

# ***The Art of Accomplishment***

*35 Surprisingly Simple Ways to Start Reaching All Of Your Goals*

**Nicholas Townsend Smith**

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# *The Art of Accomplishment*

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### INTRODUCTION

Why are you reading this book? Do you hope you will learn something that will help you change what you don't like about your life? Are you reading it because someone told you to? Are you hoping to learn something new?

It really doesn't matter why you are reading my book; I'm just glad you are. I know if you apply my methods, your life will change, as it has for me and so many others. If you follow these methods, you will become one of those people who reaches his or her goals.

Let me ask you this: what do you think it means to accomplish?

I'll tell you what I think it means. If I could give you one take away from this book and nothing else, it would be this: to accomplish something is simply to complete it. If you start finishing what you start, amazing things happen.

However, I will warn you that accomplishing anything requires effort. If you picked up this book thinking it would be a get-successful-easy methodology, you picked up the wrong book.

***Put it down before you actually EARN something!***

I believe, in the words of poet John Heywood, "Rome was not built in a day." Neither was my life; good or bad. Everything I have in my life, positive or negative, I put there by the actions I took and the choices I made. I developed habits that led to the outcomes I see today. Some of those are awesome, and others are quite terrible.

If I have learned anything, it is that success is a habit. It does not stem from luck, or genetics, or looks. It comes from taking the actions that merit reward as often as it takes and as long as it takes until they are eventually performed without thinking.

Creating habits of success is not always easy and many times people don't do them very well when they are starting out. That's OK! I tell my clients, "In order to get what you want out of life, you

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have to be willing to suck at something long enough to get good at it.”

What if you knew you would suck at something when you started; would you stick with it? The funny thing is; you’re doing that anyway. Every one of us learned how to walk, talk, eat, and go to the bathroom, and to do every other behavior, by not being very good at them for some time. Have you watched a child recently?

It is through small adjustments and repetition each of us develops the behaviors we have today. We get good at things by sucking at them for a while.

I want to share the concepts in this book with you because they have made an enormous impact in the way I live and they have helped my clients to change their worlds. These methods helped me get through some really hard times and are helping me mold myself into the person I would like to become. This book was written as a means to lay out clearly what I do to succeed. These are the methods I use to reach all of my goals, and my goals range from eating healthy to becoming a New York Times bestselling author.

If there is one thing that I have learned about success, it is that it takes effort in the right things and a willingness to persist long enough to win.

I believe we all have an opportunity to make this world into anything we would like. I know you can choose to be anything you would like to be, if you’re willing to earn it.

I will tell you just like I tell the individuals and businesses I coach: your success is up to you. I cannot go to the gym for you and give you my muscles; life doesn’t work that way.

I trust that as you ponder what I’ve done for me and my clients, you will apply and adapt these methods to your life. Following these ideas can assist you in reaching whatever it is you want. With the methods found in this book you can reach your dreams, whatever they might be. You can accomplish anything.

Just one small bit of housekeeping: this book does not follow a linear pattern and each of these methods can stand alone or be used in combination with the others. You may choose to read it in the

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order I have created, or you may skip around to the chapters that interest you the most.

It doesn't really matter to me how you read this book, all I ask is that you apply these methods to your life. Test them and determine for yourself that they work.

**Make Today Amazing!**

**--Nick**

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## *Chapter 1*

### ***CAPTURING THE RIGHT INFORMATION***

Imagine you want to go fishing and that this particular trip is going to be the best ever. You pick out the perfect spot on the map and make preparations. You load your equipment: the waders, the bait, the boat, a lunch, snacks, a good book and everything else you think you need, and head out on your way.

You drive for hours, and as you pull up on the scene of your perfect fishing spot, it is exactly as you imagined: the water is pristine, the weather perfect, the fish are jumping out of the water to capture their morning meal. It is easy to see you made the best choice.

You feel the excitement as you unload your boat and fill it with the bait, your lunch, snacks, and your book. You jump into the boat and paddle to the middle of the lake. Fish are jumping all around you. It is amazing! Nothing could be better than being surrounded by the towering mountains, alone and hours from home.

It's time to fish, so you search through your gear for your fishing pole...your pole...your rod and reel?

Are you serious? You made all of those preparations and you didn't pack the fishing pole? You didn't pack a net? For heaven's sake, you didn't even pack a camera. You made all of those preparations to be in the ideal spot and yet you didn't grab anything to capture the moment. Everything else is perfect, but you have no way to capture the fish.

What's the point of fishing if you can't even capture the fish?

This story is no different from reading this book, going through one of my training seminars, or having a one-on-one coaching

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session with me. If you don't have a way to capture the insights as they come, what's the point of participating?

Before you get too far into this book, I want you to grab something that will allow you to capture the information as it comes. You need to capture your thoughts.

It doesn't matter what I have written, what I say, or what anyone else says; it only matters what is inspired inside of you because of it. Always be ready to capture. To capture the right information you have to be ready, and that starts with simple tools like a pen and paper or a recorder.

Use this method wherever you go. You never know where the inspiration will come from, and whenever it comes you need to be ready to capture it. Carry a recorder or a notepad. Some of my best ideas have come when I am driving and sleeping (don't worry, I am not doing both at the same time). When driving in my car, I use a voice recorder. When sleeping, I keep a notepad next to my bed. The nice thing about keeping a notepad is that I can write my thoughts down and go back to sleep. If I don't write them down I stay up all night trying to remember them. Sometimes I have strokes of genius while sleeping and by morning I can't remember them anymore. That can be really frustrating.

Always be ready to capture every moment. That is the first method of change.

Are you ready? Let's move on to the other methods.

***A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience.***

**- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.**

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## *Chapter 2*

### ***WHY YOU NEED TO WAKE UP RIGHT NOW***

You cannot change what you don't know. If you don't know you do something, how can you fix it?

Wake up and notice what you are doing! Wake up and pay attention! Wake up and hear these words as though they never existed before! Wake up from the prison you have made of your mind and your self-imposed limitations! Wake Up!

Do you know what the next step in changing your life is?  
Awareness!

Awareness is the catalyst that starts the change every one of us seeks. If you don't know what you are doing, how can you change it? Allow me to explain this most vital step in shifting your behaviors.

Awareness is alertness, attentiveness, consciousness and is an awakening to your situation. It is an awakening to routines, rituals, behaviors, and outcomes. It is the very spark that will create the world you dream of.

You don't necessarily need to know why you do something; you just need to know that you do it. If it is working for you, great! If it is not, great! At least you know. I will teach you some tools to help you maximize your awareness as you are in it.

Let me share a story from a great man, Steve Hardison. He was teaching a young boy to stop sucking his thumb. He said to the boy, "Maybe you are sucking your thumb and you don't even realize that is what you are doing. Hours go by and your thumb is in your mouth and you don't know it. When you are aware that your thumb is in your mouth, pull it out." Steve continued, "Then maybe one hour goes by and you don't even realize your thumb is in your



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mouth. When you realize you have your thumb in your mouth, pull it out. Then you will be aware at 30 minutes, and then 15 and eventually you will catch your thumb coming up to your mouth. Each time you are aware of the behavior, *stop it!* Eventually, your awareness and the action you tie to it will change the behavior.”

Without awareness, without knowing what you are doing, it is impossible to change, but once you are aware, *change the behavior!*

***The world is not a problem; the problem is your unawareness.***

**- Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh**

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### *Chapter 3*

#### ***HOW NOT TO BE A SLEEP WALKER***

Sleep walkers are people who go through life never waking up to their potential. People who accept their conditioning and their current situation as destiny; something completely outside of their control; never acting or thinking for themselves. They wait in frustration for someone to tell them what to do and many wait for others to do things for them.

In some cases you will be able to wake up on your own. Other times, you need someone to throw ice cold water on you while yelling, “Wake up. Wake up. Wake up.”

Whenever you get a chance, ask yourself: What are you doing? Why are you doing it? Who are you being? Why?

Awareness is a step for creating change, but not always the solution. You may be aware of many things you do that aren’t working and that doesn’t change a thing. I am going to attempt, with this simple book, to assist you in using that awareness for positive change, but first stop sleep walking. It’s time to take control of your ship.

***Men and women are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds.***

**- Franklin D. Roosevelt**

### *Chapter 4*

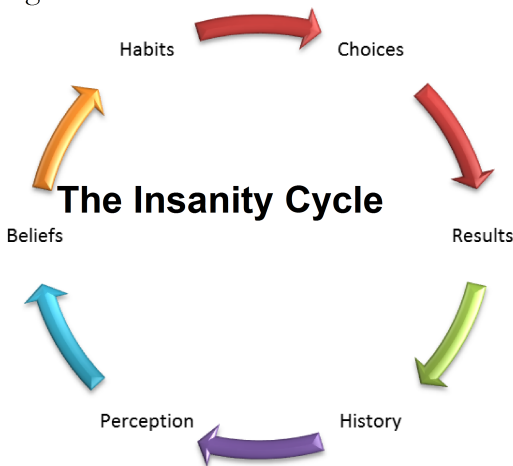
#### ***ARE YOU STUCK IN THE INSANITY CYCLE?***

As I mentioned, awareness helps you recognize the parts of your life that need work, but doesn't always create the change. Allow me to explain why we do what we do by using my Insanity Cycle.

I know you have probably heard this statement by Albert Einstein a million times, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result."

Let me ask you a question. When was the last time you considered your behavior insane?

Let me show you just how insane you and I really are. The diagram you see on the next page is what I call the Insanity Cycle. I developed this concept to explain why you and I do what we do, and believe me, it can seem a little crazy, so bear with me as I go through this.



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We all crave change in some degree. As we become aware of things we would like to have different, or attempt to make a change in our world, we immediately enter the Insanity Cycle.

Let's say for example, we decide to lose 10 pounds. We make this goal to change and maybe we do well for a week or so, then our habits kick in. Yes, we exercise for a few days, do a couple of crunches, or walk around the block, but ultimately we succumb to our old routines.

Habits or routines drive most of our choices, and before we even know what we are doing, we are back to doing what we have always done. We act in the way we always have.

Whenever we take an action, we create an outcome or a result. Much of the time our habits drive our choices and as we act on those choices, we create the same old results that we are accustomed to. Most likely those outcomes are something we have seen before. Sometimes they come out worse than they were. Maybe you look at the scale and instead of losing ten pounds, you gain five. There is nothing more frustrating than seeing your actions take your outcomes in a different direction.

When we see the results, we begin to justify, judge, or blame. We make up some story about the outcome and all of the reasons why something does or does not work. That becomes our history.

History is a compilation of the stories we have told ourselves about life's experiences and conditioning. Those experiences can come from genes, parents, teachers, TV, music, religious leaders, friends, personal experiences, etc.. It is the story we make up to make sense of what is going on in our lives. This history messes with our perception.

Perception is not what we touch, taste, smell, hear, or see, it is the interpretation our mind gives to those senses, and that interpretation is based off of our history.

Our perception causes us to see the truth in our story. Maybe we see a magazine article or have a conversation with a friend that confirms our perception as true. We literally start to see, hear, and experience things that tell us our judgment was correct, even when it might not be. The sad thing is that we draw from that perspective

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and establish a belief system. We actually believe what we perceive is true.

Beliefs are things we hold dear, and we'll protect them with our lives if necessary. They become our operating programs, and we base most decisions from them. They act as guiding methods for our lives.

We establish our beliefs based on what we perceive, and we anchor those beliefs in through behavior. We repeat the behaviors and over time establish our habits or routines.

Each time we want to change, we go right back into the cycle, act the same way we always have, create the same results, tell the same stories, believe and perceive the same way, and nothing changes. Yet the entire time we think we want something different, we act the same way we always have and nothing changes.

How is that for insane? Did you ever stop to consider how insane your behaviors really are?

Don't worry! You don't need to check into an institution. There is hope. As we move along, you will notice that the Insanity Cycle is not only the key to complete craziness, doubt, disappointment, and sadness; it is also the way out. The Insanity Cycle is the key to lasting change. The reason for this is that the way to create change is the same process you use to maintain insanity.

But first I must lay the framework for change.

***I voluntarily inflicted a certain level of insanity on myself.***

**- Jonathan Franzen**

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### *Chapter 5*

#### ***WHY CHANGING TO PROMISE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN PROMISING TO CHANGE***

Change is the driving force behind all that we do. Throughout my life, I sought for a change of environment, a change of physical health, a change of income, a change in my relationship with my wife and children, a change in my confidence, a change in my relationship with God, and so many other things.

