

The Slacker's Guide to Success

Ken Rabow

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Notes

This book belongs to:

I love writing notes in blank pages of books I am reading, so I have added a space for you to jot down any notes you’d like to make. Feel free to write down any of your own ideas as well! ~ KNR

Date	Page	Idea

Date	Page	Idea

Please note the following things:

All quotations that appear in this book are considered in the public domain. No breaking of copyright is intended.

As to the source material used here... while these are examples taken from my experiences with my clients, no one client's story is portrayed. Confidentiality is the cornerstone of my practice and I would never betray the trust put in me. The examples are an amalgam of a number of real-life experiences and difficulties with which I am grateful to have been an agent of change.

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Ken Rabow

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Dude, why are you still reading this stuff... move on to page 1, already! Go for it!

Introduction

Where you are and where you are going

So, you know you're brilliant, your parents know you're brilliant, and your dog thinks you're amazing; why are so many things in your life not working out?

Hi. My name is Ken Rabow and I work with teens and young adults struggling to find their place in the world. The ones I take on as clients are those who really want to make changes in their lives. Many of the clients I work with come to me when they have...

- a. Been stuck in part-time jobs without a future.
- b. Become addicted to video games, or pot, or magic cards, or something else.
- c. Failed school.
- d. Major sleep or anger issues.
- e. All of the above.

Don't you just love multiple choice?!?

One of my clients once said to me: "I really like staying at home, playing video games all day in my bathrobe... but I'm beginning to think that it's not a great long-term plan."

Let us call that client Skeeter. At the time of the writing of this book,

Skeeter is back in school working on a science degree. In his first semester, he caught the attention of an amazing professor doing ground-breaking research who has now hired Skeeter to work in the lab.

So how did Skeeter go from being a stay-in-his room slacker to an up-and-coming science guy? And what about you? What if you are into something other than video games but just as slack? What if you don't want to go to school but have dreams of starting your own business or creating a killer app?

So, why should you care? Because ☺ .

Okay, that's a parent-y answer. The real answer is that what worked for Skeeter can work for you—in any field, in any format, in any situation.

Your success will come from:

- Finding your power.
- Learning to believe in yourself.
- Determining how to build habits that guarantee success.
- Discovering the secret to success through messing up.

Yes, I'm here to tell you that you can't really be great at anything until you can get past... perfectionism.

That's what this system is all about. And it works! Each time. Every time. I've seen so many young people change their lives around. There are a lot of people out there who deserve to learn how to be their very best and do great things with their lives. I've written this book so that more of you could benefit from the "out-of-the-box" process I've refined in my private practice over the years. This process that will enable you to succeed on your own terms. If you follow this method, you'll find yourself growing in character and soon enough you will discover yourself achieving successes you didn't dare dream of. You will find that it's great to get out of bed every morning, feeling good about doing things that earn people's respect. More importantly, you will feel good about yourself for your personal achievements.

You will learn how to get people to give you what you want by giving them what they need. Most people really want to be heard. I mean really heard. People aren't just killing time when they talk (hard to believe, I know); they actually have something to say. They want you to listen to them; but more than that, they want to know that you understood them and that you empathize with what they are saying. If you can do that, then the world is your oyster (if you like oysters).

And check this out! Most teachers actually like it when a student comes

to them and asks how they can do better than they did on the last test or project. Those awe-struck teachers will tell you what you need to do to win grades. It ain't magic; it's school logic. And in the end, you will know exactly what to do and the precise amount of effort you need to put in to get better grades.

And by listening to your parents and having your first actual conversation that doesn't feel like you are in court or bizzaro-land (most likely, they feel the same way), double down with your improved grades and they will be much more open to any ideas you may want to run by them. ("Hey Mom! What d'ya think about getting me that amazing new portable hovercraft for getting to school?" "Whatever you say, Skeeter!")

How this system works

How does this system work and how does it not work? Well, it doesn't work by reading it, or meditating on it, or telling your friends how good it is (but please do); it doesn't work by promising to start after the next killer video game hits the streets and you've played up to level gazillion. It works by doing it. Just start! Read the first step and then do the work!

