

PROJECT: SUCCESS

HOW TO BREAK BARRIERS
AND BRING YOUR IDEAS TO LIFE



MARK SIEVERKROPP

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AND BRING YOUR IDEAS TO LIFE

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This eBook is dedicated to my beautiful, eternal companion, Lacie who supports me through my successes and failures. Thank you, I love you.

PROJECT SUCCESS

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How to Break Barriers and Bring

Your Ideas to Life

by Mark Sieverkropp

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PRAISE FOR PROJECT:SUCCESS

“Project Success is a fabulous read. In fact, it's one that will change your mindset and help you reach a level of success in your life that you never thought possible. The book helps us shift our view of projects and what you can accomplish once you begin to create projects for yourself. The information provided in the book will be invaluable to you as you set out for success.”

Joseph Lalonde
Author, Coach, Leader
JMLalonde.com

“Project: Success is both inspirational and practical. Mark Sieverkropp has spelled out for you how to eliminate the obstacles to turn your ideas into successful reality.”

Lily Kreitinger
Blogger, Focused Communicator
LilyKreitinger.com

“Insanely amazing book. This book is for the dreamers who dream big, but just haven't yet achieved that success we so passionately desire. Without fluff, you'll get a quick roadmap on how to achieve your biggest dreams.”

Michael Kawula
Coach, Consultant, Podcaster
SelfEmployedKing.com

“Anyone who has ever been stuck someplace between dreaming up an idea and making it a reality will benefit from Mark's advice. There is immense power in starting small and building momentum over time - and these pages will give you a solid plan to build credibility, gain new skills, and shipping your next project.”

Tom Dixon
Career Coach, Blogger
MondayIsGood.com

“For anyone who has given up too soon or never even tried, Mark has written the manifesto to get you moving towards the success you've always dreamed of. Every single one of us is born to do something great. We have greatness ready to ooze out of us. Mark will help you release that greatness. Read this book...and find out what success really looks like.”

Matt McWilliams
Author, speaker, consultant, life coach
MattMcWilliams.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Sieverkropp is passionate about leadership, business, self-improvement and helping others get more out of life. He is the co-founder and Director of Happen-ings at [Happen To Your Career](#). He is the co-host of two podcasts, [The Happen To Your Career Podcast](#)—A Top 25 Career Podcast in iTunes—with Scott Anthony Barlow, and [The 24 Podcast](#)—The Unofficial Podcast about Fox’s Award-Winning Show, 24—with Joshua W. Rivers.

Mark blogs regularly at [Sieverkropp.com](#) and [HappenToYourCareer.com](#). He has guest posted on [ChrisLoCurto.com](#), [MattMcWilliams.com](#), [LilyKreitinger.com](#), and [SelfEmployedKing.com](#).

When he’s not working with business owners to help increase their profitability and individuals to move forward in their career journey, he loves spending time hunting and spending time with his wife Lacie and his children, Brooklynn and Cash.

PREFACE

You are holding the tangible fulfillment of a dream and goal I have had for several years to write a book.

Thank you for giving me a portion of your time by reading this book.

It's my hope that this book will impact your life. Just the other day I was reading a post on Matt McWilliams' blog titled **“Insane Dedication Leads to Insane Success”**. In this post, Matt asks the question, “What are you insanely dedicated to no matter what the naysayers say?”

I am insanely dedicated to adding value to other people's lives. I'm insanely dedicated to adding value to your life!

That is why I wrote this book. That is why I write my blog. That is why I do all I do. With that in mind, I hope you enjoy this book—and I hope you find some value and benefit within its pages.

Thank you, enjoy!

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Mark". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends across the page.

INTRODUCTION

“Project: Success will show you how to overcome fears, concerns and challenges”

“Project: Success will show you how to overcome fears, concerns and challenges”



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The fact that you are reading this is the result of a project. I learned about the phenomenon of projects when I read the book [The Power of Starting Something Stupid](#) by Richie Norton.

This book changed my life. Richie talks about starting projects as a way to start things that you have always wanted to, but never actually done. It was from reading this book that my life dramatically changed, and in my book I will walk you through step-by-step how this idea can change your life as well.

My Story

Prior to learning about the power of utilizing projects in my life, I was stuck. I was in a job I didn't like, I was working too many hours and I felt like I was spinning my wheels. I didn't know how to get from where I was to where I wanted to be. I didn't have many of the skills I felt I needed, and wasn't sure how to get them.

Have you've been there? Are you're there now? If so, keep reading, I think I can help!

For me, I had always wanted to put on seminars, trainings and coach people. But I just couldn't seem to pull it together. I was an expert at the old planning method: "Ready, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim, aim..." (and then give up and cry in the corner!). I could never pull the trigger on my plans.

That is when I realized what my hang up was.

I would get an idea, and mentally take it from my garage to a Fortune 100 company with a corporate jet in under 2.6 seconds! I think big. I dream big.

But in this case, big thinking would completely paralyze me. I would make all these plans, and then I would think to myself, "Well, I don't know where I'll find a corporate jet—and I don't have anyone to fly it..."

And on the wings of such a ridiculous thought, my plans would die—dragging my dreams and goals along with them.

If I couldn't figure out how I would get a corporate jet, why even take the next step? I would let the enormity of what my mind had envisioned completely paralyze my thinking.

If there is anything holding you back from getting what you want, adjusting your thinking and starting a project will help you get over it!

What You Can Expect From This Book:

This book will be the magic bullet in your journey to accomplish all your greatest dreams and goals—and it will increase your gas mileage by at least 8 miles per gallon! Think of the savings!!

Ok, of course, that isn't true.

This book is not a silver bullet. It will not solve all of your concerns and problems. A heavenly chorus will not begin singing and a light won't appear above you as you read.

It will, however, help you put your goals and dreams in a format that allows you to overcome many of the obstacles you've faced up to this point.

Throughout this book I will share personal stories, what I have learned about projects, and some tips, suggestions, and tools to help you craft and execute a successful project.

Are you ready?

Alright! Let's get started!!!



1

THE PROBLEM WE ALL FACE

*No one wants to fail. No one wants to give up on their dreams. No one
wants to be average.*

The problem we all face is staring back at us from the mirror.

Before we can jump into projects and how they will help you, we need to be straight up with ourselves. Be prepared to take a hard look in the mirror. We need to establish why we haven't already accomplished all that we want to in life.

Think back to when you were a child—or think of a child you know. You will never hear a child say, "I want to grow up and get a job I really hate going to, barely pays my bills, and has horrible hours."

We don't think that way! We don't think about growing up and being "average" or "normal".

