

SUMMARY

THE POWER OF SELF - DISCIPLINE

BRIAN TRACY



Summary of “No Excuses!” by Brian Tracy

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If you’ve ever taken a look at your life and wondered what’s holding you back, No Excuses is literally the answer.

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Introduction

How many times do you tell yourself, “I’ll do it tomorrow?” or “I’ll do it when I feel better?” What about “I’m too tired right now,” or “I can do it after I go to this fun thing!”

If you’re like me, you probably lean on these excuses far more often than you should, only to find yourself scrambling to catch up later as you wonder why on earth you did this to yourself. And as you’ve probably noticed, bouncing from excuse to excuse isn’t really living your best life. So, why do we trap ourselves with excuses and how can we break the cycle? That’s the question Brian Tracy set out to answer, and this summary will teach you how to apply his findings to your own life. By the time you’ve finished this book, you’ll learn:

- What the Seven Step method is
- What a Disaster Report is and how you can use it to conquer your fears
- Why delayed gratification can set you free

Accept Responsibility, Achieve Success

Have you ever looked at someone else and thought, “How does she do it?” Although that person might not have more time, money, or resources than you, it still appears as though they effortlessly accomplish more, leaving the rest of us to stare in wonder as we try to figure out why. But there’s no mystery to their success! It might sting a little to hear, but the truth is that their success lies in the simple practice of self-discipline.

And whether it’s your neighbor who’s got it all together or the CEO of a Fortune-500 company, the common denominator of every successful person is their commitment to eliminating excuses. But the good news is that the benefits of self-discipline aren’t exclusive to some secret group of people who have it all figured out. It’s accessible to everyone and you can start cultivating your own vision of personal success right now!

If you’d like to improve your success in your career, one great way to begin is by taking note of experts in your field and what they have to say. Sure, you have the knowledge required to do your job every day, but what about learning something new? What new information could revolutionize your routine? You can start finding out by attending professional workshops and conferences or checking out some leading experts’ podcasts. In fact, that’s what Brian Tracy’s dentist did. Because he was passionate about his work, he attended every dental conference he could. That’s what brought him to a conference in Hong Kong where he learned something that transformed his career.

When a Japanese dentist shared a technique that could permanently improve the appearance of a patient’s teeth, Tracy’s dentist immediately took this new information back to his practice in the US and started implementing it with his own patients. Within just a few years, his practice experienced an explosion of success and clients from all across the United States were traveling to book appointments with him. In fact, by the age of 55, he had achieved national acclaim and made enough money to retire early. If this type of success sounds pretty good to you, the great news is

that it could easily happen to you. After all, attending conferences and learning new things doesn't sound too hard. But it's important to remember that even something as simple as learning from others requires one fundamental step: accepting responsibility.

In order to learn and make changes in your life, you must first identify and accept your limitations. One limitation might be the fact that you don't yet have the knowledge you need to be your best self; accepting that is what enables you to be humble and learn from others. But accepting responsibility is also the first step to eliminating excuses. Whatever you lack in your own life, whatever you'd like to change, it's critical that you own it and resist the temptation to blame your disadvantages on others. Brian Tracy learned that the hard way and it was that discovery which motivated him to write *No Excuses*. Because after finding himself in a dead-end job at the age of 21, with little money, no success, and no sense of personal satisfaction, he realized that was all due to his habit of blaming his problems on his childhood and his lack of education.

But once he realized that, Tracy instantly set out to redirect his toxic thought patterns. He started buying self-help books and learning everything he could about self-improvement. He began putting more effort in at his job and giving 100% of himself to everything he did. By making an active effort to change the negative aspects of his life, Tracy not only re-trained his brain, but charted a new course for personal success.

Adopt the Seven Step Method

This little piece of advice is for everyone who's struggled to keep a New Year's resolution. (And, let's be honest, that's pretty much all of us). So, if you've ever found yourself googling "how to stick to your New Year's resolutions," here's a practical method that you can put in action all year long. It's called the Seven Step method and it's even simpler than it sounds. Here's how it works:

Step One: Decide exactly what you want. Don't just write a generic goal like "lose weight" or "make more money." Identify a specific and realistic goal like "lose 50 pounds."

