

# **Are You Ready to Succeed? Unconventional Strategies for Achieving Personal Mastery in Business and Life**

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## **1. How to Use This Book**

- a. Do the exercises in the order in which they are presented
- b. Really, really, really give the exercises your very best shot
- c. Begin keeping a journal – make an entry every day. Record whatever strikes you as you read the book and do the exercises.
- d. Note your emotional tenor on a day-to-day basis – how was it before you started the book and how is it changing?

## **2. What is a mental model?**

- a. It is a notion we have of how the world works, of how things ought to be done or are done.
- b. We use mental models to explain to our satisfaction why things happen.
- c. Most of the time we don't even recognize that we are using mental models.
- d. Everyone has mental models, but we call them by other names, like "the truth" or "reality" or "the facts." We believe them absolutely.

## **3. First important idea in your transformation: *Your life is a jumble of mental models. You use them for EVERYTHING.***

- a. Many of your mental models do not serve you well.
- b. ***Exercise: My Mental Models***
  - i. Take out your journal. On top of the page write four headings for columns: family, work, love and self.
  - ii. For the next ten minutes, your pen is not to leave the page. Just start writing down the first thing comes to your mind on each of the four topics.
  - iii. When the ten minutes is up put your journal away. You will use it later.

## **4. Second important idea, a truly earth-shaking revelation: *The world we live in, the one in which we experience such love, angst, and sorrow, IS NOT REAL!!!***

- a. We invented it. We made it out of our mental models and lived by their dictates.
  - b. It is a construct made by you. Nothing more. You live in it. Some parts are good. Many are not.
  - c. How dare I say they are not real? To be more precise: the hurt you feel is very real. The life you are living is real.
  - d. What you don't realize is that the life you are living is **A** reality. The mistake you are making is that you think it is **THE** reality.
5. Third important point: ***If your life is A reality, then you can do something about it. You can explore alternatives. You can steer in a different direction. You can create a different reality.***
- a. Think about your own life. Do you choose to live in a reality that is negative? Is there a toxic person in your life who inspires the mental model? Can this person push all of your buttons leaving you quivering with rage and frustration?
  - b. What you have done is taken your most valuable possession, your ability to be happy, and given it to someone else. Why would you want to do such a thing? But you do. Everyone does.
  - c. ***Exercise: The Alternative Reality***
    - i. Go back to your mental models exercise. Pick any one situation that is troubling you right now.
    - ii. You have constructed a "reality" around your situation. Most likely you believe that this is "the" reality.
    - iii. Explore its many dimensions carefully. Come up with an "alternative reality" for your situation, one that you like a whole lot better.
    - iv. It is important that YOU, personally, be able to accept the alternative you devise. Play around with other plausible scenarios.
    - v. Then pick the one alternative reality that is better than the one you are experiencing right now and is one you can plausibly accept.
    - vi. For the next week, live "as if" the alternative reality you have selected is true. Behave in accordance with it. Jettison your earlier mental model and adopt this one.
6. **What is mental chatter?**
- a. You have a companion. One that never leaves you. This constant companion is your mental chatter.

- b. If you observe your mind, there is always a monologue going on. It begins the moment you open your eyes in the morning and carries on every single second till you drift off to sleep at night.
- c. One of your most powerful and prevalent mental chatter patterns is your Voice of Judgment (dubbed VOJ).
- d. Your VOJ loves to put you down. Sometimes with a twenty pound sledgehammer and sometimes with a jeweler's mallet but the end result is always the same – it's critical of who you are and what you do.
- e. Your VOJ is equally ready to judge others or it can be gracious but the odds are that most of its pronouncements are decidedly negative.
- f. Over time, the negative judgments start to accumulate. Eventually they form a huge barrier that is placed squarely in front of you on the path to an ideal life.
- g. All of the judgments, the comparisons, the put-downs, come from values and beliefs that you picked up in passing. You have used them to create your mental models, hundreds of them.
- h. The good news is that once you become aware of what you have unconsciously let happen to you, you can fix it!
- i. ***Exercise: What's My Mental Chatter Like?***
  - i. This exercise helps you become aware of your mental chatter.
  - ii. You are simply going to observe this chatter without judging it.
  - iii. Look to see if there are patterns, repeated single thoughts, or simply random thoughts vanishing as swiftly as they arise.
  - iv. During the day, carry around your journal or a notebook. Categorize the types of mind chatter that you are bombarded with.
  - v. Create as many categories as you need to, but you will find it unwieldy to deal with more than six or eight.
  - vi. Notice your emotional undertones – sadness, fear, frustration, dissatisfaction, etc. It could be positive, too. Is there one dominant feeling throughout the day?
  - vii. Finally notice when external stimuli hijack your mental state - a radio news broadcast, a conversation, visual stimuli, etc.
  - viii. Do this exercise for two weeks.