Children always want to be doctors, lawyers, professional athletes, the President of the United States. They want to be successful, recognized, happy, and content.

So what happened to you? What happened to me? Somewhere around 20 years old (maybe younger, maybe older), you and I settled. We decided that it was easier to just get that job that was ok, but not what we really wanted to do. We decided that the obstacles in our way, or our fear, or our circumstances were too big or too hard to overcome.

We live in a microwave society. We're used to getting anything and everything we want, literally, at the push of a button. So when things are tough, when the process seems hard, and when we aren't sure how it will end, we decide it's easier not to try.

Notice I didn't say that our circumstances won't allow us to get what we want. I didn't say the laws in the country (whatever country you live in...) keep us from our goals. I didn't say the weather, or the economy, or our parents, or our spouse keep us from getting what we desire.

The answer to getting what we want is staring back at us in the mirror. It is our own thinking, our own mindset, fears and concerns that keep us from achieving what our 5-year-old counterpart thought we could.

Your biggest challenge will be yourself.

The actual problem doesn't stop you. The thought of the problem happening stops you.

What stops you?

What stops you from achieving success?

Write down the answers to these questions:

- What stops me from achieving success?
- What do I tell myself when I don't accomplish what I had hoped to?
- When someone tells me I should follow my dreams or my passion, what do I tell them (and myself) for why I don't?

How did you answer these questions? From personal experience, and from what others have said, here are some common answers:

- I don't have the time
- I don't have the money
- I didn't really want to [fill in the blank] anyway
- I don't have the experience
- I don't know how to [fill in the blank]
- I'm scared to fail
- I'm scared to succeed
- I'll do it later
- When I'm [fill in the blank] I will
- This is good enough
- It's not worth the extra effort

Do any of these sound familiar to you?

I'm sure you could add to the list of reasons (ahem...excuses) for why you and I don't accomplish what we want to.

It has nothing to do with ability

Nine times out of ten your ability to succeed is not the issue. The issue is with the mental roadblocks that appear in front of you.

Remember the tortoise and the hare? It's not the smartest, fastest or flashiest that wins the race. It's the one that keeps his eye on the finish line, keeps going and refuses to be deterred.

When we set out to change our lives, we knock ourselves out of the race before we even get to the starting line! Look back at all those

“Nine times out of ten your ability to succeed is not the issue”



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answers we discussed a second ago. Before you even give yourself a chance, you've lost.

The actual problems didn't stop you—the *thought* of the problems stopped you. When you think of it, it's pretty dumb!

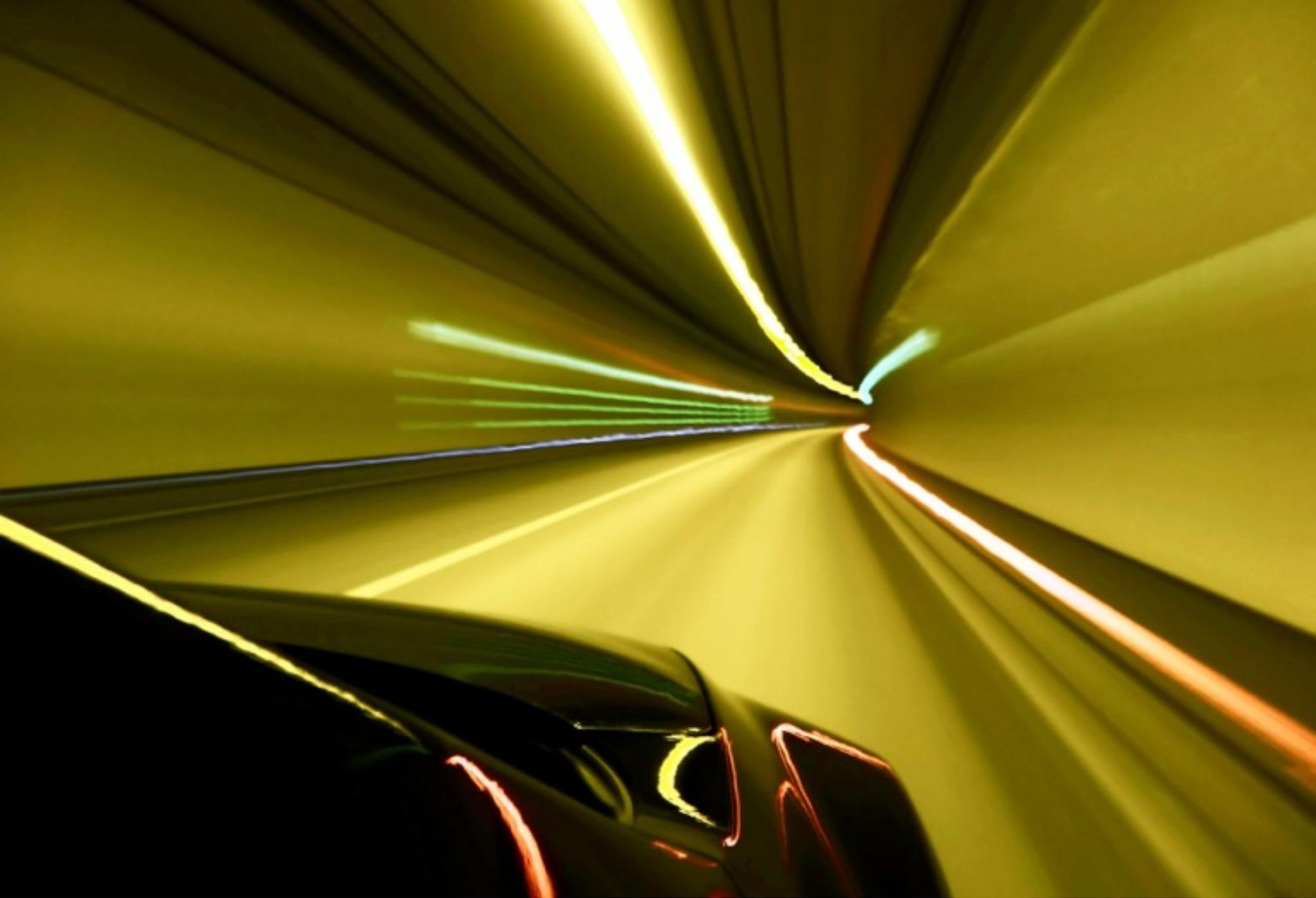
When I thought of accomplishing something, it wasn't the inability to acquire a corporate jet that destroyed my dreams. It was the *thought* that I wouldn't know how to get a jet that stopped me.

So what?

So you're probably thinking. "Ok, Mark. I thought this was a book about projects, not a book about my thought process?"