Items in my life were not always going the way I would have liked and for this reason I wanted them to be different.

Each week I would tell my wife, “This is the week it’s finally going to happen; our worries are over.” I really believed it, and thought I was making the best choices to fulfill that promise, but after more than three years, my wife had enough. She told me that if things didn’t change, than our relationship most definitely would. She told me she would leave me.

I was working hard, but to no avail and I didn’t even realize how badly it was affecting my marriage or my life. I was stuck in the insanity cycle. I knew many of the answers, but my behaviors created the same ugly outcomes. We lost our home to foreclosure, ended up filing for bankruptcy, were named in lawsuits, and were living in our in-laws basement. I love my in-laws, but you can imagine how uncomfortable that is.

I didn’t even realize it was that bad. Talk about sleep walking. I kept making the same promise over and over again: *this is the week*.

When my wife said what she did about our relationship changing if I didn’t do something different, I had an awakening. I woke up to our situation and realized how empty my words had been for years.

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One day, while pondering our condition, I thought about the promises I had made through my life and which ones I actually fulfilled. I considered everything from spiritual choices to finances, from education to my relationship with my wife. Do you know what stood out? I was constantly making promises and nothing ever changed.

Do you want to know what I learned?

***Don't promise to change; change to promise.***

I had it backward. I used to go around telling those I was in relationships with (whether that be work or marriage, friendships or associations), "I promise things will be different, will you just be patient with me?" I promised the world and then did the same thing I had always done. In their eyes I was a liar; making up stories and never living them.

Much like the alcoholic who tells a loved one, "I promise I'll stop drinking," and the next day, goes to the bar and gets drunk. It means nothing.

A promise is not meant to come before the change because in most cases, we do not complete it. Our behaviors are too powerful and override the promise, and therefore our promise means nothing.

When we change our lives first, we can keep our promises when we make them. When we take it upon us to change first and promise second, our commitment to the promise is stronger, the faith of others in our promise increases, and we authentically become what we say we will become and do what we say we will do.

The biggest thing I noticed is that a promise must be made and kept internally before it can ever be fulfilled or shared externally. This is the change I am talking about; an internal change that creates an outward reflection. In my religion, the word repentance is often used. To repent means to change one's mind and that is what occurs; the change takes place, first in the person and second in the world.

I found out that change isn't always easy. I programmed myself and was also conditioned to act and live life a certain way. Years of

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doing things in a specific manner led to me having comfort zones in uncomfortable things. I was really good at wallowing in the mud pit of my life. I wanted to understand why I did what I did and ultimately, find a way to change it, which leads me to the next method...

*Change before you have to.*

- Jack Welch



### *Chapter 6*

#### ***USING THE ICCAA FRAMEWORK***

Change can sometimes seem like a daunting task, and the challenge I see in the people I work with and even in my own life, is the willingness to stick with something long enough to see it come to fruition.

When setting and reaching desired outcomes in life, I use a very specific framework. This framework is called the ICCAA. Let me explain briefly what that is.

The ICCAA is a concept that I created to help my clients understand the process for achievement. I have used it in my personal life and with each of my clients to get maximum results and it is an acronym for the following: Identify, Clarify, Commit, Act, and Adjust.

#### **Identify**

The first step in creating change is to identify what you want. What is it that you would like to have different? Maybe that is one thing and maybe that is everything. I want you to take a minute and write that down.

I find questions to be powerful in determining what it is I want. I tend to use a lot of rhetorical questions in this process because they trigger thoughts. I want to really consider what it is I say I want.

Rhetorical questions give me the ability to look at things without judgment or emotion and really determine if I want them or not. What I know about reaching goals is that I will never have anything (positive or negative) unless I want it, and the best way to determine that is to question it.

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Ask yourself these questions and write down the thoughts that are triggered:

- What do you want to change?
- What is not working in your life?
- What behaviors are keeping you from reaching your goals?
- What is the vision you would like to have of the future?
- What would having what you say you want do for you?
- What would your life be like if you actually obtained what you say you want?

### **Clarify**

The second step in the process is to clarify the highest probability path for attaining goals. Determining a clear path does not mean that the path needs to be complicated. It only means we need to determine the actions that would give us the highest probability of success. Notice I said, “highest probability path,” and not exact path.

I don’t really know what the future holds any more than you do. I sometimes think if I did, life would be a lot easier. Instead, I am left to make things up, to figure them out.

What does it take to go from point A to point B? I don’t always know that answer, so what do I do? I determine the action items that have the highest likelihood of getting me there. Where do I find these action items? Through testing—good old fashioned trial and error.

Another great method for clarifying the path is to follow mentors. We live in an information age, a time where people’s paths for success are readily available to us.

Sometimes in creating a path, I venture into uncharted territory and am left to beat the path myself, to make it up. Other times, someone has already beaten the path and I simply have to follow.

Let me share the analogy of the Rubik’s Cube. A gentleman wanted to solve a Rubik’s Cube by himself without any outside help. He did this in a time when we have internet, video, telephones, books, and many other resources.

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He spent a lot of time and finally solved the cube 26 years after he made that decision. He missed out on important events, suffered pain in both body and mind, and put a serious strain on his marriage. What dedication right?

The quickest the cube has ever been solved is just under seven seconds. My question is this. If the cube has been solved in seven seconds, wouldn't you want to find out how that guy or girl did it or do you want to spend the next 26 years figuring it out on your own?

A question I like to ask is, "If someone else has already beaten the path, wouldn't it make sense to follow theirs?" Creating new paths takes time, energy, and resources that many of us don't have. I find value in following someone else's tested results. That saves me time and allows me to shortcut the process.

Remember, your goal is to determine which path will give you the highest likelihood of success.

### **Commit**

Steve Chandler, one of my mentors said, "What you do is what you are committed to. If you are not doing something, you are not committed to it." To commit means to perpetrate or to act, but we often use it as a term to signify an agreement. To engage is to agree. To commit is to act. However, in this sense we are going to use a combination of these two words to imply *an agreement to act*. I don't care what you say you are going to do; I only care what you do.

In order to reach your goals, you need to make decisions. What I mean is when you are in, you are all in. No more sitting on the fence, waiting for things to change. No more dipping your toe in the water to test things out. You jump completely in.

### **Act**

The fourth step is to act. You could have the greatest plan in the world, the greatest idea, the greatest service, but if you don't do anything with it, who cares? Planning without action is just a waste of time. Everything we have ever accomplished was done by acting.

How long does it take to reach goals? As long as it takes! How long can you stay committed even when you don't see the intended results?

I think it would be awesome if there was an algorithm for goal achievement. Take certain actions and *voilà*, your goal appears. The

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majority of the time it doesn't happen like that. That is why when acting on the high probability items it is important to stay focused on the desired outcome. Without action there can be no feedback, and feedback is vital for realigning yourself with your goals.

### **Adjust**

The final step in the ICCAA is to use the feedback that comes from taking action and realign yourself with your goals; to make adjustments. Not everything you do is going to turn out peachy. You may act on a high probability item and find the result to be repulsive. What do you do at that point? Quit? No! You dust yourself off, make adjustments and fire again. This is how you learned to do everything in life.

Watch a young child when you get a chance. Notice how they adjust to situations, challenges, and their environment. You were once young, too. When you act on something it will either work or it won't and if it doesn't, make the adjustment and do it again, and again, and again, and again, until you reach your destination. The problem I see is that most people quit at the first sign of opposition.

When working with my clients, I am able to really help them get clear on the best course of action and then to do something about it. I don't play around. If my clients say they will do something and continually fail to perform (I don't mean they fail to miss their mark, I mean they don't act) I fire them and they don't get any refunds. What's the point of hiring someone like me if you are just going to do what you have always done? What a waste of money and time?

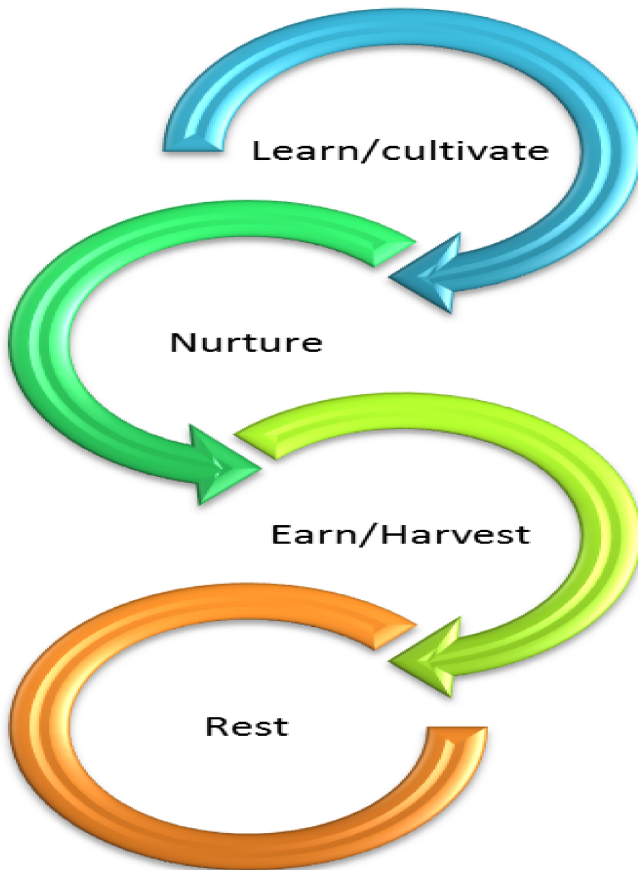
When setting your goals remember that action is vital for any achievement. If you are continually saying you will do things and failing to do them, hire someone like me to help you get out of it. I have used coaches many times throughout my life to break through my behaviors. I believe I could have done it on my own eventually, but it would have taken a lot of time, resources, and energy I didn't have. My mentors make a huge difference in my life. They help me to see the adjustments I need to make.

***It is not enough to take steps which may someday lead to a goal; each step must be itself a goal and a step likewise.***

**- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

*Chapter 7*

***WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND  
THE EARNING CYCLE***



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As you will probably see in this book, I am a big fan of cycles, so let me introduce the Earning Cycle. The Earning Cycle defines everything I feel is necessary for lasting change. If you want wealth, happiness, a loving relationship, a great job or anything else, you have to earn it. Lasting change doesn't allow for quick fixes, cheats and stealing. It is a process, and in order to earn the change you seek, you have to be willing to stick with something long enough to get good at it.

Humans are constantly observing their surroundings and adapting as necessary for survival and growth. Our perception is the gate by which all things enter. To perceive something is to grasp with the mind. All of our senses are feeding information into our minds for interpretation. Our sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing, and our instinct, are all providing an abundance of information for analysis. The gatekeeper, our conscious mind, determines what is allowed to enter and what is not. This gatekeeper makes an instant judgment call based on our past experiences, beliefs, and perspectives, and only allows things to enter if we perceive they will make us grow or provide protection. If we perceive something to be a danger, we will reject it.

In order for something to take root in our mind, we have to learn or cultivate it so we can accept the new information. In essence, we have to prepare our mind to receive. If we have past experiences with the information, this is easy. If we don't have any experiences, we might feel a sense of anxiety and will need to establish trust before moving forward.

Once we accept the information, we have an opportunity to act or not to act. If we don't act, the information is just that; information. Once we begin to take action on the new material, we strengthen and nourish it through repetition. As we do something over and over again, our brain creates neural pathways and our unconscious mind runs this program automatically. We will eventually do it without thinking. Therefore, if you want to make a new behavior a routine or a habit, you must practice it over and over again. If you want to become an expert, you must practice

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while making adjustments. These adjustments will allow you to fine-tune your skill.

Only when you have learned something new, and nurtured it, will you receive the reward for your labor. This is your harvest time where you receive the fruits of your labors. If your labor isn't producing the results you want, take that as feedback and troubleshoot the information you received. This may be a reflection of how well you nurtured.

If your results aren't what you expected, either the seed you planted is no good or you haven't nurtured properly. When you receive rewards for your labor, it is because you have taken appropriate action to that end.

The joy of this work is the rest period. I don't mean that you give up and retire. This is the time when you get to enjoy your creations, share stories, offer thanks and teach others. This is the space where the expert lives because instead of just dreaming, the expert is enjoying the fruits of their labors.

