



# Book Flight Plan

## The Real Secret of Success

Brian Tracy  
Berrett-Koehler, 2008  
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## Recommendation

Many regard Brian Tracy as the paladin of platitudes, but that doesn't mean his message isn't worthwhile. The old verities – Work hard! Think positive! You can achieve anything you put your mind to! – remain eternally valid. That’s why motivational authors like Tracy depend on them so heavily. Such venerable homilies continue to pack a punch. As Abraham Lincoln said, “God must love the common man, he made so many of them.” And, in contrast, author Philip Wylie said, “God must hate the common man, he made them so common.” In the end, everything comes down to personal taste and attitude. *BooksInShort* believes the acid test for Tracy’s books is: Do they help you? This particular offering warmly and accessibly charts a plan for taking hold of your life by using the metaphor of an airplane flight. See if it helps you take off.

## Take-Aways

- Establish firm goals by writing them down.
- Examine all of the options available to help you realize your goals.
- Develop an action plan to reach your targets.
- Prepare for all contingencies.
- Take courageous action to move ahead.
- Expect problems, but do not let them steer you off course.
- Adjust your “flight plan” as needed.
- Enhance your skills to get ahead.
- Put your subconscious mind to work to attain your objectives.
- Once you are on your journey to self-achievement, do not quit.

## Summary

### “The Real Secret of Success”

Do you fly often? If so, you may be surprised to learn that whenever you are in the air, various elements constantly blow your plane off course. Indeed, planes remain strictly on course only 1% of the time. Nevertheless, like magic, most planes arrive at their destinations just as scheduled. Your life is like a plane flight. You will be off course more often than not, but you can still reach your destination on time. You can achieve your goals and become the person that you want to be. What you require to accomplish these objectives is your own personal “flight plan.” With it, you can get exactly where you want, even if life constantly blows you off your original path.

Want to get started? Every trip begins with a first step. On this journey, you will need to take 12 steps in all. Let the journey begin. The trick is to launch yourself.

## Step 1 – “Choose Your Destination”

Most people want the same things from life. They want to feel healthy and fit, and to live a long time. They want to enjoy their jobs and earn nice incomes. They want comforting relationships with others. And they want to become prosperous so money is no longer an issue. Are these also your goals? If so, do you believe you can achieve them? If you have a good attitude, you will feel confident that you can get what you want from life. If you have a bad attitude, you will be sure that you cannot. Which attitude do you think will be the most productive? Become a “glass half-full” person. “Glass half-empty” people get nowhere. Be optimistic that you will get what you want from life. Picture an ideal life for yourself. The ideal partner. The ideal job. The ideal body. The ideal bank account. Note the word is “ideal” – not the word “perfect.” Set goals for yourself that are optimistic and also realistic. Here are four tools to help you conceptualize your ideal future:

1. **“Verbalization”** – Write down your goals for an ideal life.
2. **“Visualization”** – Picture yourself in the future. You can’t be it if you can’t see it.
3. **“Emotionalization”** – Imagine how content and happy you will feel when you achieve your goals. Experience these feelings. Make them real.
4. **“Rationalization”** – List the reasons to achieve your goals, along with their benefits.

“Your thoughts create your reality.”

Don’t look ahead just a week or a month. Adopt a long-range view. See yourself in the future. Now, imagine the steps you take today to get where you want to be later.

## Step 2 – “Review Your Flight Options”

If you fly from Miami to New York, your plane could stop in Atlanta. It could stop in Memphis, or even in Washington, D.C. No matter where you are going, there are numerous ways to get there. Similarly, you have options to use to attain your goals. If one of your options doesn’t work out, move right on to the next. List all of the options available to help you achieve your goals. For example, if your plan is to become wealthy, you might include these options: Start a new enterprise, purchase an existing business, buy real estate or enter into a lucrative franchise agreement. As you can see, the possibilities are endless. Refer back to your list as you engage your plan to remind yourself that you don’t have to settle for second best. If you don’t accomplish what you want at first, don’t lower your sights. Try a new approach. Is financial prosperity your goal? Then be prepared for what this will entail. The typical millionaire has spent more than 20 years working hard and doing without to attain his or her wealth. Expect to do the same. In life, it is important to be optimistic – but also realistic. And remember: “Hope is not a plan.”

## Step 3 – “Write Your Flight Plan”

A goal without a plan is just a wish. A wish is no different really than hoping the tooth fairy will leave five dollars under your pillow. Goals can’t become a reality if you do not have a plan to achieve them. Make your goals not only realistic, but also clear and well thought-out. Flesh them out as much as possible. If your goal is to become prosperous, write down that you will have \$500,000 in the bank by the time you are 50. Here are seven important steps for goal setting:

1. Be highly specific about each of your goals.
2. Write out each of the goals that you have.
3. Establish firm deadlines.
4. List all the roadblocks that may stand in your way.
5. Write down any new skills you must acquire to attain your goals.
6. List the people whose help you will need to get what you want.
7. Develop a step-by-step action plan.

“The future belongs to the risk takers, not the security seekers.”

There is no mystery to succeeding. Your good attitude, clear goals, solid plans and hard work will make it happen. Focus on working toward your most essential goals. Take action today, now, this minute. Don’t wait. Procrastination is your worst enemy.

## Step 4 – “Prepare for Your Journey”

Smart travelers always carry a small bag with them when they board an airplane. It holds everything they will need while out of town, for example, extra underwear, shirt, pants and so on. This way, if the airline loses their luggage, they still will be able to function. Are you fully prepared for your new goal-bound journey? You are not if you haven’t planned out all possible outcomes. Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the world’s greatest military strategists. Did Napoleon leave things up to chance? “I believe in bad luck,” he said. “I believe I will always have it, and I plan accordingly.” Approach life like Napoleon handled battle. Plan on bad things happening. Make a checklist of the possibilities. Now, make allowances for each one. Have a backup plan ready if your initial plan does not work out. This way, obstacles will not knock you off your path.

