

# **ART OF GETTING OUT OF YOUR OWN WAY**

**10 ½ Ways to Create a Growth Mindset**

**Karen Dubi**

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Contact author:

Flexible Mindset Strategies

Mailing address

[info@KarenDubi.com](mailto:info@KarenDubi.com)

[www.KarenDubi.com](http://www.KarenDubi.com)

(631) 913-8332

To my husband, Richard, and my three children,

Olivia, Adam, and Ashley.

This book would not be possible without each of you.

Dubi5 is my most cherished gift and my eternal inspiration.

Each of you has a permanent imprint etched in my heart and soul,

and I truly adore you.

“Karen Dubi knows "growth." In her professional career, she has demonstrated a passion for learning all within her reach to better understand the journey out of conflict and challenge and into solution. She has brought her integrative approach to creating change into a practical manual that you will use.”

~ Jason Linett, CEO of *Hypnotic Influence for Premium Sales*

“Karen Dubi writes from the heart as she guides the reader with her clarity and researched material to discover each person's potential. She describes skills and practices that give the reader choices to change their inner dialogue, feelings, and behaviors. Whether you are beginning your personal development journey or are already on the path of high performance, you will find value from each chapter.”

~ Rachel Hott, Ph.D., Co-Director of  
*The NLP Center of NY, Clinical Psychologist*

“The most powerful part of this book is how Karen doesn't just give you the information. She also provides incredible tools and strategies so you can start putting these practices into play right away. This isn't a book that you pick up, read, put back and go on about your life. No, this is a book that will radically change your life (if you let it.) Whatever it is you desire for yourself in your life, this book and the tools inside will help you get out of your own way to create it! This isn't just a book - it is a resource, a guide, a blueprint to unlocking the pure potentiality of all your desires! Everyone will benefit from reading this! Karen, thank you for this work of art!”

~ Kari Russell, *Energetic Business & Human Design Coach*

“Life is good when we learn how to really live it, and Karen's way here in this book will show you how to get over what's been holding you back, which ultimately means getting over yourself and showing the world what you're really made of. Go and get it. Your time is now.”

~ *Aren Babia aka @ink\_pray\_love, Entrepreneur, Speaker, Coach*

“This book is exactly what I needed in my life as a college student facing huge decisions to make in life. I feel like I have a much better understanding to be more successful in school and in finding a career job when I graduate. I will refer to it many times to remind myself how to reach those levels. I recommend this book highly.”

~ *Gabe F. (age 19)*

“Karen’s book makes me feel more confident. This book is world-class, and Karen teaches so many techniques that changed my limiting beliefs. I now have a better understanding of the importance of a growth mindset.”

~ *Pallas N. (age 18)*

“I’ve never been much of a book reader, but my coach gave me this book and insisted I read it. It gave me some practical tools to break through some barriers. I can’t just pick a single chapter from the book because there was a lot of great information throughout the entire book.”

~ *Jack P. (age 17)*

“This book is a game-changer! Karen’s style of writing makes it easy to understand and improves the way I talk to myself. These are the things I never learned in school, but all of us need.

~ *Samantha A. (age 17)*

“Karen’s writing style is so impactful. I felt she was speaking directly to me. My mindset has already shifted. Thank you to Karen for this world-class book.”

~ *Taylor H. (24)*

“Karen has helped me move past roadblocks at different stages in my life. Having known her personally, she is the real deal! Her advice and expertise have helped me on countless occasions. This book is a helpful resource that I refer to whenever I feel paralyzed by a decision or am unmotivated. I recommend this book to everyone.”

~ *Kelly P. (age 24)*

“Fabulous book! I smiled, laughed, reflected, and truly grew from this book. So relatable and filled with wisdom!”

~ *Brooke S. (age 25)*

“When I change the way I think about things, I will change my actions and my results. And then the sky is the limit for what I will achieve. That is my number one takeaway from this book. Everyone should read it. Pure power! Highly recommend.”

~ *Kim K. (age 27)*

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# FOREWORD

By Ottis Anderson

**K**aren Dubi is a renowned Life Coach who works with business leaders, athletes, students, and retirees, with an emphasis on women of all ages. I received an advanced copy of her book to review, and I was honored when asked to write the foreword. My first reaction was, *Wow, I wish I had this roadmap in high school or even college!*

I was blessed with physical talents and played college football at the University of Miami, setting college records for running backs at UM, drafted 8<sup>th</sup> in the 1979 NFL draft by the St Louis Cardinals. I also set all-time records for the Cardinals' running backs. Surprisingly, in 1986 I was traded to the NY Giants, a powerful up-and-coming team in the same division as the Cardinals. The Giants were led by Hall of Fame coach Bill Parcells. Coach Parcells told me I was an insurance policy in case his top running back, Joe Morris, were to get injured. That was mentally challenging to accept since I felt I could still contribute to this team, but I followed what my coach said. The Giants went on to win the Super Bowl in 1986, and my role remained back up running back.

Coaches are vital to any athlete. In 1989 Joe Morris suffered a leg injury, and Coach Parcells put me in the game. That was my opportunity, and I embraced it. I went on to prove myself as one of the most reliable running backs in Giants history. Coach Parcells leaned on me, and I did not disappoint him. I was voted 1989 Comeback Player of the Year.

In 1990, the Giants' #1 draft choice was Rodney Hampton, a top running back. I was again challenged mentally when as an aging player, I knew my chances of becoming a starting running back were limited, and Rodney would become the go-to running back. My role changed again, and I became a mentor and had to wait my time.

Many years earlier, I had predicted that if I ever reached the Super Bowl and it was in the State of Florida, I would win the MVP. In 1989 the Super Bowl was in Miami at the Joe Robbie Stadium, the very stadium I played during my entire college career at UM, and we lost before reaching the Super Bowl. In the locker room, dejected with my head between my hands, my friend and teammate, Maurice Carthon, asked me why I was so down. I reminded him of my earlier prediction and felt it was my fate and that it would never happen. He smiled and said, "Next year, the Super Bowl is in Tampa, Florida." I immediately replied, "We are going!" My mindset was locked in.

I reached the pinnacle of my career that next season when our NY Giants won Super Bowl XXV in the 1990/91 season, beating the Buffalo Bills 20-19 in Tampa, Florida. I was named Super Bowl MVP. It was my second and final championship ring.

I understand the intangible component needed to succeed in life, in any endeavor, is mental toughness—grit, tenacity, and positivity to

overcome adversity—summarized by Karen in this book as a *growth mindset*.

This book shares timeless ideas of classic mindset strategies with some new ideas to allow any person of influence ways to create success. It teaches the reader what a growth mindset is and how best to develop and use it.

I enjoyed this book very much and have begun implementing many new tools in my business career. I sit on several Boards of Directors for companies, and as Karen Dubi states, “It never is too late to teach an old dog new tricks.”

I encourage all to read this book and even give it to younger people to help change the trajectory of their lives.

Karen Dubi is my MVP!

~ Otis Anderson



## INTRODUCTION

I spoke my first words at six months of age. Putting phrases and sentences together before my first birthday, by the time I turned two, I could have full-on conversations. I was a nonstop chatterbox. When I entered preschool, I was reading, writing, learning multiplication and division, problem-solving, and playing advanced memory skill games. I was an all-star in the classroom—achievement awards, spelling bee competitions, and storytelling contests.

My nickname was “double-brains.” Teachers praised my intelligence and told my parents I was a gifted child, a real prodigy. Of course, their intention was well-intended, but it had negative consequences in the years to come. Initially, my natural skills afforded me stand-out grades with little to no effort required. I took pride in being the smartest because it gave me a false sense of superiority. It was easy to me until it was not.

The coursework became increasingly more complex, and my grades began to plummet. I hadn’t developed proper study habits. Up to this point, being the smart girl had come so naturally to me that I had gotten by without effort. It was a rude awakening. I went from sitting in the front row seat, hand raised and always knowing the

answers, to sitting in the back row, slouching and desperately hoping I would not get called upon in class.

Receiving praise for being smart, both at home and in school, was a lot of pressure. I was expected to know the answers, and I did not want to disappoint, nor did I want anyone to see my inner struggles, so I would not ask for help even if I needed it.

Eventually, I downshifted my identity. I revised my goals and became less ambitious. I felt vulnerable to failure, fearful of challenges, and highly critical of myself, so I stopped trying. I tended to discount or diminish evidence of my abilities. I avoided challenging situations, and I routinely quit when things became too difficult. I engineered smallness in my life. I became a “no-risk” girl, and consequently, I opted out of participating in just about every challenging academic situation. I was trapped in what is called *the fixed mindset*.

This ran so deep for me, way beyond just academics. Quitting when things got challenging became my default setting. It perpetuated a very negative self-image, and every time I realized that I was not good at something that I wanted to be good at, I would agonize over it. It was demoralizing to hear my own inner voice telling myself that I was never going to be enough. My brain evaluated everything in absolutes: win or lose; success or failure; good or bad. For me, there was no in-between, no middle ground. I had an all-or-nothing mentality.

I feared the notion of not being smart, or more accurately, I was afraid of not *looking* smart to others. Simply put, I was afraid to fail. I interpreted failure as a direct measure of my unintelligible incompetence and self-worth. What if I was exposed, and they discovered I was no longer smart or good enough? I was already

washed up, and I had not even reached puberty yet. This was my mindset, my fixed mindset, which is the opposite of a growth mindset.

I struggled to *get out of my own way* without really understanding what that even meant. I remember when the phrase seemed sort of cryptic to me. I felt more frustrated with myself for my own difficulty in achieving it. It felt as though I had a bag of weights that I carried around on my shoulders, weighing me down emotionally and physically. All the "stuff" I needed to put aside to get out of my own way felt like an unsurmountable load of heavy baggage. And it was. Wherever I went, all that baggage was right there with me.

I turned it around when I learned about it and developed a growth mindset. Nowadays, I have a growth mindset more than I ever did. Maybe you have heard the term? Do not worry. I know it is a lot to unpack, so let me explain.

If you search the phrase "growth mindset" on the internet, you will find hundreds of documents and related articles on the topic. Today, schools, businesses, organizations, and sports teams use this research to improve the learning experience, increase profitability, and optimize performance and team morale. It is a far-reaching concept worldwide, changing and improving how people learn. Despite all of the information, I want to clear up some misconceptions. This book is about effectively developing a growth mindset, and by the end, you will have all of the tools you need to get out of your own way and become the version of yourself you have always wanted to be.

So often in life, our greatest obstacle is ourselves. It is not that we do not know what we *should* be doing, and it is hardly a matter of not knowing *how* to do it. Let's be honest. We have unlimited

resources available to us right at our fingertips. The reality is that what stops us from succeeding is usually ourselves.

Whether you picked this book up with no idea how to develop a growth mindset or are a growth mindset expert, I have got you covered. Rest assured, I will explain what it is, what it is not, why it matters, and how you build it. Once you understand how you think about learning, you can change how you do it. It will shift your perspective and empower you to do the things you have always wanted to do. As a result, you will discover *The Art Of Getting Out Of Your Own Way*.



## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

When I first considered writing this book, I imagined my audience would mostly be my contemporaries—adult men and women who want to do, be, and have more in life. Growing up, there were only a few growth and development gurus, experts, and influencers, and it was certainly not as mainstream as it is today.

As I began to discuss the subject of the book, I was pleasantly surprised by the level of interest from teenagers, college students, and young millennials.

The times have changed. Younger generations desire more. They are open-minded, driven to succeed, and inspired to learn how to perform at a higher level. I had no idea how much of an impact the material in this book would have on the next generation.

Whether you received this book as a gift or purchased it yourself, the fact that you are reading this indicates that you share a similar objective—to enhance your personal growth and development and share that wealth of knowledge with others.

Of course, I would recommend reading this book from cover to cover, but it is also the type of resource where you can pick and choose which chapters or principles connect with you and refer to them as needed.

As lofty as it may sound, my mission is to change the world, one conversation at a time.

Under the guise that if I knew then what I know now, I would be light years ahead. There are, however, no regrets. Every obstacle or setback has been a stepping stone for me, personally and professionally.

I am grateful for the opportunity to inspire my colleagues, friends, and clients by choosing this path. I am especially motivated to reach out to the younger generations because YOU are the future. And my "then" has become your "now." This is your opportunity to shine.

It is my hope that this book teaches you the power of a growth mindset and that you are inspired to share and pass it on. This will confirm to me that all of the days and nights I sat with a blank screen, compelled to create this book, were well spent.

It is with all of my love, my heart, and my soul that I want to get started on that mission and change the world one conversation at a time. We will achieve great things if you also believe in our ability to do so.

Karen Dubi

# CHAPTER 1

## Mindset Matters

The powerful idea of mindset has been pushed forward by Stanford professor, leading expert in human motivation, and bestselling author Carol Dweck, who has been researching for decades, focusing her study on why some people succeed while others with equal talent do not. What she discovered is that people’s mindsets play a crucial role. She uncovered two ways of thinking about skill and development. Sometimes we operate with a *fixed mindset*—we believe our skills and intelligence are predetermined at birth, traits are set in stone, and we are either naturally talented at things or are not. This mindset is the source of limiting stories and beliefs about learning and skill development, such as, “I could never do that. I am terrible at that, so why even bother.” With a fixed mindset, people do not believe they can learn and grow. They do not think they can build or improve their skills.

The other mindset Dweck’s research uncovered is a *growth mindset*. People with this mindset believe skills and intelligence are developed over time through effort and persistence. People with growth mindsets are likely to view the world from a positive and

enthusiastic perspective that leads to greater achievements. They believe in their capacity to learn and grow. They know that they can get better and strengthen their skills with practice. People with a growth mindset are willing to take on challenges that people with a fixed mindset are not.

When it comes to learning, understanding what mindset you are operating from will impact your behaviors and actions. The way you see yourself dramatically affects how you tackle challenges, confront failure, and progress through life. Your mindset is the most important aspect of your personality in many ways. When I think about my childhood years, I was operating from a textbook fixed mindset. It was not until I was a young adult in my early twenties that I discovered the secret sauce recipe of a fixed or growth mindset, but it changed my life once I became aware of it and worked to understand it.

In his book, *The Big Leap*, Gay Hendricks writes about unrealized potential. Essentially, no matter how successful a person is, they still have their own version of the “upper limit problem.” Our upper limit is a fictitious cap, a made-up apex that we are operating under, and it is the single barrier to our next level of success.

Hendricks writes, “Each of us has an inner thermostat setting that determines how much love, success, and creativity we allow ourselves to enjoy. When we exceed our inner thermostat setting, we will often do something to sabotage ourselves, causing us to drop back into the old, familiar zone where we feel secure.”

In all my professional years, my interactions working with clients, teaching, hosting workshops, etc., I have yet to meet a person who did not have some self-created upper limit. I assure you that your

own version of this limit is exactly what is holding you back and getting in your own way from achieving your fullest potential.

When the old beliefs clash with new ideas, there is an invisible and powerful inner tug of war. The idea that pulls and wears down its counterpart will ultimately takeover. If the old belief wins, you turn down the volume on opportunity—via procrastination, self-doubt, or overly criticizing your efforts. According to Hendricks, the upper limit problem is the single most important problem you need to solve. Identify the upper limit and remove the barrier between you and your next level of success.

We have come a long way in cognitive neuroscience and behavioral psychology, and we now understand what is referred to as the “paradox of the past,” the idea that our past does not equal our future unless we choose to remain there. The chances are that many of these struggles you face today are the same that you have struggled with in years past. However, even though our past shapes us, we are not bound to it. We all can break free from the shackles that hold us back—what a tremendous freedom.

I graduated from college with three health sciences degrees, but I have done some of my best learning since graduation. I am continuously enrolled in coursework. In fact, I can not think of a time in the past twenty-plus years that I have not been learning in one way or another. You could say I am an avid learner; I love learning new things. But of course, a growth mindset is not simply about the number of accolades or achievements someone has. It is about the way they approach challenges.

During college, I commuted to school. I remember waking up early each morning to do my yoga and meditation before anyone else was awake. When I finished, I would be in the kitchen eating my breakfast, and my father would ask me what I was doing. I would

reply, “I just finished my yoga practice.” His response was always the same. “Why do you practice every day? Aren’t you an expert by now?” I would smile and tell him, “It’s a practice because there is no end point. Every day is an opportunity to learn and discover something new.” This marks my earliest recollection of my growth mindset.

Jo Boaler, professor of mathematics education at Stanford University and author of the books *Mathematical Mindsets* and *Limitless Mind*, says, “When people perform well (academically or otherwise) at early ages and are labeled smart or gifted, they become less likely to challenge themselves. They become less likely to make mistakes because they stay in their comfortable comfort zone and stop growing. And their fixed mindset persists through adulthood.”

Mindset is important because it is the foundation upon which every belief and assumption we form is based. Our underlying beliefs shape how we process information, learn about the world, and decide everything we do (or do not do).

Carol Dweck’s research shows the power of our most fundamental beliefs and how our thoughts and inner narratives can propel or prevent us from fulfilling our potential. Talent is just a starting point. People with a fixed mindset believe in “effortless perfection.” They aspire to look perfect with little to no effort. After all, the belief that talent alone creates success lends itself to not having to try. But effort and acumen are not mutually exclusive. Efforts inflame, and acumen creates.

A common misconception is that mindsets are binary—either fixed or growth. That is simply not true. We are not just one or the other but rather a mixture of both. The ultimate goal is to have your growth mindset predominate your thinking. Humans are complex, so there are no absolutes. The mindset is a spectrum that shifts

circumstantially and varies at different times throughout the day. The key is awareness. Identify the fixed thoughts that lower your standards, sabotage your happiness, and pivot to a growth mindset. Then, fasten your seat belts and prepare for BIG changes. Pivoting is *getting out of your own way!*

Research shows that when we enter a fixed mindset, the ability to learn and adapt is dramatically underdeveloped — which instantly holds individuals back from succeeding. In contrast, those who have a growth mindset believe that they have the power to make a change.

I must credit Trevor Ragan, founder of The Learner Lab and Train Ugly, for his fantastic explanation that focus and belief are the key characteristics and driving forces of mindsets. He asserts, “We can use these top two characteristics as a guide to help us understand where we are on the mindset spectrum at any given time.”

## **FOCUS**

- In a fixed mindset, intelligence is unchanging. The focus is on the outcome, results, and how it appears to others.
- In a growth mindset, intelligence is always developing. The focus is on the process of growth and learning.

## **BELIEF**

- In a fixed mindset, the person does not think they can learn, and as a result, they probably will not.
- In a growth mindset, the person believes they can learn and, as a result, will. Then, they will improve.

People with a growth mindset achieve more over time than people with a fixed mindset, and it all boils down to attitude, focus, and belief in the ability to learn and grow.

Once you are aware of some of your fixed mindset thoughts, you have the power to change them. You can identify the cause of that mindset and, more specifically, the underlying story or belief you are telling yourself. Remember to pivot.

In order to get out of your way, it is necessary to identify the things that are in your way. Stay with me, and keep reading. This book will give you a deeper understanding of what holds you back. The road to success is always under construction. Sometimes we hit roadblocks, detours, and bumps to be avoided. Once you see these signs, you can better navigate and reroute.

It is my hope that you will embrace the wisdom in this book to *create your growth mindset* and develop your own Guided Personal System (GPS).

### **KEY POINTS**

#### **Fixed Mindset:**

- The belief is I could never do that. I am terrible at that, so why even bother trying.
- The focus is on the outcome, results, and how it appears to others.

#### **Growth Mindset:**

- The belief is I can learn and will develop the skills needed. I will improve.
- The focus is on the process of growth and learning.

The art of getting out of your own way is pivoting towards a growth mindset.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **What Is Your Story?**

**H**ave you ever wanted something but not taken the steps you know are necessary to achieve it? Have you considered that deep down, you might be more committed to something else? I know that is a tough one. Let me put that into context. Have you ever noticed that when people have unmet goals or unfulfilled dreams, they immediately give you a detailed story as to why? Usually, it is a compelling story infused with long-winded explanations for why they have not, could not, and did not get started. Are they lying to themselves? Or are the stories we tell ourselves just a bunch of bullshit?

When you strip away all that fluff, it becomes clear that our stories are a way of enabling our excuses, such that our excuses then become the story. It appears to be legitimate, but I assure you that if it tears down a dream or dismantles your desired outcome, then that story about why you cannot do, be, or have what you want is the barrier in your way.

What is your excuse story? What do you blame for holding you back? Is your story empowering you, or is it preventing you from

living your happiest and most fulfilled life? These are not rhetorical questions! Clarifying your story is the *key* to getting out of your own way.

Whether we realize it or not, we are always telling ourselves stories. Sharing and listening are how we communicate. Stories provide a way to bring meaning to life experiences—both our own and others.

If you keep track of all the stories you tell yourself and share with others, you may begin to see a pattern. Eventually, we start to believe what we say, even if it began as a way to justify excuses. You will probably recognize a narrative forming causing you to second-guess yourself, deflate your enthusiasm, limit your potential, and get in your own way.

Most of us do not make conscious decisions about what we believe. A belief is essentially a thought that you keep thinking. When you repeat that narrative consistently, it becomes your truth, even if it is false. Your beliefs shape your life. They affect how you think about yourself, how you think about other people, and how you view the world.

Your narrative creates your story. It can either limit you or liberate you.

Most beliefs are based on generalizations about past experiences and how we interpret them. We become exceptionally skilled at finding evidence to back up our stories. And the more stacking we do to support those beliefs, the more empirically valid they become.

Interestingly, we manage to hold on to our sacred beliefs, yet when we witness someone else holding onto their differing beliefs, we conclude they are stubborn. We all tend to safeguard our beliefs and preserve them carefully. The challenge is to identify our limiting

beliefs—identify our inner narrative before it becomes the story told to justify a lack of progress.

A great storyteller can captivate an audience and bring them directly into the experience. For example, when you watch a movie, the writer and the cast provide a premise or context that engages you emotionally into their world. The more compelling they tell their story, the more emotionally connected you feel.

To illustrate this point, let's look at the classic story of the *Elephant and the Rope*. The original author is unknown, but its message is quite valuable.

The story goes that when the elephant was a baby, a trainer wrapped a rope around the infant's front leg. When the baby elephant tried to break away from the chains that bound him and repeatedly could not, eventually, he gave up. After some time, the infant elephant grew big and strong, yet he remained in captivity.

