QuitterProof

THE 5 BELIEFS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE



KYLE YOUNG



You slam your brakes to keep from smashing into the car ahead. Your body senses the danger and floods your veins with adrenaline, enabling you to fight or flight. Your car screeches to a stop.

Deep breath. Another. You're okay.

But you don't feel okay.

The adrenaline is still surging. You're tempted to jump up and down or jog in place, anything to burn off this deep yearning to get up and go. But you can't. You're strapped to your seat.

Soon the energy settles into an unpleasant heaviness. An ache of sorts. Your body is surging with unmet potential. It longs to be fully engaged, but your seatbelt is holding you back. So you sit there. Stuck and miserable.

I believe millions of creative, talented people live with a similar ache. The burden of unmet potential. They dream of writing books, starting businesses, fighting for a cause, blowing up as a blogger, speaking in front of a packed auditorium. Their brains are swimming with big, beautiful goals they want to accomplish, but something is holding them back.

In this book, I'll show you what sets successful people apart from the rest of us. I'll reveal what empowers high achievers to accomplish their goals while most people just stay stuck. Most importantly, I'll teach you how to harness this secret power so you can finally reach the goals that have been eluding you.

What Truly Sets Successful People Apart

This ebook exists because one day I got fed up with my life.

On paper, I was killing it. I racked up top internships, graduated summa cum laude, landed a management position in a health organization, and wrapped up my first year of work with an 8% raise.

Work life was primo, but I was a wreck. When I chased the goals I cared about in my personal life, something inside me always froze—panicked really—and I quit.

It happened when I wrote books. One was about zombies; one was about capitalism. One explored a five-island fantasy world called Quintapel; another unpacked the science of obtaining and monetizing attention. But no matter the topic, fiction or non, I didn't finish any.

Sometimes I hit a wall in the plot and flailed trying to write my way around. Another time I threw in the towel after a brutal hour of "constructive feedback."

I also launched three businesses and enjoyed some early success. In one case, I had products selling in seven stores across three cities. I'd walk into the mall and see my creation sitting on shelves.

But soon I had customers refusing to pay, a business partner who wanted out, and a state tax commission that lost my lost my sales tax payment (and somehow thought that was my fault). It drained me. Instead of facing the chaos, I would promise myself, "I'll dive in tomorrow." And each baby business slowly fizzled out.

I couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. I was smart, creative, ambitious. Why did I have nothing to show for it? Why did I hit home runs at my day job, but strike out with the goals I longed to achieve? Why did setbacks and negative feedback overwhelm me? Why were people around me achieving their goals while I stayed totally stuck?

After attending one of my pity parties, a friend kindly introduced me to a quote by Winston Churchill: "Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm."

I was skeptical. Growing up, I believed success came from what you knew, who you knew, or the talents you were born with. I thought achievement was a clean, simple process reserved for the best and brightest—the winners who didn't fail. Challenges and setbacks were signs you were chasing a bad idea, right? But when I dug a little deeper into the lives of people I admired, I discovered a pattern.

I interviewed an entrepreneur who makes $7 million a year.

…only to learn his first 30 businesses failed.

I chatted with an author who has sold over 10 million copies.

…turns out his first five books were rejected by publishers.

Every success story I could find had a slow, boring start. Every person I admired went through failures, rejection, and setbacks. What set these people apart wasn't talent, intellect, or luck. They encountered the same obstacles I did—but didn't lose their enthusiasm. They simply didn't quit.

I resolved to know what was powering these people, and my research led me to realize...

Success is fueled by what you believe.

The right mindset, the right attitude, is the key to achieving big goals that matter. The scary ones you're not sure you can achieve. Goals that require you to gamble your pride, spurn the safety of limits, and explore the vast dimensions of your potential.

I'm convinced the world is brimming with unfinished success stories. And the missing ingredient is maintaining your enthusiasm. Learning how to win with failure. Thriving in the mess.

Let's look at how you do that.

The Map and the Motor

To get from where you are to where you want to be, you need a map and you need a motor. The map is your plan. It tells you the steps you need to take to reach a goal you crave. A huge majority of books, courses, and seminars are ultimately maps.

But in order to make the journey, you need more than just directions. You also need a motor. A power source. A means of transportation that will propel you through swamplands, over steep hills, and around sudden cliffside curves.

When it comes to achieving big, gutsy goals, your motor is your mindset.

In this book, I'll teach you the five core beliefs of a winning mindset. But first, a word of warning to keep you from missing the life-changing potential of this approach.

The Distraction of Knowledge

When I was a kid, I loved the TV show Schoolhouse Rock. I would pop in my VHS tape and sing along to catchy, educational songs such as "Conjunction Junction" and "I'm Just a Bill."

