

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

BECOMING THE BEST VERSION
OF YOURSELF



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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Know What You Want in Life	5
Questions for Determining your Happiest Life	5
What Outcomes Do You Desire?	8
Taking Action to Unlock Potential	9
Recognize Your Strengths and Weaknesses	12
Your Strengths	12
Your Weaknesses	12
Map Out Your Strengths to Potential	13
Develop Your Strengths/Manage Your Weaknesses	16
Reasons for Focusing on Building on Your Strengths	16
How to Build on Your Strengths	17
But What About My Weaknesses?	17
Steps for Improving Weaknesses	18
Get Started.....	20
Tips and Reminders	21
Conclusion.....	23

Introduction

You know you could do great things... if you could only get some clarity on what you should pursue, what you should do first, and what talents you should develop. In other words, you need help learning how to unlock your hidden potential so you can take the world by storm. You are looking for fulfillment, happiness, and peace of mind while providing the world with all you have to offer.

If you have been struggling to find your purpose in life, you've arrived at the best place. You are ready to embrace your whole self and own the amazing reason you are on the planet! And, you've come across this guide that will lead you, step-by-step, to finding your purpose and unlocking your true potential so that you can begin your journey to self-discovery where you'll be able to finally free up the potential you've always known you had.

In this eBook, you will learn how to figure out what you really want in life, create a goal based on what you truly want, plan action tasks to achieve your goal, discover your strengths, get honest about your weaknesses and improve upon both so that you can get the results you want and create the life you've always wanted.

There's a lot to do, but it's going to be an exciting ride! A ride in which you will discover more about yourself and the impact you can have in the world. It's going to be hard work - no doubt about it. But you can imagine your full potential if you have the courage and dedication to keep working until your dream is realized! Let's get started, shall we?

Know What You Want in Life

One of the big challenges of unlocking your true potential is the image we have in our head of what “success” looks like. To reconnect with the potential living inside of you, you are going to need to grapple with that concept. Forget about what everyone else is doing. Ignore (most of) what others are saying you should do, want, or be. You need to dig down deep to decide what’s right for you. To do that you will need to be honest with yourself, about what you want out of life.

But how are you supposed to figure this out? You might not have any idea of what would make you unimaginably happy. Or, maybe you have too many things on that list and can’t decide which one(s) would be the best direction for you to take. Even though we can’t answer these questions for you, we can provide you with a short list of questions that will help you figure it out for yourself. These are not quickly answered, but spending some time with them now will help you get to where you want to go much faster, without backtracking or worrying you made the wrong choice later.

Spend some time in contemplation with each of these. It’s best to write them down in a journal and write out the thoughts you have on each one. Then, once you’ve drilled down and decided the answer to each, you can rewrite your answers in a succinct way so that you can easily return to them later when you need clarification on how to turn your desires into action steps.

Questions for Determining your Happiest Life

1. What would you do if money were no object?

We often limit our options by saying we don’t have enough money to do what we’d really like to do - what we think would fulfill us. So, if we remove that limitation, we can see more clearly, without boundaries, what our purpose is. Once we have that inspired clarity, we can effectively come up with action steps to make it happen. Remember, we don’t have to go from

zero to 100 immediately. There are ways of building slowly and steadily to the place where we want to be. There's no need to be a millionaire. Once we are able to define exactly what we want, we will have the lucidity to come up with a plan to make it happen!

2. What would you attempt if you were guaranteed to succeed?

Another big thing that stands in most of our ways is the fear of failure. We worry about what others will think of our dream and what they will say if we fail. But really, the only way for sure to fail is never to try. Most people who would snicker behind someone's back for taking a calculated risk are simply too afraid to try it themselves. So, when they see someone else give it their all, but stumble, they can feel they are justified for not even attempting their dream. So, ask yourself the question and be open to the possibilities! Don't let others determine what your life looks like!

3. What's your personal elevator speech?

This is a fancy way of saying, how would you describe yourself? But it goes beyond that. In the business world, an elevator speech is what we call it when we describe what we do within the time it takes to ride the elevator up to the top of the building. How would you "sell" yourself to a new friend? What are the qualities you have that make you uniquely you? You can build on these to unlock your potential. But you have to know what they are first. Don't be shy! Don't worry about being conceited or tooting your own horn. No one else is going to see what you write.

