

7 STEPS TO PERFECTION

LEARN TO MASTER ANY SKILL



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AUTHOR OF *THE FIRE WITHIN*

7

~STEPS TO PERFECTION~





LEARN TO MASTER ANY SKILL



7 Steps to Perfection

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BY MATT HACKNEY

For **Mike Price**

“I love it when it rains!”

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~WHAT IS PERFECTION?~

This is a book about perfection. Everyone talks about perfection, but do they ever think about what it actually means? Perfection is a very interesting word. People everywhere strive to have perfection, but it is not something you can grasp. Suppose you are a painter. What you want is that moment where you exclaim, “Wow! That painting is so perfect!” But perfection is not tangible—so what exactly is it?



“Everything is perfect in the universe—even your desire to improve it.”

—Wayne Dyer



Perfection, to me, is harmony. It is when everything in life comes together and creates a sense of synergy. Suppose, again, that you are looking at a picture and you think it is perfect—picture-perfect, as a matter of fact. This sense of perfection simply means that all the shapes, lines, and colors in the painting are dancing in a way that moves you. Or suppose that instead of a painting, you are looking at a room. It is a very clean and tidy room—therefore, it is perfect. Or, again, perhaps you

were performing, and you pulled it off perfectly. These are all different types of perfection.

The perfect performance, however, is never perfect. Only machines can actually achieve perfection. We, as humans, are always trying to reach that ideal moment—but most people think perfection is a state of being. Actually, perfection is a perspective. Most people try to achieve perfection in the sense that if they reach their goal or finish the task at hand, they will have made it perfect. But in reality, it is never perfect. Look at a runner who wants to be perfect. The perfect runner would make it around the entire track in 0.1 seconds, and he would not be out of breath at the end. That is perfect!

But the perfection in winning a gold medal or setting a record lap time is only perfect because it is not actually perfect. That is, it is perfect because it takes struggle, it takes pain. It hurts our bodies. We cannot make it every time. That is what is so perfect about life: You are always going to be struggling somewhere.

So before you understand how to perfect something, you need to understand what perfection is. Therefore, I am going to start by bursting your bubble. This book is not going to teach you how to achieve perfection. Yet, it will teach you an incredible perspective on perfection, and how you can adopt that perspective to achieve success in everything you do. With that in mind, I want you to understand who I am and why I am qualified to tell you about perfection.

I am a young man, but I have written multiple books, and I am also a master in many different fields. You might even think of me as a modern-day Renaissance man. One of the fields I am highly skilled in, for example, is computer programming. I have designed an entire social network, and people in the computer programming field consider me one of the leading professionals. Another field I have mastered is chess. I am a very highly rated chess player. The list goes on: I excel at ballroom dancing, self defense, martial arts, multiple languages, sword fighting, graphic design, hair

styling, fashion, knitting, horseback riding, and I am also a nutrition coach. No, not just mediocre – a top competitor, professional, or artist in each genre of life. While I am considered a master in all of these areas, I have realized after becoming proficient at each skill that my success does not come from having any sort of exceptional ability. Rather, my command of each comes from the process that I go through as I learn and take the steps to perfection. This book explains that process.

To start out, I pick a hobby, a goal, a dream, and I decide right there: “I’m going to perfect this!” Every single time, I use the same method to perfect the dream I have chosen. So if you, too, want to achieve as much as I have and also achieve perfection, then this is the book for you.

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~PLAY~



Hans Lipperhey, an eyeglass maker, got the idea to invent the telescope while letting his children play with his lenses.



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The first step toward perfecting something actually might seem like a step backward: Not aiming for perfection at all. When you first start, you want to go in the opposite direction from perfection. You might be wondering how this could possibly help?

Let's suppose you want to become a master painter, for example, the next Van Gogh or the next Picasso. Your first step should not be to read books on art, buy expensive supplies, or plan an elaborate painting. Instead, you should just pick up a paintbrush and splash some paint on the canvas. You do not even need to use paint. Find some mud and slap it on.

Whenever you do something like this, and play around, you do not need to think through what you are doing. You do not need to worry about your technique or fret about what others might think of the finished product. You are just delving into all of your senses and getting a feel for what it is like to do this.

But what if, instead of a painter, you want to be the best soccer player in the world? The same idea still applies. Go out with a Hacky Sack and just start playing around with it. You will not become perfect right away simply by practicing something really hard. Perfection takes time and the process should be fun. When you start something new, you should always be in a play phase. Ask any professional athlete where they started. I doubt they had manuals and strict practices. The majority just went out in the playground and goofed off with their friends.

When we play with something, all of our senses get involved; it is fun, exciting, and interactive! Who wants to learn how to become the best soccer player in the world if you don't enjoy the game? Anything you learn should be fun; if it is not fun, then you have the



“Just play. Have fun. Enjoy the game.”

—Michael Jordan



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wrong teacher or you've picked the wrong skill to master. Instead of trying to mimic the masters from the start, go out with your friends and turn your brain off. There is no pressure to be great when all you are doing is playing. This applies to all areas, not just sports. Too often my dance students ask the most technical questions when they look like a robot. In my head I'm thinking, "Dude, just go out there and have fun!"

So, before you do anything else, you just want to play with it. The importance of this play stage has been known for centuries and by people all over the world.

Another part of playing is "progression." People seem to have a problem understanding that when you play, you play—you do not perfect. I know I have already emphasized this, but I want to give you another example. I was teaching somebody how to make a PowerPoint presentation. After two or three weeks of working, they gave me back a completed presentation. They thought it was

perfect, they thought it was best the PowerPoint presentation ever—but the problem was, they had never done a PowerPoint presentation before. The presentation was good, but it was nowhere near perfect. Because they did not do the play phase, and just mess around with the program, they had unreasonable expectations. You cannot be perfect right away. You have to understand you are going to mess up.

You have to mess up to progress, and when you progress, you get one step closer to perfection. You can only perfect something after you have messed up at least a hundred times—I would even say a thousand times—but I do not want to scare

you away from trying to achieve your goals. So, during this play phase, continue to play, play, and play! Never even think of perfection. That will actually push you



“Play has been man’s most useful preoccupation.”

—Frank Caplan



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along further, because the more time you spend looking for perfection and trying to perfect the first time you do something, the less likely you will be satisfied. You will eventually get discouraged.

Here is a good rule of thumb: For the first fifty hours that you are doing something, do not judge yourself. Just play with it, have fun with it, and know that you are going to be horrible at it. Once you have the mindset, “Yeah, I am going to be horrible, but I am just playing right now,” then you can accept the fact that you are going to mess up and you will not be so hooked on perfection.



I was 23 years old when I first learned ballroom dancing. I had only taken three hours of instruction and I still have two left feet. I then went to a party and I only had enough courage to ask the older lady who seemed to be friends with everyone. She was mid 60s and I felt like I was doing my two steps I learned pretty well. Before the end of the

song, she gave me a frown and mumbled, “You need more practice.”

I laughed at this because I had only been going for three hours! I knew I was horrible, but she definitely reminded me.

Well, six months later, the same lady became my student and she was very discouraged on her lessons. I asked, “What is wrong today, Charlotte?”

“Matt, this is hard. I haven’t been dancing my entire life like you have. You ask so much of me!” she said with confusion and frustration.

