



RICK HOUCEK

SOAR WITH EAGLES



GET MOTIVATED!
GET MOVING!

8 BOLD STRATEGIES FOR A LIFE OF ACTION

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INTRO

Hey, from time to time, we all struggle with getting ourselves motivated... and getting into action. If that describes you, you're not alone. Even the best, highest achievers wrestle with getting 'up for the game' at times.

And here's good news. I can help you become your own most dependable source of daily inspiration.

That's why we're here.

Hi, I'm Rick Houcek, president of Soar With Eagles. I help ambitious leaders and teams to be successful self-motivated achievers. And in this audio book, I'd like to share with you 8 bold strategies the most successful people use to get motivated, get moving, and live a life of exciting action. You can use all 8 bold strategies too, and they can help you improve your life and business.

To simplify, I'll break it down into 8 chapters, each discussing one bold strategy. We'll talk about... how you break out of your comfort zone... how to set goals... how to improve your personal conversion rating... what you do when you're not quite ready to launch... an important behavior successful people don't do... and so much more.

And every one of the 8 strategies I'll share... you can put into practice today. Right now. No waiting.

Are you ready? Let's jump in.

CHAPTER 1

BREAK OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE
AND FACE YOUR FEARS –
FOR EXPONENTIAL GROWTH.



Perhaps Thoreau said it best: “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” (Forgive his male pronoun – a symptom of the time in which he lived.)

Today, though, his message is sadly still true, and yes, it applies equally to women.

Vast numbers of people are shackled in prisons of their own making – reluctant to try new things, take a risk, experiment with different methods, pursue a new path, go for the big win.

Wish I had a nickel for every person who told me “I’ve always wanted to start a business doing XXX” (whatever XXX is for them). Trouble is, years pass and they never get rolling.

Or, “I’d like to get really good at ZZZ” – (whatever ZZZ is) – but never do.

Do you know someone who’s proclaimed something similar? A business colleague? Friend? Family member? (...You??)

What do you say in response? My answer is always the same: “What precisely is roadblocking you from starting today – right now – right where you stand?” I usually get a blank stare, then stutters and stammers. Lots of excuses, but few substantive reasons.

Marissa Mayer said “Shifting toward management meant greater responsibility and influence... but was hard and took me out of my comfort zone.” She bit the bullet and did it anyway. And years later became CEO of Yahoo!

Her achievement supports novelist Ray Bradbury’s point:

"Sometimes you just have to jump out the window and grow wings on the way down." Amen to that.

Good is the enemy of great. No question, it takes courage to dance to a new drum.

Stand-up comic Chris Rock says "Comedians tend to find a comfort zone and stay there and do lamer versions of themselves for the rest of their career."

Okay, let's first give credit where it's due – they have the guts to stand on stage and tell jokes, risking jeers and ridicule if they bomb. (I applaud that.) But Rock's point is: they settle for 'okay' when they could be reaching for sensational.

Personally, I'm terrified of heights. Messes with my equilibrium and I get woozy. Doubt I'll ever shake it completely, but I refuse to let the fear own me, so I occasionally, intentionally, put myself right smack in uncomfortable 'height' situations – just to pump my fist and win. Like eating at revolving 'sky' restaurants at a window table. Or flying in a tiny glass bubble helicopter. Or looking over the edge of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Or going to the second level of the Eiffel Tower (third level was closed that day – or I'd have gone.)

Each time, I was safe – but quietly trembling and usually vice-gripped to something stable and anchored. Beating that fear convinces me other so-called 'impossible' things are achievable.

As author and success consultant Brian Tracy asserts: "You

can only grow if you are willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable, when you try something new."

Or as the baseball saying goes: You can't steal second with one first on first.

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

Three thoughts to consider:

1. Write at the top of your to-do list something you've always wanted to do... that scares you... that's beyond your comfort zone. Commit to making it Priority #1 tomorrow morning. Don't waste time thinking, worrying, fretting. Just jump in and do it.

2. Keep a running list of "All My Wants" ... add to it whenever a new idea pops to mind... and make sure you include the ones that terrify you.

3. Put a star by the most terrifying... and commit to tackle one each month. Twelve in a year.

Before long, you'll surprise yourself by doing 'scary' once a week. Then daily. Then hourly. Then it becomes your new

normal.

And that's when you'll realize your fears are dwindling in number.

You'll know because your friends will tell you they wish they had your courage. Hearing that compliment will shock you at first... and then you'll drive home fist-pumping in your car.

Here's a closing Power Thought from Russell Bishop, an entrepreneur who started 5 successful companies, and a consultant in performance acceleration. He said: "In the heating and air conditioning trade, the point on the thermostat at which neither heating nor cooling must operate – around 72 degrees – is called the 'comfort zone'. It's also known as the 'dead zone'."

🎯 **BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #1**

YOUR FEARS MAY NEVER GO AWAY ENTIRELY... SO DON'T WAIT FOR IT TO HAPPEN. INSTEAD, FACE THEM HEAD-ON AND ACT IN SPITE OF THEM. DO IT OFTEN ENOUGH, AND YOU'LL FIND ONE OF TWO THINGS:

EITHER THEY'RE NOT SO FRIGHTENING... OR YOU CAN WIN EVEN IF AFRAID.



CHAPTER 2

HOW WILL YOU MAKE YOUR MARK ON THE WORLD?



I believe most people – not all, but most – want to leave the world a better place when they're gone. Even if only in a small way.

Assuming you're in this fine club... Exactly what does that look like for you? In what specific way will you make the world better? Have you already begun, or is it something you'll 'get to' one day?

I speak frequently about two essential themes for high achievers: future planning... and taking bold action now. They go hand in hand.