It is a book about projects, but understanding where the problem lies in accomplishing our goals and dreams (our thoughts...) is vital to understanding why projects are the perfect vehicle for accomplishing your goals and dreams!

So, here we go....



2

WHY A PROJECT?

A project allows you to bypass roadblocks

Many skills can be developed as part of a project

So if you've read this far, you must want more out of your life. You have goals and dreams you want to accomplish. And if you're anything like me, you've tried dozens of times and multiple ways to accomplish these things. You've probably met with some success, and some failure.

So what will a project do for you that the way you've done things before couldn't?

A project creates a mind shift that turns the scary monster of your goals into a cute little puppy that you could easily handle.

Ok, maybe that analogy doesn't work the best, but you get the idea. Projects take your fears and your mental roadblocks and knock them down so you can move past them and onto success.

Let's take a look at several limiting beliefs.

I don't have any experience

Have you been in a situation where you don't have enough experience to get a job, but no one will give you a job so you can get the experience?

I know I've felt that way. But here's the honest truth. There are other ways to develop skills than through a traditional job.

There are two types of skill sets. Technical skills and Soft skills. Examples of technical skills are welding, performing surgery, or operating machinery. They are more difficult to learn outside of school and job training.

Much of your career success, however, will be based on the second type of skills. Soft skills include interpersonal skills, problem solving, analysis, speaking, communication, and so forth. These will set you apart and can be developed as part of a project.

No one will help me learn...

No one will help me learn how to do [fill in the blank]. No one will teach me [fill in the blank] skills.

Maybe that is true. However, no one will stop you from learning how to do something or developing a skill either. You have to take control of your personal growth.

If there is a skill you would like to acquire, find a way to utilize and develop that skill as part of a project.

One of the first projects I worked on with my partner, Scott, was a Job Search Seminar that he and I had put together.

For years I have wanted to be a trainer. I've wanted to lead training sessions, seminars, etc. I had complained to myself that I just couldn't find a job that would allow me to do that type of activity.

I felt like I couldn't get a job doing trainings because I didn't have experience training, and I couldn't get experience doing so without someone giving me a job.

I was stuck.

Or was I?

Scott and I started a project that culminated in us co-teaching the Job Search Seminar.

I created the opportunity myself to gain the experience I both needed and wanted.

You can do the very same thing with whatever skill you would like to acquire, develop or refine.

No one needs to give you permission to develop yourself. You can give yourself permission—start a project.

I don't want to start something and then not like it

Have you ever thought this? You're afraid to start something, invest months or years of time into it, only to discover you can't stand doing it and would rather watch reruns of Hannah Montana all day, every day than keep doing it!

Everyone places a certain value on their time, and they don't want to find out that they've just wasted time on something that makes them miserable. A project. Set a defined amount of time that you will work on whatever it is you want to do.

You can do anything for six months. By setting a defined amount of time, you've set the expectation right up front that you aren't necessarily going to do this for the next 25 years of your life!

Every time I try something I fail

One of the beautiful things about projects is that it magically turns a majority of your failures into successes.

Ok, it's not really magic. It's very simple. It's a mind shift.

A project will transform your outlook.

Allow me to illustrate.

You've started building beautifully hand-crafted widgets in your basement (I'm not sure why everyone creates widgets—and quite frankly, I'm not sure what a widget is—but let's go with it!) prior to reading this fantastic book that you now hold in your hands (or on your electronic device...). You think that this is going to take off and within 10 years you will be on the front of Widget Magazine with the title "King of the Widgets!"

And then you get busy, or you decide you really don't like building widgets that much. So you quit.

For the next 20 years, every time you see the box of your widget making tools in your basement you think about when you made them and a part of you thinks that you failed, or simply quit.

You have labeled yourself a quitter or a failure. Maybe you have friends or family that remind you that you failed at making widgets, so why try this?

It's a vicious cycle.

By changing your mindset, projects can magically turn your failures into success.



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But what if you started your widget-making venture after reading a great book about starting projects. Let's call it "*Project: Success*"—just for the sake of this example!. How would that look?

You decide you want to build beautifully hand-crafted widgets in your basement. You're going to start a widget-making project—just to see if people will buy them. You want to make sure you actually like making widgets as a business.

You give it 6 months. You figure it will be enough time to see if you can sell these wonderful widgets (I mean, who wouldn't want them, right??), if you can make money doing it, and decide if you want to become a full-time widget-making person.

At the end of 6 months you've had a little success. You really don't like spending that much time in your basement; and you're really not sure if you want to be known as the Widget King. So you decide that you no longer want to make widgets.

Same result as before, but this time you began the project with the understanding that you would evaluate after 6 months and determine whether you want to continue making widgets or not.

You didn't quit. You didn't fail. You completed a project. Same scenario. Same result, yet totally different.

By changing your mindset, projects can turn your failures into success.

I just can't get any closer to my goals

Do you know what you still did?

You got your life out of neutral! You took some steps towards your goals and dreams.

Remember the famous story of Thomas Edison? He found 10,000 ways that the light bulb wouldn't work. Were all of those projects in vain? As I sit beneath the glow of a light bulb writing this, I would say not!

Likewise, even if the projects you complete don't have the results you had hoped for, you have taken steps towards your goals and finding what won't work and what you don't want to do is nearly as important as finding what you want to do!



3

CHOOSING A PROJECT

You know why, now onto the “what”...

What are you passionate about? What wakes you up in the morning?

I'm hoping you're starting to see a glimpse of what a project can do for you.

Let's talk about how to choose a project.

There are several questions you can ask to help you decide which project to do.

What are you passionate about?

Pretty straight forward huh? I know, this isn't really rocket science (which is good, because I hated math in high school!).

- What are you passionate about?
- What wakes you up in the morning?
- What would you do if you didn't have to worry about money?
- What do you do for fun?

These questions will give you a glimpse into things that you probably have always thought of trying to do a bit more—and even getting paid to do—but have never taken the time.

There are some things that you are absolutely passionate about that you will probably end up deciding that you don't want to do this for money or as a "job". But there are some that you might actually completely love doing—and getting paid for at the same time.

A project is a great way to decide without completely changing careers only to find a year later you would rather just do something for fun.

What have you always wanted to do?

Ask "what have I always wanted to do?"

- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What charities or causes have you always wanted to be a part of?
- What experiences have I always wanted to have?

Everyone has *something* they've always wanted to do. We all have a mental "bucket list" that we'd love to check off before we "kick the bucket". What better way to check some of those off than to create a project around some of them?

Asking this question is a roundabout way of asking the previous question, but will often elicit different responses than asking yourself what you are passionate about.