Step Two: Write down your specific goal.

Step Three: Set a realistic deadline for accomplishing your goal. Our failure to identify the amount of time and effort it will take to accomplish something is one of the biggest reasons our resolutions fall through. So, when you're being realistic about your goal, make sure you're also realistic about how long it will take you to complete it. And if you're looking at a long-term goal, don't be afraid to break it into small, manageable chunks. On its own, "lose 50 pounds" is a pretty tall order, but "do 15 minutes of exercise today" is manageable.

Step Four: Write down a list of everything you need to achieve your goal. This includes everything from the struggles you might encounter while attempting to meet your goal to the tools you'll need to be successful.

Step Five: Identify the most beneficial tasks and prioritize them. Add them to your calendar and complete the high-priority tasks first.

Step Six: Start on your tasks right away. Even if you start small, take at least one practical step to accomplishing something right now.

Step Seven: Do something every day that helps you achieve your goal.

Sometimes, that small thing you can do every day might be as simple as asking others for advice. That's what Bob Barton learned. Bob was a frequent attendee of the author's motivational seminars and he took everything he learned to heart. Because he wanted to get ahead in his career as a salesman, Bob decided that some steps toward his goal could include things like paying attention to the senior salespeople at his company and emulating their manners of speech and dress. And while copying successful people helped him out a little, he didn't begin to see real results until he finally approached them and asked them to help him accomplish his goal.

When Bob asked one of the senior salesmen for a book recommendation that might help him learn more, his colleague was flattered, and soon all the senior sales staff began to shower him with advice that ranged from personal tips to podcasts. And when Bob disciplined himself to take advantage of these resources and really read and listen to them, the transformation was astounding. Before he knew it, Bob became the best salesman in the office!

Complete the Disaster Report

What are you afraid of? I'm not talking about the basic things that pretty much everybody fears, like spiders or heights, but rather, the deep fears that keep you from accomplishing your goals. Are you afraid of failure? Afraid of being unremarkable? Whatever your fear is, the most important thing to know is that it doesn't have to hold you back. Although they may feel insurmountable at times, our fears aren't hardwired into our brains. Because we learn to be afraid of things over the course of our lives, the good news is that we can take control and un-learn those same fears. And one of the best ways to un-learn your fears is to complete what Brian Tracy calls "the Disaster Report." It's comprised of four simple steps and it works like this:

Step One: Describe your fear clearly.

What exactly are you afraid of? What do you think will happen? Whether you're writing it down or simply articulating it for yourself out loud, be specific about the parameters of your fear.

Step Two: Identify the worst case scenario.

Often, we get so paralyzed by fear that we fail to ask "If then, what?" questions. So, take a few moments to think about the very worst thing that might happen if your fear came true and confront that possibility. As you do so, you may find that your fear is a bit irrational, that it wouldn't be all that bad if the worst really happened, or that your fear suddenly seems a bit more manageable.

Step Three: Brainstorm solutions for your worst case scenario.

Now that you know the scariest possible outcome, come up with some creative solutions for what you would do if it came to that. For example, let's say you're scared of making an investment because you're worried it might go wrong and you'd lose all your money. So, if the worst case scenario is that you lose money in the process, one solution is to acknowledge that you could find a way to make that money back. Or you could minimize the

risk and invest less of your income so you're confident of having a safety net to fall back on. Whatever the worst case scenario is, you can always find a solution that will help you minimize your fear. Acknowledging this is also a tremendous first step, because part of the paralysis of fear comes from our unwillingness to even confront what we're afraid of.

Step Four: Take actionable steps to ensure that your worst case scenario doesn't happen. This probably sounds like the most obvious statement ever, but it's worth putting into practice. Because of course we don't want our worst fears to come true, but what practical steps do we take to try and keep it from happening? Asking ourselves what we can do today to make our futures more secure is a great way to remind ourselves that our fear doesn't control us-- we control it.

