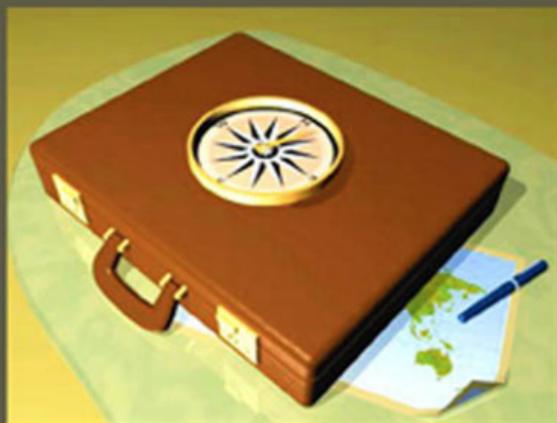


FLIGHT PLAN

THE *REAL* SECRET
OF SUCCESS



HOW TO ACHIEVE MORE,
FASTER THAN YOU
EVER DREAMED POSSIBLE

BRIAN TRACY

Bestselling Author of
Goals! and *Eat That Frog!*

an excerpt from

***Flight Plan:
The Real Secret of Success***

by Brian Tracy

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INTRODUCTION

The *Real* Secret of Success

*A journey of a thousand leagues
begins with a single step.*

CONFUCIUS

This is a wonderful time to be alive. It has never been more possible for more people to accomplish more of their goals in all of human history. And if anything, it is only going to get better in the months and years ahead. Your job is to fully participate in what economists are calling “the golden age” of mankind.

In our world, everyone wants to be happy, healthy, thin, and rich—preferably, as quickly and as easily as possible. Throughout history, in response to this almost universal demand for immediate gratification, countless people and organizations have offered enticing formulas, special techniques, esoteric strategies, and secrets for achieving success and happiness without effort.

Every year or two, someone comes along with a book like *The Secret*, suggesting that there is a quick and easy way to be happy and make a lot of money. According to *The Secret*, all you have to do is to think and visualize positive thoughts and you will attract into your life all the good things you want. This idea appeals to people who are unwilling to do the hard work that is necessary to achieve anything worthwhile.

The real secret of success, however, is that there are no secrets. There are only universal principles and timeless truths that have been discovered and rediscovered throughout the ages. Happiness, health, and prosperity do not occur by accident. They are the result of deliberate design and are subject to the iron Law of Cause and Effect.

This law says, "For every cause, there is an effect." It also says, "For every effect, there is a cause or causes." This means that if you do certain things, you get certain results. The Bible says, "Whatsoever you sow, that also shall you reap." Sir Isaac Newton wrote, "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

Here is a simple rule: If you do what other successful people do, over and over again, nothing can stop you from eventually getting the same results that they do. Conversely, if you don't do what other successful people do, nothing can help you. Success is not an accident. It is not a matter of luck but of design. It is simply a matter of cause and effect.

The Great Discovery

Perhaps the greatest discovery in human history—the foundation principle of religion, philosophy, metaphysics, and psychology—is that thoughts are causes, and conditions are effects. This means that your thoughts create your reality. You do not see the world as it is but rather as you are. Everywhere you look, you see yourself. In a larger sense, your outer world is a mirror of your inner world. Whatever you think on the inside will be reflected back to you on the outside. If you want to know what is going on inside a person, just look at what is happening to him or her on the outside.

This Law of Correspondence—“Your outer world corresponds to your inner world”—is inviolable, at least over time. You can never acquire and hold something on the outside, for the long term, that you have not prepared for and earned on the inside.

You have heard it said that to succeed, you must have what it takes. Well, what it takes is the *mental equivalent* on the inside for what you want to acquire or experience on the outside. For you to change your outer world, you must change your inner world. As Goethe said, “To have more, you must first be more.”

In other words, to create a different life, in any area, you must become a different person. You must learn and grow and have the necessary experiences that give you the wisdom and insights to live a wonderful life. And there are no shortcuts.

This brings me to a metaphor for success that I have shared with thousands of people all over the world for many years. When I describe this metaphor, every successful person I have ever spoken to has said, “That is exactly the reason that I am successful today.”