Think of projects as the “lab class” of your personal development



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What skills or experience do you want to acquire or develop?

Think of projects as the “lab class” in your personal development.

As we learn and grow, often we will read books and blogs, listen to podcasts, take classes and go to seminars.

When I was in Mr. Neff’s biology class, I learned far more about the anatomy of a frog by dissecting it than I did from the picture on the overhead projector (I don’t think my children will ever see an overhead projector...they’ve gone the way of the Walkman and chalkboards...).

You will learn more from heading into the lab class for personal development—experience.

Nowhere will you find a better lab than a project.

Ask yourself,

- What skills do I wish I had?
- What skills do I admire in others?
- What skills or experience do I wish I had on my resume?
- What skills do I need to develop to get a promotion?

Remember, you don’t need anyone’s permission to start a project. If you start a project that will help you develop a certain skill that you are in need of to advance your career, you will never have to wait on anyone else to give you a job so you can get the experience you need to advance!

You are in complete control of your personal development!

Now What?

So now, if you took some time to read these questions, really think about it, and organized your thoughts, you should have a good list of things you’re passionate about, things you’ve always wanted to do, and skills you’d like to acquire and develop.

It’s time to narrow them down.

Pick the five items that are the most exciting or most important to you (if you didn’t come up with five, go back and ask yourself the questions again, you either went too fast or you have tragically lived your entire life in a box!).

If you could only focus on **five** of these, which would you pick?

Now that you have narrowed it down to five...

If you could only do **four** of those, which one would you get rid of?
Ok, moving on, now ask yourself,
If you could only do **three** of those, which one would you get rid of?

Top Three

You've narrowed your list down to three skills you would like to acquire, or things you're passionate about and have wanted to do.

Sometimes all of these will obviously be projects you could begin. Sometimes you need to determine how to fit them into a project structure.

Developing your communication skills isn't necessarily a project. You would have to determine how you would fit it into the framework of a project.

What could you do that would allow you to exercise, grow and refine your communication skills?

It could be as simple as developing a plan to write five emails a day for three months or as complex as offering to help develop and implement the communication plan of a non-profit organization for six months.

Find a way that you can develop that skill or work towards the goal you have.

All that is important, at this point, is to have an idea what the overall project will be.

Pick One

You defined what a project would look like for each of your top three, now it's time to pick one.

It doesn't really matter how you pick from these three—they should all be projects you'd really enjoy doing!

You could flip a coin, grab a friend and play rock-paper-scissors, close your eyes and pick one blindly, or simply pick the one that most interests you.

Picking the one you will do first out of your top three will be a decision that I trust you can handle.

A Final Note

By completing the exercises in this chapter, you will have:
an abundance of ideas
a list that could be turned into meaningful projects

a list of your top three options.

Don't get rid of the total list. These are all things that could become an active project that you work on in the future.

This list is one that should always be reviewed, added to, adjusted and revised.

It's the "course list", if you will, for your personal development lab class!

Now let's begin your project!



4

LET'S GET GOING!

Get started!

A successful project will, more than likely, include several people beyond yourself.

I trust that before you flipped (or scrolled) to this page, you—by some method—chose a single project to work on.

If you haven't, please pick one.

If you aren't able to pick one, I'll pick for you...do the third of your Top Three (there's no scientific or logical reason to pick that one, I'm just trying to help you come to a decision!).

Off We Go!

The very first thing you ought to do is to choose the objective associated with it.

What specifically do you want to be accomplished by the end of your project?

When Scott and I started our project, he asked a question that has often stuck with me and you would do well to ask at the beginning of your project: "What does success look like?"

If someone asked you what it will look like if you succeed with your project, what would you say?

Please understand that you need to be as specific as possible. Specificity breeds results. If you can't define clearly what the result of your project will be, you will have a very difficult time planning and executing it.

Time spent at the outset of your project defining what the result will be and how you will get to it will be time invested wisely.

Time Frame

You know *what* the result will be, now you need to know *when* you will achieve it.

Set the time frame you want for your project. My recommendation would be no more than sixty days. Ninety days at the very most.

Parkinson's Law, coined by Cyril Northcote Parkinson states that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion."

If you allot any more than ninety days to your project, you will tend to procrastinate more and more—and your result will not be any better than if you set a time frame of no greater than sixty days.

"But Mark, you just don't understand, my project just can't be completed in sixty days!"

A successful project will, more than likely, include several people beyond yourself.

First off, let's not crucify principles for the sake of exceptions. The principle is to keep the time frame short in order to maximize the chances of completion and minimize the possibility of procrastination.

If your project cannot be completed in sixty days or less, I would strongly suggest re-evaluating your project and perhaps breaking it down into two or more smaller projects.

As humans, we love recognition and we love completing things. Projects of 60 days or less ensure that the end will be in sight almost from the beginning. This keeps recognition and completion within sight as well.

No One is an Island

No one is an island. You have probably heard that phrase. And it is true. All of us are connected to our surroundings. And more importantly, we would be foolish to try to "go it alone" when it comes to our future.

As you map out your project, you will be pleasantly surprised at how many people will be willing to help you out.

As Scott and I began our projects, we quickly realized there were several things that we were not good at, or did not have time to do.

A successful project will, more than likely, include several people beyond yourself—even if only in small part.

Here are several areas where having an additional person might make sense for your project:

- Idea generation
- Manpower
- Technical knowledge
- Accountability

Idea generation. This project is your baby. No one will care about it as much as you. However, having another person with a unique perspective will see ideas, opportunities, and risks that you might otherwise overlook. This is vital to the success of your project.

Manpower. As with any project, there will be a billion tasks (Ok, that might be an exaggeration, but the number will easily hit the thousands—or so it will seem). There will be times that it will be useful to have some help with various parts of your project. Perhaps it's assembling parts, or making phone calls, sending emails, organization, etc.

Technical Knowledge. This is the area that Scott and I found ourselves lacking. Whether it is graphic design, website design, audio/visual technology, writing, or some other area, utilizing the expertise of others will greatly reduce the time you spend on certain tasks, increase the quality of the work and reduce the amount of stress you experience.

Accountability. It will be beneficial to reach out to others simply to have someone to talk to about the project. This person will help keep you accountable to the project and its objective.

I know what you're thinking— *"I don't have the money to pay people to help me. Heck, I'm not even sure this will make enough to pay me!"*

When you are moving and working towards a goal people will come out of the woodwork to help you. Most times all you have to do is ask!

Some people will help just to help you out.

Some people are looking for a project to work on just like you are and will jump at the opportunity to be a part of it.

Some people will believe in your mission and donate their time.

Some people will agree to work with you for a certain percentage of profits or a flat fee.