Does this remind you of something? The four seasons? Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter? We earn in seasons, so to speak. We have a learning phase, a nurturing, an earning, and a rest phase. Each one vital to the next and all interconnected. If you don't learn, you can't earn. If you fail to nurture you will not enjoy the fruits or experience the rest phase.

Perhaps I can clarify with this little poem I wrote:

### Sowing Seeds

*One day while wandering in my dreams / I saw the strangest thing  
A man was planting different seeds / To see what fruits they'd bring.*

*I watched him till and dig the earth / And carefully prepare it  
But when he'd plant tomatoes there / The bush brought forth a carrot.*

*He threw some orange seeds in the air / And whichever ground they fell on  
The trees would grow extremely tall / And bring forth watermelon.*

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*The broccoli seeds would grow as pears / The peach trees... artichoke  
I couldn't see how this could be / It must have been a joke*

*But I saw him plant with so much care / Some wild raspberries  
And as he watered and nurtured them / They started growing peas*

*I was confused, my head a mess / How could this ever be?  
But with my own two eyes I saw / A blossoming turnip tree.*

*Beets were squash and squash was corn / Pumpkin trees made funny shapes.  
But the strangest one I ever saw / Was a palm tree full of grapes.*

*I rubbed my eyes and pinched myself / And fell right out of bed.  
I woke up from the craziness / That took over my head.*

*I wondered on the spectacle / Of such abnormal dreaming  
Could the things I saw that night / Hold a deeper meaning?*

*I wondered and I pondered hard / About the things I saw  
And then I realized that they were / Contrary to God's law*

*For God has blessed each thing on Earth / To keep us from a bind  
And therefore every seed we plant / Brings forth in its own kind.*

*A tomato seed will grow tomatoes / A pea will be a pea  
You will never plant an olive seed / And grow a mango tree.*

*In kind the actions that we sow / Will work in the same way  
If we sow some kindness / We'll enjoy its fruits someday.*

*If we seek for confidence / Then that is what we plant  
Or if we want to know we can / We never say we can't.*

*For what you put out in the world / Will end up as your keep  
Be sure that you remember / What you sow you'll always reap.*



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We will always get back what we put into the world. Our actions will always yield the fruits of that action. I cannot be confident while acting scared. I cannot be rich while taking the actions which merit poverty. I cannot be the embodiment of love and hate my neighbor. The way to become what we want to become is to act as though we are already that thing. If I want to be confident, I act confident. I do the things that confident people do. If I want to be successful, I act the way a successful person would, and I do the things that would bring about that result.

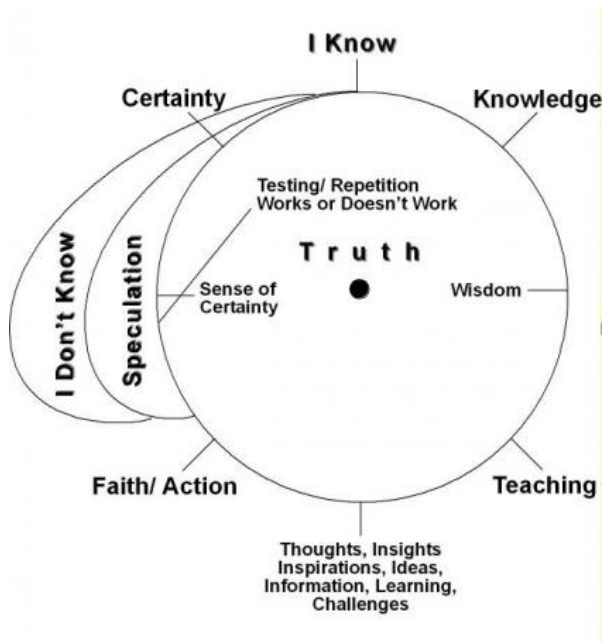
Everything you want must be earned, and remember, you can only reap what you sow.

***Before the reward there must be labor. You plant before you harvest. You sow in tears before you reap joy.***

**- Ralph Ransom**

*Chapter 8*

**WHAT TO DO WITH THE CERTAINTY CYCLE**



When we make a new choice we don't always know what the outcome will be. I was asked by a business owner whether they would get a job they were bidding. The owner said to me, "Let's test something. Are we getting that job?" I said promptly, "I don't know!" The owner told me that if we talked from a space other than certainty, we are not likely to get the job.

I pondered that. Where do uncertainty and the infamous *I Don't Knows* come from?

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First, let me define what certainty is. Etymologically, certainty means to be sure or fixed. It is the high probability that a certain event will occur exactly as it has previously. Certainty is something you can count on.

So, how does this all begin?

Somehow, somewhere, and in some way, a light kicks on in our minds. We have a thought, insight, inspiration, or idea. We receive information, learn something new, or are challenged to do a certain thing, and this certain something drives us to take an action. We have the opportunity to act or not to act.

For example, let's say we have no experience with this thing. There is no history that would tell us whether what we are anticipating works or not. We are in the space of *I Don't Know*. We speculate what we are thinking could or could not work, but we have not tested it to certainty.

In order to find out whether our idea will work, we must test it.

When we step into the unknown, it is generally with a step of faith. We reach out in anticipation that what we are doing will work. In the opposite of this, doubt causes us to not step into the unknown because we allow the speculation and the great *I Don't Know* to overpower us.

It is through faith, courage, trust, or whatever you might call it that we move forward into things we have never experienced.

Imagine as we test our concept, that we have our first experience and it goes poorly. We have now gained what I call, a sense of certainty. We feel based on one experience that a thing will continue to go as it did in our first encounter. A person says *no*, we get in an accident, we lose some money, or any other possibility. However, we don't yet know the actuality of the situation. There is not yet enough repetition or history to show with certainty that the item is what we are experiencing.

Imagine going to Vegas and putting a quarter in the slot machine. You have never gambled before and this is your very first quarter. When you put the quarter in the slot machine and pull the handle, you win the jackpot. It would be easy to say with a sense of

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certainty that every time you put a quarter in the slot machine, you will win the jackpot. We know with certainty that is not the case.

What tends to happen is people feel and live as though this one-time event, this *sense* of certainty, is actual certainty. It is not, because there is not enough evidence, history, or repetition, to give us an accurate reflection of its nature.

Certainty comes about through the repetition of a certain thing, close to or exactly as it was previously. For example, the sun coming up in the morning, our heart beating day by day, the four seasons, and anything else we experience with very little or no change on a consistent basis. These are all certain. There is a high probability the outcome will occur again and again.

It is at this point that we step out of faith, out of a sense of certainty, out of speculation and the *I Don't Know*. It is here that we gain knowledge. This is the point at which we can say, with certainty, "I know!"

Knowledge can be interpreted as learning, but not just learning. It is the truth of things. Truth is at the center of it all. It is by this truth that we know right from wrong, good from bad, and all of the other infinite opposites that exist in our universe.

However, just because we know something does not automatically mean we know how to use it. As we learn to use the knowledge we have gained, we earn wisdom. When we can determine what is true and use it appropriately, we become wise. We can determine the truth of things and use it in a way that benefits us and others.

One of the great ways to share wisdom is to teach others about your experiences. As you teach others, they gain a thought, insight, inspiration, or idea; receive information, learn something new or are challenged to do a certain thing; and the certainty cycle repeats, allowing them to find the truth of things for themselves.

The Certainty Cycle gives us all the opportunity to push through faith and speculation into knowledge and wisdom. As each of us shares our experience, others have the opportunity to see the world as we see it.

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In a later section, we will discuss the influence of repetition in creating lasting change and the power it has to shift underlying beliefs.

For now, look at your results. What choices did you make that created those results? How are those choices working for you? Can you see how your underlying beliefs affected those choices?

Your life will change when your choices change. If you don't like the choices you are making, change them.

***If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts:  
but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in  
certainties.***

**- Francis Bacon**

*Chapter 9*

**REDEFINE PERFECTION**

How many times have you thought to yourself that if you did not do something perfectly the first time, then you wouldn't do it? If you looked like some kind of an idiot, you wouldn't even try?

The word perfect originated from the Latin word *perficere*; *per* meaning 'complete' and *facere* meaning 'to do'.

To do something perfectly never meant to do things flawlessly or without defect; we redefined it to mean that. The original meaning of the word perfect was to do something and to finish it.

As you now know from the Certainty Cycle it is really hard to know if something does or does not work if you never finish it. It is in finishing things that we discover the results. If you finish what you start, then you are performing perfectly even when the results are not flawless. Perfection is what allows you to make adjustments and continue on to flawlessness.

As a little bonus, I want to share with you the process of perfection. This is a five step process and will help you accomplish every goal you set:

1. Intention - What is it you are stretching toward? What is the goal you would like to reach? Establish your target and determine the high probability path for reaching it.
2. Trigger - Establish a trigger that gets the process started. You could have an intricate goal and system put together, much like a Rube Goldberg machine, but nothing to trigger the next action, so it really doesn't matter. The trigger is the item or action that gets you moving toward your goal.
3. Perform - Now that you have the goal, the system, and the trigger, the next step is to do your system; to act.

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4. Complete - Finish what you start. Perform to completion because this is the only way you will know if your system works or not.
5. Adjust - Make adjustments to your system and actions until you are getting the results you want.

The process of perfection is a simple tool that will assist you in reaching your goals every time. Do you want to perform perfectly? Do what you say you will do and finish it! That, my friend, is perfection.

***Action is the highest perfection and drawing forth of the utmost power, vigor, and activity of man's nature.***

**- Bishop Robert South**

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### *Chapter 10*

#### ***IF YOU MAKE CHOICES, YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ZERO POINT DECISION MAKING***

There's no getting around this section. If you are reading this right now, it is because you have chosen to do so. Yep, that's right, you made a choice. Congratulations!

You never stop making choices. In every moment you are determining which path to take, what food to eat, where to go, who to talk to, what thoughts to think, and a billion other things. In an average day you will make thousands of choices. Some will be conscious, meaning you will be physically aware you are making them, and others will not.

As you will be making choices in every moment, don't you feel it would be more beneficial to know what you are choosing?

#### **Operating from Zero Point**

In the study of vortices, there is a point in the vortex that is considered to be the lowest energy field, or the grounding. It is known as the zero point. In a lot of cases, it is considered to be a vacuum, a point in space that is completely empty and void of mass.

Moment to moment, I am presented with opportunities to choose between the positive and the negative. My position when making that choice is always from the zero point, or the most neutral space, much like the massless void of a vacuum. It could be viewed as the line that separates the fork in the road in any decision. When presented with opportunities, I have the choice to act or not to act, to do or not to do, to be or not to be.

It is evident that the zero point is a monumental opportunity in my life to do things differently. It exists in everything I do, every decision I make, and it is only possible to operate from the zero



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point when I become completely aware and am 100% in the moment.

The goal in life is to live above this zero point or on the positive side of the spectrum. I call this choosing up. As I choose up, I am choosing the language or the choice of increase.

I know it is impossible to remain in the neutral ground. I cannot sit around on the fence because if I stay in the zero, I become a zero. I get to choose moment to moment to moment, everything that I will allow in my space. How exciting is that? If I didn't have the negative, how could I choose the positive? If I didn't have the positive, I could never choose the negative. Life could not exist if we had one but not the other. You and I could not exist. Would you know what happiness was if you never experienced sadness? Could you describe sweetness if you never tasted bitter? Is there any way we could find love in this world without hate? Do you think you would recognize success if you've never known failure?

I want to clarify what the zero point is, so for example purposes, let's say I make a choice that really isn't working for me. Imagine this choice is attached to an enormous buffet table that is full of every describable option that could be imagined from the positive or negative realms. Let's say that I scoop onto my plate a choice that doesn't fit my normal character. This choice is one I wouldn't make under ordinary circumstances. Now this choice would sure taste better with a heaping spoonful of guilt, wouldn't you agree? So, I am going to pour on the guilt. Well, now that I have the guilt, I should add the pain. I can't have guilt without pain. Who's ever heard of a guilt dinner without pain? I throw that on my plate. Well, pain is no good without suffering. So I grab the beat-up stick and serve myself a healthy dish of suffering. This has got to be the most fantastic destructive meal I have ever had. I mean, by the time I finish this, I should really feel terrible.

In looking at this example, everything I threw on my plate was from the negative side of the table. How would it look if I made the same initial choice and this time, instead of adding the heaping serving of guilt, I added love for myself? From that space, what if I knew it wasn't working to make the choice that I did, and served

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myself some learning? Do you get the picture? If I operate from the zero point in every moment, even if I choose guilt, is it not possible to serve myself from the positive side of the table?

