

SUMMARY
BY ALYSSA BURNETTE

**SHOOT FOR
THE MOON**
BY RICHARD WISEMAN



Summary of “Shoot for the Moon” by Richard Wiseman

Written by Alyssa Burnette

What we can learn from the men who walked on the moon.



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Introduction

“To infinity and beyond!”

If you're like me, you grew up with the inspiration of this iconic cry from action figure Buzz Lightyear. Immortalized by the movie Toy Story, Buzz the astronaut action toy existed as tangible proof of every kid's dream to fly to the moon. But before Buzz was the idol of every modern child, another generation of kids grew up believing that flying to the moon was impossible. Their dreams were no less spectacular or imaginative than ours; they just assumed that they were living in a very different reality. That's why the astronauts of 1969 made history when they walked on the moon: they had made the impossible accessible and proved to the world that anything could happen. It was, of course, as we all know, one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.

But you don't have to be a rocket scientist to benefit from this book! In fact, we're not going to talk about the intricacies of rocket science at all. Instead, this book is all about the indomitable spirit and determination that inspired this team to make dreams come true. And above all, it's about how anyone can apply this team's top tips to their own lives. Over the course of this summary, we'll explore the qualities that made this team truly great and what we can learn from them.

Motivation is Key

We've all been there-- your alarm goes off in the morning and you find yourself wondering if it would really be that bad if you just quit your job. Or dropped out of school. Or skipped that big meeting. Whatever your morning holds, in the early, drowsy hours, we can rationalize almost anything if it will give us a few extra minutes of sleep. But mornings don't have to be a nightmare! One of the best ways to reduce your morning stress is to give yourself a reason to get out of bed every morning. Or rather, a reason that transcends your fear of getting fired. (Because, let's be honest, that's what gets most of us out of bed). But what if we replaced that grudging reluctance with a motivation that excited us? What would our lives look like then?

Maybe our lives would look something like those of the iconic astronauts like Neil Armstrong! You see, this NASA team was special because they knew that motivation and a sense of purpose were the keys to accomplishing their big, impossible goal. Because as cool as it sounds to be the first man who walked on the moon, I can guarantee that every day of Neil Armstrong's life was not filled with supercharged, "first man on the moon!" energy. Instead, there would have been days where he was tired. Days where he just wasn't feeling it. Days when he didn't want to get out of bed in the morning. Days where he felt just like you do on any given work day. So, what's the difference between you and Neil Armstrong? Neil Armstrong knew that you will never be motivated all the time, so you must always be determined. And that strong determination comes from a sense of incredible purpose. In the case of Neil Armstrong and his NASA team, their sense of purpose came from their goal: they wanted to put a man on the moon. And so they were determined to work through the hard days and the "blah" days and the days where they felt like giving up. They were determined to work until they made their dream come true.

And you can do exactly the same thing! You might have a different goal, but you can still apply the same principles: finding motivation through a sense

of purpose and staying determined. But how do you do that when your goal isn't something as awesome as walking on the moon? When it comes to our own ordinary lives, we might have to work a little harder to find that sense of purpose-- but it is absolutely still out there! For example, if you're an accountant, you might not feel like your job has an awesome purpose. And, on the surface, that might be true. Maybe your job is just a job; it's a means to an end that helps you pay the bills. But it also helps you to provide for your family. It helps you take care of the people you love and make their dreams come true.

Similarly, you might not think that a nurse, a care home assistant, a doctor, and a hotel receptionist have something in common, but you do! Although the specifics of your daily work might be different, you all have something in common because you all take care of people! And if you think about your job that way, you might find that it infuses you with a new sense of purpose and meaning! You can find joy and motivation in saying, "My job is to take care of people!" So, even if your job doesn't make you feel alive with purpose, you can still find meaning in your work by switching up your perspective and finding purpose in the little things!

This is just one of the truths that helped the NASA team in 1969. But they also knew that a sense of competition can be healthy because it motivates you to work harder to achieve your goals. In their case, they were competing with the Soviet Union to see which country could be the first to put a man on the moon. But even though that's a pretty big, high-stakes competition, you can also find motivation in healthy rivalries of your own. For example, let's imagine that you're the founder and editor of a successful publication. You used to be a writer for another major magazine, but you broke your ties to that publication when you left to start your own. Now, your former publication could be considered your competition. In other words, if you want to stay relevant and successful, you have to be as good or better than your competition. So, how do you do that? Well, you would start by identifying the unique qualities that make you and your competition successful. You might do some things that they don't do and vice versa. Next, you seek to identify their weaknesses. What do they do that you can

do better? What can you offer that they don't have? How can you be better, smarter, faster, cooler? These questions can provide a bit of fun and motivation as long as you keep them in perspective. Competition can be a great motivator because it operates as an external incentive; it gives you an "enemy" to fight, to beat, and it encourages you to always stay one step ahead. So, don't be afraid to inject a little healthy competition into your everyday life! Start a friendly rivalry with a co-worker or strive to beat a rival company. Just keep it in perspective and don't get too carried away!

