

THE WAY OF THE SEAL BY MARK DIVINE | BOOK SUMMARY AND PDF

The Way of the Seal by Mark Divine identifies a number of skills that you can build on and develop. These skills align with the Seals way of life and will enable you to think and act like an 'elite warrior'. These lessons in leadership and life are applicable to business, personal life and any challenges you may face. Mark Divine has a series of exercises and questions that will help you to develop the necessary skills.

LEAD FROM THE FIELD

Genuine leadership must stem from the heart of an individual, regardless of (and sometimes in spite of) the organizational role or power systems in which he or she is enshrined.

The world needs leaders who will lead from the front and push from the rear; who will stand up and step out, risking more to enforce integrity at all levels—self, team, and organization.

We also need organizations to embrace this concept and support the development of individuals and teams by allowing risk and failure in order to foster true learning—the kind that develops the deep character that authentic leadership requires.

PRINCIPLE 1: ESTABLISH YOUR SET POINT

By defining your stand and purpose, you will be able to use them as an internal GPS. When the winds of pain and pleasure blow, you won't change course.

Make a Stand

Leading from the field requires that we first know ourselves, our true nature, inside and out. When we live in full awareness of our stand, then we can face fear with courage. Fear is natural, something to be faced and understood, not to be avoided. Finding the courage to act in the presence of fear is the Way of the SEAL.

Your stand should ultimately suggest those character traits you want to embody, even if you aren't 100 percent there right now.

Find Your Purpose

Your stand will answer the question “What would I do?” and your purpose will answer the question “Why am I here?”

Clarify your values so you can become the kind of person who can stand his or her ground every day. Values answer the question What do I want more of or less of in my life?

PRINCIPLE 2: DEVELOP FRONT-SIGHT FOCUS

In SEAL-speak, your goals typically come in two types: You have your big, long-term goals defining your end state, and you have shorter-term subgoals defining your path along the way. SEALs work on one mission at a time, though there may be multiple targets to achieve overall mission success. Whether you face immediate challenges or need a lasting long-term strategy, you can overcome any obstacle and achieve any goal with front-sight focus through a four-pronged approach:

1. Prepare Your Mind

Before you can take control of your mind, you must first calm it down. The fastest way to calm your mind, along with your body, is through slow and controlled deep breathing.

By focusing on your breath, you collapse your focus to the “front sight” that is the present moment. This settling practice helps reduce mental chatter, prevents your mind from wandering, and is generally a great boost to your self-control efforts.

2. Envision Your Goal

Front-sight focus, especially when backed up by a powerful and clear set point, can propel you toward each target on your way to mission success. But what exactly are you supposed to focus on? The key is to envision your goal—whether at the target or mission level—using a type of visualization called “mental projection.

The purpose of this type of visualization is to plant seeds of a future desired state, such as becoming CEO of your company, into your subconscious mind and nervous system. As you take action in the “real world,” the new inner vision will align your heart and mind with your actions and support your efforts to achieve that desired state.

3. Define the Mission

When you strive to achieve any goal (read: embark on a mission), you must clarify and define expectations, both explicit and implicit.

Proper planning from the start will help prevent sudden and unfavorable consequences later, which could interfere with your ability to maintain front-sight focus on missions you've accepted or chosen.

4. Simplify the Battlefield

Simplifying the battlefield" is SEAL-speak for eliminating distractions. When we eliminate distractions, we can better see the simple, elegant solutions and remain front-sight focused on the right way forward.

First, you must know your unique offer as an individual, team, or business so you can identify what you must do and what you can delegate to others. Then you must declutter your internal and external environments so you can see simple solutions more easily.

When your clutter isn't bogging you down, you literally and metaphorically have more room for the things you need.

PRINCIPLE 3: BULLETPROOF YOUR MISSION

There is a reason more than 95 percent of new business ventures fail within five years: Folks don't have the skills to eliminate uncertainty and mitigate risk.

To avoid my costly mistakes, you must bulletproof your mission, which means doing the following 4 things;

1. Select High-Value Targets

Choosing the right targets from the outset helps bulletproof your mission because you'll know exactly where your resources are best directed.

