

The Mindset of a
Game Changer

Personal Branding Strategies for Building
a Wildly Successful Business

Lethia C. Owens, CSP

The Mindset of a Game Changer

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Book Layout and Design: CallKayla.com

Editor: Jason Swadley Canon

Printed in the United States of America.

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Irresistible  Press

Meet Lethia Owens, CSP



Expert. As the nation's leading expert on the art of building Brand Influence, Personal Branding Strategist Lethia Owens is the president and CEO of Game Changers International, a consulting firm entirely focusing on personal and leadership branding for professionals and enterprising entrepreneurs.

Author. Lethia has written 12 books, five of which are best sellers. Her books include *Leading the Way to Success*, *Yes, You Can!*, *Empowering Transformations for Women*, *Think Powerfully!*, *Work Powerfully!*, *Live Powerfully!*, and *7 Points of*

Impact and Your Brand Influence: The Art and Science of Building an Influential Personal Brand.

Speaker. Lethia's message of brand reinvention, courage, and self-empowerment has inspired audiences from Dallas to Dubai to become game changers and relentlessly pursue the best that is within them. Her message has been heard on Fox, CBS, and NBC affiliate networks.

Coach. Ranked #8 among the Top 30 Brand Gurus in the World, Lethia was one of the first individuals to become certified as a personal branding and social media strategist. She offers coaching programs designed to help clients build a magnetic and game-changing brand.

Game Changer. Lethia knows what it takes to be a game changer. She went from high school dropout to highly paid speaker and consultant. She's a little geeky, magnetically motivating, and oozing with brilliant business strategies that challenge you to get in the game because game changers, not spectators, win championships.

If you would like to learn more about Lethia's work, please visit:

www.LethiaOwens.com

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Acknowledgments

My Parents. Gradis Jr. & Flora Lewis, thank you! Your love and support are fuel to my fire.

My Handsome Hunk of Chocolate. Andre Owens, you are the perfect companion. Thanks for being a wonderful husband, my biggest cheerleader, and my constant supporter. I couldn't imagine doing life with anyone else. I love you more than words could ever say.

My Children and Grandchildren. You are the "why" I do what I do. I hope my example will serve as a lighthouse for you on your journey to discovering your influential personal brand.

My Family. Tricia Brown, Jerome Brown, Jade & Lisa Paden, Latariss Payne, Cathy Sexton, and Karen Fox, thank you for holding space for me when I needed it, challenging me when I slowed down, and kicking my butt when I wanted to whine and complain.

My Amazing Editor. Jason Swadley Canon, I couldn't have done this without you. You get me!

Game Changers Everywhere. I am driven by the desire to help you reach your next level. Thank you for giving me a platform to share my brilliance with the world.



The Mindset of a Game Changer



Foreword

Did you know that you're already a game changer? Hear me out; game changers are people who alter the way things are done. For generations, the concept of work has been the same. It's a career, a profession, where you get your W2 after working 9-5 Monday through Friday. But what happens when that isn't enough or when 9-5 doesn't fit? You have to change the game.

Mary Kay Ash was a Game Changer. She spent ten years working as a top sales representative for a traditional, corporate employer while watching other people get promoted above her. Then, instead of playing by the rules, she founded her own company and created opportunities for other entrepreneurs. She made sure that her entrepreneurs were in control of their businesses, income, and growth. Her willingness to alter the way things were done changed the game for millions of people at Mary Kay and the Direct Selling industry.

When you decided to become a Wine Guide, you became a game changer. You flipped the script on what it means to "go to work." As a result, your first tasting event re-wrote the rules of how, when, and where you taste wine, and it has gone on from there.

Has your Traveling Vineyard business allowed you to have more fun than you ever thought possible at "work"? Have you met hosts, guests, and other Wine Guides who have become friends and filled your life with joy and laughter? Have you felt a sense of pride, of fulfillment - that swells in your chest when you get a round of applause after a tasting or see your paycheck hit your bank account? What about using your Traveling Vineyard financial rewards for a celebration or to lift stress from your life? All of these sound like ways that you have re-written the rules to the game of work.

And now? You've taken it one step further. You've invested in your business by attending Harvest. You've cracked open the cover of a book and journal by the Game Changer herself, Lethia Owens. You've decided that there are still rules that can be re-written, still, chances to learn and grow, to be better and shine brighter.

The Mindset of a Game Changer

Thank you for taking a chance on yourself and Traveling Vineyard and trusting that the way things are done is really WAYS things are done. You've popped the cork, but now it's time to let the wine flow. Your business can be so much more, so much bigger, so much brighter. Follow in the steps of Mary Kay, Lethia, and others before you to increase your income, increase your impact and change the game.

Cheers to you and your success!

Kate Franklin

Director of Wine Guide Success and Happiness

Traveling Vineyard



Introduction

“You are bigger, more powerful, and more valuable than you could ever imagine.”

— *Lethia Owens*

In *The Lion King*, when Simba doubts his power and potential, he is encouraged by Mufasa, his father, to remember who he is:

Mufasa's ghost: [appears among the stars] Simba, you have forgotten me.

Simba: No. How could I?

Mufasa's ghost: You have forgotten who you are and so have forgotten me. Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become.

You Are More

You may also have a case of mistaken identity, and, like Simba, you need to be reminded of who you really are.

Within every single one of us is our authentic and truest self. It is the “you” you were created to be.

Within you are attributes and gifts that make you highly valuable to your team, community, and of course, the world. Once embraced and properly presented, your true identity has the potential to become a powerful brand with great influence.

Your brand influence is measured by the extent to which you inspire and compel others to favorably respond to your ideas, instructions, requests, and leadership. That takes passion. A passion that can only come when you have identified and come into alignment with your true self.

Work and life are so much more enjoyable when you realize that you shape your experience and choose to make it a positive and rewarding one.

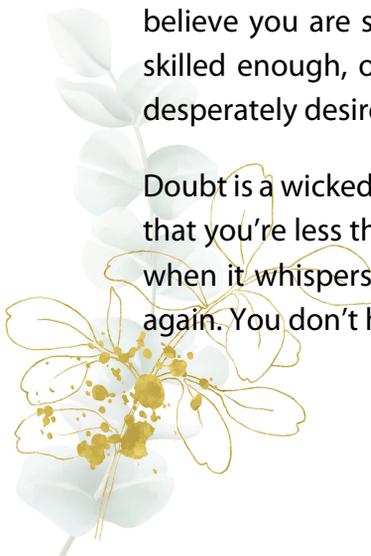
It's time to unlock your inner brilliance and discover how to add unique value to your team, organization, and community. I'm going to share personal branding strategies that will open doors of opportunity for you and attract more of the people and resources you need to build a wildly successful business.

Most people are just a few minor adjustments away from having the dream they thought was just a little bit too big, too far away, or too high to obtain. Building an influential brand begins with your mindset. It's important to start by evaluating and adjusting how you view the brand called YOU!

You Are Not Who You Think You Are

If I were to peek inside your mind, examine your daily thoughts, and observe your actions over the course of one week, I would likely deduce that you are not who you think you are. Moreover, what I would hear and observe may tell me that you don't believe you are strong enough, attractive enough, smart enough, outgoing enough, skilled enough, or perhaps creative enough to have the life, career, or business you desperately desire.

Doubt is a wicked voice that tries to rob you of your greatness by trying to convince you that you're less than who you really are. Doubt knows your weaknesses and uses them when it whispers, "You're too old. You're too young. You've failed before, so why try again. You don't have what it takes."



When you doubt yourself or your abilities, you begin to put limits on what you try, dream and pursue. You begin to shrink when the task at hand or the challenge before you really calls for you to be bold, strong, and courageous.

I believe you can have an amazing, rewarding, and satisfying career or business because of the personal brand you choose to build.

This Will Take a Transformation

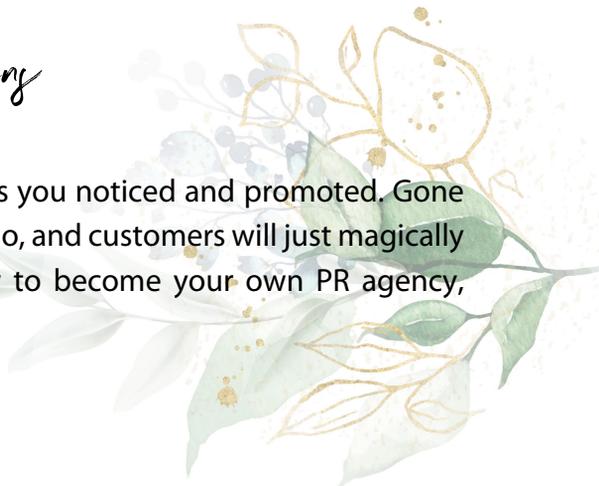
The first step in transforming your thinking is to accept full responsibility for where you are and who you are right now. **Only then** can you effectively move towards the rewarding process of building a magnetic and influential personal brand. It's likely that while on this journey, you'll discover things about yourself and how you work that are unique, valuable, and positive brand attributes. You will also likely discover behaviors that work against you and threaten your ability to build a powerful and influential brand. The exciting news is that you can course-correct and rebrand by embracing the opportunity to learn quickly, make the necessary changes, and move forward.

The biggest threat standing between you and success is your mindset. What you think about yourself impacts your confidence, your willingness to take risks, and how you show up every day.

"No one will ever pay you more than YOU think you are worth!"

-Lethia Owens

Gone are the days when just doing a great job gets you noticed and promoted. Gone are the days when you can be brilliant at what you do, and customers will just magically show up to hire you. Today, you must learn how to become your own PR agency,



strategically toot your own horn, become an advocate for your own brand and seek after the promotion, business, and opportunities you desire.

It's important that you learn to articulate your value and contributions, so you can build an authentic personal brand that will uncover the true and highly valuable YOU!

Evaluate Your Brand and See Yourself Differently

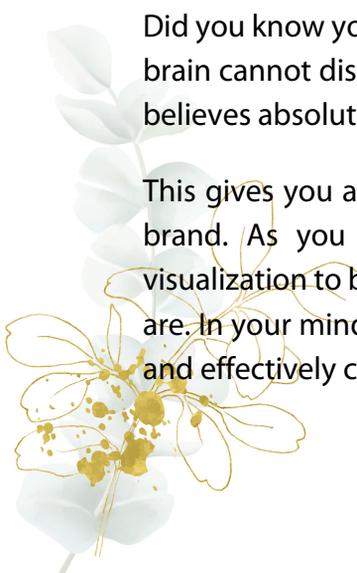
Your inner thoughts shape your life experiences; therefore, in order to enhance your personal brand, you must re-evaluate your current brand and then decide to see yourself differently. One amazing truth about personal growth is that once you think differently, you also act differently.

What is your concept of self? Think about it. It is essential that you become open to the idea of seeing yourself with a brand-new set of eyes. Failure to do so will create negative blind spots. Blind spots are those areas of our lives that need some attention, but we fail to take corrective action because we have blinders on and cannot recognize or understand the impending threat to our plan of building an influential brand.

You were created as an amazing human being with wonderful gifts and talents that are purposed to help you succeed, make a difference in the lives of others, and become all that you desire.

Did you know you become what you think about and actualize what you believe? Your brain cannot distinguish the difference between an imagined or lived experience, so it believes absolutely everything you tell it.

This gives you a huge advantage when it comes to building your influential personal brand. As you gain better insight into your current brand, use the process of visualization to begin to see yourself showing up as the powerful person that you really are. In your mind's eye, practice seeing yourself exuding a powerful business presence and effectively communicating your value when it matters the most.



The Mindset of a Game Changer

It is my sincere hope that the words you're about to read will both inspire and challenge you to see yourself with new eyes so that you can **discover what truly makes you different, unique, valuable, and brandable.**

"What makes you different makes you unique.

What makes you unique makes you valuable.

What makes you valuable will make you wealthy!"

- *Lethia Owens*

The process of building your personal brand is important inner work that can only be done by you. You can't outsource it or avoid it. If you want to stand out and rise to your full potential, you can't ignore it.

Be yourself and believe in yourself. Dare to dig into the depths of who you really are and never allow yourself to settle for less than the best you have to offer.

Your success and strength lie within; they aren't shaped and released by external factors. They are developed through commitment, hard work, and discipline.

Every great brand is unique. Therefore, be proud of who you are and never apologize for the unique gifts that have long been developing within you.

This is going to be a vital step forward on your journey to building an influential personal brand.

You and you alone are responsible for the quality of the personal brand you will build.

You are brilliant. I know you're brilliant because I've never met someone who didn't have it in them.

If you haven't recognized your brilliance, perhaps it's because you haven't taken advantage of the opportunities to cultivate your brilliance. Revealing your brilliance will require focus and intention as you face the challenges and pressures of today's ever-changing work and business environment. In fact, our light often gets covered up by self-doubt, the fear of competition, or by our past failures.

In this book, we're going to throw off all that baggage and let your brilliance radiate, using the power of an influential personal brand to unlock your potential so you can stand out, get noticed and create a game-changing career or business.

I'm enthusiastically rooting for your success!

Lethia Owens

Branding and Market Domination Strategist
Ranked #8 Among the Top Branding Gurus in the World



You Are a Brand

This may come as a surprise if you're like most of the people I meet when I travel the country speaking. You may think brands are for companies who have ad agencies, marketing budgets, and budget-breaking Super Bowl commercials.

But in truth, brands are for professionals and solopreneurs too: your brand is the way people perceive who you are, what you do, and why you do it.