I couldn’t believe what she said. She had forgotten completely that I had just learned to dance a few months back and was letting her doubt take over on her lesson instead of having fun and playing around with the instruction.



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You should also be open to somebody who is willing to teach you and give you advice. This often means you are also going to become a better listener, because you are going to be so much less stressed about achieving perfection. I have many other ballroom dancing clients who come to me for help all the time who all say, “Oh, wow, you must have been dancing your entire life.”

No, I have been dancing for only four years, but I am at the top in my field. How did I rise so far so fast? It is just like I have been telling you: First, I played with it and I played a lot more than I sat around thinking about perfecting the steps. I had so much fun with it, I never grew worried. I never



“It is better to play than do nothing.”

—Confucius



started thinking, “Oh, man. I am not as good as that guy.” To this day, I dance at least an hour day because I can’t help it! It’s that fun. How could I not become

great?

Others put in negative energy which will mess up their progression.

So remember this, because this will be more important than anything else in this entire book: During your entire process as you work on new a project, you have to understand, you progress. You do not perfect.

Also, as you progress, your goals are going to change. At first you can say, “Matt, I wish I could just get out on the dance floor and look as good as everybody else.” So you progress and progress and progress, and eventually when you are at that point where you are on the dance floor, and you look like everybody else, trust me, you are not going to be satisfied. You are going to say, “Wow! I wish I knew those cool moves that guy over there knows.” So you are going to strive to reach his level of perfection, but you do not realize what he is thinking at that exact moment, even though he looks so

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good to you: “Wow,” he’s thinking, “I wish I knew how to throw the girl in the air as we danced, and then do the splits myself.”

Everybody has their own level of progression, which they are always trying to achieve, but nobody is ever actually trying to achieve perfection. This is why you just need to play and realize that we are all progressing. The real master is the master who knows that he is always progressing and that he always has more to learn.

I learned this myself a few years ago, when I caught one of my favorite philosophers, who was renowned for his thinking and his great mind, reading a philosophy book.



“You discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.”

—Plato



“John, you’re depressing me. I thought you knew all life’s answers,” I halfway joked as I saw him studying a book intensely while at a dance competition.

Although he knew I was joking, he replied, “I’ve come to realize the more wood you put on the fire, the more darkness you can see around you.”

What he meant by that is that the more you progress, the more you learn and expand your mind – the more you will find new things to learn that take even more time and effort. So if you have the mindset that you need to reach perfection without ever playing, then you have a very long journey ahead of you.

I want to reemphasize that you are going to play in this first phase. You are going to have fun, and if you ever struggle with something down the line, all you need to do is return to this concept. Just play with it; just have fun with it, because if you are not having fun, you are not going to achieve your

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goal. It's better to be a happy amateur than a frustrated novice any day 😊

~PRACTICE~



Benjamin Franklin wrote under the anonym Mrs. Silence Dogood when he was fifteen. These writings were incredibly popular and served as practice for later work.



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After you have been playing with something for a few days, a few hours, or maybe even a few weeks, you reach a point where you decide



“It's not necessarily the amount of time you spend at practice that counts; it's what you put into the practice.”

—Eric Lindros



that this is definitely a hobby that you want to improve upon. Instead of meeting your neighbors in the afternoon for some sandlot baseball or going out dancing every night with your buddies, you need to start actually practicing. You have to hone your skills and get your technique down if you want to become better at what you are doing.

Take the next step and enroll in a formal class. Maybe you want to learn how to dance. In that case, you have probably been playing for a while by going to the club. You have fun every night, and you do not really know what you're doing. You might have a few drinks as you dance, and in general, you are just letting it loose on the dance

floor. After a while, you might be lucky enough to realize that you actually like dancing and that you are pretty good at it.

But when you enroll in a class, you need to be careful, especially when you choose your teacher. You should pick someone who is an expert in their field. Otherwise, you will be practicing all the wrong things.

For example, the other day, one of my dance students asked me some questions about the moves I was teaching her. She basically said to me, “My other teacher told me that you do this, this, and that.” It was completely opposite from what I had taught her, and I am an expert in that field.

I said to her, “If you were a bird and you were trying to learn how to fly, then you should learn from the eagle. Wait until the eagle lands, and then ask him questions. Do not ask the injured bird on the ground. The injured bird on the ground does not

know how to fly. Obviously, that person messed something up if they are on the ground.”

She was asking for help from a teacher who clearly did not look good on the dance floor. The lesson here is that you should practice only with those who preach well. Do not practice with others who are still practicing themselves.

I have a philosophy that works really well for when you are practicing, so you should keep this in mind. It is hard for teachers to understand this, but when you practice, that is all you should do. The word *practice* means to do & repeat - many times.

Practice does not mean discussing what you are doing; it does not mean philosophizing about it. You just do. This is a mechanical phase where your skills become refined. This is



“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”

—Benjamin Franklin



not a time to multitask, but a time to focus on one

thing you do not know turn it into something that is somewhat comprehensible.

For example, when I teach any class, I always try different ways to see how many times I can convince my student to do the same thing over and over and over. If my student is learning a new box step, I will tell to them to observe it mentally. Then I will show them the step, and after they visualize it, I will have them repeat what I have just done. After they do that step, we want them to repeat that process as many times as possible. You tell them, they observe it mentally. You show them,



“Action is the foundational key to all success.”

—Pablo Picasso



they visualize it, and then they do it. There is no need to have a discussion.

What happens when you teach your student like this is you hit all of their senses at the same time. I teach them the box step, and then I have them repeat the box

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step, then they repeat the box step once more, and so on. By that time, they will have a question. This is where most people run into problems when they practice. You do not want to ask too many questions. You do not need to. As you do something more and more and more, it just becomes part of your body. It becomes second nature. The fewer questions you ask, the more often you will do better.

The teacher plays as much a role in this process as you. The bad teacher always answers every question. The good teacher does not. For example, when you are learning a box step, you might ask, "Should my foot be here or should my foot be there?" The teacher needs to figure out some way to deflect the question and instead encourage more practice. If a student says, "Am I supposed to point my foot or do I roll my heel on that step?" Instead of answering their question, I say, "Let's do it again. Let's do it this time to music." I just deflected the question, and I showed them

that is not a priority right now. The priority right now is doing it again.

By the end of the lesson, I want them to have practiced the exact same thing about fifty times. That's the difference between working with somebody who knows perfection and somebody who is still striving and struggling to achieve perfection. The person who is striving and struggling will answer the question. That person will spend too much of the lesson time answering questions, and at the end of the day, the student does not have very much actual practice time. Practice time is not the time you spend philosophizing about the project; practice time is when you are actually doing it. You have the teacher there watching, and the teacher, not the student, is the one who is giving the input. The student does not need to say anything. The student just needs to do it for the action to become second nature to the body.

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When painting, for example, you do not need to ask questions about the painting so much; ten percent of your time should be spent on questions, and ninety percent should be spent practicing. If you learned new shading patterns today, then just



“Don’t aim for success if you want it; just do what you love and believe in, and it will come naturally.”

—David Frost



do the shading, again, again, and again. You just need to understand that it is not going to be perfect.

It is going to be far, far from perfect—but you are just practicing at this point. This is the second step, and you need to realize that it is the second step.