One day, a man passed by, and he noticed something interesting. The big and beautiful elephant was secured by a small rope tied around one ankle. The man was confused why the magnificent elephant just stood there and made no attempt to break free. The trainer replied, "When the elephant was young and much smaller, I used the same size rope to tie him, and at that time, the rope was strong enough to hold him. At first, the elephant tried to break free, but he realized he could not escape. Eventually, he was conditioned to believe that breaking free from the rope was impossible. Even now, after all these years, he still believes that the frayed rope can hold him back, and so he does not even try."

Hence, a fixed mindset.

People are seemingly more willing to fight for their limitations than what they truly want. And guess what? When you fight for the limitations that bind you, you get to keep them. All of your accomplishments and achievements start with your mind—that space between your ears. The distance between you and everything you want is all in your mind.

Everything in your outer world is a reflection of the state of your inner world. When you learn to control your thoughts and are better equipped with inner resources to respond, you will shape and direct your future.

*Your beliefs become your thoughts,  
Your thoughts become your words,  
Your words become your actions,  
Your actions become your habits,  
Your habits become your values,  
Your values become your destiny.*  
~ Mahatma Gandhi

We live in a culture filled with societal rules, and as humans, we have a deep desire to fit in. This becomes a problem when we foolishly continue to accept rules indoctrinated from childhood and programmed into our lives as children, even if they no longer make sense to us.

Vishen Lakhiani, the founder of Mindvalley and author of *The Code of the Extraordinary Mind*, refers to these as “brules,” which are bull-shit rules or outdated beliefs that we take on—not through rational choice but through conditioning and imitation. This is everything from relationships, money, career, health, spirituality, career, and family. We have adopted these beliefs without question because

they have been passed on from generation to generation. Here are some examples of *brules*:

“Money is the root of all evil.”

“The man is the breadwinner of the family.”

“Nice guys always finish last.”

“You must go to college in order to be successful.”

To these, I say, *maybe*. Then again, *maybe not*. What if these statements are just a bunch of limiting thoughts you keep recycling in your mind? Can you see how easily *brules* are formed and become a part of our everyday thinking? They find their way into our inner narrative and seep into our stories. *Brules* perpetuate and reinforce your story.

I invite you to view my masterclass, *Change Your Story Change Your Life* (visit [www.KarenDubi.com](http://www.KarenDubi.com)).

Changing your story is so powerful. It is rooted in the most important tenet of the growth mindset: *to believe that you can learn and do anything that you set your mind to*. Period.

When you believe something is possible, you tend to plan for it. Roger Bannister became the first person to run a mile in under four minutes on May 6, 1954. Before this feat, it was considered physically impossible to break the four-minute mark. Track athletes, experts, and physicians believed the human body would physically collapse under this type of speed and exertion. It was impossible.

Roger Bannister believed he could run a sub-four-minute mile. When you believe it is possible, you plan for it. He realized that positive affirmation and wishful thinking were not enough, but he used them to create a proper mindset that allowed proper planning

and execution. Ambitious beliefs lead to ambitious results. Once he decided to pursue this goal, he changed his training regimen to include intense intervals and speed workouts. He knew his goal was within reach. He believed it was possible.

Bannister finished the race in 3:59.4 world record time. This was considered the Holy Grail in athletic sports. He defied the odds, and he broke a world record that had been on the books for nine years! A month later, an opponent of his also broke the four-minute barrier. By the end of 1957, sixteen runners beat the four-minute time. More than a thousand runners have conquered the miracle mile that was once believed impossible. This became known as The Bannister Effect, a phenomenon of one person showing others that it can be done.

The lesson and legacy are that what was once considered unattainable eventually becomes the benchmark for others to shoot for, prompting us to believe and achieve higher. With a clear vision, belief, and practice, you can create The Bannister Effect and turn the impossible into the possible. Limits are just a creation of the mind, so Roger Bannister decided to tell a better story.

**“Those who do not believe in magic will never find it.”**

*~ Roald Dahl*

I used to love watching magic shows. When my son was little, he was fascinated with card tricks. He would spend hours and hours watching YouTube videos and learning how to do more tricks. The fascination with magic has never waned. We are still enthralled by witnessing the seemingly unattainable.

Magicians use imagination to help us see the limitations in our thinking. They help people shift their attention and change their beliefs to achieve what previously seemed impossible. They harness

the abilities of the mind to bypass perceived limitations. Sleight-of-hand experts know this powerful psychological effect. They rely on the brain's instinct to distort, delete, generalize, and miss essential things in the process. In many ways, magicians are waving a wand over our perceived notions that hold us back from what we really want.

A great magician does more than put on a show; they transform how you see things. They shine a light on the limits of your thinking. When you change the way you see the world, your world changes.

*A cynical view* of the world has a limiting or fixed mindset belief: I will believe it when I see it.

*An optimistic view* of the world has a growth mindset belief: I see it in my mind, and I believe it.

Everything you want is now much closer than you could have ever imagined. It is a chalk line.

Now that is magic!

### **KEY POINTS**

- Identify your inner narrative, the limiting beliefs you tell yourself.
- Recognize your brules.
- Change your story, change your life.





## CHAPTER 3

### Letting Go of Fear

**T**here comes a time when we must ask ourselves: Why do we continue playing small? Why do we let negative thoughts limit our actions and restrict us from pursuing our goals? Why do we make excuses that prevent us from achieving our goals? We start with the best of intentions, but somewhere along the way, we accumulate excuses, and progress comes to a screeching halt. We end up doing little to nothing despite being pumped up and motivated.

Maybe you have not gotten clear on your ultimate purpose, or it is not compelling enough to move forward. I will cover that more in chapter seven, *Principle 3: Passion and Purpose*.

Perhaps you have given in to limiting beliefs and tell yourself that you are incapable of accomplishing your goals. Maybe you are nervous that you will not be able to do it, or you are nervous about what it will take. Maybe you just have other competing commitments conflicting with your goals, producing resistance despite your best intentions. The dieter who is determined to lose those extra pounds is totally motivated yet easily gives in to the

comfort of eating chocolate chip cookies lurking in the pantry—weight loss versus immediate gratification. Competing commitments are setting him back because his priorities are not set.

We have all experienced the internal dilemmas of opposing or conflicting desires, often falling into familiar tendencies. Old patterns and habits can prevent us from becoming the person we want to be. Before you can *get out of your own way*, it is important to identify what exactly is in your way. Even if you do not know it on a conscious level, I believe that what is holding you back is fear-based. Fear is in your way.

Fear has many faces. Some trepidation is good. When you take a leap of faith into the unknown, there will inevitably be some confusion and self-doubt, and that is okay. It is human nature to doubt one's capabilities and competencies when starting a new endeavor. There can be some resistance due to fear of uncertainty. However, it can be an impetus for that change to work! If you remain in the familiar zone, there will be a certainty, but you will experience little to no growth.

Think back to your childhood—your first time on the monkey bars. It is a metaphor for life. I do not know about you, but I, for one, was never especially adept at swinging across the bars. Holding onto the bar and hanging was possible, but I was too afraid to move even one hand to grab the next bar. I was gripping the bar tightly but getting nowhere. It was not a strength issue; it was a mindset. It is common for people to firmly hold onto what they have for what they perceive as safe, even if it holds them back. It takes strength to release the hold and faith to let go. That split-second moment when you let go, are reaching for that next bar, and are suspended mid-air is scary. That in-between space is scary because you are neither here

nor there, but at the same time, that transition must happen before you can move forward. Faith is the antidote to fear.

Building a growth mindset will challenge you to leave behind what no longer serves you. It is a package deal of courage, personal power, and the freedom to choose in support of your future self.

Years ago, it became abundantly clear to me that I had been playing small. I was grossly underestimating the power of my potential. I realized my abilities and skills were not limited and that I was not doomed to mediocrity. That was the turnaround in my life. I could show up as a beginner, messy and unprepared but still ready to do new things. I could make mistakes and still succeed. I could build a growth mindset to achieve greatness. That epiphany set me free. Today, I can honestly say that I no longer play small. I dream big, I play big, and I think big. I am certainly not fearless, but I do not let that stop me from putting myself out there and giving it my all.

What would you say is the number one thought that stands in your way? Fear is a big chokehold for most people, even if they do not realize it. Fear seems to describe why we feel stuck, and it justifies why we derail our efforts. The incessant voice of disbelief and worry in our minds tends to highlight worst-case scenarios and can quickly limit who we are and what we are capable of. Most of the time, the actual event or experience is nowhere near as bad as we initially imagined.

### **FEAR – False Evidence Appearing Real**

Fear is usually a reaction to something that is happening around you, but the feeling of fear arises *within* you. In other words, you are the source of your fear, not your circumstances.

Most of the fear we feel in life is simply anxiety arising out of anticipation of three underlying sentiments that hold us back and get in our way. Sometimes these show up individually, but commonly, they show up in clusters. I call them the fear-buddies. Let's take a look.

- 1. I am scared . . .** of experiencing pain, anticipated loss or hardship, and of being judged.
- 2. I am not enough . . .** not believing in one's self, feelings of doubt, not feeling capable, worthy or credible.
- 3. I do not know what to do . . .** typically lacking either a skillset, information, connection, or direction.

These all lead to the following:

- **Imposter Syndrome:** More than 70% of people feel imposter syndrome from time to time—the feeling of inferiority and doubt in oneself. It is when you do not feel capable or qualified enough to be in the position you are in. The inner dialogue usually goes something like this: *I'm not good enough, smart enough, pretty enough, or rich enough. I'm too young or too old to be taken seriously. I don't know what I'm doing here or why they trust me to do this job.*

Imposter syndrome does not discriminate. It shows up in relationships, careers, athletic performance, and even recreational hobbies. Imposter syndrome often strikes at moments of success when you should feel confident, yet fear finds its way to creep in. I have definitely felt imposter syndrome when starting a new job, becoming a first-time parent, public speaking, etc., and I am sure you have experienced it too. In fact, one of my mentors told me something along the lines of this: If you don't experience imposter

syndrome, you haven't challenged yourself enough. Anytime we step out of our comfort zone and into new unknown territory, that shadow of imposter syndrome lurks. And you know what happens next? We lean and grow.

- **Regret:** This is a double conundrum where you are unfulfilled yet afraid to pursue anything better. It is the fear of making the wrong choice that leads to indecision. The real regret is stagnation, going backward, not trying, and not doing.
- **Self-Sabotage:** This is commonly experienced as catastrophizing and imagining a worst-case scenario. These feelings run deep and carry into our self-worth.
- **Responsibility:** This is the blame game and includes lacking accountability, making excuses, playing the victim card, and justifying why you cannot do something.
- **Rejection:** This is frequently expressed as a sense of inadequacy or insignificance. One feels judged, criticized, abandoned, left out, turned away, singled out, and not accepted.

These real emotions are exactly why people tend to play small. Our minds have a way of keeping us in a comfort zone. We procrastinate, make excuses, say yes when we want to say no, spend our time with people who de-motivate us, and as a result, we shrink down our dreams and aspirations.

Healthy fear is not a bad thing. It is designed to keep us safe in dangerous circumstances, such as climbing a high ladder or being aware of a wild animal nearby. When our fears are disruptive to our daily activities, they become problematic.

Almost all of the fear we experience rarely has anything to do with any real imminent threat or physical danger. Fear is just poor management of the mind. If you want to overcome it, you must shift the way you perceive fear by challenging the thought behind it.

When your basic needs for safety and security are violated, you feel scared or afraid, and you emotionally “armor up” to safeguard yourself. If someone or something jeopardizes that sense of security, your default impulse kicks in as the automatic response to protect you from harm.

The mind can perceive danger that is not there, creating a story. The meaning you attach to that story gives it a positive or negative charge. Sometimes it is easy to recognize fears, and at other times it is difficult to diagnose. But one thing is for sure: It is important to acknowledge that the fear is there. When you are in denial about your fear, it has more power over you. Only by identifying and acknowledging it can you effectively overcome it.

Courage and fear are not mutually exclusive. You can still have fear when you courageously take that next step. We can feel brave and afraid at the same time. And while some people use words like courage, bravery, and fearlessness interchangeably, they are not the same. The implication of fearlessness insinuates an absence of fear. Courage is the willingness to do something even in the face of fear. The notion of making fears disappear entirely is an unrealistic demand and should not be the goal. The ultimate goal ought to be a life well-lived, where fear does not get in the way of happiness, fulfillment, and success.

### **A Short Story**

An elderly man in the final days of his life is lying in bed alone, waking up to see a group of people clustered around the bed. Their

faces are loving but sad and confused. The old man smiles weakly and whispers, “You must be my childhood friends coming to say goodbye. I am so grateful.” One person gently grasps the old man’s hand and replies, “Yes. We are your best and oldest friends. But long ago, you abandoned us. You see, we are the unfulfilled promises of your youth. We are the unrealized hopes, dreams, and plans you once felt deeply inside your heart but never pursued. We are the unique talents you never refined and the special gifts you never discovered. My dear old friend, we are not here to comfort you. We have come to die with you.”

Bronnie Ware, the author of the international best-selling book, *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*, discusses her experience working in palliative care. When she questioned her patients about any regrets they had or anything they would have done differently, she discovered the five most common themes:

1. I wish I had had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I had not worked so hard.
3. I wish I had had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

The moral of the story is: Life is a choice. You choose to live the life you want to live. You choose to *create a growth mindset*. You choose to *get out of your own way*. You choose to be a participant in life. So, choose wisely.

Here is a good approach to working through fear and overcoming it. It involves creating a new response to the fear-causing stimulus. When something freaks you out, work to make new positive associations with that thing. Switch how you look at it, like when

the foreground and background shift places. Instead of focusing on the scary next step, think about how excited you'll be on the other side. If you want that job, think about how great you'll feel when you have it. If you want to launch a start-up business, envision your success. If you are intimidated to work out, think about how strong you'll feel once you get started. Whatever it is you fear, do your best to reframe it and identify what is on the other side of that fear—the thing you crave and desire.

The answer is: Do the things you fear, strengthen your resolve, make decisions, and once you decide, act. There is no room for doubt, fear, or regrets holding you back when you are in action.

Mindset work has the power to transform lives completely. True personal growth and development are about making today better so that you are already more powerful when tomorrow comes.

### **KEY POINTS**

- Don't play small; don't let fear hold you back.
- Fear has many faces.
- The antidote to fear is faith



## CHAPTER 4

### Change Your State of Mind

**W**hat if you could do or have anything you want—health, fame and fortune, career, connection, significance? Here is an honest question: Have you ever given yourself permission to be that version of yourself? Often, we say we want something, but it seems so unattainable, so impossible, that we just write it off and say, “That *would* be nice.”

Even though the title of this book is *The Art of Getting Out of Your Own Way*, so far, I have shared with you the obstacles that keep you stuck or hold you back, including a fixed mindset, fear, self-doubt, and self-imposed limiting beliefs. No one is immune from setbacks. When progress hits a roadblock, we are all susceptible to feeling a personal attack on our self-worth. But then what? Do we press the brakes and stop trying, or shift gears, get out of our way, and accelerate?

I created the acronym FLIP to help you master your psychology and change your state of mind:

- **Focus** – Concentrate on what you want rather than what you do not want. Focus on the solution rather than the problem.
- **Language** – Your inner dialogue can be your worst critic or your greatest fan. When you change the words you use or even think, you can change your perspective.
- **Intention** – Set intentions. Decide how you want to feel in the process.
- **Physiology** – Shift your body's physiology because it is the easiest way to snap out of a funk and interrupt an undesirable negative state. How you use your body affects how you feel mentally and emotionally.

Social psychologist Amy Cuddy became famous for studying the effects of “power poses.” Her TED talk, *Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are*, became the second most-watched TED talk with over fifty million views. Her research explains how posture can influence behavior and how you can transform your state of mind with a simple change in your stance.

Participants in the study groups sat in a high-power pose (expansive posture) or a low-power pose (leaning inward, legs crossed). Cuddy found that the people sitting in the high-power pose felt more powerful, performed better, and demonstrated an increase in testosterone and decreased cortisol levels. This means that by commanding a power pose, like standing up taller with our hands on our hips, we have a tool to make ourselves more powerful—proven by science. Try observing your posture when you are happy or enthusiastic versus when you are feeling sad or unmotivated. Notice the difference in how you hold yourself. We have a spectrum of emotional states. Rather than ignoring or denying these emotions, you can learn to transform them by adjusting your

language/inner dialogue, physiology/posture, and focus/intentions.

## **Change Your State of Mind Using Subconscious Reprogramming**

Hypnosis is an outstanding modality for achieving positive changes. It bypasses the critical conscious mind, establishing acceptable thinking in the subconscious mind. In other words, hypnosis empowers you to rewire your habits and access deeper states for transformation.

People often seek help to start or stop doing something, change a habit, or achieve a peak performance state. I do not know about you, but I have never met someone wanting to be less good at something. I do not think anybody thinks they are *too good* or *too skilled* or *successful*.

According to renowned hypnotist Jason Linett, “Hypnosis is a natural process in which your mind is more receptive to positive suggestion, insight, and releasing negative feelings. Your mind can rapidly integrate new skills, strategies, and strengths to help you take control of your life: your habits, behaviors, and feelings.”

Mindset matters, especially when getting out of your way and accomplishing your goals. What you focus on influences how you perform. Until you train yourself to manage your internal thoughts and emotions diligently, you will remain at the mercy of external circumstances controlling whatever state of mind washes over you.

The subsequent chapters offer you effective methods for building a growth mindset. Individually, each one will help you to break through the upper limits and barriers that hold you back. Collectively, they will strengthen your conviction and allow you to

recognize your unlimited potential so you can get out of your way and do the things you want to do.

At birth, we are not handed an owner's manual on how to be our best selves. If you are having trouble getting out of your way, feeling stuck, or can't seem to make your dreams come to life, you just have not installed the key belief that you can change. At least not yet!

You have not learned how to overcome setbacks, criticism, or how to empower self-doubt. You have not learned how to optimize your vision and energy to make high-stakes situations. In the great words of Marie Forleo in her best-selling book, *Everything is Figureoutable*, "Nothing in life is that complicated. You can do whatever you set your mind to do if you just roll up your sleeves, get in there, and do it."

It is time to train your mindset to think limitlessly and creatively and set new standards. Redefine what you are capable of and believe you can grow, develop and achieve. Let's dive into the next series of ideas to support your new mindset so you can become limitless and set those new standards.

## **Language Patterns to Change Your State of Mind**

### **Maybe versus Must:**

What would happen if you turn all your statements, "Maybe I will," into "I must?" What would happen if you decide to raise your standard, commit to your goals, and fully believe you can and will achieve them? It is a game-changer.

"Maybe" really means "I might."

I will "try" really means "I won't."

I "must" means "I will."

## **BE ready before you FEEL ready:**

Waiting until you are “ready” just postpones action. When you feel stuck, ask yourself better questions:

- Is this feeling/emotion/belief true?
- What would I have to do to gain the next level of love, connection, and belonging?
- What can I learn from this experience?
- What is one step I can take today to move forward?

You can take back control at any moment. If you feel anxious, take five deep breaths, and create a sense of calm. If you feel uncertain, write one thing you will accomplish today, and then do it. If you feel unmotivated, just move your body. Think about exercise. You do not always feel like doing it. You might feel very strongly about not doing it. Perhaps you think to yourself, “I don’t feel like it. I’m too tired. I don’t want to. I’ll start tomorrow.” Something interesting happens when you lace up your sneakers. A powerful force takes over, and you feel more energized and alive within minutes. *Do-ing* is what generates the momentum to keep going. Stop thinking and start doing. Make a move. Any move. The secret elixir is to dissipate the voice in your head that says, “I’m not ready yet.” Start doing before you are ready.

## **Problems versus Issues:**

People often confuse problems with issues. A problem is a circumstance—a legitimate roadblock. An issue is a man-made slowdown that you have the power to bypass. We lose perspective. A problem is a spot on an X-ray indicating a broken bone or a condition of sorts—something you have to deal with that might cause a bit of a slowdown. An issue is clearing a credit item to get your mortgage. An issue is finishing that term paper to graduate. It

is something you have more control of, however annoying or time-consuming it may be. The vast majority of setbacks or detours are merely issues. Maybe it is a matter of degree, but how you are *thinking* about the issue is the real challenge. Some people operate from a victim perspective or a fixed mindset paradigm. Their lens is focused on the issue as if it is a problem with no solution in sight. Others with a growth mindset spend most of their time focusing on the solution, regardless of if it is an issue or a real problem.

### **If I Knew Then What I Know Now:**

In my childhood years, personal growth development was not a mainstream concept. There were some truly exceptional pioneers, but back when I was a young girl, I had no idea how to get out of my own way. I had no exposure to any of the mindset work, and it certainly cost me a lot over the years—a lot of time. There was a lot of *not doing, not trying, quitting*, and a whole lot of *not believing in myself*. If I knew then what I know now, I would have been spared a lot of that. My learnings are sprinkled throughout this book so that you can benefit from my experiences.

A growth mindset will change the trajectory of your life. You are on your way, so let's keep going.

#### **KEY POINTS**

- Use FLIP to snap out of that funk.
- Identify common language patterns that influence your mindset.
- Your body's physiology has the power to influence your behavior and transform your state of mind if used effectively

## CHAPTER 5

### Principle 1: The Power of Words

*Be careful what you say; remember you are always listening.*

**T**here is no other species that communicate the way humans do. Our words, intonation, and voice inflection convey far more than information—they also express emotion. Words can inspire people or bring them to tears. Words can magically lift someone’s spirit or tear them down. The power of words transcends our deepest emotions into people’s minds, notwithstanding time, place, or proximity.

Words may not change reality, but they can change how people perceive reality. A single word can make a world of difference between liking or disliking someone. If a friend uses the words such as deceptive, untrustworthy, or unreliable to describe a person you are about to meet for the first time, you are predisposed to a negative view of them. Conversely, if your friend indicates high regard for that person and says the individual is honest and trustworthy, you would feel more at ease meeting this person.

Your language and communication also impact how others relate to you. If you feel undervalued, underappreciated, or neglected, consider how your word patterns contribute. If you speak negatively about yourself or second guess and doubt the advice or opinions you offer to others, you undermine your authority, which weakens your standing.

The right words can leave a huge and lasting impact. Words hold the power to fuel your confidence, create connection, and influence with integrity. Words also hold the power to make you feel inadequate and hopeless. Words can create new opportunities or shut them down. When you walk into a room, your words can make a solid first impression to be remembered or quickly forgotten.

