

# ***SUCCEED WITH PURPOSE***

*15 Simple Strategies to: Unleash Your Potential, Boost Your Career, Increase Your Income and Find Your Purpose*

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## Introduction

### **Succeed with Purpose**

The idea for *Succeed with Purpose* was born out of a sense of surprise. After winning *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart*, the refrain I heard time and again was, “What I admired most was how you won. You were so nice and respectful—a true team player—it’s so rare to see that today.”

Receiving this praise was flattering, but being singled out concerned me. Why was my behavior considered so rare? Why is living by the Golden Rule (Treat others as you want to be treated) considered not the norm, but an aberration? A quick look around – at newspapers, magazines, television, and movies – made it clear: We are no longer living in the benign era of the *Brady Bunch*, of being nice to others and doing the right thing; we are living in the cutthroat age of *Sons of Anarchy*: kill or be killed.

A lot of people are afraid of being too nice in the work place. They hear stories about ruthless leaders that rise to the top and are conditioned to think the way to get ahead is to succeed at all costs while waging a virtual war on the competition. Kindness is viewed as a chink in the armor and a guaranteed ticket to finishing last.

If you’ve picked up this book, you probably feel, like me, that how you succeed counts as much as the success. The idea of being able to succeed in business while still maintaining your dignity, pride, and self respect is more important to you than the “succeed at all costs” mentality that prevails in much of today’s business world.

Despite the negative images and the portrayal of business in the media, there are still millions of people who have meaningful relationships with their co-workers, help

other people grow and develop even as they become successful themselves, and ultimately thrive by staying true to their core values of integrity, respect, altruism, and friendship. My experience, and the experience of plenty of others, proves that you can succeed with purpose!

I've been an investment banker, management consultant, chief marketing officer for a \$700 million company, and an entrepreneur. I founded *Her Sports + Fitness*, a national woman's health and fitness magazine that was named Best New Magazine in 2004 and was later rebranded *Women's Running* magazine. In 2009, I launched a the Women's Half Marathon series—five events across the country. In 2012 I sold both companies to the industry leader. Together, my husband and I have written more than 7 books, have hit the bestseller list multiple times and have earned both 5-figure and 6-figure book deals from some of New York's top publishing houses. We were able to accomplish all this by following a set of principles in both our business and personal lives that is based on our *Succeed with Purpose* philosophy.

As a kid I was always taught to respect others and do the right thing. And after nearly 30 years in business I've learned specific ways and techniques to put these early values into practice, creating positive results for all involved. I didn't necessarily know how to identify these techniques early on in my career, and it sure would have been helpful to have someone show me simple steps I could take to make a positive impact on others around me while at the same time positively impacting my own life and success. That is why I wrote *Succeed with Purpose*: to share these techniques with others and to spread the “wealth” of shared success.

I believe that generally people are inherently good and want to do the right thing. However, with pressure to succeed “at all costs” it can sometimes be difficult to know how to get ahead without stepping on others. Sometimes the roadblock may come from failing to believe in ourselves enough to actually be our best. We may lack the confidence to approach others and try new things. Or we may not realize how a few small changes in the way we carry ourselves can impact our success. My goal is for each and every person who reads this book to utilize it to make life more passionate, enjoyable and successful for you and those around you.

I know from personal experience that being genuinely nice can help you get ahead in your career, open doors that may have previously been shut, and create powerful opportunities that may have been unavailable otherwise.

I was also motivated to write *Succeed with Purpose* because there seems to be a common perception that nice people finish last. Being a “nice guy” or “nice girl” doesn’t mean you’re a pushover or a weak person. You can be powerful and nice, confident and nice, influential and nice, and even authoritative and nice. Despite being a nice person I am tough in negotiations, hold my employees accountable for their actions, focus on the bottom line profitability and terminate employees for non-performance. Being nice doesn’t mean you shy away from doing the things necessary to make your business or career a success. But it does mean conducting yourself in a way that leaves everyone involved feeling comfortable with the outcome.