Whatever agreement you come up with as you ask people to help you out, keep this one in mind:

Strive to provide value for those that help you.

This value may be monetary, it may be experience, it may be recognition, but make sure that they see the value in helping you.

If they don't see the value they will either leave without completing what you need completed—or worse—they will become disgruntled and frustrated.

You don't want that attitude to become a part of your project.

When Scott and I worked on our project we offered several people we used for technical knowledge a percentage of money earned.

The people that helped us believed in what we were doing—and they understood that their compensation was directly related to how the project as a whole turned out.

However you structure bringing people in to help you in your project, treat them fairly and respectfully.

Specificity breeds results



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This isn't your job and you aren't their boss. They are voluntarily helping you because they like you and/or believe in your mission. Treat them as partners.

Resources

At the outset of your project you will want to know what resources you need. Resources include materials for your product, financial means, tools, technology, etc.

Anything you need to complete your project should be listed out.

There's nothing worse than getting halfway through your project and realizing that you had forgotten some necessary resource.

After you've quantified your resources, you can create your plan.

The Plan

The plan is the culmination of everything I've just outlined. The plan is the roadmap for your project. It will help you know where you are, where you're headed, and when you should get there.

You will basically take everything we've talked about in this chapter and fit it onto a calendar.

Pull out a calendar, count out the 60 days that you allotted for the project and mark that day on your calendar.

This is the day that your project will be completed.

Next, figure out the milestones you will hit along the way.

You will probably come up with between three and seven milestones within a 60 day period. Milestones are major accomplishments along the way.

Maybe it is finishing a prototype, or a draft of your book. Maybe it's setting a marketing plan in motion. Find out what are the major steps that you must hit along the way, and plot them on your calendar as well.

Finally, break these milestones into weekly and daily goals and tasks.

The other day I was talking to Scott and we were making some plans for some of the projects we're working on and he told me that if the completion of a task was more than a day away, that we ought to create another task. I know that is a principle that has been taught by many

“...work will expand so as to fill the time available for its completion.”

-Parkinson's Law

time management gurus, but I'm attributing it to Scott at this point, because that's where I heard it.

Map out what you will do each and every day and what you hope to have accomplished by the end of each week.

Richie Norton, in his book *The Power of Starting Something Stupid*, says,

“Begin by targeting small goals and overcoming small fears that lead to your ultimate goal.”

This is what Richie refers to as “crushing fear”—crushing it down into tiny, manageable portions that you can easily overcome.

Remember my example. I might not know where I'll find a corporate jet, or someone to fly it, but I can make a couple phone calls today. Or I can finish an outline to a training I'm preparing.

Breaking your project down into weekly and daily goals that are based on the milestones you set to get you to your project objective will greatly increase the chances you'll achieve success.



5

EXECUTE

You know where you're going, so get going! You have a detailed plan now. You know your overall objective for this project and have several milestones to help along the way.

Now that you have this plan, make a note to review it now and again.

Reviewing your plan on a weekly basis will allow you to ensure that you are staying on track.

You will be able to make small corrections frequently, rather than having to make large, serious course corrections.

Take time to review your plan. If you don't actually sit down and go over it, you will miss things.

You'll come up with new ideas and adjustments that may enhance and improve your project.

Challenges and Setbacks

I really hate to burst your bubble, but even with a great plan and all of the effort you've put into your project on the front end, you are going to face some challenges and probably see some setbacks.

The question will then be, how do you handle them? It won't be the challenges and setbacks that will determine the success of your project, but how you respond and deal with them.

Let me warn you about several challenges you will face.

Nay-Sayers

It might be a family member, a co-worker, a friend, or a complete stranger. But you will probably have someone that will be there to rain on your parade. They will tell you why your project won't work, why you're wasting your time or the intellectually deep argument: "That is stupid."

Remember you've put a lot of effort into this project already simply planning it out! You've gone over exactly what needs to be done. You've created a detailed plan. And most importantly, you know the work that you're willing to put in.

One of the best ways to deal with a nay-sayer is to have an accountability partner. This will do several things for you.

- Keep you accountable (duh!)
- Encourage you

Your accountability partner will be vital to your success

- Provide a sounding board

Your accountability partner will be vital to your success, so make sure you have one!

Here are a few things to consider in choosing your accountability partner. Find someone who:

- You trust
- You will listen to
- You know will be honest and straightforward with you

The bottom line is, if your accountability partner won't be honest with you—or you won't listen when she is—then it does you no good.

Keep you accountable. Your accountability partner knows your objective and your plan. They ask you how you are doing on the tasks you have lined out.

They shine light on the places where you might be missing something or keep you focused on those tasks that might be more difficult or uncomfortable for you.

Encouragement. There may be no shortage of people telling you why your project won't work. Your accountability partner is the person telling you why it will work.

They care about you and believes in what you're doing. She counter-balances any negative comments and people that you encounter.

Visiting with him is a sort of refuge. A time when you can be buoyed up and strengthened. A place where you can let your guard down and be yourself.

Sounding board. Your accountability partner listens. He will listen to your successes and failures, your fears and concerns. You can be yourself around him and vent your frustrations.

Everyone needs a listening ear and your accountability partner is that for you.

She won't let you sit around and wallow in self-pity. She'll encourage you to get back on the horse and keep going. She'll remind you of your vision and your objectives.

Don't try to start a project without an accountability partner. It is much harder without one and you'll be more stressed and frustrated without someone there to encourage you and keep you accountable!

“If you only have 24 hours in a day, your success is dependent on how you use the 24.”

-Eric Thomas

What Do I Do?

Even with the best laid plans, you might have times that you wonder what you should do. Maybe things aren't going as you planned. No matter the reason, you might find a time that you will ask this question during your project.

If and when you do, remember these things:

This isn't life and death. This is a project. This isn't the sole source for providing for your family and your livelihood. You are doing this for the experience. You are doing this as something extra. This is you acting on your dreams above and beyond your regular 9-5. You're already succeeding. You're already further than you would be otherwise.

Just do something! You're already in motion. You're already making a change in your life. You're already acting on your goals and your dreams. So if you don't know what to do, *do something!*

It beats just sitting there wondering what to do.

Remember, this is a project—not your retirement plan!

Richie Norton, in [his interview on the HTYC Podcast](#), said this,

“Magic happens when you’re in motion.”

Be in motion. Do something. Even if it’s a small step towards your project objective, it’s still a step.

Remember, this is a project. It is going to end in 60 days. If something goes wrong, it’s only for 60 days. At the end of that time you can completely scrap it and count it up to experience.

Go back to your plan, find out where you are now and determine the next step towards your goal.