- j. What You Will Get From This Exercise
  - i. Most people find this exercise extremely revelatory. The very act of observing it changes your mental chatter.
  - ii. The VOJ can be from 20 to 60 percent of your mental chatter and negative judgments typically outweigh positive ones by as much as ten to one.
  - iii. When you become aware of your judgments you gain some much needed control over your life. You decide whether you are going to build a reality on the foundation of a negative judgment.
- k. Your mental chatter picks up your models and applies them to your life.
  - i. It is very much a two-way street: The models influence your chatter and your chatter influences your mental models.
  - ii. Together, through constant interaction, they create the reality of your life – or at least, your perception of it.

## 7. **By Golly! I'll Stop That Mental Chatter!**

- a. If mental chatter is so negative why not stop it, once and for all? Try to stop your mental chatter and it will not take you too long to discover what others have – that ***you cannot!***
- b. It is impossible to extinguish your mental chatter. Any attempt to stanch its flow paradoxically energizes it and increases its intensity.
- c. The good news is that your mental chatter is actually not the enemy even though it may appear so.
- d. How do you control your mental chatter? You use a tool called "awareness," and it is all you will ever need.
  - i. When you become conscious of what you are permitting to germinate inside you, the weeds in your life will wither simply by exposing them to the light of awareness.
  - ii. Awareness gives you emotional control. The moment you become aware of the onset of the Voice of Judgment, an outward distraction, or an undertone of anger, hate, or fear, your conscious awareness will immediately diminish it.
  - iii. To use this tool effectively, however, requires, you will need a special companion.

## 8. The Witness: The Best Friend You Will Ever Have

- a. Remember the exercise where you dispassionately observed your mental chatter and categorized it? The guy who was observing was your Witness.
- b. Your Witness is a dispassionate observer. He never passes judgment. He merely observes. The Witness knows all the convoluted games you play with yourself.
- c. When you cultivate your Witness, you feel like you are living on two parallel tracks. You are doing things as you normally do, yet you are also watching yourself doing them.
- d. The advantage of making friends with your Witness is that he shows you with absolute clarity the many ways in which you frustrate yourself and act in self-defeating ways.
- e. As the Witness observes your behavior he calmly exposes you, and your models, to yourself. And that is how you start straightening out your life.

### f. ***Exercise: Present Moment Awareness***

- i. This exercise will bring your Witness to life.
- ii. Pick one day and commit to doing all your activities deliberately and unhurriedly. Focus intently on whatever you are doing one step at a time. No multi-tasking allowed.
- iii. Each time your mental chatter carries you away, just gently detach yourself and come back to the task at hand.
- iv. This is especially important when you are talking to someone: *Do not* get involved in your mental chatter, with the wonderful reply you are going to make, etc. Focus on the other person and what he/she is saying. *Really* notice the other person. *Really* listen.
- v. If you focus on the task at hand you will be astonished with the results. You will get far more done with much less stress.

### g. ***Exercise: Eating Mindfully***

- i. For seven consecutive days eat at least one meal in total silence. No reading, no television, radio or other background chatter. No friends, relatives or anyone to shoot the breeze. Just you and your food.

- ii. Pay close attention to the act of eating. Do not wolf down your meal. Chew slowly and thoughtfully. Recognize the subtle flavors.
- iii. Pay attention to the reactions of your body. Be aware of the pangs of hunger. When do they get sated?
- iv. Count how many times you normally chew your food before you swallow it, and double the number.
- v. You will find a dramatic reduction in your food intake if you do this conscientiously. It's a great help for those who want to lose weight.