The word "brand" comes from an Old English word that denotes the sense of branding we associate with the Old American West. A rancher branded his cattle for one reason: to show the other ranchers where his cattle belonged. A steer could wander hundreds of miles away, but at one site of the brand, the identity of the rancher could be recognized.

Our personal brands are the same: they educate and illuminate. Brands are dense with data and meaning. They say much about who we are, what we believe, what we stand for, and what we can do.

Cognitive Shortcuts

Don't believe me? Stroll down the aisle at Best Buy. The moment your eyes become fixed on that just-released iPhone, an array of associations start firing up in your brain.

These and a thousand other inputs are processed in nanoseconds.

Neuroscientists have learned to call brands "cognitive shortcuts," timesavers that help our brains make sense of the dizzying array of words, images, and associations competing for our attention.

Now imagine if every trip through Best Buy were like your first. Suddenly, from every angle, you're faced with brands you don't know, packages you didn't understand, and

technologies that you've never heard of before. (Good luck finding that USB to VGA dongle.)

Personal brands are exactly the same — they help us make our way in the world by working as a "cognitive shortcut" for the people we see every day.

The Brushstrokes of Your Personal Brand

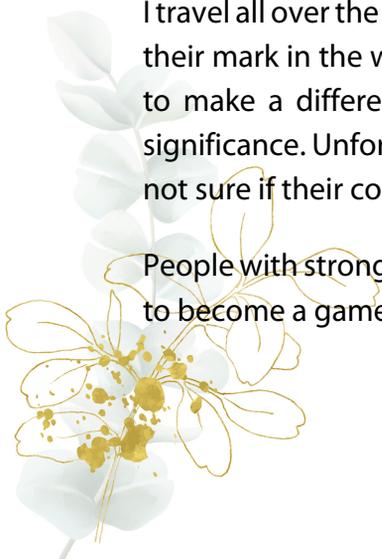
When you first meet someone, their perception of your brand is as blank as an empty canvas.

Their first impression of you — what you're wearing, how you walk, how you introduce yourself — becomes the first brushstrokes on that canvas. Over time, additional strokes are added based on how you react to certain situations, how you handle stress, what you do when someone disappoints you, and how you lead yourself or your team. Eventually, a portrait emerges. The image is you, outlined in the mind by your reputation.

Are we reliable? Creative? Fun to be around? These are the types of associations that get lodged deep in the brains of those who know us (or know of us). This gives them incredible power, and as we all learned alongside Peter Parker, with great power comes great responsibility.

I travel all over the world meeting professionals and entrepreneurs who all want to leave their mark in the world, who want to use their expertise to generate wealth, who want to make a difference through their work, and who desire and thirst for a sense of significance. Unfortunately, many of them work hard in their business every day and are not sure if their contributions will generate the success they desire.

People with strong brands know who they are, and they know how to use their brilliance to become a game changer.



The Mindset of a Game Changer

I wrote this book to share with you the very same strategies and tips I share with coaching clients that have hired me to help them brand and grow their business. Some of them have grown their business to make millions of dollars while staying true to who they are and building a wildly successful business they love.

You see, I've been studying brands my whole life — from my first business selling Blow Pop lollipops out of my high school locker to the thought leaders and experts I coach, to the Fortune 500 companies I now work with on a daily basis — and along the way, I've learned that just a few best practices can take your reputation from utterly forgettable to completely remarkable.

By the end of this book, you'll have the information you need to be a game changer and create the impact and income you've always desired.

In the process, you'll also discover the most rewarding part of a personal brand: how to improve the lives of everyone around you.

I've reverse-engineered the success of some of the world's most successful people, and all of them — every single one of them — has a strong, instantly identifiable brand.

I'd like you to think of the journey of reading this book as a virtual coaching session in which you and I work through each strategy to help you build a game-changing, influential personal brand.

Ready? Let's begin.



The Mindset of a Game Changer



Choose How the World Sees You

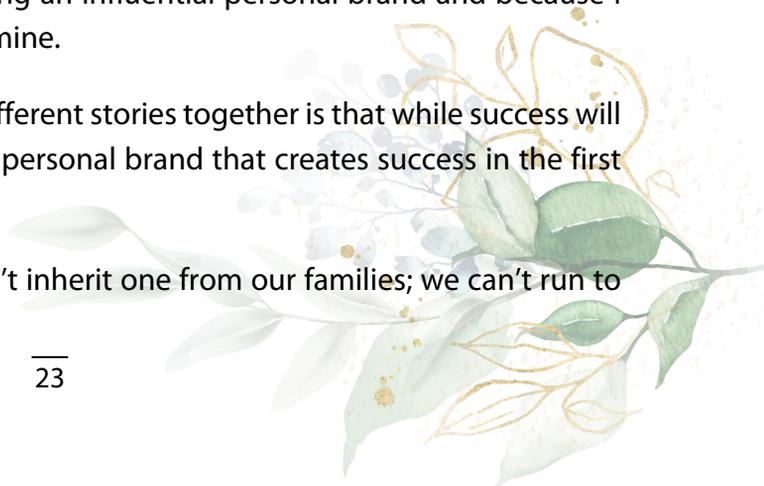
You have an incredible opportunity: to define how the world sees your work.

If you're still skeptical, allow me to present some evidence:

- Beyoncé is a remarkable force. Her fans know the pull of her personal brand — that's why she's got over 100 million followers on Instagram alone. Advertisers know her magnetism too, which is why she was able to sign a \$50 million marketing deal with Pepsi a few years ago. The fact that Beyoncé can maintain such a strong brand while working as a singer, songwriter, actress, entrepreneur, and mother should be an inspiration to us all.²
- Few outside of the tech world had heard of Elon Musk until just a few years ago. And now? Now you can find him on the Simpsons and being referenced alongside the Wright Brothers in Star Trek: Discovery. You don't get to that level of visibility without a strong brand. What's Elon's brand? Hard work (running several world-shaping companies at a time) and a limitless imagination.
- The story I know the best is my own. I went from being a high school dropout at age 14 to being ranked #8 among the top 30 brand gurus in the world. In my career as an IT professional at companies like Union Pacific Railroad and State Farm Insurance, I consistently received record performance pay increases (up to 14%) and was often one of the youngest leaders at the table. This didn't happen because I was the cutest or even the smartest one in the room. It was because I understood the power of building an influential personal brand and because I was intentional about building mine.

The common thread tying these very different stories together is that while success will reshape your personal brand, it is your personal brand that creates success in the first place.

We weren't born with a brand; we didn't inherit one from our families; we can't run to the store and buy one.



Nevertheless, we each have a brand unique to us alone. It's as unique as our fingerprint, and it serves as the primary way we are identified in the workplace.

Brands are built naturally, imperceptibly over time. Their identity and value accumulate through an infinite number of interactions and exchanges. Soon, a reputation is formed, and a personal brand emerges.

This is why I believe that everyone has a brand, whether they know it or not. It's strange for some people to think of having a personal brand, but they've been building a personal brand all along. Every time they've submitted a resume, or revised their LinkedIn profile, pitched to a client, they've said to the world, "Here is who I am, and here is how I'd like you to think of me."

The problem, of course, is that we're rarely this aware of how we're being perceived, and this introduces what I call the Brand Gap.

The Brand Gap



The brand gap is simply the distance between where you are now and where you want to be.

The Mindset of a Game Changer

The left side of the diagram is your current personal brand, shaped by what you have or have not accomplished, by how you've shown up, and by what you have said. The left is made up of how you see yourself and how others see you.

The right side is the brand identity you wish to build. For example, on the left, you might record a brand that is known as being **competitive** when what you really want (on the right) is a brand that is known for being **collaborative**.

It's important to be intentional and clear about the brand identity you want to create and to be clear about how you want to be known. There are few things as priceless as a good reputation.

Once you're clear about the brand you're building, it becomes easier to see the steps needed to close the personal brand gap. You will be able to bring how others see you and how you want to be seen into alignment.

Your Brand Shapes Your Success

The answer to an unclear or not so powerful personal brand is to reclaim it by redefining it yourself.

After years of research and working with thousands of clients, I've found that the secrets to an influential personal brand aren't secrets at all. Rather they're a collection of tried-and-true best practices that I've seen work in my own life and my client's lives.

Remember Elon Musk? In December 2008, Musk was hours away from seeing his dreams for Tesla and SpaceX dissolve into a frosted night.

Both companies were broke. Tesla needed a hit; SpaceX had seen the first three launches of the company's Falcon 1 rocket fail. Everything was riding on its fourth.

The Mindset of a Game Changer

Musk had once invested his last \$35 million into Tesla, and now he faced a similar but harder choice: split his funds between both companies (neither of which was stable) or cut his losses on one to give the other a chance at survival.

Neither choice looked appealing, but he decided to risk everything to give both companies one last shot.

It worked!

On Christmas Eve, in the last round of funding, Musk was able to raise \$20 million for Tesla, without which the company wouldn't exist today. On the day after Christmas, after the fourth Falcon 1 rocket successfully took to the skies, NASA offered SpaceX a contract worth \$1.6 billion.³

We hear stories about famous figures like these, and they usually feel distant enough so as to be out of a comic book; great obstacles, global stakes, and superhuman strength winning out in the end.

But I'm here to tell you that there's nothing superhuman about Elon Musk. Talk to his employees at SpaceX from those days, and they'll tell you that they stuck around, through the grueling hours and embarrassing failures, because they believed in the project and — most importantly — because they believed in Elon.

Why was Musk able to secure investment just in the nick of time? It wasn't luck. It was because his investors saw that he'd do whatever it took to reach his goals, even to the point of personal ruin.

It was his brand that gave him followers, and it was his brand that brought the partnerships he needed right when he needed them.

Elon Musk knows the power of an influential personal brand.

The Direction of Success

I share this story about Elon Musk because it reveals a deep truth about success. Your success will influence how your brand is received, but your personal brand is the fuel for your success.

I can imagine someone reading this book saying, “What you’re saying about a personal brand makes sense, but I would need more _____ before my brand is worth anything.” They would then fill in the blank with something outside of their control: most likely fame, or money, or connections, or a well-known family name.

My message to you is this: you already have everything you need to build a stellar personal brand. You don’t need anything — from anyone or anywhere — to begin.

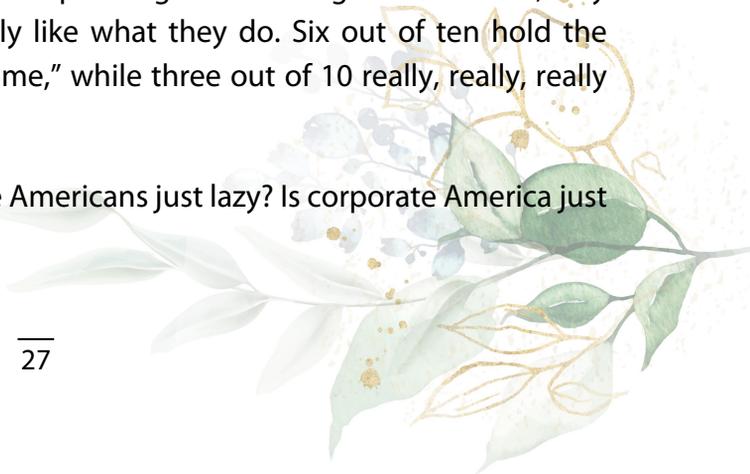
All you need is grit and a willingness to dig deep into your past and your present in order to design your future.

The Game Maintainers

A “game maintainer” takes the safe road. They don’t initiate change, and they don’t look for ways to improve; they just sit back and coast along as the game tosses them this way and that. Sure, you’ll hear them complaining over lunch, but they don’t actively do anything to change who they are, where they’re at, or where they’re going.

Most people are game maintainers. Despite spending most waking hours at work, only one out of ten workers in America really like what they do. Six out of ten hold the sentiment, “Eh. It’s okay... it’s not killing me,” while three out of 10 really, really, really hate their work.

What’s behind such dismal statistics? Are Americans just lazy? Is corporate America just filled with sadistic bosses?



The Road Ahead

I became a brand consultant when I discovered the answer. You see, the game maintainers have bought into a pernicious lie repeated throughout our culture: that sameness is safe.

We hear this message everywhere, often in subtle ways:

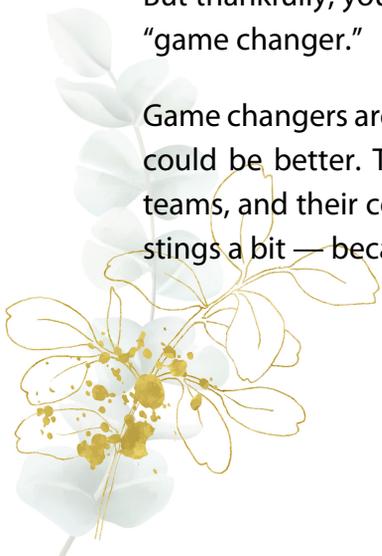
- “We’ve been in business for over a hundred years.” (But does that make you the best?)
- “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” (It doesn’t need to be broken to be improved.)
- “It’s such a big problem, and there’s nothing I could do about it anyway.” (What if you break it down into smaller problems?)
- Great opportunities never come to people like me! (What if YOU intentionally created the life and success you desire?)

Over and over, we’re told that where we are is just fine, that it’s best to go along to get along, that we couldn’t change things anyway because it’s all out of our control. Sameness feels like the safe route.

But I’ve found that route to be anything but safe. Instead, over time, I’ve seen how it leads to feelings of frustration, of unfulfillment, of depression.