Here's another way it doesn't work. It doesn't work alone. You will need someone's help. I strongly recommend someone who is not your parent, your guardian, or your Auntie Bert who lives in the basement. That's right. A neighbour, a distant relative, or a mentor volunteer from a local institution: a religious institution, a community centre, or a place where the guys wear hats with those dangly things on them. Most importantly, find someone you can talk to, someone who will keep your secrets, someone who will respect you, and let you grow at your own pace.

The best way to get a mentor: have one of your parents mentor an acquaintance outside of your circle of friends and have one of their parents mentor you. I will explain this process further in Step Two.

How this book works

This book is divided into three stages. Each Stage represents one full phase of development in this system. The first is personal development. The second Stage, professional development, has you taking what you've learned out into the world with your newly honed strengths. The third Stage, inner development, focuses on your taking all you've learned and all you've become and using it to grow as a person and give back to the world.

They say when you point a finger at someone and accuse them of some-

thing, three fingers point back at you. I've found the same is true about helping people. Think of Michelangelo's famous "Creation of Adam." When you put out even one finger to help someone else, you get three fingers of help back from the universe. It just works. That's the idea behind Stage Three.

Within the book are 13 Steps that take you through the three Stages. Each Step is a concentrated focus point to give you direction, to keep you on your journey towards success. Here is a brief outline of what each Step involves.

If you have questions or want more information on this or the following books on the subject, you can reach me by going to www.reallifecoaching.ca or e-mail any questions you may have to sgts@reallifecoaching.ca

Introducing Stages and Steps

Stage One—Personal Development

Step One: Investigation. A life that is investigated becomes a life worth living. We begin by looking at our strengths and the challenges we face in harnessing those strengths. We look at our past patterns of self-sabotage and find the coping strategies we use to "deal" with the world. We then learn how to choose role models, events, or ideas as inspiration to guide us into being our better selves day by day, moment by moment.

Step Two: Opportunity. Opportunities are all around us. We need to know how to recognize them and how to say "yes" to the ones that will benefit us. We will learn how to choose a mentor and how to enlist that mentor into helping us set goals, define the challenges to reaching those goals, and determine how we measure our first level of success.

Step Three: Mindsets. Our mindset is the lens through which we shape how we live our lives. When people see the positive possibilities in a given situation, they are engaging in an abundance mindset. When people see only what is lacking in certain parts of their lives, this is the poverty mindset at play. We will look at the places in our lives where we have an "abundance mindset" and the places where we have a "poverty mindset" and we will focus on bringing abundance to all aspects of our lives while learning how to avoid the negative thoughts that can stop changes.

Step Four: Generativity. Here we learn how to create a daily routine—our personal meaningful practice. As we implement our daily routine, we experience the blocks that prevent our successes and learn to find ways around those blocks.

Step Five: Out into the world (and back again). We now put our new skills into practice in the outside world in a safe way for a short, defined period of time.

Step Six: How to arrest your time stealers. We learn how to set limits gracefully on the time-stealers in our lives.

Step Seven: Direction (following your bliss). This is where we lay the groundwork for a successful, enjoyable life doing what we were meant to do in this lifetime.

Stage Two—Professional Development

Step Eight: Three toes in the water. At this point, we engage in a more extended practice of the things we learned in Stage One. It could be going to university or college, it could be entering the work force, the art world, or it could be taking steps towards creating an entrepreneurial business. We apply what we have learned into new and broader situations.

Step Nine: Feeling safe “out there.” Using the practice of being mindful in our daily lives, we look at our recent successes and see how they can work in new situations while we learn to feel safe “out there.”

Step Ten: From Crud to Cred: creating new generative structures. Building on our work, we focus on schedules, on coping, and on making new friends who will re-enforce our successes.

Step Eleven: Making your addictions work for you. We find creative ways to use our impulses as rewards for doing the work we need to get done and becoming Masters of our own domain.

Stage Three—Inner Development

Step Twelve: Living a full life. We begin a sustainable daily practice of being mindful in learning, work, relationships, and play. Creating a full and successful life secure with the knowledge that any future stumbling blocks will become mere stepping stones to even greater accomplishments.