But, whatever you do, do something! Don’t sit idly by—that will not get you closer to your goal!

I Don’t Have Time

This is one that hits you early and often. Let’s be honest, you’ve got a million things going on in your life. Between your job, activities with your spouse, your kids’ activities, church and other activities you’re pressed for time.

I’m not going to tell you that it’s going to be easy. If you’re reading this book, and you are contemplating starting a project because you want more out of life, you probably already have a million things fighting for your attention every day.

So how do you combat not having enough time?

My good friend, [Matt McWilliams](#), said this when he was on the [HTYC Podcast](#):

“Find two hours a week, five hours a week. I know statistically that everybody has 2-5 hours a week. Whether it’s waking up early, or not watching TV—whatever it is, we have the 2-5 hours.”

Can I be honest with you? When you say you don’t have enough time, what you are really saying is that there are several things that you have decided are a higher priority in your life than this project.

Don’t lie to yourself and others. You have the time. You’re just assigning that time to other activities right now.

Take a good long look at how you spend every day. Can you wake up an hour earlier? Can you cut out some TV time? Can you take a shorter lunch?

You keep up from 8 to 5. You get ahead before and after that.



Click to Tweet

I agree with Matt. Every one of us could find 2-5 hours somewhere in our lives—if we make it a priority.

Make your project a priority. It is doing things above and beyond your normal work that will make a difference in your life, your experience and eventually your success.

You keep up from 8 to 5. You get ahead before and after that.

Your project is what will move you ahead. Make it a priority.

As you look for this extra time, remember that this is for a 60 day period. Put in the effort for the short term. Sacrifice some leisure time for the short duration and you'll be amazed at the results you will find.

Eric Thomas says it best,

“If you only have 24 hours in a day, your success is dependent on how you use the 24.”

Be intentional about how you spend your time. Ask yourself if the things you are doing are priority. If they aren't, adjust accordingly.

What if I Fail?

Again, this is the beauty of a project. Failure is very difficult to achieve.

Remember, this is a project—not your retirement plan. A project is, something you are doing in addition to what you do to support yourself and your family. It is done to gain experience, try out something you've always wanted to do, or address a need or cause you see in the world.

With this in mind, take your project very seriously, but also keep perspective about what it is.

If your project fails, but you gain experience, you've succeeded. If you decide you don't want to continue with it, you've succeeded at not locking yourself into something for the next 5 or 10 years of your life. If you start a project to help a cause you care about and you shut down the project at the end—only bringing in a few hundred bucks—that is a few hundred bucks you wouldn't have provided the cause if you had been sitting in your easy chair drinking your beverage of choice!

Keep perspective. Success is much more attainable with a project than in many other aspects of your life.

Stick with it for 60 days—whatever it is. You will be a success. You have completed something. You have either found something that you

“The only purpose of starting is to finish”

- Seth Godin

enjoy doing and would like to continue, or discovered something you'd rather not ever do again. Both are great pieces of information!

Just the act of completing your project, develops within you a habit of completing tasks in your life. And having that habit will do wonders for your happiness and self-confidence.

What if I Don't Like What I'm Doing?

We addressed this briefly in the previous section.

If you don't like what you're doing, stick it out until the end. Even when you don't enjoy it, there are several valuable skills, traits, and insights that you can glean from finishing the project.

Once you arrive at the end, if you find that this isn't something you want to continue, move on.

That's it.

Ship!

This probably sounds funny to you, but one of the biggest challenges you'll face with executing your project plan is—executing your project plan.

That may seem weird to you, but I promise you it is true.

There may be several reasons that it is difficult for you to execute on your project.

It could be good old-fashioned fear. It could be other challenges. It could be the “Just one more...” syndrome.

Let's talk about that last one for a second. What do I mean by the “just one more...” syndrome?

I mean when you say “just one more finishing touch...” or “just one more phone call...” or “just one more re-write...” so on and so forth.

This isn't mentioned much, but the enemy to “good” (or finished) is often “perfect”.

As you work on your project you may want to make your product or service just a little bit better before releasing it.

But sooner or later, you just need to release it.

Author Seth Godin refers to this as “shipping.”

Seth says,

“The only purpose of starting is to finish, and while the projects we do are never really finished, they must ship... shipping is the collision between your work and the outside world.” (Linchpin)

Don't forget that. The only purpose of starting is to finish. Don't get so caught up in making your product or service perfect that you never, ever ship it.

The greatest invention in the world does no good if it's never offered to the world. The most life changing service imaginable won't affect a single person if it's not presented to possible clients.

Like Seth said, “...shipping is the collision between your work and the outside world.”

Make sure your work collides with the outside world. It's the absolute only way it'll have the effect you want (or any effect at all!).

Set hard dates to ship various parts of your product or service.

Once you set the date, stick to it!

I know, I know...if you had just another week you could adjust this or that and make it that much better!

You should adjust those things, but ship the product, then adjust it going forward. Don't hold up the process until everything is just right—it's never all “just right”.

Bottom Line

Once you've put all the effort into defining, choosing, and planning a project, if you don't actually execute, you're not better off. You might as well have stayed home and watched the Mariners get stomped again (I live in Washington...but I'm not a Seattle Mariners fan ☺).

Plan. Ship. Succeed.



6

THE FINISH LINE

Now, what?

Let me be the first to congratulate you, you've completed a project! You can be proud of yourself!

You took action, moved forward and proved to yourself that you can start and finish something. You gained that elusive experience that employers always want to see. You developed skills that you can add to your resume. And now you have concrete, real-world, evidence of those skills.

You found something you absolutely love doing—or something you really don't want to do ever again. Either way, this is valuable information that you can use to move toward your goals and dreams.

You have made an impact in other people's lives—or at least got a better idea of how you could do so in the future.

Debriefing

Now that the project is done, please, please, PLEASE take some time to debrief.

It's easy to just finish the project, wrap everything up and then move on. Resist that temptation!

So much can be learned by taking a few moments and reviewing what you just accomplished.

Ask yourself these several questions:

Did I Accomplish My Objective?

I know what you're thinking now. *"But Mark, you've just spent this entire book telling me how the outcome of my project doesn't matter—that it's a success no matter what."*

That is true. You completed the project, learned some skills and learned what you like doing, or don't like doing.

But you should still spend some time determining whether you accomplished your objective.

The process of reviewing the completed project in relation to the goal is a valuable skill to develop.

Beyond that, by reviewing the project and asking yourself whether you accomplished your objective, you can make adjustments to future projects and allow them to be more successful as well!

What Went Well? What Didn't?

This goes hand-in-hand with asking whether you accomplished your objective.

