communicate with confidence and make a greater impact.

The Power of the Only: Own Your Voice, Thrive in Any Environment reframes this challenge as an advantage. It is a practical, reflective roadmap for transforming uniqueness into strength rather than liability. Through structured exercises, real-world stories, and research-backed guidance, readers learn how to reframe limiting beliefs, communicate with clarity, and step forward with confidence. At the core are five principles that help individuals recognize their inherent power, articulate their voice, and focus on thriving rather than merely fitting in.

Written by Angela Chee, an award-winning former television news anchor, media and communication coach, keynote speaker, and host of *The Power of the Only* podcast, the book draws on more than two decades in media and leadership development. Chee blends her experience as a pioneering Asian American woman in broadcast journalism with insights from CEOs, founders, creatives, and everyday professionals, to create a practical guide to leadership, visibility, and authentic influence.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

- Learn how to reframe being "the Only" as a strategic advantage
- Build confidence by recognizing and owning your existing strengths
- Develop a clear, authentic voice and improve communication with clarity, presence, and connection
- Shift from survival mode to long-term growth and leadership impact

INTRODUCTION

The Power of the Only

The Power of the Only is seeing, understanding, and feeling what others don't. It's leveraging this unique perspective to achieve your goals and create change for yourself and others. It is cultivated through years of navigating challenges and unfamiliar situations as an Only—whether you are the only woman, person of color, LGBTQ individual, neurodivergent professional, or the lone voice in the room who sees things differently and seeks to shift the status quo, break through barriers, and create something new.

When you step into this power, you know the value you bring to every interaction. You don't second-guess yourself. You know what you want and don't want, what you are willing to do and what you are not, and you don't accept that these decisions are unavailable to you. You will thrive in any environment and be the bridge builder for the next generation of leaders, ideas, and innovation. But where does this power come from?

It's already inside us. You already have everything you need. If you are an Only, all the things that may have been challenging in the past, such as the act of hitting barriers and either breaking through them, going around them, or forging a new path, are what have helped shape you to see beyond, understand, navigate, process, empathize, and innovate. Your power is already inside you waiting; all you have to do is tap into it.

Growing up as the only Chinese American girl around taught me how to navigate conversations, be comfortable, and connect with different groups. Working in competitive industries like Hollywood and TV news helped me hone my skills and know how to be seen and heard, despite others telling me it would be too hard. When I was younger, I felt like I had to hide parts of myself; now, I am comfortable in my skin. It took time and various experiences to step into who I am. Once I truly embraced being an Only, it started to make a difference in my life.

The Five Principles of the Power of the Only

To harness the Power of the Only, we must break through barriers, both internal and external. We must see what those barriers are, understand where they came from, and redefine them so that they are no longer obstacles but strengths.

Through my research, experience, and years of interviewing individuals who have stepped into their strength and thrived, I've identified five guiding principles for doing the same:

1. Own your opportunity
2. Own your power
3. Own your voice
4. Own your communication
5. Own your future

PRINCIPLE 1

Own Your Opportunity

Owning your opportunity isn't just saying yes to the opportunities in front of you; it's also showing up when others say there are no options. You don't listen to the limiting messages from society, the "You can't do this," or "You shouldn't do that." You see what is possible and believe you can achieve it.

For my whole life, I was taught to be grateful and not make a fuss. It was the built-in template of my immigrant parents.

All of us have a set of internal rules that shape our decisions, feelings, and, ultimately, our lives. These rules can be influenced by our families, life experiences, workplaces, and communities. And sometimes, these rules can block us from our true potential.

Despite all the logical, personal, external, and probably very good reasoning as to why you didn't own your opportunity in the past, you *can* change and learn to navigate your reality with the goal of owning your opportunities in the future. You don't have to be on television or be an award-winning filmmaker. Everyone deserves to own their unique and desired opportunity, whatever it may be.

To own *your* opportunity, you must first acknowledge that some circumstances are not your fault and that you can't fix everything. When you can see that situations are not always in your control but don't internalize this lack of control as a personal flaw, you can more easily access your power and move forward.

Then, you must reframe your challenges. When you understand where your barriers are coming from, you can honor your past, see it as a gift, and use it as fuel for the future. But most importantly, you must view being an Only not as a burden, but as the most important opportunity that you own. Having the ability to navigate diverse perspectives and serve as a bridge builder is a true superpower.