Training yourself to confront your fears right away is another helpful step you can take. For example, another of the author's seminar attendees had a tricky relationship with her boss. Although she was a top employee, her boss never lost an opportunity to find fault with her work, which-- understandably-- caused her to feel nervous and uncomfortable at work. And after months of dreading any interaction with her boss, she finally put Tracy's advice to the test and simply told him, "Please don't talk to me that way. I'd really appreciate being spoken to differently. When my feelings are hurt, I can't focus on my work or give my best." And although she was nervous about her boss' reaction, the worst case scenario didn't happen! Instead, her boss apologized and spoke to her respectfully in all future interactions.

Self-Discipline Determines Your Success

Although some of our examples have centered on the lives and best practices of those who work for someone else, the truth is that self-discipline is still a vital part of your success even if you're self-employed. In fact, it might even be more important then! That's because statistics show that the average business owner works 59 hours every week. So, if you're running your own business, it's critical to be aware of the willpower, consistency, and determination which fuels the successful management of that work schedule. In order to maintain it, you'll need to implement the CANEI method, which stands for Continuous And Never Ending Improvement. Here's how it works:

You know, of course, that when you start a new business, you need to write up a business plan and identify key things like your target market, pricing strategies, marketing tactics, etc. But you should also know that this business plan isn't set in stone. No matter how well it's serving you at the moment, there will come a point when your current strategy fails to work for you, and because of this, you should be constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve. That's how you avoid the failures of businesses like Blockbuster which collapsed because they refused to adapt with the changing market. So, keep in mind that a successful business is one which is constantly improving. And to lead that successful business, you must always seek to challenge and improve yourself.

But the same is true for every employee out there as well! Although you may not be responsible for the growth of an entire business, you're 100% in charge of your growth. And although that might not sound like a big deal, maximizing your sense of personal responsibility can actually help you to move up in your company. Brian Tracy learned that firsthand when he worked for a property development company. He started by giving his best to every job he was assigned and then asking his boss for more responsibility. And as he earned it, he continued to develop his sense of self-discipline, training himself to get the job done better and faster than

the last time, until he'd beaten his personal best. This ultimately earned him the reputation as the "go-to guy" that you could trust to do anything well.

And once he had that reputation, Tracy just kept building on it, until one day, he was asked to fly to Reno and start working on a new property the company had just acquired. Although he'd only been asked to do it in the next couple of weeks, Tracy took initiative and flew out the next day to get an early start. By doing this, he discovered that the property had no access to water and thus was virtually useless for development. Catching this mistake early enabled him to terminate the contract and save his company the \$2 million they would have otherwise wasted! It all goes to show you what can be accomplished when you take initiative and practice some aggressive self-discipline!

Achieve Financial Freedom

Do you work because you have to or because you want to? For most of us, it's the former, and we often spend our time fantasizing about what we'd do if we had complete financial freedom. We'd buy a mansion, perhaps, or spend all our time laying by the beach. Every moment we'd normally spend working could suddenly be spent in pursuit of only our favorite activities. Sounds pretty great, doesn't it? But what you might not know is that this could actually be well within your reach! How can you do it?

Well, the first step to achieving financial freedom starts with practicing something called delayed gratification. Because our world has gotten faster than ever, our expectation of getting exactly what we want at the moment we want it has increased as well and it's a death blow to our success. That's because success can only be achieved through self-discipline and self-discipline requires patience. So, although it may be tough to master at first, start training yourself to take control with the One Percent Method.

All you have to do is set aside 1% of your income and discipline yourself not to touch these savings. And if you think about it, when you're living off the other 99% of your income, it's not like you'll miss it all that much! Because if you earn \$3,000 a month, 1% is just \$30. Is the lack of an extra \$30 a month going to cause you significant hardship? Probably not, and that even applies if, like most people, you live paycheck to paycheck. Although you might miss that extra \$30 slightly more than those with a bigger monthly income, it's unlikely that it will have a negative impact on your quality of life each month. And by setting aside just 1% of your income each month, you can soon build a sizeable savings account that will help you gain financial freedom! In fact, if you're able, you can even try upgrading to 2% of your monthly income and watch your savings grow.