But thankfully, you don’t have to be a game maintainer; you can be what I like to call a “game changer.”

Game changers aren’t satisfied with the status quo. They are always seeking how things could be better. They’re out in front, looking for ways to improve themselves, their teams, and their communities. They’re excited for the chance to grow — even when it stings a bit — because they know that growth is necessary for success.



The Mindset of a Game Changer

Game changers are the one in 10 who love their work because they've designed that work around what they love and what they're good at. Imagine what your organization or business could become if everyone were just like that one in 10. Wouldn't you want to work in an organization or run a business like that?

It is impossible to get from where you are to where you want to be without experiencing growing pains, failure, and setbacks. Game changers know they'll get bruised along the way. It's part of the process.

The next part of this book is written for those who are or aspire to be game changers. If you're ready to take control of your reputation and reinvent your future, then the time to start building your influential personal brand is now.



The Mindset of a Game Changer



The Mindset of a Game Changer

Everyone has a Next Level!

No matter where you are in your career or business — whether you're just getting started or whether you're at the top of your field — there is a next level of effectiveness awaiting you and your personal brand.

How can I say this with such assurance? Because I've seen it over and over again. I've seen even the most established leaders in an industry move to another plane of performance by putting into practice the strategies you are about to learn.

If you're willing to invest the time, energy, and attention — and like anything profitable, it will require investment — you will find yourself being more valuable to everyone around you.

As a branding strategist, I've been blessed to work with some of the biggest and most successful brands and businesses in the world.

And what I've learned is this: the ones who win have what I like to call the mindset of a game changer: the mindset that never settles for the status quo, but is always looking to be just a little bit better.

1% better every day — this is the mindset that makes all the difference.

I used to think that successful people had some secret DNA that gave them the power to push forward.

I've come to believe that it's not just the Serena Williams' or Steve Jobs' of the world who have the power to shape the whole human race — it's something each of us can do, with one small change a day.

At 15 years old, I became a teen mom and a high school dropout.

The Mindset of a Game Changer

I remember vividly going to school the first week of December in 1985. It was a cold winter morning, and I was being escorted by my parents. We were there to tell my principal, guidance counselor, and homeroom teacher that I would be withdrawing.

Words cannot describe how it feels to have someone immediately prejudice and dismiss you because of who they think you are.

I remember standing about 2 feet from Mr. Wilder, my homeroom teacher when I told him the news. He looked at me with such disgust...

With my head held low, I stood there...paralyzed.

And I'll never forget what he said to me.

He said: "You will never amount to anything. I wouldn't be surprised if you spend the rest of your life on welfare or on drugs."

So, I quit school, had my daughter, and when she was born, I remember looking into her eyes — these big, bright, brown eyes — and I realized that she did not ask to be here.

I knew I had to show up differently in order to give her a different life.

Prior to dropping out, I was a C or D student, but after returning, I was a straight A student.

I sold "BlowPop" lollipops from my locker to provide for my daughter. Mr. Wilder was right. I would be selling blow — just not the kind he'd thought.

My boyfriend at the time told me that I should study for the SAT exam. I told him I didn't need to study for the exam because I wasn't going to college; I was going to become a cosmetologist.

Every time I asked him to take me to the mall or take me out to eat, he would say, "yes, after you study for the SAT." He even had me record hundreds of Greek and Latin root

words, prefixes, and suffixes on a cassette tape — remember those? Every day on the school bus, while my friends were listening to New Edition and John Cougar Mellencamp, I was listening to: “sub means under.” That went on for over 18 months.

Sometimes I thought my boyfriend was from another planet, but I am grateful that he was persistent in pushing me to grow, learn, and improve every day.

When it came time to take the SAT, I asked my parents to register me for the exam, and they wouldn't because they couldn't afford it. So my boyfriend paid for it.

I took the test and sent my scores to the schools I knew — Harvard... Yale... and Albany State University.

Six weeks later, I got pulled out of class and sent to the principal's office. All sorts of things were running through my mind because I had already been caught and warned about my Blow Pop hustle. So I was wondering — who had snitched on me?!

When I entered the principal's office, there was a man waiting there to speak to me.

I thought to myself, “Did they bring in reinforcements? Really? Over me selling Blow Pops?!”

It turned out the man wasn't from the school board, the FBI, or the DEA. He was from Albany State University. He says to me, “We have here a near-perfect SAT score with no college application... can you explain that?”

Relieved this wasn't about Blow Pops, I replied, “Oh, that's because I'm not going to college. I'm going to be a cosmetologist.”

Confused by my response, he said, “But what if I give you a full ride?”

And I said, “Sir, I'm sorry, but I don't know you. I'm not riding with you anywhere?” I was not about to get in a car and go anywhere a man I didn't know.

I wish you could have seen his face when he said, “No, Lethia, that’s not what I mean. I am talking about a full-ride scholarship to college. That means we pay for everything.”

And I said, “... I can do that! Where do I sign up?”

I went on to get a degree in computer science, and then a master’s, and now I’m working on my Ph.D., and it’s because my high school boyfriend always pushed me to be just a little better every day.

Hey, I’m no dumb chick — I decided to marry that handsome hunk of chocolate, and we’ve been together now for 29 years.

So, I’ve seen success. I know what it’s like to come from nothing, and to make yourself into something, day by day, week by week. I know what it’s like to have someone like Mr. Wilder put up mental obstacles that take years to overcome.

But it wasn’t until I understood the power of 1% and how I’d been using it all along that things finally started to make sense.

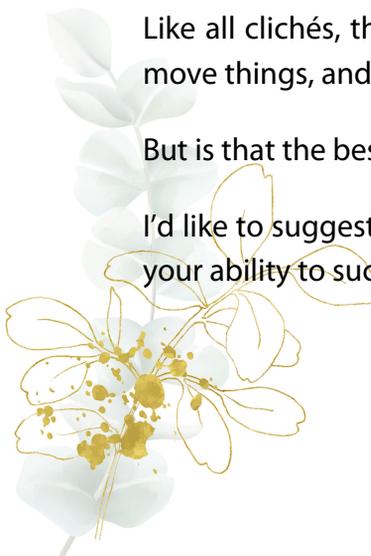
Getting 1% Better Each Day

Here’s how we normally talk about success: work harder than the next guy, and work smarter, not harder.

Like all clichés, there’s some truth here. If you work hard enough, you will eventually move things, and if you work smarter, you will get better.

But is that the best way to really make a difference?

I’d like to suggest a different strategy, one that will reliably and exponentially increase your ability to succeed.



That strategy is to focus on improving by 1% each day. Take all your hard work and try to move the needle every day, by just one notch.

Sure, 1 is a tiny number, and we often think we can't do much with 1 minute, 1 seed, 1 dollar. I beg to differ. In fact, I'm not the only one who believes this. I'm good friends with a carpenter who told his disciples that with just the faith of a single mustard seed, whole mountains would move.

In technical terms, this is called the compound effect of aggregating the marginal gain in improvement... but since that's a mouthful, let's call it the "marginal gains strategy."

The marginal gains strategy is this: an "aggregation of 1% gains in order to deliver a significant performance advantage." On its own, 1% is barely tangible — barely a blip on an annual report — but aggregated over time, it can mean everything.

Think of it like compounded interest, but with compounding improvements in the areas you want to grow and become better.

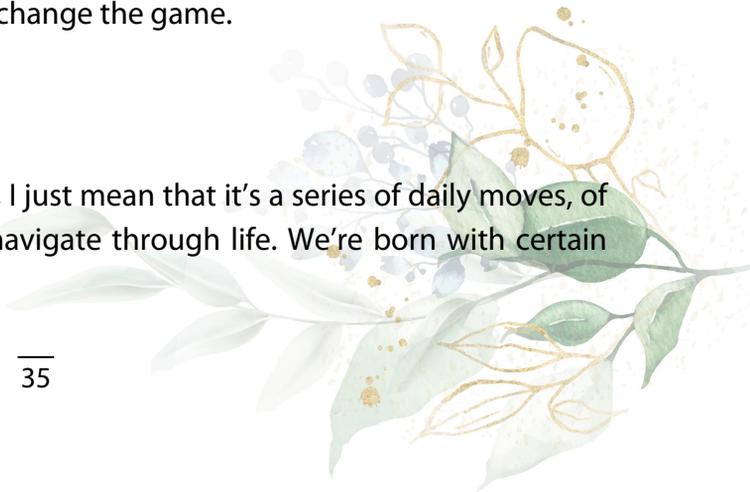
Let's look at the math. If you commit to improving by just 1% each day for 365 days, at the end of the year, you will become 37 times better in your performance.

Imagine if after 1 year, your marriage was 37 times better or your health was 37 times better. You would pay me a lot as a broker if I could improve your portfolio 37 times over this year; what if I can promise the same improvement in your career or business?

It all starts with just 1%. That is how you change the game.

The Serious Game of Life

Life is serious, and life is a game. By that, I just mean that it's a series of daily moves, of jukes and jumps, that we make as we navigate through life. We're born with certain



The Mindset of a Game Changer

abilities, and when we use them — when we truly find our place in the game — there's no limit to how much better we could get.

In over 76 years of competing in the Tour de France, the British Cycling team had achieved not 1, not 5, but zero wins.

That was until their coach, Sir Dave Brailsford, used the power of 1% to help the team improve.

He reduced the wheel weight; he shaved a few millimeters off the seat; tweaked their diet.

He even — and this is my favorite part — had the crew lug the team's personal mattresses from hotel to hotel so they could always get a good night of sleep.

That's fanatical attention to the small stuff that most people wouldn't see.

In 2012, a British cyclist won the Tour de France, a teammate placed second, and the team took home eight gold medals at the London Olympics that same year.

What was responsible for this transformation? Nothing but a commitment to get a little better every day, in whatever ways were needed.

The Power to Overcome

This is what I'd like you to remember: being a game changer doesn't require super-intelligence, super-strength, connections in high places, or even a single superpower.

It simply requires that you be committed to consistently taking small, intentional steps each day to advance your audacious goals. That's how the most successful leaders have built their brands.



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When my granddaughter Makayla was three years old, I decided I would start a business for each of my grandchildren. In 2009, I founded CallKayla.com, a branding, and marketing agency, and on Makayla's graduation day from college, our gift to her will be her own company.

That's an audacious goal, but I'm making it happen slowly, one day and one action at a time. I've embraced that audacity as part of my own personal brand because I want everyone to know I'm in this game to change it.

Game changers can be anyone: business leaders or business owners, caregivers or educators, boardroom suits, or stockroom clerks. They change the game because they believe they can.

Decide how good you really want to be, then become it!

I've heard it said that we should focus on progress, not perfection. I'm here to tell you that there is nothing more perfect than progress.

What if your 1% daily improvements added up to something amazing?



The Mindset of a Game Changer



9 Things Every Game Changer Does Differently to Win

If I had to choose one word that adequately describes a Game Changer, I would choose the word “**audacious.**”

Audacious means a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks. Game Changers are brave, daring, courageous, unconventional, and—when it counts—willing to take extremely bold risks.

It is for this reason that when I laid out the framework for how Game Changers think and operate, I chose the acronym “audacious.”

Let’s have a look.

Game Changers...

1. **Activate their dreams through hard work**
2. **Unapologetically prepare differently**
3. **Decide to “burn their boats”**
4. **Awaken their most authentic selves**
5. **Come to terms with ambiguity and discomfort**
6. **Ignite insane inspiration to fuel them forward**
7. **Overcome under pressure**
8. **Understand success requires a series of small shifts**
9. **Spark their curiosity**

The right mindset can completely change your life because our mindsets guide our progress through life and help us make the right decisions. If we can change the way we perceive our lives and how we approach our lives, we are on our way to changing our lives.

Once we’ve changed our mindsets, our actions begin to change.



If you want more out of life—if you want to impact lives, change your business, change your family’s legacy, or change the world—this framework will help you understand nine powerful things every Game Changer does, so, if you’re not already doing them, you can start doing them, too.

Let’s dig out the gold in each layer of the framework:

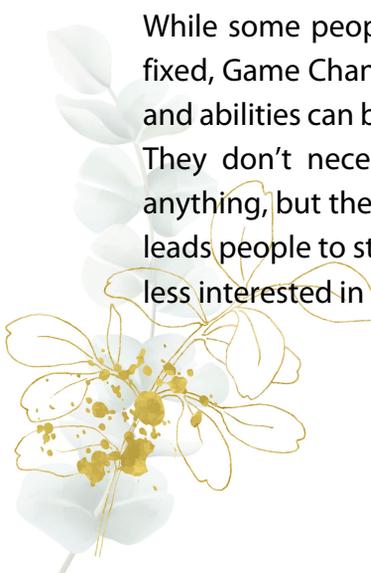
1. Game Changers — Activate Their Dreams Through Hard Work

Nothing is more fruitful than hard work.

Growing up, I was not the smartest kid in my class, but I always had the best grades. When I entered the workforce, I had colleagues who were obviously smarter than me, but while they were heading out to a happy hour or settling onto the couch to watch a series, I would go home, research, study, write code, and play around with technology to get better and better. I had the belief that while others may outsmart me, they couldn’t outwork me.

Game Changers are willing to put in hard work. They might not be as smart as the next person, but because they have a commitment and dedication to working hard, they become more successful. This type of mindset is called a “growth-oriented” mindset as opposed to a “fixed mindset.”

