

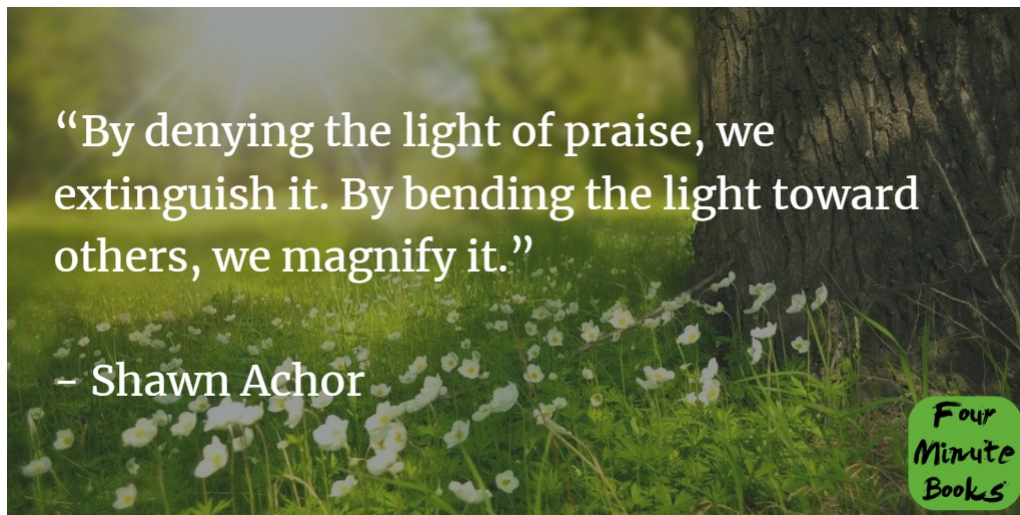
Big Potential Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/big-potential-summary/

1-Sentence-Summary: *Big Potential will show you that the real secret to success and thriving in all aspects of life by developing strong connections with others and treating them in a way that lifts them up.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Two intelligent and hard-working girls enter a rigorous freshman year at Harvard. One of them decides that the best option for success is to become a recluse. She focuses on being alone to study and work.

In contrast, the other works hard but also makes time for social events. She attends activities, participates in study groups, and enjoys a little time with her friends.

A few months later, the hermit-like young woman finds herself leaving Harvard, while the social butterfly is thriving. What happened? The big potential within the relationships the second student built were the path to her success. With only the small potential of working alone, the first failed. Social connection breeds progress and joy, and the lack thereof only brings stagnation and sorrow.

In *The Happiness Advantage*, author Shawn Achor flipped upside-down the notion that success causes happiness. Now that we know enjoyment *leads to* achievement, the only question is how to find that joy. In the last chapter of his first book, Achor identified that the largest indicator of happiness and success is social connections. *Big Potential: How Transforming the Pursuit of Success Raises Our Achievement, Happiness, and Well-Being* is Achor's follow-up to that revolutionary finding and explores the idea further.

Here are the 3 biggest lessons about potential:

1. Use the SEEDS acronym to develop big potential, the first part of which is to *Surround* yourself with the best people.
2. *Expand* and *Enhance* your power by helping your positive influencers lead and focusing on their accomplishments.
3. When your system is in place *Defend* it from attacks and *Sustain* the process with the "Virtuous Cycle."

Are you ready to see how you can grow from a small acorn into a large tree? Let's get started!

Lesson 1: Surround yourself with positive influencers to begin growing the SEEDS of big potential.

UConn women's head basketball coach Geno Auriemma knows what it means to surround yourself with positive influencers. Evaluation of his players focuses on how well they contribute to the team, instead of their individual accomplishments. The success of this method shows, too. As of the current writing, the team hasn't lost a game in two years.

One study from my alma mater, BYU, discovered that in basketball, assists are the highest determiner of the team's chances of winning. An assist is when a player passes the ball to another player that scores. **In other words, rather than being a ball hog, considering success and the goal of winning as a team effort is more productive than attempting to be a superstar.**

It's not just having a team-centered mindset that helps, however. Who you have on your team is just as important. Jim Collins, in *Good to Great*, refers to this as "getting the right people on the bus." Surround yourself with people who build you up. Remove those people from your life which tear you down. When you're surrounded by people who are committed to yours and the groups success, your potential increases.

Lesson 2: Help your team grow by Expanding their opportunities to lead and Enhancing by focusing on the system as the source of success.

The "I Saved a Life" program at Kaiser Permanente has saved almost 500 lives by empowering receptionists and other staff to be part of the lifesaving process. The leaders of the organization expanded their power by allowing people other than "medical providers" to participate in the health care process. If someone called to schedule an appointment, for example, employees could see if they were overdue for any preventative screenings.

Representatives asked if patients wanted to schedule appointments for these procedures. In one case, 40% of those diagnosed with cancer had scheduled the screening appointment through one of these calls!

You don't need to be a leader to make a difference. But if you are one, delegating responsibilities to others will not only help you, but the entire organization. When you reach goals, the next step is to Enhance your assets by praising in the right way. Most often, we deflect praise away from ourselves. **But when we instead reflect compliments toward the team, we grow our potential.**

One woman working at a law firm found herself in fierce competition with another for an open position as a partner. She knew that her ability to sell herself to the existing partners making the decision would be the determining factor. But when she bragged about herself in one interview she left feeling that something wasn't right. In the next session, after a compliment for a recent triumph, she decided to try something new. Instead of continuing to build herself up she surprised everyone by praising the team that made it possible, including the very person that she was competing against. A few weeks later she got the position due to her reflecting praise toward others.

Lesson 3: The last steps to harness big potential are to Defend your system and Sustain it through the "Virtuous Cycle."

When developing big potential, it would be naive to neglect negative influences. One powerful way to do this is by mental Aikido, or redirecting attacks back at your enemy rather than just defending against them. One way to do this when you grow stressed is to ask yourself why you care. The feeling of stress tells you that you do care, and can be transformed into motivation by examining that aspect of it.

The last step to develop Big Potential is to sustain growth. We all know Newton's law that "an object in motion stays in motion." But what most of us forget is the second part, "unless acted on by an unbalanced force."

Have you ever been to a motivational day of training at a conference or other event? After these experiences, we feel excited to start fresh. But when we get back to our work, the energy from the event begins to wane. This is that unbalanced force fighting against us that we usually don't consider. **If we were to, say, share what we learned at the conference with a coworker who gets on board with our new vision, the forward-moving potential continues.**

Big Potential Review

I love *Big Potential*, it's one of my favorite books. Achor's inclusion of many studies provides the motivation to change the way we look at potential. I'm certain that anyone who reads this book and does what it says will see their health, wealth, and happiness skyrocket.

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Who would I recommend the Big Potential summary to?

The 21-year-old college student who thinks it's better to live in a single room rather than shared, the 37-year-old project manager with the goal of improving the company's bottom line, and anyone who wants the secret to being happy and successful.