How do I prepare myself to be ready to choose up, even when I am not 100% in the moment? I feel it comes from planning ahead while I am in the moment, whenever that moment is. By planning ahead and making choices prior to the event, I allow myself to choose up. I also get to recognize the chains of negative habits that are keeping me from choosing the positive things I truly want, and break them. If I subscribe to being sad, then sadness comes with depression; depression is accompanied by a sick feeling and that sick feeling causes me to be tired, and so on. At any moment, I can break that chain while in the zero point and choose differently. When presented with the opportunity to be joyful or sad, I can choose joyful. Depressed or enthusiastic—enthusiasm! There is an opportunity to operate from this zero point every time a decision is made. It is up to you to recognize that opening in your choices.

By choosing up in every moment, you are making it easier to choose up the next time. By choosing down, you make it easier to choose down the next time. You are here to create abundance in every aspect of your life. Choose up! I challenge you to do this. To get started, be aware moment to moment of the words you are using and the feelings you are choosing. Be sure to stay above zero point and watch the miracles come.

***We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them.***

**- Khalil Gibran**

### *Chapter 11*

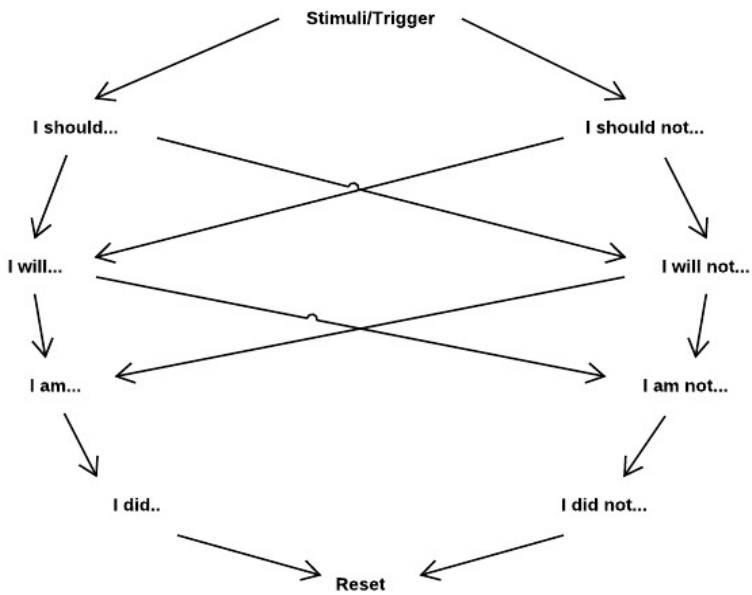
#### ***SHOULD I OR SHOULDN'T I? WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE?***

One night my wife and I were getting ready for bed and she ran her hand across her face and said, "I should wash my face." Immediately she followed it with, "I am going to wash my face." She then washed her face. It was simple decision making in the process. I never really considered how simple the process was until I experienced that during that evening. The process stuck in my mind like glue.

Allow me to explain in my own nonscientific terms, how we make decisions. First, a stimuli triggers a thought. The stimuli in my wife's case, was her hand running across her face. The thought that was triggered because of that stimuli, was "I should wash my face." Second, she decided to wash her face with her declaration, "I am going to wash my face." Third she washed her face. So, not only did she decide, but she followed through with an action; she washed her face. Fourth, she finished and was able to satisfy the initial stimuli and the subsequent thoughts. She felt a sense of accomplishment and reset the mechanism so that the next time she touched her face or triggered that thought pattern, she would be ready to decide and act again.

In simple terms, this is what occurs when we go to take action. A thought is triggered and we get the feeling or idea that we should or should not do something. We decide whether we will or will not act on it, we act or we do not act, which allows us to say we did or we did not do something. Either way, the mechanism is reset and we can go through the process all over again.

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*Desire is a powerful force that can be used to make things happen.*

- Marcia Wieder

### *Chapter 12*

#### ***WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO DECIDE***

Have you ever had to make a decision? Were some of them harder to make than others? Though short, this section will help you to understand what decisions are and why they are so important.

What is the most vital point in the action process? The decision is. Why? Because without the decision there is no action. Deciding is what helps a person to burn bridges, close off retreats, and the very item that allows a person to move forward unhindered.

The word *decide* comes from the latin word *de caedere*. *De* meaning off and *caedere* meaning to cut. To decide then is to cut off. It is the point where you determine what you will do and you don't look back.

Unless one decides, he or she is left to waiver much like a ship if it were in the middle of the ocean with no sail and no rudder. People who do not decide are left to be tossed around by the decisions that are made for them by others.

Decision is what allows a person to enjoy the fruits of labor. Decision takes a person from wanting something to having it.

***A real decision is measured by the fact that you've taken a new action. If there's no action, you haven't truly decided.***

**- Tony Robbins**

*Chapter 13*

***TO SATISFICE OR OPTIMIZE- THAT IS THE QUESTION***

In the 1950's, Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon coined the phrase *satisficing*. This word is a simple combination of satisfying and sufficing, but despite its simplicity, this simple concept has made a profound difference in my life.

As an example of what satisficing is, imagine that you are at the store and you need to pay for an item. The item costs \$7.48. A person who is optimizing would give the cashier exactly \$7.48. A person who is satisficing could give the teller either \$7.48 or any denomination above that. A ten dollar bill would be good enough to pay the tab.

Satisficing is a concept of good enough. If something is good enough, it is deliverable. Optimizing is to make the most of something. There is a time for optimizing and a time for satisficing. My thought is that it is better to deliver than to optimize if optimization gets in the way of performance.

I can't tell you how many times I waited to act on things until I had everything exactly as I thought I needed it. I thought if I had everything flawless, then I would be ok. However, in perfecting my ideas, I failed to launch. I failed to take action. I spent too much fixing all of the possible challenges, but never delivering. Any product would be better than a perfect and undelivered product.

One of my coaching clients is a videographer, and not just any videographer; he's a perfectionist. The problem was that he was spending way too much time perfecting his products to his standards and he was losing money in the process. After teaching him the term satisficing, he began to deliver his stellar product on

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time. He stopped perfecting and started satisficing. It wasn't that he was cutting corners, he just realized he could still deliver a quality product and fit the needs of his customers without having to make his products flawless.

On the other hand, this same client does find times where he needs to optimize his projects and deliver a product that does not just satisfice. The difference is that he now determines the best method to use and takes action accordingly. When you don't need to optimize, satisfice!

*I didn't feel like I had great command out there, but it was good enough.*

- Tom Glavine

*Chapter 14*

***THE REAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONSCIOUS  
AND UNCONSCIOUS CHOICES***

There are two types of choices that we make in any given moment; conscious and unconscious. There is a distinction between conscious and unconscious action. Consciousness means that we are aware, or awake, to everything within our space. Unconsciousness is anything outside of this type of awareness.

Unconscious actions are the things we do without thinking or pondering, we just do them; they are automatic. These are the habits, behaviors, and underlying beliefs that move us through life automatically. I refer to these as our default mode.

Conscious actions are the actions we take from an awareness level. This is where we are fully awake to our choices, experiences, surroundings, outcomes, etc.

The beauty of the two action types is that they are both necessary for our advancement.

Conscious actions can become unconscious actions. In other words, if you perform a positive or negative conscious action long enough, you will master it, and it will become automatic or unconscious. If you would like to create new positive habits, the key is to repeat the new behaviors long enough consciously for them to become unconscious.

Our goal is to create enough positive unconscious actions that these positive, unconscious actions put our body into the mode of creating the things we would truly like to have in our lives rather than accepting those negative things that are already there.



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*It is a profoundly erroneous truism, repeated by all copy-books and by eminent people when they are making speeches, that we should cultivate the habit of thinking of what we are doing. The precise opposite is the case. Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking about them.*

- Alfred North Whitehead

*Chapter 15*

***HOW TO BRIDGE THE CHASM BETWEEN WHERE  
YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE***

Imagine, if you will, a large gorge, an enormous gap between two mountains. You want to get across this chasm and the only way it seems possible to do that is to jump. The good thing about this story is that you can't get hurt when you jump, and if you don't make it to the other side, you can stop attempting and leave or you can keep doing it over.

You notice as you come to the edge and look at the vastness of this rut that it seems impossible. You have never done this before, and you're certain it will be difficult to get across.

Let's say as you imagine this, you decide to go for it. You back up to a ready stance and make a run for it as hard and as fast as your little legs will go. As you approach the edge, you slide to a stop like a baseball player coming into home base, losing all momentum precisely before going over the edge and into the deep, dark unknown below. You stand up, dust yourself off and say, "This is crazy! What am I doing? I could get myself killed."

You have a choice in this moment, to attempt it again or go home. For some reason you decide to attempt it again as your mind hounds you and tells you how bad you failed the first time. The mind tells you that you can't do this, but you go for it anyway.

Again, you back up to a ready stance and make a run for it, and as you approach the edge you jump with all of your might, giving it everything you have as you leap off the edge towards the other side. You realize as you are floating through the air like Michael Jordan that you are not Michael Jordan, and you are significantly short of the other side. You are going down into the hole short of the prize.

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As though it were magic, you suddenly appear on the ledge where you started.

“Interesting,” you say to yourself. “I didn’t die and I didn’t make it to the other side; how cool is that?” So you decide you will attempt it again. For the third time, you approach the edge and jump with all of your might, giving it everything you have as you leap off the edge towards the other side and....you miss. Back up to the ledge you go. You ask yourself, “How can I get to the other side? I know! I can build a launching platform off the edge of the cliff. If I build it out a little way, I know I can make it.” So you go about building yourself a launch pad. You make it strong and sturdy so it won’t break apart on liftoff. You finish your creation, back up to a ready stance and make a run for it. As you approach the platform once more, you jump with all of your might, giving it everything you have as you leap off the edge towards the other side and....you miss again. Back up to the ledge you go. “How can I do this? It is really important to me that I get to the other side. What can I do to reach my goal?”

It comes to you in a flash of visionary clarity: *Make the launch pad longer*. That’s it! That’s the secret sauce. You go to work and extend the launch pad out even further, back up to a ready stance and make a run for it as hard and as fast as your little legs will go, and as you approach the platform, you jump with all of your might, giving it everything you have as you leap off the edge towards the other side and....you miss. Back up to the ledge you go.

The thought keeps coming, “Make the launch pad longer.”

Over and over and over, you make attempt after attempt, each time getting closer and closer to the other side, yet you still fall short. However the thought still says, “Make the launch pad longer.” As you build out your launch pad just a little bit longer, you notice that it’s touching the other side of the chasm. You have built a bridge across the chasm and calmly and easily step to the other side, free to go back and forth whenever you choose.

This is how our brains work. Neurons in our brains jump across chasms called synapses. As they do this, your mind is communicating with your body that it wants a certain task

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performed. As you tell yourself repeatedly that what you are doing is important to you, the mind will begin to create a connection between the synapse. The more you do a thing, the easier the mind makes it for the neurons to pass over and carry out the signal. As the gap is bridged, the signal travels easily and automatically, it becomes a habit. I call this Mind Glue. The mind *glues* the bridge together.

There are two types of habits that we form: those that work for us and those that work against us. All habits come about through the same process of repetition. The same process we use to create a habit is the same process we use to break it. It comes about through repetition.

When we are starting something new, we are usually not very good at it. Norman Adler said, “anything worth doing is worth doing crappy.”

I like to call this phase the wobble. If you have ever spun a top, you’ll notice that it seems to spin uncontrollably as though it will crash, yet as it continues its path, the wobbling smooths out to a controllable circular motion. This is how life works when we are doing something new. We start out being very uncomfortable, we wobble like crazy. As we continue to do it over and over again, it becomes easier, and the wobbling goes away. I am of the opinion that when the wobbling goes away, it’s time to wobble again. It’s time to stretch further.

When we create habits, good or bad, we wobble initially until we become proficient at it. When we break habits, we do the same thing. Most people give up during the wobble. They never make it through to smoothness. They never hold out long enough to make or break the habit. The only way to make it through is to hold on for the ride and be conscious that what you are experiencing is all part of the process. How badly do you want those habits? How badly do you want to achieve your goals? That will depend on how committed you are through the wobble.

***In order to get what you want out of life, you have to be willing to suck at something long enough to get good at it.***

**- Nick Smith**

### *Chapter 16*

#### ***WHY TAKING SALMONIC ACTION WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER***

Never heard of Salmonic Action? That's because I made the term up, but I'll share where it came from.