Do not give your all into this just yet; simply understand that this is the phase when you are building the necessary skills. You are connecting the brain to different pieces of the body. You are becoming one with what you are trying to perfect.



Unfortunately, a few of you out there stay in the Play phase your entire life and think that you never need to practice. For some, this actually works such as the painter who never takes a class and becomes a success or the writer who doesn't go to grammar school, but writes a best-seller. But for the rest, practice really does make perfect.

It hurts my brain to listen to a song from someone who has not taken proper music identification courses or to read a book or watch a movie from an amateur. I can also immediately tell if someone is in the club dancing and wild or if they've actually taken lessons before – so please people, practice!

When we practice, something magical happens inside of our brain. There are four areas of learning that you will want to memorize.

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Dream Phase: You don't know what you don't know

Learn Phase: You know what you don't know

Do Phase: You know what you know

Be Phase: You don't know what you know

During the **Dream Phase** – we know absolutely nothing. You don't even know where to start in something, you're just dreaming about it. *Your subconscious mind does not know it is doing everything wrong.* This is fine for your dream phase, but it gets old quickly. If you want to become the best photographer in the world and you have no idea what f-stops, shutter speed, diffusers, or DSLRs are then you're just in the dream phase and not really taking your hobby seriously. However, dreaming is an important first step



“Dreams are the touchstones
of our character.”

— Henry David Thoreau



in learning anything. For, without dreams, we do not know which direction we want to go in.

This is the whole reason to start practicing. Practicing is where we step into the **Learn Phase**. There is no point in practicing unless you know what to practice with the dream you've envisioned for yourself.

Simply grab the manual and read up on it and you see there is a lot more to taking pictures than snapping that top button. *Your conscious mind knows it is doing something wrong.* You now know that you don't know something. While many see this as frustrating and discouraging, this is a HUGE step forward and should be looked at with delight because you have moved your mind out of Dream Phase and into Learning Phase. Don't put your camera down and say that photography isn't for you just because you learn there are 400 features on the device. This is a time to buckle down and practice and play.

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Once you have practiced long enough, you move your practice into the **Do Phase**. In this phase, you'll continue practicing what you've learned until it becomes second nature. I doubt you'll learn all 400 commands on the camera, but after a few months switching it from night mode to daylight and maybe even slowing down the shutter or adding a longer lens all seems common sense to you. *Your conscious mind now knows it is doing everything right.* It is this phase where most people feel confident in their hobby and welcome more instruction. It is stressful to do everything and you have your checklist to make sure, but at least you know it is possible.

At this point, you may even go out and buy a new camera book or DVD to learn more skills. These new skills are going to be in the Dream Phase. You still have not experimented with filters or backdrops and were most likely unaware those even existed. So after learning of them, you experiment with a few filters and put them in

your learning phase. Three more months go by and you now know how to use multiple lenses, different filters, have a few diffusers and all sorts of other goodies.

To the novice, your setup and routine looks quite intimidating. To yourself, however, you really feel challenged explaining your hobby to anyone else. They just can't understand everything you do and it is overwhelming. To you, though, it all feels like common sense and second nature. This means you have entered the **Be Phase**. *Your subconscious mind is now unaware that is doing everything right.* This is essentially perfection for the practitioner. Though as a mentor or teacher, this is a hard phase to be in because you no longer even are aware yourself that you are doing things right. Professional dancers who have grown up dancing their entire life often fall in this category and they often teach classes saying "Oh, it's easy. You just do it like

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this.” And then they continue to do three back flips while talking on their cell phone.

Don't be one of these teachers or professionals! Understand you're simply in the Be Phase and you must constantly remind yourself of what is in your subconscious mind to share your knowledge with others and to further excel.

~Passion~



Though Voltaire was sent to the Bastille, a French prison, for 11 months, his passion for writing led him to finish his first work while his interim there.



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Okay, so this is where the real jewels of my book and the secrets of my success come in to play, and this time I'm talking about "passion." Now, the reason I say it's the jewels is that ninety-nine percent of people never make the stage. They stay in the practice stage their entire life. You will meet somebody that's a dancer and they have been dancing ten to twenty years and they will go play, they will go to the clubs, and then they will go practice. They will go play, go to a party, and then go to a class. And they are stuck and they always are going to look like a student. They are never going to be a master in their field.

You will find the person that is a painter and they will paint for fun and scribble around, and then they will go take a class, but they never truly perfect something and it's this next step that is crucial to perfecting anything and that's having passion for



"Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion."

—Georg Wilhelm Freidrich
Hegel



it. So, when I say passion there are two different levels of passion.

There is passion for life, and then there is passion for what you are doing, and first just think about passion for what you are doing, because you can forget the passion for life if you aren't passionate about what you are doing.

For example in ballroom dancing when I first took it up I wasn't passionate about it. They told me the kind of shoes you had to buy, they told me how many days I had to practice, and I just wasn't into it. So, I barely did it and I was still in the play and practice stages, and in these stages I knew that I was a student and I kept telling myself that I was a student, and I put my own cap on myself. I eventually started getting pretty good at the practicing. I realized, "You know what? I like this! I think I do want to make this passion of mine!" So, I became more involved in it, and then the passion that I had for dancing continued. I started just

thinking about dancing. I started dreaming about dancing and it was just a different experience!

As soon as you start dreaming about something that is an incredible learning process. When you are dreaming you are connecting your brain to a vision and then whenever you do it you actually become closer to that vision. This is clear, because I know you have heard of Dream Management before and how you can achieve goals through dreams, but you need to realize that that's a process that you start now, after you have been practicing for a little bit.



“A strong passion for any object will ensure success, for the desire of the end will point out the means.”

—William Hazlitt



So you have to ask yourself, are you truly passionate about what you are trying to perfect? Because if you are trying to become a painter and simply have a nice painting on your wall, one that you

made, and you think it looks like a Van Gogh, then I am sorry. It's not going to look very good. In my opinion, Van Gogh actually wasn't a very good painter. He was just so passionate about what he did that it created beauty, and when you have passion for something it will be beautiful, it will be perfect, and that's what is so hard for people to understand.

Now, like I said there are two different levels of passion. You have to have passion for what you are doing, and then you have to have passion for life. Now, passion for life can be interpreted in a few different ways but let's look at all the greats of the world and let's look at their personal lives.

Take Van Gogh for example. He might have been eccentric but he was passionate. He was so passionate about love, so passionate about beauty; you could see passion in all his work.

Go to art class and play around first, then you go to class and practice, practice, practice. That's great! You are going to learn the techniques.

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You are going to learn the brushstrokes, but you can't learn that passion. You have to have that passion within you, and you need to create it, and that's what I found in my life! Whenever I do something in one area that I love so much, all the other areas that I love get built up as well. Because it is more passion I have added to my life, I see that same passion somewhere else.



“Perfection is attained in slow degrees; it requires the hand of time.”

—Voltaire



So, taking this back to where you are in your life, and what you are trying to perfect, I want to show you a story of passion. I had a

student come to me, two different students actually. One of them had a ton of money. She was able to practice all she wanted. She had a nine-to-five job, made about one-hundred-fifty grand a year, and you know, she wanted have a nice tango routine. Now, whenever she came to her practices she came to practice.