Life Is a Journey

Over the years, I have flown back and forth across the country and around the world many times. One day I learned a remarkable fact: when you fly in any airplane headed for any destination, you will be off course 99 percent of the time! Because of unavoidable conditions such as updrafts, downdrafts, crosswinds, turbulence, storms, lightning, and the earth’s magnetism, the plane will be off course throughout the journey.

However, when the plane takes off from Los Angeles bound for New York, the pilot will come on the loudspeaker and say something like, “Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for flying our airline. Our flight today will take approximately five hours and twelve minutes, and we will touch down at LaGuardia Airport at twenty minutes to six in the afternoon. Have a nice flight.” And sure enough, five hours and twelve minutes later, the plane lands at LaGuardia, right on the minute, just as predicted.

The point is this: **In life, you will be off course most of the time.** No matter how carefully you plan and organize in advance, your life will be a series of two

steps forward and one step back. From the time you start on your journey of life toward your destination, you will have to make continual course corrections. You will have to start, stop, go left or right, move under or over obstacles, and often retrace your steps. These are the essential experiences you require to become the kind of person you need to be to achieve any kind of lasting success.

You Need a Flight Plan

A wise man once told me, “Success is goals; all else is commentary.” To achieve greatly, you need clear goals, plans, and schedules to get from wherever you are today to wherever you want to be in the future. You need a flight plan that you *file* before you begin and that you use to guide you on your journey. You must then have the courage to “take off,” to step out in faith with no guarantees of success. On your journey, you must be prepared to make continual course corrections. And especially, you must resolve in advance that you will keep going until you reach your destination.

The Real Secret in Action

The most sophisticated guided missile, which will fly unerringly to its target, must first be launched. It must be fired into the air. It must be in motion toward its target before the guidance mechanism can begin functioning.

In the same way, before you can use all your remarkable powers and abilities, you must launch as well. You must take the first step. You must take action. You must overcome your fears of failure and potential disappointment. You must move out of your comfort zone into your "discomfort zone."

The real secret of success is that life is like a long-distance airplane journey. You must first determine where you want to go, board the plane, and then take off toward your goal, knowing in advance that you will be off course 99 percent of the time. And once you begin, you must be prepared to make continual course corrections until you arrive at your destination.

Let the Flight Begin

There are twelve steps you can take on your journey toward greater happiness, health, and prosperity than you have ever enjoyed before. By following these steps, you can take complete control of your life, activate all your mental powers, become the person you want to become, and increase the likelihood that you will reach your destination on schedule. Here they are.



CHAPTER ONE

Choose Your Destination

Thoroughness characterizes all successful men.

Genius is the art of taking infinite pains.

**All great achievement has been characterized
by extreme care, infinite painstaking,
even to the minutest detail.**

ELBERT HUBBARD

You have the ability, right now, to accomplish more in life than you ever imagined possible. You have more talent than you could use in a hundred lifetimes. There have never been more opportunities and innovations to enable you to achieve higher levels of health, happiness, and financial well-being than exist today. In order for you to realize this unlimited potential, your first and greatest responsibility to yourself is to become absolutely clear about what it is that you really want.

When you are absolutely clear about who you are, what you want, and where you want to go, you will accomplish ten times as much as the average person, and much faster as well.

Virtually all of us have four main goals in common. These are (1) to be fit, be healthy, and live a long life; (2) to do work we enjoy and be well paid for it; (3) to be in happy relationships with people we love and respect and who love and respect us in return; and (4) to achieve financial independence so we never have to worry about money again. When you give yourself a score of one to ten in each of these four areas, you will find that most of your problems and concerns today are in that part of your life where you scored the lowest. The most rapid improvements in your life will come when you make improvements in that specific area.

An Abundant Worldview

In flying toward any of these four destinations, you can have either an attitude of abundance or an attitude of scarcity. If you have an attitude of abundance, you will be confident, optimistic, and positive and continually work confidently in the direction of your dreams.

When you have an attitude of abundance, you will tend to see the world in a benevolent way. You will believe that the world is a good place largely filled with good people. You will feel that this is the best of all possible times to be alive.

This doesn't mean that you are unaware of the problems and difficulties in the world. But you accept that these problems have always existed. With an attitude of abundance, you will be more positive and constructive, more focused on solutions than on problems. You will be more concerned about what can be done to improve matters than who is to blame or what has happened in the past.