In *Succeed with Purpose* I want to share with you what I consider the 7 building blocks to personal success, and show you how to use these skills to succeed in business

and life. *Succeed with Purpose* is more than just a set of rules—it's an approach to living life on a whole new level; one that allows you to be the very best you can be.

The book is divided into two parts, and each chapter allows you to build on what you learned previously. In *Build Your Foundation*, you'll discover the seven building blocks that will help grow your interpersonal skills while at the same time you help to improve the lives of those around you.

The seven building blocks are:

1. Believe in Yourself

You'll learn why believing in yourself is the foundation for success and how to effectively grow your self-confidence. I'll show you how to keep a positive outlook, never give up, and overcome your doubts.

2. Win With Communication

You'll learn how much your style and approach to communication influences how you are perceived by others. I'll show you how to listen more effectively, project more energy and come across more clearly, as well as how to be approachable to others.

3. Give Recognition

You'll learn the importance of recognizing the efforts and contributions of others and how even the smallest expression of appreciation can have a positive and lasting impact on others. I'll show you how to give recognition in a way that reflects positively on you and the recipient.

#### 4. Take an Interest in Others

You'll learn why it's so important to invest the time to learn more about the people you come in contact with. I'll show you how looking outside yourself can help you better connect with others.

#### 5. Help Others Help Themselves

In this chapter you'll learn how your actions can help others be the best they can be. I'll show you how to provide support, be a great mentor and encourage others to improve themselves.

#### 6. Be Part of the Team

You'll learn how to become a more effective team player. I'll show you how to express your enthusiasm, improve team communications and get along with almost anyone.

#### 7. Exude Professionalism

In this chapter you will learn why dressing, acting and communicating for success can take your career to new heights. I'll show you how to impress at first sight, stand out from the pack, and how to tackle sensitive situations.

Put the building blocks into practice and you will quickly notice a change in how those around you perceive you and how you perceive yourself.

Part two, *Build Your Future*, shows you how to apply the seven building blocks in your daily interactions with others – superiors, co-workers, competitors, clients, customers, family, and friends. You'll learn how to put a positive spin on the toughest situations. You'll learn how to:

1. Find Your Passion

In this chapter you will learn why finding your passion is so critical. I'll show you how to reassess your career, explore future opportunities and chart a path to happiness.

2. Promote Yourself

You'll learn that there is more to getting ahead than just doing a good job. I'll show you how to ask for what you want, how to let your accomplishments be known, and how to propel your business or career.

3. Rule with Your Heart

In this chapter you will learn that how you manage is more important than what or whom you manage. I will show you how to critique constructively, build trust, and get the most out of your team.

4. Become a Great Leader

You'll learn how to set yourself apart as a great leader. I'll show you how to think like a leader, act like a leader, communicate your vision and hire the best.



## 5. Build Lasting Relationships

You'll learn that it's never too late to build a network of strong relationships. I will show you how to proactively build a cadre of strong supporters.

## 6. Embrace Your Customers and Clients

In this chapter you will learn the importance of creating the strongest bonds possible with your customers and clients. I'll show you how to stay in contact, make your clients feel appreciated, and shine amid your competitors.

## 7. Give Back

You'll learn how rewarding it is to adopt and support a cause. I'll show you how to find the best way to contribute given your personal interest and economic and time restraints.

## 8. Be Your Best

You'll learn how embracing the *Succeed with Purpose* approach can make you perform at your best and you'll review the simple steps that you can immediately employ in your every day life. You'll also learn how these small changes can impact you and those around you.

Follow the techniques in this book and you can reap exponential rewards as you progress through your business career. *Succeed with Purpose* is not a strategy for short-term gains; it's a philosophy that yields more out of your relationships with others and ultimately more personal advancement.

If you want to improve your life, have even more success, create stronger relationships and be happier with who you are, commit to learning and practicing the art of succeeding with purpose.