So if you're already on the path to making your mark, good for you. Aggressively stay with it. If you're not, but you do know what that path will be... you just need to launch off the couch and get rockin'. Like today. And if you're not on the path and have no idea what it will be... you need to start planning.

If you disbelieve the wacky notion that one person can make a difference in the world, take solace in the words of Apple founder Steve Jobs: "The crazy ones who believe they CAN change the world, are the ones who do." So it's okay – maybe even necessary – to have a screw loose.

Truth is, most people will never be in a position to impact the world in a large-scale, global way – like by being a head of state, or being famous and recognizable, or being a sought-after opinion leader. No. For most, it will be done in a smaller, quieter way. In the shadows.

That's perfectly okay. Mother Teresa helped the poorest of the poor in India, under the radar, without fanfare. She said: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across

the waters to create many ripples.”

School teachers – often unknown and under-appreciated – work with small groups of 20 or 30 children. Future leaders emerge from these groups and no teacher knows for sure which kids it will be, but they can take pride in knowing they contributed.

Good parents are unsung heroes, counseling their own children daily – in proper behavior, table manners, striving to do their best – in the quiet of their homes, no TV cameras rolling, no world watching.

But make no mistake, these are no small achievements, they have far-reaching impact, and should be seen as such.

Designer Anne Klein gave broader meaning to her fashion empire: “Clothes aren’t going to change the world. But the women who wear them will.”

Michael Phelps said: “I want to test my maximum and see how much I can do. And I want to change the world of swimming.”

I, personally, decided long ago that I could best impact a large mass of people if I worked with only a small number of them: Leaders. People in charge. At the top.

Specifically, business owners and CEOs. Team coaches. Department heads. Executives. Leadership teams. Parents.

My belief was, and still is, if I can help leaders improve, they will in turn – through the influence of their position and

power – bleed it down throughout their constituencies – and all or most (or even just a few) of their followers will improve too.

Thus, by affecting only a handful, I can impact thousands, maybe millions. A rising tide lifts all boats.

So I created and built a business to do just that: guiding aggressive CEOs and leadership teams with strategic planning... helping high achievers with effective personal life planning and goal setting... training ambitious leaders and managers to more expertly grow their teams... and delivering motivational messages to audiences large and small, if only to inspire a smattering of attendees with kernels of thought they might use to advance their businesses, their families, their lives.

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

What about you? Are you moving on the path... or haven’t figured it out yet?

Don’t let size matter. I didn’t. Impacting the world can be done one person at a time. One small team at a time.

I’ve said for many years that if all I ever accomplished in life was to father my children in such a way that they became productive, respected, honorable members of our society, and not drains to – and drags on – the system, then I could die happy. I still feel that way... although I’ve broadened

my vision beyond my two kids to reach and impact so many more.

And it all starts with you. As Gandhi said: "Be the change you seek."

My suggestion: Get moving. And if you're already moving... move faster, move bigger.

In the best-seller "The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People", author Stephen Covey said winners begin with the end in mind. To that point, wouldn't an ideal 'end' be to lay on your deathbed proud of the impact you made... rather than regretful you never got started?

Here's a closing Power Thought from Dr. Steve Maraboli, peak performance coach, author, and founder of A Better Today International. He said: "With one kind gesture, you can change a life. One person at a time, you can change the world. One day at a time, we can change everything."

© **BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #2**

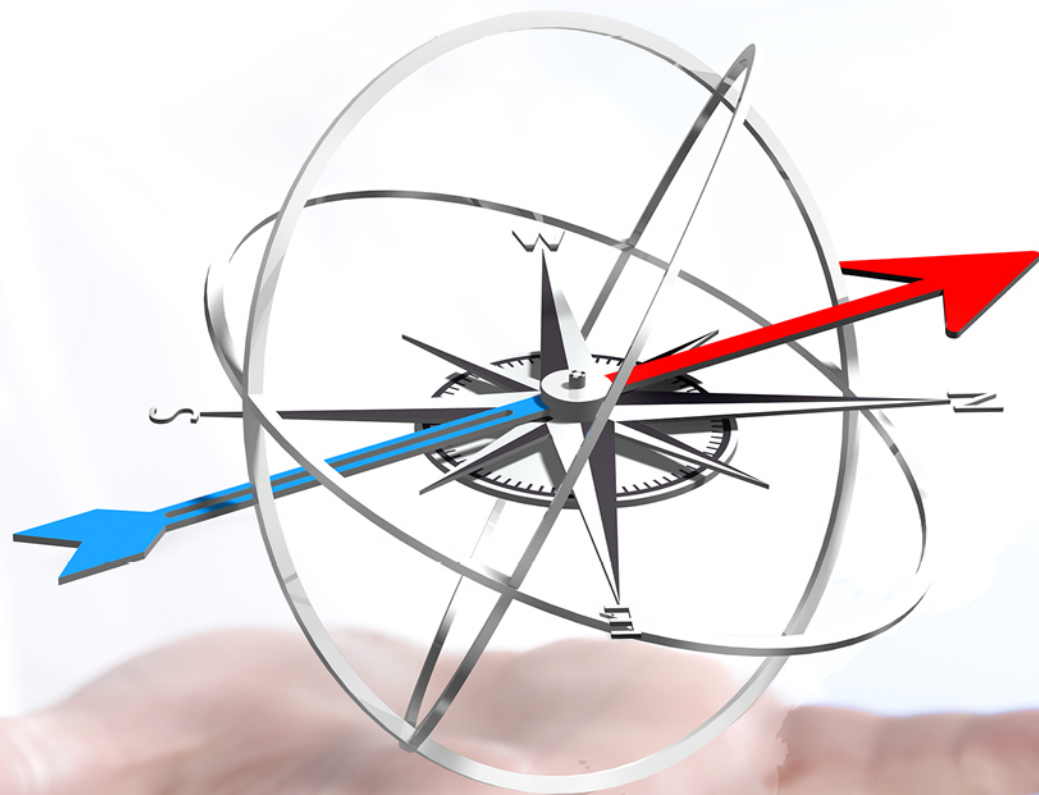
DECIDE HOW YOU'LL MAKE YOUR MARK ON THE WORLD - AND GET AT IT. TODAY.