Recognize It's Not All Your Fault

As Onlys, there will be barriers that aren't our fault. For some, these challenges may be cultural; you may have a lan-

True worth comes from being
in alignment with yourself.

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guage barrier or be restricted by cultural norms. Maybe you are ruled by family values or parental expectations. Others may face economic or social barriers that can limit access to opportunities. Systemic injustices like discrimination and gender inequality can also play a role. It's important to recognize your true value and realize that there's not always something to fix or prove.

Sometimes, you may feel a bit exhausted and feel like no matter how hard you try, it's not enough or there's another level to break through. It may take longer to own your opportunities than others if they don't have to overcome the same hurdles you do. These obstacles can slow you down, but you don't have to let them stop you. To own our opportunity, we first need to take a deeper look at where these external and internal barriers come from and what is ours to carry.

Once you have acknowledged the barriers in your life—internal, external, or both—you can create your own story. You don't have to accept what has come before. It's time to challenge the status quo and redefine power and success on your own terms.

Reframe Your Challenges as Power

Reframing your challenges is shifting your perspective, honoring your past, and embracing all your experiences as stepping stones to growth and empowerment.

We may have taken on barriers from society, our families, and the media; however, we have the agency to control what we take in, what we keep, and what we let go of. To reframe your challenges as power, mine your past challenges for insights, honor your history and the challenges it presents, and embrace those challenges fully to own your opportunities and move forward with abundance and power.

By embracing your challenges or what you once viewed as roadblocks, you can step more fully into your true self. This shift not only cultivates a more positive and resilient mindset but also empowers you to own your opportunity with confidence and perseverance. The process of enduring and overcoming these challenges reveals your true capabilities, fostering a sense of self-assurance and strength.

By appreciating your struggles, setbacks, and barriers, you transform them into powerful lessons that fuel your growth.

This mindset allows you to continuously learn, evolve, and thrive, ensuring that you not only recognize but also fully own the opportunities that come your way. In doing so, you become the architect of your own success, turning every challenge into a stepping stone.

See Being an Only as an Opportunity, Not a Burden

Progress in society's efforts to make change in many areas is slow and often comes up short. That's why it's more important than ever to view being an Only not as a burden, but as a unique opportunity to create meaningful change. By embracing this perspective, we can leverage our distinct voices and experiences to affect change where it matters most.

Do you wonder why it's your responsibility to step up, explain yourself, and educate others? I often hear from Onlys about being disillusioned and tired of running into the same persistent roadblocks.

I believe the very reasons some might view being an Only as a burden—not feeling like you fit in, being isolated, or facing discrimination and microaggressions—are the same reasons why it's more important than ever to own our opportunity and create change, not just for ourselves, but for others.

Having someone with a distinct perspective in the room and fostering diverse perspectives are essential for effective decision-making, innovation, and preventing groupthink. Groupthink occurs when well-intentioned people make irrational or suboptimal decisions because they have a strong urge to conform, leading to not speaking up or raising alternative ideas, which then leads to a uniform way of thinking.

PRINCIPLE 2

Own Your Power

Owning your power means not letting others dictate your value. You know you have everything you need inside to succeed. You are worthy *now* and not because of your title, level, awards, number of followers, or any other external metric. You don't need permission to take up space. You don't need to change who you are to access your power. You have internal status and agency. You know who you are and what you stand for, and you know you belong there.

You've likely experienced and will continue to experience times when people don't see your power. Truly owning your power is knowing who you are, owning your worth, and embracing it fully. Ask yourself: *Do I know my own value, regardless of external circumstances? How can I improve my sense of self?*

Some of us don't own our power because we cannot see it or because we've been told we don't have any. These limiting messages, whether a passing comment or consistent criticism, can affect what you believe about yourself.

If others put limitations on you, you may start accepting narratives about who you are that don't serve you and keep you from stepping up. These narratives, both external and internal, shape our self-perception.

Reclaim Your Story

You can step into your full power and claim it:

1. **Understand that you don't need to change who you are**, but you do need to discover who you are and how you want to show up in the world.
2. **Recognize that your worth is not tied to your title, status, or others' expectations.**
3. **Find ways to celebrate yourself** and realize it's not a luxury but a necessity for stepping into your power.

How will you know you're fully owning your power? When you can see *beyond* it.