The FITS (Fit, Importance, Timing, Simplicity) process is designed it to determine which targets best fit the mission you've chosen, which in turn should connect to your purpose as discussed with Principle 1. FITS asks you to look at each possible target with regard to four criteria: - Does this target fit your skills and your team and does it give you a good return on your investment? - How important is this target to achieving mission success? - Is the timing optimal for pursuing this target? - Is the target simple and clear?"

It takes discipline to focus only on high-value targets instead of giving in to the temptation of the low-hanging fruit life serves up daily.

2. Explore Your Options

The right path forward is rarely crystal clear. Often we have multiple options for satisfying our goals, but they won't rank equally as best for your situation. The key is to scope out your options so you can make the strongest decision for ensuring mission success.

Once you've selected your high-value targets, you will use the PROP process to explore your options for achieving them and zero in on the right path forward. This tool asks: - To identify your current priorities? - What are the realities of the situation? - What options do your targets suggest? - Which path forward will you select?

3. Communicate the Mission

If you can't communicate your mission, you won't get support, and worse, you may not recognize disparities between your vision and your stakeholders'.

You want people—whether they are potential partners, investors, or holders of other support roles—to understand clearly what you want to do, why you're doing it, what resources are required, and who's in charge.

The process of framing your mission as a story creates a visual mosaic of the mission plan, which is easy to digest for the team and others who need to be in the know, such as logistical partners and higher-up decision makers.

4. Dirt-Dive the Mission

Once you've clearly and visually defined your mission, you need to reconnect with it viscerally. Review it each morning individually and then review it together with your team in your weekly meetings.

Ideally, you will want to include both mental and physical components when you dirt-dive your mission. However, sometimes a physical rehearsal may not make sense or be possible. At minimum, it's always a good idea to dirt-dive through a mental rehearsal.

When you and your team connect with a mission regularly, when you work out all the kinks and anticipate all the potential problems, your familiarization will enable you to face the real thing as if it were just another day.

PRINCIPLE 4: DO TODAY WHAT OTHERS WON'T

To become the best version of yourself possible, you must suck it up and do the work!

Find Your 20X Factor

“You guys are capable of at least twenty times what you think you are.”

Hard work builds character, while a soft life weakens it. Comfort imprisons us in a low-grade fear of suffering. We naturally shy from things that hurt, not understanding how much this pattern debilitates us and keeps us from experiencing life at its fullest. We must define our comfort zone, and then get the heck out of it! The 20X factor is all about embracing a personal culture of mighty effort.

Embrace the Suck

SEAL trainers often say, “Pain is weakness leaving the body.” This encouraging metaphor describes a fascinating alchemy: the transmutation of training-induced pain into confidence when performing, whether on the battlefield, playing field, or in life.

The first step to embracing the suck is to step up and face your fear of suffering. Pain is your body’s way of telling you that security is threatened because something is out of whack. However, when you consistently experience the personal growth that accrues from deliberately putting yourself out of balance, such as with hard workouts, you begin to embrace that temporary pain for the rewards it brings.

One simple technique for embracing the suck of any painful situation is to change your state by immediately focusing on something else that is positive . . . and then smiling or even laughing.

Build the Three Ds (Discipline, Drive, and Determination)

Our habits define us: Solid character habits define a solid character. Start putting your mind to developing the character habits of discipline, drive, and determination.

- Discipline is the spark that ignites the fire of a habit. Those fires must be lit daily, and discipline provides the original source energy. Discipline isn’t built or acquired overnight. It starts with baby steps.
- Drive is the motivation behind your actions. How do we build drive? First,

- connect a major life interest to your purpose and define a mission around it.
- Determination is the long-view commitment to the mission. When everyone else is done for the day, the determined stay for an extra hour honing a skill, working on their gear, or studying something new.

PRINCIPLE 5: FORGE MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Making excellence a habit will take you a long way down the road toward every mission you focus on and enable you to satisfy your purpose, leading to a happier, more fulfilling, and meaningful life. But how exactly do you continue to hang on after others have let go?

Control Your Response

Your immediate and unconscious reaction to surviving such a moment, whether literally or figuratively, is likely to take a deep “phew” breath, followed by several more. Deep breathing is the universal shutoff switch to stress, but it’s also useful proactively to maintain your focus, as we learned with Principle 2.