If you have an attitude of scarcity, you will be just the opposite. You will believe that success is very much a matter of luck and that those who are successful probably earned their money by cheating or swindling someone else. You will see oppression and unfairness everywhere. You will easily accept the old excuses: "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer," "It's not what you know; it's who you know," "You can't fight city hall."

Whichever attitude you develop takes on a force of its own. Your outer world will conform to your inner world. Because you are reading this book, you obviously have an abundant and benevolent worldview. You have a high sense of control and believe that most of what happens to you is self-determined.

If you are a positive and constructive person, you accept a high degree of responsibility for yourself and for everything that happens to you. You do not blame other people or make excuses. If you are not happy with a situation, you get busy and do something to change it. And if you can't change it, you accept it. But you never complain.

Chart Your Destination

The more time you take to decide upon your destination and your goals, the faster and easier it will be for you to reach them. Your future intent will determine your present actions every day.

Begin with perhaps the most important question of all: **What do I really want to do with my life?**

When you set goals for yourself in any part of your life, be perfectly selfish. Idealize. Determine exactly the conditions that would make you the happiest and give you the greatest satisfaction if you could attain them.

Imagine that you could wave a magic wand over your life and make it perfect in every way. What would it look like? What would you dare to dream if you knew you could not fail?

When you ask this question, imagine that you have no *limitations* of any kind. Imagine that you have all the time and all the money, all the knowledge and all the skills, all the friends and all the contacts, and all the education and all the ability that you need to accomplish any goal that you set for yourself. Put another way, imagine that you have a credit card with no limit and you can fly off to any destination.

Your Ideal Career and Income

Begin with your job and career. If your income were ideal, how much would you be earning? If your work-

place were perfect, what kind of a company or organization would you work in? What kind of people would you work with? If you could design your job, how would you most enjoy working, and in what ways would you be the most productive? What special talents and abilities do you have that you would like to use at the highest possible level?

Since you are going to have to work at a job for most of your life, one of your chief responsibilities is to be absolutely clear about the perfect job for you. As Napoleon Hill said, “The key to success is to determine what it is that you most enjoy doing, and then find a way to make a good living doing it.”

If you could do just one thing all day long and be paid well for doing it, what would it be?

Your Natural Talents and Abilities

Wayne Dyer says that each child comes into the world with secret orders. What are yours? What were you born to do? What are the special talents, abilities, interests, desires, and skills that make you unique—different from all other people? How do you know when you are doing what you are meant to do? How can you tell?

Here are ten indicators that you can use to determine that you are in the right field, doing what you were put on this earth to do:

1. You *love* your job. It interests you, fascinates you, attracts you.

2. You want to be *excellent* at your job, to be among the top 10 percent in your field.
3. You *admire* the top people in your field and want to be like them, to achieve their same level of success.
4. You like to *learn* about your chosen field—to read about it, attend courses and lectures on it, listen to audio programs about it. You never tire of learning more throughout your life.
5. The right job for you is something that is easy to learn and easy to do. It seems to come *naturally* to you, while it is difficult for most others.
6. When you are fully engaged in your work, *time stands still*. You often forget to eat, drink, take breaks, or rest.
7. Success experiences in this field give you your greatest feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction, your *peak experiences* in life. You can hardly wait to achieve success again.
8. You like to *think* about your work and talk about it when you aren't doing it. It is interwoven with your whole life.
9. You like to *associate* with other people in your field and to “talk shop” on every occasion.
10. You plan to do this work *all your life*, to never retire, because you enjoy it so much.

It has been said, “Do what you love; the money will follow.” True success comes from discovering what you love to do and then throwing your whole heart into doing it better and better. Determining your ideal job or career is essential to your choosing your real destination and fulfilling your potential.

Your Perfect Personal Life

Wave a magic wand over your family, relationships, and personal life. If your family life were perfect, what would it look like? What kind of lifestyle would you enjoy? Where would you live? What kind of a home would you have? How would you spend your time with the members of your family, day in and day out?

If you are not married, describe the perfect relationship for you. Imagine your dream person. Write down every single quality and characteristic that the perfect person for you would have. You’ll be absolutely amazed at how quickly you will meet the right person for you once you are clear about what the right person looks like.

If your personal life were perfect in every way, how would you spend your time and your life? What kind of car would you drive? What kinds of vacations would you take? What sorts of destinations would you want to visit? Create your ideal calendar—day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year. Knowing what you want is the first step to getting it.