The slogan for the series was "knowledge is power," and as I've grown up, I've learned these words are more than just the motto of Schoolhouse Rock. They represent a treasured cultural belief.

I think it's bogus.

We love to brag about the books we've read, podcasts we've listened to, conferences we've attended and courses we've taken as if our education is somehow a measure of success rather than simply a means.

When we get stuck, we despair, thinking, "I already know so much, what's holding me back?"

When we eventually recommit, we do so insisting, "If I can only learn more, I'll make it."

But that's not entirely true.

Knowledge isn't power. Knowledge is simply a form of potential, and in our quest for knowledge we amplify our pain. The more you know and fail to capitalize on, the more unmet potential you bear.

Success doesn't come from what you know. It comes from what you do. What you do is the product of how you think, and how you think stems from what you believe.

What's my point?

I'm about to teach you the five beliefs of highly successful people, as I see them. You are welcome to learn these beliefs, quote them, and share them with your friends.

But success doesn't come from what you know. So instead of simply memorizing these five beliefs, I encourage you to wrestle with them. Try to prove them wrong. And most importantly, ask yourself the questions, "Do I believe that? Why? Why not?"

Without further ado, let's look at the 5 beliefs of a winning mindset.



Belief #1: You have to start slow in order to finish big.

“...if you really look closely, most overnight successes took a long time.”
- Steve Jobs

The myth of the overnight success is ubiquitous, and while some people reach their goals faster than others, almost all big accomplishments are the result of an iterative process. The danger of believing in quick, easy success is you'll be tempted to give up when you encounter setbacks. You'll assume the challenges are a sign from the universe that you're chasing the wrong idea. In reality, you're just going through the process of refining an idea.

The world is flooded with unfinished success stories because of this misconception. People try once, fail, and quit, assuming they or their ideas just aren't good enough. In order to maintain your enthusiasm, you need to know success starts slow.

The actual journey of success is illustrated in the story below.

A wealthy king built his castle next to a river, across the water from sprawling farmlands that fed his many citizens. As the kingdom grew, he needed two new bridges to transport crops and allow laborers to quickly commute from the city to the fields. So the king summoned two builders, one for each new bridge, and he offered the men a choice as to how they would be paid.

The builders could elect to receive one million dollars for the job, more than either of them had ever seen, or, if they chose, the king would pay a single penny on day one and double the money each day until the project was finished at the end of the month. "I think you'll find," the king explained, "this is an easy decision to make."

The first builder, a young man, couldn't agree more. He barely let the king finish speaking before stammering that he would be choosing the million dollar option.

"Very well, the king said. Do you have any questions for me before you begin your work?"

"No, Your Majesty," the builder insisted, before rushing home to tell his wife the news.

The king turned to the second builder, who was older than the first. The older builder remembered the day when the king had first inherited the throne from his father. Watching in admiration, the craftsman had witnessed the young ruler expand the boundaries of the kingdom and establish trade that brought wealth and fine goods to the growing population.

"Will you too be electing the million dollar option?" The king asked.

“Your Majesty,” the older builder asked softly. “Might I first ask a question? I promise it will only be one.”

The king nodded, intrigued.

“Which option would you choose, if our roles were reversed?”

The king smiled. “My, what a fine question. I would choose the second option. A penny doubled every day for one month.”

“Then that is what I choose.” The builder declared with a bow.

The old man left with one penny, as promised. His wife nearly beat the poor fellow to death with her rolling pin when he told her what he’d done. But four and a half weeks later, on the thirty-first day of the month, the builder again marched home from the castle—this time, with $10,737,418 (and twenty-four pennies).

He was now the richest man in the entire kingdom, except for the king himself.

Variations of this story are commonly used to explain the power of compounded interest to beginning investors. When interest is earned, and reinvested, additional interest will be gained not only from the original investment, but from the reinvested interest as well. This is what allows a small amount of well-invested money to grow into a fortune in a fraction of the time you might expect.

But the power of this story, the lesson you need to take away, is not how quickly a penny turned into ten million dollars. No, if you want this tale to change your life, we must dig a bit deeper.

Below you’ll find how much money the old man had each of the thirty-one days. This is what’s remarkable about the story.

1 $.01	**2** $.02	**3** $.04	**4** $.08	**5** $.16	**6** $.32
7 $.64	**8** $1.28	**9** $2.56	**10** $5.12	**11** $10.24	**12** $20.48
13 $40.96	**14** $81.92	**15** $163.84	**16** $327.68	**17** $655.36	**18** $1,310.72
19 $2,621.44	**20** $5,242.88	**21** $10,485.76	**22** $20,971.52	**23** $41,943.04	**24** $83,886.08
25 $167,772.16	**26** $335,544.32	**27** $671,088.64	**28** $1,342,177.28	**29** $2,684,354.56	**30** $5,368,709.12
31 $10,737,418.24					

Notice that by the end of the first week, the man who turned down a small fortune still didn't have a single dollar. Can you imagine that? Seven days' work with sixty-four cents to show for it. But the struggle wasn't over yet. By day twenty-four, with just a week left to go, he still had less than $100,000—a far cry from the million he was offered.