4. What are your core personal values?

These are the things that are important to you and the way you live your life. They help you determine the difference between what's good or bad for you, helpful or a hindrance, important or insignificant for your way of life. There are no wrong answers here! If material possessions are important for you in the life you want to lead, then list them out. Or, if spending time with your family is more important than material possessions, that's fine, too. These are the guidelines you live by. The

tenets that ensure your life has a meaning. Knowing these core values will help you decide on your priorities as you move further into unlocking your potential.

5. What makes you deeply content/happy?

Once you've determined your core values, it's time to think about what you already have in your life that makes you happy. You might also think back to when you were a child or teen. How did you enjoy spending time? Do those activities still bring you a sense of joy? You also need to make sure these align with your core values. For example, if spending time with your family is more important than material possessions, you may opt to stop working overtime at your job so that you can be with them more.

6. What would you do, even if you didn't get paid for it?

This gets to the core of what brings you joy in your life. It's the activity that you lose track of time when you are doing it. What are the one or two things that pop into your head when you read the question? When you were a kid, what did you want to do when you grew up? Often, if we look back at what we wanted to do when we were younger, we can glean our true talents. When we are young, we haven't been conditioned by society to ignore what we love so that we can get to the top. You may just rediscover your true passion, and therefore, your potential by asking this question and remembering how you loved to spend your time as a young person.

Whew, those are some head scratchers. And you may be asking why you need to know that stuff. You want to dive right into the action... get the potential party started. But the work starts with knowing yourself deeply. Without knowing your true self, you could waste years going in a direction that ultimately doesn't make you happy at all. It's better to put the time into getting to know yourself now to avoid frustration later.

What Outcomes Do You Desire?

The next step in unlocking your potential is to define what outcomes you'd like in different areas of your life. These are the big picture things you'd like to create in your life and the things you plan to achieve as you unlock your potential.

Consider these areas of your life:

- Personal - these can include physical/fitness, self-development, artistic and relationship outcomes.
- Professional - this covers what outcomes you'd like to achieve in your career. It might also include educational and/or financial outcomes.
- Spiritual - these outcomes are ways in which you'd like to grow spiritually.

Without setting specific outcomes for yourself, it's going to be difficult to get to where you want to go... because you aren't sure where that is.

When deciding upon your outcomes, they should meet these criteria. They should be S-M-A-R-T:

S - Specific - Be as detailed as possible.

M - Measurable - How will you know when you've achieved your outcome?

A – Agreed Upon – Agreed to by the people who have a part in making the outcome happen.

R – Realistic - Is it possible to meet your outcome by your imposed deadline?

T - Time-based - Determine a timeline for your outcome.

We have come up with what we want in life and specific outcomes surrounding what we want. The next step is to decide on action steps to take to meet those outcomes. How are we going to get from desires and wishes and onto living our

dream? By taking action! The only way to unlock your true potential is to take action to learn and grow into what you were meant to be!

Taking Action to Unlock Potential

The way to reach your potential isn't by willy-nilly action taking. That's how most of us got into a life that has helped us survive, but not thrive. What we need to do if we want to be all we were meant to be is to plan out our action steps so we can make sure we are always moving in the right direction. We determine this by keeping our eye on our outcomes and making sure each action step is in alignment with our understanding of what makes us happy and the outcomes that arose from that understanding.

Before we start outlining action steps, we need to come up with a reasonable deadline for meeting this outcome. It could be 10 years down the road or six months. But regardless, it needs to be reasonable for your circumstances. If you are too unrealistic or inflexible, you may feel like giving up before you've achieved what you set out to do. So, be fair and honest with yourself. We're all different and each of our situations is different. Remember - this is all about you and what makes you happy, no one else. Tapping into your potential is what's going to make it possible for you to live the life you want. No one else's potential is quite like yours. So, allow your plan to be as unique as you are.

Remember that journal we suggested earlier? Now's the time to pull it back out. Keeping everything in your head causes stress, so you will want to write things down. It's smart to have a project or outcome notebook where you keep new ideas, your schedule, and inspirational ideas or journaling that you do around your outcome, all in one place.