MAKE IT SOMETHING THAT ENERGIZES AND INVIGORATES YOU - WHETHER LARGE OR SMALL - SO YOU'LL HAVE EVERY REASON TO PERSIST AND STAY ENGAGED.



CHAPTER 3

GO FOR THE 'BOLD'!
SET 3 IMPOSSIBLE GOALS!



Today is the first day of the rest of your life... as the saying goes. It's the beginning of anything you want. No time for couch-sitting.

Here's my challenge to you: Set 3 impossible goals for yourself to accomplish over the next 12 months.

Don't shake in your boots over that. 'Impossible' is a relative term. As Dr. Robert Schuller says, "Anything of any value that I've ever accomplished was impossible when I first grabbed hold of the idea."

If you look back on your own biggest life achievements, you'll probably realize they, too, seemed impossible in the beginning. But hey, you did them, didn't you?

And whatever you do, DON'T call them resolutions. Not around New Year's Day... or any time of year. Mere mention of that word nauseates me. Few people take resolutions seriously. (Have you?... really?... ever?). And few people stick with them. Resolutions make stimulating cocktail chatter at New Year's Eve parties, but they're usually in the dumper by February 1. Or before.

Instead, get serious and set goals. Goals with purpose and meaning. Goals you're passionately committed to.

Football coach Lou Holtz says, "If you're bored with life... if you don't get up every morning with a burning desire to do things... you don't have enough goals."

Couldn't agree more.

I teach that a goal should include, at minimum, 6 critical components. It must...

1. Be written and read daily, preferably first thing in the morning. (Don't trust goals to memory.)

2. Be written with a clear, specific picture/description of the end result you want, with a M/D/Y deadline for completion. (Example: I will have learned, mastered, and performed 3 jazz piano pieces by Dec. 31 of the year in question. Or... I will be able to communicate fluently in French... both speaking and writing... having completed 3 home-study courses of graduating difficulty, with a grade of B+ or better in each, by Sept. 15 of the year in question.)

3. Include a precise, written plan of action, with M/D/Y due dates for each action step.

4. Include clear, written benefits to you for achieving the goal. No, this isn't selfish. It just means you expect and require a personal payoff. Or frankly, you'll lose interest. Nothin' wrong with that.

5. Include a written list of possible obstacles or 'what

could go wrong' roadblocks... along with contingency actions for each obstacle, in case it happens.

6. Include your signature. Yes, treat this as a contract with yourself to make sure your head, heart, and soul are enthusiastically engaged.

Then, let nothing stand in your way. As tennis star Venus Williams says "I don't focus on what I'm up against. I focus on my goal and I try to ignore the rest."

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

The clock is ticking... and always will be. Remember the challenge: Set 3 impossible goals for yourself.

Why not get this done before the stroke of midnight tonight. There's no time like now.

And by the way, if you can't or don't get it done today, that's no excuse. Write them tomorrow. There's no escape from this if you wish to lead the life of a high achiever and accomplish great things.

If you don't, why'd you stay with me this far?

Here's a closing Power Thought from
Reba McEntire, chart-topping, award-winning country music singer, film and TV actress, and owner of several businesses. She said: "My goals have changed throughout my life. At one time it was winning awards, selling out concert dates, selling more albums than anyone else. Now, my goals are to see my grandchildren grown, live a long and healthy life with my family and friends, and travel the world."

© ***BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #3***

TIME TO GO FOR IT IN A BIG WAY.

SET 3 INVIGORATING, STIMULATING,
IMPOSSIBLE GOALS THAT GET YOUR JUICES
FLOWING. COMMIT TO FINISHING THEM
WITHIN 12 MONTHS.

THIS IS WHAT WINNERS DO:
GET CLEAR, FOCUSED, AND MOVING ON
THEIR GRAND AMBITIONS.



CHAPTER 4

HEY, WHAT'S YOUR PCR?



You'll love this. Bet you don't even know what a PCR is, do you? (Okay, I confess, I didn't either.)

But stick with me... you will in a moment... and it'll be worth it. And it will enhance your life.

I wrote a newsletter a few weeks ago, and mentioned the Common Denominator of Success, as discovered and revealed by Albert Gray in 1940.

He said: The common denominator of success – the secret of success of every man who has ever been successful – lies in the fact that he formed the habit of doing things failures don't like to do.

I went on in the newsletter to give examples of specific actions that failures hate and won't do – that winners often hate too – but suck up and do anyway – and achieve the result they want.

Couple hours later, I got a fascinating email from David Briggs, a CEO client of mine in New Orleans.

Listen to what he wrote:

"Rick, today's topic is right on. I have another Common Denominator of Success. I call it one's 'Personal Conversion Rating'. I operate under the belief that, on a daily basis, ALL humans encounter both negative and positive influences. The Personal Conversion Rating (PCR) works this way... if one converts every negative influence into a positive direction... and they convert every positive influence into an even more

powerful positive... that person has a “Personal Conversion Ratio” of 100%! Successful people have very high PCRs. They’ve developed the habit and mindset that all that comes our way is energy. There is positive energy, and there is negative energy. Successful people convert ALL energy into positive voltage.”

Wow! Now that’s a powerful concept we can all benefit from. (David graciously agreed to let me share his stimulating story.)