While some people have a “fixed mindset” and believe their talents and abilities are fixed, Game Changers have a “growth-oriented” mindset and believe that their talents and abilities can be developed over time through learning, dedication, and mentorship. They don’t necessarily believe that everyone is the same or that anyone can be anything, but they believe that everyone can grow their abilities. This is a mindset that leads people to stretch out of their comfort zone to try new things. Game Changers are less interested in proving how smart they are than in getting smarter.



You can work hard at your success and ensure the process is smooth, despite challenges, by following these three simple steps:

1. **Embrace Your God-Given Talent and Calling** – There may be a lot of things that you are good at, and you may even have a lot of interests, but when you embrace the work you were born to do, the path to success has an ease to it, because you were made for it. I was great at writing computer programs, and I am really good at project management, but I was born to transform the lives of others through speaking, coaching, and consulting. My success didn't really kick into high gear until I followed this path and put my all into making it work.
2. **Ask for What You Want and Need** – Too often, I worked hard to make things happen on my own. What I learned (the hard way) is there are no self-made millionaires. Every successful person has leveraged or benefited from the genius of others. A successful Game Changer asks for what he or she wants and seeks help along the way. If you want to sell more and serve more, start asking. If you are an entrepreneur, pray and ask God to bless you with clients who are perfect for you. Then, believe they will come. Don't be afraid to ask for the sale. When you are selling, you are offering people something they already want: a solution to a problem they are trying to solve. If you are an employee, create your own career plan and map out your path to success, then solicit help along the way by seeking advocates, mentors, and coaches.
3. **Serve Others Along the Way** – Zig Ziglar said, "You can have everything in life you want if you will just help other people get what they want." I have learned that you attract more success, more favor, and more opportunities by being in service than by focusing only on what you need and want. Many of the game-changing opportunities that have come my way came through someone I've supported or served. Service is the great multiplier and amplifier for the wealth you desire to build. When you serve and help others, you become an

opportunity and a blessing magnet. Everything you need to be phenomenally successful will become attracted to you.

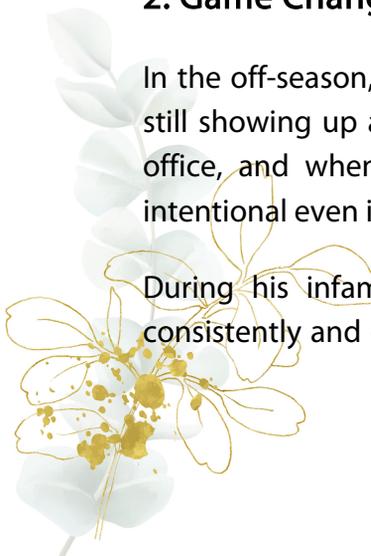
4. **Expect to Win** – Here is a secret I've learned from studying successful people: they don't operate on hope. They aren't just dreamers; they are also doers. More specifically, they expect to WIN. They expect to be successful. They expect to be victorious. Yes, they know that some people win and some lose, but they have conditioned themselves to believe that they will accomplish the task that's set before them. LeBron James delivered an NBA National Championship victory to the city of Cleveland. He put in the work, the practice, and the grind. But, here is what I love about this unprecedented story...when Labron returned to the Cleveland Cavaliers, he promised them a victory. He said, "I came back for a reason. I came back to bring a championship to our city." When Labron made this statement, he expected to WIN. He didn't expect to do well. No, he expected to WIN, and that is the same mindset you must develop if you really want to be successful and leave your mark on the world.

I wish I had learned this earlier on. My hope, beloved, is that you put this into practice sooner rather than later, so you create greater success with the grace and ease that comes from being fully aligned with your highest purpose and believing nothing is more fruitful than hard work.

2. Game Changers — Unapologetically Prepare Differently

In the off-season, Game Changers are not sitting down and eating bon-bons. They're still showing up and preparing...in the rain when it's hot, when no one else is in the office, and when others are taking a break. They don't get complacent and are intentional even in their off-season.

During his infamous career, Olympic gold-medal winner Michael Phelps worked consistently and constantly to become the world's greatest swimming champion. His



workout schedule is one of the most physically demanding there is. He trains between five to six hours per day, six days a week, sometimes more.

In fact, there was a time in Michael's career when his coach asked him if he was willing to work out on Sundays when everyone else rested. He said, "yes!" and did a workout, knowing that it would give him 52 more workouts than anyone else.

Great performers and Game Changers maximize every minute they have available to get better at what they do. This isn't praise for extreme workaholics or for living an unbalanced life. Game Changers do have a work-life balance and are committed to spending time with their family and friends, but they are incredibly intentional about how they spend their time and manage it.

The way Beyoncé approaches her performances is another great example of how Game Changers prepare differently. After Beyoncé gets off stage, and before she goes to bed, she watches that night's performance, so she can make adjustments. She makes adjustments at every stop, so the people on the last leg of her tour get better performance. She adjusts immediately, rather than at the end of her tour, so she can get better and better every time.

When I became a certified personal branding strategist, I decided I would buy every book that was ever written with "personal branding" in the title. I searched Amazon and spent about \$300 on books. After I consumed every book on that topic, I started buying additional books on branding in general. Once I made a decision on the path of becoming a personal branding expert, I showed up as a Game Changer.

Deliberate Practice Physically Changes Your Brain

Many scientists believe that deliberate practice at a young age can make the difference between a world-class athlete and everyone else. Studies have shown that deliberate and repeated practice causes changes to the biochemical structure of the brain. Practice increases cells that trigger myelin to wrap around connections in your brain that

increase the timing and speed of a “signal.” So basically, when you perform a task, your brain performs with the efficiency of a broadband internet connection rather than the slow speed of dial-up.

Our habits move from the prefrontal cortex (where we consciously think) to the basal ganglia, where a habit or skill becomes natural, and we become less aware we’re using it.

The more a skill is exercised, the less aware you are of using it. It begins to feel natural like you’ve always had it. Walking and talking are good examples.

Deliberate practice is difficult, and the number one constraint on our practice is mental. Practice requires intense concentration, which can be exhausting. It requires lots of repetition and lots of feedback. Feedback is important in the lives of Game Changers, whether it comes from someone else or themselves. Game Changers continually evaluate and seek out the next weakness, always looking for the next growth area or thing to improve upon.

Game Changers Picture the Perfect Shot

Game Changers picture the perfect shot, the perfect jump, and the perfect end result. They hold this picture firmly in their minds. Thinking forward cultivates an attitude that aligns your actions with the goals you set out to achieve.

When I prepare for a speaking engagement, I spend hours picturing myself on stage successfully delivering that speech. I see and hear the audience’s reaction. I see my gestures as I walk through the speech. I see myself walking off the stage to a standing ovation. Game Changers see their success in their mind long before they ever get to experience it in real life.

As we have seen and as we know, research concerning the world’s greatest athletes shows that longer practice results in superior stamina and sustained effort distinguishes



true champions. Such research suggests that anyone can become great through exceptional concentrated and sustained exertion.

You can start preparing differently right now.

3. Game Changers — Decide to “Burn Their Boats”

Throughout history, commanders and conquerors have instructed their soldiers to “burn the boats” before the battle. The Spanish conquistador, Cortés, ordered his men to “burn the boats” as they marched to face their enemies.

Roughly a thousand years before that, Alexander the Great burned his boats when he arrived on the shores of Persia, telling his men that they would go home in Persian boats or not go home at all.

Though this strategy is about 100% commitment to the end result, it is about so much more. It leaves no exit strategy in place and no plan B. It essentially leaves two choices: fail or achieve victory.

When Game Changers “burn their boats,” they eliminate any notion of failure or going back. They put themselves all in and commit to the fight, the battle, or the journey before them.

If you treat your goal like it is a battle that can either result in victory or failure, you fight, and you find a way. This leads to another point—Game Changers also sacrifice who they are for who they want to become. They sacrifice what they have for what they REALLY want.

Undoubtedly, there had to be soldiers among the ranks who were scared to death, but they sacrificed who they were for the fiercely brave and committed warrior they wanted to be. They sacrificed their boats for the territory they so strongly desired.

Greatness requires hard choices and unending sacrifice, but the rewards are sweetest at the edge of greatness, and we're all better, stronger, and wiser because of it.

When most people are hit hard, they make excuses or give up. When Game Changers are hit hard or face insurmountable odds, they immediately leverage the power of thoughts to shift their situation. They assess the situation, make the necessary adjustments, and then press forward.

What separates them from the 92% is that they **prepare for the blow mentally**. They know what is coming or what could be coming, and it does not cause them to give up. They may be afraid, but they press forward—in their fear—with bravery because ultimately, they believe that they will win...that they will be the victor and succeed.

Give yourself permission to get knocked down—to fail even—but be 100% committed to success and victory.

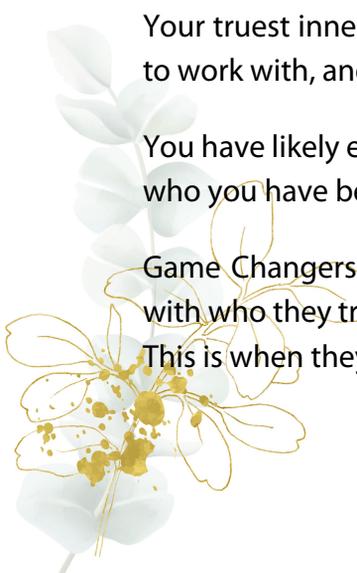
4. Game Changers — Awaken Their Truest Authentic Selves

Game Changers stand out in a room, create impact, and build influence. They are their true authentic selves. They show up as they are because they are confident there are people who will resonate with who they are. Beloved—there are people who will resonate with who you are. Your authenticity will be attractive to them.

Your truest inner self is magnetic to those who resonate with you, who you are meant to work with, and who you like working with (your ideal clients or peers).

You have likely experienced moments when you see a glimmer of who you really are or who you have been called to be.

Game Changers dig into their likes, desires, passions, and expressions. They connect with who they truly are when everything else is stripped away and awaken that person. This is when they bring their truest, most authentic selves to life.



Imagine yourself doing what you've always wanted to do and responding to life as you've always wanted to respond. Envision yourself boldly stepping out and claim that vision as your reality. Keep calling your authentic self out and discovering and re-discovering who you are.

Develop Magnetic Personalities

Game Changers are authentically magnetic. You do not have to be an extrovert or a performer to be magnetic. It is not even about being popular.

When you develop a magnetic personality, you attract the opportunities, resources, and people you need to accomplish your goals and become successful.

Magnetic and authentic individuals easily communicate with people, are approachable, possess quiet self-confidence, inspire others, and typically win promotions and get a lot of business referrals.

A Game Changer's magnetic and authentic personality is revealed through charisma which, contrary to popular belief, can be learned and developed. Magnetic charisma comes from:

- Speaking sincerely and listening lovingly
- Being deeply committed to a sense of purpose, a mission, goal, or project
- Drawing out excellence in others and in themselves
- Bottomless enthusiasm despite bad days, stress, and pressure
- A sense of humor and being able to laugh at oneself
- High interest and a deep curiosity (which we will discuss in detail later)
- Reflecting warmth, sincerity, and radiance
- Serving sincerely and considering other people

5. Game Changers — Come to Terms with Ambiguity and Discomfort

Game Changers understand being uncomfortable is part of the process. They don't expect to be comfortable.

If you strive towards greatness, you will experience discomfort, but if you push forward, you will eventually overcome it to an extent. If we look at exercise or sports, the more you stretch and continue to stretch past your point of discomfort, the more flexible you'll become. At some point, what was once uncomfortable will now become easy and pain-free. You'll be able to push yourself further to a new point of discomfort.

Going back to a sport's analogy, when athletes prepare for a game, they put in a lot of work. Their muscles are stretched and hurt beforehand. They get bumps and bruises—maybe even get hurt—during the game, and after the game, they still typically feel uncomfortable.

Being a Game Changer is not about living in a constant state of pain or discomfort, but you have to be willing to be uncomfortable along the way to becoming a champion.

The same goes for ambiguity and uncertainty. Game Changers have learned to come to terms with uncertainty and to push forward in spite of it, trusting in their abilities and in the process.

Game Changers don't need to know all of the details before they get started. They have learned to start taking action and moving forward when they have done their research and have a reasonable amount of information to plan their course. They learn to become comfortable with ambiguity and fill in the blanks as they go. This does not mean they are reckless or do not do their due diligence. It simply means they don't become paralyzed or stagnated by uncertainty.



Game Changers have learned to be self-directed and self-driven to find the answers they need to get the job done without waiting on others to give them the answers or provide a map. You cannot be a successful Game Changer if you do not adopt this mindset.

Over the years, I've hired more than six people in my speaking and consulting business, and out of those six, I have only had two who took everything I gave them and ran with it. They were very self-driven and tried to figure things out versus sitting on an assignment and waiting for me to give instructions on how to move forward.

Ambiguity naturally creates complexity and makes decisions more difficult, but real Game Changers use ambiguity to help them think creatively to come up with solutions. They know it prepares them and gives them the tools they need to face more challenges that will inevitably unravel along the way.

While others think they need more in order to win, Game Changers get started with what they have.

6. Game Changers — Ignite Insane Inspiration Every Day to Fuel Them Forward

Game Changers are fiercely passionate about the things that move them and are important to them. They are insanely inspired, and they ignite that inspiration daily.

Steve Jobs referred to himself as “one of the crazy ones.” There are times when you are going to feel unique and peculiar because not everyone will understand the inspiration you have towards your goal, cause, or purpose. When they hear your plans and vision, people will likely tell you, “that is insane!” You can respond with, “Absolutely, because I'm on my way to a destination.”