Some say that words are even more powerful than thoughts. Words are the expression of thoughts, and like a song lyric, they come to life when someone sings them. How about the healing power of prayer or mantra? Words are a form of energy. Mantras are not just any collection of words. They are a particular arrangement of sound, which is why you do not necessarily need to know the meaning to experience benefit. Whether our conscious minds are paying attention or not, our bodies take their cues from these vibrational sounds and rhythms, which have a powerful effect on how we feel throughout the day.

When you speak, there is a vibration beyond thoughts. Spoken words are powerful because they occur twice: first internally in the mind and secondly expressed externally via sound.

The nervous system responds as the body receives information from the brain, indicating how the body ought to react in each situation. For example, when you hear someone call your name adoringly, your body reacts in seconds and sends a signal to your



brain that makes you feel happy instead of that person yelling your name out, making you feel startled.

The words we choose to say to others—and *how* we say them—have powerful consequences. Our ability to use words internally shapes our lives for the better. Words that ignite change encourage us to act and improve our quality of life. To have any experience in life and know whether that experience was good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, you first must communicate with yourself. The quality of your life is how you communicate with yourself. How you communicate with yourself affects how you interpret interactions with others and how you feel, act, and behave in the future.

If you have ever experienced a falling-out with a partner, friend, or business associate, you have several ways that you may have communicated the situation to yourself. You may have said, “I’m not good enough, and that is why they left me.” Or you may have said, “I am glad they left, I was feeling depleted, and now I focus on other people who are better for me.”

The quality of your communication to yourself can change your world. Your communication with others creates a sense of unity and connectedness.

Language and communication prove to be very powerful in achievement and leadership. People who know how to use linguistic skills are more likely to come into positions of power. Politicians, trial attorneys, public speakers, and high-stake negotiators utilize the power of persuasive language to convince people of their point of view.

The greatest speeches from the world’s greatest leaders and progressive thinkers have inspired people throughout history and have used the power of words to create actionable changes in the

world. Your daily words become your habitual vocabulary, both in your mind and those you say out loud. Those words become your core beliefs, and ultimately, they determine your reality—your successes and your ability to bounce back from setbacks.

Albert Mehrabian published the book *Silent Messages*, which discusses his research theory about how much meaning is communicated through nonverbal communication. He concluded that:

- Of human communication, 7% are actual words. When someone is talking to you, the smallest part is what words they are actually saying.
- Tonality comprises 38%. The tone of voice that a person uses tells much more than the actual words.
- Non-verbal communication is 55% and comprises body language, facial expressions, breathing patterns, eye contact, and body positioning, which reveal a lot more than just words themselves.
- According to the 7-38-55 rule, 93% of interpersonal communication is nonverbal.

While that seems to be a pretty high percentage, and we may or may not agree with it, it does indicate to us that nonverbal communication is essential, regardless of the exact number we assign it. An interesting takeaway that I wish to highlight is that there are cues to observe when listening to someone beyond their words. There is a relationship between thinking, eye movement, and body positioning.

It is fascinating and incredibly useful to observe peoples' subtle body language indicators to gain a deeper understanding of how

they think, act, and secretly communicate their feelings and intentions without ever realizing they are doing it.

Have you ever spoken with someone and known that their words were not congruent with what they were thinking? I encourage you to pay attention to those subtle aspects of language and non-verbal communication. Beyond the words, it is extremely important to calibrate your communication and gain better control of your own effective messaging to strengthen and build rapport.

*Syntax* is the exact order or an arranged sequence necessary to produce a specific result. In the case of word syntax, the structure of words and sentences generates ideas and thoughts and conveys information. There is a big difference between “the dog jumped on the baby” versus “the baby jumped on the dog.” It is incredible how we can change the entire meaning by rearranging the same words in a different sequence pattern.

How you speak to yourself and others all contribute to your mindset. The words you choose determine your current state of mind. The key here is learning to choose your words wisely. Are you starting to see the importance of communication—both verbal and non-verbal?

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) studies the way thoughts affect behavior. Neuro-linguistic programming techniques help us look at our thoughts, behaviors, and emotions as things that we can control rather than things that passively happen to us. It looks at how the brain interprets signals and processes the information and how these interpretations affect our decisions and actions. I was first introduced to NLP in 1994 after I graduated college. At that time, Tony Robbins’ popular infomercial audio series, *Personal Power*,

was streaming on television channels with the promise to transform your quality of life from ordinary to extraordinary. And it did.

If you have attended any of his events or watched his videos, then you understand how his big personality motivates a crowd, and he leads everyone into a peak state of performance. He was the inspiration that started my personal growth and development journey and the impetus that led me to become an NLP master practitioner.

In most cases, people have no clue how or why they act or feel the way they do. If they were to create their emotional states consciously, they would likely opt for something quite different. Paying attention to your habitual language or the common word patterns you use to describe yourself, your mood, feelings, and emotions can help you learn to control your emotions and “break state” almost instantly. The words you attach to your experience *become* your reality. And when you substitute your choice of words, you provide yourself with new, improved emotional conditions.

You can rewire your brain and replace destructive thoughts and language patterns with better serving ones. Change your current negative vocabulary habits into positive ones beginning by monitoring your narrative over the next twenty-four hours, with no judgment, just observations. Then replace negative words with empowering words.

Here is a list of five words or phrases that will shift your emotional state and shape your decision-making process:

**Power of Words:**

1. I am
2. Yet

3. Now
4. Yes, No
5. Imagine

***I am:***

Two incredibly powerful words in our vocabulary are “I am.” Whatever words you put directly after “I am” is the truth you create in your life. Whether those words are true or not, those two little words are how you define who you are to yourself and to other people. They affirm your current state as opposed to *I can* or *I will*, which refers to a future command. The phrase “I am” strengthens your authority and conviction in the present moment. With practice, you will replace negative self-effacing statements with empowering words.

***Yet:***

Just because you do not know something does not mean you will not know something. Add the word “yet” to the end of a sentence, and you change everything—and I mean, *everything*.

*Yet* immediately shifts a negative statement of “I cannot do that” or “I do not know how to” into a confidently optimistic one. It closes the gap between what seems hopeless and encourages a more confident and optimistic outlook. It changes your way of thinking from impossible to possible. For example, “I do not know how to do that yet.”

***Now:***

This moment. Right here, right *now*. If you could have what you want at this moment, right now, would you feel happy? It is not a trick question. How would you feel if you could have what you want right now?

Whatever you want, whether money, love, food, or achievement, you will feel happy if you have it right now. The desire may be different for each of us, and the desire is different at each moment. If you are thirsty, water *right now* will make you happy. If you are cold, warmth *right now* will make you happy.

The concept of “now” seems so esoteric, mainly because our tendency is not to live in the present. Not now. Our mind’s attention is focused on ideas or memories from the past or predictions for the future. The power of now is to think about how you are in this moment.

*Now, in this moment, there is simply nowhere else to be.*

*Now, in this moment, I do not have to change anything or fix anything.*

*Now, in this moment, I can just be.*

*Now, in this moment, I am fully involved and present.*

Being aware of now, there is a tremendous relief from all the unnecessary resistance to the things you cannot change and empowerment in creating the next moment. Observe the impact of this awareness on how you are and everything you do. What do you notice now?

### **Yes, No:**

*Yes* implies acceptance, agreement, approval, and acknowledgment. When I say “Yes,” it means that I am totally on board. When we say *yes* to something, it also means we are saying *no* to something else. Think about it. If you say *yes* to going out, you are saying *no* to staying home. If you say *yes* to a job offer, you are saying *no* to another job. If you say *yes* to a marriage proposal, you are saying *no* to being single.

There is power in *yes*, and there is power in *no*.

Can you think of a time you said *yes* to doing something you did not want to do? How did it feel? Misaligned, right? We are all busy. We have all taken on too much. We spread ourselves too thin, we say yes to too many things, and as a result, we are overwhelmed, drained, perhaps a little resentful, and likely unfulfilled.

The thought-provoking book *Hell Yeah or No!* by Derek Sivers discusses ideas around re-defining yourself, changing focus, and saying yes to less. In a world where most high performers are hard-wired to do more, a doing mindset, the author talks about how doing less can be far more productive than doing more.

Sivers offers that when you are asked to do something, anything, it needs to be a “Hell yes” or a “Hell no” with your time. Nothing in between. There is no “Hell maybe.” His reasoning is this: If you say yes to the things that are not that important, you will not have time for the “Hell yes” stuff in your life that is important. When you say no to the more obligatory things that do not inspire you, you will have more time, energy, and focus for the things that will excite you.

There is a reason we do not say, “Hell maybe!” *Maybe* is unsure. *Maybe* holds you back from committing to do something or taking action. *Maybe* keeps you stuck because it becomes your way to avoid or postpone a decision. *Maybes* are non-committal, and people around you will not know what to expect from you or whether they can count on you.

If you seek the *yes*, if you seek approval or acceptance, you have to be willing to collect some *nos*. This holds in all areas of life: sales, business deals, and relationships. You must be ready to hear no. Many of the greatest inventions and success stories in history

endured countless rejections before receiving the *yes* that changed the world. In other words, the power of *yes* lives in the land of *no*.

***Imagine:***

*Imagine* if. . . *Imagine* doing. . . *Imagine* being. . . *Imagine* having. . .  
*Imagine* what it would be like. . .

Without the ability to imagine, we lose the ability to create new opportunities and possibilities. Children are so imaginative. They do not judge or limit their thought process; they just explore. We lose that creative flare somewhere along the line. Perhaps we think it is silly or just plain impossible, like the land of make-believe. Every iconic invention or idea, everything we know, big or small, was first imagined by someone. John Lennon, Walt Disney, and Steve Jobs are extraordinary individuals whose imaginations have transformed the world. They used their power of imagination, creation, innovation, and belief while facing adversity along the way to make what seemed impossible possible. Change *impossible* to *I am possible*.

If you are wondering how to start, the easiest way is to begin with one word. Replace one word, and it will transform the way you experience something. Observe when you use absolutes such as never, always, very, and completely. The reason I say “observe” is because sometimes you might intentionally choose to take such a firm position, but often, people tend to throw these absolute word phrases around out of habit, and it can draw you toward a fixed mindset. The bottom line is you must relentlessly audit your language. Tony Robbins tells us that transformational vocabulary gives us the power to change our experiences in life by lowering the intensity of negative emotions to the point where they do not control us. It can also enhance positive experiences and breakthroughs to even higher standards for ourselves.



### **KEY POINTS**

- Be aware of the power that verbal and non-verbal communication have in creating influence.
- Use power words. Remember, you are listening to what you say.
- Change your words, shift your mindset, and transform your life.



## CHAPTER 6

### Principle 2: Three Dimensional Vision to Overcome Inertia

Everybody wants a better quality of life, but almost all of us get stuck at times. Whether it is fitness and health, changing our body, improving the quality of our relationships, building financial wealth, or just being happy and fulfilled on a different level than where we are at, we all have that thing we desire.

We get stuck. We get trapped in an emotional pattern that leads to frustration, worry, and overwhelm. Sometimes we just get stuck in our ways until we have a breakthrough. The breakthrough shift in our entire perspective might be triggered by a conversation or maybe by hitting rock bottom. Eventually, something clicks inside of us and makes us look at life through a different filter in another way—a new insight.

In that moment, we make the *decision* to take back control of our life. This is the first of the three Ds for 3D vision: decision, disciplines, and develop.

### **3D Vision – Decision, Discipline, and Develop**

Your decisions shape your destiny. The quality of your decisions determines the quality of your actions and results. Think about a decision you have made in your life where you know if you had chosen otherwise, it would have altered the trajectory of your current circumstances, not necessarily for better or worse, but different. Maybe the decision was where to attend school or whether to accept a new job. Perhaps you decided to go to a party where you met the love of your life. Perhaps you attended an event and were introduced to someone so inspirational that, as a result, you decided to pursue a different career path. It is not only the big decisions that have the power to alter your life. Even the small ones, like what you choose to eat, can hugely determine the physical destiny of your health and well-being. Your choices create your destiny.

If you want a new experience in life, you must make new choices. If you want to improve your health, you can decide to change it. If you do not like your clothes, you can decide to change them. If you are not happy at your job or career, you can decide to change it; if you are in a bad relationship, you can decide to leave it. Everything in your life changes when you decide.

Trying is not the same as making a decision. The thought, *I will try to go to the gym today*, is not the same as deciding and committing *I am going to the gym today*.

We have all agonized over deciding what to do next at some point in our lives. Some decisions hang over our heads like a dark cloud, taxing our minds and draining our energy. We can decide not to decide, but this indecision does not solve the problem and creates stress, anxiety, and mental torment. Regardless of why you feel

paralyzed by options, the lack of decisiveness causes you to not be able to get out of your own way. Big decisions start with little decisions. When choices seem overwhelming, chunk them down into smaller ones.

If you want to change your results, you must become more conscious of your decision-making. Make new choices. People have a hard time sticking to their goals for many reasons. We discussed the root causes of fear and self-doubt—both of which can stop us. When faced with these mental blocks, things can happen to us that prevent us from working through them. Sometimes it is simply a fundamental disconnect to the original goal. We forgot what we had once decided to do.

Every goal worth pursuing or any acquisition of a new skill requires two things:

1. Consistent and deliberate action, and
2. Recognizing that it may be challenging.

You have to make a conscious, deliberate, and determined effort to reinvent your life. The solution for overcoming inertia lies in understanding the process of building self-discipline.

### **3D Vision – Decision, Discipline, and Develop**

Remember, a growth mindset is not something you are born with. You build it consistently over time. The same is true with discipline. Discipline is an unshakable commitment to stay the course and stick to it no matter what attitude. Discipline is choosing to put your future self's needs before your current self. While a fixed mindset leaves someone closed off to the ideas of using hard work and effort to learn as they go, the growth mindset is supercharged with these characteristics—the heart and soul of self-discipline. Self-discipline

recognizes that you define your future and enables you to put in the hard work. It is not a fixed trait. It is something you build, develop, and strengthen. You go to the gym, strength train, increase weight and intensity, and repeatedly continue to develop your muscles. It is no different with building discipline. Practice small decision-making and strong follow-through, and incrementally, you will build rock-solid self-discipline over time.

The time to act is when the idea is hot and the emotion is strong. If you feel strongly about something and do not take the first step, the feeling passes, and the idea dims. It is called “the law of diminishing intent.” You intend to, but if you do not translate that into action now, the intent starts to diminish, and a month, six months, or a year from now, you have built a pile of excuses that are standing in your way. You must set up a discipline when the emotions are high and the idea is strong, clear, and powerful. Otherwise, the wisdom is wasted. The emotion will pass if you do not put it into a disciplined activity and capture that wisdom right away. It is a bank account of equity disciplines, and you must continuously make deposits.

Here is what is essential about self-disciplines: All disciplines affect each other. Everything affects everything else. It is a domino effect. Some things appear to matter more than others, but really, everything matters. It is part of the educational process of personal development. If you do not purchase the sneakers, you probably will not go to the gym. If you do not go to the gym, you probably will not start the exercise planned. If you do not start exercising, you probably will not change your eating habits. You will not do wise things with your sleeping patterns and lifestyle choices. It will affect your sense of self-worth, your psyche in relationships, and likely other areas in your life as well.

All disciplines affect each other. Every lack affects the rest, so the key is to diminish the lack. The lack starts to erode your psyche. There is much temptation to ease up our efforts when distractions are all around us. Train and strengthen your discipline muscle by making it a habit. There are two ways to train this, according to Rubin of HappyRubin.com:

1. Have the discipline *not to do unwanted things*. For example, put the chocolate cookies away to avoid temptation each time you look in the cabinet. Turn your phone setting on ‘do not disturb’ so it is not a distraction to you.
2. Have the conviction to do *desired things*. Make your bed immediately when you get up. Start your day with tiny disciplines as a warmup. It is about the “idea” of applying discipline that flexes your discipline muscles.

Action starts by chunking your goal down into small and manageable steps. Disciplines are actions that follow thoughts. Start with a phrase like “I can, and I will,” and inspire yourself to action. No longer feed your excuses, and instead celebrate your progress. That is the key to discipline. I have created an eight-step discipline process based on the work from Impact Theory University and Tom Bilyeu’s iron-clad self-discipline.

### **Eight Steps to Rock Solid Self-Discipline**

I realize this is not a very sexy statement: Iron-clad self-discipline entails showing up messy, raw, and real. The truth is that none of us start off impressive. If we want to do something—learn a skill or take that next step—then we have to recognize that currently, at this moment, we are unable to do it. We are, in fact, inadequately equipped to accomplish that thing. This is not intended to derail you or cause damage to you. Knowing that there is a gap in our

abilities is a good starting point and highlights the opportunity for growth. The reality is, if you were completely able to do that thing right now, you would not need to strive for it. It certainly would not be a push for you. It would not provoke insecurity, fear, or conjure up feelings of self-doubt. In other words, discipline is the unrelenting willingness to push through the discomforts of inadequacy to be decisive in the face of uncertainty. Discipline is the mindset you need to build the skillset and accomplish what you want.

### **3D Vision – Decision, Discipline, and Develop**

Here is an eight-step process of how to build rock-solid self-discipline so that you can develop the skillset that you need to get out of your own way, do the things you want to do, and accomplish your goals. The things holding you back from being disciplined and sticking with your goals are going to fade away by using this very simple, direct eight-step process:

1. Optimize mind-body-energy
2. Credibility loop
3. Align
4. Build an identity construct
5. Chunk it down
6. Create rules
7. Fail forward fast
8. Effectively reward and punish

#### **1. Optimize Mind-Body-Energy**

Discovering how to live a healthy lifestyle to optimize your mind-body-energy cannot be achieved by hacks or shortcuts. Quick fixes are short-lived and will not provide long-lasting optimization. If you



want to ignite your sense of vitality, it comes down to four mandates for optimizing cognitive function and well-being:

1. Diet
2. Sleep
3. Exercise
4. Meditation

One of the tell-tale ways to know if you are optimizing your level of productivity, performance, and sense of clarity is by assessing your energy throughout the day. If you are tired and lagging throughout the day or unable to focus on tasks, there may be an underlying problem. Poor diet, inadequate nutrition, dehydration, lack of sleep, and daily stressors contribute to physical exhaustion and mental fatigue. Your body and brain will not function efficiently if they deal with problems instead of focusing on basic functionalities.

Have you ever experienced brain fog? It is an absolute inability to focus or concentrate. You are just so tired that you do not even want to concentrate. And clearly, you cannot even think clearly (pun intended). When you are in that foggy state of mind, it has everything to do with the mind-body-energy triad.

Proper diet, hydration, getting enough sleep, regular exercise, and meditation are critical in developing solid self-discipline. Discipline grows when your body is healthier, the mind is clearer, and energy is not depleted. Take scheduled breaks, get fresh air, drink more water, take time to relax, and minimize distractions so you can focus on substantive decisions. What is *your* plan?

## **2. Credibility Loop**

Get hyped on you. It is one thing to have ambition and another to believe in yourself. You can want to do something, but you will

likely be unable to withstand the difficulties if you do not *believe* that you can. You must earn credibility with yourself and others by building your self-worth and self-respect. At a minimum, showing yourself that you are credible will help you make big decisions and changes. You will benefit from believing that you *can and will* do anything if you put in the appropriate time and energy. It ties back to the growth mindset.

The best decision-makers have a set of tools to process the big decisions and feel good about their choices. It is a simple formula: Do small things successfully. Build your credibility loop. Develop the ability to make more significant decisions. Aim for the acquisition of skills to control behavior and build self-credibility.

Make a list of things that you have accomplished. Even if the list is short, you need to remind yourself that you can do hard things. Replay that tape of all the things you have accomplished in your mind repeatedly and build a fortress of your successes. Your future success in incremental progress is based on the belief that you can learn new things and acquire new skill sets. What is *your* plan?

### **3. Align**

Walk your talk. If I meet a person who says, “Do as I say, not as I do,” and their actions contradict their statements, they lose all credibility. I do not know if you feel the same, but I believe building credibility is about congruence and doing things with integrity. At the end of the day, it is about feeling good about who you are when you are by yourself. The question is, What is meaningful to you? This is your north star, so decide it and declare it. Tell people, friends, and family what you are up to and keep repeating it to yourself to hold yourself accountable and stay on track to get results.

Aim for what you care about, set a standard, build credibility for yourself, and live with integrity. It is critically important that you do not waiver - discipline is about pushing through when it gets hard, boring, challenging, painful, or uncertain. Making progress toward a goal can easily lead to sabotaging behavior. You might say to yourself, "I'm doing well, so now I can chill or slack or slide a little." You cannot let up. This is when you must ask yourself the question that got you started: "Why am I doing this?" Remember your *why* for staying motivated. What is *your* plan?

#### **4. Build an Identity Construct**

Build discipline into your identity. The way that you think about yourself needs to be empowering. Remember, walk your talk! You need to believe that you are the disciplined person who sets out to do something and then does that thing. Your own narrative is the real powerhouse of your identity construct.

Chapter five discussed the power of words, including "I am." Identity statements leverage your actions. Even if you do not believe it initially, build the statement and build the identity. Trigger your mindset and actions because you built a solid identity statement that reminds you that you can do it. Repetition is the mother of skill; you will become what you repeat.

Complete these phrases:

*I AM the type of person that will \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I AM willing to \_\_\_\_\_.*

#### **5. Chunk It Down:**

No matter how skilled you are at multi-tasking or handling several things at once, our brain's natural tendency is to organize

information into groups and patterns. When people do not reach their goals, it is usually because of poor organization inhibiting their success. It feels overwhelming to be *here* when you want to get over *there*.

To accomplish your goals and achieve further success, chunk it down. Help your mind handle the daunting task in front of you by breaking it into smaller steps.

Milton Erickson, a renowned psychiatrist, specializing in medical hypnosis, used this method with his clients' claustrophobia. He instructed them to go into a confined closet and close the door one inch further at a time. He did not have them go into the closet and shut the door immediately. He had them chunk it down incrementally. This method sets up for success and feeds into the credibility loop.

You do not have to go through a big change or transition all at once. Use the power of microlearning. Take that big idea or goal and break it down into smaller steps. Get more specific, probe for more details, and take one small immediate action toward that desired outcome. What is *your* plan?