Step Thirteen: Helping others helps you. Once we've reached this point, our life is richer, we are happier, and we truly want to help others grow in their own way. This step will teach us how to do that.

Ken Rabow

Stage One

Personal Development

Here is the question that I am seldom asked, yet it rests in the hearts and minds of every client who crosses my doorstep waiting to begin their journey through this first Stage: "Why do I have to suffer so! What is the point of all these challenges in my life, and why isn't my life as easy and fulfilling as everybody else's life?" Maybe it's a good thing that they don't ask because they might take a slug at me if they heard my answer. Here it is: Every challenge and every failure that comes into your life is an opportunity to find your greatness. So many of the people of substance we admire in life have risen above tremendous tribulations. They had one important advantage that many do not: a daily routine of personal contemplation, physical exercise, and creative outlets. These are the building blocks of a deep inner-faith in oneself. In Stage One, you will learn to take on these attributes so you may find the path towards your true inner potential.

Step One

Investigation of Strengths and Challenges

You can change your life for the better right now!

Changing your life starts with looking at the strengths and challenges you face each day in your life. By examining your challenges, you can start to see the patterns that you repeat and the self-limiting thoughts running in your subconscious: “I’ll never be able to do that... Why bother doing ***, etc.” Our strengths can inspire us to rise above these repeating patterns and thoughts; they lead us towards living a richer life. You can learn to change that nagging voice in your head to an inspirational coach. This chapter will help you begin making that transformation.

- Your strengths can help you do well in your daily life.
- Your challenges are the gateway to your genius.
- So many people have talents that they either don’t believe in or too easily dismiss.

In order to change your life around, in order to not only achieve success but also earn praise, respect, and eventually a rewarding income, you need to believe in yourself. Most of the work of Stage One in this book is about learning to have faith in yourself and gain pride in your “quiet accomplishments.”

Quiet accomplishments are those things that you work on without the world noticing. They aren't done to show off or receive praise but are done to feel good about yourself. They are just as challenging as the things others see, but when you do them well, there's a deep inner pride that will be nourished and will keep growing.

Let me tell you about Wendy.

When Wendy came to me and I asked her what she was good at, she looked deep into my eyes with tears beginning to well up and replied: "Nothing." I was taken aback. "Isn't there something you like doing that you're good at?" I asked her.

"Well," she said, "I paint with watercolours and I can make a picture of whatever I see and people tell me it looks just like the real thing, but better."

"Don't you think that this is something you can say that you are good at?" I inquired.

Wendy then told me her deep belief: "I just know that anyone can do it, so it's not really special."

This reminded me of my one foray into the world of drawing. My kindergarten teacher sent me home one day with my class colouring book. She wrote in big red letters across it: "Kenny will never learn to colour inside the lines! It's impossible!" My mom read the note to me, folded the note three times and then exclaimed: "Well you know, Ken, you are the very best at drawing outside the lines that I have ever seen!"

I told Wendy that I could never draw like her and would give my eye-teeth to be able to draw the way she did.

She looked at me with genuine surprise, "You can't?"

"Most people can't," I said.

She looked confused and a little uncertain of what that meant. Then I asked her: "If most people can't do it and you do it really well, what does that tell you?"

"I guess it is something that I'm good at," sighed Wendy. And with that we began the reshaping of her deep beliefs.

Before you can reach the point of creating a daily practice to change your limiting deep beliefs, you will have to create goals and uncover the challenges to those goals.

I want you to imagine for the moment that you are in my studio on my very relaxing, comfy, and safe couch. I'm on the other side of the room in my chair. You are my client and I would like you to try some exercises.

Exercise One: Goals

- Goals: Take a moment and write down three things that you want to work on.
- Obstacles: What would you say are some of the challenges you see to making these goals become your reality? Write down at least one challenge for each goal and then put a number from one to ten to indicate your level of desire to resolve this obstacle and reach that particular goal.

The scale is this:

- Ten would indicate the most important goal of your life.
- Seven, a very important goal.
- Five being a take-it-or-leave-it goal.
- Anything below that, diminishing in interest all the way down to one.
- Finally, use the in-between numbers as shadings in between these levels.
- Success: Write down one line describing what you think would be a good indication of positive progress towards each goal.