#### 9. **Your Mind Is Precious: Protect It!**

- a. As your practice continues, your Witness grows stronger. He or she will become your protector.
- b. You need to protect your mind with the same ferocity as you protect your body. You have to be mindful of what you let in. Your Witness will help you observe who crosses your mental threshold.
- c. The Witness is your guard. The one who alerts you to the attackers who are trying to breach your walls and enter. Pay attention to your Witness. There is no one else looking out for you.
- d. Try to remember that when you are dealing with your mental chatter, force does not work – that is, in fact, counterproductive. Trying to suppress it energizes it.
- e. But observation accomplishes what force cannot. The Witness is a remarkable pacifier. Being aware of what you are doing brings change of its own volition. Do this persistently, and change *will* happen.

#### 10. **The Law of Increase**

- a. Here is a common, erroneous mental model that most of us have: We believe the Universe collaborates to consciously thwart us. At other times there is no malicious intent by the Universe, there is just indifference to what we want. The net result is the same – we don't get what we would like to get.
- b. Try this mental model instead: The Universe is a conscious entity that wants to give you what you desire, and you can influence it.
- c. The way in which you influence the Universe is simple and is summed up in the **Law of Increase: *Whatever you are truly grateful for and appreciate will increase in your life.***

d. ***Exercise: Appreciation and Gratitude Number 1***

- i. Try this for a week, for five to ten minutes every night, just before you retire.
- ii. Think of something that happened that day for which you are thankful. Think of the numerous way in which you are fortunate. Doubtless, you have many things to be thankful for.
- iii. Let a deep feeling of appreciation and gratitude well up in you. Allow this feeling to envelope you.
- iv. Did you fall asleep more easily, and was your sleep deeper and more refreshing? Did you find yourself greeting the new day with more joy than before?

e. ***Exercise: Appreciation and Gratitude Number 2***

- i. After you incorporate the first part of this exercise into your life, try expanding it. Try letting feelings of gratitude take hold of you many times during the day. Don't force it. Let it seize you if it can.
  - ii. Observe what this does to your emotional tenor during the day.
  - iii. Finally, note what your emotional tenor has been during the week and how it compares before you started this book.
- f. Merge the Mental Models of "Frantic Doing" with "Calm Being."
- i. **Frantic Doing Mental Model** – when we face a situation that we do not like, we like to DO something. Preferably lots of somethings. This is an accepted part of our culture and crops up countless sayings like, "The harder I work the luckier I get." The problem is that even when it "works", the results are frequently poor.
  - ii. **Calm Being Mental Model** – there is a better and more powerful way to bring about the change you are seeking. You will be far more efficient in achieving something by doing "internal" work rather than by rushing around doing "external" work.
  - iii. I am not saying you don't need to do the external stuff. I am saying that there is much less of that needed than you think.

- iv. Try using frantic doing and calm being in tandem. Gradually experience will allow you to depend less on the former and more on the latter.

### 11. Your “Me-Centered” Universe Creates the Stress In Your Life

- a. When you observe something happening around you, you react in terms of its impact on you. It would be more accurate to point out that you are really reacting to not the event itself but what you think its impact is going to be on you.
- b. The Universe has an unfortunate tendency of not paying any attention at all to how this event impacts you and what you want, and that is hard to accept. That lack of acceptance is the source of all the stress in your life.
- c. ALL the stress in your life results directly from your fixed notion of how the Universe should behave and from your inability to accept a different outcome than what you want. You generally take these departures from your script as a personal affront.
- d. As a result of not getting the outcome you want you punish yourself by being uptight, anxious, irritable and depressed. You punish those around you by snapping at them and generally being unhappy. It’s a toxic cocktail. And we drink it on many days.
- e. The problem is not having expectations. The problem is what you do when your expectations are not met. How do you react when what you want does not happen?
- f. The only way you can prevent toxic feelings from being generally inside yourself is to accept whatever outcome actually occurs. It is better if you can cheerfully accept it. It is still better if you can embrace it.
- g. This is how you do it: The first thing you normally do when you face an outcome different from what you expected is to judge it. You label it “good” or “bad,” but generally “bad.” The greater the deviation from what you wanted, the worse you think it is.
- h. Instead think of something that is bothering you in your life and see how it could be a good thing or a bad thing? Can you acknowledge that you just don’t know?
- i. ***Exercise: Good Thing? Bad Thing? Who Knows?***
  - i. Look back on your life. Have there been any events that you classified as disasters, as totally terrible things, that you now recognize as true blessings?