Game Changers understand how to leverage this insane inspiration in the drive for their goals, and they do it every day. They want to accomplish their goals with a level of ferocity that the average person does not possess.

They are so inspired that they make every day count, every minute count. Steve Jobs asked the question, “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I’m about to do today?” I like to challenge my audiences with this question: “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to spend it the way I have spent it? How will my tomorrow be different because of my answer to this question?”

In the last few years, I have lost a lot of close family members, including my brother and mother. As a Game Changer, I understand the cost of wasting time, and this loss only inspires me to make my life, work, and everyday count.

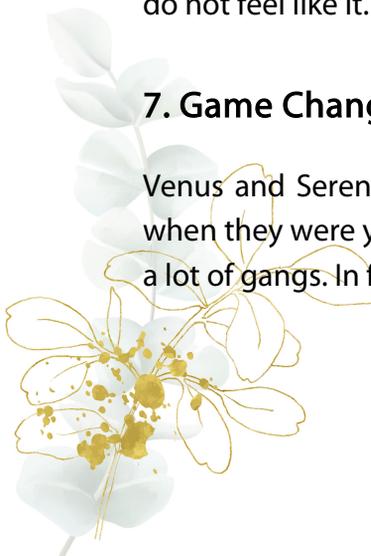
Game Changers know they could be playing a game on their iPad or using it as a learning device. Playing games or relaxing is not a bad thing. In fact, relaxation, rest, and rejuvenation are essential to success, but Game Changers ensure that even their rest is intentional and their time off is strategic.

Everything they do is intentional—from curling up on the couch to read a good book, going horseback riding, or booking a day at the spa. They take time off to energize and refuel their inspiration. Every action is inspired by their drive to make a difference and leave their mark.

Inspired, by definition, is to be spurred, motivated, moved, or compelled to do something by supernatural or extreme influence. Game Changers are insanely inspired, and they drum up that inspiration to move forward every single day, even when they do not feel like it.

7. Game Changers — Overcome Under Pressure

Venus and Serena Williams started playing tennis under the teaching of their father when they were young girls. They grew up in a rough neighborhood where there were a lot of gangs. In fact, they could hear gunshots in the background as they played.



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Their father, Richard Williams, would take his daughters to the local tennis courts and pay kids to heckle them on the sidelines as a way to teach them to maintain focus and mental toughness. It may sound crazy, but he knew they needed to learn how to perform under pressure and block negativity out.

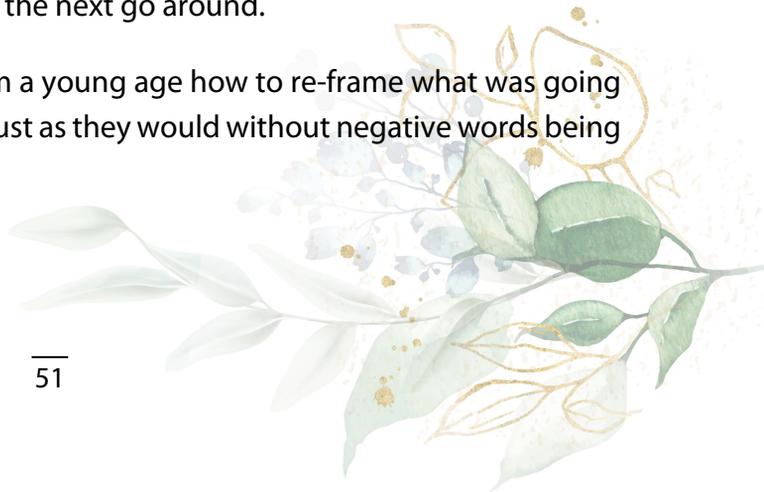
Game Changers know how to perform well under pressure. They establish mental strength and learn how to block out negative thoughts, negative words, negative emotions, and negative people to remain focused.

It is estimated that around 65,000 thoughts go through our minds each day. Unfortunately, the majority of those thoughts are negative. They are called “automatic negative thoughts.” Game Changers FOCUS on the thoughts that lead them to a win and address the thoughts that are a threat to their success.

Here is how I suggest that you deal with Automatic Negative Thoughts that bombard your thinking every day:

- Reframe the situation in your mind and find the positive or benefit in what has happened. You may be tempted to think, “I can’t believe I got passed up for that promotion!” or “I can’t believe she didn’t want to buy my product.” Instead, think to yourself, “What can I do to be better prepared for the next opportunity, for the next sales call?”
- Refocus your energy on what you can do to turn the situation around or get better results next time.
- Respond as if you expect to WIN the next go around.

Venus and Serena Williams learned from a young age how to re-frame what was going on around them, refocus, and respond just as they would without negative words being thrown at them.



They learned how to block out the negative words and take any negative thoughts captive that those words might inspire. By re-framing and refocusing, they were able to maintain their confidence and not only stay in the game but also WIN big.

Prepare yourself for whatever lies ahead. You can do almost anything if you set your mind to it.

Try these tips for increasing your stamina and forging mental toughness.

Major Elements of Mental Strength

Mental strength manifests differently depending on our individual personalities. Still, there are some fundamental qualities we can all tap into.

1. **Practice mindfulness.** Manage your feelings and thoughts. Be aware of what is going on in your head so you can make sound decisions. **Challenge faulty beliefs and develop more constructive ways of coping.**
2. **Be conscientious.** Remain true to your core values and principles. Organize your life, take your responsibilities to others seriously, and follow through on your plans.
3. **Develop patience.** Bear with annoyances and delays. Rather than making you a doormat, patience gives you the ability to stay calm and choose your actions. Learn to slow down and consider your options.
4. **Remain flexible.** Being open to change allows you to adjust your thinking and adapt to new circumstances. **Reframe your attitude, so you see opportunities instead of disruptions.** Appreciate the rewards of being innovative and resilient.
5. **Live authentically.** Identify what really matters to you. Understand your strengths and celebrate your unique gifts.



Positive Habits That Build Mental Strength

Mental strength is not a fixed quality. With practice and determination, you can train your mind to hold up under pressure.

1. **Delay gratification.** A famous study showed that children who could resist eating one treat now in order to receive two treats later performed better in school and enjoyed more success in later life. Good things are worth waiting for.
2. **Accept discomfort.** Giving in to frustration intensifies unpleasant feelings. **Let go of your resistance and experience the relief that comes with facing reality.**
3. **Focus on your priorities.** Your mental powers are formidable, but it's still important to channel them efficiently. Devote your time and energy to activities that are meaningful and fulfilling for you.
4. **Find inner motivation.** It's easier to work hard when you're doing it for reasons that you find compelling instead of trying to please others.
5. **Build your confidence.** High self-esteem and mental strength naturally go together. Pursue goals that are realistic and ambitious. Surround yourself with family and friends who encourage and support you.
6. **Condition your body.** Physical fitness strengthens your mind as well as your muscles. Exercise on a regular basis and incorporate more activity into your daily routine. Eat nourishing whole foods and go to bed on a consistent schedule. It matters more than you think.
7. **Think positive.** Banish stress by looking on the bright side and using your self-talk to affirm your worth. Remember that you are in charge of your destiny, and you deserve joy and love.
8. **Hang in there.** Developing your mental strength is a lifelong project. Expect some ups and downs. As long as you persevere, you will see results. **Overcoming obstacles can be even more satisfying than scoring easy victories.**

You can't remove the challenges from life, but you can respond to them in a way that makes you smarter and tougher. Build up your mental strength now so you'll be ready to thrive under any conditions. Believe in yourself and use setbacks as stepping stones to greater happiness and success.

Like a diamond in the rough, a Game Changer's brilliance will only be revealed through a refining process. Just like turning coal into a diamond, the greater the pressure, the greater the value of the diamond. Don't be discouraged by the extreme pressure you may be under. It's just a sign of your future potential and value.

8. Game Changers — Understand It Takes a Series of Small Shifts

Game Changers know their way to success or the path to the next level of success is not going to come by swallowing some "magic pill" or doing "just this one thing." They understand the path to success is made up of a series of small shifts that are executed over and over again.

Game Changers know that it is the small shifts and the details that bring about the big transformations.

Through prayer and asking God to reveal to me what my path to success would be or what I was supposed to do with my life, I would always get these undeniable nudges. I knew these small shifts would each lead to me becoming all I am meant to be and doing all I'm meant to do. Saying "yes" to opportunities or small nudges over and over again had led to big shifts in my life, even when things did not end up how I expected.

Everything I needed to be successful in the next shift, I had already accumulated from the previous steps I had taken. Game Changers understand that consistently taking advantage of small shifts creates big opportunities in the future and distinguishes truly great performers from merely good ones. They pay attention to the details and small shifts afforded to them.



Coach John Wooden always used the same routine to introduce freshmen to UCLA basketball practice. He told the new players to remove their shoes and socks and then carefully instructed them on exactly how to pull on their socks and lace up their shoes. "If there are wrinkles in your socks or your shoes aren't tied properly, you will develop blisters," Wooden told his players. "With blisters, you'll miss practice. If you miss practice, you don't play. And if you don't play, we cannot win."

Great performers and Game Changers pay attention to the smallest of details and prepare with care for every contingency.

They also do not start and stop. While they shift and change, they are not constantly starting and stopping because they know it reduces their strength, dilutes their energy, and dissipates their momentum.

9. Game Changers — Spark Their Curiosity

Game Changers are curious by nature, but, more so, they have learned to become interested in what other people are interested in.

Albert Einstein said, "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious."

The most successful entrepreneurs, athletes, professionals, business owners, or inventors were profoundly curious—well beyond the infamous saying "curiosity killed the cat." Game Changers always ask questions, wonder about things, are taking things apart, or questioning why we do things the way we do or why we do the things we do.

Curiosity leads to knowledge and learning, which leads to new ideas, solutions, and understanding. Be curious. Start asking more questions.

The right mindset can completely change your life.

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Remember, people will be after you because you have the BALL – a dream, goal, mission, and vision. Expect to be tackled, ambushed, knocked down, and tripped on your way to the finish line. You may get hurt or bruised, become frustrated, or get diverted, but hold onto the ball because you are almost in the end zone.

Grab the ball, go after your dream, and start changing the game.



Live Your Brand

The way you “show up” is by building either an influential positive personal brand or a negative brand.

I wrote this chapter to provide a host of ideas called “hacks” to help you develop the mindset and skills necessary to increase your ability to influence others through the power of your personal brand.

Some are so simple that you’ll be saying, “Duh! Why aren’t I already doing this?” Others might feel like you’ve found the world’s greatest secret, LOL.

That’s just fine.

All I ask is that you commit to remaining both open and coachable.

My hope, though, is that you’ll find most of what follows to be so creative and innovative that you’re inspired to take a fresh look at how you can bring an even better, more powerful version of yourself to your work every single day.

1. Be Remarkable!

You’ve thought it, you’ve felt it, perhaps you’ve even dreamed of it.

You know... those thoughts that you were created to do something special, important, outstanding, or even extraordinary. Deep inside, you wait for the opportunity to do something remarkable and let your genius shine.

You seek the chance to make your mark, to make a difference through your work.

Now is the time to step into the spotlight, leverage your talents, and embrace the opportunity to show just how remarkable you really are. Find your fit and determine where your unique set of skills will have the greatest impact and outcome. Then become

relentless in advocating for development opportunities that bring you closer to serving from your position of strength.

2. Stay Focused and Be a Doer

It's easy to get so focused on getting ahead that we lose our attention toward the present moment.

To be credible and build an influential brand, you must be excellent, and excellence requires you to focus on the now. You must be able to complete projects of superb quality on time and within a given budget.

If you want to be recognized as someone who gets things done and who has a positive impact on others, you're going to have to show up and take the shot and don't lose sight of the task at hand.

3. Be a Savvy Social Networker

Social media is ever-evolving. If you say something that someone notices and they click on a share button, your message can spread throughout an increasing number of sites, including blogs, wikis, forums, podcasts, photo sites, and bookmarks.

Social media was created specifically to share information among networks, which means leveraging its power is an incredible way to spread your message. The downside is that it's nearly impossible to get rid of a message you want to retract.

If you make comments about someone you dislike, a company that you are not pleased with, a book that struck a nerve, or a political opinion you disagree with, you've got to keep in mind that those comments can and will be traced back to you.



4. Be mindful of what you post online.

You also need to develop a healthy curiosity about how people see you online and what they're saying about you. Learn to set up automatic searches for your name (e.g., a Google Alert) to receive an e-mail letting you know every time your name is mentioned online.

Make sure that pictures, comments, e-mail signatures, and articles about you support your brand. If they do not, try to get them removed as quickly as possible.

I recommend that you reserve your name on every social networking site so that other people cannot pretend to be you. Then create a consistent message (your brand) across all the sites you use. Don't think that you have to be active on every site because you don't. Spend as little time as you can on sites just used to protect your brand, and save the rest of your time for the sites on which you really want to be active.

When your presence is well managed—both in-person and online—you have the opportunity to exert influence congruent with your brand.