The man made 92% of his money in the last 22% of his month. Half of it came on the final day, of course.

This is the nature of momentum. You're going to start slow, with nothing to show for your work except the satisfaction of knowing that you did your work.

This is why so many people never reach their goals. The old builder has two things they lack: faith and patience, which go hand in hand.

To reach the finish line, you have to believe that over time, small wins will snowball into meaningful results. Once you believe that, you have to be willing to work—and to wait.

Much like money, success compounds on itself. Let's use the intimidating task of building a network as an example. Your first connections will come slowly, but these

early relationships will reproduce. And when you finally meet a few well-connected people, your network will explode.

Each new win sets you up for even bigger breakthroughs. So don't be discouraged by a slow start. The secret is persevering until the first big win, where momentum kicks in and begins to push alongside you.

Let's examine the "start slow, finish big" belief in a real-life success story.

In the 2014 - 2015 season, the Golden State Warriors emerged to win the NBA championship. The following season, they did something many thought impossible. They finished with a regular season record of 73 - 9, beating, by one game, the previous record set by Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls in 1995.

Casual fans often view the Warriors as an overnight success story. The team drafted two-time MVP Stephen Curry, and the rest is history.

But the numbers say otherwise. Like most stories of big success, the Warriors started slow. After drafting Curry, the team posted losing seasons their next three years. Before winning a championship and breaking the regular season win record, the team went through three coaches and numerous players, experimenting for a recipe that worked.

Below you'll find the Warriors' regular season records after drafting Curry.

Season	Wins	Losses	W/L%
2009-10	26	56	.317
2010-11	36	46	.439
2011-12	23	43	.348
2012-13	47	35	.573
2013-14	51	31	.622
2014-15	67	15	.817
2015-16	73	9	.890

This chart was created using data from basketball-reference.com.

Losing season, losing season, losing season, barely winning season, good season, championship, best season of all time. This is the story of success.

Just like the bridge builder, the Warriors didn't succeed overnight. In fact, heading into their championship season, during which Stephen Curry would first be named MVP, Curry still had a losing career win record (183W - 211L). The most valuable player in the league had lost more games than he'd won.

We're taught that a few people are born for success while most of us are born for failure. But the truth is, everyone is born for failure. And the people who learn how to win with failure get to enjoy success.

Failure produces learning, learning produces progress, progress produces success, and success compounds on itself.



Belief #2: Your first try won’t be your best try — as long as it’s not your only try.

“The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is practice.”
-Vladimir Horowitz

Nothing kills enthusiasm quite like negative feedback. It can come from friends or from failure, and many success stories die young because people don't know how to handle it.

Consider this example.

You wake up an hour earlier every morning for a month and use the time to write your first short story. You push past the writer's block, get your thoughts on paper, and edit away all the mistakes you can find. Finally, you're ready to reveal your masterpiece, so you share a copy with your friend, a book editor.

The next day, your friend calls. You're tingling with anticipation, preparing for the praise that's surely on its way. Instead you're dealt a crushing blow. "This isn't very good. It's bad really."

What do you do next?

Many people would find a new dream. They gave writing their best shot, right? They did the work, poured themselves into the story. It just wasn't good enough. *They* just weren't good enough.

While this reaction is common, it's also kind of absurd. Who in their right mind would expect their first attempt at fiction to impress a professional editor? When was your first try at anything a success?

To maintain your enthusiasm in the face of negative feedback, you have to distinguish between your performance and your potential.

Do you ever catch yourself thinking negative thoughts like, "I'm just not a writer"? "I'm not smart enough to launch a business." "I could never do that."

These rigid thoughts stem from what psychologist Carol Dweck calls a "Fixed Mindset," which is essentially the belief that, if you aren't good at something today, you never will be. At best, any improvement you make will screech to a halt when you collide with the impassable limits of your genetic potential.

But many scientists disagree with the Fixed Mindset in favor of what is called a "Growth Mindset"—the belief that you can improve your skills through practice.

On the surface, this is obvious. Walking, talking, reading, driving a car—these are all learned skills. And isn't the point of school to help you improve at subjects such as math, English, science, and history?

But when it comes to our big, gutsy goals, the ones we long to achieve, we often forget about the empowering effect of practice. I think it has to do with identity. We let our passions define us.