Ask yourself what went really well? What just seemed to work? What did others comment on?

It is imperative that you determine what went well. This information will be beneficial when you go to do your next project. You will know what to implement and repeat.

Knowing what went well will also give you insights into skills and aptitudes that you have.

On the flip side, you have to ask yourself the tough questions.

What didn't go well? What completely flopped? What should I not do again?

This information is also vital to future projects. If you don't quantify what didn't go well, you're doomed to repeat it in the future!

Think about it, if you spend all this time on a project, you gain some awesome experience, but you don't determine what went well and what didn't—then you don't utilize that information in your next project, or job or your life in general—what was the point of spending all that time acquiring the experience?

It was useless. You wasted your time.

So don't forget to ask yourself and write down what went great, and what didn't.

Is it Something I Want to Continue?

Throughout the project you will probably be forming an opinion on this question.

Ask the question, and really think about it.

Is this is something you want to continue doing? Or do you never want to do it again?

Either answer is ok. There's no right or wrong to this question. You've already succeeded. You completed the project.

Remember, this is the beauty of doing a project. You did what you said you would, you worked on the project for the defined amount of time and you succeeded in completing it.

You have much more than two choices when it comes to this question.

If it's not documented, it didn't happen

In addition to,

- Continue the project-as is
- Discontinue the project
- ...you have several more options,
- Alter or adjust the project and continue it
- Continue with only part of the project
- Put the project on hold for a period of time

You have nearly unlimited possibilities as to how to proceed. You are in the driver's seat—and, again, there is no wrong answer.

Your completed project is like a buffet. Choose the parts you liked and continue them, leave the parts you didn't like or didn't work.

By doing this from project to project you will slowly perfect whatever it is you are doing.

If you are completing a project with the intent of starting a business, you will slowly define and perfect your business without the pressure of getting everything right all at once.

Document It

If it's not documented, it didn't happen.

That's the truth of the matter. It behooves you to document your project. This is crucial if part of your motivation for completing this project was to gain experience to acquire a job or advance in your current profession.

Focus your documentation on presenting what you did and accomplished, what skills you utilized and how they are applicable to other ventures you might find yourself pursuing.

Another great benefit of documenting your project will be the ability to go back at a later date and review the project.

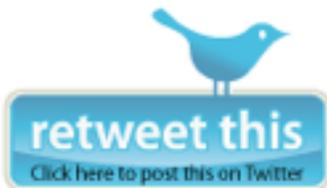
It allows you to build upon your successes—thus saving precious time and effort.

I know you think that you'll never forget the lessons and skills you learned in the course of completing the project, but if it's not documented, sooner or later, there will be parts that you forget—and therefore, they might as well have not happened.

Congratulations! Your project is officially completed.

Remember the quote from Seth Godin. "The only purpose of starting is to finish..." ([Linchpin](#)).

*"Take pride in what
you've accomplished.
Enjoy it for a second.
Then move on."*



Click to Tweet

The only reason you began your project was to accomplish something—to finish it.

Take pride in what you've accomplished. Enjoy it for a second. Then move on. Whether that is by starting another project, building upon the one you just finished, or by moving in another direction.

Start moving—take the next step.



7

ON FROM HERE

What now? What are your next steps?

You've finished your project. What now? What are your next steps?

You are certainly not the same person you were 60 days ago. You have changed, you have grown, you have learned.

No matter what the objective of your project was, it shaped and molded you.

You have new skills. You have a new mindset. You're more confident—in your abilities and skills, but also overall. You completed something, and completing tasks naturally gives us humans a measure of confidence.

So where do you go from here?

PARTY!!

Ok, not really...or maybe so!

I think it's important to celebrate your success! At the very least, as I've said before, you completed something!

Take a few moments to celebrate what you've done. Treat yourself to dinner, take your sweetheart on a date or a weekend get-away.

Relish your successes. Tell some stories, laugh. If your project was a way to take some steps towards your dreams and goals, you will most certainly have some good times to remember and cherish. Be sure to take time to do so.

After all, why go to all this extra work if you aren't going to enjoy at least some of it!

Relax

You've probably been putting in extra hours a lot during your project; make sure you take time to rejuvenate for a short time.

Don't jump into another project too quickly. You have to make sure that you don't burn out.

Projects are typically things that you enjoy doing—or think you might enjoy doing. Don't jump into them so quickly that they become something you dread.

I doubt you're looking to create a second job for yourself—this is supposed to be enjoyable and develop skills and experience—so take'er easy!

“You can utilize the principle of projects in all facets of your life”



Click to Tweet

Onward!

Once you've taken some time to relax and celebrate a completed project you can continue on.

You get to decide if you want to continue the project you were doing, or go in a different direction.

Decisions, decisions!

The great thing is, there's really no right or wrong decision. Spend some time reviewing the list of project ideas that you created before your last project and see if any of them jump out to you now. You may have some new ideas for projects. Add them to your list of potential projects.

What I Think You'll Find

What I think you'll find is you'll want to do another project.

For me, projects are exhilarating! As we talked about in the beginning of this book, the mindset associated with working on a project frees you from several of the roadblocks that you might otherwise face in trying to accomplish your goals and dreams!

You can utilize the principle of projects in all facets of your life, no matter how young or old you are or what may be going on for you!

Whatever direction your next steps take you, find a project to work on!



8

CONCLUSION

Coming back around

*My life completely
changed when I be-
gan creating*

When you and I started this conversation, I asked you a lot of questions. Searching questions. Tough Questions. Questions not answerable without some thought and introspection.

Remember what they were?

- What happened to you?
- What stops you from success?
- What do you tell yourself when you don't accomplish what you'd like to?

The Problem We All Face

The problem we all face in getting what we want is staring back at us in the mirror.

That is what I told you.

That, in a way, is the answer to all of those questions I just asked you again.

I am my biggest problem, and you are yours.

Our thinking is what keeps us from success.

My purpose in writing this book was to give you some tools to overcome the things that are keeping you from your goals, your dreams—from success.

I believe whole-heartedly that turning those goals and dreams into projects will allow you to take steps towards their accomplishment.

How Can I Be So Sure?

A year ago I was where you were.

I was a chronic non-starter. I had a bookshelf full of self-improvement, business, and career books—that I had read. I religiously read leadership and business blogs. I talked about how I wanted to become an entrepreneur and how I make a terrible employee.

If you were to talk to me, you would've thought I was the entrepreneur of the year, but the reality was quite different.

I hadn't done a darn thing to act on my dreams—except maybe sit down once and start a business plan for an idea I had.

I was all talk and no walk.