She came to the party that I told her to and then she took private lessons with me. She took two private lessons a week and did this for six months, and I made her a great dancer. She learned the technique really well, she was very structured in all of the steps that she did. But when you watched her dance, my coach told me, “You know what? That girl that you are dancing with... she is Milk & Toast to me”.

I thought about this, and thought “What is milk and toast? Milk and toast is just bland. It’s so boring.” What the coach was really trying to tell me is that girl does not have passion in her dancing. She is technically sound and it looks nice, but it’s not interesting.

So, people are trying to achieve this passion in their life and that’s another level of perfecting something. The other student who came to me didn’t have very much money for her dancing and she was more of a creative type. She was a massage-therapist. She dreamt of just travelling the

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world, she was romantic; she wrote poetry all the time. She smoked these flavored cigarettes, always wore interesting outfits, and she was very soft-spoken. What I told her was, “You know, it does not matter that you can’t take very many lessons with me. You already *are* the tango. You going out and reading a book by that fountain over there on your break. That’s learning tango! That’s passion in life, and that’s what people want to see on this dance floor. They don’t want to see somebody that works a nine-to-five job. They already think all day about how they wish they could be doing something else, and then finally they come here to their dance lesson, and they learn. Yeah, they learn a little bit, and they get a little bit of passion, but you have so much passion in your life everywhere



“Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.”

—Winston Churchill



else that now all you need to do is learn a few steps and that passion is going to blossom. That's the beauty of passion!"

Once you have passion in your life, passion will be seen in everything that you do, and that's where I am now in all areas of my life. I can pick up a hobby and within a week people will ask if I'm a professional at it due to my level of passion for life.

After you learn everything your passion is just there, and it's beautiful no matter what that person does. Their passion radiates and spreads over to everybody else. So, passion is by far the most beautiful thing that you can have in life.

So instead of looking at your goal and saying, "I need to accomplish this goal," now look at your life and ask yourself, "What am I passionate about?"

Are you passionate about your kids? Then why not work really hard with your kids, and truly be passionate about that? Are you passionate about painting? Do you dream about painting? Whatever

you dream about—that's what you're passionate about. You need to do what you dream about!



"You've got to get up every morning with determination if you're going to go to bed with satisfaction."

—George Lorimer



You can't artificially create a dream. I didn't truly take-up dancing until I started dreaming about it! Once I started

dreaming about it I realized, "Yes, Wow! This is a passion of mine!" And then I was able to invest more time into the practice because the practice was dream-building at that point and it was exciting. It was no longer practice to me.

I receive many queries for books to be published in my company, but they are just too narrow-minded. I can tell the girl who wrote the book on gothic vampires who eat flesh never has fallen in love and I can tell the fictional story about a prince who saves the day was written by someone who has an obsession with Disney flicks and

probably never has grabbed a beer with the boys and wore her hair down.

You see – in order to achieve perfection, we must be passionate and diverse in our passion and interest. I started dancing because I thought it was for gay guys & it looked horrible to me. I was narrow-minded, but I was smart to test the waters in an area I wasn't comfortable. Two years later, I have a different perspective on life and am able to bring this to everything I do. So reach out for your passions and test what you know and what you care about in life.

So, at this point in your timeline you should be seeing that you are no longer practicing. Now you're working on your dream and if you still practicing at this point, then maybe you should recalibrate what you are working on, because until you're passionate about something it's going to be really hard to perfect that first step. So many people go through life and they gave eighty percent everywhere. But they have no passion in anything.

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So if you're trying to learn archery, and you never have done it before and you're just doing it because your girlfriend wants you to, then it's probably not going to work very well. Find something that you truly are passionate about and go for that. You might not have a true passion in life, but find something that you think is higher than all the others and just go for it. After you're passionate and after you get the feeling of what is like to practice in the area, involve yourself in other areas that are the same. It will be easy for you to progress along and perfect them as well.

~Persistence~



Thomas Edison on the lightbulb.
““Before I got through," he recalled, "I tested no fewer than 6,000 vegetable growths, and ransacked the world for the most suitable filament material.”



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If you can say right now that you are following my instructions in your quest for perfection, then I congratulate you! You have made it farther than most people. Most people realize that they are not passionate about something, so they pick a new hobby. They realize they are not passionate about that one either, so they pick yet another hobby. But you have not, so now it is time to really buckle down and be persistent.



“The most essential factor is persistence—the determination never to allow your energy or enthusiasm to be dampened by the discouragement that must inevitably come.”

—James Whitcomb Riley



At this point, all you need to do is put in your hours and keep doing the same thing over and over and over. You should take a look at your schedule. Do you have two hours a week to practice what you're doing? If you have fewer than two hours a week to practice, then you should pick something else to be passionate about.

You need to be persistent with your passions. When you are persistent, you are consistent.

Week after week, year after year, you should do the same thing, over and over. So, if you want to learn a new language, it does not matter how intelligent you are. If you're only working on the language once a month, you are not going to be able to learn it. If you try learning once every week, you will be mediocre at best. What you need to do is figure out how much time you have every day, and even if you are only practicing for ten minutes a day, that is still a big difference.

People will recommend working out thirty minutes three times a week. Ten minutes will do just as well. Honestly, that is more than what ninety percent of human beings spend working out. As long as you are consistent and know what your goal is, you can work out thirty minutes or ten, and you will see the same improvement.

In India, they believe that if you put ten thousand hours into something, then you will

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become a master. Nothing else matters but putting in those ten thousand hours. I personally believe that ten thousand hours is a bit extreme, but I do believe in the concept of putting in as many hours as possible.

Unfortunately, a lot of people start coming up with excuses. They say, "My dog died," or, "I'm sick this week."

Or they say, "It was my anniversary," or,

"It was my birthday." If it is your birthday, you can still practice your Italian. If your dog died, you can practice your Italian when you say your goodbyes to him. Do not let all the obstacles in your life prevent you from perfecting your goal.

As a business owner & consultant, the number one problem in every business is the fact that people give really lame excuses for not accomplishing simple tasks. The most simple of a



"Some guys just give up living, others start dying little by little, piece by piece. Some guys come home from work and wash up, and go racing in the streets."

—Bruce Springsteen



task is showing up. When you don't show up, it's really, really hard to see any success. A diet only works if you are on it. A salesman can't really sell any cars if he doesn't show up to the lot to meet the customers.

I do not believe in obstacles, which is why I am able to be successful in so many places. Right now I am interested in ballroom dancing, but although I am a great dancer, it does "take two to tango." However, I have trouble finding a partner because it is atrocious how little motivation everyone has. One day she is sick, the next day her car breaks down, the next day this happens. Before you know it, six months have gone by, and she is still mediocre when dancing. You can fix that by understanding the importance of consistency and also the rule of time. Time does not wait for you, people! If you are going to schedule yourself for something, you should understand that if you show up early, you are actually on time. If you show up on time, you are late; and if you are late... well, it is

best to say that you will definitely not be perfect, ever.

I do not believe in being late for anything, because then you are going to be late for life. Time is the only thing that is consistent in life, so you need to be in control of your time. Learn how to manipulate and squeeze as much time as possible out of each moment. For example, I could be teaching this series on perfection in a workshop right now, but I am choosing to put it in a book, because the book is timeless. This can teach millions of people for years, maybe for centuries, and that is the best use of my time.