- ii. Now pick something that you are still grappling with. Envision circumstances in which what you now see as a “bad thing” may actually be a “good thing.”
- iii. Finally, can you think of “good things” in your past that actually turned out to be “bad things?”
- iv. DO NOT play this exercise in reverse. Accept “good things” in your life at present as they are. Don’t try to see how they could be “bad things.”

## 12. Surrender To The Universe

- a. This new perspective is important in eliminating stress in your life. Remember that stress in your life is caused by your reaction to not getting what you want.
- b. Here’s the good news: ***You can eliminate all this stress by surrendering.***
- c. The process of surrender has four steps.
  - i. First, take all actions with a clear understanding of what you would like to have happen. What do you want to accomplish?
  - ii. Consciously wish that all outcomes be beneficial for all parties concerned. Actively and sincerely wish that there are no losers.
  - iii. Recognize that your actions are simply one possible way of achieving the outcome you want. Remember that you have a limited understanding of all the forces at play and from that limited viewpoint have selected your course of action as the “best.”
  - iv. Detach yourself from the outcome. Accept whatever outcome the Universe provides. Surrender to the Universe. Cheerfully accept whatever comes your way.
- d. Surrender is NOT passive acceptance. It is not lying down and taking what comes.
  - i. It means you recognize that you did not achieve what you set out to do, and you do this without any kind of emotional trauma.
  - ii. When you do this, you will become more effective when you keep your negative emotions out of the way. And you will find that you begin to accomplish what you set out to do more often than before.

e. ***Exercise: The “Other-centered” Universe***

- i. For one week, live in an “other-centered” universe. That is incredibly hard to do for lengthy periods, so I suggest that you pick two one-hour time slots each day.
- ii. During your selected times, you will do all things for the sole benefit of the person with whom you interact. Focus on what the person is saying and feeling and think only of how you can be of service to that person.
- iii. Each day, deliberately and consciously, do more than one thing to make the world a little better.
- iv. As you do this exercise, your attitude is important. If you help someone, do not expect gratitude from that person. Instead, you should be grateful to that person for providing the opportunity to be of service.
- v. Finally, each day, make someone’s day.

**13. Freedom and Happiness: They Ain’t What You Think**

- a. There are many kinds of freedom. The ability to speak, worship and assemble without fear are just a few.
- b. There is one freedom we probably have not achieved, nor are we even pursuing. This is the freedom from the constant desire for “more.” We are still prey to this ruthless feeling which ignites avarice and produces self-important ambition.
- c. Every time we imagine happiness will come from a better job, a different relationship, more money, or something else that is presently eluding us, what we are actually doing is handing over to others the power to determine our happiness and tranquility.
- d. Do you really want to spend your whole life in the quest for something so dependent on outside circumstances that are never going to be in your control?
- e. The truth: Your happiness is not dependent on your wealth, your good health or your having loving friends and relatives.
- f. There is nothing you have to do or get in order to be happy. All you have to do is allow it to surface. Happiness is already a part of your innate nature.
- g. If true, why our lives filled with angst and sorrow? The answer is simple: We have constructed mental models in which happiness comes as a result of our getting something – money, power, spouse, fame, etc.

- h. Anytime we want something and we get it, there is a brief moment of contentment, when we are not our habitual wanting self. And in that moment we experience the happiness that is always a part of us. We are content. But the very next moment, some other desire raises its ugly head and we are off on our fruitless quest.
- i. The problem is that we do not recognize that the happiness we experience is because we are free from want. It springs from an acceptance of the Universe as it is. It is simply our innate nature bubbling forth in the absence of our incessant demands.
- j. ***Exercise: List Satisfying Accomplishments***
  - i. Go over your life from your earliest memories and make a list of accomplishments that gave you satisfaction. Write down everything you can recall that was memorable.
  - ii. It could be something others considered "trivial" such as a kindergarten teacher commenting on your crayon drawing. It might be what other considered "important" such as landing a prestigious job.
  - iii. After you have done this exercise, reflect on whether there are any patterns that pop up in the occasions you have recorded. For example, do you find what gives you satisfaction is almost always related to helping others? Or do you find that the moments you remember are when you were the center of applause?
  - iv. This exercise will give you some idea of the extent to which you are dependent on others for your well-being. If most of the incidents are memorable because of the reactions of others then you know that you are in prison even if you cannot see the bars.