Okay, let’s examine some real-life applications of this...

Author J.K. Rowling was rejected by dozens of publishers – but refused to accept defeat, kept hammering away, and finally found one to launch “Harry Potter”.

Colonel Sanders was turned away by more than 1000 restaurant owners, yet maintained his resilience. Finally, one agreed to let him cook his chicken and share the profits... which not long after, led him to create the Kentucky Fried Chicken chain that made him famous. By the way, Sanders was over 65 at the time, so it wasn’t just 1000 restaurant owners he would not let stop him. He didn’t let his age roadblock him either.

Tyler Perry’s rough early years included child abuse, getting kicked out of school, and two suicide attempts. But he turned the corner... and later wrote, produced, and starred in his own stage production. It failed miserably. Still, he never quit... and 6 agonizing years later it was a huge success... and launched his now-stellar acting, TV, movie, and film

production career.

Rowling, Sanders, Perry... all were confronted with brick wall obstacles... many times... but never lost faith... and blasted through. Their PCRs are in the stratosphere!

Where’s yours?

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

What negatives are you facing right now?

Tough job? Difficulty in your marriage? Low grades in school? Business floundering? Declining motivation? Lost a big customer? Important relationships decaying?

Now the flip-side: What positives are you experiencing?

Profits up? Recent promotion? Win a blue chip account? Blissful, rock-solid marriage? Getting plenty of quality time with your kids? Still on cloud 9 from a relaxing vacation?

In either case – negative or positive – your assignment is to muster the mojo to crank up your PCR! You can do it – no person, no problem, no policy, no event can stop you if you won’t allow it. Go for it!

Oh, and by the way, back to my client David Briggs, the creator of the PCR. If it’s delicious frozen adult beverages you crave, visit one of David’s 50 fun establishments: New Orleans Original Daiquiris or Fat Tuesday. In the U.S.,

Mexico, Puerto Rico and Honduras. Enjoy!

And while you're there, propose a toast... to your elevated PCR!

Here's closing Power Thought from Jamelle

Sanders, entrepreneur, consultant, spiritual leader, radio host, Who's Who Among Business Leaders. He said: "Turnaround happens when you learn to thrive despite the adversity."

🎯 **BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #4**

ELEVATE YOUR PCR – YOUR PERSONAL
CONVERSION RATING – BY TURNING
ALL NEGATIVE ENERGY, EVENTS, AND
INFLUENCES – INTO POSITIVE VOLTAGE.

AND DO THE SAME WITH POSITIVE OUTCOMES
– MAKE THEM EVEN MORE POSITIVE.
SHOOT FOR A PCR OF 100 .

DON'T COMPROMISE.



CHAPTER 5

SUCCESS IN 3 SHORT SENTENCES...
6 ENERGETIC WORDS.

A few things
to remember!

*

Let's see if you can guess what they are after reading a few brief inspirational stories.

First, about 31-year old Nicole Gross, who some time back, had a landmark week, as reported by USA Today. Because she was finally able to add her favorite activity – swimming – to her rehab therapy.

You see, 6 months before, Nicole was one of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombings, suffering severe leg damage when a bomb exploded near the finish line. There as a spectator with her husband and sister to watch her mother's first race, the bomb tore into both legs.

A former University of Tennessee team swimmer – and today a triathlete – Nicole went through difficult twice-weekly physical therapy sessions, including ankle and foot exercises, kettle bell swings, core work, pushups, and a myriad of other body-restoring routines. She doesn't care if she ever runs again... just wants to do daily functioning things.

For Nicole, her recovery has been one day at a time... agonizing pain, diligent effort, slow progress, never giving up.

In her words: "I attribute my attitude and progression to the fact that I can tap into that inner athlete." She's an inspiration to all victims of that hideous bombing... and all the rest of us who weren't.

Second, I recently saw a TV interview with rock star Jon Bon Jovi. He told a story of a song he wrote and, before releasing, had second thoughts it would sell, became convinced it was a dud, and wanted to kill it.

He told band mate Richie Sambora, who blew a gasket. He saw it differently... completely opposite. He envisioned the song having epic popularity.

Turns out, Sambora was right. It became one of the band's signature songs.

Humbly, Bon Jovi said, in the interview, he's missed the boat the other way, too... convinced certain songs were destined to be chart-toppers... only to see them fizzle.

Through all the ups and downs, he said, the band just kept plugging away. The result? 30 years together, over 130 million albums sold, played before 35 million fans in 50 countries. Not too bad.

And lastly, one of my all-time favorite icons...

Thomas Edison, master inventor and holder of 1,093 patents for such creations as the electric light bulb, the motion picture camera, and the phonograph.

Known for his legendary and relentless laser focus, he would not allow distractions to interrupt his daily routines, nor that of his scientists. He built the Menlo Park laboratory, his invention factory, to devote full-time to the work of inventing useful devices the world had not yet seen, many of which are still in use today.

He remains the world's most prolific inventor.

There you have them – 3 brief stories that illustrate my point. Each one – Nicole Gross, Jon Bon Jovi, and Thomas Edison –

all lived the same simple code that drove their success.

Can you guess what it is? That simple code? 3 short sentences, 6 energetic words.

Here they are, and I keep them on a sign over my office desk to be reminded every day:

Get started. Keep moving. Never stop.

That's it. 3 short sentences, 6 energetic words.

Get started. Keep moving. Never stop.

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

I picked those 3 shining examples to prove my point. But frankly, I could have chosen from literally hundreds of thousands of successful people, in all walks of life.

And here's the catch. All those people bundled together – who religiously follow those 6 energetic words – get started, keep moving, never stop – are in a very small minority. Maybe only 1% to 3% of the total world population, since the dawn of mankind.