Use your time wisely and learn how to be consistent in the areas that you think are important in your life. If your children are important to you, but you are always going out with your girlfriends, then you are going to miss all the time they spend growing up. If Italian is important to you, but you are going to anniversaries and birthday parties instead, then you are never going to learn Italian. You have

to put that time in and be persistent, be consistent, and if three months go by and you still have not met your goal, then you should write down on a calendar how many times you got sick, how many birthday parties you went to. Then write down how many times you actually studied your assignment. How many times did you actually show up to that ballroom dance class? If you are investing fewer than eight hours a month into a project, then it is not going to be a fruitful project. It is better to just drop it so that you do not have any mediocre projects. I would rather somebody one hobby that they really perfect and put a lot of time into, as opposed to twenty or thirty that are just mediocre.

The person who ends up mediocre goes to the salsa class, then tries to get certified to be an aesthetician, and then also takes Italian, thinking they are going to go to



“When life knocks you down, you have two choices—stay down or get up.”

—Tom Krause



Italy one day. However, they have a little two-year-old, who is taking up lot of time. That person is not showing good time management. You are not going to be consistent or persistent in your goal when you have that many other goals also on your hands. Start small and wait until you perfect one goal. Make your highest priority showing up. It sounds simple, but an entire chapter is devoted to it for a reason. Successful people show up. No, they don't skip their lesson to watch the Oscars. They don't skip because their mother is in town. Instead, they would bring their mother to the lesson, as well. There is always a different perspective which reaps success that you aren't thinking of if you walk down the road of absence and lacking persistence.

If there is nothing in your life that you absolutely incredible at, then definitely only start with one hobby. Once you see the process that it took to do that with one hobby, then you can go back and try more. Always start with one and work until you are very persistent at it before you add more to your resume.

~Performance~



Shakespeare enjoyed performing the part of the ghost in Hamlet onstage.



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So exactly why are you practicing everything? Once you find out that you are passionate about something, you do not want to practice just to practice. This will bring excitement for a few months. Heck, even a year while you progress. Though, it will tire and bore you in time. You want to take that practice to the next level and actually perform. During your practice, set a goal for yourself.

Suppose you are learning a dance. Do not just learn a dance. Instead, pick a place, such as a ball, and say, "I want to go and perform at the ball. I am going to buy a beautiful dress, go out there, and put on a show!" Or, if you are learning archery, practicing is okay, but it is nothing like actually going on a hunt and using your bow and arrow to kill an animal.



"Performance is your reality.
Forget everything else."

—Harold S. Geneen



You will find
that there are two
different types of
people. There are

the people who understand this concept, and they are constantly learning and applying it in actual life. But there are also people who are just dreamers, and they never actually take their dream to the performance level. It is these people, ironically, who think they understand what perfection is.

You see these people everywhere. They watch TV, and when they see a football game, they will point out all the things that person is doing wrong. They will say, "Oh, c'mon! Why didn't you throw it to #88?! He was wide open!" But they never take something to a performance themselves. Only once you perform yourself will you become much more humble. Your adrenalin gets involved. When you are practicing, you should understand that you will always perform five times better than at an actual performance. Being in front of an audience, being criticized, will always teach you how hard it really is to perform. But don't let this scare you. Performing is an exciting and flourishing part of the learning process.

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We need to go through the same progression within our performance as in our practices. The first time you perform, you should just play around with it and realize that you are going to mess up. You know that you are going to make mistakes. You have to practice performing. You have to become passionate about performing, and you have to be consistent and persistent in your performances, just like you do in your practices.

If you are only performing once a year, then your adrenalin will get way too high, and you are going to not perform as well. In high school, when I was in track doing all of my running events, I treated my Tuesday performances at our track meets as practices. Then on the Friday meets, I would actually try as hard as I could to win the events. It was a nice system, because on Tuesdays I was able to concentrate solely on practicing my performance. I would try to keep my adrenalin down and keep my breathing correct.

When you perform, your body acts completely different from when you practice. I don't care if it is a piano performance, an archery contest, a hunt, or a dance recital. Whenever you perform, your adrenalin always gets in the way. It makes your vision, reaction time, and your intelligence cloudy.

The person who sits at home watching is not involved in the performance. Of course they can think more logically! However, in order to truly perfect something on a high level, you need to make performances a daily ritual until they are just a habit.



“The thing about performance, even if it's only an illusion, is that it is a celebration of the fact that we do contain within ourselves infinite possibilities.”

—Sydney Smith



Another thing you need to understand is that the three areas (practicing, playing, and performing) are all distinct. I notice the difference

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especially because I teach ballroom dancing so much. I can pick out a dancer and tell you, “That is the kind of dancer who always goes to the club to party,” or, “That is the kind of dancer who only goes to group classes and gets involved in their group stuff,” or, “That is the kind of dancer who only goes to performances and the big ballroom competitions.” There are problems with all three dancers.

The clubber will have a lot of fun. What they will not have, on the other hand, is control.

The person who goes to the group classes and does nothing but practice will look way too technical. Whenever they dance, they will not see the fun side of it and when they perform, they will be way too nervous because they never really perform. When they do go to a big competition, their eyes will be really big, and they will be trying to take it all in and absorb it.

The person who only goes to performances will be a bit vain. Nothing actually excites them, and

you can see that when they are dancing. You do not see any sparkle, because they do it too much and their moves are a bit too flashy for social dancing. They end up not relating well to the rest of the dancers and the reason they started was to socialize in the first place.

You should have a bit of all three. You need to perform a little bit, you need to play a little bit, and you need to practice a little bit. Be persistent, and you will find the balance and harmony in all three.

~Preach~



Our current school systems date back more than 2,000 years and have not been challenged as a form of pedagogy. New schools are forming (ex. Waldorf & Montessori) where students collaborate with teachers and act as a community as opposed to a linear style of teaching.



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Okay, so in the last chapter we talked about being persistent, and after people are persistent for a while, ninety-nine percent of them stop in their progression. After you are persistent for quite some time, you should be skilled enough to start preaching your method to others.

When you preach you aren't only what you say are, but you teach others what they can become as well. In that process you will learn ten times more than in practicing, or when being persistent, or playing, because when we preach and teach others how to do something, we not only understand how to communicate it at back to them, which is as a job within itself, we also see all of the questions and problems as they arise.



“No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end in their nature and education.”

—Plato



Students will always bring up questions that you never had while you learned which allows you to refine your skills. When you learn how to play soccer, maybe you had a lot of difficulty dribbling, but shooting goals came easy. Then, when you teach, your student seems to kick the ball over the goal every time. So now you need to break down the goal kicking, but you find you are at a loss for words on how to teach this skill since it came so easy to you. Since your brain might already be in the Be Phase for goal kicking where your body just subconsciously does it correctly, you will need to pull that information out of the subconscious and make it a conscious effort in order to communicate and teach your student. In doing this, you become a much stronger athlete, yourself.

So, let's really not focus on why it's important to preach, but let's focus on how to preach, and how to teach.

Let's assume you aren't confident yet by the time you reach this chapter, but you want to see

which secrets lie ahead. So if you don't have confidence, then most likely you are going to be the kind of person that tells me, "Matt, I'm not ready to teach." I know how you feel – many of my students give me this "I'm not ready" excuse.