You can download a version of these questions here:

http://www.reallifecoaching.ca/rlc/Initial_Questionnaire.html

Here are real-world goals, obstacles, and success markers from Skeeter.

Please state three things you wish to work on:

1. Procrastination
2. Social Skills (Not to feel "awkward" when I talk to people)
3. Finding my own path to success

What would you say are some of the challenges you have to making these things be as you want them to be?

(After the explanation, please put a number from 1–10 indicating your level of desire to resolve the situation.)

1. I always find excuses not to get started. It seems much harder once you have been procrastinating. This is an 8.
2. I'm very shy when it comes to doing something in public. I worry about them "thinking" something bad about me. This is a 10.
3. I dread trying "something" new. I'm afraid I might flunk out again. This is a 7.

What would be a good indicator that you have made progress in each of these things?

1. When I start seeing myself actively "pursuing" something that needs to be done without anyone telling me to.
2. When I'm saturated by a large group of people and I'm able to really talk.
3. When I get the feeling that my life is getting on the right track.

Something very powerful happens when you write down your challenges and strengths. They take on a power and meaning that thinking or talking about them cannot reach. Once written, they become objects you can build up, modify, or let go of at will. You become the one in control of them; you become the Master of your own fate.

Take a moment to look over your goals. More often than not, I find my clients put those goals in the exact order of importance. But importance isn't necessarily the best place to start. Look at your three goals and decide which goal inspires you the most. This is the one you should start with. Once you get the first goal moving towards your indicator for success, you will know which one should follow. Remember, your goals can change; they grow and evolve. The important thing is to set your mind on a target and go for it.

Now inspect your obstacles. Do they accurately represent your stumbling blocks? Do they need to be modified or are they good as they are? Chances are that you nailed them perfectly (and for those of you who didn't bother to actually write them down... do so now! No, really... I'm watching... that's better!)

Check out your choice of indicators for success. By choosing an indicator for success, you are allowing your whole mind to consider success. Once your minds, both the conscious and subconscious, are in sync and are considering the possibility of success, you will make constant micro-decisions that you may not even notice making. These micro-decisions, will guide you towards your successes.

Moving now to your strengths, we shall discover the tools you need to rise above your challenges.

Exercise Two: Strengths

- **Talent:** Write down something that you are good at. It may be what you know you do well or it may be something that comes easily to you but you dismiss it because, like Wendy, you think "anyone can do that." Both of those are strengths. List as many as you can think of. As long as you have at least one, you are on your way.
- **Inspiration:** Think of a person you admire who is either still living or someone from the past whom you believe to be inspiring. When you find yourself in a frustrating situation, ask yourself: "What would they do?" It's okay to change that person from time to time depending on which skill (resolving conflict, inspiring others, working as a team, etc.) or quality (passion, caring, humility,

etc.) you wish to draw down into yourself.

- **Power Place:** Imagine a situation or a place that makes you feel powerful. It could be something you've seen or heard about. It could be something you hope will one day happen. Use your strongest senses to try to make it feel real. Imagine what it would feel like to be experiencing it right now. I had one client who would picture himself in a spotlight waiting for his song to begin in front of a huge crowd. He pictured the stadium. He could smell the excitement and hear the crowd. He could feel them waiting for him to begin and he was ready. That was his power place.

Remember... nothing is cast in stone. As you move forward in this method, you may end up modifying what you have written down in these first exercises. This re-evaluation is expected.

A great film director was once asked what was the most important quality for a leader. He said: "the ability to make an immediate decision." It didn't matter whether it was the right or wrong choice because he knew whatever it was, it could be corrected. The crew sensed his decisiveness, and with that they could relax and do their jobs, knowing there was direction.

The same is true of our subconscious. It is that crew waiting to be led and our will becomes the director. So choose your goals and choose your strengths knowing that making the choice itself propels you forward towards success. If you find these choices don't suit you after you have given them your best effort, then go back and modify or change them.

Now, let's go on to what you do with what you've written down. The following are some exercises you can start with tomorrow.