Are you familiar with the salmon? Salmon are saltwater fish. They are born in fresh water, migrate to the ocean, then return to fresh water to reproduce. They overcome amazing barriers to reach their goal. They face horrendous predators, devastating waterfalls, body-destroying diseases, and unearthly strong currents. They are relentless in their pursuit even in the face of so much danger. The salmon will stop at nothing to reach its destination.

An amazing piece of information about these fish is that they can lie motionless for any amount of time in the strongest current. They will not so much as wiggle a fin, and they won't move. If alarmed, on the other hand, they dart at lightning speed upstream against the current instead of allowing themselves to be carried downstream by it, which would seem to be more natural.

What do salmon have to do with you? In the face of many challenges when pursuing your goals, you have an opportunity to charge headstrong into the adversity or float downstream. Someone once said to me that even a dead fish can float downstream.

In difficult times, most people jump ship and swim or float like a dead fish with the current. Those who stand firm will see the possibilities that are available in the face of so much fear and negativity, because they will be ready to charge forward at lightning speed to take advantage of the opportunities that will arise. Are you one of those that charges forward at lightning speed?

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In place of succumbing to the power of negative thoughts, you could charge forward through the thoughts to the intended goal.

Like the salmon, when we are presented with a challenge we get to charge into it. The key to progress in difficult times is committed action: Action at lightning speed beyond the setback. What does it take to move forward when fear strikes? It takes courage, clarity of purpose, trust, and passion.

When the crowd or your mind is running in the opposite direction, it is up to you to stand firm and, at the sight of opportunity, charge forward into success. There will be times when you don't see the opportunities before you. Your forward action will make those opportunities clear and bring about the rewards.

When I was selling real estate, I remember one bitterly cold winter in particular. I hadn't sold a home for what seemed like an eternity, and things were getting extremely difficult. I had no clients and no prospects. I had known for some time that when I take committed, lightning-speed action, creation steps in and fills in the gaps. I determined I would go out in the dead of that obscenely cold winter and knock on doors. I had no idea if it would work or be a complete waste of time.

While everyone was comfortably warm in their homes on that frigid day, I was out trekking through the knee-high snow from door to door. I must have looked more like an Eskimo than a real estate agent, yet the people were kind enough to let me in. I gathered a lot of names that day, and not one of those was ready to work with me. When I got home that night I felt like an utter failure. That same evening my phone rang. One of my past clients asked me if I would like to represent their friend in the sale of their home. I emphatically said, "Yes!"

I gained a client that day. It came because I was willing to step blindly into the unknown regardless of the outcome. I think that because of my action, that client called me.

We may not know what the results of our actions will be. It is not up to us to know the mechanics or the how's. It is up to us to know, that by our committed action, the results we seek will come. We get to take action. This key to your success will push you

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forward into the actualization of your goals as you originally intended them.

***Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.***

**- Thomas Jefferson**

*Chapter 17*

***HOW I ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS***

Sometimes in making choices, we'll let distractions get in the way. It's our method for going back into default mode. Distractions are sneaky, and if you're not vigilant, they will take you completely off course.

Sometimes when I had a task to perform online, I would get hung up checking my email, looking at the stats on my blog, or chatting with my friends on Facebook. Hours would go by before I realized I never did what I set out to do.

Distractions come in all shapes and sizes, and their main purpose is to keep us from reaching our goals or being our word. They are also an avoidance mechanism that we all use to postpone what we perceive to be a painful experience. The way I avoid distractions is to stay aware and have purpose for every action I take. If I make a choice, it leads to a desired outcome, and from that outcome I make another choice, which takes me to my destination. This is zero point thinking.

***A distracted existence leads us to no goal.***

**- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**



### *Chapter 18*

#### ***PERSISTENCE IS REALLY THAT IMPORTANT***

Do anything long enough and you'll get good at it. William George Jordan, in his book *The Majesty of Calmness*, said, "you cannot tell your valet to go to the gym for you, work out diligently and give you all of the benefits of his exercise. You must do it on your own." We make lasting changes in our life by the choices we make and it is up to us individually to act.

This is the toughest part for most people. It is easy for them to give up in the face of adversity. For a lot of people, the motto becomes, "When the going gets tough, I quit!"

Imagine you're in a race. The gun fires, and you explode off the line with a huge amount of energy, determined you will be the winner. You give it everything you have, and it pays off by giving you a vast lead over your rivals. You think to yourself, "I've got this in the bag." You round the first turn and begin to feel slight fatigue. You notice that the other competitors are catching up to you. Relentlessly, you tell yourself to keep going, but little by little you lose stamina. You become disheartened and slow down even more as you begin to ponder the reasons you're running out of energy. As quickly as the thought fills your mind, you are passed by one of the other runners. The crowd starts cheering for her. "They should be cheering for me," you tell yourself. Then another runner eases by you, and another. "What's wrong with me? Why is everyone else succeeding and I'm not?" Seeing the opportunity of being first across the finish line has escaped you, you begin to slow down even more. The rest of the group plows by you as you come to a standstill in the middle of the track. You decide in that moment this isn't worth it, quit and walk, depressed, off the field. You never

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even cross the finish line, and go home to sleep for a few weeks to honor the depression you are feeling. Whenever anyone asks what happened, you blame something or someone for the results of that day.

How often do you run your life, relationships, and businesses this way? You start out great with tons of excitement and energy. Everyone, including yourself, knows you are going to come out on top. You jump into it full force and take an astounding lead in your life. Then it takes longer than you expected, a client says no, a girlfriend says she's not interested anymore, a friend says the economy is going to make it difficult to succeed, and you begin to ponder the reasons these statements might be true for you. You begin to doubt. As you allow one event after another to confirm your *why not's*, you slowly decay mentally and finally succumb to the pressures of quitting. When people ask you what happened, you quickly blame everyone and everything, never looking at your role and accountability.

To become a winner, you must triumph over yourself.

When people set expectations for what the end should look like, they quickly become disheartened when their lack of persistence causes it to take on the appearance of something else. An alternative ending so to speak. Rather than pushing through to the creation they had in mind, they quit.

Our biggest critic is our own mind. It will treat us more harshly than any other human ever would. It wants to hear those negative statements and make them true. It will beat on us until we finally believe we are not good enough. It will torment us until we admit we can't do something. It is more powerful than all of those naysayers put together. They are all on the outside and it is not.

***What we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence.***

**- Samuel Johnson**

### *Chapter 19*

#### ***THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACTUALITY AND REALITY***

To perceive means to grasp with the mind, to gather and to obtain. Perspective in short is the way in which we interpret all of the information that flows into our space. It is the story we have given to every experience in life. This is how we make sense of things. When we communicate, it is from our perception.

In *The Blind Men and the Elephant* by John Godfrey Saxe, he shares a story about six men from Indostan who are all blind and are attempting, without success, to describe an elephant. Each of them grabs hold of a different part of the elephant and ties it directly to a reference in his life. The first feels the side of the elephant, and it feels sturdy like a wall, so in his mind an elephant is like a wall. The second grabs a hold of the tusk, feels how sharp it is and sees the elephant like a spear. The third lays hold of the trunk, and to him it seems as though the elephant is a snake. The fourth, who touched the wrinkled knee, thinks the elephant is like a tree. The fifth, who happened upon the ear, feels an elephant is like a fan, and the sixth clutches the elephant's tail and assumes it is a rope. Each of them argues that what he observes is correct and the others are wrong. None of them will budge in what they see as truth.

The *reality* of this poem is that each man was right in what he perceived to be as truth, and it was as real as it would be to you and me. The *actuality* of the poem is that they were all looking at an elephant through blind eyes, and their perceptions caused them to see it differently.

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Actuality is the state of being actual or existing as it actually is and not what it is perceived to be.

Reality can include things that exist as they actually are and things that may not actually exist, but are perceived.

By combining the viewpoints of these different individuals, it is possible to arrive closer to the actuality of an item or situation.

We have a tendency to portray the world in the way we perceive it. Others do this when we communicate with them. We rarely see things exactly the same.

It is impossible for each of us to see the same thing the exact same way. Since no two observers can occupy the exact same space at exactly the same time. One observer's view of an object will vary slightly, depending on their position. The view may be skewed left, right, up, down, in front or behind. Therefore, an object, as it appears to one person, will not be the same perceived object to another.

It is very common for us to believe that people are seeing what we are seeing, hearing what we are hearing, or learning like we are learning when in reality, they may be seeing the same object, but not in the same way. For example, I can see you and you can see me, but I can never see me the way you see me. Even if I looked in a mirror, I would see myself through my own eyes. This being the case, it is possible for every person to have a truly unique experience.

Because our perspectives are unique, our beliefs follow suit. We base our beliefs off of the interpretation we have given to something based on our observation. This observation dictates what we hold as true. We compare against what we already believe and reject or accept based on that analysis.

***I reject your reality and substitute it for my own.***

**- Adam Savage**

### *Chapter 20*

#### ***WHY YOU NEED TO BURST YOUR BUBBLE PERSPECTIVE***

Imagine a group of people surrounded by an individual bubble. Each one of them is saying, “My way is the right way, and that’s the way it is. My perspective is the right perspective, and that’s the way it is.” Each of them is saying the same thing.

Notice a big circle of people all staring at one object in the middle of a room. As they observe the object, they form an opinion of what it is. Each of their opinions is slightly differently. Not significantly different, just slightly. Yet each of them is unwilling to bend because their perspective is the right one. What they perceive becomes their new belief on this object.

You have this mess of bubble people bouncing into each other, and each time they do they say, “This is what I see, and I’m right.” Bouncing and bouncing and bouncing into each other always saying they see it correctly. They each have differences in opinions, yet there remains just one object in the middle.

One little bubble guy opens up to the possibility there may be another perspective that will add clarity to his own. He opens up his bubble and asks another, “What do you see?” Of course, that one shares his perspective, being 100% right. “That’s my way, that’s the way it is.” The little bubble guy says, “Huh! I never saw it that way before. That’s interesting. I’m going to incorporate that into what I already know.”

He opens up and asks another, “What do you see?” Of course that one shares her perspective, being 100% right. “That’s my way, that’s the way it is. Blah! Blah! Blah!”

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The little bubble guy says, “Huh! I never thought of that before. I had never seen it that way before. That’s interesting. I’m going to incorporate that into what I already know.”

He continues this over and over again and notices something very interesting. He notices that each of them is looking at the same object but with a different perspective. He begins to gain a clearer perspective into what is actually in the middle by continuing to ask those around him what they see.

Some of the descriptions seem crazy. Some of the descriptions are close. Some of them are slightly, and nearly unnoticeably, varied. He learns that by asking others for their perspective, he can increase his own perspective. It’s not just about him and what he sees.

How often do you go about in your bubble of perspective with nothing new going out and nothing new coming in?

Open up to the possibility that someone else may see it a little differently than you and that is ok.

As you meet new people in life, remember that all of their experiences were different from yours. Because of this, they will never comprehend the world the same way you do. Imagine what the other people are seeing and put yourself in their positions. Realize, however, that as you do this, it will be passing through your filters and will never be fully accurate to their experience.

Take this book, for example. Thousands of people have written on similar subjects to those I am teaching in my book. However, none of them have ever written it with my perspective. Only I can do that, and that is what makes me and this book unique. You may say to yourself that people have already contributed to the world in a way similar to what you are planning, and therefore it doesn’t matter. Nobody will contribute the way you will. What’s to say you aren’t the last piece of the puzzle needed to paint the picture clearly? You and your contribution are unique and needed.

***Reality is merely an illusion, although a very persistent one.***

**- Albert Einstein**

*Chapter 21*

***IF HISTORY IS JUST A STORY WHY NOT REWRITE IT?***

Isn't it interesting that history broken down is literally *his story*. Couldn't we call it her-story or *her story* as well? History is essentially that, it is the story we give to events in our lives. We love stories, they make us feel happy. They make us feel sad. Stories make us who we are, and we love them.

Our stories affect the way we react to the world. We have a tendency to dress them up. We make them fun and exciting. We add our filters to them.

Where do these stories come from?

Scientists show that some of our history is passed down in our DNA, and we are in many ways like our ancestors. However, that does not mean that we have no control over our lives. Sure, you could accept the story that your genes make you do everything. To me that's a cop out.

In some cases, we accept the stories of others as our own. How many times have you heard someone say, "Why can't you be more like...?" Well, isn't it obvious, I am not that person and therefore I can never be exactly like them? Each one of us has a truly unique history, and this history greatly affects our perception.