But look at this way; let's look at your family. Say you have three children: You have a thirteen-year-old, a four-year-old, and a one-year-



"Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work."

—Aristotle



old. The four year old is already teaching. He wants to teach, he loves teaching, and you have to actually try to stop him from teaching because you know that you are a better teacher he is, because he will take that one-year-old and will try to teach him how to eat a banana by jabbing it in his eye.

He will try to teach the baby how to eat a bug, how to drink a glass of milk, and do all the stuff that he is doing. What you need to understand is

that the four-year-old is doing this not to be rude, but because we instinctively need to teach people so that we learn stuff better. We are designed like this to have our society become stronger and for our species to survive and evolve. Instead of fighting this instinct of his that seems annoying, go with the flow.

Right now you most likely try to tell the one-year-old what to do, and then tell your four-year-old what to do, all while your thirteen-year-old over there is just laughing at you, thinking, “Oh! Man, mom has no control of the family!”

Instead, delegate. In delegating you are learning how to take better control of your family and you’re actually giving the four-year-old time to learn skills, and to learn how to be a better manager in his own life. So tell the four-year-old, “You know, it’s not a good idea to have my little one-year-old drink from a cup that is made of glass because she can break it. So, instead why don’t you help her with her sippy cup? That’s made out of plastic.”

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You teach how to teach in doing this. Don't take the teaching away from the four-year-old, and while the thirteen-year-old is giggling, go over there and tell her "Hey! Can you help me out? If you want to be home alone, I need to see you can help with the other guys. I'd really appreciate it."

You are delegating your family tasks and dividing them out and that's how you can see that even a four-year-old can be a teacher.

Bring a new born into the room and you'll see that even your one-year-old tries to teach the newborn! We all are teachers and our parents and teachers who tell us "No!" are the ones who put ideas of failure in our heads. So drown out those words and realize that yes, you can teach. And yes, your four-year-old can even teach!

We love to teach, and in the teaching process that's how we learn the most. So, teach your thirteen-year-old to teach your four-year-old, to teach your one-year-old. Then when I'm your dance teacher and I tell you, "You know, you should teach

a volunteer class in ballroom dancing.” After you’ve been my student for six months, don’t come to me and shake your head and say, “No, I’m not ready yet,” because a four-year-old would love to teach! They have an open mind and they understand that teaching is fun; you get to learn, you get to help somebody else, and who cares if you mess-up? Because you aren’t trying to teach them perfection, you are trying to teach them the first chapter of this book - How to Play. You are taking them back to the very, very first step that you had in the hobby – and your fear of failure lies in the fact that you are now on step 6 and you think you need to teach them step 5.

So, if you are telling me you don’t know how to teach somebody else how to play, and you can’t go and play with somebody else, then you don’t yet understand the purpose of learning things. We never learn anything in life to actually perfect it. We learn stuff to have hobbies, to have fun, to just enjoy life. And when you learn dancing, you want to

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enjoy life with it, and if you aren't enjoying it then you're never going to look great at it!

So when you're teaching, keep this in mind. See that there is never a reason to be nervous. The play stage is the easiest for anyone, so help the novice out by teaching them to play – not teaching them any other step in the beginning. You'll see it is more difficult for them to understand to have fun than anything else. Most people are brainwashed into taking life too seriously and their brain confuses them to the point of failure.

Anything you do requires this process for success.

If you are trying to lose weight, trust me it's not going to work unless you enjoy the process, practice,

persist with it, do some type of competition, and finally teach others. You have to have fun in order



“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”

—Francis of Assisi



to turn your hobby into a profession or perfection. So in teaching somebody weight loss, have fun with it, find a hobby, and go play soccer with somebody else. While you are playing soccer with them they will realize, “Wow!” Yeah, you might still be fifty pounds overweight, but compared to those who have worked out for five years, you are actually an inspiration! And once you see that you are an inspiration to somebody else, it’s spreads like crazy throughout your own body. In giving back to somebody else you create this new form of energy within yourself.

This new understanding and this new base of knowledge is something that you can work from. When you get off work and you are just dead tired, you are like, “Oh! Man, I have to go to yoga!” Sure you made that a daily goal. Or you wanted to be the best yoga-practitioner but it’s just the end of the day and you want to go home, turn on the TV, and just relax. But if you see that there is somebody there at that class that just can’t wait for you to get there so that you can teach them what to do, and

they are so thankful at the end that you came - you'll want to go. This creates a new source of energy in you so that you no longer think about the TV. You think, "Wow! I want to go teach Jackie how to do yoga!" Or, "I can't wait to get to my yoga class, because John is going to be there and I know he has been practicing what I showed him last week." You end up wanting to help him more.

And in helping him, what happens? You become more persistent. So, **the reason we preach is to become more persistent** and to open our minds back up and just keep that passion rolling. We are to the point that we no longer need new goals, we just need to get into the mindset where we want to teach, and keep repeating the stuff that we were doing before.



"When I hear a man preach, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees."

—Abraham Lincoln



So, in teaching other people you are tricking your own mind into practicing more, into being more passionate, into being more persistent, and that's the purpose of stepping into this mindset. It really just kills me when somebody says, "You know, what Matt? I don't want to teach, I just want to be really good." That's so selfish, and you can see that selfish side of them within whatever they practice.

I have other clients who say, "Matt, I don't want to teach – I just want lessons from you." This is also a naïve perspective in that teaching will make you far better than a private lesson with me ever could, or a private lesson with any top professional. Most of my private students really cling to their private lessons and struggle with this step as they feel it is a step backwards or a way for me to get rid of them and work with someone else. I'm actually looking into their best interest and trying to take off the "I'm a client" hat they currently wear and show them that they really are a professional in their field.

Now, I do understand that teaching is an art. I have entire books & workshops teaching the art of teaching. This takes years to become a master as a teacher, but you should start by teaching. And start with something easy. I'm not asking you to go out and teach a master painting class your first day. Just teach your four-year-old and encourage them to practice the new shading pattern you learned. Then maybe you can teach an entire four-year-old class, eventually. After a year or two teaching the children, you'll have the confidence to teach adults and eventually write your own book on the subject.

If you are painter and you never teach somebody else, trust me you are not the best painter. If you are a dancer and you never teach somebody else, you can't possibly understand dance on a level that I understand dance. So, the earlier you start the teaching process, the better. As soon you have taken five dance classes you can easily go and teach somebody else, the basics, and just play around with it. Just have fun with it, even if

Matt Hackney

you just go home and teaching your dog! Preaching makes you think more and grow within.

~Perspective~



Marcus Aurelius, one of the Five Good Emperors of Rome, stands out as one of the greatest intellectuals to rule in Western Civilization, often proved through his philosophical writings.



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Now the last step of perfecting something is “perspective.” You have already been doing your skill for a while. You are quite persistent in it, you have been performing for a long time, and you have even taught it to all kinds of people. By now, you should be at the top of your game. So, the last step is changing your perspective, and by changing perspective, people see you as the teacher; they see you as the lead coach in this area, and that really changes things. Because when you are dancing and you have not taught someone else yet, you are missing out.

When you are a performer and you mess



“You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist.”

—Friedrich Nietzsche



up, people are still rooting for you. They are on your team, and it’s okay when you mess up. As a performer, they expect you to, and if

you mess up just one percent of time it's okay. When you get to the level of a teacher you shouldn't be able to mess up anymore. That's the responsibility people put on you. They are like, "Well, if you are teaching it you should be perfect at this."