## **6. Create Rules**

What are your personal rules? Personal rules are the rules you live by, the ones that you, and only you, have control over. They are the list of self-care that you need to do every day to live a life you are satisfied by. It is important to develop a disciplined set of rules in your life. When working with people struggling to move forward, a lack of rules in their routine is typically revealed early on.

Ironically, people think that rules trap them and that structure inhibits progress. I disagree. Discipline equals freedom. Creating

rules helps you avoid excuses. I have a rule that I will only snooze my morning alarm one time. No matter what. No matter how tired I am, I will get out of bed within one snooze. It is a rule I created for myself which became my discipline. When I walk my talk and get out of bed according to my rule, I live in alignment with my identity. It strengthens my credibility loop.

Whatever rules you set in place for yourself are intended to build and empower you. They hold you accountable and give you the freedom to do what you want. What is *your* plan?

## **7. Fail Forward Fast**

Many people fall short of reaching their goals because they are afraid of failing. I sure have. Since you chose to read this book, I am guessing that you, too, have opted out of doing something that you had once wanted to do. Typically, it is fear-based. It is critical to understand that failing and succeeding are two sides of the same coin. Most successes are achieved through a series of learning. Some call it failed attempts, so they have an excuse to give up. Others view it as a learning curve that leads them to victory. There are no failures, only lessons.

Be clear on the goal and be flexible with your strategy. If it is not working, pivot your strategy and move on fast. Feedback is an opportunity to reflect, review and revise so you can “fail forward fast.”

Almost everyone can name the man who invented the light bulb. But did you know how many missteps he encountered along the way? Thomas Edison once said, “I have not failed 10,000 times—I’ve successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.”

The universe's delays are NOT the universe's denials. What seems impossible now in the short term becomes very possible in the long term if you are persistent and disciplined in your actions. What is *your* plan?

## 8. Punish and Reward Effectively

The key word is *effectively*. Progress is important, and you want to recognize and celebrate your successes along the way. It is equally important to identify when you are not making progress and not strengthening your credibility loop. Effective punishment is giving yourself a little kick in the butt in whatever amount is needed to get you to take the appropriate action. And that is defined by whatever actions lead you most efficiently toward your goal. This is not about beating yourself up but rather about acknowledging what you have not done so you can powerfully move ahead. What is *your* plan?

The great thing about decisions, discipline, and develop is that they provide the framework for 3D vision. After that, it gets easier.

### KEY POINTS

- Your decisions determine the quality of your actions and results.
- Your choices shape your destiny.
- Use the eight-step process to build rock-solid self-discipline and develop the skillset to get out of your own way.

## CHAPTER 7

### Principle 3: Passion and Purpose

**C**onfucius says, “Love what you do and do what you love.” He also says, “If you choose what you love, you will never work a day in your life.” I certainly agree with the first part.

You should love what you do, and of course, you ought to do the things you love. Respectfully, I do not entirely agree with the latter statement. I do many things that require daily work, yet they are still a labor of love. I work out, and I choose to eat and live a healthy lifestyle. It is work, but I love it.

Let me offer you a few scenarios to demonstrate why I question that theory. Have you ever fallen in love? Whether it was love at first sight or developed over time, the initial honeymoon phase of a relationship is full of excitement. To maintain integrity over time, that love affair requires mutual work and consistent effort from both people. I do not know about you in your experience, but in my marriage, the effort we put into it and to one another is precisely what keeps the passion and love alive. Some people think the formula is 50/50, but it is really 100/100. Both must put forth full effort.

Anything worth having requires effort. Would you say that working hard at something means that you have stopped loving it? Hardly. Ask any athlete, and they will tell you that they have worked hard and devoted countless hours practicing because of their love for the game.

I have worked with many high performers from various walks of life. Some tell me they knew from when they were little exactly what they wanted to be when they grew up. Others say their parents enrolled them in classes, and at the time, they hated it. They were not very good, the work was exhausting, and they wanted to quit. As they acquired the skills and aptitude, they discovered a real passion and love for what they do. In retrospect, they thanked their parents for insisting they keep at it.

I am often asked:

- How do I find my purpose?
- What if I do not find my passion in life?
- How do I know I am on the right path?

You do not need to “find your purpose.” It is not out there! Instead, you create it. It is experiential. You create your passions and purpose by doing, being curious, trying new things, experimenting, and experiencing.

### **Everything Has Purpose**

Everything serves a purpose. Even if you do not see it now, one day, you will. We get so caught up in day-to-day obligations that we lose sight of our life’s purpose. We forget the important things—the big picture.

Ultimately, you must ask yourself these fundamental questions: Are the things you are doing lighting you up? Do they fill you with



enthusiasm and energy, or do they deplete you? These are my go-to questions for measuring passion.

David Allen, the creator of *Getting Things Done*, an online work-life management system, said, “You can do anything, but not everything.” You can have multiple passions. And they can evolve many times throughout your life.

Your passion is an expression of your purpose. When people ask, “What is your passion?” the true answer is rarely one thing. Passion and purpose are like puzzles where the pieces fit together even though they are not initially connected. Combine the tiniest amount of curiosity with doing things and experiencing new things, and you will begin to fit the pieces together.

If you want to unlock your full potential, you need to harness the power of passion. Why is passion so important? Well, for starters, it drives us. Passion is a catalyst, akin to “being in the zone” and fully immersed in an activity. In a world full of distractions, passion is what guides our focus and directs our attention to filter out the noise. Passion is an excellent teacher to stay present in the moment.

Passion elevates neurotransmitters such as norepinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin in the brain, all associated with motivation and sustaining uninterrupted focus for long periods. Passion catches momentum and flows in the direction that reveals purpose.

### **Passion to Purpose**

Initially, passion is self-fulfilling. It is all about doing what you love—the things you feel energized about. If passion is doing what brings you joy, then purpose answers a deeper question about why. The overlap of passion and purpose promotes service to others. This becomes a perpetual feedback loop.

How do we tap into our sense of purpose? Easy, start with your *why*. Become more acquainted with the reason behind what you are

doing and ask yourself, “Why am I doing this?” It circles back to that curiosity and self-inquiry. Simon Sinek, a best-selling author, and inspirational speaker, discusses the importance of *knowing your why*. He introduces the Golden Circle concept, encouraging us to start with WHY at the center. Once we know why we are doing something, it is followed by HOW, which are the specific actions we take to realize our “why.” Finally, the outer circle is the WHAT, which provides tangible proof of our efforts and validates our purpose.

The struggle for people is that they wait for everything to line up perfectly before they begin. The better action is to start where you are. Develop a curiosity and begin. Build an aptitude and acquire the skill set.

### **Self-Examination to Clarify Your Purpose**

The human mind is so vast and does not come with an owner’s manual, so our lives are an experiential journey. Unfortunately, many live a mundane existence filled with negative emotions and little self-reflection. There is an excellent technique for raising the quality of self-awareness, perhaps reassigning a different meaning to our experiences and clarifying our purpose.

The practice only takes minutes and is best done at the end of the day. The idea is to go through your entire day like a movie playing on a screen and watch it in your mind. Watch yourself in the third person, like a character in the movie. Because you are watching this footage, you view the experience from an outside perspective. In other words, you are dissociating your feelings and recalling the day’s unfolding from a neutral perspective.

As you go through the day in as much detail as you can recall, identify what things, interactions, and thoughts were pleasant. Here are some ideas to contemplate and questions to ponder:

1. *What did you do well?*
2. *What could you have done better?*
3. *Where were you most connected to feeling a sense of fulfillment?*
4. *When did you feel right? When did you feel wrong?*
5. *Watching the footage of your day, when do you feel like you would give a thumbs up to your efforts?*
6. *At what point in the day did you feel like a hero in your story?*
7. *Where were you not paying attention? Or not involved?*
8. *What did you do today that was purpose-filled?*

These questions help you see where and when you are anchored into your best self—the self that is generating energy, joy, and fulfillment. They also help to identify areas in your day that are depleting.

Watching yourself as a character in a movie in your mind is different from merely highlighting a few standouts from the day. It is not about picking or choosing moments but more about reviewing all. It is about identifying the experiences during your day where you were fully involved and present. Over time, you will discover the meaningful aspects of your days and focus on enhancing a deeper meaning in your life by devoting more time and energy to those things. This is how you create your purpose.

### **KEY POINTS**

- You don't find your purpose; you create it.
- When passion catches momentum, it directs our focus and attention. We are able to filter out the noise and remain present.
- Ask yourself better questions, and know your WHY.



## CHAPTER 8

### Principle 4: Goal All In

**W**hen you were young, what kinds of things did you wish for? A fancy car? A mansion? Winning the lottery? Something else?

How did you wish for it? Was it a thought in your mind? Did you write it down on paper? Did you pray for it to happen? Was it when you blew out the birthday candles?

Since childhood, we have been conditioned to close our eyes, make a wish, blow out the candles, and hope for our wishes to come true. We were not taught that anything else is required. Just simply blow out the candles and wait for them to magically appear.

A wish is passive. It hardly matters how it comes to be or how it shows up. That is a wish. And the wishful thinking carries over into adulthood: *I wish my body looked like that. I wish I had more money. I wish I could do, be, have [fill in the blank].* We have all had our share of such wishes. A dark side of wishful thinking is the built-in excuses it creates. However, we have not agreed to do the necessary planning and effort to attain it. The *work* part is omitted with this wishful

thinking, and we inadvertently create a sense of entitlement. I wished for it; therefore, I should have it.

Yet still, there is a difference between a wish and a goal. Goals are an essential part of life. They give us something to work for so we can constantly improve ourselves. Regardless of the goal, it seems that once you arrive at the desired outcome, there is always a new one—something more to learn or do. Goals have no limits.

Unlike a wish, goal-setting is an active process. You cannot achieve ambitious goals simply by closing your eyes and wishing for them to happen. I have identified six important criteria which will help you achieve your goals. Keep in mind your (1) *ambition*, (2) *commitment*, (3) *determination*, (4) *parameters*, (5) *flexibility*, and (6) *destination*. The path to success is always being paved, which implies that there will be ups and downs, gains and setbacks along the way. You must have a strong *desire* to make the necessary changes. You must remain focused and *committed* to your vision and purpose. Once you set a goal and you have a plan of action, you need to train yourself with a *determination* to follow through and stick to it. Carefully monitor your strategy and course-correct as needed. Come hell or high water, rain or shine, be *flexible* in your approach, and be prepared to do whatever it takes to get it done. Finally, your destiny—you shape your future *destination*. You have your own GPS (guided personal system)—your inner compass that navigates you through life and steers you on the path toward your goals and pursuits.

There is a concept in positive psychology called *prospection*, and it is the idea of bringing your mind to the optimal place that it needs to be *today* to address a *future outcome or goal*. What you envision for your future self is the very thing that drives your current behaviors.

At its core, it is connecting with the future state and identifying everything necessary to become that future version of yourself. Envision the time and place in the future where your goal or desired outcome has already happened. “I am here, and I want to be there in the future.” Now reverse engineer and work backward from that point. What did it take to become that future version of you?

Ideas for your future dictate your present-day motivation. If you cannot see it as a possibility, how likely are you to put in the required effort now? Probably unlikely. On the other hand, if you have an exciting vision for your future, how do you think that will impact the intensity of your day-to-day actions? Your future self is shaping your current identity and behaviors. Aligning your passions and purpose with desired outcomes will clarify your goals.

The principles outlined in the earlier chapters are an amalgamation of what resides in a growth mindset. We have the extraordinary ability to get exactly what we must have. We can achieve practically any of our wildest dreams, no matter how big or small. Napoleon Hill, author of *Think and Grow Rich*, said, “Whatever you can conceive and believe, you can achieve.” There are no limitations to the mind except for those we acknowledge.

You can make possible what others say is impossible. Do you recall the struggles of the fixed mindset with that notion of being boxed in and stuck with no ability to change, no vision for the future? Perhaps it is merely an inability to believe what cannot be seen. When a goal or desire seems impossible, you have two choices. The first is to build defenses as to why you are not chasing your dream and remain confined to a fixed way of thinking. The second option is to align your goals and mindset and act accordingly, with no excuses or limitations. It is your choice if you want to make it your mission to do whatever it takes to achieve.

The way people set and pursue their goals has a lot to do with whether they succeed or fail. Some common acronyms for goal setting include the ABC method—that a goal should be *Achievable*, *Believable*, and *Committed*. Another well-known strategy is the SMART method—*Specific*, *Measurable*, *Achievable*, *Realistic*, *Timely*. Yet, as useful as these are, some embedded limits are built in. Not all goals need to be safe. Some ought to be big, audacious, and unrealistic to stretch possibilities.

Multiple goals are okay. For instance, you might have fitness goals, romantic relationship goals, financial goals, and academic goals. One of the major challenges is that not all goals are created equally. Your goals can be short-term, moderate-term, or long-term.

One of the main reasons people do not establish lofty goals is that they do not want to disappoint themselves or others if they are not fulfilled. I agree that achieving goals does not always imply eternal happiness. However, I respectfully disagree with the concept that chasing ambitious goals leads to unhappiness. That is completely fundamentally false. Goals aid in our development. We should dream massive, expect the extraordinary, and hold nothing back. Strive for greatness in all areas of life, but remember that there is magic in the present moment. You have more certainty and control over your current actions than you do over any unknown, unpredictable future outcome.

People are dissatisfied not because they have high expectations but because they want life to be a certain way, and it is currently not. A goal is something you want to do or achieve that you do not have right now. However, the importance of intention setting—how do you want to feel right now?—is often underestimated. What can you do right now to feel like you are making progress towards your goal?



You must take immediate action. The key words are *action* and *progress*.

The best way to measure growth is by measuring yourself against yourself. Novelist Ernest Hemingway said, “There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self.” It is easy to compare yourself to other people, but you must remember that everyone’s best work is not always truthfully displayed on social media. Life is competitive, but it is not a race against anyone else. Instead, the only person you can measure your growth against is your former self.

I want to ask you an important question. Is the goal you currently have set a beginning point or an endpoint? Based on common thinking, the goal would be an endpoint, right? You want to win the marathon. You want to lose ten pounds. You want to make a million dollars in revenue this year. You want to take a luxury vacation. All these goals represent the desired outcome or endpoint.

But what if you flip the script and make your goals a place to *come from*, not a place to *get to*. Then the real question becomes, who would I have to *be* to create these results?

The journey, not the goal, offers the most valuable lessons. The significance of establishing goals is not in achieving them. The true purpose of setting goals is to encourage you to become the person required to achieve them. The greatest value comes from the skills, knowledge, discipline, and perseverance you will attain as you strive for that next-level status.

Who must you become to get all you desire? What skills do you need to hone? What abilities do you need to develop to improve? If you have a growth mindset, you believe that you can accomplish incredible things. Your ability grows to meet your hopes and

aspirations. The heart of goal-setting is soul-getting. The acquisition of the things you want is secondary.

Business management expert and author of *Good to Great*, Jim Collins, says, “If you have more than three priorities, you do not have any.” Research shows that when you have too many goals or pursuits at one time, you will end up having little progress in any of them. There is an old saying, “The man who chases two rabbits catches neither.” Remember, we can do anything, but we cannot do everything. It is important to prioritize two or three and table the rest for a future time. Whether the goal is an event, an experience, or something more quantifiable, it is best to have a specified outcome so you can measure your progress along the way.

The results you get (or do not get) ultimately point to the quality of the objectives you set for yourself and the actions you take. The bigger your vision for your future self, the bigger your leap will be. Confidence is a byproduct of the actions you take. Brendon Burchard calls it a “competence-confidence loop,” which is the idea that as we acquire more skill and gain competence, we are more confident to try and learn, and then we feel more motivated to try more and aim even higher.

One of the most impactful and inspirational high-performance coaches I had the privilege to learn from is Rich Litvin. He taught me about exponential coaching, exponential thinking, and exponential goal setting. The word “exponential” means explosive growth, increase, or becoming more and more rapid.

Exponential thinking is when you are riding on an exponential curve. The curve appears linear. If you look behind, it is a horizontal flat line. And if you look forward, the curve line is a vertical spike, an exponential curve. It requires bigger thinking. To achieve

significant and meaningful things, the demands are high, and one must lean into the very edge of discomfort. The common mistakes are that most people set their sights too low and underestimate the action required.



Most people's biggest mistake in life is not setting goals high enough. We live in a world where most people are aiming for 10% increases. There is nothing wrong with a 10% increase. Incremental thinking still yields advances and progress. Grant Cardone, an internationally renowned speaker and *New York Times* bestselling co-author of *The 10X Rule*, says that:

1. You must set targets for yourself that are 10X greater, not just 10%, than what you think you want or believe you can achieve.
2. You should take actions 10X greater than what you think is necessary to achieve your goal.

The only thing stopping you from achieving your goals and ambitions are your limitations set up in a fixed mindset. Learn what they are and then push further. Arthur C. Clarke, a science fiction

writer and futurist, said, “The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.” When you meet your limits, you may feel some resistance, and yet when seeing them in the rearview mirror, they become less troublesome as they fade away.

One of the biggest falsehoods is believing that not reaching your goal is the ultimate letdown. The true letdown is succumbing to mental blocks and not taking action. No action, no progress. You can accomplish impossible goals if you are willing to put in the time and effort required to actualize them.

The concept called “implementation intention” comes from Dr. Benjamin P. Hardy. It is a filter you create to actively plan for failures or setbacks. It is a strategy that becomes your automatic anchor when presented with something that might take you off track. If the action brings you closer to your goal, then it is a green light to proceed. If it is unclear or might negatively impact your efforts toward your goal, then it is a no, do not proceed.

There is a balance between “too difficult” and “too easy.” Studies show that high and hard goals are more powerful than low easy goals. Impossible goals are more motivating and exciting than the “within reach” and “possible goals.” I did not always agree with that sentiment, believing that setting big goals were unrealistic, unattainable, and discouraging. The implementation of an intention strategy creates a standard of commitment. If you decide to be fully committed to a goal and are willing to say no to everything that could deter you from that outcome, you remove obstacles and achieve your goal. Remember, you can do anything.

Earlier chapters revealed many common reasons why people remain stuck. You might have noticed that some methodologies reappear throughout the book. Some fundamental principles overlap and

bear repeating since they are the core framework for any change work.

One of the most classic personal growth and development books is *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. He says that a habit can be defined as an intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire. To successfully achieve any goal or next level of growth, you need to do what you have not done before: a physical, emotional, or mental habit. Unless you possess all three (knowledge, skill, and desire), a new habit cannot be created.

### **The Seven-Step Breakdown of Effective Goal Setting:**

Goal setting is vital because it helps you focus on what is most important to you. You can be passionate about numerous things, but prioritizing and deciding are crucial.

1. **Clearly defined goals** – Dare to dream BIG! What thoughts come up for you? Imagine what it would feel like if it happened. Even though it probably feels impossible right now, just keep going. Eventually, things will begin to take shape and point you in the direction of your ideal future self. One thing to remember is to aim for what you want rather than what you think you can get. This is a dream-focused behavior that will energize you towards something meaningful.
2. **Time-based goals** – When you set goals, the time frame you give yourself to achieve them makes a big difference. Goals are classified into four types: lifetime, long-term, moderate-term, and short-term.
  - **Lifetime goals:** This is the foundation for your goal-setting because it defines who you want to be and where you want to go in the future. These goals will take anywhere from a year to a lifetime to accomplish. When you imagine a future version of yourself and who you want to be, you are looking

at the "big picture." These are the foundational goals essential for appropriately breaking down these lifetime goals into smaller, more manageable goals.

- **Long-term goals:** These are your primary objectives. They must have specific time constraints, typically five or ten-year goals. You want to ask yourself, "Where do I see myself in ten years?" Consider what you hope to accomplish. These are broad aspirations that will take time to implement and require planning. For example, if you want to be a doctor, that would be the lifetime goal, and attending medical school would be the long-term goal.
  - **Moderate-term goals:** This type of goal ranges from six months to a year. It serves as a significant milestone to assist you in achieving your long-term goals and ensures that you are working towards your lifelong dreams and pursuits. Let's stick with the doctor example: Taking the entrance exams and submitting your medical school applications is a reasonable moderate-term goal that bridges the gap between where you are now and the ultimate goal you want to achieve.
  - **Short-term goals:** These are the goals that you work toward daily. The time period ranges anywhere between now and six months in the future. A few examples might include registering for classes, setting semester goals, and preparing your studies for upcoming exams.
3. **Write it down** – Many studies show that people who write down their goals are more likely to achieve them. You must have a game plan and develop strategic thinking about what you need to work on to move the needle and achieve your goals. What abilities do you possess? What skills are required? What actions or training do you need to take? Make a list of your ideas and

then define them further by using the four different types of goals from step two. Remember that your long-term and lifetime goals should feel BIG. Your goals are not meant to be completed right now. They are intended to make you feel excited, motivated, and a little uneasy when you say them, but instead of dismissing them as impossible, imagine that they are possible. These goals are not a part of your current reality; rather, they represent an opportunity. Grab a pen and just start writing about what lights you up.

4. **Make some noise** – Goals are not a secret birthday wish. Tell people about your ambitions. Declare your goals aloud and hold yourself accountable to them. Your ideas must be heard, and you may even inspire others with your mission. If you do not talk about your goals, no one will hear you, and they will not be able to support, assist, or cheer you on. Consider it, write it down, and say it aloud. Furthermore, each time you mention your goals, you will reaffirm them in your mind, and they will become real to you.
5. **Schedule it** – If it is not on your calendar, it is unlikely to happen. Priority lists on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis are essential. Establish time limits and deadlines for your tasks. For example, if you want to exercise, schedule it during the week and hold yourself accountable. If you want to be a writer, you must set aside time to write. Otherwise, your time will fly by, things will come up (as they always do), and you will make no progress. Decide whether you prefer a digital scheduling software or a paper planner, and begin blocking time to do what you say you want to do but have not gotten around to.
6. **Reflect, remove, and revise** – The average attention span used to be around thirty minutes. According to current studies, people's attention spans are only a few seconds long, which means that it is very easy to get sidetracked from your goals.

Make every effort to eliminate distractions from your focus and productivity. This could be thought of as a "life-wide spring cleaning." Ask yourself: What is working? What is not working? Identify what is preventing you from making progress, and then find the resources or support you need to resolve it. Keep your end goal in mind, and be flexible in your approach. Maintain a progress sheet to track your successes and make adjustments as needed.