In any case our history is made up. If you don't like the story you are telling, change it! Sit down and rewrite it, and then live into it.

***I am always at a loss at how much to believe of my own stories.***

**- Washington Irving**

*Chapter 22*

***USING RESULTS CONSTRUCTIVELY***

Results are the outcomes of our choices and they never lie. Our results will tell us accurately whether our choices are working or not. Often, we will allow our story to cover up the actuality of our results, like our genes made us do it, or something along those lines. Results are simple creatures. They tell us the truth about our choices. They are honest buggers. If only we could be as honest as our results.

In short, results are the outcomes of our choices, and they tell us exactly how we are doing. Results tell us simply that the actions we take are working for us or not. If we would strip away all stories and look at the outcomes we could truly get in touch with how we are doing.

Imagine you have never shot a bow and arrow before. You pick it up, aim at the target, and let fly. You miss the target by a ridiculous amount. You are not even close. You are so far off, it is laughable.

Some people would quit. They would throw the bow on the ground and never pick it up again. They would cuss at the wind, the bow, their health, or whatever they can come up with. Did they fail? Only if they quit.

Those that win are the ones that pick up the bow, make an adjustment and shoot again. Maybe this time they're fifty yards off. They adjust and shoot again. Now they are twenty yards off. They adjust and shoot over and over again until they are hitting the center of the target every time. Then they move the target and do it all over again. Missing the target only means you need to adjust and shoot again.



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Missing the target is only an indication that you need to make adjustments. If you quit, you will never know what is possible. You must be willing to adjust and go at it again, until you get what you are after. That is what results are for.

***There is no such thing as failure. There are only results.***

**- Tony Robbins**

*Chapter 23*

**WHAT STRETCHING HAS TO DO WITH SUCCESS**

When someone is willing to take a risk, they are taking a chance on the unknown; stepping out of their comfort zone.

If you hadn't taken the risk of walking when you were a baby, you would still be crawling. If you didn't take the risk of driving a car when you turned 16, you might still be walking.

Risk is a part of the ever-growing life. It starts with an intention. This word comes from the Latin root for tendons and literally means *to stretch towards*. As we intend our goals, we are stretching towards them. This intention requires risk because we are usually stretching into the unknown. This stretching allows for growth and the attainment of those things we desire. In talking about the literal benefits of stretching our bodies, we can see how the benefits are similar to the stretching we experience when reaching for new attainments.

Below are the actual physical benefits of stretching. The description that follows is a reflection of the true benefits of intention:

**Reduced Tension** - When we get out of our comfort zone and accomplish something we thought might have been out of reach, there is a sense of relief that is experienced with its achievement. The anxieties experienced by the mysterious unknown disappear and we can revel in the accomplishment.

**Increased Range of Movement** - As you reach a goal, it becomes easier and easier to hit it again. When a goal becomes easy to attain, you can intend for goals that are just out of reach. Little by little, you will gain an increased range of motion in the reaching of your goals. Risk going too far to see how far you can go.

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**Enhanced Coordination** - The more you accomplish something, the better you become. Skills and wisdom are gained. With practice, it becomes an ordinary part of you. Your body will work with you in making it natural and easy. Soon it won't seem like a stretch to reach for those idealistic goals.

**Increased Circulation** - While you intend for your goals you will notice an increased circulation. It may come in the form of money, love, friendship, or any of those things or feelings that are important to you. This increase will allow you to continue forward in the attainment of your other goals.

**Increased Energy** - Once that money, love, and friendship start flowing, or you begin experiencing success, what happens to your energy level? It will go through the roof. You will feel as though you can accomplish anything. You feel like the King of the World.

If someone is unwilling to step out of their comfort zone, they will never experience the joy that others experience by risking.

Wisdom is the key to risking productively. Let's suppose you say, "I am going to be a millionaire, and I will do it by robbing banks all across the nation." This may be a possibility. However, it is not a wise choice. For one, it is highly illegal and will likely end in death or life behind bars.

The risks you deserve to take are the ones that will assist you in obtaining your goals. It may be risky to talk to people you don't know on the phone. It might seem like a risk to talk to that boy or girl you've always wanted to take on a date. It may be a risk to invest your money in a new venture.

When one is willing to risk, they are also ready to receive the rewards or learn the lessons that are offered when it works or doesn't. If you never step out of that comfort zone, you will continue to receive what you have always gotten. If that is the case, be grateful for what you have, because you are the one creating it. If you want to see it change, you will have to do things differently.

Recently I developed a program called Stretch Revolution ([StretchRevolution.com](http://StretchRevolution.com)). For thirty days, participants receive a daily challenge that really gets them out of their comfort zones. The

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problem is that stretching for the sake of stretching doesn't really accomplish much. One must have an intention for the stretching, so in addition to getting uncomfortable, I have participants tie that discomfort into their goals. Now not only are they stretching, but they are creating something positive with it. They are no longer just adrenaline junkies; they are adrenaline junkies creating amazing things in their world.

When you stretch, ask yourself why you are doing it. If it is just for fun, enjoy it! If you are doing it to accomplish a goal, then by all means get uncomfortable and reach the goal.

*If you only do what you know you can do- you never do very much.*

**- Tom Krause**

### *Chapter 24*

#### ***WHY THE LAW OF ATTRACTION SHOULD BE CALLED THE LAW OF ACTION***

I almost imagine a fisherman with his pole in hand and a large tackle box full of different lures. Some are colorful and large. Others are simple and small, but each lure serves its purpose in attracting what he wants in his life: fish! As nice as his lures might be, he will never catch a fish unless he attaches one to a line and throws it in the water, and even if he throws it in the water he must reel it in appropriately to gain the prize.

Do you feel like you can obtain your goals if you never take action? I feel a lot of people believe that just because they want something and it's the only thing they think of, talk of, and dream of, that they will obtain it. Yet they never take action towards its attainment. They think it will mysteriously appear. That is ridiculous!

Things become attracted to us when we become value magnetized. This is magnetization that comes about by the actions associated to the value we create. If I write this book, it may be amazing. But if I never have it published or tell the world about it, no one will ever know. I need to tell everyone that I have done something that merits reward. I've pondered this aspect a lot. What does it take to create this magnetization? I like the idea of the more I do, the more likely I am to see a positive result.

Let's say I have an idea for something amazing. This something will revolutionize the world and bring about an incredible positive change for all humanity. No one else has created this item, and I am the only one who knows about it. I tell my friends about this thing, and they are amazed. They tell me my invention will be the greatest

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thing in the world. I sit back, mentally patting myself on the back, and continue to tell myself that what I have thought of is monumental. I decide to tell a few more people and they, too, are amazed, and I give myself some more back patting. I continue doing this disclosure/back pat routine for several years, feeling I am making progress because I have told all these people about my idea. A strange thing happens. I go out and talk to my friends about my great invention and they begin to shun me. They have all heard the story a thousand times, but have yet to see or experience the product. They become bored with my antics and my idea fizzles and fails.

One day in my sadness I am watching the news (because that is what sad people do) and they announce an invention similar to mine but far more inferior. The world praises this creator for his invention and I become agitated. "I have a better product!" I shout inside. But it's too late. This person did what I did not. He let the world experience his product. He went to the media, his friends, his family and associates. He demonstrated his product while I casually disclosed what I had created whenever I needed a boost of ego. One worked diligently, the other casually; the difference in result is quite significant.

I have written a poem that illustrates this quite well:

### Two Spiders

*Two spiders spun their webs / In two very different places.  
I will tell you how they came / To occupy these spaces*

*One day a wise old spider / Showed two friends the secret way  
That they could both be like him / And live in strength some day*

*They both agreed it could be done / If they followed in his plan  
They looked at him with much respect / Each said the words "I Can!"*

*Both spiders started working hard / They surely gave their best  
As time went on, while one would work / The other liked to rest  
Herein came the greatest change / Between these spiders two*

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*The one would be most diligent / The other would fret and stew*

*In time the hardest working spider / Would see results compounded  
While the other in his lazy efforts / Found his returns confounded*

*So now we see two spiders / And how their time was spent  
One spider gained the promised prize / The other not a cent  
That is how two spiders spun / In two very different places  
It came from all the choices made. / Their actions picked their spaces.*

It is through our diligence and actions that we create the positive outcomes we seek. Just having the best idea or greatest invention is not enough. He who demonstrates the best, talks the most, and works diligently, wins.

***An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea.***

**- Buddha**

*Chapter 25*

***IF YOU ARE NOT REPORTING TO SOMEONE...  
YOU SHOULD***

When left alone, most people go back to what they know. Most people will hold themselves accountable to a certain degree. But usually only to the degree they are already experiencing. Rarely do people hold themselves accountable above and beyond that. Rare is the person who can take themselves to their fullest potential without assistance. People love to live in their comfort zones.

Reporting allows us to grow beyond our normalcy. If we know that someone will be asking us about our results, reviewing the feedback, and challenging us to improve, we are more likely to do what we commit to.

We report to a lot of different people in our lives: employers, friends, religious leaders, associates, family, the IRS, clients and more. Each of them demands a certain amount of performance from us. We raise ourselves up to the level they expect and usually level off.

Because I am married and have children, I am accountable to them. My commitment is to provide for them. Believe me, when I don't, they let me know, and I quickly make amends. My family expects me to provide food, clothing, shelter, and safety. I provide this and more. However, it is through coaching that I am able to provide way beyond their expectations.

The reason my clients pay me such an unconscionable amount of money is because I hold them accountable to a higher level than they would themselves, and help them get results they struggled to attain alone. There's something about paying large fees that gets a person to be accountable.



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One of my coaches had me stretching in ways that assisted me in improving my performance. We met on a consistent basis and reviewed the results of my actions. Together, we analyzed those results and made adjustments for the next period. Another coach I worked with helped me to understand marketing and branding. Another coach helped with personal issues.

One particular coach I have worked with has a coach who holds him accountable to an even higher standard. This coach tells me he would produce only about 10% of what he does if it weren't for his coach. I know from my own experience that I am in that same boat. I wouldn't be nearly as productive as I am without my coaches. My clients tell me the same thing about their coaching experience with me. They tell me if they weren't reporting to me, they wouldn't be getting such dramatic results.

When changing your life, you need an outside observer who can assist you in reaching your goals. This can't be someone you're in a relationship with. Friends, spouses, and business partners all have a vested interest in you. They don't want to hurt the relationship and will often hold back the truth when that is what you need to hear most. As a coach, my goal is the success of my client, whatever that goal might be. I tell them the truth, because that's what they need to hear. The only time they can make a true change in their life is if they are working with accurate information. There is no holding back in coaching, and that is what scares most people away from doing it. They are not ready to dig into the way they play the game of life. They know what they find can be scary.

Having someone to report to, that tells it to you like it is, creates a significant change in most people. We act differently when we know someone is watching. Having someone to report to allows us to look at our fears and face them for what they truly are. In most cases, they are just excuses.

If you want to see what you are capable of on your own, look at what you have already created. Your results will tell you what you are currently able to do. If you want to see what you are truly capable of, hire a coach like me to get you to your highest potential.

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You will soar above what you thought was even possible.

*A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you.*

- Bob Proctor

### *Chapter 26*

#### ***MAKING TIME FOR RECOVERY***

Let's face it. You are not the energizer bunny, and neither am I. You will run out of steam at some point. Whenever you are stretching outside of your current comfort zones, it is very important that you give yourself time to recover.

It is much like working out. When starting out on any exercise program, you may require frequent rests. Your body may not be accustomed to the change and will tire more quickly. However, the more you exercise over time, the fewer breaks you will need.

The only caveat I give with this chapter is that you better get back to work after your recovery period. Some people use their comfort zones as an excuse to stop working. Comfort zones are for recovering, not building your mansion. If you want things to be different, you will have to move outside of your comfort zone. In fact, stop calling it a comfort zone and start calling it your recovery zone. It is the place you go to recover so you can get right back out and work on your goals.

You are going to need breaks. Take them! You may need to take a break before you start a project, you might need breaks during a project, and you will likely want a break after a project. Take them!

Just remember to get back in and work.

There is a strange thing that happens when we take breaks. Many times barriers are broken down because we are willing to step back and catch our breath. Sometime we see solutions we missed because we were so caught up in the moment. Start taking breaks

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and you'll notice a drastic improvement in your performance.

