

THE MAGIC OF THINKING BIG BY DAVID SCHWARTZ | BOOK SUMMARY

The Magic of Thinking Big contains the secrets to getting the most out of your job, your marriage and family life. The book illustrates how you don't need to be incredibly intelligent or unique to have the success you want, you simply need to think in a way that cultivates success. By thinking big you can motivate yourself to improve your work life, earn more money and get more happiness and fulfillment out of life.

BELIEVE YOU CAN SUCCEED AND YOU WILL

Here are the three guides to acquiring and strengthening the power of belief:

1. Think success, don't think failure. At work, in your home, substitute success thinking for failure thinking. When you face a difficult situation, think, "I'll win," not "I'll probably lose." When you compete with someone else, think, "I'm equal to the best," not "I'm outclassed." When opportunity appears, think "I can do it," never "I can't." Let the master thought "I will succeed" dominate your thinking process. Thinking success conditions your mind to create plans that produce success. Thinking failure does the exact opposite. Failure thinking conditions the mind to think other thoughts that produce failure.
2. Remind yourself regularly that you are better than you think you are. Successful people are not supermen. Success does not require a superintellect. Nor is there anything mystical about success. And success isn't based on luck. Successful people are just ordinary folks who have developed belief in themselves and what they do. Never—yes, never—sell yourself short.
3. Believe Big. The size of your success is determined by the size of your belief. Think little goals and expect little achievements. Think big goals and win big success. Remember this, too! Big ideas and big plans are often easier—certainly no more difficult – than small ideas and small plans.

CURE YOURSELF OF EXCUSITIS, THE FAILURE DISEASE

Excusitis appears in a wide variety of forms, but the worst types of this disease are health excusitis, intelligence excusitis, age excusitis, and luck excusitis.

1. *"But My Health Isn't Good."*

1. Refuse to talk about your health. The more you talk about an ailment, even the common cold, the worse it seems to get. Talking about bad health is like putting fertilizer on weeds. Besides, talking about your health is a bad habit. It bores people. It makes one appear self-centered and old-maidish. One may (and let me emphasize the word may) get a little sympathy, but one doesn't get respect and loyalty by being a chronic complainer.
2. Refuse to worry about your health. Dr. Walter Alvarez, emeritus consultant to the world-famous Mayo Clinic, wrote recently, "I always beg worriers to exercise some self-control. For instance, when I saw this man (a fellow who was convinced he had a diseased gallbladder although eight separate X-ray examinations showed that the organ was perfectly normal), I begged him to quit getting his gallbladder X-rayed. I have begged hundreds of heart-conscious men to quit getting electrocardiograms made."
3. Be genuinely grateful that your health is as good as it is. There's an old saying worth repeating often: "I felt sorry for myself because I had ragged shoes until I met a man who had no feet." Instead of complaining about "not feeling good," it's far better to be glad you are as healthy as you are. Just being grateful for the health you have is powerful vaccination against developing new aches and pains and real illness.
4. Remind yourself often, "It's better to wear out than rust out." Life is yours to enjoy. Don't waste it. Don't pass up living by thinking yourself into a hospital bed.

2. *"But You've Got to Have Brains to Succeed."*

1. Never underestimate your own intelligence, and never overestimate the intelligence of others. Don't sell yourself short. Concentrate on your assets. Discover your superior talents. Remember, it's not how many brains you've got that matters. Rather, it's how you use your brains that counts. Manage your brains instead of worrying about how much IQ you've got.
2. Remind yourself several times daily, "My attitudes are more important than my intelligence." At work and at home practice positive attitudes. See the reasons why you can do it, not the reasons why you can't. Develop an "I'm winning" attitude. Put your intelligence to creative positive use. Use it to find ways to win, not to prove you will lose.

3. Remember that the ability to think is of much greater value than the ability to memorize facts. Use your mind to create and develop ideas, to find new and better ways to do things. Ask yourself, "Am I using my mental ability to make history, or am I using it merely to record history made by others?"

3. *"It's No Use. I'm Too Old (or Too Young)."*

1. Look at your present age positively. Think, "I'm still young," not "I'm already old." Practice looking forward to new horizons and gain the enthusiasm and the feel of youth.
2. Compute how much productive time you have left. Remember, a person age thirty still has 80 percent of his productive life ahead of him. And the fifty-year-old still has a big 40 percent—the best 40 percent—of his opportunity years left. Life is actually longer than most people think!
3. Invest future time in doing what you really want to do. It's too late only when you let your mind go negative and think it's too late. Stop thinking "I should have started years ago." That's failure thinking. Instead think, "I'm going to start now, my best years are ahead of me." That's the way successful people think.