Don't Change Who You Are

People often feel like they need to play a role or act a certain way to fit in, or even to hide their true selves. Owning your power isn't about changing who you are; it's about *reclaiming all parts of yourself and embodying all of it*. It's not about fitting in; it's about digging deeper to discover who you are, what you value, and how you want to show up in the world.

When you figure out who you are and embrace it, you no longer rely on external validation. You cultivate a sense of empowerment, authenticity, and self-respect by not changing who you are. When you are true to yourself, you can show up more fully, foster more authentic connections, and truly own your power.

Once you take the time to understand your strengths, values, and boundaries, you too can navigate your life with more clarity and intention. Doing this also helps you live in alignment with your true self rather than being influenced by external pressure, expectations, or the need for validation.

Finding yourself doesn't usually happen overnight, but you can start the conversation today. Or, if you've had this conversation before, now is the time to revisit it.

Own Your Worth

Owning your worth and internal status is knowing you are enough. It's about seeing and honoring who you are *right now*, even if others don't. It's knowing you are more than a title, position, label, or whatever category others may want to place you in. It's about developing strong internal status: seeing all your strengths, knowing and trusting your value, and understanding what you bring to the table.

It's about remembering who you are, even when facing challenges or transitions. Your internal status follows you no matter where you go, no matter what happens around you. You stop comparing yourself to others. You realize it's not about doing more to be worthy or defining yourself based on your achievements or others' rules and standards.

True worth comes from being in alignment with yourself.

Celebrate Your Wins

We often fail to own our power because we overlook and undervalue our achievements. Celebrating both major and minor victories is crucial; it helps us reconnect with our power and fuels our drive.

Research shows that it isn't just beneficial for your well-being—it also has the potential to positively influence both your emotions and performance. It can lower your cortisol level, reduce stress, and increase the "feel-good" chemicals in your brain—the neurotransmitters that also act as hormones to keep you happy and motivated. Celebrating our wins helps move them from short-term to long-term memory so that we don't lose them. When you feel good, you achieve more and are more productive. *That* is the cycle of celebration.

PRINCIPLE 3

Own Your Voice

It's important to own your opportunity and know your worth. As an Only, you can make an impact in the room. But unless you speak up and use your voice, nothing will change.

Owning your voice isn't about just speaking up. It's knowing that what you have to say matters and can make a difference. And it isn't just about what you say to others; what you say *to yourself* matters too. It means finally realizing you don't have to find your voice; you already have it.

Leveraging the power of being an Only means that when something doesn't serve you, you change it.

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Why You Don't Own Your Voice

Speaking up is hard for many people. We're afraid of what others will think about us. We fear showing up, being seen, and not being good enough. As an Only, it may be even more difficult to do these things. Some might feel the burden of representing an entire group or may not speak up in fear of standing out or "rocking the boat." It just doesn't feel safe.

Here are common reasons people hesitate to speak up:

- You could be in an environment where conformity is valued and feel pressure to fit in, or there are power dynamics at play and you don't feel you're in a position of authority.
- You may be scared that others won't listen.
- You've had experiences where you were ignored, criticized, or rejected.
- You might let perfectionism, overthinking, or even comparison hold you back.
- You don't feel ready and need more experience.
- You're someone who once confidently spoke up but now needs to reclaim that voice.

Whatever your reason, overcoming these barriers is essential for making an impact and owning your voice.

Break Through Your Fear

You shouldn't necessarily want fear to go away; instead, you need to reframe it. You want to understand where it comes from and why you need it. You need to learn how to use your fear as your partner. Shift your focus away from yourself to your message, purpose, or mission, and develop tools to calm your fear through practice and preparation. Embrace fear as a catalyst for growth and let it drive you to deliver your message with greater clarity and impact.

For many Onlys, speaking up has been and continues to be a very real life-threatening experience. Activists and advocates for underrepresented groups often face risks to their lives and livelihoods when challenging the status quo and defending marginalized communities.

In everyday work situations and beyond, the sensation of being observed and potentially rejected can trigger a primal

response, making us feel as though we are facing real danger. To overcome this, we need to shift our perception of fear.

Below are four ways to help you break through fear.

1. Reframe fear as your partner

The key to reframing and making fear your partner is to ensure you have the optimal level of arousal. "Optimal" is when fear works for you: your brain and body are energized and you feel a sense of clarity and focus.

2. Shift your inner talk

Studies show that talking to yourself in the second or third person; that is, using "you" or your own name instead of "I" or "me," boosts clarity, confidence, and performance; it flips a switch in the brain.