7. **Get out of your own way** – It is impossible to live intentionally if you do not have a clear idea of who you want to be in the future. You must do the inner work to get out of your own way. Sure, there will be some unexpected bumps along the way, but the majority of reasons we do not set out and reach our goals are due to internal obstacles and fabricated doubts. Allowing your preconceived notions and limited views to define your objectives is a mistake.

Consider this: You have not met your future self yet, so why put limitations on what that version of you can accomplish? Make a plan to get from where you are now to where you need to be in order to achieve your goals.

### **KEY POINTS**

- A goal is a place to come from rather than a place to get to.
- Set short, moderate, and long-term goals.
- The heart of goal-setting is soul-getting. The outcome is secondary.



## CHAPTER 9

### Principle 5: Limitless Energy

Everything you have read in this book presupposes you have the energy to follow through. Even if you believe and have the skills, knowledge, and resources to act, it will be difficult to channel your best efforts if energy levels are low or your health is compromised. A challenge for most people is that they have great goals, tremendous possibilities, and things they want to achieve but barely have enough energy to get through the day. They work hard day in and day out, but they typically come home, eat dinner, are completely wiped, watch some television, and go to bed. Rinse and Repeat. No time is carved out for personal care, self-reflection, or to work on their goals for themselves. Ironically, we all charge our cellphones and computers to make sure they are powered up, but do we re-charge ourselves?

Anything in life worth pursuing requires an investment of your energy. Most people are held back from pursuing their dreams and desires not because they do not have the ability or the intelligence but because their emotional stamina and physical endurance fizzle. Everything becomes exponentially more challenging when you do

not have the necessary energy levels to meet your daily demands. Health is wealth. If you are not creating the habits that produce a healthy lifestyle, chances are you will not lead a truly wealthy life. Let's say, for example, you have all the money in the world that you need to afford a dream house, luxury vacations, multiple cars (if that is your thing)—all the material things money can buy—yet if you are unhealthy or just completely burnt out and stressed, does any of that really matter? Would you agree that some of the richest people are still poor because they only have money?

Whatever stage of life we are at, our emotional fitness and physical strength will dictate our performance. When we master our own psychology, we become *limitless thinkers*. When we take care of our body at a fundamental level, we generate sustainable energy to live a truly magnificent life. Our energy is so important for a healthy life.

When was the last time you made a real commitment to getting in the best health of your life? Unfortunately, few of us take the time to really think through our philosophy toward health and wellness. We spend billions of dollars worldwide searching for the fountain of youth to yield alluring beauty and the promise of amazing fitness and vitality. Yet, societally, we are highly conditioned to seek convenience and quick-fix solutions.

Despite advancements in science, technology, and pharmacology, millions suffer from health-related conditions. The marketing industries appeal to our senses, and often unconsciously, they influence our critical thinking. There are so many conflicting messages in contemporary media regarding the potential benefits or harms of certain health protocols. We are left not knowing what to believe or what it takes to avoid disease and experience optimal health.

Understanding how to increase energy is not simply an issue for athletes or those who are physically active. Everyone benefits from knowing how to boost energy and improve performance every day, whether company owners, employees, academic students, or caregivers. When it comes to the holistic nature of energy, mastering the strategies for reaching your peak state of cognitive alertness and physical vitality will generate more energy, allowing you to accomplish more throughout the day.

Usually, people emphasize a need for physical energy when mental energy proves just as important. To quickly increase energy, people rely on coffee, energy drinks, and other stimulants, which harm your overall well-being and lead to energy drops or dependence. On the other hand, natural energy boosters will restore and rejuvenate your mind and mood.

If this is you, make a habit of prioritizing physical strategies that will help your body adapt to a new, healthier way of living. To control your everyday demands and transform challenges into opportunities, you need a focused approach to improving your mental and physical energy.

You require a higher level of energy quality to function on a higher plane of existence. Being energetic means different things to different people. For a kid, being energetic means running around and playing games. For a student, it means having the mental fortitude to learn and study for hours at a time. For the athlete, it means having the physical endurance and stamina to train. For a business executive, it means the mental sharpness to be alert and productive.

Dr. Deepak Chopra is considered by many to be one of the foremost experts in psycho-neuro-immunology (PNI). He has spent

his entire life dedicated to research in integrative medicine and personal transformation. He has been at the forefront of merging western medicine with Ayurveda, the ancient system of medicine that originated thousands of years ago during the Vedic period in India.

From an Ayurvedic viewpoint, our five senses are the gateway from our shared external world to our personal inner world physically, mentally, and emotionally. We receive input which is then processed, assimilated, and subsequently becomes a part of our being.

The adage “You are what you eat” is outdated. More accurately, “You are everything you ingest” represents a more unified view of health and wellness depending on an interconnected balance between the mind, body, and spirit. You are a product of everything you ingest from the external world, knowingly or unknowingly. We ingest from multiple sources, so it is essential to be selective of what we take in via all our senses. Be intentional about what you consume and be responsible for your energy in the world. Developing and maintaining positive and upbeat energy involves more than simply thinking happy thoughts. It is the belief that despite any current challenge, all situations will work out favorably in the end.

Energy is sourced from the foods we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the natural sunlight we are exposed to, and the people we interact with and communicate with. We are biological systems, and we must understand this to protect ourselves at a cellular level. Mindful practices, a healthy diet, adequate exercise, and proper rest and sleep are directly linked to improved mental alertness, cognitive performance, handling stressful situations, and overall increased stamina in everything we do.

I could devote an entire book to each one of these topics, but for the sake of energy, as it relates to a growth mindset, I want to share some methods and practices that will dramatically help you to increase energy and productivity to do the things you want to do.

When I use the term energy-amplifying practices, it reflects the full spectrum of vibrancy, including mental stamina, physical endurance, and emotional stability. The good news is that your energy, like your growth mindset, is not a fixed state. You generate it. How? Below, I have outlined several ways to optimize your energy and vibrancy.

## **Eleven Hacks to Generate Limitless Energy**

**1. Identify your peak energy.** What would you do if you gained a few extra hours in the day? We obviously cannot add a twenty-fifth hour, but if you can identify your current habits that consume energy, you can more effectively capture and optimize your creative energy. Some people wake up revved up and ready to start, feeling the most creative and energetic in the morning. Others find they generate more energy in the afternoon, and some people prefer the late evening hours.

It does not matter when your creative energy is at its peak. It is important to understand when it occurs and arrange your work around that time. An excellent way to identify your peak creativity and energy is to track it over a few days. Create a spreadsheet for the week, including hourly increments. Use a Likert scale (1-10) to assess your energy at various times. Set a reminder for yourself each hour and note your energy levels throughout the day. Once you have tracked your energy for a week, review it and look for recurring patterns.

**2. Master transitions.** I call it the *task-transition method*. People frequently go from one task or activity to the next, juggling many things throughout the day in a fast-paced, multi-tasking world. It is no surprise that individuals feel drained and exhausted later in the day. Without any sort of pause between various tasks, and the changeovers from one activity to the next, we lose energy rather than generate it throughout the day. It is imperative that you identify where you notice and experience smooth transitions in your day.

It is essential to handle transitions with a two-minute pause to maintain high energy levels. Between significant activity changes, close your eyes for two minutes. Set an intention for how you want the following action to look and feel in the privacy of your thoughts. For example, if you are sitting at your desk drafting an email and the next activity is a presentation in the conference room, close your eyes for two minutes and repeat the phrase "release and reset" silently. Set your intention for the next activity before you open your eyes. In this example, imagine how you will portray yourself during the presentation. You are essentially releasing tension and resetting with a new intention.

Another example: At the end of the school day or workday, people typically jump immediately into their next role or the next phase of the day, with no time to mentally prepare. You will be more attentive to your partner, children, or friends if you consciously switch gears from the prior activity into family mode. Taking two minutes acts as a buffer and helps you transition smoothly and successfully. It unquestionably generates energy and awareness in your next task, and as a result, you elevate your energy and improve your performance. Try it. Before entering your home, take two minutes, close your eyes and consider how you want to feel and be.

See where else you can incorporate the task transition method into your day.

**3. Eat healthy meals.** Proper nutrition is essential for maintaining your energy levels. Junk food, processed foods, and sugar not only make you feel sluggish, but they can also contribute to further health-related problems. To have more energy, you must establish a sustainable diet that includes low-toxicity foods, wholesome, nutrient-dense foods, water, and physical movement. Without getting into particular diet protocols, a universal rule of thumb is to eat foods closest to nature in their natural form. According to Ayurveda, a principle for optimizing the assimilation of nutrients and digestion is the “one-third principle.” This rule suggests solid foods we eat ideally occupy one-third of the space in our stomach, and liquids occupy the next third. The remaining third is reserved for interstitial space to maximize the digestive process. A benefit of adhering to this principle is never leaving the table feeling overly full or stuffed, which inadvertently compromises digestion causing lethargy and fatigue. It is encouraged to drink small sips rather than big gulps during your meal. And lastly, pay attention to your body's responses to what you are consuming. Rather than deeming any food as good or bad, it is more effective to observe how it makes you feel physically and mentally. Not doing so can compromise your energy levels and affect your stamina, mood, and productivity.

Many people have an all-or-nothing approach to diet and healthy eating. They either want to change everything or nothing at all. Let me share some good news for you: It is best to modify one or two items at a time and do so incrementally to get better feedback from your body and track changes more efficiently. Furthermore, because the human experience is predicated on seeking pleasure, it is best to not try and eliminate all of the things we enjoy eating but rather

strive to make gradual, healthy adjustments over time. With that in mind, what are two things you can start incorporating right now to improve your eating habits?

**4. Breathe.** When was the last time you focused on your breathing? We do not stop to think about our breathing since it is an involuntary action that comes naturally. However, there are many health benefits to conscious breathing. It is one of the most effective strategies to help oxygenate your body and improve lymphatic circulation. In Sanskrit (a classical language of Indo-European culture), the word *prana* means energy, and *yama* means regulating or controlling. *Pranayama* uses breathing practices to "regulate the flow of energy" in our bodies. It involves conscious manipulation and control of the breath through retentions. This is a therapeutic healing benefit of yoga practice.

We know that long deep breaths alleviate stress and have a calming effect. The breath has more layers than simply inhaling and exhaling. Extending the breath's length and retention at the top of the full inhalation or the bottom of a full exhalation impacts our energy, vitality, and concentration. In part, conscious breathing can control emotional states and influence our mood. Many breathing practices, including box breathing, rhythmic, holotropic breathwork, alternate nostril breathing, quick forced exhalation techniques, diaphragmatic breathing, and many others, effectively shift the energetic state physiologically, mentally, and spiritually. Depending on the desired effect, whether it be a stimulating, calming, detoxifying, or balancing effect, breathwork techniques support those needs and provide mental clarity and enhanced energy.

A simple yet powerful breathwork is the *1-4-2 ratio*. It will take just a few minutes, yet it will establish lingering and lasting benefits.



Begin with ten rounds of this breathing practice, two to three times each day in the ratio of 1-4-2. For example, inhale for four seconds, hold for sixteen seconds, then exhale for eight seconds. Over time, you do more repetitions and can scale the ratio and breath lengths as you become comfortable with the ratio.

**5. Guard your energy.** If we are not careful, many things can rob our energy and creative flow throughout the day. And while there are exceptions, you need to become ruthless about safeguarding your energy. Otherwise, you will be pulled in many directions taking you off course and depleting your energy. Notice when, during your day, you are being protective of your energy.

**6. Set reminders.** Four things define your emotional state:

1. Full engagement and presence,
2. A sense of joy,
3. Gratitude, and
4. Confidence.

Set alarms at different times of the day to remind yourself to check in with your mental, emotional, and physical energy. How present are you in what you are doing? How can you bring more joy into the moment? Identify what you are grateful for at any given moment, and it will result in a new sense of energy. And remember, confidence is a byproduct of taking actionable steps. Focus on the other aspects of your emotional wellness, and you will discover greater confidence. Whether an app on your phone, an alarm clock, or a daily planner, decide the best method to hold you accountable for incremental reminders throughout your day.

**7. Generate good vibes.** At least twice a day, pause what you are doing and bring your attention to the area surrounding your heart. Place your hands over your heart and fill your mind with pleasant

thoughts (past, present, or future). Imagine yourself fully immersed in the experience. Feel the joy, and you will discover that this simple exercise transports you to a specific place, perhaps a memory of someone or something or a future opportunity that floods your body and mind with positive energy, raising your vibrational frequency.

**8. Be the gatekeeper.** Stand guard to the door of your mind. Empower yourself by conditioning qualities like grit, courage, perseverance, determination, appreciation, compassion, and love. (More on grit and perseverance in chapter eleven). Our emotions and mindset can be our most powerful allies in generating energy. Consider yourself the landlord of the most valuable property—your mind and body. Would it not seem absurd to allow bitter, negative tenants to occupy your space rent-free? You are the gatekeeper; do not allow other non-supportive people or limiting thoughts to invade your valuable mind space. Kick them to the curb and replace them with higher valued content.

**9. Rest and sleep.** When you are tired, you do not properly consider the consequences of your actions. As a result, you are more inclined to make poor decisions. Making decisions can be difficult. No matter how trivial or monumental a decision is, it requires energy. You are fried at the end of the day, and you simply want to relax and unwind. But here is the thing: You are exhausted, and therefore, the choices you make when depleted are most likely not the best options. This is precisely why dieters tend to eat well throughout the day, and at night they binge eat whatever they can get their hands on.

Your decisions, particularly in the evening, have a significant impact on the quality of your sleep, which is the momentum that determines alertness and vitality the following day. Our bodies have

a remarkable capacity to rebalance themselves. Even if you had a terrible night's sleep, you could probably get through the next day without missing a beat. However, if you repeatedly do not get enough sleep and continue to work, your energy levels will plummet, and your performance will suffer. Because we are all unique people with various physical and cognitive needs throughout the day, how much sleep is optimal for each of us may vary. However, numerous studies suggest that a minimum of seven to eight hours of sleep each night is recommended to improve mental and physical energy throughout the day. Set up what you need and adjust your sleep schedule so you can make clearer, better decisions.

**10. Avoid distractions.** Warren Buffett was conversing with his pilot and asked if he might like some support with his life and career. The pilot took him up on the offer, and Buffett requested that he write a list of the top twenty-five things he wanted to do before he died. The pilot performed as instructed and came back with his list. Buffett then instructed, "Now, choose the top five items from your list." The pilot returned with his top five, and Buffett asked him what he intended to do with the other twenty. The pilot told Buffett that he would get around to them in his spare time. Buffett looked him in the eyes and, as I paraphrase, said, "No. That was your mistake. Those twenty have now been added to your 'avoid at all costs' list. These are the things that slow you down and deplete your energy."

Write down your "avoid at all costs" list. Start by creating your list of twenty-five things you want to do. Then narrow it down to your top five. Focus on those for now, and you will omit the things that are current distractions.

**11. Audit your energy.** This is an opportunity for you to list all the things, people, places, and habits that either fill you with or drain

you of energy. If something zaps you of energy, you can entirely distance yourself from it or remove it from your life. This relates to the *hell yes* and *hell no* principle. What are you saying yes to that you really do not want to do? And what things are you not making room for that you really want to do? As you take notice of all the obligatory nuances that zap your joy and enthusiasm, you will begin to audit and preserve your energy.

### **KEY POINTS**

- A flow state of mind and physical vitality will generate more energy, allowing you to accomplish more throughout the day.
- Energy is sourced from all five senses – we are a product of everything we take in, knowingly or unknowingly.
- Be intentional about protecting your energy. Use the eleven hacks to generate limitless energy.

## CHAPTER 10

### Principle 6: Modeling Excellence

**H**ave you ever noticed that if you are near someone who yawns, you suddenly have the urge to yawn? Some say that yawning is contagious, but it is not, at least not in the literal sense. Yawning is said to be contagious due to social mirroring. We have all heard the phrase, “Monkey see, monkey do.” But have you ever thought about what that means?

Humans have evolved by mimicking others, including verbal and non-verbal behaviors and emotions. The study of imitation dates back to Darwin, who wrote detailed scientific descriptions of mimicry in animals. Over several decades, neuroscientists have discovered brain cells called mirror neurons in monkeys. These cells were activated when the monkeys carried out a specific action after observing the action from another monkey or individual. When a person reached out to grab a nut, the monkey’s mirror neurons fired up, and the monkey modeled the behavior and reached out for a nut, too; hence the popular idiom, “Monkey see, monkey do.”

Humans have mirror neurons that are far more evolved than monkeys. Neuroscientists regard mirror neurons as an important

breakthrough in our understanding of the human brain. Direct stimulation explains how we do simple and more complicated tasks and their social and behavioral meanings. Mirror neurons are activated when a person exhibits an emotion associated with a behavior, and other people reflect a comparable emotion or activity. A social phenomenon known as "emotional contagion" explains why we feel happy when we see someone smile or why a negative personality can drain the joy from a room. This explains why we yawn when we see someone else yawn.

Andrew N. Meltzoff, a developmental psychologist, is known for his groundbreaking research on infant and early childhood imitation and cognition, which revealed that infants and newborns (as young as forty-two minutes old) have rudimentary imitation abilities. Children learn and mimic behaviors from others, particularly their parents, older siblings, friends, and the television.

"You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with," said Jim Rohn, a motivational speaker, entrepreneur, and co-author of *My Philosophy for Successful Living*. Who you are is largely shaped by the people you associate with. They impact your actions, attitudes, what you do, and your decisions. They even impact the results and outcomes realized.

Some people hold you back while others encourage you forward. This is a fact of life. Your inner circle is usually comprised of people you respect and admire. Friends, family, coworkers, and confidants can either quash your ideas and deflate your ambitions by lowering your "upper limit," or they can provide accountability and support and serve as an emotional bedrock in times of need. But make no mistake, you and the people closest to you mirror and adopt features from each other. The activities, decisions, ideas, and behaviors of individuals around you inevitably shape and influence your day-to-

day perspectives, whether you are conscious of it or not. So it is important to think about who you are spending your time with, the company you keep, and the impact these individuals have on your life.

Spend enough time with someone, and you will begin to think like them, say things the same way they do, and act the same way they do. Would any of that raise concerns? The takeaway here is there is an influence in shaping the construct of your social environment.

It all comes down to mirror neurons. Our brain cells respond when we do something or observe someone do the same thing. You are less likely to excel if you are surrounded by people who do not hold you to a higher standard. Fortunately, the inverse is also true. You are more likely to reach your full potential when surrounded by inspiring, positive people. The most common reason people join organizations and groups is to be surrounded by like-minded people who share similar goals and interests.

Surprisingly, you can also learn from less successful people, those you would not want to emulate or model yourself after. If you want to be healthy, pay attention to how unhealthy people live and take note. Seeing what you do not want can provide useful information. Pay attention to what successful people say and do. Practice your listening skills. Keep looking out for the subtle differences that move the needle from good to great.

I attended a leadership event early in my coaching career and was blown away by something one keynote presenter said. He said a poor person should take a wealthy individual out to dinner and listen to them because they are likely to drop life-changing ideas into their lap.

"Success leaves clues," as Jim Rohn popularized the phrase. Be a better observer of the winners and losers, those who are succeeding, and those struggling. Take a mental note and say to yourself, "I'm going to adjust what I'm doing based on what I see."

If someone is successful at something more than once or even twice, it is not merely luck. They have a method. They may not even realize they have a strategy, but they do.

If you want something other people have in life, do not think it is because someone else has a rare or unique gift. They may have been born with a natural talent, but they had to work hard to hone it. Any level of achievement, expertise, or mastery necessitates proper effort, discipline, and practice.

Does this ring a bell? A growth mindset is made up of these elements. You can reap the same rewards if you plant the same seeds. You can reproduce the same desired goal by studying what that individual did to reach their degree of accomplishment.

"Success leaves clues," but you have to be willing to seek and pursue them. People fascinate me, and I enjoy studying them. I am constantly observing people, watching how they walk, talk, and communicate, as well as the tonality of what they say (or do not say). I wonder who they learned from, who inspired them, and how they realized their potential. I am curious about their daily routines, strategies, practices, and disciplines.

Mentors and role models are all around us. Even if you do not have anyone in your direct proximity, look into online community groups and books that can provide supportive inspiration. Hundreds of pages were written by authors solely to educate and inspire you somehow. The chances are that someone has done it before, no



matter your career path or what you want to do with your life, personally or professionally.

The process of replicating greatness is called *neuro-linguistic programming*. By learning the beliefs, physiology, and precise thought processes that underpin the skill or action, we may model any human behavior. The creators of neuro-linguistic programming, John Grinder and Richard Bandler, were attracted by the work of numerous highly recognized psychotherapists who were obtaining outstanding results with their patients in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They combined approaches and theories from other well-known mental health experts and researchers. They studied the behavior and language patterns of these highly effective change agents in order to figure out how to apply and teach these skills to others so that they could be replicated.

Could they put what they learned to use? And, of course, the answer was yes. We can absolutely model and reproduce other people's success. Grinder and Bandler's work resulted in the creation of the NLP meta model, a systemized approach to producing repeatable patterns to aid communication to experience their fullest potential.

Modeling is a straightforward skill: What is this person doing that no one else is doing? In what ways are they succeeding? This is not limited to material wealth. Perhaps you are looking for someone who is emotionally, spiritually, physically vibrant, and financially inspiring. What distinguishes their values, morals, and beliefs from those of others? What sets them apart from the rest of the pack? How can you use these to improve your game?

Here is an insightful exercise. Consider someone you admire and respect. It might be a prominent person who is either still alive or has passed away. This individual has touched your life somehow,

whether through their contributions, service, or knowledge, and they have earned your respect. Now assume you had the opportunity to get to know this person. Who do you think it would be?

Let's say you have five people to choose from. You get to spend an afternoon with each of them and ask them anything you want. Who would these five people be? Choose what you would discuss with each of them. Imagine for a moment that you have the ability to think and act like any of them. It is important to remember that it is not limited to world leaders or celebrities. These are the five people you admire the most. Consider their emotional intelligence, as well as any distinguishing characteristics you perceive. What are some of their attributes that you would like to embody? What impact would this have on your life? How would this transform your choices and actions?

With this imaginative exercise, you have already taken the first step in psychological modeling. Understanding the process of behavioral modeling makes it empirically possible to adopt, model, and replicate what you want to be. We have been doing it our whole lives, but now you can choose who and what to model after.