*Sometimes it's important to work for that pot of gold. But other times it's essential to take time off and to make sure that your most important decision in the day simply consists of choosing which color to slide down on the rainbow.*

- Douglas Pagels

### *Chapter 27*

#### ***FLOWING LIKE A RIVER***

Draw a point A and a Point B on a sheet of paper. Point A is where we are today. Point B is where we would like to be. What are some of the goals you would like to accomplish? Let's pick one we can all agree on; let's say it's a healthy body. How many ways and possibilities are there for getting from point A to point B? Let me hear some... Just pay for liposuction. Put that on there. Is that a possibility for us to follow the path of least resistance, just go from point A to point B? Absolutely! What are some other ways to get from here to there? What if you're low on money, how could you get fit? Could you work out at home? Could you run outdoors? Could you eat healthier? How many possibilities are there for you to get to your destination? I want you to note for yourself, what is the path for you?

There is a path for each of us to get to fit right now. Let me have you start synergizing and think of the possibilities of going from point A to point B. Capture some of these thoughts. What are the myriad ways we can get fit with or without money? Capture them one at a time. Now if we look at these ideas, are there a lot of them?

Let me share the story of a river.

What does a river do that's unique? A river flows. Does it get from point A to point B? Yes. Are there times when a river just goes straight from point A to point B? Yes, it's generally called a canal right? Its generally man made, a straight line, although you will sometimes see straight lines in nature, water flowing in a straight line is generally man made. As a river goes from point A to point B, what will it do? It will say, "Ok, it's getting a little hard to keep

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going in that direction, I'm going to go this direction, and then I'm going to go that direction."

What's the thing about a river? It's continually moving forward. It is not stopping and quitting. It's not saying "This is too hard, I quit!" It's not saying, "This is too hard, I'm going back to where I came from." It continually moves towards point B. Am I right? Now, a river as it flows, finds the path that's the easiest for the river to flow through. How many rivers are there in the world? There are a lot. Am I correct in saying that? There are a lot of rivers. If each of these rivers has the opportunity to go from point A to point B, why aren't they all on the same path? If they are all going into the ocean, why not join up into the same river and go right into the ocean? Are there a lot of rivers that do connect to the bigger rivers? Yes, there are a lot of streams and tributaries flowing in the same direction that connect to these larger bodies of water. Yet, in most cases, they have their own path. They choose their own way. Whether it's going from a reservoir to a lake or a lake to an ocean, it doesn't matter, the river is just going to flow, even possibly from ocean to ocean, whatever it might be. So, here is the thing, it's flowing and finding the path of least resistance to get to where it wants to go and sometimes that's straight from point A to point B? Am I right?

So we want to look at this as a river in going from point A to point B. How many ways are there to get from point A to point B? There are infinite ways, but does each of these have a process and a flow? Yes, and as we get going are we going to see things that make us say, "You know, maybe this isn't working to go this direction, let's choose this way?" And we choose a different path. Does that happen?

So as you look at this, if you were a river, and your goal is to go from where you are, and let's say point A is your reservoir and fitness is the lake that you are flowing into. Look at all these paths and options you can choose from. Which one works the best for you? Do you have to do it like somebody else? You are unique, so you have the ability to choose your path and it can flow like a river, smoothly and easily, or you can start blasting mountains and hope

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you don't run out of resources before you get to your destination. Most of us have been conditioned to blast through things, which leads to casualties. We put our head to the grindstone and push forward blasting through relationships, blasting through friendships, blasting through valuable resources, and anything that comes in our way. There's a rock in our way, an obstacle in our path? Blast it! What, there's a person between me and my goal? Blast him! My family is not supporting me in this? Blast them! The problem with this is that you may reach your goal, but what good is a drop of water to an empty lake? You were supposed to bring the rest of the water with you.

The beauty of a river is that it nourishes and builds along the way. It gives the gift of life and abundance to all who are in its path. A river does not steal resources from its neighbors. To all the naysayers who say, "Oh yeah, what about erosion?" I say, "What about deposition?" A river usually creates more value for those in its path than harm. A river is not in a hurry, although it will move quickly when required. A river is unafraid. A river is powerful and serene. If a river runs into an obstacle, it quietly and gladly finds another way. A river moves forward continually towards its destination. A river leaves a path to follow.

When reaching for your goals in life, do it like a river would do it. Lift up those around you on your journey. Be calm in your voyage and find the course that works for you, the path that gets you to your destination and leave a passageway for others to follow.

A river does not know the word can't, and neither should you. If you choose not to make it to your destination, it shows you were not committed to the goal. The only thing that can stop you from getting what you want in life is you. It is not the barber's fault or the baker. It is not impossible. It is merely a choice. There is no one in this world who can take credit for your results.

Find the process and flow that allows you to get from point A to point B. Ask yourself, "What are the possibilities, and which one makes the most sense for me in this moment?"

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If you never stop moving forward you cannot fail. Only quitters fail.

*Flow with whatever may happen and let your mind be free.  
Stay centered by accepting whatever you are doing. This is  
the ultimate.*

- Chuang Tzu



### *Chapter 28*

#### ***WHEN TO USE AFFIRMATIONS AND QUESTIONS***

An affirmation is a positive statement that we say aloud, or in private, repeatedly, to bring about the things we desire in our lives. This statement is always in the affirmative and may sound like this: “I am a powerful, wealthy man or woman.” or “I am healthy now.” In order for an affirmation to work, it must be true, and you must believe it. If you are absolutely broke and bankrupt and are telling yourself you are a millionaire, it is not likely to happen.

In the case of our runner, he bombarded himself with negative thoughts. Although outside forces may say or do things to affect our course, none of these will take hold unless we allow our internal dialogue to accept it as its own. An affirmation is a way for us to take our thoughts off what we don’t want and realign them with our goal. What we focus on, we create.

Our minds are wired for automation. When you were a baby, chances are you started like most of us, crawling. Not too many babies walk home from the hospital. Truth be told, they don’t crawl home either. As you were learning to walk, it took a great deal of effort and focus to take that first step. You probably fell down a few times. With time and repetition, your body began to take over. You didn’t start each day at that very first step. The mind retained that information and you were able to progress from where you left off. There came a point in this process wherein you could walk effortlessly. Now, I would venture to say, you don’t even have to think about walking, you just do it.

Our body has the ability to automate those things that are vital to our livelihood. Do you have to think or tell your mind to make your heart beat? Do you remember to breathe in and breathe out?

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Did you tell your body to maintain its temperature? How many things did you do while you were driving to work today? Did you talk on the phone, put on makeup, or write some notes? As our body begins to experience repetition, it begins to notice this is important and retains it in the *Keep* database. It becomes automated, and we can begin to do it without any conscious thought.

Affirmations allow us to retain fresh in our minds those things we would like to actualize. They trigger what is known as the Reticular Activating System (RAS). This is a part of the brain that is believed to cause awareness and motivation. This is also believed to be the system that maintains the body's essential functions like breathing, heart rate, and other automatic functions.

When we repeat something over and over again it becomes habit, and this part of our mind will automate it. If I say, for example, "I only see blue Volkswagen Beetles," my Reticular Activator will show me all of the blue Volkswagen Beetles. If I repeat over and over again that I am powerful, the RAS will kick in and show me all of the reasons why I am powerful. This incredible tool not only keeps us alive when we are doing a million things and driving, it brings to our attention the things that are most important to us. It will also automate the habits that will be necessary in reaching our goals.

Alternatively, if we repeatedly say there is a lack of money, time or anything else, our RAS will show us the reason why those statements ring true. The RAS will automate those actions (or lack thereof) you would need to take to reach the actuality of a lack of money, time, or anything else that seems lacking.

Imagine a baby wanting to walk. Let's suppose this baby had the use of affirmations. He determines that he will walk, and every day he lies on his back moving not even a muscle, saying, "I can walk smoothly now." He repeats this over and over again, day in and day out. Months go by and he doesn't miss a day of his affirmations, yet he never moves a muscle. Do you think this baby will ever walk? Not if he never takes action. The RAS is not a magician. Just saying something over and over again doesn't mean it will come into your space. This occurs when we take action.

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Many believe that by saying something over and over again, it will magically appear in their life. This is not true. Although we can create automation through repetition, we cannot bring about the item until we take some form of committed action.

It is unfair to say that one will be a millionaire while this same person sits at home watching TV. Yes, they may say their affirmations as they sit in front of their favorite reality show, but this will not bring the millions of dollars to their door. You cannot reap what you do not sow. Just talking about farming does not make you a farmer.

Affirmations must be welded to committed action. This allows your talk to become your reality. The repetition of both your affirmations and committed action will allow your RAS to become your biggest advocate. It will assist you in automating those things that will make your goal a reality. It is said that it takes 45 days to stop a bad habit and the same amount of time to create a new good one. You must be consistent in your efforts, and the energy you feel towards creating the new habit must be equal throughout the process.

Affirmations work great for some people. I personally use a combination of both affirmations and questions. Questions are very powerful at getting us to see other possibilities.

Do you recall when you were younger, the amount of questions you would ask about life? Have you ever paid attention to a child when they are discovering what this world is about? My children ask millions of questions, and I am astounded at the wisdom they gain in such a short amount of time.

Have you ever wondered why, when you go to a specialist, that they ask you a lot of questions? A true expert seldom just gives you advice. They will calmly draw out from within you the answers that you hold. Do they know something we don't? When advising my clients, I rarely tell them what to do. I ask them questions until they find their own answers. I have found this to work in the same way when I ask myself questions.

When did we stop asking questions? Why is it that most of us think we have life figured out and there is nothing left to ask?

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The only way to grow in this life is to ask questions. Why do I do this? How does this work? What are you doing? Where are we going? What am I making? These are a few of the many questions we can ask each day.

Wisdom comes from seeking and seeking comes in the form of a question.

I challenge you to start asking more questions. Throughout the day, ask yourself why you do things, how you can improve, how things work and anything else that comes to mind. At night before you go to bed, ask yourself the things you would like to know. Your mind will go to work while you rest, and by morning or within a few days, you'll have your answer. The mind wants to figure things out and in most cases, will leave no question unanswered.

Be ready when the answers come. Keep a notepad or recorder with you at all times. Sleep with one next to your bed, so when those insights come, you can quickly jot them down.

When you ask good questions, life gives you good answers. When you ask bad questions, you get bad answers in kind. Questions like, "Why does this always happen to me?" allow the mind to come back and say, "Because you are a victim!" Ask questions that lead in the direction you desire to go and you'll get answers to get you there.

Your success is dependent on the questions you ask and the frequency of them. Return to your youth, re-light that youthful curiosity, and become what you dream about by asking questions.

***Every sentence I utter must be understood not as an affirmation, but as a question.***

**- Niels Bohr**

*Chapter 29*

***WHY YOU NEED TO BECOME AN EXPERT***

Recently I interviewed many experts to find out how they got to where they are. They ranged from world champion arm wrestlers to New York Times bestselling authors. I wanted to know what made them tick and if they were really any different from you and I.

The first thing I did was to redefine what an expert is. Often we hear the word expert and we think of one person who is unique above any other person. He or she has developed qualities and skill that surpass the average person, but that is not what it means to be an expert.

An expert is someone who has tested or tried, a person who is wise through experience. Couldn't that be any one of us? Don't we all have experience in different areas? Have you ever tried and tested something?

What was so amazing about these interviews is that each of these people in the interviews was no different from you or I. Each was born into an average family with some innate talents. However, none of them had the skills they have today when they were born. They had to develop them. It took time to reach their success, anywhere from 5 to 25 years. All of them had mentors along the way. Each established routines that helped them become who they are. Every one of them faced challenges equal to or greater than those you and I face.

What was the common thread? They knew what they wanted, and they stuck with it long enough to attain it.

An expert is not unique. An expert is someone like you and I who did what it takes to become successful. He or she tested and tried and became wise through his or her experience. They earned their success.

Why do you need to become an expert? Because what you say you want to have different is going to require your effort. You need

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to test and try. You need to become wise in your subject through experience.

***An expert is a man who has made all the mistakes which can be made, in a narrow field.***

**- Niels Bohr**

*Chapter 30*

***IF YOU WANT TO SUCCEED...SET BOUNDARIES***

Do you know what you want? Do you know what you will do, and what you won't do? Are you aware of your abilities? Do you let others know your rules for playing this game of life?

If you don't know the answer to these questions, or you do know and are unwilling to declare them, then it is highly likely that someone else will determine them for you.