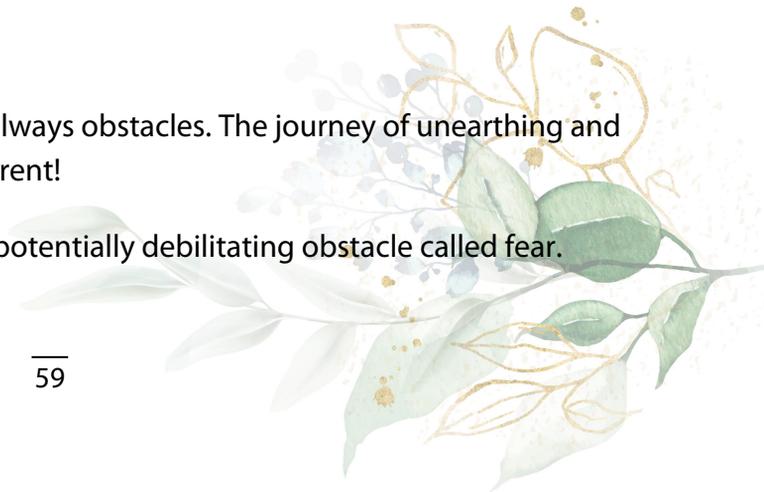
When it comes to getting a promotion, applying for a new job, or trying to secure a contract, the Human Resources departments and your contacts now regularly search the web to see what they can find about you.

Will what they find support your brand?

5. Be Fearless!

On any journey of discovery, there are always obstacles. The journey of unearthing and building your personal brand is no different!

On this journey, you are likely to face a potentially debilitating obstacle called fear.



I'm not going to tell you to focus on eliminating the fear found inside. Instead, I am going to challenge you to feel the fear and move forward regardless.

By embracing the fear and understanding it, you can make it serve you, not deter you. For example, by peeling back the layers of your fear, you may find that you are hesitant to reach for a promotion or go after that BIG client because you fear the workload at the next level would impact your work-life balance. Now instead of being stuck because of the inherent fear, you are empowered to move beyond it.

Another useful strategy is positioning the situation in a way that there is a positive or suitable outcome because of it.

You might ask yourself, "What would I do in the next 30 days to work toward a goal if I knew I could not fail and would have the time I desire to spend with my family for a proper work-life balance?"

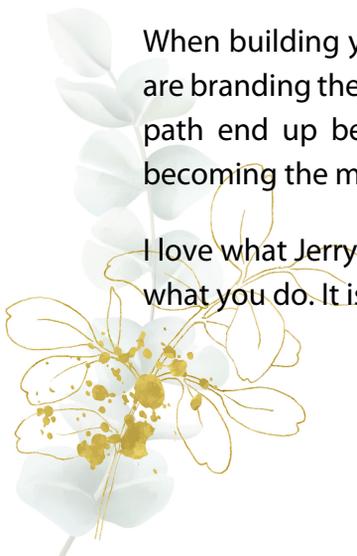
Sometimes we don't get the answer we need to move forward because we are trying to answer the wrong question.

6. Be Priceless

In the pursuit of building an influential brand, seek to become a priceless original instead of a cheap copy or imitation.

When building your brand, it's tempting to study your competition to see how others are branding themselves. The problem with this approach is that people who follow this path end up becoming a replica or a weak version of their competitor instead of becoming the most powerful version of themselves.

I love what Jerry Garcia had to say: "Success is not being perceived as being the best at what you do. It is being perceived as being the only one who does what you do."



The key is to study yourself in detail, find your points of differentiation, and learn to leverage them. Don't try to sell a better version of someone else; sell the best version of yourself.

7. Explore Your Brilliance Without Boundaries

I've coached hundreds through a technique I affectionately call Exploring Brilliance without Boundaries (EBB). An important key to the EBB technique is to ask yourself the EBB question each and every time you encounter an obstacle.

The EBB question: "It may seem that I can't, but if I could, how would I?"

When you commit to applying this technique in your thought process, the results will be brilliant.

When you spend too much time and energy dwelling on why something can't be done, you become stagnant and stop moving towards your goal.

When you ask the EBB question, you begin focusing on what could be instead of what has already been. You don't allow the limitations of previous accomplishments to restrict where you could go this time around. By remaining focused on what can be done and how it can be done, you continue moving ahead in the exploration process until you finally reach the brilliant ideas within.

My colleague and famed Internet marketing guru Randy Gage tells a story that demonstrates the power of this technique. He explains that he knew what he wanted—to earn one million dollars from his one-day seminar—but he didn't know HOW to make it happen for him.

Randy consulted his website developer, "Ford, I know it's not possible to make a million dollars from a one-day seminar. But if it were possible, how would we go about doing it?" This question started a powerful brainstorming session. And guess what? Randy and

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Ford presented an extraordinary one-day seminar that not only grossed more than a million dollars; it made a lot of attendees happy and wealthy in the process.

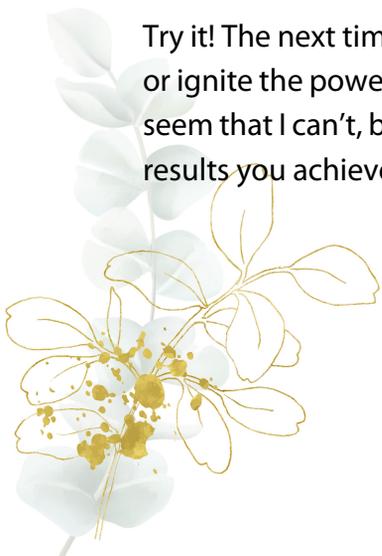
While working with Rachel Browning, a clinical psychologist and business management consultant, we identified what she wanted to accomplish, and then we used the EBB technique to develop a radically different business model than the one she had been using. It allows her as a coach to serve thousands of more clients each month than she was able to serve before as a psychologist.

It wasn't easy getting her to try out the EBB technique. Being the analyzer she is, she initially found it difficult to allow herself to think so creatively, so freely, so boundlessly. Through this technique, she was able to break away from the limited thinking associated with what she thought she knew and believed was possible. She was then able to imagine the possibilities and start working hard to make her dream a reality.

You, too, may find it difficult to think so creatively, freely, and boundlessly... at least at first. But by continually applying the EBB technique, you will find you are able to escape the limited thinking you have been allowing. You'll learn to freely imagine the possibilities that will turn ideas into solutions.

Those with the most powerful and influential personal brands are able to see what is possible for them. They allow themselves to step into the vision and then work hard to make it their new reality.

Try it! The next time you need a brilliant idea to overcome an obstacle, solve a problem, or ignite the power within you, challenge yourself with the simple EBB question: "It may seem that I can't, but if I could, how would I do it?" You may be surprised at the powerful results you achieve.



8. Put your game face on and play to win!

Refuse to give in to your fears, doubts, or someone else's opinion of what is possible for you. It is your career and your life that's on the line.

Will you hand control over so quickly to someone who doesn't know where you are going or how you plan to get there? Remain in the driver's seat and encourage your supervisor to join you for the ride, but never relinquish the wheel or take your eyes off the road, even for a second. The destination is career success.

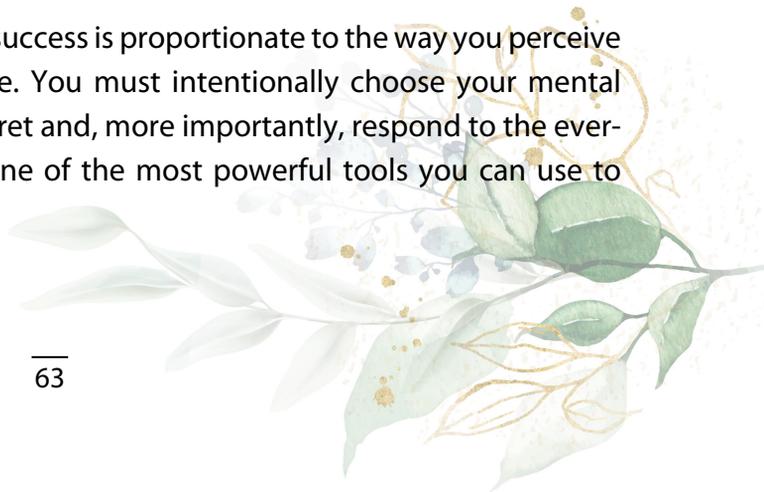
9. Develop a Success-Oriented Mindset

If you compare two people with similar education, backgrounds, and skillsets, what are the differentiating factors that allow one person to reach or surpass their goals while the other person simply struggles?

The following three principles are key factors that differentiate each person's unique level of success:

- **Optimism:** choosing to believe that great good is yet to come.
- **Resilience:** bouncing back from setbacks and always persisting in the face of adversity.
- **Continuous Self-Renewal:** working to bring about your very best self.

Your level of personal and professional success is proportionate to the way you perceive and react to the challenges in your life. You must intentionally choose your mental outlook and decide how you will interpret and, more importantly, respond to the ever-changing events of your life. This is one of the most powerful tools you can use to generate additional success.



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Each day more than 50,000 thoughts pass through your mind, yet most of those thoughts go unnoticed. Unfortunately, research says that 95 percent of your thoughts are negatively based.

Would you like to learn how to make your thoughts empower and motivate you instead of physically draining you?

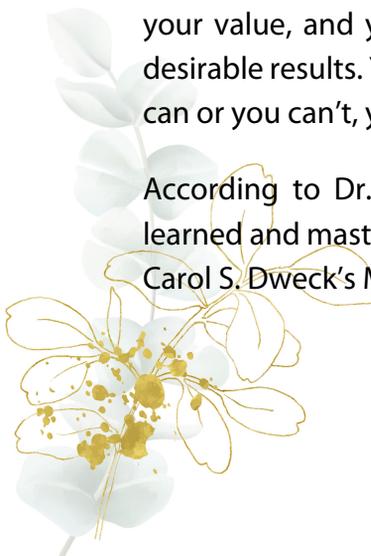
Dr. Martin Seligman studies learned helplessness, depression, optimism and pessimism, and positive psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. He reports that pessimistic people do not fare as well as optimistic people in three different ways:

1. They get depressed more often.
2. They achieve less at school, on the job, and on the playing field—much less than their talents would typically suggest.
3. Their physical health is worse than that of optimists.

The key to developing a mind oriented towards optimism and success is to understand that your beliefs shape your reality.

If you have been taught to believe self-defeating, self-sabotaging ideas about yourself, these negative thoughts will manifest themselves in actual defeat and cause you to act in a way that prevents you from achieving the success you desire. On the other hand, if you choose to use purposeful, passionate, positive, and powerful affirmations about your value, and your potential and probability for success, you are likely to achieve desirable results. Your perception is your reality. Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can or you can't, you're right." Choose to believe that you can.

According to Dr. Seligman, recent significant findings show that optimism can be learned and mastered. His work corresponds with other researchers', as documented in Carol S. Dweck's *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.



She explains ways people with a "growth mindset" can improve themselves. Optimists consistently outperform those with a "fixed mindset" who believe they have already reached their maximum capabilities. Seligman says that optimists have and maintain better physical health.

Dr. Toshihiko Maruta, a researcher at the Mayo Clinic, reports that optimistic attitudes can dramatically affect both a person's physical and mental functioning. A positive outlook and reaction to life can impact longevity and quality of life as a whole. In addition, a Johns Hopkins study showed that optimists outperform pessimists in all professional fields except just one—law. This is primarily because they believe they are capable of affecting change and improving themselves.

Optimists are also more resilient and have learned that life is full of trial and error experiences that provide them with opportunities to learn and grow. They don't let such setbacks keep them from reaching their dreams and goals.

10. Increase Your Adaptability Factor

Just when you think you know how things are going to go in life, something happens that puts a wrench in your plan and throws you off-kilter.

Maybe your project experiences scope creep (uncontrolled changes), your resources have been reduced, or the time allocated to your presentation at a company-wide meeting has literally been cut in half.

Yes, that is sometimes how life goes. During times of change, keeping your cool and increasing your adaptability factor will help you enhance your personal brand. Others will see that they can depend on you to remain calm, focused, and on task.

To increase your adaptability factor, try these strategies:

1. Accept that life is always unpredictable. The nature of life is ever-evolving. Remind yourself from time to time of the level of unpredictability that surrounds you. In other words, life is what it is.
2. Keep an open mind. When something doesn't go as planned, you're being given the gift to do something completely different in its place. Shift your paradigm.
3. Consider an unexpected change as an opportunity. When something unforeseen occurs, you might have a chance to do something you wouldn't normally have done before. When stretched, you may discover a special talent or skill you didn't know you possessed. Allow inner magic to happen.
4. Have a Plan B. If you consistently set up a Plan B; you'll rarely be disappointed when Plan A fails. Plus, life might be a bit more interesting. Being adaptable comes with built-in rewards such as reduced stress and the ability to adapt quickly.
5. Be accepting of new people. Remain open to the possibility of developing powerful relationships with new people.

11. Make a Great First Impression

In almost all life situations, we want to leave a positive impression on people when we first meet them. Whether you're establishing a new business contact or meeting your new colleague for the very first time, first impressions always matter.

Fantastic first impressions are vital to your personal brand.

Studies by social psychologists note the great impact that first impressions can make on clients or even co-workers. These instant impressions are formed within just 3 seconds of meeting you and are impressions that convey who you really are to others.

The list of impressions includes:



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- Personality
- Education level
- Career competence and success
- Level of sophistication
- Trustworthiness
- Sense of humor

Imagine how quickly three seconds can pass! There is no way to give clients and co-workers your resume, college diploma, and references within a mere 3 seconds. You can't tell employers about your experiences, skills, and other noteworthy events within that short timeframe either.

But, that is the exact amount of time it takes others to make a judgment about you, merely based on your first impression. Your clothes, your hair, your facial expressions, and your overall personal image are what will determine your first impression to others—all within just 3 seconds.