Consider this. When was the last time you heard someone say, "I want to get better at writing"? Chances are, he would actually say, "I want to be a better writer." We take certain skills and make them identities, which renders practice irrelevant because practice doesn't change who you are. You're left with an all-or-nothing scenario. You either have the talent, intelligence, and willpower or you don't.

The truth is everyone is naturally bad at everything, and in the pursuit of big goals, your current level of skill will be quickly proven insufficient. So if you worry you might not be skilled enough, relax. You aren't skilled enough. No one is naturally. And that's okay. You have the power to improve.

Author and researcher K. Anders Ericsson has dedicated his career to studying the power of practice. In his book *Peak*, he writes...

"In pretty much any area of human endeavor, people have a tremendous capacity to improve their performance, as long as they train in the right way. If you practice something for a few hundred hours, you will almost certainly see great improvement..." (Pg. 113)

Takeaway?

There are things you're good at and things you can get better at.

Understanding this flexibility changes the question from "What am I good at" to "What do I *want* to be good at?"

In fairness, some scientists disagree with Erikson's cheerful outlook on human potential, arguing innate talent plays a bigger role. But I find very few voices claiming you can't improve your skills. The debate seems to focus on expertise—people at the very top of their fields. Which leads to an important point.

Being the Best Is Overrated—and Unnecessary

Have you ever seen someone living your dream and thought, “What’s the point in trying? I’ll never be as good as she is.”

This is a tragic hesitation. Especially in creative endeavors.

You don’t have to be the best to achieve your goals. When Stephenie Meyer wrote the Twilight series, she was criticized in her craft. Stephen King went as far as saying, “Stephenie Meyer can't write worth a darn."

Yet none of the criticism stopped Meyer from selling 100 million books, which kickstarted her reported net worth of $125 million.

Was she the best writer on the planet? Of course not. But who doesn’t want to sell 100 million books?

You don’t have to be the best to achieve your goals. You just have to get good enough at what really matters.

In writing, story trumps skill. If you can weave an interesting plot, you don’t have to be Joseph Conrad.

In entrepreneurship, we’re used to hearing about remarkably creative, eccentric inventors. But creativity isn’t nearly as important as knowing how to run and grow a business. Ray Kroc didn’t dream up McDonald's. He bought it and grew it—using skills you can learn.

In entertainment, your job is to be entertaining. Which is part of why American Idol flop William Hung has an estimated net worth of $1.5 million (higher than some of the show’s winners). Was Hung the most talented contestant? No. But he was unique, comical, and delightfully self-assured, making him very fun to listen to.

Finally, consider intelligence. Who’s smarter, a doctor or a mechanic? Depends on what you need worked on.

The point is this. You don’t have to be the best to achieve your goals. And rarely are someone else’s talents or accomplishments a threat to you. There’s enough success to go around.

So how do you improve?

Skill isn't conjured into existence. It comes from stretching the abilities you already have. To do that, you must repeatedly engage in challenges that exceed your current skill level.

If Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson started bench pressing 100 pounds in his workouts, would he build muscle? No, he would lose muscle because a 100 pound bench press wouldn't create the stress his muscles need to grow stronger. The challenge doesn't exceed his skill, leaving no opportunity for growth.

What if I started benching 100 pounds twice a week? Considering I never go to the gym now, 100 pounds would be a workout, and I would build some muscle. But if I continued benching the same 100 pounds for the rest of my life, the returns would eventually stop.

In *Peak*, Ericsson argues this is why many people stall in the development of their abilities. They practice to a certain point and stop pushing themselves, at which time their skills begin to gradually decline. In order to keep moving forward, you must keep going up in weight.

But not all skills are as straightforward as building muscle. Sometimes the exercises that lead to growth are less obvious. For these situations, here is a simple framework you can follow.

First, identify the outcome you want to achieve. Let's say your goal is to write an engrossing novel.

Second, list the skills you'll need to reach that outcome, and pick one to develop first. You might choose crafting compelling dialogue.

Third, you need to get a clear picture of what success looks like. To do this, find a person, business, or (in this case) an author who excels in the area you want to grow. When was the last time you were wowed by a piece of dialogue? What were you reading or watching?

Fourth, you need to spot the differences in your execution. What does the person you admire do differently? Look for patterns.

Why does the dialogue she writes feel so authentic? *Her characters use fragments and choppy sentences like real people.*

Finally you bridge the gap by imitating the experts. Break every skill into the simplest steps possible, practice your way to proficiency, and keep raising your standards until you're consistently getting the results you want.

An important note: Trying to improve too much too fast is ineffective compared to taking small, doable steps. If you want to learn to ski, starting out on a double black diamond slope is more likely to lead to injury than improvement. Furthermore, if your goal is to improve at a dangerous activity, you should only do so under the supervision of a trained instructor.