Daily Practice:

1. Choose a goal
 - a. Choose one goal that you wish to work on first from your three goals. You may want to do them in order but you may choose to start with any one of the three.
 - b. Reflect on the obstacle that is in your way. What kind of obstacle is it? It is a belief stopping you? Is it a fear? Rate it on a scale from one to ten of erasability.

This is the scale:

- Ten would indicate something that could be completely erased.

- Seven an obstacle that would have very little hold on you.
 - Five being a level where half the time you would be free of it.
 - Anything below that are obstacles that would be harder and harder to erase.
 - Use the in-between numbers as shadings in between these levels.
- c. “Soften” the obstacle. Pick three points of attack you can use to minimize your obstacle. Call these points your aspects. Work on one aspect each and every day until you begin to see that aspect of the obstacle melting away. Move on to the next aspect until they are all gone. When you have made it through the three aspects of your first obstacle, carry onto the next challenge. It sometimes helps to have an outside person work on this with you. We shall talk about that in the next step.
2. Imagine your power place. Each night just before falling asleep, close your eyes and imagine experiencing your power place. If you are doing something there, *live it* as if it was happening to you right now. Take in every feeling of it. Be open to things that will happen during the following day of doing this practice, things that bring you closer to making your power place a reality.
 3. Reflect on your inspiration: When you wake up, take a moment to reflect on one quality of your inspirational person. Decide to implement that quality at least once today.
 4. Keep a journal. Write down between one sentence to one page about what is going on in your life each day. “Why should I?” A very good question! Many of these changes are subtle. By journaling daily, you track the subtleties. All of my clients are amazed when they look back over a few months of entries and see the real improvements that have come about in their thoughts and actions.

There you have it. Work on these exercises until you feel you have a good command of them, then take a look at the next Step.

“The longest journey begins with a single step.”

~ Lao-tzu ~

Carrying on with Skeeter, here is his example for softening obstacles on one of his goals.

Choose a goal to work on:

Social Skills (Not to feel “awkward” when I talk to people)

Write down three obstacles in your way of the goal.

Write down if it is a belief (something you have experienced before; a fear (something that never has happened but you are afraid may happen); other (explain what that is).

Use the scale from 1–10 (10 being easy to “melt,” 1 being close to impossible) and put a number next to it.

1. I’m very shy when it comes to doing something in public. This is a belief and I give it a 5.
2. I worry about them thinking something bad about me. This is a fear and I give it a 7.
3. I tend not to know when to stop talking and I can see people’s eye glaze over, but I can’t stop myself. This is a belief and I give it an 8.5.

Soften the obstacles. Pick three points of attack to soften.

(Here is the example for obstacle 1. See if you can figure out three “softening points” for Skeeter’s 2nd and 3rd obstacles.

1. My belief that I’m very shy when it comes to doing something in public.
 - a. (Shy) Try and see how many people are confident in a public situation and how many people are nervous. Make it your goal to help a nervous person feel comfortable.
 - b. See if there is something neat about them: how they look, how they hold themselves, their laugh, their voice and give them an honest compliment.
 - c. See what it feels like to walk into a room acting as if you were confident and imagine being open to talking to people.
 - d. Volunteer to help someone in the group who is seeking help.

2. My fear about them "thinking" something bad about me.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. My belief that I talk too much.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Ken Rabow

Step Two

Opportunity: Choosing A Mentor and Establishing Goals

You now have:

- Your Goals.
- Your Challenges.
- Your Indicators for Success.
- Your Power Place.
- Your Inspirational Character or Event.

You have done some work on your own and that is great. Now it's time to take it up to the next level. For this, you need guidance, guidance in the form of an outside party who is not caught up in the day-to-day consequences of your life. You want someone who will be able to be an unbiased coaching presence on your journey to self-empowerment.

Apprenticeships and Mentors

For most of recorded history, between the ages of ten and 15 you left your family to either become an apprentice to a tradesman, join the army, work on someone's farm, or if you were from "privileged class," you were given over to an educator. In all these situations, you went from learning life lessons from the family to the learning how to succeed in the world by working along side of a mentor. This was the way it was for thousands of