I disagree – we are all human – so we all mess up. But this added pressure changes how you perceive yourself. So you now have a different perspective, and you have that perspective because other people have that perspective. They see you as the teacher; they see you as the role model. Now the goal is to fit into this role model perspective as soon as possible.

One day you might say, "Hey, I'm going to pickup a new hobby. I'm going to learn archery." Some of your friends will look at you wondering why you would ever pick that hobby!

You start it regardless of their mockery and your hands are stiff and rigid. Others come to you and see you are a novice. They put negative energy

into you by pointing out your flaws. So, even when they put that negative energy into you, you continue to go to the class. Maybe your teacher there is going to be telling you, “John, come on you can do this. It took me five years to learn it and you are doing great! You are right on the same level that I was back then.” But you don’t believe it, because that’s one percent out of a thousand that told you that you could do this.



“When I let go of what I am, I
become what I might be.”

—Lao Tzu



So, then after you have been doing it for six months, you tell your friends, “Oh! Yeah, I’m going to my archery class,” and then they feel kind of disconnected from you. They are like, “So how is that going? Are you getting any better?” This is the point where you can change their perspective. Now they see you as a student of archery. No, they don’t see you as a master, but yes, they do see you as a student. So changing their perspective and

changing your perspective allows you to be a student. This means you are going to look like a student, you are going to perform like a student, and you are going to preach like a student.

And then we get to the next level and you actually go hunting and get to use your archery skills. You even kill your first deer with an arrow. This is the first time you've "performed" at this skill. You've already played around with it, practiced, you're obviously passionate since you never miss a class which shows your persistence – you have all the skills needed for perfection. You practice some more, and you practice some more, then you come back from your hunting trip and you can say, "Hey guys, I just got back from a hunt and I got my first deer!" Then you can bring them some deer jerky, and it's the proof in the pudding that you are doing great. Once again you have changed their perspective. It's all about perspective and this is what perfection really is. Perfection is what others' perspectives of you are when you succeed in new things – which mold your own perspective.

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So, if you could change their perspective, and your own perspective, you are ten times more



“A principle is the expression of perfection, and as imperfect beings like us cannot practice perfection, we devise every moment limits of its compromise in practice.”

—Mohandas Gandhi



powerful than they are. So again, you just finished another hunt and you keep on practicing and now people see you as a performer. They are like, “Oh! Yeah, John

has been doing archery for four years now and each winter he goes out, he brings back a deer. Yeah he is pretty good at it, I guess!” But you still doubt yourself. You are like, “Well, yeah I’m pretty good. I’m one of the best in the class, but wow! My teacher is way better than I am – he gets six deer each winter and always brings home at least one buck.”

But think about it. Your teacher is better because he has been doing it longer. Of course he is better – he’s the teacher! Compared to your buddies back at home, you’re definitely awesome

though. Sure, you're still trying to learn how to arch the arrow to the right angle to shoot targets at a distance, but you've already mastered holding the quill with less pressure and breathing methodically with your release. Those are skills that take years to master and there is no reason to call yourself an amateur anymore. Self projected doubt is the root of failure.

Just keep doing it for three of four more years and eventually you are the best student in the class. And the teacher is trying to convince you, "John, you should totally teach a beginner class. You are incredible at this! You can even have your own hunt that you go to each winter, and take some of the students with you." Then you think to yourself, "I'm going to try it out." When you try it out you realize all sorts of new things and you realize, "No wonder Matt wanted me to preach and teach people, because, yeah, I do learn. I learn a lot more."

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And now your students are looking at you as their master. What they don't understand is you have your own master, but this makes you lot more responsible in class.

Now, as their teacher, your new students rely on you to make sure they have enough equipment, that they bring enough food, and all the little things that separate the amateur from the pure professional on a weekend hunt.

And then an epiphany in your own head happens. You think, "Wow, I'm a teacher & people respect me in my hunting. That's pretty cool!"

Your same friends from before are coming to you, and they are telling you that they also want to go hunting. Now your own friends, who were doubting you in the beginning, become your students and this is the paradigm shift that you are going to see.

Stephen Covey talks about it, Lao Tzu talks about it, and I talk about it. A lot of masters in different fields talk about the fact that you need to

have a paradigm shift in order to make success happen.

On another level after you have performed and you have succeeded in many areas, you can actually change your own perspective immediately. An example of this is my own sword-fighting. I learned ballroom dancing, I learned chess, business management, writing books, and so much more. I had all of these different areas under my belt, and I finally realized there was a method to all of this. That method is what I have taught you in this book. When I learned sword-fighting, I didn't go through this method. I just went to the very last step, my **self-perception**.

Skipping all steps, I just perceived myself to be a sword-fighter, even though I never had held a sword in my life. Sure, I'd watched a fair amount of Star Wars and like any guy wanted to look cool with a sword, but that didn't warrant me the status of being a swordsman... or did it?

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My approach to this paradigm shift is something I now possess and I use it when learning any new skill and if you can learn this – then you have no need for all the other six chapters, so pay attention!!

Even though I had never even held a sword of my own I purchased 10 swords off the internet and created an advertisement for a new sword fighting DVD audition – no experience necessary.

Just days before the audition, my swords arrived and I did a quick video search online to see what I could learn. All I got out of it was a figure 8 motion, the most basic move.



“Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.”

—Marcus Aurelius



I had models and actresses show up from all over Southern California to audition. Some of them could do acrobatics and all were interested in swordplay. As

I was the host for the production, they immediately saw me as a master swordsman!

In seeing me as a master swordsman, they all listened intently as I gave instruction on the figure 8 motion I had just learned.

Class was only once per week and I allowed twenty participants to return and learn the motions. Each week, I would watch a new video right before class to motivate myself to look better during class.

I then stirred up new interest among some students who wanted private lessons and within six weeks, I actually impressed myself with my skills. The audition class turned into my intermediate class, I started a beginner class, and started taking private lessons as well. Doing over eight hours of sword fighting a week made my figure 8 technically sound. I also had private students who wanted specific skills, so I would research those before giving them each lesson.

You see – people pay a teacher to instill success inside of them. I stepped into this

successful mindset before starting and you could hear me coaching my students on each lesson, “You can do it! Just practice this motion twice per week and you’ll get it.”

The main difference I then saw between myself and my students was our ability to perceive success. Thus, my perception of myself allowed me to enjoy teaching new people this hobby I picked up. Within three months, I had put in well over 60 hours worth of swords lessons all while my students were paying for me to learn! My DVD didn’t get produced for two more years, but that was probably for the best.

I still have the same students I had in those first days of my sword-fighting. When mentioning this part of my book, they were very confused when I told them about this section.

“Whatever, Matt. You’ve been doing sword fighting forever.” Jenn remarked.

“No, really. Your first lesson was also my first lesson,” I replied.

“How can that be? You had all these swords, the DVD auditions? You’re just saying that,” she insisted.

This story was repeated to all my students and they are still in disbelief. I had convinced myself so much that I was a swordsman that she couldn’t comprehend her first lesson was also my first. This is a powerful skill to maintain as this paradigm shift can create success in any area.



“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once.”