If possible, regardless of the danger level, Ericsson encourages you to find a coach who has a reputation for producing excellence in students. Many fields have proven paths to progress which can expedite your growth if a guide shows you the way. But if you can't find or afford a coach, here's how to turn yourself or a friend into a passable mentor while you save for a better option.

The Art of Obtaining Useful Feedback

People have a nearly compulsive need to give feedback. I've seen it with every business I've started and many of the books I've written. Some feedback is well intentioned, other is just an ego trip, and some is born out of envy or fear.

The good news is, regardless of the intentions, you can get decent feedback from unlikely sources if you know how to play the game.

The secret is getting crystal clear on what you want, communicating what you want to your feedback givers, and asking very specific questions to find out how you're doing.

Here's what that looks like in 5 steps...

1. Specify who your target customer or reader is.

Gender, income, existing skill level—whatever you need to get your feedback-giver into the mind of your intended audience.

2. Specify what you want your product/writing/speech to accomplish for the customer.

3. Format questions for your feedback-giver using the following template: “Do you think (this type of person) would get (this type of result) from my idea?”

“Do you think a single mom who wants to lose weight could make time for my 15-minute home workout routine?”

“Do you think a young man could relate to the insecurities my protagonist is facing?”

4. Determine when to ask the questions.

In many cases, you should tell people what to look for before you present the idea. For example, if you ask novices to critique the presentation you’re practicing, without first directing their focus, get ready for a precise count of how many times you said “um.” Then, when you ask about how well you argued your point, you’ll be greeted with blank stares from an audience who was only listening for one word.

5. Filter the feedback.

If you’re asking the right questions, you’ll hopefully be getting relevant answers. That said, sometimes you’ll ask great questions and still get a speech from somebody who’s just happy to have a captive audience. But assuming the answers are relevant, here’s how to filter...

First, ask yourself, “Is this feedback about my performance or my potential?”

Example of performance-centric feedback: “I thought your speech was a little rambly.”

Example of potential-centric feedback: “I don’t think you’re cut out to be a speaker.”

Welcome feedback about your performance; question feedback about your potential.

“Why don’t you think I’m cut out to be a speaker?”

“Well, you said ‘um’ 8 times.”

Bingo. Back to performance-based feedback.

Always ask for feedback in the explicit context of your goals. If you don’t set the goals, your feedback-givers will choose their own—and hold you to them.



Belief #3: You don’t have to beat the odds, you only have to play them.

“It doesn’t matter how many times you fail. You only have to be right once and then everyone can tell you that you are an overnight success.”
- Mark Cuban

Our culture is obsessed with the term "one in a million." We incorrectly apply it to sports outcomes and our chances of accomplishing goals. But the fact is, while some goals are harder than others, yours might be more doable than you realize.

Here are two reasons why:

1. The improbable is usually inevitable.

If a basketball team has a 20% chance of winning a particular game, what does that really mean? Obviously, you can't win a 5th of a basketball game.

This statistic is predicting that if the game were played five times, under the given circumstances, the team would win one game and lose four. Even though the odds look slim, winning isn't impossible; it's closer to inevitable. If you're willing to lose four games, you might win one, and as we've already learned, success compounds on itself.

2. The odds improve as you make progress.

Statistics are a snapshot of the past. When the situation changes, the odds change too.

In the 1998 movie *A Bug's Life*, a colony of ants spends years serving a bullying gang of grasshoppers. The odds of the ants overthrowing their oppressors were slim, until something changed. The ants realized they outnumbered the grasshoppers 10 to 1, and even though they were weaker individually, they were stronger as a team.

This breakthrough, a simple mindset shift, completely changed the odds. And since success compounds on itself, victory was only a matter of time.

When you put these two points together, here's what you get. Right now, your goals may seem distant and unreachable, but one big win can change that entirely. If you're willing to lose early, you can win eventually, and after a few game-changing wins, the odds begin to tilt in your favor.

In other words, you don't have to beat the odds, you only have to play them.

Let’s explore what that looks like in the story of a successful entrepreneur.

A money clip, a pen, and one month’s severance—these were the tokens of appreciation Cory Boatright received the day he was laid off from his job.

Cory had poured himself into the company, rising from customer service representative to manager, manager to department head, and finally leading a division of sales. In a few short years, he’d gone from earning a few bucks an hour to raking in almost $50,000 a year. Not bad for a 22 year old in the late 1990s.

Now that job had been snatched away, and Cory didn’t know what he was going to do next. He did know one thing, however. He wasn’t interested in being poor.

After his sophomore year of high school, Cory had dropped out to tour with a Christian metal band. The bandmates were also roommates; and one month, to cover his share of the rent, Cory was forced to pawn his stereo. As a musician, parting with the stereo he loved because he couldn’t afford rent was devastating.