Once you have a deadline that is reasonable, start planning backward and plan out the action steps you need to take to reach your outcome. You may want to start with a brain dump. A brain dump is writing down, in no particular order,

everything that needs to be done to get to where you are going. But it is a very effective way of getting the details out of your head and onto the page where you can organize and prioritize them.

Before we go further, it's important to mention that you'll want to choose the one outcome from your list that seems the most urgent to you. There may be some overlap, but in general, it's best to focus on them individually. This will keep you from going into overwhelm, which often leads to giving up. So, separate the outcomes you want to reach and create action steps and a schedule for each of them, one at a time.

To come up with the action steps you need to take and schedule them out, follow these steps:

1. Decide on a realistic deadline to complete your outcome.
2. Set action tasks for yourself - ones that directly apply to reaching your outcome. You will want to break down the action tasks into the smallest steps, so you don't get overwhelmed. This will keep you on track, stop you from getting overwhelmed and keep you motivated.
3. Design a monthly action task list that will ensure you achieve your outcome by your deadline. Each of the actions you take should be directly related to your outcome. When you have an idea for an action task, test it against your outcome to ensure it is a smart, logical step towards your outcome, rather than something that will only distract you.
4. Design weekly action task lists, just as you did for the month.
5. Further, break down outcome-related tasks by creating a daily to-do list. Make sure to prioritize the tasks so that you do not get sidetracked doing things that aren't really that important. You may want to tackle the biggest tasks first thing in the morning to ensure they get finished.
6. Review your monthly, weekly and daily action task lists frequently. Keep track of when you accomplish each aspect of your outcome.

We can't overstate the importance of writing down and reviewing your goals regularly! This will put it in perspective though.

- 80% of people do not even think about setting goals.
- 16% of people think of them, but don't write them down.
- 4% of people write down their goals.
- 1% of people write down their goals and regularly review them.

This 1% are consistently the highest achievers. They are totally focused on unlocking all the great potential they have inside of them and they make it happen.

If you want to be one of those who succeeds in the world, you must ruminate on, write out, and review your goals regularly!

Another important point is vital to the success of reaching your goals and potential is to allow for flexibility. If an action you thought would be helpful isn't as effective as you had thought, reconsider the options. Don't be afraid to be flexible if an action isn't performing as expected or if you need to adjust your time frame. The less stressful and frustrating reaching your designation is, the more likely you will keep up the pace necessary to get there.

Recognize Your Strengths and Weaknesses

You can come up with objectives, make a list of action steps required for reaching that outcome and break it all down into monthly, weekly and daily steps, no problem. But you may flinch when it comes time to take an honest look at your strengths and weaknesses.

Your Strengths

We might feel like we are bragging when we list our strengths, even if we know no one else will see what we've written. Or, we may talk ourselves out of being good at something. For example, you're good at organizing - your physical space, events, everything. But then your negative self-talk may kick in to remind you of all the times you haven't been organized. Your house is a mess, you missed your dentist appointment this week because you forgot to write it down...

But part of unlocking your potential is to see what your natural gifts are. So, shut out that negative whisper in your ear and write down all the things you are good at. Here are some questions that will get you started because this isn't always as easy as it should be.

- What have you always been good at....it seems to be a part of who you are?
- What do you do better than anyone else you know?
- What do other people think are your strengths (ask your friends and family if you aren't sure what they think)?
- What skills have you developed that could be added to the list?

Your Weaknesses

Hey, we can't all be good at everything. And learning new skills is one of the great joys in life. So, before you get all upset with yourself for not being perfect, remember that we grow as people as we take on challenges and build our skill sets.

Actually, let's define "weakness." A weakness is something you naturally struggle with. It's not a failing. It's not anything you should beat yourself up over. It's simply a skill you weren't naturally born with. We all have weaknesses, so acknowledging them shouldn't be a big deal. In fact, most people would be much happier if they took stock of their natural strengths and weaknesses. That's because we often allow those weaknesses to hold us back from reaching our potential.

It's important to be aware of our weaknesses so we can determine how to deal with situations where the skill or ability is necessary, but we 1) can't do it or 2) know others could do it much better and/or much faster. Then, when we run up against these situations, we can best decide if we should buff up on our skill or if our time is better spent using our strengths. When that's the case, we can hire someone who can do the job, while we focus on what we're best at. Problem solved. But if you struggle with everything because you are unwilling to take an honest look at what you aren't great at, you could spend a lot of time, money and effort needlessly.