Control Your Attention

Attention control is the SEAL version of positive self-talk. At the simplest level, it means to shift our attention from the negative by talking to ourselves positively.

It’s well known that whatever we focus on tends to become our reality, even if the focus is on not wanting something. Negative input can plant seeds of destruction in our subconscious mind, which then partners with our conscious mind in a conspiracy for failure.

The art of positive self-talk is simply paying attention to your inner dialogue and directing it toward positive, performance-based language.

Develop Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience is instrumental to your ability to forge mental toughness—it’s the power to bounce back quickly when circumstances conspire against you.

One must speak, visualize, and feel positively in order to be aligned in positivity. Otherwise, the emotional states counteract the positive self-talk and imagery, leading to weak results. The starting point is emotional awareness: Are you emotionally positive or negative?

Set Effective Goals

Each time you set a goal—whether it is big or long-term —you ignite a spiral of success that feeds your mental toughness. You’re giving yourself something to strive for (a “why”), something to visualize and focus on for positive momentum. And each time you achieve your goal, the thrill of success and the surge of confidence you receive expand your sense of self, enhance your emotional resilience, and make it that much easier to tackle the next mission. But you’re much more likely to achieve your goals if they are set properly in the first place.

Well-stated goals are precise, positive, and written down. They are also measurable and have an associated, and appropriate, timeframe. Your goals must be achievable in that you have the potential to accomplish them with the skills and resources available to you. Which leads to the last element of proper goal setting: Your goals must be realistic for you and your life situation. These attributes form the acronym SMART—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely or Time-Bound.

PRINCIPLE 6: BREAK THINGS

Apply Total Commitment

For elite operators, commitment doesn’t mean you already know how you’re going to get it done. “Find a way or make a way” was our motto in the SEALs. It means you will commit and then figure it out. Since no challenge is completely new or unique, to break the mold of current thinking, you’ll want to meld ideas from the past with informed predictions about the future to come up with new solutions for the present.

Fail Forward Fast

Moving forward despite chaotic conditions—and sometimes because of them—is inherently risky, and since we don’t shy from risk in the Way of the SEAL, you will inevitably experience failure, probably more often than you succeed, actually.

The good news is that, failure is not as shameful as it once might have been—it’s become almost commonplace for an individual to lose his job or to see her business go belly-up. In today’s fast-paced world, new technologies change industries overnight.

With the business, social, and political landscapes shifting like quicksand, “failing forward fast” is more important now than ever. When you deliberately break something, you must shift your perspective so that you both expect and welcome failure—you will seek it out because that is where the opportunities for personal

and professional growth lie hidden. In fact, you're getting it out of the way, knowing that only failure will bring the insights and lessons necessary to remake things better.

Failing forward fast allows everyone to learn and gain momentum together in a rapid process. Failure is simply a step in a learning process that looks like this:

1. Try something new.
2. Fail.
3. Analyze (a) the lessons we learned, and (b) how we can modify our approach to gain momentum and prevent the failure again.
4. Implement changes for the next iteration.
5. Incorporate the insights personally and at the team level to shift your thinking for another go-round, and perhaps adjust the system or process itself to reflect the new knowledge.
6. Try it again and repeat steps 2 through 5 until you've succeeded in your mission.

Navigate Gaps for Opportunity

Life will bring you plenty of opportunity in the form of failure and, as you embrace the concept of failing forward fast with intention, you will accelerate toward opportunities for learning and growth. But as a WOS leader, you can and should also proactively seek out opportunities for breaking things so you can remake them better.

The speed of technological advancement has accelerated change in all areas of commerce, government, and our personal lives. As these new realities depart from the old boundary lines, gaps open, and in these gaps arise numerous opportunities. During transition periods such as we are currently experiencing, there will be more chaos, more reality gaps, and more opportunities. These opportunities are yours to grab.

Innovate and Adapt Quickly

After risk aversion and fear of failure, indecision is perhaps the most common reason for that innovation-killing standstill we call inertia. The thing is, any plan is better than no plan, and a good plan executed now is far better than a perfect plan executed too late.

You need to get comfortable with a "good enough" plan and develop conviction in the belief that your decisions will improve as you fail forward fast and tap into your resources.