There are many examples of people achieving excellence nowadays; there is no need to reinvent the wheel. You can deconstruct those processes by looking at their language patterns. Identify the intricacies of why and how these people are successful, then extract the pieces and adapt them to yourself.

Most successful people have utilized modeling the performance of others. If it is possible for someone else, it is possible for you to learn and then teach to others. When you teach something, you get

to learn it twice!—you learn by teaching them and by doing, which reinforces what you have already learned.

There are two approaches to modeling:

1. Study the patterns, habits, and desired skillsets of others. When you follow in their footsteps, you will be able to break free from old paradigms that have held you back. You gain new perspectives that allow you to generate opportunities that are limitless in scope.
2. Take inspiration from your own successes and victories. Determine what worked in the past and apply it to your current situation. The potency of a growth mindset is reinforced by the fact that you have done it before, and you can do it again.

To be successful in modeling, you must choose the proper person and study everything you can about them. What obstacles did they have to overcome, and how did they do so? Ask yourself if there are any parallels between their stumbling blocks and yours.

There are two ways to observe. The first is *sight*, which is seeing with your eyes, and the second is *insight*, which is seeing with your intellect. When you look with your eyes, you see objects; when you look at things with your mind, you see answers.

In *Sherlock Holmes and a Scandal in Bohemia*, Sherlock asks Dr. Watson how many stairs lead up to their apartment. Watson climbed those steps several times a day, yet he had no idea how many there were.

Holmes responds that he knows there are seventeen steps since he has both seen and observed them. He distinguishes between someone who sees but does not observe. This differentiation is ideal for building your sight and insight. Pay close attention to details.

One final note on modeling. It is critical that you do not lose your sense of self in modeling others. You want to improve yourself without sacrificing your identity. You are who you are. Even if you are temporarily replicating, modeling, or acting like someone else to excel, you are not that person. Always stay true to yourself.

### **KEY POINTS**

- Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) Modeling is the process of modeling excellence.
- We can achieve a desired outcome by studying the behaviors and strategies that underlie the particular skill or behavior. Remember, success leaves clues.
- You are more likely to realize your full potential when you surround yourself with inspiring, positive people.

## CHAPTER 11

### Principle 7: Get the Grit

*“It’s hard to beat a person who never gives up.”*

*– Babe Ruth*

**H**ave you ever considered what it takes to succeed at such a high level? What makes successful people tick psychologically? *Grit* is the one thing that all great achievers and elite performers have in common.

According to research, grit is an even better predictor of success than IQ, skill, ability, or sheer talent. Grit is a combination of persistence and resilience. It is about having unwavering conviction in your ability to complete what you started. Gritty people persist in overcoming obstacles. They stick with things long after the fun phase is over, no matter how long it takes. When it comes to grit, it is rarely an overnight success.

The difference between those with grit and those without boils down to effort and mindset. Grit is built on the foundation of a growth mindset that allows people to see challenges and setbacks so they can learn and improve.

Carol Dweck and her research team looked at the impact of effort and praise on development in a number of studies. One study followed 400 fifth-grade kids from across the country. A ten-question non-verbal IQ test was administered to all of the children. After completing the questions, they were praised in one of two ways: One group was praised for their intelligence, "You must be really smart at this." The second group was praised for their efforts, "You must have worked really hard at this." Though the difference seems small, it had a significant impact.

Here is what occurred:

For their next test, students were given two options. Option one was that their next test would be much more difficult, but they would have greater learning opportunities. Option two was that the next test would be as simple as the first test, so they would perform well.

This is where things started to get interesting. Sixty-seven percent of the children praised for their intelligence chose the easier option, while 92% of the children praised for their effort chose the harder option.

The results of these studies are fascinating. It turns out that children and adults alike who are praised for their intelligence or talents are less motivated learners. This kind of praise shines a light on what is called the *innate-intelligence mindset*, which makes them more fearful of messing up. They have been labeled as smart and do not want to disappoint. As a result, they develop a fixed mindset by playing it safe, limiting their potential. They become less willing to take risks. They are more prone to cheating or giving up. Overall, they are less confident in their ability to succeed.

By contrast, praising effort and commending the process fosters a willingness to attempt difficult tasks and take on new challenges. Essentially, grit.

Next, Dweck and her research team handed the students a difficult test designed for them to fail, so they could observe how the students approached the challenge. Dweck noted that the students who were originally praised for their effort worked harder and longer and actually enjoyed the test more than the people who were praised for their intelligence. In fact, this group became very frustrated with the test and gave up quickly.

After the manufactured failure round, the children were then given a third and final test. This exam was on par with the first in terms of difficulty, but the results were remarkable. The group praised for intellect performed worse on this test than they did on the first, with an average score that dropped by 20%. The group that was praised for their efforts performed far better, with an average score that increased by nearly 30%. This huge disparity in performance correlated to subtle differences in how they were initially praised.

Grit is resilience or a stick-to-it demeanor. Psychologist Angela Duckworth's research on the concept of grit has gained popularity in recent years. In her New York Times bestseller, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Persistence*, she defines grit as "the intersection of passion and perseverance."

Many people begin projects and work on them until they are completed. For some, this means working nonstop, leading to exhaustion and burnout. Others begin with enthusiasm, but as the novelty wears off, they lose interest and give up.

Grit is a blend of passion and perseverance; people will just give up without the latter. And if you do not have a passion for what you are doing, you will burn out.

I was recognized for intelligence as a young kid, but a string of negative implications that fit the profile predictably led to a fixed mindset. I lacked grit. Every time I started something new, I quit. I either lost motivation, or it became too difficult for me to handle. I was overly concerned about appearing dumb or unintelligent. That goes under the guise of “I wish I knew then what I know now,” which is I needed grit to not quit.

There is a natural bias favoring raw talent or naturally gifted people in our culture. We are impressed with their God-given talents and how simple and effortless it seems for them, forgetting all of their hard work and devotion. Once you tell yourself, “I could never do that,” you take yourself right out of play. This occurs even on a benign or subconscious level.

What if we used their accomplishments as a barometer of what is possible? What if you tackled the challenges with curiosity and the belief that with enough work, you could attain similar results? In fact, I am sure you would agree with this mindset, that you have the potential to do great things in your life.

Most people are familiar with the grit to persevere in the face of adversity, regardless of how favorable or unfavorable the circumstances are. When it comes to dealing with problems, gritty people have various tools and methods at their disposal. Three components of grit include willpower, mental fortitude, and drive, so let's look at each one separately.

**Willpower:** Willpower allows us to intentionally direct our thoughts and emotions. It is self-control that allows us to resist temptation



and delay immediate gratification. For example, saying no to that decadent dessert or pushing through the last hour to finish the project. Willpower is getting up and going to the gym when you would rather stay in bed. It is like a muscle, and it must be worked out in order to strengthen it. With effort, it strengthens over time. As it does, you will spend less time and expend less energy resisting temptations. But willpower is not enough for grit. It is a limited resource, and as a result, it is insufficient on its own. If you are interested in learning more about the very fascinating topic of willpower, I highly recommend the book, *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength* by Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney.

**Mental Fortitude:** Believing that our actions will result in improvement is mental fortitude, and that is what this entire book is all about. Skill and talent are potential power. All the talent in the world is nothing more than unrealized potential. Raw talent can only be developed and brought to fruition with effort and mental fortitude.

**Passion:** While passion itself does not make us resilient, it provides the determination to endure hardships. When you are working on something you truly enjoy and are completely immersed in, you gain momentum to enter a passionate flow state. Resilient people can bounce back from setbacks and thrive under constant pressure without succumbing to defeat.

Michael Jordan is widely regarded as the greatest basketball player of all time. It is an attitude he and every other successful athlete share. They have got grit. "Things may not always go your way," Jordan has said, "but the effort should be there every single night."

Getting gritty is not always pretty. It is a process of successfully adapting to difficult life experiences. Everyone has the capacity to develop grit and resilience.

Here are six hacks to develop your grit and resilience:

1. **Establish solid habits.** Your behaviors determine how good you are. It all comes down to your commitment to regular practice and your ability to stick to it and not quit.
2. **Build mental strength.** Surround yourself with gritty people. Look at the athletes, the top CEOs, leaders, scholars, and creative artists. They all deliver on a regular basis, and they dedicate time even when they do not feel motivated. They handle their work like pros, prioritize the most important things, and never avoid their responsibilities.
3. **Honor the struggle.** It is important to validate the effort. You can learn much about yourself through challenging times. Recognize the strengths you've gained. Has your perspective shifted as a result? Take note of how you have grown from the experience.
4. **Regularly take risks.** Whatever got you to this level of success will not get you to the next level. Be willing to change things up a bit and try another way.
5. **Learn to do your best, even when you are at your worst.** This is the art of preparing for anything that comes. Aim to practice in more extreme situations that are tougher than those you would likely face in real life.
6. **Practice, practice, practice.** Engage in a deliberate process of learning as you go, getting feedback from your experience and from others, and being willing to adjust accordingly with love and devotion, patience, and unwavering effort.

## Here are six ways to develop grit and resilience

### Build mental strength

Surround yourself with gritty people. Look at the athletes, the top CEOs, leaders, scholars, and creative artists. They all deliver on a regular basis, and they dedicate time even when they do not feel motivated. They handle their work like a pro, prioritize the most important things, and never avoid their responsibilities.

### Regularly take risks

Whatever got you to this level of success will not get you to the next level. Be willing to change things up a bit and try another way.

### Practice, practice, practice

Engage in a deliberate process of learning as you go, get feedback from your experience and from others, and be willing to adjust accordingly with love and devotion, patience, and unwavering effort.

### Establish solid habits

Your behaviors determine how good you are. It all comes down to your commitment to regular practice and your ability to stick to it and not quit.

### Honor the struggle

It is important to validate the effort. You can learn much about yourself through challenging times. Recognize the strengths you gained. Has your perspective shifted as a result? Take note of how you have grown from the experience.

### Learn to do your best, even when you are at your worst

This is the art of preparing for anything that comes. Aim to practice in more extreme situations that are tougher than those you would likely face in real life.

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It is all about maintaining a consistent effort over time. To acquire grit, you need to adopt a growth mindset. The reason for this is that you may be underwhelmed by your current ability or what you have accomplished to this point. The idea is to consider where you want to go and focus on the skill sets to help you get there. To persevere, manage your thoughts, overcome fear, train your weaknesses, strengthen your strengths, and prosper, you need grit.

Keep in mind that the key word here is *development*. Do not fall into the trap of believing that you cannot improve your grit because you have a fixed mindset. When you develop grit, you become limitless because you recognize what awaits you on the other side.

### **KEY POINTS**

- Grit is a blend of passion and perseverance.
- Grit is an even better predictor of success than IQ, skill, ability, or sheer talent. Everyone has the capacity to get gritty.
- Use the six hacks for grit and resilience to overcome anything that is holding you back, and you will become limitless.

## CHAPTER 12

### Principle 8: Brain Fitness is Your Super Power

**O**ur minds are incredibly remarkable. Our brains rely on developmental plasticity when we learn something new. Brain fitness is the ability to learn what it takes to thrive in various contexts when developmental processes change or modify neuron connections by rerouting signals along a different neural pathway. This affects our complete being, our physical abilities, and our cognitive abilities.

Over decades of research, neuroscientists discovered that we could improve our cognitive abilities and improve any skill regardless of age. When we develop a skill, we not only improve that skill, but we also improve our ability to learn in general. To adapt to new situations, we rewire our brains. This happens on a daily basis, but it is also something we can intentionally encourage.

Riding a bike is a specific skill that, once acquired, is difficult to forget. Most kids learn to ride a bike and never forget it, right? That is what I thought until I watched a *Smarter Every Day* video by Destin Sandlin, an American engineer and science writer. He attempted to *unlearn* how to ride a bicycle. He discovered that this seemingly

simple activity involves several complex steps. A friend of Sandlin's constructed a backwards bike. It looked like a traditional bike design but with a massive functional difference. When he turned the bike's handlebars left, it steered right, and when the bike steered right, it would veer left. Sandlin challenged himself to ride it, so he hopped on. Despite knowing how to ride a bike, he was blown away when he realized that he could not ride this redesigned bike. His cycling mindset from years and years of riding was deeply engrained. Even though he knew how the backwards bike operated, he lacked the brain plasticity to ride it. This supported his theory that *knowledge does not equal understanding*.

Riding this backwards bike appeared to be a simple mental adjustment, but it was not, mainly because riding a bike is cognitively a lot more complicated than we think. The brain analyzes many factors and processes through very sophisticated algorithms to keep you moving. Even if you modify one variable, the entire process is disturbed.

For eight months, Sandlin practiced backwards bike riding for five minutes every day. He experimented by teaching his young son to ride it, and within just two weeks, he was riding backward like an expert. One finding was that youth provides greater brain plasticity than adults. Another fascinating extension of this experiment occurred when Sandlin was unable to ride a regular bike and then had to relearn that skill. Until the old algorithm function clicked back in, getting back on the bike was a bit difficult. Those mechanics needed to be rewired. Granted, the process did not take quite as long to relearn, but it included a whole lot of wobbling.

This is one of the reasons brain plasticity is so intriguing. Beyond positive psychology and cognitive behavioral therapy, neuroscience refers to the neural circuits that underpin goal-directed behavior and

our ability to design and optimize outcomes using neural circuits and modulators.

Let's suppose your path is to learn about photography, but your objective is to take great photographs. There is a distinction. Can you differentiate between knowledge and skill? If you are stuck on the path of gathering more knowledge, you may never reach your goal because you seek information rather than skill. This is analysis paralysis. People do this all the time. They endlessly search online without actually executing. Beware of procrastination disguised as extensive research to avoid taking action.

When I first started learning about the growth mindset, I was fascinated with the concept of brain plasticity, also known as neuroplasticity. The brain is constantly reshaping itself by stretching to develop greater capacity. A person with a growth mindset believes that with effort and determination, they can become more proficient and skilled at something. It is precisely what neuroplasticity describes but from a scientific perspective.

When people use the term brain plasticity or neuroplasticity, it is not suggesting that our brains are made up of literal plastic like a plastic bag or a cheap plastic toy. *Plasticity* refers to the brain's malleability, and *neuro* refers to neurons, the nerve cells that are the building blocks of the brain and nervous system. The brain can remarkably restructure neural pathways, create new connections, and even create new neurons.

Neuroscientists agree that the human brain is not fully developed until our mid-twenties. In more recent years, they have found that the human brain changes and evolves throughout our lives, adjusting to behaviors, environments, and actions.

Children's brains grow in spurts when they can absorb information and develop skills rapidly. This starts as early as the age of two and continues throughout adolescence. During these periods of development, the number of connections (synapses) between brain cells doubles. These connections are where learning happens, so having twice as many synapses allows the brain to learn quicker than at any other stage in life. This explains why the child was able to learn to ride the backwards bike so quickly. The science behind this is that the prefrontal cortex is the region of the brain that deals with memory and cognitive behavior. It is incredibly malleable. There are approximately eighty-six billion neurons in the human brain. At birth, every neuron in the cerebral cortex has approximately 2,500 synapses. By the age of three, the number of synapses per neuron increases to about 15,000. Think about those numbers; it is quite remarkable.

Interestingly, a process called “synaptic pruning” occurs to maintain proper balance. This is like deleting old files to reduce clutter and create more space on your hard drive. By the time we reach adulthood, the number of synapses declines by up to half. As we learn and experience new things, our brains eliminate unused or unnecessary connections while preserving and strengthening the connections used more frequently.

We have all heard the expression, "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks." While it has validity, it is not entirely accurate. It is true that during early developmental years, the brain absorbs information more efficiently and tends to be more responsive to change. However, neuroscientists have discovered in recent years that brain plasticity continues throughout a lifetime.

Ivan Pavlov, a famous psychologist, best known for classical conditioning and behavioral learning, trained dogs to salivate when



they heard the ringing of the bell. Each time the bell rang, the dogs were presented with food. Over time, they developed a strong association, and eventually, they would salivate at the bell even when no food was presented.

All learning is associating something you know with something you do not know. It is about putting together and giving meaning to two or more pieces of information, and when we learn something new, we are harnessing the power of neuroplasticity. The brain changes as a function of how we use it.

When repeatedly exposed to new stimuli, you alter your brain function. The brain forms new synaptic connections. Neuroplasticity is essentially a continuous rewiring experience, so we are all capable of learning new tricks.

What is fascinating is just how quickly the brain can grow and change in short periods. One study of the rapid growth in brain plasticity comes from the most famous study of London cab drivers. Now, this was back in the day before we had smartphones and GPS to show us how to drive around, and if you do not know, the roads in London are gnarly, winding, and convoluted. To become a London cab driver, applicants need to undergo extensive training for a minimum of two years. They must pass a knowledge test to be licensed to operate. The prerequisite for the test is learning and memorizing over 25,000 streets and 20,000 landmarks in London.

At the start of the study, all the participants had the same average size hippocampal neurons. The hippocampus is the region in the brain associated with memory and the acquisition of complex data. The subjects' hippocampi were reported to be an average size. After completing hundreds of hours of study and training to become London taxi drivers, the group repeated the brain scans showing significant growth in that region of the brain. Another interesting

finding was that the hippocampus shrinks back to normal once drivers retire.

Let's talk about what this study tells us. It is not saying we ought to study London taxis like the cab drivers to grow and develop a big hippocampus, but it is saying that focused training fires up certain pathways that develop the brain.

Experts are still discovering things about the brain's tremendous capacities and plasticity and its potential for lifelong growth. The difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset has to do with brain plasticity. Brain activity in groups of students faced with challenges, errors, and uncertainty while performing a task has been studied by scientists. When students with a growth mindset were confronted with errors or mistakes, their brain activity was significantly higher, indicating internal processing via trial and error and searching for the best solution. The students with a fixed mindset had minimal brain activity when confronted with such errors. The result is that a positive and engaged mindset increases learning-related plasticity, whereas a negative and disengaged mindset promotes the concept of unlearning.

The brain is similar to a muscle in that it strengthens with exercise. I worked with a client who wanted to increase his muscle mass. He joined a gym and made tremendous progress over time. He then canceled his gym membership. When I questioned why he canceled his membership, he said he had developed muscle and no longer needed his membership. What? What about maintenance? Hence the saying, "Use it or lose it."

Once you have achieved the goal, one of the pillars of a growth mindset is to set the next goal. Perhaps this client's training regimen can change but stopping entirely will diminish all or most of his gains.

Whether you are working on your physique or your mind, there are four basic guidelines to remember:

1. It has to be challenging in order to adapt and grow.
2. Learning a new skill requires time.
3. Repetition and reinforcement are required.
4. We can improve our skills in almost any area.

It takes time to develop strength and muscle. You might start with ten-pound dumbbells and work your way up to forty-five-pound plates over time. This is a long-term pursuit, and the key is persistence and time. You cannot get fit by watching others in the gym. That might be nice, but it is not how it works.

You have to participate. You have to actively do the work. You can certainly learn by observing other people, but you will ultimately have to grab the weights, create some struggle, and over time, you will develop muscle mass. You can learn from people's tactics and techniques, but you have to train your brain and do the repetitions to fire the pathways for skill development.

What happens when you work out with a partner, and they are struggling with their last set? Do you take it from them and do it yourself? No. You might help them, but you would not complete that last rep for them. Yet, people do this all the time when faced with challenges or struggles in learning. We remove the struggle and solve it for them, essentially completing their last rep. They miss the growth. Do not shy away from that challenge. Growth occurs by forced repetition.

Neuroscientists often say, “What fires together wires together,” which describes how learning combined with practice and repetition is the hallmark of skill development and a growth mindset. We now have impressive scientific evidence that the brain is more like a soft-

wired encoding system. It can be retrained and restructured, indicating that there is always room to grow. The key is adopting a growth mindset. Remember, the most important belief is believing that you can learn and grow.

### **Brain Fitness:**

1. **The Pomodoro Technique.** Working in twenty-five-minute increments followed by short two to five-minute breaks has been shown to increase productivity and takes advantage of two memory principles: primacy and recency.  
Have you ever gone to a meeting or a party and been introduced to several people at a time? Statistically, people are more likely to recall the names learned at the beginning (primacy) or at the end (recency) than the names they learned in the middle. The more breaks you take, the more beginnings and ends you have, hence greater memory recall for effective learning.
2. **Spaced repetition.** If you cram for a test, you will recall the information stored in short-term memory. Space out studying into intervals and then go back and review. This helps move information from short-term to long-term memory. Repetition is the mother of learning and the key to retention. Cramming is not effective for long-term memory.
3. **Mind and body connection.** A combined mental focus with physical movement enhances the learning process. Activities like yoga, martial arts, juggling, balancing, or playing an instrument require mental focus combined with physical activity. One of the techniques in speed reading is using your finger as a guide. Again, this engages the cognitive and physical faculties, thus enhancing the learning process.
4. **Interaction.** Conventional academia is taught passively while the student is sitting at a desk listening to the teacher. When students do not participate or interact, they tend to get bored

and pay less attention. Studies show more interactive students perform better.

5. **Olfaction.** Our sense of smell signals a direct impulse to the brain. The pathway is connected to the limbic system, the area associated with emotions. When you inhale pleasant aromas such as essential oils or fragrances, it stimulates areas of the limbic system, enhancing cognitive focus and memory.
6. **Playfulness.** This is my absolute favorite. One of the surprising reasons children are such quick learners is because of their uninhibited use of play. Listen to them as they share their creative ideas, observe how they put their imagination to use, and hear the lighthearted giggles as they play. Play is more powerful than just fun and games, it is a key to learning. Research has found that play can help enrich learning and enhance skill development such as expression, inquiry, experimentation, collaboration, and negotiation.

A few years ago, I attended a business conference called Pays to be Brave for female entrepreneurs hosted by Angie Lee, the founder and well-known podcaster of the *Angie Lee Show*. She put on a fantastic and unforgettable event. The keynote speakers were outstanding, both motivating and informative. But it was the palpable energy at this event that made it truly magical. Thousands of professional women gathered to learn about business and network marketing tactics to break through their current levels of success. There was a world of play awaiting these guests just outside the venue. It was like a children's party for grownups. It was high-energy entertainment, from singing, dancing, and jumping into inflatable ball pits to prize-dispensing gumball machines. We had a great time laughing, playing, and learning. It was unlike any professional event I had ever attended. It was brilliant.

As children grow into adults and our lives become more serious games, we forget and lose the fun-spirited and young feeling of play. Take time to think about that. We do not even refer to it as "play." Work has taken the role of play in our vernacular.