That’s why Cory had taken the job in the first place and worked so hard to get promoted and increase his salary. Now he was back where he started. Taking stock of his situation, Cory had areas of strength and areas of weakness.

Cory’s summer job from ages 15 - 17 had been going door to door selling Kirby vacuum cleaners. Later, he’d taken a job selling credit cards for a telemarketing company. After years of practice knocking on doors and calling during dinner, what Cory calls “rejection training,” the man could sell just about anything.

But without a high school diploma, much less a college degree, Cory knew he wouldn’t find a job that would pay him $50,000 a year. And why take another entry-level position and work your way up, when you might just get laid off again? So Cory decided to start his own business. Actually, he started a few...

Cory sold jewelry. He sold domain names. He sold kitchen knives. He would copy and rush deliver VHS tapes for lawyers. Altogether, he experimented with roughly 30 business ideas in the early days of his entrepreneurial career. None of them came close to replacing the salary he’d lost.

When I asked Cory what inspired him to keep going when his early efforts weren't paying off, he told me, "After pawning my stereo to pay rent, I read a book about how to generate wealth. The author mentioned 9 out of 10 business fail. I remember thinking, 'Wait a minute, so all I need to do is start 10 businesses, and one of them will succeed.' I didn't feel like I was failing. I was just doing research. I knew I was going through the same process all the most successful entrepreneurs I know and respect have endured."

Sure enough, with each failure, Cory learned. At one point, he was selling 10,000 kitchen knives a week on ebay through one of his drop-shipping businesses. He was one attempt short of his first big success.

Cory wanted to sell a big-ticket item. He was tired of moving tens of thousands of knives at small margins. After doing some research, Cory settled on plasma screen TVs. In the early 2000s, you could profit $3,000-$5,000 by selling just one unit. The business grossed over $4 million in its first three years.

As you might expect, the people buying $10,000 TVs were wealthy. When a new prospect called in, Cory would get the person talking with a well-rehearsed line: "Tell me what made you successful." Cory knew people like talking about themselves, and he got lots of answers. He also noticed a trend—90% of his wealthy clients mentioned real estate as a primary source of their wealth.

Cory knew what he wanted to do next. He sold the TV business for $600,000.

Today, Cory wholesales houses. He sends out roughly 30,000 postcards every month, offering to buy houses for cash. He gets roughly 100 houses per year under contract and then sells the contracts to one of the 1,800 investors in his network. He has multiple employees, a business that grosses over $7 million every year, and a side coaching businesses that makes almost $1 million per year.

Did Cory get lucky? Did he beat the odds? I don't think so. The man failed 30 times.

Cory knew 9 out of 10 businesses fail, and he recognized those were winnable odds. So he played them, with faith and patience—and he won big.

In 2015, Cory, the high school dropout, was invited to speak at Harvard. The topic? How to create a mindset for success—exactly what you're doing right now.



Belief #4: If you can’t enjoy the path, you’ll never reach the destination.

“You can only become truly accomplished at something you love. Don’t make money your goal. Instead pursue the things you love doing and then do them so well that people can’t take their eyes off of you.”
- Maya Angelou

We hear a lot about grit today. Resolve in the face of challenge. I worry the romanticism of grit is leading to a myth of misery. We believe success is reserved for a chosen few, and to protect this belief, we assume successful people are the rare olympians of grit who persevere in tasks they hate until they see results.

While no job is 100% fun, I think this story is bogus. To maintain your enthusiasm through setbacks and failures, you need to find meaning in the work, not just the outcome.

For example, Ted Dekker is a *New York Times* bestselling novelist who has sold over 10 million copies. But the first five books he wrote went unpublished.

Writing a novel is tough. Ted did it five times with nothing to show. No one would have blamed him if he'd just given up. Why didn't he? Ted explains, "Writing gives me clarity."

If you want to persevere in your work, make it irreplaceable.

For Ted, it wasn't a choice between the hard work of writing and the ease of giving up. It was between the hard work of writing and depression.

Or consider the McElroy brothers, whose podcast, *My Brother My Brother and Me*, ranks Top 25 in iTunes' comedy category and is regularly performed in front of sold out crowds.

The first few episodes of the show are painful to listen to. Seriously. The youngest brother recorded his audio with a microphone from the video game Rock Band. Yet the brothers persevered.

After moving to different parts of the country, the McElroys didn't see each other often. Since they couldn't go to a movie or grab dinner, the podcast was a way to spend time together. And that made it irreplaceable. They weren't choosing between recording or quitting. They were choosing between hanging out or only catching up on holidays. Now, with better equipment, over 300 episodes recorded and an army of fans, momentum is on their side.

