

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE 48 LAWS OF POWER  
ROBERT GREENE

6 KEYS TO

MASTERY



THE SECRET TO ULTIMATE  
POWER OVER YOURSELF  
AND YOUR CRAFT

## **The path to power is surprisingly simple.**

For great masters, past and present, it has always been the same. For Da Vinci, Napoleon, Paul Graham, Santiago Calatrava, Thomas Edison, Temple Grandin and countless others.

At the root of their story is a simple process that leads to mastery—one that is accessible to all of us:

- Enter the career path that suits your uniqueness, that sparks your deepest curiosity and interests.
- Stay focused and fluid.
- Learn your environment inside and out.
- Creative powers will come to you.

**As will power and mastery.**

**What follows are the keys to this path.**

**How to obtain mastery—  
a total command**

**of reality,**

**other people,**

**of ourselves.**

# OUR ULTIMATE POWER

“Everyone holds his fortune in his own hands, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure.

But it’s the same with that type of artistic activity as with all others:

We are merely born with the *capability* to do it.

The skill to mold the material into what we want must be learned and attentively cultivated.”

—*Goethe*

# DISCOVER YOUR CALLING:

## *THE LIFE'S TASK*

You possess a kind of inner force that seeks to guide you toward your Life's Task—what you are meant to accomplish in the time that you have to live. In childhood this force was clear to you. It directed you toward activities and subjects that fit your natural inclinations, that sparked a curiosity that was deep and primal. In the intervening years, the force tends to fade in and out as you listen more to parents and peers, to the daily anxieties that wear away at you. This can be the source of your unhappiness—your lack of connection to who you are and what makes you unique. The first move toward mastery is always inward—learning who you really are and reconnecting with that innate force. Knowing it with clarity, you will find your way to the proper career path and everything else will fall into place. It is never too late to start this process.

# **SUBMIT TO REALITY:** ***THE IDEAL APPRENTICESHIP***

After your formal education, you enter the most critical phase in your life—a second, practical education known as The Apprenticeship. Every time you change careers or acquire new skills, you reenter this phase of life. The dangers are many. If you are not careful, you will succumb to insecurities, become embroiled in emotional issues and conflicts that will dominate your thoughts; you will develop fears and learning disabilities that you will carry with you throughout your life. Before it is too late you must learn the lessons and follow the path established by the greatest Masters, past and present—a kind of Ideal Apprenticeship that transcends all fields. In the process you will master the necessary skills, discipline your mind, and transform yourself into an independent thinker, prepared for the creative challenges on the way to mastery.



# III

## ABSORB THE MASTER'S POWER: *THE MENTOR DYNAMIC*

Life is short, and your time for learning and creativity is limited. Without any guidance, you can waste valuable years trying to gain knowledge and practice from various sources. Instead, you must follow the example set by Masters throughout the ages and find the proper mentor. The mentor-protégé relationship is the most efficient and productive form of learning. The right mentors know where to focus your attention and how to challenge you. Their knowledge and experience become yours. They provide immediate and realistic feedback on your work, so you can improve more rapidly. Through an intense person-to-person interaction, you absorb a way of thinking that contains great power and can be adapted to your individual spirit. Choose the mentor who best fits your needs and connects to your Life's Task. Once you have internalized their knowledge, you must move on and never remain in their shadow. Your goal is always to surpass your mentors in mastery and brilliance.

# IV

## SEE PEOPLE AS THEY ARE: *SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE*

Often the greatest obstacle to our pursuit of mastery comes from the emotional drain we experience in dealing with the resistance and manipulations of the people around us. If we are not careful, our minds become absorbed in endless political intrigues and battles. The principal problem we face in the social arena is our naïve tendency to project onto people our emotional needs and desires of the moment. We misread their intentions and react in ways that cause confusion or conflict. Social intelligence is the ability to see people in the most realistic light possible. By moving past our usual self-absorption, we can learn to focus deeply on others, reading their behavior in the moment, seeing what motivates them, and discerning any possible manipulative tendencies. Navigating smoothly the social environment, we have more time and energy to focus on learning and acquiring skills. Success attained without this intelligence is not true mastery and will not last.



# AWAKEN THE DIMENSIONAL MIND: *THE CREATIVE-ACTIVE*

As you accumulate more skills and internalize the rules that govern your field, your mind will want to become more active, seeking to use this knowledge in ways that are more suited to your inclinations. What will impede this natural creative dynamic from flourishing is not a lack of talent, but your attitude. Feeling anxious and insecure, you will tend to turn conservative with your knowledge, preferring to fit into the group and sticking to the procedures you have learned. Instead, you must force yourself in the opposite direction. As you emerge from your apprenticeship, you must become increasingly bold. Instead of feeling complacent about what you know, you must expand your knowledge to related fields, giving your mind fuel to make new associations between different ideas. You must experiment and look at problems from all possible angles. As your thinking grows more fluid your mind will become increasingly dimensional, seeing more and more aspects of reality. In the end, you will turn against the very rules you have internalized, shaping and reforming them to suit your spirit. Such originality will bring you to the heights of power.

# FUSE THE INTUITIVE WITH THE RATIONAL: *MASTERY*

All of us have access to a higher form of intelligence, one that can allow us to see more of the world, to anticipate trends, to respond with speed and accuracy to any circumstance. This intelligence is cultivated by deeply immersing ourselves in a field of study and staying true to our inclinations, no matter how unconventional our approach might seem to others. Through such intense immersion over many years we come to internalize and gain an intuitive feel for the complicated components of our field. When we fuse this intuitive feel with rational processes, we expand our minds to the outer limits of our potential and are able to see into the secret core of life itself. We then come to have powers that approximate the instinctive force and speed of animals, but with the added reach that our human consciousness brings us. This power is what our brains were designed to attain, and we will be naturally led to this type of intelligence if we follow our inclinations to their ultimate ends.

“Genius too does nothing but learn first how to lay bricks then how to build, and continually seek for material and continually form itself around it.

Every activity of man is amazingly complicated, not only that of the genius: but none is a ‘miracle.’

—*Nietzsche*

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DESIGN BY MATT RADCLIFFE