Anyone can be in that small club. But most, by their everyday actions, are choosing not to be. Oh sure, if you ask them, they'll tell you they are. But their behavior proves otherwise.

What are you choosing?

Get started. Keep moving. Never stop.

Why not start by posting those 6 words in places where you'll see them several times a day. In your office... on your computer... on the refrigerator... on your bathroom mirror... on your car visor... everywhere.

Sure, you may take some ribbing from friends and co-workers. But so what? They're probably in the 97%. Worry about you.

Here's a closing Power Thought from Charles Dickens, one of the greatest English authors of novels, short stories, articles, and journals. He said: "I could never have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one subject at a time."

🎯 **BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #5**

APPLY A SIMPLE CODE OF ACTION - 6
POWERFUL WORDS - TO EVERY IMPORTANT
ENDEAVOR YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT AND
WANT DONE WITH DISTINCTION:

GET STARTED. KEEP MOVING. NEVER STOP



CHAPTER 6

THE TRUTH ABOUT 'READY'.



It's been said, rightly so, that no prior job on earth fully prepares a person to be president of the United States.

Not being vice president or governor. Not congressman or cabinet advisor. Not foreign ambassador or secretary of anything. Not Washington insider or corporate CEO.

Nothing.

Many presidents – confident and certain of their own preparedness beforehand – admitted after office their shock and surprise at how the full scope and magnitude could never have been anticipated. (Translation with spin removed: they were unprepared.)

And it begs a broader question...

Can ANYone ever be fully prepared or fully ready for ANY job or task or endeavor, of ANY size, or ANY magnitude, at ANY time?

In my view... no. Not fully.

And I'm someone who believes in, preaches to others, and exemplifies... vigilant preparation. Always will.

But the fact is, at some point, you've prepared all you can... and now it's time to hope you've got enough... take the leap of faith... and act.

This is where courage enters the picture. And it was most eloquently verbalized one night several years ago when my wife and I were watching Dancing With The

Stars. Contestant and rodeo star Ty Murray was asked... after his week of diligent and brutal preparation for that night's dance... Are you ready?

With an ear-to-ear smile, in his down-home drawl, he responded: "It's like rodeo. You're never really ready. It's just your turn."

That, in a nutshell, nails the essence of life in general.

'Readiness' is not a firm point in time. There's no such thing as 100% ready. It contains a huge truckload of faith, will, and courage.

You just 'hold your nose and jump', as comedian Jeff Foxworthy says is the fatherly advice he gives to his daughters at the pool.

Or, in the words of marketing consultant Bill Glazer: "You don't wait for perfection. Good enough is good enough. Time to move."

This illustrates 2 critical and essential separation points between winners and wannabes:

1. The eagerness and willingness to prepare.

2. The courage to pull the trigger and act, to dare boldly, even knowing you're not 100% ready, and never will be.

Many years ago, starting out at golf, I signed up for 8 lessons. After the second, my pro instructor said "Now go play 2 rounds, then come back for your third lesson."

I said, "But I'm not ready, I'll make a lot of mistakes."

He said. "Yes you will. And you're as ready as you need to be for now. Go."

I later came to realize how brilliant that was. My third lesson was infinitely more valuable after playing those 2 rounds, unready.

Consultant/author/speaker Brian Tracy tells new entrepreneurs (paraphrasing)... you'll learn more in your first 2 weeks of a newly-birthed business than you did in the 18 months of preparation... so stop preparing and open your doors.



ACTIONS FOR YOU:

Got any big projects or goals you're holding back from launch, knees trembling that you don't yet have the final few pieces of the puzzle? That you're lacking one or two vital bits of information? Or don't have all the money? Or the support you need from others?

Do you really need it? Or are you stalling? Maybe it's time to hit the throttle and let the rest of what's needed reveal itself as you go.

Winners always do. They launch before they're ready.
Because 'ready' never really gets here.

Get moving.

Here's a closing Power Thought from Napoleon Hill, pioneer in the personal development movement, who authored several self-help books, including "The Law of Success" and the best-selling classic "Think and Grow Rich". He said: "Create a definite plan for carrying out your desire and begin at once, whether you're ready or not, to put this plan into action."

🕒 **BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #6**

PREPARATION IS A KEYSTONE HABIT OF
SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE... BUT SO IS NOT
OVER-PREPARING.

YOU'LL NEVER BE FULLY, 100% READY NO
MATTER HOW MUCH YOU LEARN, TRAIN, OR
GRIND.

SO WHEN YOU'VE GOT JUST ENOUGH:
LAUNCH. ACT. GET MOVING.



CHAPTER 7

WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DON'T DO.



It's been said: Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

And yes, it's true, we all feel good when someone does what we do, repeats what we say, mimics our style, duplicates our methodology.

Of course! It's validation. A shot of adrenaline for our ego.

But let's turn the tables and ask: Is it smart for you to imitate others?

Fact is, most people do this blindly. They imitate the actions of family, friends, co-workers, teammates, leaders, competitors, even sworn enemies. Often with no proof of success or foundational wisdom.

But more just because... if someone else did it, they must know something I don't know.

In strategic planning retreats I lead, I've heard client team members speak of an aggressive competitor that made a bold move, and ask the question of teammates: "Why didn't we think of that?" ... assuming the idea's brilliance.

When I ask if they have evidence it worked, the answer is almost always no. But absence of empirical facts seldom stops most folks from leaping to: they're right, we're wrong, we're the fools.

What kid – after impulsively copying a best friend into a troublesome or dangerous activity – hasn't been asked by his

parents “Well, if Tommy jumped off a cliff, would you jump too?” The kid instantly says no, only to ignore the lesson tomorrow and do it again and again. Even years later into adulthood.