These questions should help prompt you to answer that question.

- What skills or tasks do you struggle with?
- What tasks do you procrastinate doing because you don't feel confident in your ability to perform them?
- What do others see as your weak area?
- What negative work habits do you have that could be considered a weakness (for example, you're disorganized or always running late)?
- What personality traits do you have that you experience as weaknesses or negatives?

Map Out Your Strengths to Potential

Now, let's go back a step, for a minute. One big stumbling block to meeting our goals and making our dreams come true is that we believe we don't have the

strengths, talents or skills that others have. We see people in our lives who have “made it.” We read about people who have overcome huge obstacles to reach their potential and who end up changing the world.

Then we look at our strengths. Hopefully, after the above exercises, you are more realistic about owning your strengths. But it’s easy to fall back into the pattern of thinking they are nothing compared to what other people have in their personal potential toolkit.

But here’s the exciting thing: There’s more than one path to reach our full potential! And if it’s our potential, then we surely were given the strengths (with possibly some weaknesses to overcome) to reach it!

So, if believing you don’t have the big vision that Steve Jobs had or the support systems your friend who’s built his own potential has, it doesn’t matter. You can unlock your potential by mapping out your strengths and using them to get where you want to go.

Strategic thinking is necessary at this point. You need to look at your list of weaknesses and find ways to use your strengths to leapfrog right over them. If you look at those people who have “made it,” you’ll find they still have weaknesses, but they’ve learned how to use their strengths strategically so their weaknesses don’t hold them back.

Let’s look at an example to make this clearer. Let’s say you know one of your weaknesses is a lack of technical skills. Now that can be a game-changer in our modern world. You took a couple of classes to learn more about using current technology to master your field. But none of it made any sense to you. You made little in the way of progress and ended up feeling like you were too stupid to build your dream life.

However, one of your biggest strengths is the management of resources, including employees. You also have a real knack for finding the right fit for

positions you need to fill. So, does it really matter that technology isn't your bag? Not if you fully utilize your management and intuition skills to hire the right person to run that side of things for you. As long as you continue to manage your new IT hire to the best of your ability, he'll do the tech stuff, which will free you up to do the stuff you really love to do and shine at doing.

So, map out how you might be able to use your strengths to overcome your weaknesses - not by working harder to "fix" your weaknesses, but by building on your strengths. It may sound like we are suggesting you never work on your weaknesses, but that's not quite what we mean.

The problem with working on our weaknesses is that sometimes people focus so much on them that they lose sight of their strengths. If you work on your skills in the areas you're weak in, but find you can't seem to "get it," then there will be other ways to achieve your potential using your strong skill sets.

Going back to our previous example, taking those classes about technology may not have made you a computer whiz. You may still not understand all the intricate details necessary to make all the parts work. But, you now understand enough of the bigger picture to make decisions with the guidance of your newly-hired IT employee. That is both overcoming your weaknesses and building on your strengths.

Now it's your turn. Go back to your list of strengths and weaknesses. Lay out your ideal outcomes next to each of them and come up with ways your strengths may help you realize your outcomes.

Develop Your Strengths/Manage Your Weaknesses

Self-improvement is key to living a successful life, no matter what that looks like to you. No matter what your ideal outcomes are, you can reach them with a dedication to self-improvement. We either grow, learning from our mistakes as we go, or we become stagnate and survive through life. When we put it like that, it's easier to make a commitment to improving yourself in ways that will make a huge difference in unlocking your potential so you can live the life you desire and deserve!

As we previously mentioned, when people think of self-improvement, they often see it as a way to focus their attention on their weaknesses. This can quickly lead us down the rabbit hole of beating ourselves up about past failures or make us feel like we have too many weaknesses to overcome. What we propose as self-improvement instead is to get even better at what you're already good at. That's right - working around your weaknesses, rather than trying to get rid of them, is a much better use of your time and energy.

Reasons for Focusing on Building on Your Strengths

- It builds self-confidence instead of tearing it down.
- It takes less time and effort because you find things you do well easy and enjoyable.
- You focus on the positives in your life, and those positives will increase. Whatever we put our attention on in life increases. So, concentrate on the positives.
- It makes you happier.