Imagine No Limitations

If your health were perfect, how would it be different from your health today? How much would you weigh? How fit would you be? What kinds of foods would you eat? What kinds of physical exercise would you do each day and each week? Imagine that you could sculpt and shape your perfect body. What would you look like?

Finally, if your financial life were perfect in every way, how much would you be worth? How much money would you have in the bank? How much money would you have invested and working for you? What would be your net worth? How much would you be earning as passive income each month and each year? Especially, what do you want your net worth to be?

The greater clarity you have regarding your answers to these questions, the easier it will be for you to plan your destination and determine your flight plan.

Financial Independence

Here is a simple exercise: Determine how much it would cost you per month to live comfortably even if you had no income at all. Include all your costs of housing, food, travel, medical expenses, vacations, and entertainment. Multiply that number by 12 (the number of months in a year), and then multiply that result by 20 (the number of years you will probably live after you retire). The total represents your retirement goal. This is how much you

will have to accumulate to be financially independent for life.

Then determine your net worth. Calculate on paper exactly how much you are worth today. Imagine that you were going to sell everything that you own and move to a foreign country. Be honest. How much would you have in total if you liquidated all of your assets today? This is the kind of analysis that a bank requires when you apply for a loan. A lender wants to know how much you have, how much you owe, and how much liquid cash you have available.

You now have a financial starting point, your current net worth, and a financial destination, the number that you want to reach in the years ahead. You are ready to take action.

Back-from-the-Future Thinking

In determining your ultimate destination in any area of your life, practice “long-time perspective.” This technique, used by the most successful people in every area, requires that you project forward several years and determine where you want to be at the end of that period.

You then practice “back-from-the-future” thinking. From the vantage point of the future, in your imagination, you look back to where you are at the present moment. You then think about the steps that you could take, starting today, to get from where you are to where you want to be in the future.

This long-time perspective enables you to see yourself and your life with greater clarity. It reveals what you need to do, and what you need to stop doing, if you truly want to reach your destination.

When you are completely clear about your destination, you'll find it much easier to make decisions regarding your actions, day by day and hour by hour. The secret is simply to make sure that everything you do today, every decision you make, is moving you toward the destination you have chosen.

Four Powerful Techniques

In determining your destination, you can use four special techniques to accelerate your progress and increase the likelihood that you will achieve your goals on schedule. These are *verbalization*, *visualization*, *emotionalization*, and *rationalization*. Let us take them in order:

1. *Verbalization*: With verbalization you write down a clear, specific, and measurable goal. You can't hit a target that you can't see. You cannot achieve a goal that you cannot express clearly in words. The more time you take to be precise and accurate in your description of the goal that you wish to attain, the easier it will be for you to make sure that every step you take is in the right direction.
2. *Visualization*: All improvements in your outer life begin with an improvement in your mental pictures

of yourself and your desired future. You visualize by creating a clear, detailed mental picture of your perfect goal or destination.

Your ability to visualize is one of the most incredible powers that you possess. Each time you replay the picture of your perfect goal as if it were already realized, you imprint this message deeper and deeper into your subconscious mind. The more clearly you can see your goal in your mind, the faster it will appear in your reality.

3. *Emotionalization:* When you emotionalize the goal that you have verbalized and visualized, you actually create within yourself the feelings that you would experience if you had already attained the goal. The more intense your desire to achieve this goal, the more power and energy you will put behind it, and the faster you will move toward it.

When you imagine the feelings of joy, happiness, pride, and pleasure that will accompany the attainment of your goal, you multiply your mental powers for goal attainment.

4. *Rationalization:* You rationalize your goal by writing down all the reasons why you want to reach this goal and all the benefits that you will enjoy when you attain it. Make a list of all the ways that the attainment of this goal will improve your life. As Nietzsche wrote, "He who has a strong enough why can bear almost any how."

Reasons are the fuel in the furnace of achievement. The more reasons you have for wanting to attain a goal, the more motivated and determined you will become. The more reasons you have, the more you will persist in the face of any adversity. The more reasons you have, the more creative you will become in overcoming difficulties and removing obstacles. The more reasons you have, the more likely it is that you will become *unstoppable* in your movement toward your destination.

Make It Believable

One important point: make sure your goals are both believable and realistic. As Napoleon Hill said, “Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.”