## Step 5 – “Take Off at Full Throttle”

Okay, you have chosen your destination. And you have fully mapped out alternative routes to get there. Now it’s time to get on the plane and begin your journey. Unfortunately, this is the step that many people cannot handle. They are afraid to take action. Or they try to take off on their journey at something less than full throttle. This will never work. The pilot cannot get the plane off the runway at half-speed. Similarly, you cannot start your journey if you are not fully committed to it. Besides firm goals, a good plan and a list of options, there is something else you need: courage. Here’s some good news: You can teach yourself to be courageous. Indeed, your first step on your journey (into the unknown) is an act of courage! Be bold: Take that step. Each one after that will become much easier.

## **Step 6 – “Plan for Turbulence”**

For a pilot, turbulence is just part of the job. If every pilot turned his or her plane around at the first sign of turbulence, no one would ever get anywhere by air. Expect turbulence as you journey toward your goals. You cannot do anything about the obstacles that suddenly appear in your path. But you can control how you react to them. Plan in advance to remain calm, no matter what. When you run into an obstacle, think of solutions, not problems. Ask yourself questions to determine what you are up against. Guess what? When you start posing such questions, your mind automatically starts searching for the answers. These will be the solutions to your problems. Another tip: Think of your problems as “situations” or “challenges.” You rise to a challenge, but a problem weighs you down. The way you think about things makes all the difference.

## **Step 7 – “Make Continual Course Corrections”**

So what do you do when you are blown off course? The mark of a great leader is his or her ability to deal in a calm and straightforward manner with crises. Accept the fact that life will continuously test you. Indeed, welcome these tests. People grow when they overcome adversity. Therefore, anticipate emergencies. Napoleon Bonaparte’s army continuously fought its enemies from 1793 to 1815. In nearly every battle, Napoleon proved victorious. How could this be? Napoleon was masterful at planning things in advance. He anticipated every enemy movement and then made allowances for them. Adopt this kind of a mindset. Always be flexible in the face of change. Be willing to admit mistakes. Keep an open mind at all times. Of course, you cannot deal with an emergency if you do not know what you are up against. Line up the facts, and then analyze them. Learn to differentiate between the things you can control and the things you cannot. Focus on the things you can change. And always, no matter what, keep moving ahead.

## **Step 8 – “Accelerate Your Learning and Progress”**

You will realize a fuller and richer life if you enhance your skills. This enables you to increase your ability to earn. How do you do this? Study, read and constantly improve your mind. Attend seminars. Go back to school. Increase your “intellectual assets” – that is, your knowledge, expertise and skills. You will be worth far more as a result. Whatever your job is, make an indispensable contribution at work. This is the surest way to get paid more for what you do. Yes, all this takes time. But time is a constantly diminishing asset. Why not put it to productive use? When it comes to time, you either use it or you lose it.

## **Step 9 – “Activate Your Superconscious Mind”**

Many air travelers may be surprised to learn that when a plane is in the air, the pilots do little of the actual flying. The plane’s super sophisticated avionics system, including the vaunted autopilot, does most of the flying, and continually makes course corrections. Your subconscious mind is your autopilot system. It can do most of the work to help you get where you want to be in life. You just need to give it the opportunity to do so. Write down your goals. Doing so imprints or “programs” this information into your mind’s subconscious. Armed with this targeted information, the subconscious then goes into overdrive, working 24/7, to help you achieve your goals. Start today to tap into this amazing power. Make a “positive affirmation” regarding your goals. This is a “present-tense, positive, personal” declaration of what you plan to achieve. For example, “I will become a millionaire by age 50.” Use your mind’s eye to activate your subconscious powers. Visualize what things will be like when you achieve your goals. Paint a clear picture of this in your mind. Your subconscious is an amazingly potent internal mechanism that can help you achieve your dreams. Activate its vast power today.

## **Step 10 – “Avoid Shortcuts and Other Mirages”**

There is no magical way to fly from Albuquerque to New York City without traversing a good deal of the continental United States. You must put the miles in to get wherever you want to go. Similarly, there are no shortcuts to achieve your goals. Like all good things, your goals come with price tags. You must be ready to pick up the tab for your journey. When it comes to achieving your goals, there are no shortcuts.

## **Step 11 – “Master Your Fears”**

Inertia is your biggest enemy. This is the tendency to remain in place, regardless of how dispiriting such a place may be. Take action to move ahead. Find ways to overcome your fears. Doing so requires courage. Objectively analyze your fears by picking up a piece of paper and writing down these words: “What am I afraid of?” List everything that makes you fearful. Ask yourself three questions about each fear: 1) How does this fear prevent me from attaining my goals? 2) Does this fear provide me with some benefit (for example, by making you work harder to avoid poverty)? 3) How will my life get better if I rid myself of this fear? Find answers to these questions and you “turn fear into power.”

## **Step 12 – “Persist until You Succeed”**

To get where you want to be in life, you must stick to your “flight plan.” Do not let anything deter you from your path. Self-made millionaire Ross Perot says that most people “quit on the one-yard line.” Don’t be a quitter. Keep moving ahead at all costs. Score the touchdown. Win the game.

## **“Success Is Not an Accident”**

To summarize: Write out your goals and your plans to achieve them. Engage your plans through bold action. Expect difficulties and obstacles. Alter your course as necessary, but stay on track. Follow these simple steps and you will achieve your goals.

## **About the Author**

**Brian Tracy** is an author of popular self-help books that deal with such topics as leadership, sales and business strategy. Brian Tracy also leads seminars on these subjects. He is the founder and chairman of a California-based human-resources company.