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

Ever caught yourself mindlessly mirroring someone else?

I have. Guilty as charged. And when it goes astray, and I’m being honest with myself, I realize how foolish it was to not ask questions, enough questions, the right questions... first.

Comedian Ron White says “You can’t fix stupid.” He’s right, but let’s clarify. Stupid is not making a one-time mistake. It’s making the same mistake repeatedly, and learning nothing from early attempts.

I’ve learned that any bold, exciting idea or action undertaken by another, however seductive and enticing, warrants investigation before I jump in.

I ask questions like: What good came of it? What went wrong? Where did you get surprised or fooled? Would you do it again? In hindsight, what would you do differently?

A wise friend told me her trick. She never acts on new advice the same day. No matter how tempting or urgent, she forces ‘think time’ on herself, always sleeping on it, seeing it with new insight and broader perspective the next day. “It’s never failed me,” she said. “If it’s a great idea today, it’ll still be great tomorrow. And if waiting causes me to miss the window of opportunity, well, so be it.”

Another colleague follows a similar delay pattern, and uses the extra time to call 2 or 3 trusted advisors who have no emotional attachment to the outcome, and ask: I’m thinking of doing X. What are all the ways you can think of it could go south? What am I missing? Do you see better options? What would you do? He says it has saved his tail more than once.

Yes, there are times when swift action, obeying the impulse, is the right path. But other times when contemplation before action makes more sense. Trick is, knowing which to employ when. Ain’t no pat answers... life is trial and error.

Just remember, imitation is a double-edge sword. Love it when someone imitates you. But be wary of blindly following and replicating others. There’s usually time for a few thoughtful, probing questions. Especially when risk is involved, seek out evidence of success before haphazardly following Tommy off that cliff.

Here's a closing Power Thought from Jiddu Krishnamurti, speaker and writer on philosophy and spirituality. He said: "Do not repeat after me words you do not understand. Do not merely put on a mask of my ideas, for it will be an illusion and you will thereby deceive yourself."

© ***BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #7***

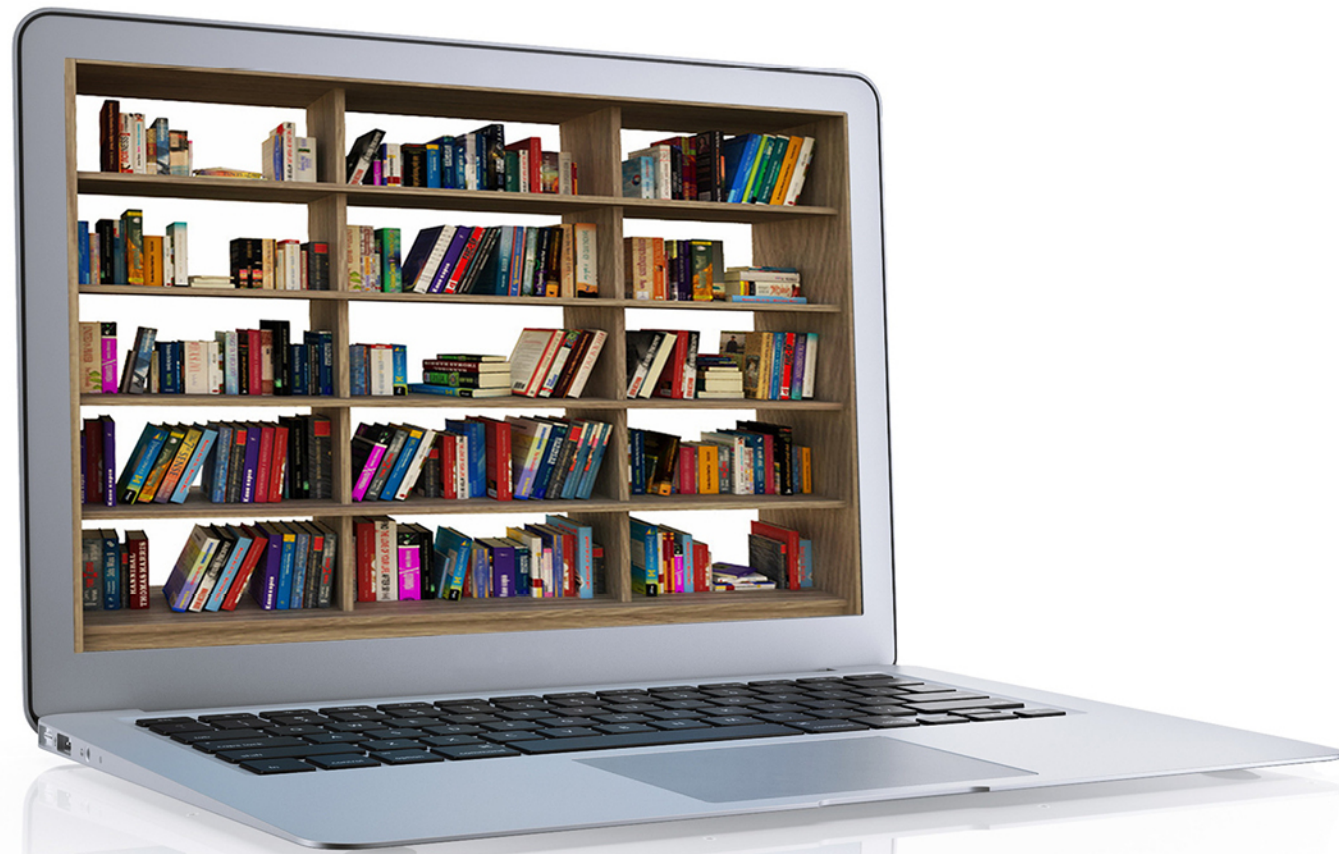
THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE ARE
SKEPTICAL OF – AND RELUCTANT TO –
BLINDLY FOLLOW THE MASSES OR BELIEVE
CONVENTIONAL WISDOM.