#### 14. The Law of Self-Interest

- a. The Laws of Nature are fixed and immutable. They just are. You don't question them. You accept them and adjust your life to accommodate them. The Law of Gravity is just such a law.
- b. The **Law of Self-Interest** is also such a law. **It states that everybody, at all times, ALWAYS acts in his or her perceived self-interest.**
- c. Are you saying that everything I do is in some sense "selfish" because the reason I do it is to get some level of emotional satisfaction and relief? That is exactly what I am saying. And the knowledge of this truth is both wonderful and liberating, even if it doesn't seem like it at first.

d. ***Exercise: Drop Your Camera***

- i. Take a moment and think of three things you regret having done. The “should haves” and the “why didn’t I?” Think of how, when you did them, you were acting in your perceived self-interest.
- ii. Today, with greater maturity, you may clearly see that what you then thought was in your best interest really wasn’t. But you didn’t know it then. Blaming yourself is like blaming the Law of Gravity for letting your camera fall. You just don’t do it. You just can’t do it.
- iii. Do this exercise for a few days and you will see that your burden of guilt lightens and then slips away.

**15. The Universe Is a Force Multiplier**

- a. From the Law of Increase, you learned that whatever you are truly grateful for and appreciate will increase in your life.
- b. There is a dark flip side to this. The negative emotions you broadcast – anger, hate, distrust, and the like – are also picked up and reflected back to you with greater force.
- c. The Universe is a giant force multiplier, and you can learn to harness its immense power. You have been using it unconsciously and, thus, frequently unwisely. I now invite you to use it both consciously and wisely.
- d. The way you use it is by understanding how it operates and by controlling the broadcast you make that it picks up and amplifies back to you.
- e. The appreciation and gratitude exercise you have already done is an example of this principle at work.
- f. ***Exercise: Make Your Job Rejuvenating***
  - i. Think about your job. Do you love it? Or hate it? If you are like most people, you have mixed feelings.
  - ii. Write down a list of what keeps you in your job. Be grateful for this list of reasons.
  - iii. Next, think of what you do. Write down those things you do during the day that are enjoyable to do, that leaves you reenergized. Contemplate this list and be grateful for each item.
  - iv. Then identify one area of work where you would like to improve your skills and become more efficient. Pick

something where your success will result in increasing the part of your work you most enjoy.

- v. For one month focus exclusively on acquiring the skill you have identified and applying it appropriately. You have to learn something that gets you out of familiar territory and increases your base and your skill set. Carefully measure your progress.
- vi. Evaluate your progress at the end of the month. If you haven't met your goal, revise your goal so that it moves you along to your ultimate goal of acquiring the new skill. Be persistent.
- vii. If you persevere you will discover that your job performance has improved greatly and that you are actually enjoying it much of the time.
- viii. When you stop explicitly focusing on yourself, on what you want and what you don't have, and start focusing on how you can be of service to others, then you let loose some very powerful forces. Your broadcast goes out, gets amplified, and comes right back to you. In fact this is the most efficient method of truly getting the happiness that you crave.

**g. *Exercise: A New Take on Networking***

- i. Pick five people you would like to get to know better.
- ii. Figure out what it is about that person that resonates within you. What you admire about them. Which of their values, accomplishments, behaviors, impresses you?
- iii. Write a letter or take an action that involves each of these people. Let each person know what it is that touches you and why. Write from the heart with utter sincerity.
- iv. State a specific way in which you would like to be useful to that person's cause.

**16. You Create Your World from What Is Inside You! - All**

transformation begins and ends with mental models. Because these mental models dictate how you act, when you change the model, you change your life. It's time to get rid of the mental models that are painful and poisonous.

**17. The Benevolent-Universe Model** – The Universe is a conscious and benevolent entity. It ALWAYS acts in your best interest and ALWAYS brings into your life EXACTLY what you need at any instant.

- a. If this model is true then you would always be provided for in ways you cannot fathom.
- b. All sorrow would become bearable because it somehow would be for your good and your growth.
- c. There would be no frustration when you were apparently thwarted. Instead you would feel that the Universe was charting a different course to get you where you needed to be.
- d. Regardless of whether or not this proposed model is true, your life would be immeasurably improved if you could sincerely adopt it. True or not, you would enjoy the benefits of the tranquility and sense of purpose the model provides.
- e. You can reach that place, starting right now. In fact, you have already begun the journey. All the exercises in this book have broken down your old mental models and enabled you to replace them with more functional ones. This benevolent-universe proposed model simply ties them all together.