So you must make your personal image as strong as possible, and you need to be aware of your business presence and make it as strong and commanding as possible.

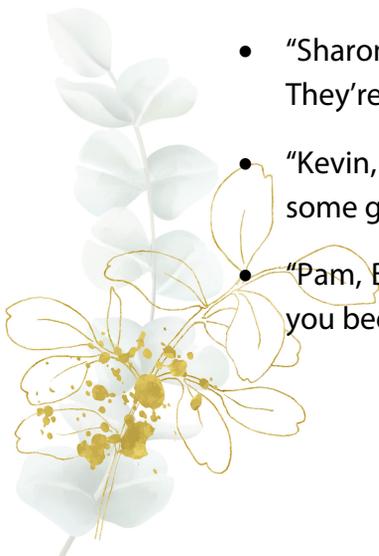
First impressions do matter in the world we live in. If we lived in a perfect world where there were no judgments made, first impressions would not matter, but that is just not the case. The world tends to judge a book solely by its cover, not by its contents. Just as a wine bottle is judged by its label and a house is judged by its curb appeal, you are similarly judged simply by the way you dress and the way you act toward others.

Follow these tips to make a great and memorable first impression:

1. Have a pleasing appearance. Even though attractiveness is in the eye of the beholder, it's still important to look your absolute best. Clean, wrinkle-free

clothing, brushed and styled hair, and light or no fragrance helps most people be at their best. If you wear make-up, you must remember that it doesn't take much to enhance your appearance.

2. Make eye contact and smile. In some cultures, making direct eye contact doesn't indicate good rapport. However, in American culture, people make positive connections by looking each other in the eyes. If you don't, the person you're meeting for the first time may think you have something to hide from them!
3. Smile. You look friendly and more appealing. You come across as more open to others when you're smiling in a completely natural and relaxed way.
4. Pay attention. When you're meeting someone, make every effort to pay attention and focus on what's being said. When you listen well, you show genuine interest in the other person.
5. Refer to others by name. You will be perceived as a good listener who is focused and polite. Using a person's name in your conversation helps accomplish all of these things quickly.
6. Initiate conversation with a positive comment. Making a positive impression means that people will maintain good thoughts when they remember you by something you did or said. This goes a long way towards building a positive awareness for your personal brand. Consider these examples of ways to start a verbal exchange with a new acquaintance:
 - "Sharon, I saw the drawings you did for the local Boys' Club campaign. They're amazing. How did you come up with such an incredible visual?"
 - "Kevin, I heard from Julie that you're quite the fisherman. Where can I find some good fishing spots around here?"
 - "Pam, Bill always speaks so highly of the work that you do. How long have you been working at the James Corporation?"



7. Be sincere. Be yourself. This is essential when first meeting someone. People can sense when others are putting on a front or behaving in ways that aren't natural for them. If you're sincere, your new acquaintance will sense that immediately.

Because you never know what might blossom between you and a new acquaintance, put in the effort to make a positive and memorable first impression. Try some of the tips above, and you'll make a great first impression—perhaps even pave the way for a successful future business relationship.

12. Be Known as an Expert or Thought Leader

If you want to stand out from the crowd or the competition at work, then you need to be seen as an expert in your field. This requires action on your part, not just walking around telling people that you're an expert.

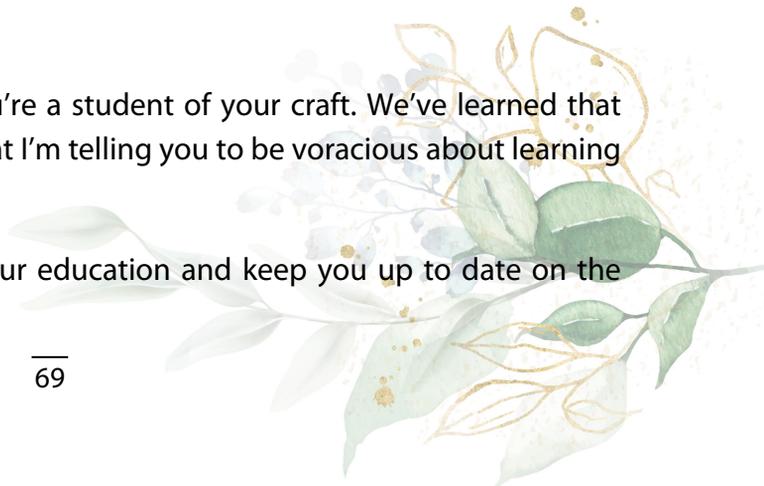
Anyone has the potential to become a thought leader or be seen as an expert if a proper amount of time and effort is given to the development of one's craft. It is essential that you learn how to share and demonstrate your knowledge if you want to become known as an expert or thought leader.

It's one thing to talk about what you know, but it's a whole different story to actually turn that knowledge into action and teach others how to do the same. Experts don't walk around bragging about what they can do. Experts take action.

13. Make Education a Priority

First and foremost, make sure that you're a student of your craft. We've learned that focused, deliberate practice. Here's what I'm telling you to be voracious about learning as much as you can!

- Take courses to help further your education and keep you up to date on the latest technology.



- Attend conferences to stay current with industry trends and changes.
- Become a ferocious reader. Success leaves priceless clues, and you will grow exponentially by reading about the experiences and adventures of others in your field.

By expanding your knowledge, you'll also build your confidence. Can you think of a single person that was ever seen as an expert that didn't believe in themselves and what they were doing? Can you name even one? Not likely! With knowledge comes confidence.

14. Honor Your Agreements

When you've gained the trust of your colleagues, your ability to influence increases, the quickest way to build trust in any relationship is to honor your initial agreements.

Your personal brand is built over time by remaining consistent in demonstrating what your brand stands for and showing people what they can expect from you. Honoring your agreements and keeping your commitments best accomplish this.

15. Be impossible to ignore

Do you want to get noticed and create a buzz for your brand? Then be so good at what you do that you are impossible to ignore. Seek opportunities with increased visibility for demonstrating your abilities and talents.

When done well and communicated effectively, this strategy can kick your brand awareness up a few notches. It may even get you recognition from the leaders whose attention you have been seeking.



16. Take Responsibility for Your Results

Take responsibility for your success and own your results. Spend time developing your most valuable relationship—the relationship you have with yourself. Your outcomes are a result of the deliberate and intentional actions that you take on a daily basis. You always have a choice in how you will respond to the situations and challenges that present themselves to you.

Don't fall into the habit of blaming others when things don't exactly go your way. Step up and accept your role in the grand scheme of things. When you point the finger at others, you are giving away your power and diminishing your brand. Don't get stuck. Instead, take responsibility and ownership for your actions and results. And remember that it's okay to be imperfect!

17. Expect to Succeed

When you expect success and solely focus on it, your world will rearrange itself accordingly. When you always expect to succeed, your odds of actually doing so increase tremendously.

Have you ever found yourself expecting one thing but instead focusing on another? This is similar to swinging your foot to draw a figure 8 in the air while at the same time patting the top of your head. You are in motion, but the results are still highly unpredictable.

When you decide to take on an endeavor, set your intentions on being successful, see yourself being successful. Imagine what it will feel like to celebrate your successful completion of the task at hand.

By doing so, you increase your chance of showing up in a powerful and meaningful way because absolutely everything about how you show up says, "I am confident in my ability to create the desired result."

18. Be Transparent

Show the world who you really are. Be authentic, real, and genuine. People can sense when you are not sharing your true thoughts and innermost feelings. When this happens, you are teaching people to distrust you.

Having said this, I am not suggesting for one minute that you air your dirty laundry at work or share intimate details of the skeletons in your closet. Instead, I am merely suggesting that if you are concerned about the direction your team is heading, be brave enough to state your feelings—even if they do not match the consensus of the group. Being transparent requires a degree of courage...courage to say what you feel and what you are thinking in spite of how others may view the situation at hand.

Again, having said this, I am also not suggesting that you just say anything you feel, without regard for the ideas, feelings, and position of the people with whom you are communicating.

Using the right amount of courage and finesse will help you to build a brand that says, "I'm approachable, relatable, and I'm not guarded."

19. Be the Solution, Not the Problem

No one likes to work with a complainer, a whiner, or someone who only looks at the negative side of things and always plays the devil's advocate. If this is how you have been showing up, regroup, refocus, and reposition yourself to show yourself as a creative contributor to the idea pool.

Be someone who frequently has fresh ideas that move the team forward, instead of the one who can point out all the reasons an idea won't work.



You will advance farther up the corporate ladder if you position yourself as an idea generator, a problem solver, and a difference-maker. A company WILL hire or promote you if your skillset is the best solution for a problem they genuinely must solve.

You establish your ability to be the solution by demonstrating your expertise in an area where the organization has identified a strong need and ongoing focus.

The greater the need, the greater the opportunity for you to show up as a valuable and indispensable resource.

20. Become a Catalyst for Positive Change

Change is inevitable... except from a vending machine.

The current marketplace is characterized by frequently changing demands and objectives. You can dig in your heels and refuse to grow or shift with the changing times, or you can develop an increased tolerance for change, learn to embrace it, and perhaps even inspire it. Professionals with influential brands frequently find themselves on the side of initiating change and are often a catalyst for changes that bring about new transformation and growth.

Here are three simple strategies for becoming a catalyst for positive change:

1. Look beyond the obvious. Develop the ability to look past what everyone else sees and discover what else lies beneath the surface. You will discover fresh opportunities, possibilities, and risks that others have overlooked. Use this information to help initiate positive change to remove any roadblocks, get unstuck, and breakthrough difficult barriers.
2. Don't suggest a change for the sake of change. Only recommend change when it is truly timely, relevant, beneficial, and necessary.

3. Stay true to your core values. It is much easier to champion change when it is in alignment with both your core values and beliefs.

21. Accept Your Mistakes and Move On

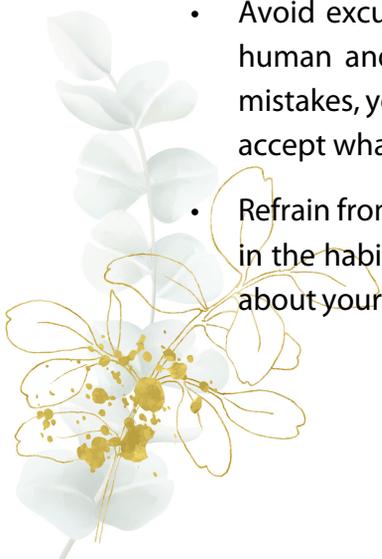
In life, you will experience failure, so please, get used to it. It's part of the process of getting from where you are to rewarding career success.

While on this path, you will experience many bumps in the road, detours that derail you, and dead ends that leave you questioning if you're even on the right path. When you review your mistakes, you may feel a sense of remorse and disappointment, but these are healthy reactions. They'll fuel your motivation to correct your course and make important adjustments that will allow you to build a more powerful and influential personal brand over time.

When you encounter your mistakes, you will likely encounter some negative emotions. Remorse and disappointment are different from self-condemnation, which can lead to depression, guilt, and shame. These unhealthy emotions may cause you to give up or even avoid facing your mistakes. Instead, look toward what you can do to change your actions the next time around.

Try these strategies to increase your acceptance of mistakes so you can move on:

- Avoid excusing yourself of your mistakes. It's okay to tell yourself that you're human and prone to error, but if you use this to refuse to face up to your mistakes, you won't grow. Instead, work on improving yourself. This will help you accept what you did and put it in the past so you can move on.
- Refrain from calling yourself names like "idiot," "total failure," or even "loser." Get in the habit of complimenting yourself instead. Reinforce the qualities you like about yourself by telling yourself motivational statements like "I can do this," "I'm



good at this," "Forgiving others is perfectly like me," or "I can find a solution to this ongoing challenge."

- Be tolerant and compassionate with yourself, just as you are with your friends and family. Judge your behavior, not yourself.

22. Strengthen Your Character

Would you like to be more deeply respected by others? Do you respect yourself? Maybe you'd just like to accomplish more or improve the quality of what you already do. To work toward all of these ends at once, you must work on your character.

Character is defined as the combination of qualities or traits that influence a person's actions. In other words, your character is what leads you to make the decisions you make and behave the way you do. Your character shapes your brand identity and how others perceive you based on your choices, decisions, and actions.

Follow the six steps below to become a stronger, more principled individual:

1. What are your values? Think about the intrinsic values that guide you. Where did you learn them? Are they connected to your own ideas, what your parents taught you, or your faith?
2. Evaluate your life. Have you constantly lived by your values? An important step in strengthening your character is to take an inventory of your past behaviors and choices.

Did you make your decisions based on your principles? For example, if you consider yourself a servant leader, someone who serves those around them before being a leader to them, have you been diligent in developing your team members and supporting their own career development goals?



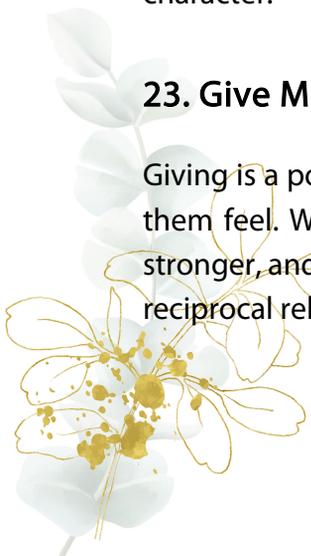
This exploration into your past behavior is necessary if you hope to strengthen your character further. Without knowing where you've been, it's hard to see clearly where you're at today and even harder to chart a course to take you where you want to go.