It is referred to as a "play date" by the kids. It is known among teenagers as "hanging out." It is known among young adults as a "get together." It is referred to as a "meeting" by adults.

This list of brain hacks was deliberately organized, with play at the end. If you have read the previous hacks, you are already familiar with the memory principle of recency. Incorporating play into your life will not only increase your joy and happiness but will also enhance neuroplasticity. Playfulness is a state of mind in which an individual's thought process is flexible, allowing them to explore ideas, be creative, encourage innovative concepts, and take chances, whether young or old. Playfulness encourages a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset.

Exercising your brain is brain fitness. Think of it as your personal gym, where you are exercising your memory, attention, brain speed, skills, intelligence, and navigating so your brain can function at its sharpest.

### **KEY POINTS**

- Neuroplasticity is a process of installing new habits and thought patterns into your brain.
- The difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset has a lot to do with brain plasticity.
- Learning combined with practice and repetition is the hallmark of skill development and a growth mindset.

## CHAPTER 13

### Principle 9: Celebrate Victories, Celebrate Impermanence

**A**re you the same person you were ten years ago? Of course not. Take a quick stroll down memory lane and reflect on all the changes you have experienced, the adventures you have had, and the memories you have made throughout the years. Different viewpoints, priorities, goals, connections, and so forth are likely to exist now.

Let's break it down even more. How different is your life right now compared to where you were a year ago? Or how about last week? What is one thing you now know that you did not fully understand a week ago? As you can see, we are always changing and evolving. We are not the same people we were even just a few days ago.

As the British philosopher Alain de Botton said, “Anyone who is not embarrassed of who they were last year probably is not learning.”

I shake my head once in a while as I recall past blog posts, classes, or lectures I have delivered. It can be somewhat embarrassing at

times. When you quietly wish you could do it all over again—whether in sales, customer service, submitting an assignment, taking a test, performing, or having a discussion—that is one of the best growth markers. Could you do it better if you had the chance to showcase what you know now against what you knew then? Recognize that you are evolving. You have outgrown your former self; therefore, you must embrace and celebrate the impermanence.

According to what I have heard, most authors secretly wish they could go back and revise a portion of their published work because their perspective or writing style has shifted since they wrote it. I can only imagine, but I am glad to be able to share this book with you, as imperfect as I may find it someday in the future.

One of the most basic life lessons taught in Buddhism is that everything changes. Consider that for a moment. Seasons change, and each season brings its own unique set of challenges and beauty. Due to the constant movement of life, everything is transient. It is somewhat comforting when we realize this includes any pain and discomfort you may be experiencing.

Impermanence is a concept that recognizes that life is a continuous flow with no two moments ever being the same. Every day is different—your body changes as well as your ideas, thoughts, emotions, and circumstances.

To change and evolve, you must frequently have high-level or peak experiences—those aha moments that leave you speechless. You must be willing to try new things in order to have a peak experience. You need to be humble. Remember that learning from mistakes and making errors are all part of the learning curve.

When was the last time you had a peak experience?



Many people say they do not like change. What is the reason for this? Why are we so opposed to change when it is a natural and unavoidable part of life? People's aversion to change is based on their fear of the unknown.

Do you remember how we talked about the what-if scenario in previous chapters? *What if* it is not a resounding success? *What if* it all goes wrong? On the other hand, *what if* it is even better? *What if* it offers a once-in-a-lifetime peak experience?

The vast majority of people place a high value on their existing identity and their own viewpoints. We believe we have a firm handle on ourselves and that, for the most part, we will continue to be who we are without understanding the inevitable changes over time.

Here is a paradox to chew on. You can move forward into your future while learning to change your associations with the past.

Your future is a set of projections and uncertainties. You can't know the future because it has not happened yet. The future is flexible. Your past is also flexible. You get to decide the meaning you place on the past, which in turn affects how you live in the present and future. You can't literally change past events, but you can reprogram how emotionally charged you are by the memories. You can rewrite how past experiences impact your present self. In that way, you take back control of your current emotional state.

Dr. Benjamin Hardy and Dan Sullivan's book, *The Gap and The Gain*, highlights the importance of measuring progress to affirmatively validate gains. The *gap* represents people's notion of what a perfect outcome will be. That is their *ideal*. The *gain* refers to one's progress by looking back and measuring. In other words, they recognize the steps they have taken and the results they have accomplished to assess the gains they have made.

Many high-achieving entrepreneurs are unable to appreciate their accomplishments. They track their progress against an ideal they have set for themselves rather than the distance they have traveled. The problem with this is that ideals are like moving targets that always seem to be out of reach. We are in "the gap" when comparing ourselves to our ideal.

"The gain," on the other hand, compares your current self to your former self. People keep track of their progress and evaluate the steps they have made and the outcomes they have achieved. They recognize the gains that lead to their steady skill development and growth.

Instead of asking yourself, "How long will this take?" consider asking yourself, "How far and wide am I willing to go?" Every step forward is a victory. Celebrate the small wins along the way.

When you complete a project, ace an exam, produce an exceptional paper, lead an outstanding meeting, deliver a strong presentation, complete a tough workout, exceed your goals, or even help someone accomplish their goals, how do you celebrate?

It is necessary to acknowledge and celebrate instances when you step outside your comfort zone. Whether you dared to try something new, pushed yourself to accomplish something that others warned you wouldn't work, or doubted yourself, you did it anyway. Things worked because you put forth the effort, so applaud yourself.

Although major accomplishments are more obvious, it is equally important to acknowledge and celebrate your "smaller" successes. When you tally up all of your small wins, you can see how making headway results from several little incremental steps and decisions made along the way.

The concept of praising yourself for your efforts along the way boosts your confidence since you are deliberately reminding yourself of the amazing things you have accomplished. You gain confidence because of your actions. Confidence is a skill that you can develop over time by training your mind to evaluate what went well. Our natural tendency is to dwell on what went wrong, but the sooner you ask yourself what you could do differently next time and let go of the rest, the sooner you will be able to move ahead. This will also offer you more room to praise yourself for your efforts! What will you do to celebrate your next accomplishment?

Do you ever wish you had someone else's level of success? Do you ever feel envious or even resentful of others and wonder why you do not have what they have? Is it because of their likeability or because of their social status? Maybe you are drawn to them because of their style, radiant beauty, or intimidating strength. What about their accumulated wealth and seemingly limitless business opportunities? It happens to everyone from time to time. Judgment, envy, and jealousy are universal emotions, but feeding into them breeds bitterness and anguish over time.

People use social comparison when they compare their worth to the success of others. They mistake comparing how they feel at their worst to how someone else appears on social media at their best. There are algorithms created deliberately to keep consumers addicted to the allure of digital marketing success and perfection. Trying to keep up with a false reality poses a significant concern, often resulting in stress and depression. Teenagers, millennials, parents, business owners, and executives are all under a lot of pressure trying to appear flawless.

The internet, according to best-selling author Seth Godin, is "the envy amplifier." It is simple to find and track down those who are

wealthier, more successful and more popular. Comparing ourselves to others is never a smart idea, yet we still do it. The point of it all is that the only person with whom we should compete is the former version of ourselves. If we are honest with ourselves, we can find areas in our lives where we can improve—those things preventing us from moving forward, right? Now is your chance to think about what you have learned and apply those insights to make a difference. Small hinges open big doors. Keep an eye out for small details that lead to big opportunities.

If you believe a finite amount of success is available, you will feel cheated whenever anyone excels. Although common, that is a flawed way of thinking, and it will have a negative impact on how you present yourself in the world. If you reframe that perspective and cultivate a growth mindset, you will notice an endless supply of joy and happiness to go around, and you might even be able to ride the wave initiated by the person you are most envious of.

Understanding the abundant mindset—abundance breeds abundance—is one strategy to diffuse envy. When our inner abundance is ignited, everything we seek begins to flow freely. Consider abundance as a reflection of everything within you rather than an abstract concept that exists and is solely available to others. If that individual can do it, it is also possible that you can too. We are frequently enslaved by our fear-based thinking that others have an unfair advantage. When we see abundance for others, our scarcity mindset, our inner voice, tells us there is not enough for us. We internalize the fact that someone else has what we want and believe that we are undeserving. The old, fixed mindset sees their surplus as denying our own rights. Abundance is the antidote to a scarcity worldview.

Rather than comparing or judging others who have what you want, it is time to acknowledge and applaud their achievements. You will find your north star and a greater understanding of abundance when you can identify excellence in others and appreciate their efforts and accomplishments. Consider how amazing it will feel to channel your petty envy into true joy for that person's accomplishments as if they were your own. This will establish a positive feedback loop in which you cheer for others as they develop and succeed.

People gravitate toward those who gravitate toward them. We generate a reciprocity of loving presence when we can sincerely be happy for our friends and contemporaries for all that they have and all that they have accomplished. Celebrating the success of others will help you generate the feelings you need to attract more of the same into your own life. To be fair, I did not create this law. It is what is known as the law of attraction.

According to The Yoga Sutras, one of the most authoritative scriptures in yoga philosophy, there are four keys to unlocking an endless stream of abundance. These are four attributes that you can never have too much of, no matter how happy you are.

- **Kindness and friendliness:** This entails being happy for the happiness and good fortune of others. Jealousy will not detract from their joy, but it will disrupt your own peace.
- **Compassion:** If someone is sad or upset, seek to comfort them as much as possible to alleviate their suffering. Never take pleasure in witnessing another person suffer.
- **Appreciation:** When you see someone performing commendable activities or acts of compassion, appreciate them and try to emulate them in your own life.
- **Equanimity:** The art of becoming less triggered by others' behaviors and more indifferent to them while remaining

calm in the moment. This does not imply that you should overlook harmful behavior. It does imply doing your best to remain indifferent and not succumb to instinctive reactions to certain situations. This is often the most difficult key to open, but it can be learned with growth mindset practices.

Success is sweetest when it is shared with others. There are times when we rely on one another to become more successful. The relationships you form with others are often the missing link to help you get to where you want to go.

And finally, celebrate the people you care about. Honor them for their efforts and accomplishments. Be happy for them. When you have an abundant mentality, you will eliminate the negativity that gets in your way. Once you are grounded in compassion, gratitude, joy, and abundance will flow.

### **Seven Ways to Celebrate Change, Victories, and Abundance**

1. **Appreciate yourself:** When people are dissatisfied with their current situation, they assume that greater opportunities may be found elsewhere. When we are envious of others, we lose sight of what we already have—intrinsic worth, respect, family, relationships, etc. According to author and newspaper columnist Regina Brett, "If we threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back." This can be considered a suggestion that perhaps we should spend more time appreciating and enjoying what we have. There is no room for greed and jealousy when you have your own sacred space. Remember, whatever your objective is, you have all the resources you need within you.
2. **Witness your judgment without judging it.** Avoid the temptation to judge yourself. Be more aware of what lies

beneath the surface of what triggers the envy that divides you from others.

3. **Celebrate the ones you love.** Cheering on relatives and friends by giving them a fist pump or a high-five for their accomplishments will help you feel more at ease. When you show your support and celebrate the achievements of friends and coworkers, your network expands. Be aware of all the opportunities that will arise because of other people's success.
4. **An attitude of gratitude.** This does not imply that you are repressing your emotions or ignoring your dreams and aspirations. It indicates that you have decided to live in a joyful state regardless of the outcome. If you only feel joy when things go your way, you will not feel joy very often. The more you can cultivate an attitude of gratitude for yourself for all that was, is, and will be, the more you will anchor into an emotional state of joy.
5. **Focus on quarterly sprints rather than New Year's Resolutions.** New Year's Resolutions are ineffective. We have all figured that out by now. What is a more effective approach? Set three-month sprint goals. Every three months, re-evaluate. As a result, you get four chances to confirm and achieve.
6. **Invest more in yourself.** There is no such thing as a free lunch. Everything has a price tag attached to it. Everything is an investment. And the more you approach life as an investment, the more you will concentrate on what you can give rather than what you can receive.

What amazes me about most individuals is their unwillingness to invest in themselves. Education, mentorships, mastermind groups, and other such activities are seen as a "cost" by them. To put it another way, they do not think they are worth it. They do not see the importance of investing in themselves.

When your viewpoint shifts from "cost" to "investment," you start to invest heavily in yourself, your abilities, relationships, environment, and other critical aspects of your life. Whenever you invest in something, you upgrade your subconscious mindset around that thing. The more you invest yourself in others, the more connected you will be to them.

7. **Focus on growth over status.** If people are honest with themselves, most individuals desire "success" for the status it will provide. They will not admit it, but status is what matters to them. When your primary goal is to achieve a certain level of status, your job will always be to maintain that status in life. This is especially prevalent in today's social media world, where everyone is striving to become a famous influencer. You need to check your ego at the door. People who want to grow are willing to embrace the unknown and celebrate change and impermanence. Celebrating your achievements will fuel your motivation to keep pushing forward.

### **KEY POINTS**

- You can move forward into your future while simultaneously changing the emotions you associate with the past.
- Choose an abundant mindset and eliminate a scarcity mentality.
- Confidence is a skill that can be developed by training your mind to evaluate and validate what went well.



## CHAPTER 14

### Principle 10: Make it a Habit, Make it a Routine

**W**e live in a fast-paced world where everything happens in the blink of an eye. People can be impatient at times. We want it done yesterday, but we will settle for right now. We have been conditioned to expect a quick fix and immediate gratification. Slow progress can be extremely frustrating.

Despite our desire for each day to be unique, the cycle of repeating the same actions day after day is common. We form habits through repetition. Almost everything we do from the moment we wake up is a habit. Brushing your teeth, putting on your socks and shoes, grabbing a quick bite on the go, and listening to music or a favorite podcast during your morning commute are all examples.

Our habits shape who we are. According to various studies, somewhere between 40 and 50% of what we do every day and the decisions we make are the results of a habit. Habits are your brain's way of conserving energy. Since nearly half of your waking hours surround habitually doing things you are not aware of, it is worthwhile to figure out what is happening here. A huge chunk of our life experiences are governed by what scientists refer to as

*automaticity*. When our mental activity slows and our brain powers down, we are in auto-pilot mode.

Take into account all the seemingly insignificant things you perform daily without giving any thought. Imagine how exhausting it would be if you had to think about everything you did. Without habit loops, our brains would be overwhelmed by the minor details and nuances of everyday living.

A habit is basically behavior that has been repeated enough times to become second nature. They are a series of automatic solutions that solve a problem. As habits form, the level of activity in the brain decreases. There is no longer any need to analyze every aspect of the situation. Your brain bypasses steps in the process by generating a formula, like a cognitive script that it automatically follows: If I do this, then that will happen—a *cause and effect*. This habit script becomes a mental shortcut conditioned from prior experiences.

Simply put, our brains require a lot of energy, and our brains have gotten very good at conserving energy to become more efficient. As funny as it sounds, our brain has a mind of its own, and it does not care to expend energy on mundane tasks done all the time. The *cerebral cortex* is the part of the brain that is used when we first learn something new. Once repeated, actions are no longer controlled by the cerebral cortex because it is inefficient. Repeat behavior works in another part of the brain known as the *basal ganglia*. When an action reaches the basal ganglia, it becomes an automated response rather than something you consciously think about. It effectively bypasses our critical thinking to now exist in the subconscious mind. This explains why it is challenging to break a bad habit.

Although these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, there are important distinctions between *habits* and *routines*. Habits

and routines are both regular and repeated actions; however, habits occur with little to no conscious thought, whereas routines require higher levels of intention and effort.

Consider this: How many times per day do you unlock your phone? Smartphone owners unlock their phones an average of 150 times per day, with nearly 69% checking their devices within the first five minutes of waking up. You probably have a routine when you wake up in the morning, and because we are creatures of habit, our autopilot mode kicks in.

If you want to transform your life, you must first change your habits and establish structured routines that support the changes you desire. Fortunately, once you understand how habits work, you can change them with greater success.

To effect long-term change, you must first make the desired behavior a habit. How can you develop a habit from a behavior? Let's look at *The Habit Loop*, which I first learned about from Charles Duhigg's book, *The Power of Habit*. We must first understand how habits are established before we can change them. The process of habit building can be classified into three steps: cue, response, and reward.

The cue is an automatic trigger that causes a behavior to occur. When your alarm clock goes off in the morning, it becomes your automated cue to take action and get out of bed. Habits always begin with a cue or a trigger to act. A cue automatically initiates a behavior or response, and subsequently, that behavior provides a reward. Every time you go through this sequence, your brain remembers the pattern for future use. It develops an automated habit loop involving a cue, a response, and a reward.

Of course, not every habit is good. If we adopt unhealthy behaviors, the consequences can be ignored for a long time, and we may not see the effects for years. By that time, breaking the habit becomes even more difficult. Let's suppose you have a dessert every night after dinner to reward yourself after a long day. Our bodies recalibrate on a regular basis, so it is nothing to be concerned about initially. However, if you continue to reward yourself with a decadent dessert every evening, you may find yourself with extra weight gain or an excess of sugar in your diet. These potential long-term resulting outcomes of habits demonstrate why it is important to understand the habit loop and have the tools to replace your cues, responses, and rewards to form better habits. Let's have a look.

Every habit contains all three steps. It is worth noting that the cues might be a thought or a feeling that prompts a response. The behavioral response, or result of the cue, leads to some kind of reward. The reward might be intangible, either emotional or cognitive, indicating that you have learned something new or are feeling a benefit. A tangible item or treat might also be used as a reward.

It is necessary to anticipate the reward in order for a habit to stick. To put it another way, you must be willing to go through the routine to reap the benefits. I realize this appears to be an oversimplification of the habit loop, but it illustrates the power of routine and how we can incorporate it into our daily lives.

Linking a new habit to something you already do is an effective approach to get started.

This is referred to as anchoring a new routine to an existing cue. Adding your new habit to something you are already doing makes it easier to integrate into your daily routine. Once you do it on a

regular basis, it becomes second nature, and you will not have to think about it.

The cue remains the same, but you replace the previous routine with a more favorable one. The reward remains the same. You are simply adding a new habit loop to an existing one. It sounds simple, but it can prove difficult, so you need one more factor to improve your chances of success: Stay rooted in your growth mindset. You must believe in the possibility of change. You must feel that you are capable of adjusting and that it will benefit your future.

Let's assume you want to start drinking more water, starting with a glass before your morning cup of coffee. Going to the kitchen to make fresh coffee becomes the cue that prompts you to drink a glass of water while your coffee is brewing. The cue remains unchanged. You simply modify the routine by adding an additional step or habit. You respond by drinking the water, and now you have a two-fold benefit: an immediate reward in the form of a good cup of coffee and a longer-term reward in the form of feeling healthy and hydrated. It is typically more difficult to stick with the habit and build momentum if there is no immediate gratification or short-term reward. If there is a short-term and long-term incentive, the habit loop will become even more successful and automated.

These gains are not always immediately recognizable because the impact of little changes, such as drinking more water, is not obvious right away. Although the effects may not be seen for months or even years, the long-term benefits can be enormous. You have to convince your brain that the rewards are significant. Let's face it, we do not always want to do the work. Over time, the small habits add up to big results.

When people try to change their habits, they make two errors. Even if they have the best of intentions, people tend to move off track when it comes to improving their health, starting a new activity, or launching a project.

1. **Attempting to do too much too soon.** Do you recall the value of the reward in both the short and long term? Here is why it is so vital. When it comes to motivation, repetition is key. We start strong and enthusiastic, but most people quickly lose steam, become discouraged, and give up too soon. It is because we bite off more than we can chew, and the rewards pale in comparison to the daily grind and struggle.
2. **There is no specificity.** Specificity is essential for productive action. On the other hand, procrastination and despondency thrive on uncertainty and ambiguity. We tend to avoid activities and routines when we are unsure how to start. This avoidance leads to guilt and frustration, which leads to less motivation or incentive to forge ahead. It is a vicious circle.

Each of our habits benefits us in some way. There may be some negative consequences to our behaviors; however, we are always attempting to make the best choice based on what is serving us in this particular moment. Knowing how to change your habits involves confidently owning and managing your time.

**“Lose an hour in the morning,  
and you will spend all day looking for it.”**

**– Richard Whately**

If you do not intentionally carve out time every day to progress and continue improving—without a doubt, your time will be lost in the

dark abyss of an oversaturated daily life. Understanding how to change your habits involves confidently owning and managing your time. Focus on the behaviors that have the most influence and reverse engineer the life you want.

A life-changing routine does not happen by chance. It must be carefully designed and planned. The design will outperform willpower. If you just spend a few minutes configuring the environment, the decision is already made for you. Suppose you want to begin a fitness routine in the morning. It will be more convenient to prepare your workout attire and sneakers the night before. Pre-planning eliminates unnecessary morning steps, which frequently derails our productivity and success. The less time and mental energy you waste on trivial things, the more time and mental energy you will have for the things that matter.

Benjamin Franklin is credited with the saying: “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!”

According to psychologist Ron Friedman, the first three hours of the day are the most important for enhancing productivity.

This makes perfect sense on so many levels. Let's start from the top: sleep. According to neuroscience, the brain, notably the prefrontal cortex, is most active and creative directly following sleep. The subconscious mind builds contextual associations while you sleep. These connections stimulate our creativity, and as a result, our minds are most active and alert just after a good night's sleep. Mastering your morning routine is vital if you want to be truly productive and achieve long-term changes. Effective habits have a secret weapon: good routines. The three most important things to consider while forming high-performance habits and developing new routines are to keep it *small*, *easy*, and *stackable*.

1. **Make small changes.** The Kaizen Method is the process of continuous small positive adjustments that lead to substantial and significant growth in people and organizations.
2. **Make it easy on yourself.** The most common reason people struggle to stick to a routine is because there are too many steps or they are unsure how to execute it. Keep it simple, especially when you are first starting. You can add to it as the process becomes more automated. If you want to read more, start with one page rather than a complete chapter. When you are satisfied with that, go ahead and add another. The third concept, stacking, follows from this.
3. **Stacking.** A routine is a series of simple behaviors that function as a link to a more complex set of behaviors. Rather than altering everything, the most effective method for forming new habits is to tie a new behavior to an old one and build to the routine. Remember the drinking water example? We did not get rid of the coffee; instead, we just added a new habit to the old one and created a better routine. Layering the habit loop follows all three criteria, keeping it small, simple, and stackable. The results are surprisingly rewarding.