3. Stop focusing on yourself

Psychologists have found that people tend to focus on the negative quality of their voice recordings, magnifying imperfections that might go unnoticed by others. One way to break through your fear is to realize people aren't noticing you as much as you think.

4. Focus on your message and mission

Another way to break through your fear is to stay focused on your message and your higher purpose. What you have to offer—your stories, your insights, your wisdom, or your perspective in an everyday interaction—is a gift. What you want to say matters more than your fear.

Reframe How You Talk to Yourself About Yourself

Most of us like labels. It's easier to relate to things when we can define them with a universal term. Unfortunately, the problem with labels is that they are *not* universal and can limit us in many ways. Using specific labels to describe certain behaviors can unintentionally create barriers that weren't there before.

How can you reframe how you talk to yourself about yourself? Start by taking a closer look at how you interpret the labels others assign to you, as well as those you give yourself. You need to reframe these labels so they empower you rather than limit your potential, ensuring they reflect your true identity. You must challenge your negative self-talk, self-lim-

iting language, self-criticism, and assumptions. Understand where these labels come from, their history, the context in which they came to be, and how they are evolving today.

Once you see how some labels describe parts of yourself that don't need fixing or overcoming, you can leverage them positively and see them as a strength rather than an obstacle. You may even realize that these labels no longer define you at all.

PRINCIPLE 4

Own Your Communication

Owning your communication means you know how to communicate so that others will hear you, allowing you to navigate any environment, whether you're leading a team, pitching an idea, advocating for change, or even negotiating with your partner or children.

It's about more than just what you say; it's about how you engage with your audience to create meaningful impact and drive change. It means being heard and felt. It means that in our interconnected and digital world, you have the tools to be clear, confident, connected, and ready for any opportunity.

It also means that, as the Only, you can see your gift of being a bridge builder and know that you have the power to plant seeds of understanding, amplify the voices of others, and foster inclusive conversations.

Owning your communication is vital to harnessing the Power of the Only. By doing this, you not only overcome your own barriers and step fully into your potential but also pave the way for other Onlys to do the same.

Connect With Your Audience

Connecting with your audience builds trust, enhances engagement, and makes your message more relevant and effective. When people feel understood, seen, and valued, they are more likely to hear you, allowing you to make an impact and move people to action.

To help you apply this in any setting, the YOU, Amplified! Connection Framework outlines seven steps for clarifying your message and forging meaningful connections with any audience.

- **Audience.** Know your audience—who you are speaking to and what you want them to walk away with.
- **Message.** Be clear about your message: what it is, what you want to share, and why you believe what you believe and do what you do.

- **Purpose.** Know your objective and what you hope to achieve in this appearance.
- **Lead.** Decide how you will show up and how others will experience your leadership.
- **Image.** Visualize the image you want to convey—through wardrobe, makeup, style, brand colors, or video background, if applicable.
- **Feeling.** Embody the energy you want to project and the feeling you want your audience to have.
- **You, Amplified!** It's all about you. Step into your amplified self.

Be the Bridge Builder

Onlys are the bridge builders of the future, shaped by the unique experiences and challenges of being the only one in a room. These experiences foster a deep understanding and strength in connecting with diverse people and seeing perspectives others might miss.

In these polarizing and divided times, being a bridge builder is more important than ever. As you rise and show up more, especially in leadership, part of owning your communication is understanding how to navigate diverse environments, connect with different individuals, and recognize this power. From this strength, you can create opportunities for yourself and others and be an agent of positive change.

PRINCIPLE 5

Own Your Future

Hard work and sacrifices are part of the job, especially early in our careers and when we start something new. But who does it serve when this behavior is self-imposed and unnecessary? When it's an unconscious pattern and a burden we put on ourselves rather than a required part of the journey?

Leveraging the power of being an Only means that when something doesn't serve you, you change it. It means *you* own your future. The foundation of owning your future is focusing on thriving, not just surviving. Thriving requires recognizing that the mindset, habits, and skills that brought you this far may not be sustainable or enough to propel you forward. Instead of clinging to outdated models of success, you create your own path.

Cultivating a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity is key to owning your future. When you shift your focus from merely surviving to actively thriving, you break free from

You don't have to make history or be the first at something to have an impact.



outdated patterns, societal conditioning, and others' expectations. Instead, you create a future defined by what you desire and design for yourself.