Now, that sounds like a pretty manageable path to financial freedom, but would you believe that cultivating a pattern of smart savings involves more than just setting aside money? It's also about time management and for

that, you can use the ABCDE method. Like the One Percent method, it's just as simple as it sounds, and it's the best way to cut procrastination from your life. (Because honestly, isn't procrastination at the root of all our excuses?) You can start eliminating your excuses by following these simple steps:

A: These are your "must-do" tasks, denoted by the first letter of the alphabet because they're the things you've got to do first. Any tasks that will bring major negative consequences for ignoring them should be put in this category.

B: "Should do" tasks go here. While you definitely ought to do them, you probably won't die if you don't get these things done.

C: "Nice to do" tasks go in this category. Think writing a card to a friend or offering to do someone a favor. These are great things and you should definitely do them if you can, but don't prioritize your great aunt's birthday card over the presentation that could cost you your job.

D: These are the tasks that can be delegated to others. Often when we take on responsibilities, we assume we have to do every single thing on our own. But in fact, some things could be delegated to people we trust who are willing to help us take some of the load. So, if a quick errand can be delegated to your partner, put it in the D category and get on with your A jobs!

E: Lastly, these are the tasks that aren't essential. Being neither necessary nor nice or otherwise important, these things don't have to be done and are probably distractions. Ignore them and focus on your main goals.

Avoiding the “Three Whites”

Any book about getting rid of excuses has to deal with exercise at some point because exercise is one of the most common things we make excuses about. And if we're going to be truly healthy and successful, then working some exercise into our lifestyle isn't just a good idea-- it's absolutely necessary. Cultivating healthy eating habits is equally important and one of the best ways to develop those habits is the “Thinking Big” weight-loss program. Developed by Brian Tracy as an integral part of his “no excuses” ideology, “Thinking Big” encourages users to cut “the three whites” out of their diet. These, of course, are sugar, salt, and flour, and step one begins with eliminating all sugars from your diet. (Ouch!)

Although you'll definitely miss sugary desserts, sweet drinks, and sugar in your morning coffee, making this choice requires a clear identification of your priorities. Because if your priority is to be your healthiest self, you can't go wrong with a diet that helps you to shave off one pound a day, increase your energy, and boost your focus. To really maximize these benefits, you should also cut out all salt from your meals (goodbye, french fries!). And last but not least, eliminate all white-flour products like bread, pastries, and pasta from your diet as well. You're probably thinking we've just asked you to cut out pretty much anything that tastes good and you're probably right, but as with every “no excuses” decision, it's all about priorities. Sacrifice is an essential element of any healthy food pattern, and if your goal is to see real results in your weight loss, this is a proven way to get there!

Improve Your Personal Relationships

No excuses means no regrets. That's one of the best things about it! Because when you remove procrastination as an option and discipline yourself to achieve your goals, the fewer occasions you have to look back and say, "I wish I'd done..." Our personal relationships are often some of our biggest sources of regret and as such, they're the perfect frontier for self-improvement.

So, using the methods outlined in this book, take a look at your relationships and identify what you need to improve. Do you want to spend more time with your children? Do you need to remind your family that they're a priority? No matter what you'd like to change, you have the power to say no to the excuses that are holding your relationships back. You can start by committing to spend more time with your family, or, if you need to, to practice forgiveness. Learning to forgive is one of the most vital steps to achieving happiness and it's also critical for accepting responsibility.

Because we often blame our parents for problems we have as adults or for childhood experiences that impact us to this day, it's easy to use that blame as a means of diverting responsibility away from ourselves. After all, if our parents messed us up, our toxic patterns can't really be our fault, right? Wrong! While we can't control the past experiences that have shaped us, we are 100% responsible for what we do with our lives today. So, if there's anyone you need to forgive or anything you need to let go of, relinquish those excuses today and start on the path to happiness.

Final Summary

Excuses are all around us and they're easy to take advantage of. But choosing the easy route won't bring us happiness and success. Instead, it's the quickest way to ensure that we'll one day wake up and find ourselves unhappy, unfulfilled, and wondering how we got this way. If you want to reclaim your future and find success, happiness, and financial freedom, you've got to say no to excuses and cultivate self-discipline.



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