I understand that some may not be able to adhere to a fixed schedule. Different lifestyles, obligations, and commitments generally require adjustments to our circumstances. Some people are able to get up at the crack of dawn, while others are not. Rather than telling you to adhere to some arbitrarily specified timeframe, I would like to teach you how to design a morning and evening routine that works for you. These are scientifically verified methods for establishing successful habits and reaping long-term rewards.



To begin, make the most of your mornings by maximizing your time. Priming is the first step in setting yourself up for success in the morning. Those who know how to leverage their mornings accomplish more by noon than most people do throughout the week. Once you learn to optimize your mornings, you will be amazed at how much you can do in the first few hours of the day. Here are a few morning routines to get you started.

- **Make Your Bed.** Admiral William H. McRaven shared some of the ideas he acquired during basic SEAL training at one of his alma mater's graduations. He highlighted how important it is to make your bed every day. He says that making your bed gives you a sense of accomplishment and demonstrates that if you cannot withstand small tasks, you simply will not be able to do bigger ones effectively. Making your bed exercises your mind, reaffirms the importance of the simplest of tasks, and encourages you to take on new responsibilities and pursuits. Completing that one activity will have multiplied into several tasks performed by the end of the day. Identify the cue that will trigger the behavior response, which is making the bed, and you will have an immediate reward with a sense of accomplishment in completing a small task upon awakening.
- **The 90-90-1 Rule.** Popularized by author and leadership guru Robin Sharma, the 90-90-1 rule is an approach for effectively realizing your vision and goals while also planning your daily routine. This common rule suggests focusing on your primary objective for the first ninety minutes of each day for the next ninety days—without checking emails or replying to social media until you have given yourself time to prioritize. Consider it this way: You should spend your morning time on output rather than input. Focus on the

creativity you produce rather than the distractions that pull you away from your main objective. If ninety minutes seems excessive, try 45-45-1 or even 30-30-1. Make it work in your favor.

- **Take the Plunge.** I used to dread the thought of taking a cold shower. I prefer a pool that is heated. But keep in mind that your fear is emotional rather than bodily. Cold water for sixty seconds is not physiologically dangerous or harmful. Physically, it is rather refreshing. Immersion in cold water stimulates the body's natural healing processes. It has anti-inflammatory properties, boosts immunity, improves lymphatic and cardiovascular circulation, improves hair and skin, and floods the body with mood-boosting neurotransmitters, energizing and invigorating. There is also an additional concept called *forcing functions* that supports habit formation. Create small disciplines that drive you to do things outside your comfort zone. Powerful routines involving forceful functions, such as submerging yourself in cold water, maintaining a one-snooze rule to get yourself out of bed no matter what, or blocking out an allotted time in the morning to prepare for the day sets forth effective routines that kickstart the habit loop and get you moving quickly.
- **Get Moving.** It 'does not have to be a full-fledged gym session to receive the benefits. Consider taking a brief, brisk walk to connect with nature, doing stimulating breathwork, yoga, stretching, or calisthenics, all of which are effective ways to jumpstart your day. In just minutes, you will be able to tenfold your energy, allowing you to get the most out of your entire day. Morning activity increases blood flow, endorphin production, and bodily strength. It aids in getting

you ready for the day, increases overall energy levels, and keeps you healthy.

- **The Morning Paper, Daily Shaper.** We have access to an unlimited number of schedule planners, phone apps, and digital calendars in our modern technological world, which is amazing. However, nothing beats a good old-fashioned pen and paper for intention-setting and journaling. Get yourself a notepad to use for your everyday writing. Each day, go through a few inspiring prompts that cue your behavior. What must occur today? How will you know if you completed that task successfully at the end of the day? What kind of emotional state would you like to be in right now? What one word best describes who you want to be? What might the best version of yourself do if anything knocks you off-guard or throws you off-kilter? Diary entries are not the same as this form of journal writing. Prompts help you get into the habit of planning ahead of time by getting you in the appropriate mindset. Setting the tone and committing to your best efforts ahead of time is essential. This will help you stay organized, productive, and effective while also providing a solution-oriented approach to task and time management. Take a few minutes to handwrite your ideas on paper, and you will be amazed at how quickly it becomes a daily shaper.

### **Set An Evening Routine to Guarantee Success The Next Day**

The first thing to keep in mind is that the quality of your daily routine greatly influences the structure of your evening. Our evenings are affected by an ineffective day. The primary objective of your evening routine is to set your next day up for success with a plan, so you are more effective.

Your brain is more analytical at night and more creative in the morning. It is an excellent idea to spend five minutes in the evening planning out your next day. The evening time is best to reflect, rest, and recover. You will have better success the next day once you have prepared yourself the night before.

The key components of an evening routine listed below will help you perform at your best every day of your life. Your life will change dramatically and steadily when you do these things day after day.

- **Reflect, then disconnect.** If you go to bed with a long list of issues on your mind, what will your sleep be like? And how could you wake up with a refreshed vitality to get the most out of your morning if your sleep suffers? What you do in the evening increases the likelihood of accomplishing what you set out to do on any given day. The secret to productivity begins the night before while you absorb outcomes in your sleep and set the tone for waking up the next morning with a clear intention. When you are sleeping, your subconscious mind processes information and creates results. Napoleon Hill has said that our subconscious thoughts manifest into our physical world. The subconscious mind works as we sleep, reinforcing memories and consolidating information. What you do before going to bed sends a powerful message to your subconscious.

Thomas Edison famously said, "Never go to sleep without a request to your subconscious." He believed that we might direct our subconscious creativity to generate results and construct solutions while we sleep, even if we are not consciously aware of it.

The concept of subconscious priming is not a psychedelic phenomenon. It is a tool utilized by growth-minded people.

Mastering subconscious priming requires some practice, but it is well worth the effort. Before you go to bed, think about what you want to accomplish. Evaluate it from as many angles and perspectives and ask yourself as many questions as you can. In Edison's words, make some "requests." Be specific in your requests; this will help you get clear responses. Make a list of your requests. Your subconscious mind will continue to work while you sleep.

- **The 3-2-1 routine:** A simple yet powerful habit loop to use while winding down your evening. Stop eating three hours before bedtime, complete any work two hours before bedtime, and avoid screen time one hour before bedtime. This is how you consciously and effectively design your subconscious, rather than having your subconscious control you.
- **Unplug to connect:** Unplug from social media and news consumption. Set a nighttime curfew for your phone and devices. It is essential to protect your eyes from the blue light emitted from the screen, plus your body interprets this light as daytime which contributes to insomnia or restless sleep. Take time in the evening to connect with family and spend quality time with loved ones.

Our habits and routines serve as the bedrock of our daily life, providing a framework for everything we do. This is the power of routines. The cumulative effect of small, simple, repeated actions can be exponential. You can prime a growth mindset each day by designing an effective morning and evening routine.

### **KEY POINTS**

- Habits are a series of automatic solutions that solve a problem.
- Effective habits have a secret weapon: good routines.
- Use these three important strategies while forming high-performance habits and new routines: Keep it *small, easy, and stackable*.

## CHAPTER 15

### The “Half” Principle: Less Is More

The working title of this book sparked curiosity in almost everyone I spoke with—they all wanted to know what the half principle was. My playful response was, “You’ll have to read the book to find out!” Well, before I reveal what the half is, I want to explain what it is not.

As we refer to the half, I assure you that it does not mean: half-assed, half-way, half-effort, half-full, or half the importance. It does not represent mediocrity, average, or settling for less than.

One of the fundamental tenets of productivity can be summarized as “less is more,” which is the premise of the *half principle*.

We have all experienced the common pattern where we are motivated and enthusiastic about big changes. Then it quickly fades, and we find ourselves falling back into old patterns and feelings of overwhelm.

In other words, people procrastinate. We all do it. We delay, avoid, postpone, and put things off to a future day with all sorts of excuses as to why. But what if procrastination itself is not really the issue?

What if the real issue is that people are setting unrealistic expectations for their productivity and do not know how to procrastinate productively?

*Productive procrastination* is a legitimate term that means cultivating activities where you can procrastinate yet still be on a productive path. The secret is to allow yourself to procrastinate *a little*. When you strategize in this way, you will rarely allow your procrastination to derail you.

Productivity is both an art and a science that improves our results in life. Doing less can be a game-changer because it encourages us to focus on what is truly important rather than get sidetracked by low-value activities. We are speaking about efficiency.

When we focus on doing less and doing it well (instead of doing more and assuming it is better), we are less frenetic, more deliberate, and more present. Priorities must be defined, first and foremost. When you fill your day with higher-value priorities, distractions and lower-value choices are no longer the focus. They are either given their allotted time (perhaps *half* the time), or they disappear entirely. Making a decision about what your true priorities are makes your other tasks feel simpler or less important. This chapter discusses how to maximize your productivity. Since we cannot increase the number of hours in the day, we must strengthen our focus and efficiency.

What exactly does that look like? You will feel more productive if you spend less time on the things that rob you of your valuable time. For example, if you simply reduce the time by half on the things that derail your focus, i.e., half the time scrolling through emails and social media, half the time watching television, etc., you will gain



back half of the time and energy usually consumed on things that do not give you the results you want.

Procrastination is not just time management but mind management.

You have probably heard the Chinese proverb, "The ideal time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second-best time is now." Consider for a moment how you might feel if you started something you have been putting off? Most people claim they simply "do not have time," though this is not exactly true. According to Timothy A. Pynchl, a professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, procrastination is more about our emotions than time management.

I am not a fan of the expression "waste of time." Granted, there may be a better use of time, but doing what feels right for you in the moment can be worth it. What if a cozy couch day of rest and recovery is exactly what you need? What if you sit down to write a paper or a project, and nothing is happening? Blank paper, blank screen. So you decide to scroll the internet for some creative ideas, not exactly making a dent in that paper, but nonetheless, gathering ideas. Is that still a waste of time? Perhaps, but my point is this: Maybe it is not so much the time as it is the mindset of what you are choosing to do.

The question is, how long will you put off doing what needs to be done? Spending half the time you would ordinarily spend on low-value activities captures more time to do the things that matter most. In other words, lessening inefficient use of time and energy throughout the day—by half.

We are not robots, and we cannot expect our efficiency to run like a well-oiled machine all day long without downtime and maintenance. Small breaks from productivity are normal and important. Evaluate what to postpone or eliminate—that which is

not adding any value. We often associate procrastination with laziness, leading to feelings of guilt or shame. It is regarded as a character flaw that holds us back from entering the ranks of the high-achievers club.

The urge to procrastinate is normal. It is often your mind's natural desire for stimulation. And when you stop wasting mental energy fighting the tendency to procrastinate and then criticizing yourself for it, you will find it far easier to get back to work quickly after a brief session of productive procrastination.

Interestingly, the word procrastinate comes from the Latin language and means "belonging to tomorrow." Studies show that being in the middle of procrastination is more painful than actually starting and doing the work. The negative feelings about not doing the work are worse than just doing it.

The idea of procrastinating is so timeless that the ancient discipline of Ayurveda, a five-thousand-year-old science has a word for it (prajnaparadha), which is the state of acting against your better judgment, an offense against wisdom. It is when you know deep down that something is not appropriate for your mind-body-spirit, yet you go ahead and choose to do it anyway.

Deep down, you know you should just do the work. The operative word is "should." Start paying attention to how often you use the word should or should not and listen to how frequently people use it conversationally. The root word "should" implies second-guessing oneself, being one's own critic, and that is when we lay on the guilt and unfairly judge ourselves.

What if I told you that you could leverage procrastination to help prioritize the next step? What if you could transform your procrastination into sources of motivation and productivity? Rather

than it being an impediment to progress, procrastination could be the key to personal growth.

Having opportunities for procrastination indicates that you have something important to do. You have reached the edge of your comfort zone, and the next phase requires you to play a different game. In other words, you are being challenged to consider your future self in a broader context than you have previously.

Procrastination is essentially choosing perceived feelings of ease and pleasure over the pain associated with putting in the work and effort for a future outcome. Psychologists refer to this as temporal discounting. We tend to value immediate gratification more than future rewards. “Why do today what I can put off till tomorrow” is the mindset that lures us into postponing and procrastinating. People are busier than ever. They are overwhelmed with too much to do in too little time to get it done.

In a figurative sense, your present and future selves are at odds with one another. When you have a goal, you envision yourself in the future. And although your brain sees the importance of taking proper actions toward that goal, your present self is focused on immediate gratification and less concerned with future rewards. Any tasks that evoke unpleasant feelings in the present moment, such as boredom, stress, or anxiety, are avoided at all costs. Hence the habit loop.

Truly productive people embrace *some* procrastination rather than fight against it. But, they use it as a mental break that will get them closer to their goal rather than as an excuse to push it off. Unfortunately, most people resign themselves to believing that distractions are simply inevitable. Highly focused people are aware that while some distractions are unavoidable, the majority may be

avoided by making difficult decisions. Now that you have made it this far into this chapter, I suggest you go one half further.

How would you like to spend less time getting more done?

You can set yourself up for success by eliminating the decision fatigue associated with deciding what to work on next. Decision fatigue drains your energy when you have too many things to do and too many decisions to make.

The strategies outlined are time management and prioritization techniques that will move you to make the hard decisions quickly and before other priorities distract you or throw you off track. Above all, these methods focus on the half principle, which supports the “less is more” mindset.

- **The Ivy Lee Method:** This simple strategy was developed in the early 1900s by Charles M. Schwab to help individuals and businesses improve productivity and efficiency. It boils down to a proven six-step approach.
  1. Define vision, goals, and objectives.
  2. At the end of each day, write down the six most important things you intend to accomplish for the following day. Limit yourself to no more than six per day.
  3. Prioritize tasks from most important to least important.
  4. The next morning, work on the first task until it is complete before moving on to the next.
  5. At the end of the day, move any unfinished tasks to a new list for the following day.
  6. Repeat this process each day.

This basic six-step approach is simple to adopt and will help you remain organized and focused, which is one of its most major advantages.

- **Eat that Frog:** It is easy to slip into procrastination repeatedly because we do not have a clear system for deciding what is important and what we should do first. Brian Tracy, author of *Eat That Frog!*, explains strategies for doing more in less time. He recommends the importance of eating the frog first thing in the morning: Do the most unpleasant thing, the frog, right away; The frog is usually that task that will have a profound impact but is the most work or the least enjoyable. If you have two frogs, look at them, choose the ugliest of the two, and “eat that one first.” People get bogged down with dozens of things on their to-do lists, yet they neglect to tackle the one big thing, the frog, that would be most rewarding and impactful. Eat that frog first, the main meal, and then all the lesser important tasks are dessert.
- **80/20 Rule:** This is a solid set of principles or rules of thumb that can make all the difference. When it comes to our own productivity, the Pareto Principle, commonly known as the 80/20 rule, can help boost overall productivity and properly manage our time and energy.

Many of us face the challenge of being bombarded with tedious things to do during the day, and many of these tasks do not contribute much significance. They do not help you achieve your meaningful goals.

The principle can be applied in the following way: 80% of our results come from 20% of our efforts. The idea is to figure out what that 20% is, so we know where to focus our efforts while eliminating

as much of the 80% as we can. Choose the two most important tasks and work on them first for every ten tasks. In other words, you are aiming to get more bang for your buck in terms of efficiency and effort.

*What is my highest value activity?*

*What can I do to make a substantial difference or have the most impact?*

*What is the best use of my time right now?*

- **Delegate and Eliminate:** You do not need to do everything. When people have too much on their plate, they become overwhelmed and their productivity suffers. Find your resources and delegate the things that someone else can do. Give yourself the appropriate time and energy to complete the things that only you can do or that you are better suited to do. Identify specific aspects of the project you can do and what would be most efficient to hand off to someone else.
- **Compounding Effect:** There is power in small things adding up to huge results. The main driving force of compounding is consistency over time. Small purposeful efforts can scale and develop over time. My favorite example of the power of compounding comes from a very clever penny story:

If you were given a choice to take one penny that will double each day for thirty days or \$2 million outright, which would you choose?

The average person would opt for the \$2 million by sheer shortsightedness. However, after thirty days, that single penny will be worth a whopping \$5,368,709.12. Watch what happens to the penny over thirty days!

<b>Day 1</b> \$.01	<b>Day 11</b> \$10.24	<b>Day 21</b> \$10,485.76
<b>Day 2</b> \$.02	<b>Day 12</b> \$20.48	<b>Day 22</b> \$20,971.52
<b>Day 3</b> \$.04	<b>Day 13</b> \$40.96	<b>Day 23</b> \$41,943.04
<b>Day 4</b> \$.08	<b>Day 14</b> \$81.92	<b>Day 24</b> \$83,886.08
<b>Day 5</b> \$.16	<b>Day 15</b> \$163.84	<b>Day 25</b> \$167,772.16
<b>Day 6</b> \$.32	<b>Day 16</b> \$327.86	<b>Day 26</b> \$335,544.32
<b>Day 7</b> \$.64	<b>Day 17</b> \$655.36	<b>Day 27</b> \$671,088.64
<b>Day 8</b> \$1.28	<b>Day 18</b> \$1,310.44	<b>Day 28</b> \$1,342,177.28
<b>Day 9</b> \$2.56	<b>Day 19</b> \$2,621.44	<b>Day 29</b> \$2,684,354.56
<b>Day 10</b> \$5.12	<b>Day 20</b> \$5,242.88	<b>Day 30</b> \$5,368,709.12

It is pretty amazing when you see the effect of compounding in action. The advantages of compounding are not immediate but rather gradual. Over short distances, small incremental improvements are barely noticeable, but over longer spans, compounding is a powerful force for exponential growth.

Compounding requires time and delayed gratification, often lots of it. The majority of individuals would prefer to eat one slice of cake now rather than two slices later. Furthermore, we tend to think in linear terms and underestimate the results that can be sustained by thinking long-term. The takeaway is to avoid the short-term mindset and bias, accept delayed gratification, and recognize that learning productivity optimizations takes time.

The fascinating aspect of compounding is that its concept can be applied to a wide range of situations with significant results. I am convinced that a key distinction between successful and unsuccessful people is their approach to compound learning. You

will rarely find someone who is successful and who has not compounded their learning, networking, relationships, experiences, time, finances, or skills over time. Even though we cannot compound time itself, we can compound our efforts with some strategic interventions.

Albert Einstein referred to compounding as the eighth wonder of the world. "He who understands it earns it, and he who doesn't, pays it." Your efficiency will soar once you realize the power of less is more, so long as the lesser actions are focused and intentional. Procrastination is more than just a time limitation. It is a mindset management issue. Understanding this will allow you to make proactive decisions with your end goal in mind. When you prioritize items by their relevance, you will discover that you focus on the most important things and are less bogged down with low value-producing things.

Find an area in your day where you can cut one hour and direct that saved time towards a goal you have. Do this for a couple of weeks, and you will be surprised by your increased productivity. Do this for a long enough period of time, and the effects of your time compounding will be powerful.

Have you ever gone to a restaurant that had an extensive menu with so many choices to sift through and consider? In contrast, have you gone to an event with a prefixed menu of three or four items? You may glance at it for a moment and, within seconds, make a decision. Having a large menu—a chronic list of things to do—can derail us from productivity and efficiency. In many instances, less is more.

Conventional wisdom suggests that “more” ultimately leads to greater success. To achieve more, you need to do more. Yet science suggests the opposite can be true. A less is more philosophy can go



a long way in creating value and enabling our progress with simple yet effective strategies to become more productive. It is simply doing less to achieve more by avoiding the likelihood of spreading yourself too thin. The antidote is focus.

By doing less, you are able to focus and achieve more. When you take on too much, you spread yourself too thin. This multi-tasking is akin to burning a candle at both ends. Urgent does not always mean important. Busy does not always mean productive. Think about that for a moment. How often have you been so busy yet ended up achieving nothing significant?

Ask yourself what is it that you are really avoiding. Complete this sentence in as many different ways as you can to establish new productive daily habits:

**I traded \_\_\_\_\_ hours of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_  
hours of \_\_\_\_\_.**

Procrastination is a habit, and if you understand how it shows up for you, you can replace it with a better one. Growth comes by building upon previous growth, whether money, learning, networking, memories, or time. We must make sure the areas we are working on are connected, productive, and have a specific purpose. Take the time to evaluate your life and where you want to improve, then apply this principle. If we apply this to all areas of our lives, I am convinced we will see the power of growth like never before. Remember, the most important belief is the belief that you can grow and develop your skills and abilities.

### **KEY POINTS**

- To maximize productivity, priorities must be defined. When you fill your day with higher-value priorities, distractions and lower-value choices are no longer the focus.
- Procrastination is not just time management but mind management.
- Being in the middle of procrastination is more painful than actually starting and doing the work.

## CONCLUSION

**C**ongratulations! The fact that you have made it this far indicates that you are really committed to stopping letting things hold you back. The tools in this book have the power to transform your life. They are a series of step-by-step lessons of self-mastery that will enable you to get out of your own way. You can and should refer to these tools as often as you need.

Many people believe that while growth is always possible, the most fundamental aspects of our identity are fixed and unchanging. Yet, you now know that you have the power to change the very foundations of who you are and unlock your limitless potential.

If you are feeling held back, now you can more easily identify the self-imposed limitations that you can dismantle and reprogram to shape your own destiny. When you recognize these reality tunnels that have held you back, you can reroute your future path and become unstoppable.

I have used the methods and principles throughout this book, and I have experienced the growth and benefit first-hand. I have seen the results with my clients as they break out of their comfort zones

and overcome obstacles to achieve new levels of success in their lives. They exhibit more joy, confidence, and firm belief in their ability to learn and develop new skills.

You have a tremendous opportunity to alter the trajectory of your life right now. Changes are inevitable, but growth is a choice. To progress, you must recognize your own worth. You must know yourself to grow yourself. Getting out of our own way and creating a growth mindset is an inside job. I encourage you to use this book as a reference. Revisit it periodically, and I assure you that this will continue to provide new insights each and every time.

Finally, I will say this: My mission is to change the world, one conversation at a time. I believe in you. My company's tagline is "Be you. Be extraordinary. Be extraordinary at being you." Having the belief that YOU CAN is the most important belief of all.

Please visit my website for some free resources and a video library that I have prepared to help you continue your personal development journey.

All of my love, ~ Karen

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## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

For additional resources, visit Karen Dubi's website

[www.KarenDubi.com](http://www.KarenDubi.com)