I'm embarrassed to say that—to admit that to you. Part of me thinks that those around me will now know that I was full of it. But I'm pretty sure they all knew that at the time.

“...turning goals and dreams into projects will allow you to take steps towards success”



Click to Tweet

Those around you aren't nearly as fooled as you might hope they are.

But when I learned about this principle, my life changed.

Suddenly I felt like I was in control of my future!

I wasn't beholden to my boss, my job, or my circumstances. I could create my own circumstances, one project at a time.

I was instantly freed from many of things that held me back.

That may sound too good to be true. I mean, how could I instantly be freed just from having a thought??

It's because I was held hostage by thoughts—so a thought could also set me free.

That's Why!

That's why I can be so sure! My life completely changed when I began creating projects around my goals and dreams.

I know yours can too! Give it a shot!

I don't want to give you the wrong idea though. I'm not a millionaire (yet...) and I haven't achieved all of my dreams and goals (if I get close...I'll just add more!).

I'm not promising that this idea will make you a millionaire (though, it might...) or that it will make your wildest dreams come true (do I look like a genie??). But the process of acting upon your goals, dreams, plans and passions will, most certainly, lead you to more happiness.

You will be surprised how enjoyable the "work" you do in association with your project will be. You'll feel like a kid at times! You'll feel in control of your life and your destiny.

Conclusion of the Conclusion

So, in conclusion, I hope this book has been of value to you. I know the principle of projects is sound and that it will benefit you in your life if you will use it!

I want to hear from you!

I want to hear what you think of the book.

I want to hear your questions regarding planning and executing projects. Head to the [Project: Success page of Happentoyourcareer.com](http://Project:SuccesspageofHappentoyourcareer.com) to provide feedback and to access all the resources mentioned in this book and more!

STEPS TO PROJECT:SUCCESS

Steps to Project:Success

HOW TO BREAK BARRIERS AND BRING YOUR IDEAS TO LIFE

MARK SIEVERKROPP

PREPARATION

1



DEFINE GOALS



SELECT PROJECT



NARROW DOWN

PLANNING

2



DEFINE PROJECT GOAL



SET UP TIME FRAME



GATHER RESOURCES

EXECUTION

3



ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER



ADJUST COURSE



SHIP

evaluate your success

**What worked?
What didn't?
Log in all you have
learned.**

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Design by Lily Kreitinger lilykreitinger.com



Piktochart
make information beautiful

FOR BUSINESS
OWNERS

Throughout this book I've spoken almost exclusively to individuals—and those working for someone else, at that.

It is important for you, the business owner, to know that these very same principles can be adapted and used very successfully within your business.

So you might ask, How? How can I use this principle to help my business?

What about launching a new product? Implementing a marketing plan? New procedures or practices? New programs?

All of these could be fashioned into a project.

Why would you do this?

Because just like individuals, I'm sure that you, as a business owner, don't try new ideas because you don't want to be locked into them long term, or you're just not sure where to start.

A project will solve the same problems for a business owner as it does for an individual.

Working on a project will allow you to work out the kinks and challenges to your idea before completely implementing a new program, procedure or plan.

Also, starting a project will encourage and motivate your employees to work on new ideas.

Choosing Your Project

As you are planning a project for your business, you will ask several of the same questions an individual would ask.

What are we passionate about in our business? What direction do we want our business to go in? What is our competition doing? What do your customers want or need?

Asking these questions will guide you towards projects that would be beneficial to the growth and progress of your business.

Planning Your Project

Planning your project will be accomplished the same way you accomplish the other goals and plans in your business.

Determine what you will accomplish with the project. And the length of the project.

Choose which of your employees will be on the project team.
Set some interim milestones that will help you stay on the right track.

Assign daily and weekly tasks to each of the members of the project team.

Execute

Hold regular meetings with the project team to encourage progress and accountability.

Be prepared to adjust the project plan as new information becomes available.

Seek the input and ideas of everyone on the project team as to how the project is going, how it can be improved and how it might need to be redirected.

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Recap

Once the project ends, you will need to spend some time reviewing, analyzing and recapping the project.

Did the project achieve its stated objective? What was learned from the project? Is the project something we want to continue, alter, or discontinue?

As you are recapping your project, be sure to get input from the entire project team.

Don't discount any ideas, suggestions or opinions. Capitalize on the collective knowledge and experience of the team members to get a good sense of how the project went.

Be sure to document the project. What processes worked well, what didn't work well. The things you'd like to see continued in your company and the things that don't really fit what you're trying to accomplish as a company.

On From Here

Just like an individual, you, as a business owner, now need to ask yourself where will you go?

Will you continue the work that was started by this project? Perhaps doing a full roll out of a new product or implementing a new customer service procedure company wide?

Will you pivot to something else or scrap it all together?

These are the decisions you can now make.

Whatever you choose, you will have taken steps towards your future and moved your business forward. Congratulations!

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

These are books, blogs and podcast that will help make your project successful

The Power of Starting Something Stupid by Richie Norton

Linchpin by Seth Godin

The 76 Day Challenge - by Richie Norton

www.MattMcWilliams.com - Matt McWilliams' blog

www.ChrisLoCurto.com - Chris LoCurto's blog

The Happen To Your Career Podcast

Happen To Your Career

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you for taking the time to read my book. I recognize and appreciate the trust you placed in me by doing so.

I would love to know what you thought of the book and the principles. If you have any questions, comments or success stories from working on your projects, please head to the [Project: Success page of Happen To Your Career](#). You can also email me at mark@happentoyourcareer.com or connect with me on Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and through my blog, Sieverkropp.com.



I spent countless hours and effort researching, writing and editing this book. I would greatly appreciate your help in ensuring that this book is not shared illegally.

If you think your friends, family and acquaintances would appreciate this book, please direct them to the Project: Success page of Happen To Your Career or click on the Retweet button below to share it on twitter.

Thank you for—for everything!



"I just finished reading this awesome book, Project Success! Check it out"

HTYC Contributors

These are the folks who believed enough in the dreams of a couple guys in Central Washington to at least part with their daily cup of coffee to help make this book a reality—Thank you.

Allison Games

Amanda Woodward-Prune

Andrew Trujillo

Bret Wortman

Chris Pettit

Doc Kennedy

gibsonclayton

Jonathan Harrison

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Debbie Sieverkropp

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Steve Pate

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The man who has inspired and encouraged me to be better from afar. For kicking my butt when I needed it, and being accessible to his followers.

The CLoTribe

A group that has celebrated, cried, laughed (a lot), encouraged and supported me, and each other, more than most people I know in person. I can't wait to be able to meet each of you in person. Thank you for everything!

And last...but certainly not least,

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