MINDSET & SUCCESS

The Magic of Thinking Big

by David J. Schwartz

Your life grows to the size of your thinking: believe big, act bold, and drop the excuses.

BEST POINTS FROM THE BOOK

01 **Believe you can succeed and you will: when you believe, your mind starts hunting for the how.**

Schwartz calls the mind a thought factory run by two foremen - Mr. Triumph and Mr. Defeat. Whichever one you signal gets to work, so think success, not failure. (Ch. 1)

02 **Excusitis - blaming your health, smarts, age, or luck - is the failure disease.**

Those are the four excuses Schwartz says unsuccessful people hide behind. Successful people refuse them: attitudes beat raw intelligence, and results follow cause and effect, not luck. (Ch. 2)

03 **Action cures fear. Indecision and postponement fertilize it.**

Isolate exactly what you fear, then act against that exact thing - now, not when conditions feel perfect. Waiting is how don'ters stay stuck; doers move first. (Ch. 3 & 10)

04 **Use a big-think vocabulary, and see what you can be - not just what you are.**

Small, negative words paint small mental pictures and shrink your plans before you start. Bright, optimistic words, a big view of your job, and ignoring trivialities stretch what you attempt. (Ch. 4)

05 **Believe it can be done, and your mind finds the way to do it.**

That belief is the root of creative thinking. Don't let tradition paralyze you - ask 'How can I do better?' and 'How can I do more?', then ask questions and listen more than you talk. (Ch. 5)

06 **You are what you think you are.**

Look important and it helps you think important: dress sharp, treat your work as important, give yourself a pep talk daily, and ask, 'Is this how an important person would think?' (Ch. 6)

07 **Manage your environment: go first class in everything you do.**

Your mind runs on the diet your surroundings feed it. Cut out thought-poison and small-thinking people, get advice from people who are succeeding, and keep finding new groups and new stimulation. (Ch. 7)

08 **Grow enthusiasm: to feel activated, act activated.**

Dig into what you must do until you understand it, act alive in how you move and speak, and broadcast good news. Enthusiasm is contagious - it lifts your results and everyone around you. (Ch. 8)

09 **Make other people feel important - and put service first.**

Call people by name, show appreciation at every chance, listen and let others talk, and take the initiative in friendship. Money and help follow the person who serves first and thinks right toward people. (Ch. 8 & 9)

10 **Turn defeat into victory by studying your setbacks.**

Be your own constructive critic, blend persistence with experimentation, and never blame luck. Every situation has a good side - the winners are the ones who go find it. (Ch. 11)

11 **Use goals to help you grow: picture yourself ten years from now, then write the plan.**

A clear image of who you want to be pulls you forward like an autopilot. Break it into 30-day steps, take detours in stride, and invest in yourself along the way. (Ch. 12)

12 **Think like a leader: trade minds with the people you want to influence.**

Ask how a decision looks through their eyes, always think progress, and take time alone every day just to think - leaders tap their best thinking in solitude. (Ch. 13)

THE BOOK, IN SHORT

The big idea: success is not reserved for the smartest or most talented. Two people with the same ability end up in very different places, and the difference is the size of their thinking. As Schwartz puts it, the size of your success is determined by the size of your belief.

It starts with belief. Your mind is a thought factory: feed it success thoughts and it produces ways to win; feed it doubt and it manufactures reasons to fail. The first disease to cure is excusitis - explaining your life away with your health, your smarts, your age, or your luck. Then build confidence the only way that works: action cures fear, while indecision and postponement fertilize it.

Next, enlarge the thinking itself. Use big, bright, optimistic words, see what you can be instead of only what you are, and believe a thing can be done so your mind gets creative about how. Manage your self-image too - you are what you think you are, so look important, treat your work as important, and talk to yourself like someone who matters.

Then manage everything around the mind. Your environment is a diet: go first class, cut out thought-poison, and get advice from people who are succeeding. Grow enthusiasm, make other people feel

important - by name, with appreciation, by listening - and put service first, because people and money follow the person who thinks right toward people.

It closes with growth tools: study setbacks instead of blaming luck, and blend persistence with experimentation until defeat turns into victory. Set a clear image of yourself ten years out and let it pull you forward in 30-day steps. And think like a leader: trade minds with the people you hope to influence, think progress in everything, and take time alone each day to think. None of it needs rare talent - just bigger belief, practised daily.

DO THIS WEEK

This week, run Schwartz's own drills. Day 1: name your main excuse, label which excusitis it is (health, smarts, age, or luck), and write down the action it has been blocking. Day 2: write your ten-year picture - who you are, what you earn, what your days look like. Days 3-7: isolate one thing you have been avoiding out of fear and take one concrete action against it each day, because action cures fear. All week, practise one confidence exercise daily - sit in the front row, make eye contact, speak up once - and call every person you deal with by name.

By David J. Schwartz, first published 1959. Read it if you play small, make excuses, or want a plain, practical push to aim higher.