Create a New Vision

Are you trying to be everything to everyone all the time? Do you have this never-ending to-do list cluttering your brain? Do you set goals and achieve them, yet still feel like it's just never enough? Based on societal pressure and metrics, success is usually tied to achievement, and that can be incredibly exhausting.

In the beginning, the drive for "more" can propel Onlys forward. You might feel under scrutiny, underestimated, or like there is no room for failure. This pressure to prove others wrong can be a powerful motivator.

However, there comes a point when what once fueled your success—your perseverance, grit, relentless hustle, the need to be the best, pushing yourself to the limit, always caring for others, and saying yes to everything—can become your greatest obstacles. What protected us or were our strong suits can also hold us back from our true selves and potential unless we create a new vision of what success means to us.

When you don't take the time to create a new vision of success that fits your current life stage and continue to chase achievement or other old patterns, you can get stuck.

To create a new life vision where you are at your peak, reflect on your values and priorities. The following steps will help you clarify your priorities and define what matters most at this stage of your life.

1. Determine what's important to you now.
2. Pick the values that are a priority for you.
3. List the things that will help you live out each of those values.
4. List the things you want to avoid or eliminate.

Guard and Heal Your Energy

As Onlys, we often face many obstacles, big and small, that are beyond our control. Over time, these challenges can wear us down and deplete our energy. Being an Only can lead to

feelings of being isolated, undervalued, or misunderstood. You may also experience increased pressure or responsibilities and lack of support from your company or peers.

Whether being scrutinized or facing direct and indirect bias, feeling the need to advocate not just for yourself but also others, or being asked to take on extra unpaid work or initiatives, these factors can strain your emotional capacity to manage stress and process emotions, affecting your self-esteem, motivation, work, and overall life.

To own your future, you must guard your energy and honor your wellbeing. Guarding your energy means being aware of your environment, the information you are exposed to and consume, the people you surround yourself with, and what claims your time and attention, then understanding how all of it affects you.

It means that as you navigate spaces that aren't supportive, welcoming, or built for you, you can tap into your intuition to block out—not internalize—the negativity around you. It means you decide which emotions you want to experience and which you want to release. By doing so, you can cultivate the energy to appreciate the joy and beauty around you.

Be Discerning

The Onlys who will own the future are the ones who can be discerning about information, people, and energies to embrace. You focus your attention on what truly matters to you and learn to block out all the noise from the past, the future, and external distractions that mute the knowing in your soul.

Discernment involves understanding what you should carry and what you shouldn't, deciding what aligns with your values and what doesn't, and determining what truly benefits you. It's about setting boundaries with clarity and purpose, ensuring that you remain aligned with your true self and goals. It means being able to say:

- I don't agree.
- This is not for me.
- I've done all I can.
- I've had enough.
- It's time for me to move on.
- It's time for me to do my own thing.

Many rooms are not made for you as an Only, and things may not be set up in your favor. You may not always have the same access, resources, or networks. While this may not be fair, you can still thrive if you have the awareness and tools to discern what applies to you and what doesn't and the agency to decide what you are and are not going to do moving forward.

Trust in your ability to steer your own course and own your future. Each decision, whether it leads you to move forward or take a step back, is a step toward greater self-discovery and fulfillment. Embrace the journey with all its ups and downs, knowing that each moment of discernment brings you closer to living a life that is genuinely aligned with who you are and who you aspire to become.

Conclusion

It often takes time to fully see what was in front of us or inside us all along. All of us have so much power and wisdom from our past and present. But to access it, to step into the future we want to create, we need to recognize it and honor it in ourselves and in our ancestors.

I know being an Only can be lonely, but now you know you are not really alone and that it is not a weakness but your greatest strength.

You don't have to make history or be the first at something to have an impact. Realize that *what* you do, *who* you are, and *how* you show up matters.

You have the power. You've had it all along.

And now all you have to do is step into it.



Angela Chee is a media and communication coach, keynote speaker, and host of *The Power of the Only* podcast. An award-winning former TV news anchor and reporter, she brings more than twenty years of experience in media and public speaking. Chee has worked with major stations including KCBS-TV, KNBC-TV, and Fox 6 San Diego, and has appeared on networks such as E! and HGTV. She speaks for global organizations including Microsoft, Cisco, Intel, and JPMorgan Chase. Chee helps leaders communicate with clarity and confidence and amplify their unique voice. She lives in San Diego with her husband and two children.

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