Don't Quit Your Daydream

Did anybody ever tell you to stop daydreaming when you were a kid? Were you encouraged to work harder, work faster, and stop taking breaks? If you're like most people, you can probably answer yes to that question! That's because most of us grew up being told that we should work as much as we can and as hard as we can if we want to be successful. But nobody ever told us to actively daydream! However, the author affirms that daydreaming and taking breaks is more constructive than you think. In fact, studies show that people think more clearly when they give themselves breaks, so don't feel like you're being lazy if you take some time to daydream. Burnout is a very real and very dangerous threat to our mental health and it sets in when we push ourselves too hard for too long. So, take some time to think about nothing or lose yourself in a fantasy of how happy you'll be when you go on vacation. After your brain has had a chance to recharge, dive back in to another small task! And don't be afraid to continue breaking that task down into smaller and smaller increments. For example, if thinking about doing an entire powerpoint is overwhelming, just concentrate on doing five slides first. And once you've done them, do another five! Just keep breaking that task down until you've accomplished your goal.

You can also boost your motivation through exercise breaks and the power of a good night's sleep. Unfortunately, however, we often skip these steps as well because we put them in the same category as daydreaming. Many people remember their college days as a haze of caffeine-fueled cramming and all-nighters. During those hectic times, you didn't sleep, you didn't eat, you just frantically attempted to stuff your brain full of as much information as possible. But the author affirms that this is incredibly unhealthy as well! In fact, psychological studies show that people can boost their creativity by as much as 60% if they simply take time for a walk or a jog during their workday! Similarly, when you allow yourself to get a good night's sleep, your brain is able to retain more information and solve problems faster!

So, take a nap, take a thirty minute walk, and allow yourself to get a good night's sleep! The author's research shows that Neil Armstrong's NASA team employed all of these success secrets over the years that they worked on the Apollo mission. That's because they knew that creativity can't be forced and you can't cram to generate innovative ideas. Instead, it's important to take time for self-care and give your mind the freedom to flourish.

Embrace the Freedom to Fail

When you think about failure, you probably don't view it as something you would ever want to encourage or embrace. Why? Because everyone has been taught to believe that failure is a negative thing. Failure is something to dread, fear, or avoid. After all, you get congratulations cards and balloons and parties when you pass the test or graduate. But no one throws you a party for failing. And as a result, we internalize failure as being one of the worst things that can happen to us. In fact, people often live in such crippling fear of failure that they refuse to try new things in case they fail. The author believes that this is one of the most toxic attitudes for any individual or workplace to have. However, he's also quick to point out that encouraging failure is not the same thing as encouraging your employees to underperform. It's also not the same thing as saying, "We have no standards at our company! We never try to do anything!"

Many managers-- and many highly motivated employees-- believe in this misperception, however. In fact, a lot of people misidentify failure as the number-one thing to avoid at all costs. This is often what causes managers to promote highly competitive or fearful environments; without the presence of fear, they believe that people will slack off or lack the motivation to work hard. But that's not necessarily the case! Fear can also generate some truly toxic results, like poor performance, unethical decision-making, and an increase in depression and anxiety. That's why the author believes that we should learn to embrace failure instead. Because, even if failing is unpleasant at the moment, we almost always learn something from our failures. We learn what doesn't work. We learn how not to do something. And this in turn enables us to see what does work and what we can do better next time. So, if we open ourselves up to embracing our failures, we can use them as learning opportunities! We can use our failures as launching pads to explore new possibilities and new avenues of success.

You're probably familiar with Thomas Edison's famous statement, "I have not failed 10,000 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 10,000 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work." This quote has become famous because it embodies a unique attitude toward failure that everyone should embrace. Astronauts like Neil Armstrong understood that our failures help us learn, and that's why he and his team embraced the freedom to learn from their mistakes. If they can do it, you can too!

Final Summary

The very first men who walked on the moon made history because they did something incredible. It's no wonder that we admire and memorialize them; they deserve it! But the authors observe that it's important to remember that the team who led the Apollo mission were just ordinary people like you and me. And you can use their success secrets to improve your own life!

To infuse your life with the success of NASA superstars, start by remembering that motivation is key. Search for purpose in your work and allow a healthy sense of competition to keep you engaged and encouraged. Likewise, remember to take time for self-care; don't force yourself to cram as much information into your brain as possible. Instead, take breaks, take walks, and find peace in a good night's sleep. And lastly, give yourself the freedom to fail.



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