4. *"But My Case Is Different; I Attract Bad Luck."*

1. Accept the law of cause and effect. Take a second look at what appears to be someone's "good luck." You'll find that not luck but preparation, planning, and success-producing thinking preceded his good fortune. Take a second look at what appears to be someone's "bad luck." Look, and you'll discover certain specific reasons. Mr. Success receives a setback; he learns and profits. But when Mr. Mediocre loses, he fails to learn.
2. Don't be a wishful thinker. Don't waste your mental muscles dreaming of an effortless way to win success. We don't become successful simply through luck. Success comes from doing those things and mastering those principles that produce success. Don't count on luck for promotions, victories, the good things in life. Luck simply isn't designed to deliver these good things. Instead, just concentrate on developing those qualities in yourself that will make you a winner.

BUILD CONFIDENCE AND DESTROY FEAR

1. Action cures fear. Isolate your fear and then take constructive action. Inaction—doing nothing about a situation—strengthens fear and destroys confidence.
2. Make a supreme effort to put only positive thoughts in your memory bank. Don't let negative, self-deprecatory thoughts grow into mental monsters. Simply refuse to recall unpleasant events or situations.
3. Put people in proper perspective. Remember, people are more alike, much more alike, than they are different. Get a balanced view of the other fellow. He is just another human being. And develop an understanding attitude. Many people will bark, but it's a rare one who bites.
4. Practice doing what your conscience tells you is right. This prevents a poisonous guilt complex from developing. Doing what's right is a very practical rule for success.
5. Make everything about you say, "I'm confident, really confident." Practice these little techniques in your day-to-day activities: Be a front seater. Make eye contact. Walk 25 percent faster. Speak up. Smile big.

HOW TO THINK BIG

1. Don't sell yourself short. Conquer the crime of self-deprecation. Concentrate on your assets. You're better than you think you are.
2. Use the big thinker's vocabulary. Use big, bright, cheerful words. Use words that promise victory, hope, happiness, pleasure; avoid words that create unpleasant images of failure, defeat, grief.
3. Stretch your vision. See what can be, not just what is. Practice adding value to things, to people, and to yourself.
4. Get the big view of your job. Think, really think your present job is important. That next promotion depends mostly on how you think toward your present job.
5. Think above trivial things. Focus your attention on big objectives. Before getting involved in a petty matter, ask yourself, "Is it really important?"
Grow big by thinking big!

HOW TO THINK AND DREAM CREATIVELY

1. Believe it can be done. When you believe something can be done, your mind will find the ways to do it. Believing a solution paves the way to solution. Eliminate “impossible,” “won’t work,” “can’t do,” “no use trying” from your thinking and speaking vocabularies.
2. Don’t let tradition paralyze your mind. Be receptive to new ideas. Be experimental. Try new approaches. Be progressive in everything you do.
3. Ask yourself daily, “How can I do better?” There is no limit to self-improvement. When you ask yourself, “How can I do better?” sound answers will appear. Try it and see.
4. Ask yourself, “How can I do more?” Capacity is a state of mind. Asking yourself this question puts your mind to work to find intelligent shortcuts. The success combination in business is: Do what you do better (improve the quality of your output), and: Do more of what you do (increase the quantity of your output).
5. Practice asking and listening. Ask and listen, and you’ll obtain raw material for reaching sound decisions. Remember: Big people monopolize the listening; small people monopolize the talking.
6. Stretch your mind. Get stimulated. Associate with people who can help you think of new ideas, new ways of doing things. Mix with people of different occupational and social interests.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE

Upgrading your thinking upgrades your actions, and this produces success. Here is an easy way to help you make more of yourself by thinking like important people think. Use the form below as a guide.

1. Look important; it helps you think important. Your appearance talks to you. Be sure it lifts your spirits and builds your confidence. Your appearance talks to others. Make certain it says, “Here is an important person: intelligent, prosperous, and dependable.”
2. Think your work is important. Think this way, and you will receive mental signals on how to do your job better. Think your work is important, and your subordinates will think their work is important too.

3. Give yourself a pep talk several times daily. Build a “sell-yourself-to-yourself” commercial. Remind yourself at every opportunity that you’re a first-class person.
4. In all of life’s situations, ask yourself, “Is this the way an important person thinks?” Then obey the answer.

MANAGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT: GO FIRST CLASS

1. Be environment-conscious. Just as body diet makes the body, mind diet makes the mind.
2. Make your environment work for you, not against you. Don’t let suppressive forces—the negative, you-can’t-do-it people—make you think defeat.
3. Don’t let small-thinking people hold you back. Jealous people want to see you stumble. Don’t give them that satisfaction.
4. Get your advice from successful people. Your future is important. Never risk it with freelance advisors who are living failures.
5. Get plenty of psychological sunshine. Circulate in new groups. Discover new and stimulating things to do.
6. Throw thought poison out of your environment. Avoid gossip. Talk about people, but stay on the positive side.
7. Go first class in everything you do. You can’t afford to go any other way.

MAKE YOUR ATTITUDES YOUR ALLIES

1. Grow the “I’m activated” attitude. Results come in proportion to the enthusiasm invested. Three things to do to activate yourself are:
Dig into it deeper. When you find yourself uninterested in something, dig in and learn more about it. This sets off enthusiasm.
Life up everything about you: your smile, your handshake, your talk, even your walk. Act alive.
Broadcast good news. No one ever accomplished anything positive telling bad news.

2. Grow the “You are important” attitude. People do more for you when you make them feel important. Remember to do these things:
Show appreciation at every opportunity. Make people feel important.
Call people by name.
3. Grow the “Service first” attitude, and watch money take care of itself. Make it a rule in everything you do: give people more than they expect to get.

THINK RIGHT TOWARD PEOPLE

1. Make yourself lighter to lift. Be likable. Practice being the kind of person people like. This wins their support and puts fuel in your success-building program.
2. Take the initiative in building friendships. Introduce yourself to others at every opportunity. Make sure you get the other person’s name straight, and make certain he gets your name straight too. Drop a personal note to your new friends you want to get to know better.
3. Accept human differences and limitations. Don’t expect anyone to be perfect. Remember, the other person has a right to be different. And don’t be a reformer.
4. Tune in Channel P, the Good Thoughts Station. Find qualities to like and admire in a person, not things to dislike. And don’t let others prejudice your thinking about a third person. Think positive thoughts towards people—and get positive results.
5. Practice conversation generosity. Be like successful people. Encourage others to talk. Let the other person talk to you about his views, his opinions, his accomplishments.
6. Practice courtesy all the time. It makes other people feel better. It makes you feel better too.
7. Don’t blame others when you receive a setback. Remember, how you think when you lose determines how long it will be until you win.

GET THE ACTION HABIT

1. Be an activationist. Be someone who does things. Be a doer, not a don’t-er.

2. Don't wait until conditions are perfect. They never will be. Expect future obstacles and difficulties and solve them as they arise.
3. Remember, ideas alone won't bring success. Ideas have value only when you act upon them.
4. Use action to cure fear and gain confidence. Do what you fear, and fear disappears. Just try it and see.
5. Start your mental engine mechanically. Don't wait for the spirit to move you. Take action, dig in, and you move the spirit.
6. Think in terms of now. Tomorrow, next week, later, and similar words often are synonymous with the failure word, never. Be an "I'm starting right now" kind of person.
7. Get down to business—pronto. Don't waste time getting ready to act. Start acting instead.
8. Seize the initiative. Be a crusader. Pick up the ball and run. Be a volunteer. Show that you have the ability and ambition to do.

HOW TO TURN DEFEAT INTO VICTORY

The difference between success and failure is found in one's attitudes toward setbacks, handicaps, discouragements, and other disappointing situations.

Five guideposts to help you turn defeat into victory are:

1. Study setbacks to pave your way to success. When you lose, learn, and then go on to win next time.
2. Have the courage to be your own constructive critic. Seek out your faults and weaknesses and then correct them. This makes you a professional.
3. Stop blaming luck. Research each setback. Find out what went wrong. Remember, blaming luck never got anyone where he wanted to go.
4. Blend persistence with experimentation. Stay with your goal but don't beat your head against a stone wall. Try new approaches. Experiment.
5. Remember, there is a good side in every situation. Find it. See the good side and whip discouragement.

USE GOALS TO HELP YOU GROW

1. Get a clear fix on where you want to go. Create an image of yourself ten years from now.
2. Write out your ten-year plan. Your life is too important to be left to chance. Put down on paper what you want to accomplish in your work, your home, and your social departments.
3. Surrender yourself to your desires. Set goals to get more energy. Set goals to get things done. Set goals and discover the real enjoyment of living.
4. Let your major goal be your automatic pilot. When you let your goal absorb you, you'll find yourself making the right decisions to reach your goal.
5. Achieve your goal one step at a time. Regard each task you perform, regardless of how small it may seem, as a step toward your goal.
6. Build thirty-day goals. Day-by-day effort pays off.
7. Take detours in stride. A detour simply means another route. It should never mean surrendering the goal.
8. Invest in yourself. Purchase those things that build mental power and efficiency. Invest in education. Invest in idea starters.