Now that you see the advantages of using self-improvement as a means of building on your strength, let's look at ways you can make that happen.

How to Build on Your Strengths

1. Invest in learning more about what you're already good at. You might be an expert, but there are always more things to learn and new strategies to employ. For example, if you are a great manager of resources, you may build on your skills and techniques by reading about the way other leaders manage their teams to improve productivity and morale.
2. Spend time with others who have your desire to build upon their strengths. You'll learn a great deal about yourself as well as finding out new ways of implementing your strengths that will lead you further down your path of unlocking your potential.
3. Step out of your comfort zone. It's easier to hide behind a book to learn, but stepping out of your zone of comfort and influence is one of the best ways to learn. When you do this, you'll be put into places where you need to step up your game to get the job done. Without forcing yourself into new lessons in this way, you may never fully develop the potential you have within you.
4. Teach others your strengths. There's no better way to learn than to teach. Try mentoring others who are working to improve the skills you have.

At this point, you may be asking how focusing your energy on your strengths can lead to better outcome results. The answer is simple - if you have the potential within you, then you already have the strengths you need to reach it. It's just logical. Don't compare yourself to others who have already realized their ideal outcomes. Your potential and strengths are different from theirs, and that's a good thing. The best way to unlock your potential is to be the best you that you can be. Focusing your energy and time on becoming the best version of your unique self is the wisest course of action.

But What About My Weaknesses?

Though we encourage you to minimize your focus on weaknesses, there are some that you will need to work on as you go. They may be majorly important to unlocking your potential. For example, if you procrastinate doing anything new or

challenging, you probably aren't going to get very far in achieving your outcomes. Other weaknesses are easier to overcome because since other people have them, you can team up with them to get the job done. But fundamental weaknesses will need to be improved.

The first thing you need to do is decide if you have a weakness that could advance your chances of reaching your outcome if it were improved upon. Are there fundamental skills or personality traits that will hold you back if you don't conquer them? Or, are there skill sets that you don't have but can easily find in someone else? Asking yourself these questions while looking at your weaknesses list is the first step.

If you find weaknesses that do need to be improved upon, here are some techniques to make the challenge less daunting:

Steps for Improving Weaknesses

- **Accept it** - Accept your flaws for what they are. They are a part of you, but not the biggest part. You can't move past them if you don't acknowledge them.
- **Love yourself anyway** - We all have faults. Even your hero does. Your weakness helps make up your true self, so embrace them.
- **Make daily strides to get better** - Don't expect perfection, but strive every day to be a little better than the day before. This process is only accomplished slowly and steadily.
- **Focus on small wins** - Don't wait to celebrate or pat yourself on the back until your weakness has turned into a strength! Celebrate each small victory towards overcoming your flaw.
- **Continue to build on your strengths** - Always keep in mind that your main focus should be on building on your strengths so you don't fall into giving up on reaching your goals.

If on the other hand, you can reach your outcomes and your full potential by outsourcing the tasks you aren't good at, come up with a plan for finding these employees and ways you will manage them using your strengths.

Get Started

By now, you should have a better understanding of how to unlock the potential you were born with. Each of us is here for a reason, and we are happiest when we are living that life. And that potential is attainable! Otherwise, it wouldn't be inherent within us. Even those who have reached their most unimaginable goal and are living within the flow of their potential had to work to get there. But that's part of the journey. We learn a great deal along the way, which makes it all that much more exciting.

If you're ready to unleash the latent talents you have to share with the world, now's the time to get started. Once you are clear on the outcome and what outcome you want to work towards first, create your plan for reaching it. Keep digging deeper until you have a set of short-term objectives that will lead you to your larger goal. Then, start taking action!

While you must have a firm understanding of where you want to go and why you want to get there, you won't get far if you don't break down the big tasks into smaller ones that you can complete step-by-step. Overwhelm is your enemy, and one sure way to let it win is to only look at the whole, big picture and not take the action steps necessary. There will be days when you don't feel like completing the task set for the day but do it anyway. The results will be well worth your effort.