—Albert Einstein



Now I have videos in sword fighting and all sorts of other areas, too, using this concept. This is the main skill masters possess that amateurs fail to realize. Once you perfect the process of perfection, you can just shift into perfection with your self-perspective.

7 Steps to Perfection

Sometimes I find students have a hard time shifting into this perspective when their peers project so much doubt into them. Thus, it is important to segregate yourself from anyone who doubts your success when changing self-perspective.

Instead of telling your peers of your perception, join a new social network and just BE. For example, If you are trying to learn French, yet never have spoken a word simply sign up for a new volleyball league where you know nobody.

At your first volleyball practice when people introduce themselves to you, a good introduction goes like the following:

“Hi, my name is John. I am from New York and also speak French.”

“Hey John, welcome to the club!” shouts a cute blonde in red shorts and a tank top. “My name is Jessie – I’ve always wanted to learn French.”

John thinks, “Wow, I met a cute girl and a potential study partner all while at volleyball. This is great!”

Before long, Jessie and John are on their fifth date making some crepes and Jessie has all types of questions about French culture. Perception is everything. Since John knows he cares about French and wants to learn, he continues teaching her. Too often, people think lies and deception and even knowledge are linear.

Within six months, John has a 200 word vocabulary in French, a beautiful girlfriend who shares his interest in volleyball, good food, and romance languages. He is much more content because he believed his future was his reality and created his perspective around what he wanted.



““I reject your reality and substitute it for my own.”

—Adam Savage



7 Steps to Perfection

This would not have been possible if he went into his office and told Chris in the cubicle beside him that he was learning French. Chris has known John too long and remembers at the Christmas party when John thought the Eiffel tower was in Vegas!

Nor would John have the same experience if he enrolled in a French class at the local community college. The teacher at the local college would view John as a student and expect him to learn up to fifteen words by the end of the semester. Not to mention make the whole process feel like work. The teacher would put John in the position of being a student and John would accept this perspective of himself and start speaking like one – a horrible way to learn if you ask me!

So life is all about perspectives, so just choose what you want to be great at, and when you put the energy there and you see yourself in that perspective, it happens.

Too often I find people say, “Once I _____ I will be happy!” You can fill in the blank with any of the following objectives:

Lose weight

Learn piano

Have children

Get married

Graduate High School/College

Make more money

For years, society has followed the teaching of Sigmund Freud. He teaches that your surroundings mold your perspective and attitude. While he was a great philosopher, I think he was very practical and didn’t understand the power of the mind.

Other men such as Lao Tzu, Viktor Frankl, Virgil, and me are all examples of people who can take mind over matter. Stories of mind over matter are not common but they do exist.

Sure, there are supposed masters of this concept who have proven to walk on water like

7 Steps to Perfection

Jesus, swallow poison as if it were a glass of lemonade, or walk over hot coals, but I'm not asking you to do such things.

A much more practical approach is that of Viktor Frankl, a holocaust survivor who was in a concentration camp. His wife and parents were murdered during the war in other camps, though he was still happy in his demeanor. He did not take the Freudian thought process and created his own, logotherapy. Logotherapy teaches that thought proceeds form. Lao Tzu taught this a few thousand years prior, but Frankl's approach moved millions as he endured many hardships while imprisoned, but was still able to maintain happiness.

He didn't
understand why
others allowed their
surroundings to
affect them so much
and realized the



"There are some people who live in a dream world, and there are some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other."

—Douglass Everett



mind could choose whether to be happy or not. As a doctor and therapist, he used this thought process after war upon his release and wrote about this in his *book, Man's Search for Meaning*.

Frankl confused guards and other inmates with the pleasure he found in life as he was able to see an image of his wife in his mind and find happiness at any moment with this thought alone. This is a paradigm shift. You would think one in such a situation would be unhappy and depressed, though he found salvation in each moment regardless of the surroundings.

I had a similar experience when I was but only fourteen. Fall had just started and we were in the third week of football practice. It was a cool Thursday afternoon and our first game was coming up the following day. We were hoping coach would let us stay inside and study some videos or even lift some weights as it was quite humid and cloudy outside.

7 Steps to Perfection

Nonetheless, he told us to meet out on the field in five minutes. We moaned and groaned and went out to the field wearing our sluggish mindset all over our body.

“Alright boys, we have a big game tomorrow! Let’s start this season strong!” coach exclaimed. “Everyone line up. Quarterbacks - on the targets. Linemen – on the sleds...” my mind trailed off seeing the dark clouds roll in.

Coach was in his normal enthusiastic mood and we just weren’t feeling it. “How could anyone have a great practice on a day like this? Someone might get struck by lightning if it gets worse,” I thought.

The rest of the team felt the same way. We were missing our passes and really couldn’t understand why we were having such a hard practice right before our first big game.

“Alright boys, everyone huddle up!” coach sounded frustrated.

“Foot shuffle, go!” coach commanded with his whistle in hand. Right then, I almost fell forward as the wind smacked a layer of mist on my back.

“Are we really doing up downs during a rain storm?” Adam asked me.

The layers of mist kept coming in and my jersey clung to my pads and my stomach. “Down!” coach yelled. We all hit the ground fast. “Now boys, every time you stand up, I want to hear you yell – I LOVE IT WHEN IT RAINS!” coach seemed too excited.

“Up!” he yelled.

“I LOVE IT WHEN IT RAINS!” you could hear from all my teammates.

“Down!”

“Up!”

“I LOVE IT WHEN IT RAINS!” we shouted harder.

“Boys, we don’t stop for nothin’. Those Williamstown boys can’t handle us. You can’t

handle a little bit of rain? How can you take out a whole team? DOWN!” he made his point clearly. “Up!”

“I LOVE IT WHEN IT RAINS!”

You could see the chemistry in our team now. The rain mixed with sweat on my lip and tasted salty. These up downs went on for another twenty minutes, straight.

By the end, we were exhausted, but we were ready for anything. The next night we went out and it was raining once again. “I love it when it rains, coach!” I shouted as I went out of the locker room on the way to the game.

To this day, I think of that practice every time it rains. Especially when people complain their day isn’t going as planned because the weather isn’t cooperating. What does a little rain hurt? Suck it up and give your best. Your perspective creates your reality. Your reality, your happiness, and your performance have no connection to your environment – only your perception and mindset.

Keep this in mind and this fact alone negates all the other principles I've taught within this book. Though, the other six steps are building blocks to creating this winning perspective.

In creating this perspective, you must remember that it takes progression, not perfection in order to achieve success. After accomplishing many feats in life, you will eventually be able to step into the mindset that you are successful before you even start a new skill or hobby.

Success is abundant and can be found with many paths. The only step you do NOT want to do is become stagnant. Just as water becomes putrid without movement, so do our bodies & minds. So you will find perfection if you do not dwell in the same mindset for too long.

Good luck in your endeavors & I look forward to seeing you in our success network where everyone is on the move!

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Matt Hackney resides in Santa Barbara, CA, and spends his time learning new skills and also enjoying ballroom dancing, knitting, martial arts, writing, chess, and the beach to name just a few. He is the founder of TheMOV – an online community which helps people across the world bring their dreams to reality.

Matt rides a bike as his only form of transportation and supports his local economy by shopping at the farmers' market and buys from local craftsman.

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