HOW TO THINK LIKE A LEADER

1. Trade minds with the people you want to influence. It's easy to get others to do what you want them to do if you'll see things through their eyes. Ask yourself this question before you act: "What would I think of this if I exchanged places with the other person?"
2. Apply the "Be-Human" rule in your dealings with others. Ask, "What is the human way to handle this?" In everything you do, show that you put other people first. Just give other people the kind of treatment you like to receive. You'll be rewarded.
3. Think progress, believe in progress, push for progress. Think improvement in everything you do. Think high standards in everything you do. Over a period of time subordinates tend to become carbon copies of their chief. Be sure the

master copy is worth duplicating. Make this a personal resolution: “At home, at work, in community life, if it’s progress I’m for it.”

4. Take time out to confer with yourself and tap your supreme thinking power. Managed solitude pays off. Use it to release your creative power. Use it to find solutions to personal and business problems. So spend some time alone every day just for thinking. Use the thinking technique all great leaders use: confer with yourself.

HOW TO USE THE MAGIC OF THINKING BIG IN LIFE’S MOST CRUCIAL SITUATIONS

There is magic in thinking big. But it is so easy to forget. When you hit some rough spots, there is danger that your thinking will shrink in size. And when it does, you lose. Below are some brief guides for staying big when you’re tempted to use the small approach. Perhaps you’ll want to put these guides on small cards for even handier reference.

A. When Little People Try to Drive You Down, THINK BIG

To be sure, there are some people who want you to lose, to experience misfortune, to be reprimanded. But these people can’t hurt you if you’ll remember three things:

You win when you refuse to fight petty people. Fighting little people reduces you to their size. Stay big.

Expect to be sniped at. It’s proof you’re growing.

Remind yourself that snipers are psychologically sick. Be Big. Feel sorry for them.

Think Big Enough to be immune to the attacks of petty people.

B. When That “I-Haven’t-Got-What-It-Takes” Feeling Creeps Up on You, THINK BIG

Remember: if you think you are weak, you are. If you think you’re inadequate, you are. If you think you’re second-class, you are.

Whip that natural tendency to sell yourself short with these tools:

Look important. It helps you think important. How you look on the outside has a lot to do with how you feel on the inside.

Concentrate on your assets. Build a sell-yourself-to-yourself commercial and use it. Learn to supercharge yourself. Know your positive self.

Put other people in proper perspective. The other person is just another human being, so why be afraid of him?

Think Big Enough to see how good you really are!

C. When an Argument or Quarrel Seems Inevitable, THINK BIG.

Successfully resist the temptation to argue and quarrel by:

Asking yourself, “Honestly now, is this thing really important enough to argue about?”

Reminding yourself, you never gain anything from an argument but you always lose something.

Think Big Enough to see that quarrels, arguments, feuds, and fusses will never help you get where you want to go.

D. When You Feel Defeated, THINK BIG.

It is not possible to achieve large success without hardships and setbacks. But it is possible to live the rest of your life without defeat. Big thinkers react to setbacks this way:

Regard the setback as a lesson. Learn from it. Research it. Use it to propel you forward. Salvage something from every setback.

Blend persistence with experimentation. Back off and start afresh with a new approach.

Think Big Enough to see that defeat is a state of mind, nothing more.

E. When Romance Starts to Slip, THINK BIG

Negative, petty, “She’s-(He’s)-unfair-to-me-so-I’ll-get-even” type of thinking slaughters romance, destroys the affection that can be yours. Do this when things aren’t going right in the love department:

Concentrate on the biggest qualities in the person you want to love you. Put little things where they belong—in second place.

Do something special for your mate—and do it often.

Think Big Enough to find the secret to marital joys.

F. When You Feel Your Progress on the Job Is Slowing Down, THINK BIG

No matter what you do and regardless of your occupation, higher status, higher pay come from one thing: increasing the quality and quantity of your output. Do this:

Think, “I can do better.” The best is not unattainable. There is room for doing everything better. Nothing in this world is being done as well as it could be. And when you think, “I can do better,” ways to do better will appear. Thinking “I can do better” switches on your creative power.

Think Big Enough to see that if you put service first, money takes care of itself.

In the words of Publilius Syrus:

A wise man will be master of his mind,

A fool will be its slave.