You can't allow a fear of failure to keep you from ever starting! Let your intuition guide you. Your perspective will shift as you act, which is a good thing, and you'll tighten things up as you go. So, after taking a moment to assess the situation, make a decision, use the tools and take action as soon as possible.

PRINCIPLE 7: BUILD YOUR INTUITION

Most of your creativity and some of your best ideas will come from the hidden inner mind of your subconscious. Once you learn to harness this powerful intelligence, you will break through to new levels of awareness and accomplishments.

Expand Your Awareness

Awareness is the ability to pay close attention to the whole and the parts of a situation simultaneously. We want to be able to take it all in while also maintaining an attention to detail.

Intuition development requires us to expand our range of awareness and tap into our subconscious minds at will. The art of using your intuition is to learn by absorbing more information and then accessing it in a sensible form. This skill can help us make better decisions and avoid danger or problems, especially on the fly or in chaotic situations.

Your awareness does expand naturally as you age, travel, and take in more experiences. However, you can still be closed to the deeper wisdom within you if you remain in your head all the time. Expand your awareness deliberately by getting out of your head and deepening your connection to your senses and your subconscious genius.

Strengthen Your Sensory Perception

Slowing down and engaging the senses fosters a sense of mindfulness.

Mindfulness is a practice that leads to a deeper connection with your inner self, a more present state of awareness through which your wisdom can flow. To facilitate this, you want to develop your sensory perception, which means that you take in more information through each of your senses.

Develop your sensory perception by tuning into and turning on your senses.

Uncover Your Background of Obviousness

Life experiences, especially those from early childhood, can remain with us a long time. We store what we need to actively remember in order to survive and thrive—in our memory centers. The bulk of the details are imprinted at a deep, subconscious level. They often solidify into negative or destructive beliefs, which then drive our behavior in subtle ways for years after the experience itself. Your Background of Obviousness (BOO). That's because they are hidden in plain sight, obvious to others but not to you.

If you want to succeed at the highest levels, you must align the inner with the outer. This theme repeats itself in this book because it is a base requirement for many of the techniques to work at maximum effectiveness. Often this means you will have to reconnect with or relive your hidden experiences.

Recap your past and tune in with how you developed the beliefs and behaviors you have now, many of which may be holding you back or interfering with your ability to make good decisions.

Open Up to Your Inner Wisdom

The next stage of this process is to open up a channel for your subconscious mind to communicate with you more clearly. Providing more detailed information than a simple feeling in your gut, and a tool for clearing out any baggage that clouds your present decision making.

PRINCIPLE 8: THINK OFFENSE, ALL THE TIME

Whether at home, at work, or even out having fun, how you think and deal with opportunities and threats will determine whether you are the victor or victim. Destiny can strike anytime, anywhere. For success in the Way of the SEAL, you must develop your winning attitude and become a more offense-oriented leader.

Develop Unwavering Confidence

Make an honest assessment of the language that you use on a daily basis. Do you use negative or “slow down” words? Practice using new language daily and journal your findings every week. Keep at this until it becomes a new habit and second nature.

Activate Your Radar

Like a SEAL, you must learn to act aggressively and rapidly when you become aware of the threats facing you. You must also take advantage of opportunities by innovating and adapting, doing the unexpected to keep your competition off

balance.

Do the Unexpected

Doing the unexpected fundamentally asks you to look at things from a different angle than everyone else. When you train yourself to see what others don't see, then you can unlock your innate creativity. People generally expect that others will follow "the rules," which may literally be rules as in a competition or may be somewhat more abstract as in cultural norms. So, it naturally follows that doing the unexpected often means breaking the rules.

Execute with Velocity and Agility

In business, speed—or velocity—keeps you ahead of the competition and keeps them off balance, surprising them at every turn. Apple gets kudos for their creativity, but Samsung gets the award for speed—they stunned the iPad creator with how quickly they produced a competing tablet.

You are well aware that the pace of change is accelerating as technology pushes the reaches of globalization. Remain static and you lose momentum, visibility, and opportunities. Eventually you become stuck in a cryogenic deep freeze as the world blazes by. Like the SEALs, WOS leaders set the conditions for rapid execution by: • trusting those in the field • applying standard operating procedures • utilizing a shoot, move, and communicate process