A boundary is where one thing ends and another begins. We can set boundaries around time, family, spirituality, work, and many other things. The problem is that many of us don't know where one thing ends and another begins. We make appointments and someone asks us to do something. We accept it because we have some story that tells us we should, and we allow them to break our boundaries while we complain about never having enough time. Enough time for what, the things you would like to do?

How will others know your boundaries if you are constantly violating them? If we likened a boundary to a property, I would imagine you would put up a fence to mark off your territory. Not only that, you would also put up no trespassing signs, and if someone crossed that boundary you might have them arrested. What if you went through all this work of setting up this perimeter and any time someone crossed over it, you let it slide? What if you let them cross the fence regardless of the clearly marked no trespassing signs? Would it really matter that you went through all the work of setting up the boundary?

This applies to your life as well. If you don't know your boundaries, no one else can know them either. If you know your boundaries and don't enforce them, what's the point of having boundaries? If you want your life to be different, if you want more time, if you want to be with your family or friends, start enforcing your boundaries.

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Here's how you do this. First, determine what it is you will and will not do. Second, communicate what you will and will not do with others. Perhaps you don't take calls after a certain hour. Let others know! Third, enforce the boundary. When someone calls after that specified hour, don't answer!

You can apply boundaries to every area of your life but beware of the biggest trespasser of them all...You! You will violate your boundaries more than any other person. My challenge for you is to honor the boundaries you set.

To get what you want out of life, you need to set boundaries. You must know what it is you want and what you are willing to do to attain it. Boundaries are the secret little tool that will help you succeed.

***Boundaries are to protect life, not to limit pleasures.***

**- Edwin Louis Cole**



*Chapter 31*

***STOP WAITING FOR DESIRE***

If you wait to do things until you feel like doing them, you will probably never do them. You may not feel like eating healthy, going to the gym, calling the next person. You might not ever feel like practicing or stepping out of your comfort zone. But you must. You must act despite desire!

Many times we will wait to accomplish something until it feels just right. I am telling you that feeling may not come until you are neck deep in action.

If you want to feel the desire, go take the actions that you need to take to accomplish your goals. The desire will come. It may take time for you to feel the desire, but remember my segment on bridging the chasm. With time you will gain the desire to do what you need to do. Stop waiting for desire. Take action and the desire will come.

***Wanting something is not enough. You must hunger for it. Your motivation must be absolutely compelling in order to overcome the obstacles that will invariably come your way.***

**- Les Brown**

*Chapter 32*

***CLEAR YOUR PLATE***

Imagine yourself in a buffet line. You have one plate and myriad food options in front of you. You load your plate and go back to your table to clear it. Maybe you loaded your plate with so much food you are unable finish everything on it, so you have leftovers. Imagine now there is no one to take your plate away when you're done and you are allowed to grab a new plate. You repeat the process and eventually you have a stack of plates in front of you with a lot of leftovers. Now imagine you have to take those plates and all of the scraps with you everywhere you go. Would that be annoying?

Sometimes we make to do lists that are enormous. We say we will do all of these things, and while we get to some, many are left undone. The problem with undone items is that they consume space in our mind. They are like mind bombs, and until we disarm them, they are constantly sucking up our energy as we remind ourselves of what we should do.

The best way to stay present is to finish what you start or don't put the dang thing on your plate in the first place. If you make a commitment to do something, by all means do it. Otherwise, don't make those kinds of commitments.

A client of mine was talking about a short letter he had been putting off writing for nearly a year. I talked with him about clearing the plate and challenged him to write this letter. He agreed, and the next week reported what occurred. He told me that writing the stupid letter took a huge load off his shoulders. He no longer had to worry about doing it because it was done. He told me he felt free to do other things and was surprised that he allowed a five minute letter to control him like that.

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If you want to accomplish more, clear your plate! If you will be proactive, only put things on your plate you know you will do.

***In hell there is no other punishment than to begin over and over again the tasks left unfinished in your lifetime.***

**- Andre Gide**

*Chapter 33*

***DON'T LET THE BALL STOP IN YOUR COURT***

One of the keys to change is keeping the ball in motion. If you are reaching for a goal, don't let the ball stop in your court. Don't let momentum end with you. Find something to do that will get you closer to your goal. If you need to make a call, make the call! If you need to do something, do it! If someone else isn't performing, take the ball out of their court and put it somewhere else. No one ever succeeded by sitting around, and no one succeeds when the ball is out of motion.

***Success comes from taking the initiative and following up...  
persisting... eloquently expressing the depth of your love.  
What simple action could you take today to produce a new  
momentum toward success in your life?"***

**- Anthony Robbins**

*Chapter 34*

*1-1-1*

A few years back, I attended a seminar where Craig Zablocki shared a story of an older gentleman who set a goal, when he was young, to exercise every day. His goal was so simple he could not fail. He determined he would do 1 sit-up, 1 jumping jack, and 1 push-up every day. Some days he felt like doing more and he would. Other days he would at a minimum, do 1, 1 and 1.

Goals do not have to be complex to be effective. Sometimes it is better to do something with a small goal than to have large goals that we never act on.

My challenge for you is to make your goals so easy they are impossible to fail. What small things could you do to reach your goals right now? Do them!

***Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction.***

**- E.F. Schumacher**

*Chapter 35*

***MAINTAIN A LONG-TERM VISION***

Let's face it; it could take some time for you to reach your goals. Be patient with yourself as you work through this process. Trust that your actions will create a new outcome.

As you set your goals, keep your eye on the end you have in mind. If you can maintain this long term vision you will accomplish everything. It becomes your purpose and the why behind everything you do.

***At the center of your being you have the answer; you know who you are and you know what you want.***

**- Lao Tzu**

*Conclusion*

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Can you imagine what is possible for you if you lived by these methods? What would your life look like if you kept all of your promises? Who would you be if you stopped living an insane life?

The art of accomplishment is completing the things you start. What I have shared in this book should allow you to do that, but remember no one has the responsibility of getting you to take action other than yourself. Apply these methods, and take control of your outcomes. If you don't like what you are experiencing, change it! If you need help doing that, hire someone or have a friend or group assist you.

If you will stick with your dreams, you will surprise yourself. You are capable of so much and I look forward to hearing about your accomplishments.

Thank you for reading my book, and please share it with your friends!

—Nick

## ABOUT NICHOLAS TOWNSEND SMITH

Nicholas Townsend Smith (Nick) is quickly becoming the most powerful performance trainer in America. His transformational style and commitment to individuals generates lasting change in each person who comes in contact with him. From seminars, webinars, and teleseminars to group and individual coaching, Nick gets results!

Nick has worked with business owners, organizational leaders, executives, employees and individuals across America and into Canada in the area of performance. His client's results have been astonishing; from establishing high paying contracts to increasing health, each person has taken Nick's concepts and used them to accomplish their desires.

Nick works with people to raise their performance to its highest level, to perform perfectly, to break out of comfort zones and to succeed.

Our news reflects an MTV/ Entitled society wherein you get something for nothing. We are riddled with fraud, laziness, deception and a **not my problem** mentality because people feel they don't have to earn things. We have reached a tipping point where those who seek benefits outweigh those who create benefits. Therefore people feel that those who **"have"** must provide for those who **"have not"** and many have forgotten that they have the ability to provide for themselves; they feel entitled to that which they have not earned.

Many employees feel as though their employers owe them something. As though having a job entitles them to an easy ride and low production. Nick teaches employees to be intrapreneurs; people within an organization who take ownership and accountability for their roles in the company. He teaches them that their success is up to them and shows them how to change their non-productive routines.

Nick has interviewed many experts from New York Times best-selling authors to professional mountain bikers to discover the



secrets of earning success. These common methods have been lost among the hype of get rich quick schemes, multi-million dollar lawsuits and lottery winners. Nick has been in the words of Ivan Misner, PHD, **“Applying uncommon action to these common principles.”** Nick has taught these methods to hundreds of business owners and professionals across America and into Canada. Nick’s expert methods have created lasting positive change for these people and their organizations.

Nick is an action and results based expert performance coach. He cares less about what you say you’ll do and more about what you actually do. Nick teaches his clients to become expert in their field using the same methods used by the nation’s leading experts. By creating an environment of accountability and reporting, Nick has been able to get his clients the results they’ve been challenged to attain in the past. You can learn more about Nick and his work at <http://clearpathtraining.com>.

## TRIBUTES FROM PEOPLE LIKE YOU

“I met Nick by chance, if there is such a thing as chance. During our first conversation, Nick opened my eyes to many things about my business that I had just not been aware of. I was able to address these blind spots and it has made a huge difference for us. Since then, Nick has coached us in our business and personal lives and continues to help us uncover our clear path to success.”

— [Ryan Bradshaw](#)

“Perhaps one of the most valuable things Nick has taught me is that I sometimes make up stories in my mind, and that is all that they are is stories. Things don't always happen like we think they are going to when we are caught up in the heat of the moment. Nick had taught me to keep moving forward during the hard times, and I find myself looking back on those times, realizing that it did not turn out like I had thought it was going to. I had simply just made up a story in my mind. This has been powerful to me. It has helped me get through some pretty difficult times.”

— [Glen Swallow](#)

“One life changing gem that Nick shared with me was not to promise to change, but to change in order to keep my promise. I no longer spend time trying to convince others to believe in me. I believe in myself, do it, and let my actions do the convincing. This one philosophy has changed my life. This is just one of many ‘light bulb moments’ I’ve had working with Nick. A true friend and an inspiration!”

— **Jonas Otsuji**

“Many times in life you make promises to change and spend the majority of the time making lists, setting goals and getting ready to change but fail miserably after about 30 days when the will power and life happenings set in. I think everyone knows that wanting results, getting them and knowing how to keep on track is difficult. 2010 is a year that I firmly committed to change and motivated myself to move toward and make a real contribution to my business, income and leadership. I had a semi-clear vision of what I wanted my life to look like and achieved a good level of success but needed more clarity and skills to get more of what I wanted. I was looking for the ideal business coach. I was looking for a coach that I could trust, confide and believe in and one who would help me see things that I didn’t see. I also wanted someone who would help me learn the skills and tools I would need to get there. I had succeeded at reading self-help books and leadership books, attending seminars and during the process my car became a nutritional library; however I still fell short in certain areas. There are many business coaches that claim to perform miracles and I have tried some. I didn’t see results until I hired Nick Smith. He helped me not only get clear on what I wanted short term but long term. He’s helped me produce lasting skills and long term results. He has helped me dismiss un-important things that interfere with the greater things in my life and focus on doing the basics like keeping things simple. He’s helped me to produce better leaders in my business, to be more duplicable and to get dream clients in a short time. He has also helped me create more balance with my family life and have more spontaneous fun. Nick’s strengths are; he is straight forward but genuine and sincere. He cares first and helps wrap around what will work with my desires rather than what could work for him or others. He keeps me accountable on the things I intend to do, and doesn’t allow me to stop short because of discouragement and setbacks. If you don’t know about Nick Smith you will want talk to me.”

— Rachel Smartt

“I have struggled with how to handle the seasonality of my business. The "down time" it creates and the loss of momentum has always frustrated me. Nick taught me how to treat this time much

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like a sports team treats its off season. Prepare, Strategize, Re-tool and get ready for the next season. This approach has taken the frustration away and has helped me maintain excitement toward doing better when "game time" hits. Thank you for your wisdom and for teaching me how to make the most out of my very fortunate "off season!"

— Shawn Whitaker

“Today I am sitting on the porch relaxing after my reduced work schedule ( I accomplish more in less time) and realized that that I am a lot happier now, and Nick has helped me achieve this. There is a tremendous difference in the quality of my life since working with Nick. From our very first coaching session Nick has set me free from many limitations and stresses in my projects and life. I now work less and accomplish much more. The best part is that I experience considerably more fun, peace, joy and balance in my projects and in my life. I am just happier.”

— Paul Gasztold (Pavel)

“The book The Art of Accomplishment demystifies the truest essence of success. The world is full of skill based books and Nick takes his book to a whole other level of artful accomplishment. Read it and share it with anyone that wants to get things done in business or life.”

— Stephen McGhee, Founder of [theaconcaguaproject.com](http://theaconcaguaproject.com)  
& [miracleleader.com](http://miracleleader.com)



Visit [www.clearpathtraining.com](http://www.clearpathtraining.com) to find out how you can receive coaching from Nick Smith or have him speak at your next event.

*"Nick Smith has written a simple and very powerful starter kit for a successful life."*

Steve Chandler,  
Author of *Time Warrior*