When you decide on an exciting future destination, your goal must be realistic. It must be something that you can get your mind around. It must be something that makes you stretch but that you feel confident you can achieve.

This is the reason for making your goals believable: if you set a goal that is too far beyond anything you have ever accomplished, it actually *demotivates* you rather than motivating you. When you set your goals too high, a “circuit-breaker” mechanism in your subconscious mind actually shuts off your motivation.

If you cannot quite believe in your *conscious mind* that you can attain a goal, none of your mental powers

will click into action to help you attain it. Instead, you may be motivated and excited for a while, but as soon as you face the inevitable adversity and disappointment that accompany goal attainment, you will lose heart and give up.

Walk Before You Run

Quite often, people will come up to me after a seminar and say that they have decided upon their financial goal. When I ask them what it is, they tell me that they have decided to become a millionaire or even a billionaire in the next year or two.

In almost every case, these people turn out to have no money or very little. They are often in their thirties or forties and have a lifetime of financial mismanagement behind them. Nonetheless, they think that they can neutralize all their past experiences and somehow leap into wealth and affluence with little preparation, few resources, and no clear idea of how to get there. They believe that all they need to do is to think happy thoughts and they will magically attract everything they need to overcome decades of frustration and failure.

When people say to me that they want to be a millionaire as soon as possible, I suggest that they first become a “thousandaire.” After they have managed to save a thousand dollars and get out of debt, they can then become a “ten thousandaire,” and so on. To achieve great things,

great efforts are necessary. Each person must walk before he or she can run.

The Question of Deservingness

The great frontier today is not outer space. Rather, it is *inner space*—recognizing and releasing the incredible powers of the mind.

Because of childhood experiences and other factors, you have deep within you a series of psychological blocks—“mental brakes” on your potential. One of the first steps to achieving great things is for you to identify and release these mental brakes so that you can move ahead in your life far faster than ever before.

One of the most harmful of these unconscious barriers is the feeling of undeservingness. This occurs when you feel, deep in your heart, that you do not really deserve to be happy, healthy, and prosperous. Most people have this feeling of undeservingness to some extent, and for many people, it becomes a major obstacle to their success. This block is expressed in the feeling “I’m not good enough.”

Create Value for Others

The fact is that you deserve all the good things in life that you can possibly imagine as long as you achieve them by doing or contributing something of value to other people and to your world. When you develop your talents and

skills, work hard, and do good work that benefits other people, you deserve all the recognition and rewards that you earn. You do not need to feel guilty or undeserving in any way. When you contribute value to the lives of others, you are entitled to keep some of that value for yourself. This simple concept is the basis of free markets and free societies.

When you achieve great financial success, people may ask you, “Don’t you feel guilty making all that money?” You can reply with pride and confidence, “Not at all. I have decided that the very best way to help the poor is not to become one of them.”

The Practice of Voluntary Exchange

This brings us to an important point. All money comes from creating wealth of some kind. Most money that a person possesses is the result of that person exchanging his or her time and effort in the production of a product or service for a particular amount of money.

In other words, every dollar that you desire to acquire on your road to financial independence has to come from someone who has worked to earn the money in some way. Every dollar that you wish to acquire must be given to you or paid to you voluntarily by someone else who has worked hard to earn that amount of money for himself or herself.

The key question in life then becomes, What can I do to *deserve* this money from other people?

The Power of Contribution

Peter Drucker said that most of our misunderstandings in business and finance could be eliminated if we just replaced the word “success” with the word “contribution.”

When you look around, you will find that the wealthiest people are those who are making the greatest contributions to the greatest number of people. They are producing products and services that large numbers of people are willingly and eagerly buying to improve the quality of their own lives.

The question you must ask and answer is, What contribution am I going to make to other people to cause them to want to give me the amount of money I want to earn or acquire? This may be the most important question of all with regard to your financial life. What are you doing today? What can you do in the future? Why do you deserve the kind of money that you want to acquire? What value are you prepared to give to others so that they will voluntarily give you their money, the money that they have earned from their personal efforts?

Most of all, what kind of a person do you have to become on the inside, in terms of knowledge, skills, and character, to deserve the kind of life you want to live on the outside?

When you stop thinking about yourself and what you can get and start projecting into the minds and hearts of the people you wish to serve, you will see all kinds of pos-

sibilities and opportunities to help others. When you begin focusing on giving, you will truly step onto the road to riches.

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