THEY PROBE, ASK, AND FACT-CHECK...
AND FREQUENTLY TAKE A DIFFERENT PATH
THAN THE MAJORITY. BE THAT PERSON.



CHAPTER 8

THERE'S A WORLD OF PROFITABLE,
ADVANTAGEOUS LEARNING OUT THERE.
ARE YOU ENGAGED?



The other day, for the umpteenth thousandth time it seems, I heard someone say...

"I couldn't wait to get out of school and get a job. School was a drag. All those years of constant learning, day in and day out, was too much for anyone."

Those are words uttered by a person I would never hire.

You can't run and hide from this fact: constant, non-stop, lifelong learning is critical to high achievement.

I preach that frequently, and since I often get asked if I put my money where my mouth is – the answer is yes by the way – let me share my personal resource list.

I tallied them all up, and I'll bet I missed a bunch. So here goes...

Being a health/fitness/nutrition addict, I subscribe to 2 monthly magazines and 7 e-newsletters (some daily, some weekly, some monthly) from which I accumulate a variety of studies, workouts, tips, and new ideas. In airports, I frequently buy more single-issue fitness publications. Over the years, I've kept some, read and discarded others. My current library of fitness mags is easily 150+, some dating back to the mid '60s.

My home reference library of books and articles on leadership number 240+.

On marketing topics, more than 300.

Biographies of high achievers, more than 80.

On business in general, over 160.

In addition, I subscribe to 9 e-newsletters, blogs, and online essays on those same topics that come to me no less than monthly – most are weekly.

On matters related to high achievement, winner behavior, and wealth creation, I have more than 140 books I reference frequently.

Time management, 35 books.

Online, I subscribe to 8 e-newsletters on those same achiever topics.

Books on baseball (a lifelong passion of mine) number more than 35.

I spend volumes of time each month watching these 4 cable channels: Biography, History, Discovery, and Animal Planet. Specifically for inspirational narratives on overcoming obstacles, beating the odds, historical perspective, high achievement, rags-to-riches. (Yes, animals are amazing to learn from.)

Over the last 26 years, I've been a member (still am) of several peer learning groups for CEOs, entrepreneurs, and marketing pros... and have attended more than 610 all-day meetings,

listening to, and learning from, experts who've been there.

I've spent more than 7700 hours in one-on-one coaching with CEOs – and learn every bit as much from them, as they from me.

I have learning CDs, old cassette tapes, and MP3 downloads that number more than 330 I frequently re-listen to, especially while working out and driving.

My electronic reference files on life/business achievement articles number more than 450. I subscribe to 2 monthly magazines on success themes, and buy dozens more single-issues of success-related magazines in airports. Most I read, highlight, dog-ear pages, file by title, and store for later reference. (Why? Success ideas are timeless.)

I print out many of the e-newsletters I receive... then highlight and file for reference by topic. Or file them electronically.

When I hear a keynote/seminar/workshop speaker (about 3 to 4 per month), I take copious written notes, review them several times over the next 7 days, highlight further, and file for frequent reference.

I scour newspapers and several online news sources every week.

Clearly, I'm an intentional pack rat with educational stuff. Very little that's useful and relevant gets thrown away. My downstairs office, workshop, and gym have extensive shelving and 11 large 5-drawer file cabinets in every nook and cranny

– Office Depot loves me – filled with articles that date back to the early '70s, some yellowed with age.

From all these sources, no, of course I don't read every word, every issue... I pick and choose. Sometimes I print or tear out pages and take on planes, read in hotels and lobbies. Sometimes I scan and store. Other times, read and delete.

Sometimes material sits for weeks, unopened, unread, before I can get to it.

I see the world as an enormous encyclopedia, university, and museum all-in-one... jammed with data to help me lead a better life... AND... all transferable to help my clients and my family too.

And I can't forget my wife as a source. She has her own alternative therapy business – she's brilliant – has a library to rival mine – studies incessantly – and just a 30-minute kitchen conversation with her over lunch has my head swirling with enough new info, it seems, to power a university masters course. She's that smart.

In fact, I approach every conversation – with everybody – as a learning opportunity. Can't tell you how many times I've been in a conversation, then walk away mumbling in my head, over and over, something the other person said, until it's memorized or I can write it down.

ACTIONS FOR YOU:

I tell you none of this to brag or impress. Merely to answer the question I'm often asked: do I practice what I preach.

How about you? What did you learn yesterday? What will you learn today? Tomorrow? Next week?

Further – and this is no joke – I hang out with people who make me look like a pre-schooler. Their volume of learning material puts mine to shame. I'm small potatoes by comparison, and they inspire me greatly.

I never forget that what I know – compared to the entire body of available worldly knowledge – could fit on the head of a pin.

At the root of all this is an insatiable curiosity... an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. I'm a learning junkie. And that... is a characteristic trait of all high achievers I know, study, and emulate.

And now... all this leads me to the 'catch'... the 'caveat'... the 'so what?'

You see, learning, per se, is one thing. But putting what you learn into action... well, THAT is where all high achievement really comes from.

I always shake my head in disbelief when I hear someone proudly proclaim "Knowledge is power". That's total B.S. The truth is... knowledge is power ONLY IF you put it into action.

So absolutely be relentless acquirer of usable knowledge. Endlessly. Tirelessly. Non-stop. In areas of high interest and passion to you. School never ends for the high achiever.

But don't stop there. Launch. Blast off. Get moving. Put that knowledge into action.