Considering the importance of making your work irreplaceable, let's look at how you can do this in your own life.

Focus on the people you serve.

No one is driven by knowledge. Greed, love, lust, compassion, fear, hunger, anger—these are drivers, and most of them involve other people. Focusing on the people you want to serve is a powerful way to stay motivated. If your work is irreplaceable to them, it's more likely to be irreplaceable to you.

Embrace the value of doing hard things.

The 2003 movie *Holes* included a short story about a boy who wished to marry a young woman. The story was set hundreds of years ago; and in order to marry the girl, the young man would need to present a gift to her father.

The youth learned another suitor planned to offer the girl's father a cow in exchange for her hand, so the boy hurried to his grandfather's farm and asked for his fattest pig. Instead, Grandfather gave him a small piglet. And some advice. "Every morning" the old man said, "carry this pig up into the mountains where he can graze on the roots and the onions that grow so plentifully up there."

Reluctantly, the young man obeyed.

Every day he would carry the pig up the mountain. The pig would eat, and as grandfather had predicted, each day it grew a bit fatter. But the pig wasn't the only one changing. As the pig gained weight, every day the boy grew a little bit stronger from carrying it. By the end of the summer, the boy had grown into a strong man, and he was the proud owner of a fat pig.

You are much like the boy in this story. The pig is your book, your business, your cause. And as you continue to do the hard work of trying, failing, learning and trying again, the results will improve. But if you pay attention, you'll notice your work isn't the only thing improving. You will also be growing—both in your craft and in your strength as a person.

Completing difficult tasks is how we build confidence, mastery, perseverance, and humility. This is the beauty of the path. We all want to be handed a fat pig, but growth and transformation happen on the mountainside. So keep going. Never panic. Every day is an opportunity to grow, and growth is not a waste of your time.

Admittedly, these aren't automatic means to passion and persistence. Everyone struggles with focus—and accountability is key. But consider this final tip…

Pivot to your passion.

Do you live with a nagging feeling you're cheating on your calling? Maybe you've stiff-armed it for years because it sounds too ambitious or you're not sure how it would be profitable. Those concerns might be perfectly valid. And as a proponent of focused, consistent effort over time, I'm slow to advise anyone to swap dreams.

But many talented people spend their lives serving dreams they inherited from parents, friends, or Hollywood.

Sometimes the cost of inspiration is to let go of the dream you've been chasing and surrender to the dream that has been chasing you.

A test to consider is to follow your fear. If you're running from a calling because it scares you, imagine what life could be like if you gave it a try, trusting the right doors to be opened. As Victor Hugo reportedly said, "Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come."

Too many people are waiting for a big break. For someone to knock on their door and whisk them to a publisher's office, a movie set, a conference stage, or Silicon Valley.

Perhaps the most driving trait of highly successful people is ownership. The belief that at some level, you are responsible for your goals and your outcomes.

I'm not promoting the myth of the self-made man. At crucial points in the journey of every successful person, the right mentors and sidekicks show up to encourage, challenge, guide, and assist. As a person of faith, I take this a step further, looking to God for guidance and strength in pursuit of my goals.

But if you feel trapped by the burden of unmet potential, I would encourage you to stop waiting to be rescued and start planning your escape. Don't wait for support. Seek it. Don't wish for more talent. Cultivate it. Don't hope for a lucky break. Prepare to capitalize on the breaks each of us receive.

If you want to own the results, you have to own the process.

If it's meant to happen, make it happen.

How to Get Started—or Restarted

Your motor is your mindset, and by wrestling with the four beliefs you've learned, you can build a powerful, resilient motor that will propel you in pursuit of your goals.

Remember, success doesn't start with what you know. It begins with what you believe.

Review each of the four beliefs and ask yourself, "Do I believe that? Why? Why not?"

Belief #1: You have to start slow in order to finish big.

Belief #2: Your first try won't be your best try — as long as it's not your only try.

Belief #3: You don't have to beat the odds, you only have to play them.

Belief #4: If you can't enjoy the path, you'll never reach the destination.

Test these principles. Write them on a notecard to read out loud before you begin your work. Let time change your beliefs, your thinking, your choices, and your outcomes.

With these beliefs ruling your mind, you can become quitterproof—able to maintain your enthusiasm through challenges because you know they're just part of the process.

To go with your new motor, you'll also need a map. Chances are, you already own several. Revisit these courses, books, and trainings before you buy more. Learn, do, learn something new. Don't collect knowledge, apply it.

If you have no idea how to achieve your goals, you have an internet of free resources to explore. Simply search "How to…." (fill in the rest) and get busy learning.

Alright, I know what you're thinking.

"I was promised 5 beliefs! This is an outrage!"