Some people can plan till the cows come home, but when it comes time to take action, they freeze. They worry they have chosen the wrong outcome to work on first or they are worried about making a mistake. The biggest mistake you can make is to not take any action. Just start. Start small and keep taking action towards your goal each day. Utilize your Outcome Journal to keep track of what works for you and what needs improvement.

Try different things until you find the perfect way to do things for you. Gather feedback from friends, family, and co-workers to get their ideas of how your plan

is working. Just keep adjusting and improving your plan and the way you approach tasks until it all clicks together. Needing to rethink a step towards your goal isn't failure. It's success, because you are learning and growing as you go. Remember, this is all a process that will lead you to live the life you were meant to live. Don't expect your plans to be perfect. Allow for flexibility and adjust as you go.

Remember when we discussed SMART goals? The M stands for measurable. You need to find a way to ensure you are actually taking productive steps towards your ideal outcome. How will you measure the way you are inching closer to your fullest potential?

Tips and Reminders

- Break down steps into the smallest possible tasks. Instead of an action step that states: *Learn about investing for the future*, break it down into several smaller steps, such as: *Join the 401K plan at work, make an appointment with a financial advisor, make a list of questions for the financial advisor*, etc. This will keep you from getting overwhelmed and giving up.
- Make sure your effort isn't being wasted by being busy instead of taking action. Our society sees busyness as a virtue. But in reality, we often waste a lot of time doing things that aren't productive or necessary. Take stock of your to-do list on a regular basis to ensure you are using your time and energy wisely.
- Don't expect perfection. Sometimes getting a task completed to the best of your current ability and moving on is more important than a task being perfect. Perfectionism is a way of procrastinating. If you are stepping way out of your comfort zone and putting off calling a task done, it may be because you are afraid of failure instead of trying for perfection. Being honest with yourself and owning up to your fear will serve you much better

than spending unnecessary time and effort on something that is good enough.

- Although it's important to come up with your own plan and do what works best for you, it's smart to use the tools and strategies that others have already designed. If you find a suggestion that worked for someone else that you think will work well for you, use it. There's no need to totally reinvent the wheel when you can use the wisdom of those who have gone before you.
- Own your fear and self-doubt when it arises. And it will. We all have these worries come up from time to time, no matter how self-confident we are. If you want to be a doer instead of a dreamer, you're going to need to overcome your fear and do those things that scare you. Recognizing your fear or doubt is holding you back is the first step towards owning it and then overcoming it.
- Have a deadline, but be flexible. There are going to be times when a project takes longer than expected or you come up against unexpected obstacles. This can stop some people in their tracks. They feel like they failed because they didn't meet an arbitrary deadline, and so they give up. Don't let that happen to you. You should always be gathering feedback and adjusting your plan based on what you learn as you go along. If that means pushing back a deadline, at least you'll know you are working wisely and that you will reach your potential. You'll never do that if you give up.
- Expect setbacks and impediments. A good, solid plan is important, as is following it. But there will be unexpected setbacks along the way. Don't let them detour you. You can't prepare for everything, but expecting things to not always go smoothly will help you work through those challenges.

Conclusion

We all have hidden reserves of potential within us. You should congratulate yourself on taking the first step in accessing your potential by learning about how you can unlock it so you can live the life you were meant to lead!

You now know what it takes to reach your full potential. First, decide what you are most passionate about - what makes your heart sing. Once you know that, figure out what objectives need to be met to have that in your life. You may have more than one objective that needs to be reached, and that's fine. Tackle one at a time so you don't get overwhelmed. Next, break down all the actions you'll need to take to reach your objective. Crunch them down until they are in monthly, weekly and daily tasks.

Don't forget to review them daily to keep yourself on track. It's also a good idea to review your reasons for taking this action. There will probably be times when you wonder if all the effort is worth it. Remembering the passionate life that you are working towards will keep you motivated, even when things get tough. Keep your attention on ways to build upon your strengths while also overcoming any weaknesses you may need to improve upon. If the flaws are skills that are easy to outsource, go ahead and make a plan to make that happen. This will free up your time and energy to focus on your passion.

Finally, take action every day towards your objectives. It will take time, but by taking a small step each day, you'll be amazed at how quickly it can all fall into place. It's your potential and only you can claim it! Don't stay stuck in survival mode when your life can be fulfilling. Reaching your potential is within your reach! Now go and get it!