Here's a closing Power Thought from Mahatma Gandhi, visionary leader of India's independence movement. He said: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."

🌀 **BOLD ACTION STRATEGY #8**

NON-STOP, NEVER-ENDING, EVERY-DAY
LEARNING IS A HALLMARK OF WINNER
BEHAVIOR.

FIND A MYRIAD OF SOURCES TO LEARN
FROM – BOOKS, (DS, DOWNLOADS,
WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, EXPERTS,
MENTORS, PUBLICATIONS,
THE INTERNET, AND MANY MORE.

THEN RELENTLESSLY PUT WHAT YOU
LEARN INTO FOCUSED ACTION.





Well, there they are... 8 bold strategies to help you get motivated... get moving... and live a life of exciting action.

Let's close down with a final review. Here's a quick summary of all 8 strategies one more time.

Bold Action Strategy #1

Your fears may never go away entirely... so don't wait for it to happen. Instead, face them head-on and act in spite of them. Do it often enough, and you'll find one of two things: either they're not so frightening... or you can win even if afraid.

Bold Action Strategy #2

Decide how you'll make your mark on the world – and get at it. Today. Make it something that energizes and invigorates you – whether large or small –so you'll have every reason to persist and stay engaged.

Bold Action Strategy #3

Time to go for it in a big way. Set 3 invigorating, stimulating, impossible goals that get your juices flowing. Commit to finishing them within 12 months. This is what winners do: get clear, focused, and moving on their grand ambitions.

Bold Action Strategy #4

Elevate your PCR – your Personal Conversion Rating – by turning all negative energy, events, and influences – into positive voltage. And do the same with positive outcomes – make them even more positive. Shoot for a PCR of 100%. Don't compromise.

Bold Action Strategy #5

Apply a simple code of action – 6 powerful words – to every important endeavor you're passionate about and want done with distinction: Get started. Keep moving. Never stop.

Bold Action Strategy #6

Preparation is a keystone habit of successful people... but so is not over-preparing. You'll never be fully, 100% ready no matter how much you learn, train, or grind. So when you've got just enough: Launch. Act. Get moving .

Bold Action Strategy #7

The most successful people are skeptical of – and reluctant to – blindly follow the masses or believe conventional wisdom. They probe, ask, and fact-check... and frequently take a different path than the majority. Be that person.

Bold Action Strategy #8

Non-stop, never-ending, every-day learning is a hallmark of winner behavior. Find a myriad of sources to learn from – books, CDs, downloads, workshops, seminars, experts, mentors, publications, the internet, and many more. Then relentlessly put what you learn into focused action.

Hearing these once... or twice... or even three times... is not enough to ingrain them in your brain. Repetition is a key component to learning and drilling winning ideas into your head, so they're there unconsciously when you need them. So it's a good idea to review all 8 strategies every morning, before you start your day. It's a seminar in 5 quick minutes.

Now... go out and be the rock star you were meant to be!

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS AUTHOR RICK HOUCEK UP TO?

Here's some of what he's done... and is still doing...

- Has led nearly 300 high-stakes strategic planning retreats for small and mid-size companies with his proprietary Power Planning™ Strategic Retreat process
- Delivered more than 600 live keynote and workshop presentations to audiences of all sizes in the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland on high achievement and peak performance themes
- Led/participated in more than 610 CEO and senior executive peer group meetings over 25 years
- Runs his Leadership Excellence Academy for people in charge
- Served more than 460 advertising clients in an 18-year ad agency career
- Authored 11 audio/ebooks
- Co-authored 7 print books
- Writes an ongoing e-newsletter for growth-driven leaders, change agents, and high achievers
- Was president of Ross Roy Advertising, an Atlanta ad agency and division of the \$700 million Ross Roy Group
- Is member of National Speakers Association
- Recognized in Who's Who Among U.S. Executives
- Recognized in Who's Who in Georgia
- Recognized in Who's Who Among American Student Leaders

Attention CEOs:

Are You Operating Without A Strategic Plan?

You're playing blind archery if you are. Worse, there's debilitating confusion among your staff and it's doubtful anyone's telling you. How can they perform in a fog? How can your desired results be achieved when your leadership team isn't bought into a common vision? Here's how to fix it: Rick Houcek leads strategy retreats for small & mid-size businesses using his dynamic Power Planning™ process. His Escape-Proof Accountability™ system overcomes the crippling effects of lousy execution – the single biggest cause of plan failure. Everyone leaves on the same page. For details, visit www.SoarWithEagles.com. Be sure to read the priceless praise from prestigious CEO clients about value they gained.

Attention Managers:

Looking For An Innovative Way To Grow Your People?

Consider bringing in Rick Houcek's dynamic "Self-Motivation For Winners" personal goal workshop for your employees. This is 'life planning' at its best – not business goal setting – and it assures staff members you care about them, their families, their lives. Invite spouses too.

For details, go to www.SoarWithEagles.com.

Attention Meeting Planners:

Need a High-Energy Speaker For Your Next Conference?

Could your team use a jolt of inspiration? How about content-rich, battle-tested ideas on leadership excellence, self-motivation, winner behavior, or personal goal setting? Why not bring in Rick Houcek to speak at your annual meeting, team offsite, or industry conference? For topics and information, go to www.SoarWithEagles.com. Read what clients have said about value they gained — their words are gold!

A WEE BIT MORE ABOUT RICK...

Rick Houcek's singular company purpose is: To provide high-octane, world-class strategic planning systems for business and life, helping top gun leaders, teams and individuals to succeed 'on purpose, most of the time,' rather than 'by accident, some of the time.'

A University of Missouri graduate, Rick has 4 fanatical life passions: family, health/fitness, helping others prosper through his business and friendships, and playing competitive baseball.

Rick Houcek

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