Fair enough. Let's land this plane.



Belief #5: Success isn’t flying; it’s “falling with style.”

“When you take risks you learn that there will be times when you succeed and there will be times when you fail, and both are equally important.”
- Ellen DeGeneres

There's an old saying, "If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail." While I understand the point, if you're not planning to fail, you're woefully unprepared to reach your goals.

Successful people start slow like the Warriors. They practice their way to proficiency like Ted Dekker did in the writing of his first five books. They fail often like Cory—the $7 million man. They endure unsolicited feedback like Stephenie Meyer. They find joy in their work like the podcasting McElroy brothers.

Success isn't a clean, simple process. It's messy. It's slow. And the people who fail the most are the ones who actually reach the finish line.

What I'm about to unpack is a lesson you've hopefully already gathered, but I want to be explicit because this advice can spare you from the pain that causes many people to give up before they reach their goals.

While success takes confidence, ambition, tenacity, and resolve, it also requires humility. You are embarking on a journey that will be 80% failure. Your current level of skill will quickly be exposed as insufficient, it will be slow going in the early stages, and most of the things you try, probably won't work. The only way to survive falling this many times, is to make sure you don't have far to fall.

Growing up, Toy Story was one of my favorite movies. Since it's now over twenty years old—yikes—I'll give you a quick refresher. An uptight sheriff doll named Woody, who belongs to a boy named Andy, has his world turned upside down when a shiny new toy crash-lands in Andy's bedroom. This new toy is Buzz Lightyear, a fancy action figure with buttons, lasers, and wings that shoot out of his back. Buzz is a cool toy, but what's interesting is, Buzz thinks he's an actual space ranger. His arrogant behavior sends the already tightly wound Woody over the edge.

Their argument escalates quickly and comes to center around one claim. Buzz believes he can fly. After bouncing around the room doing micro-parkour, most of Andy's other toys agree. But not Woody.

When Andy accidentally forgets Woody and Buzz at a pizza restaurant, the two rivals have to work together to find their way home. In the process, Buzz comes across a TV commercial that reveals, to his horror, Woody was right. Buzz is not a space ranger; he's just a toy. And if that weren't bad enough, he's not a flying toy. Refusing to believe what he's heard, Buzz climbs to the top of a staircase, spreads his wings, and jumps.

He crashes to the ground, losing an arm in the process.

Buzz is truly ruined. With no sense of self worth, he's robbed of all purpose. Seeing him despondent, Woody tries to encourage Buzz. He admits he was jealous of Buzz's bells and whistles, and tells him that while he is just a toy, he's a very cool toy, and he has the power to do something meaningful by making life more fun for his owner Andy.

Soon after, Woody is taken prisoner by an unstable teenager who tears apart toys for fun. So Buzz resolves to overcome both his insecurities and his arrogance, by working together with other toys to save his only friend.

In a daring rescue, Buzz launches himself from a bottle rocket to grab Woody before soaring into the sky. When the rocket's flare dies out, Buzz spreads his wings, and glides toward the ground with Woody in his arms. Seeing what Buzz is capable of, Woody is amazed, and without a hint of bitterness, he shouts, "Buzz, you're flying!"

But Buzz, remembering his tumble down the stairs, humbly explains, "This isn't flying; it's falling with style."

Every day, overconfident dreamers, who don't understand the journey of success, invite everyone they know to watch as they leap from dangerous heights, embarking on an unexpected date with gravity. Wounded, ashamed, and shocked, many, after hitting the ground, never get back up to try again. They mistakenly believe their error was in dreaming big, taking risks. They feel worthless, as the talents they so prized are proven insufficient, and they realize they're no better than the people they wanted to impress.

The world isn't divided into talented space rangers and lowly toys. We're all toys. Depending on how you view yourself, that even playing field may be encouraging. Or, like Buzz, you might take offense, thinking, "He's just trying to hold me down. To keep my from flying."

But that's the thing, isn't it? You can't fly. You weren't born with some exceptional power that will allow you to bypass the challenges and struggles required to succeed. You're going to have to work hard, strengthen your weaknesses, and fail often. If I don't tell you that, gravity will, as it reminds me every day.

But that's not a reason to quit either. Even though you and I are no better than the other toys, we are uniquely equipped, each with our own buttons and lasers. And when we, in

community, acknowledge our weaknesses and combine our talents in service to others, we can accomplish amazing things.

The road to success is paved with a thousand failures, but most people don't know that. And when you reach your goals, admirers will look at you and exclaim, "Wow, you're flying!" But by the time you've made it that far, you'll know better. You've simply gone from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.

You've mastered falling with style—the best kept secret of success.

Copyright ©2017 by Kyle Young

All rights reserved