3. Make changes. If you feel something needs to change, consider what behaviors you'd like to change. Next, make a list of what you've noticed about them.
4. Apply your new guidelines each day. From this point forward, focus on the decisions you make and how you behave, keeping in mind your chosen set of values. Vow to make the changes that you've listed.
5. Be completely fearless in your efforts to live by your values. Stand guard over your daily decisions to ensure that they match up with your guiding principles and values.
6. Remember that today is a new day. Whatever you did yesterday, while it may require an apology, is now in the past. If you didn't do as well as you would have liked, you could start fresh today.

Strengthening your character takes effort, discipline, and courage. If you apply the above steps efficiently, you'll enhance your ability to build an influential brand. It is impossible to develop a powerful and influential brand if you are not living in accordance with your own values. Discover your best "you" by first strengthening your character.

23. Give More Than You Take

Giving is a powerful force. People never forget how you make them feel or have made them feel. When we act from a place of generosity, our hearts and our power grow stronger, and the gifts returned to us are practically immeasurable. We live in a world of reciprocal relationships and energy. When you give, you get.



The fantastic book *Pay It Forward* by Catherine Ryan Hyde generated a social generosity trend. Paying it forward is returning an unsolicited gift you received from a stranger by anonymously giving something or being of service to another complete stranger. What an inspiring concept!

For example, someone lets you over in traffic, and you can't do anything more than wave to thank them. So, later in the day, you add a few coins to someone's expired parking meter, thus stopping them from getting a parking ticket. So, how generous are you?

When you offer to share your gifts and talents without expecting anything in return, you activate the law of reciprocity—what social psychology calls responding to a positive action with another equal positive action. By giving more than you take, you create the opportunity for others to have a positive and memorable experience with you, enhancing your personal brand. You don't keep score and individually track how many favors you've extended with the expectation of benefiting from helping others. When your intentions are pure, this principle will yield some great rewards and results as a by-product, not by intention.

"This is captured beautifully in one of my favorite poems:

I slept and dreamt that life was Joy;

Then I awoke and realized

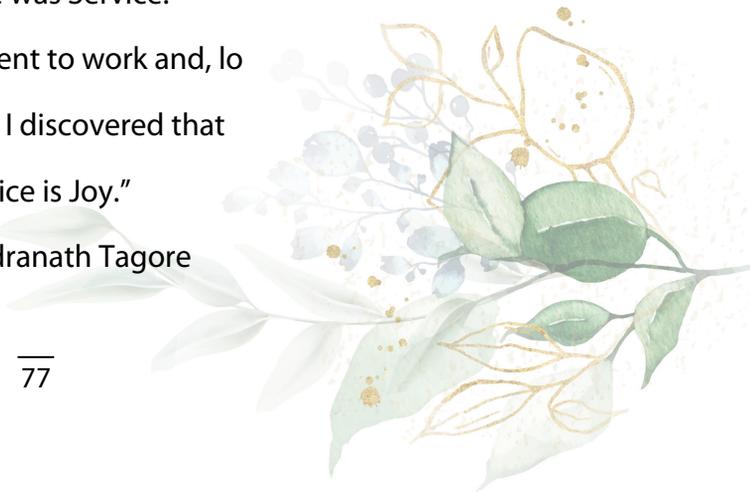
that life was Service.

And then I went to work and, lo

and behold I discovered that

Service is Joy."

—Rabindranath Tagore



24. Ask for What You Want

As adults, we seem to lose our ability to ask for what we want, and we can really struggle when it comes to asking for what we need. I have always found that the world responds to those who ask! We can create abundance in our lives just by mastering the art of asking assertively.

There are three reasons why we don't ask for what we want:

- We believe that it's not right to ask.
- We lack confidence.
- We fear rejection.

Some people don't enjoy the rewards of asking for what they want because they don't ask effectively. A large part of building an influential brand is being able to ask for what you want. Having a powerful brand to support that request definitely increases the chance that you'll get what you want.

Here are four ways to ensure that you get results when you ask:

1. **Ask Clearly.** Be precise. Think about your request. Take time to prepare, maybe even write out what you want and practice asking. Words are powerful, especially when chosen carefully.
2. **Ask With Confidence.** You are more apt to get what you want if you speak up and sound confident, rather than hesitant and unsure of yourself. The worst that can happen is that you will be denied.
3. **Ask Creatively.** Consider ways to make your request impactful, so it doesn't get lost in the crowd. How can you make your request stand out? Maybe even schedule time every month to dream up new and different ways to ask for what you want.



4. Ask Sincerely. When you really want help, people will respond. Ask from your heart.

Ask, and you shall receive!

25. Become a Master Communicator

Some people seem to be naturally good communicators, while others have to work at it. Communication skills are not proportionate to how bright we are. People can be gifted in their subject matter but struggle with communicating what they know or connecting with people.

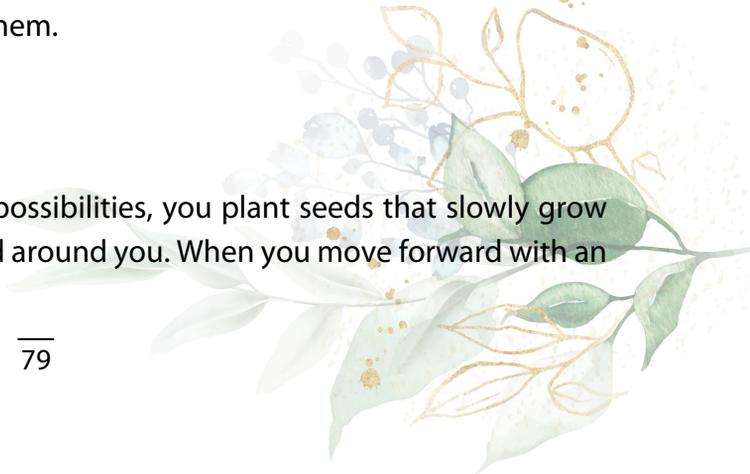
What we say isn't always what the other person hears. Our message goes through a complicated system of filters and outside influences before it reaches the recipient. We must always clarify that the person has received the message we intended to send.

I have been a member of Toastmaster's International (<http://www.toastmasters.org>) for over 22 years, yet each time I attend a meeting, I realize that I still have much more to learn.

If you need a fun, safe place to develop your communication and leadership skills, you should consider joining a local Toastmasters club. This organization is an extremely affordable way to get the help you need in order to become a master communicator. After all, if you have the most accurate data and the best plan but fail to effectively communicate it to others, they won't listen to you. At that point, all the data and plans in the world won't be able to influence them.

26. Stay Open to Possibilities

When you stay open to new ideas and possibilities, you plant seeds that slowly grow and change your perception of the world around you. When you move forward with an



open mind, you will make wonderful, enlightened, and rewarding discoveries along the way.

Many of my success stories have an unusual beginning and start with some kind of encounter or insight very different than what I would consider the norm for me.

27. Branding as a Discovery Process

The process of unearthing your personal brand is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Follow these simple steps along your journey to discovering your unique brand identity:

- Focus on “The Big Picture.” The big picture may not be clear immediately, but when you diligently work to solve the puzzle piece-by-piece, the big picture gradually emerges.
- Start with the Border Pieces. Begin with what you already know. When putting a puzzle together, most people start with what they already know, which is usually the border pieces because they are the easiest to solve. Conduct a self-assessment of your personal brand and use that as a place to start unearthing your own brand identity.
- Place the Inside Pieces. Once you complete the border of your personal brand puzzle, your eyes will be drawn to certain points of interest. These points of interest serve as clues to your passion and areas of talent and strength. Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and Les Hewitt, authors of *The Power of Focus: How to Hit Your Business, Personal and Financial Targets with Absolute Certainty*, call these our areas of brilliance, things we do subconsciously, almost effortlessly. By studying your areas of brilliance, you'll begin to learn more about your natural gifts and talents, which in turn answer questions related to you and the unique promise of value (UPV) that your brand offers.
- Progress Increases Clarity. As each puzzle piece is placed, you'll find that the overall picture becomes more and more clear until the day you realize the



meaning of the picture before you. It is important to realize that the process is a slow one. There will be many wonderful discoveries along the way. The more time you spend evaluating your personal brand, the clearer your value and points of differentiation will become.

- Enjoy the journey. While this discovery process is much like solving a jigsaw puzzle, there is one main and integral difference: when the jigsaw puzzle is solved, it is clear that you have reached the end of the journey, but when the picture of your brand emerges, you will realize the journey is only just beginning. The emergence of your brand will open up intriguing, exciting, and boundless opportunities for you to continually reinvent yourself and your brand.

28. Leverage Your Strengths and Manage Your Weaknesses

According to the authors of *The Power Focus: How to Hit Your Business, Personal and Financial Targets with Absolute Certainty*, the average person spends approximately 80 percent of their day working on tasks that they are mediocre at and only 20 percent of their day operating using the strengths, gifts, and talents that make-up their brilliance.

Do you spend more than 20 percent of your day doing what you are naturally gifted at? If the answer is a simple no, you are probably not in a position that is allowing you to pursue your life's true mission.

As I studied successful people, I discovered that they all seem to spend most of their day operating from their strengths instead of trying to work on (or improve) their weaknesses. All too often, we work hard to become well-rounded individuals, working to shore up our weaknesses in hopes of becoming a lot more successful.

Marcus Buckingham, a best-selling author, speaker, and consultant, has written a series of great books on developing our strengths instead of us obsessing over "fixing" what's wrong. Focusing on shoring up those weaknesses may result in minor success, but it will

never produce the results that can be achieved by focusing most of your time on growing your strengths.

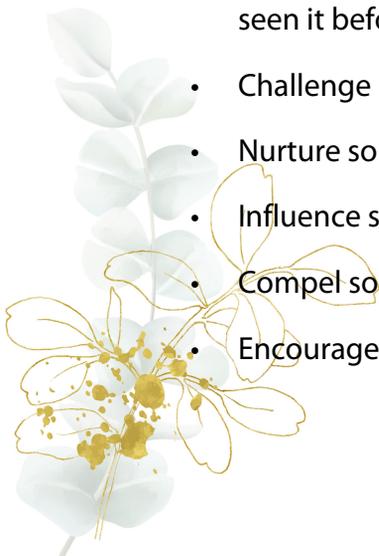
Your goal is to be keenly focused on developing your strengths and managing your weaknesses while continuing to pursue endeavors that take the most advantage of your inherent gifts. I am not suggesting that you do not address the weaknesses that are blocking your success. You must balance the time spent on both.

Don't let the obsession with improving a weakness keep you from sharpening a strength that could possibly compensate for the skill(s) you lack.

29. Presentation Skills as a Tool of Influence

CEOs and senior managers with Fortune 500 companies believe, almost unanimously, that good communication and presentation skills were instrumental in getting them where they are today. Building an influential brand, getting ahead, and moving forward in your career will require you to develop the ability to confidently and credibly present your ideas. When you share your ideas with a group, you have an opportunity to:

- Inspire someone to do something new.
- Motivate someone to do something they didn't actually believe they could do.
- Educate someone so they can see the world around them as they have never seen it before.
- Challenge someone to do the one thing they fear most.
- Nurture someone's dream and help them believe it will one day come true.
- Influence someone to do more than they are paid to do.
- Compel someone to do more than they have to.
- Encourage someone to do more than they thought was possible.



- Empower someone to take that one powerful step that could forever change the course of their life.

30. Dream BIG or Wake Up!

My philosophy is, “Dream BIG or wake up!” Nothing great or extraordinary was ever accomplished by playing it safe and dreaming small.

If you want to build a powerful and influential brand that has the ability to captivate, fascinate, and attract others who will become fresh advocates of who you are, then you have to be willing to step out on the edge and do what others who are playing small would never dream of doing.



The Mindset of a Game Changer



The Journey Begins

Take a minute to congratulate yourself: it's taken time to read this book, and you should be proud of investing that time in yourself and your future.

What's next? Pause for a minute and consider your state of mind at the moment. If you're like me, when I finish a book like this, I have hundreds of ideas I want to implement, and the sooner, the better!

The truth is that you'll never have more fresh ideas about your personal brand than you have this very instant. **So what will you do?** Will you let those ideas fade and let this book become just another one that you forget about next week? Or will you commit to making the real changes that will transform your personal brand forever?

I know you're serious about growing your personal brand. Carve a few hours out of your day or your weekend to work through the action steps, and use them to plan the next evolution of your brand.

One Final Note

If you've benefited from this book — if you know more now than when you started reading — would you share this with just one other person who could use a more influential personal brand?

I've found that sharing this resource is **the best and most natural way to start a conversation** with a colleague or supervisor about the work you're starting on your own brand.

And by sharing this book, you're also furthering my mission to help leaders develop the personal brands they need to change the world.

I'd also love to hear about your journey and success. Connect with me on LinkedIn and share your experience.

The Mindset of a Game Changer

I'd also love the chance to share this message with your team at one of my in-person keynotes or training. If you think a book has the power to change lives, wait until you see what we can accomplish with an in-person program!

If this book has inspired you, I hope you'll help me inspire others too by sharing it.

Thanks for reading. Please keep me updated on your growth by sending me an email at lethia@gamechangersint.com or visit me online at www.LethiaOwens.com.



“Always remember that you are bigger,
more powerful, and more valuable
than you have ever been taught to
believe.

Now go out into the world and
be who you are—on purpose
and without apology!”

-Lethia Owens