*Succeed with Purpose* can be your ticket to self-fulfillment and happiness – just give it a try!

## **Building Your Foundation**

## Chapter 1: Believe in Yourself

“You sort of start thinking anything's possible if you've got enough nerve.”

J.K. Rowling

Joanne Rowling was once a single mother, unemployed and living on state benefits. She worked on a book manuscript for years and when she was done, she packaged up the first three chapters and sent them to an agent, “who returned them so fast they must have been sent back the same day they arrived.” But she believed in her manuscript, and found another agent. After a year and a dozen rejections she finally received an offer for her book. Now known as JK Rowling, her Harry Potter series has been published in 63 languages, sold more than 400 million copies, and is credited with inciting an increase in child and adult reading. Rowling is now a billionaire. What if Rowling didn't believe in herself enough to keep pushing forward with her manuscript? What if she stopped trying after those first three chapters were rejected?

You have the potential to take your life to a whole new level. No matter how satisfied or unsatisfied you may currently be in life, believe me when I say your life can be much better than it is today. It can have more passion, humor, fun, excitement, and meaning. And when it does, your career will take off and success will no longer be a question. But before you embrace any of the *Succeed with Purpose* principles you must first believe in yourself. This is the foundation upon which everything else is built.

In order to improve your life and the lives of those around you must believe that

you can truly make a difference. We are capable of so much more than most of us realize. The secret to tapping into your ultimate potential is to understand that with hard work, determination and unwavering conviction you can realize your dreams. You can do anything as long as you believe you can!

Developing a strong belief in yourself will not happen overnight, but I've seen dozens of examples where in just weeks or months, people have gained incredible amounts of confidence and literally transformed their lives. To start building your inner belief system you need to:

- Stay positive
- Start with you
- Never give up
- Overcome your doubts
- Eliminate the negative whenever possible
- Find the silver lining
- Embrace the small things
- Spread positive energy

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### **Stay Positive**

Dale Carnegie said, "Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at

all.” What if Albert Einstein gave up on his research when no university would hire him? What if Thomas Edison pulled the plug on his experiments after two years and hundreds of failed attempts? Einstein, Edison and Rowling all persevered in light of many failures. Every day people make the choice to either push forward or give up. If you stay positive and look at failure as a lesson learned, and an opportunity to persevere, incredible things can happen.

After inventing the Ballbarrow, a wheelbarrow with a ball instead of a wheel, James Dyson turned to another low-brow item – the vacuum cleaner. Inspired by a system at a local sawmill, he created a prototype of the cyclone vacuum, that used spun air to separate dirt from air, rather than a filter or bag. Three and a half years and 5,127 prototypes later, he had a unique product that didn’t require a vacuum bag. Dyson went on the road, visiting British and European manufacturers, who all rejected his device. Over the next decade, Dyson rode a rollercoaster of rejection, bad licensing agreements and lawsuits. But he remained committed to his new design and by 1995 he had the best selling vacuum cleaner in Britain. By 2005, Dyson’s company had an annual profit of over \$173 million and his 100% ownership of the company was worth an estimated \$1.1 billion. He continues to run his company as he wants (no suits and ties, no internal walls) and he operates under a simple but straightforward philosophy. As he says, “We try to get people to do things in a different way.”

To paraphrase a famous quote by Thomas Edison, Dyson didn’t fail; he simply found 5,127 ways that didn’t work. By viewing all these attempts not as failures but as opportunities to learn and develop a better prototype, Dyson was able to maintain the positive attitude necessary to achieve his goal.

We all face what's commonly termed failure or rejection from time to time. What sets a winner apart is how they perceive the situation. Those that remain positive in light of numerous obstacles are often the ones who succeed.

On May 6, 1954, 25-year-old Oxford medical student Roger Bannister became the first person to run a sub four-minute mile, shattering a 9-year record. People said it couldn't be done but Bannister had a secret weapon others overwhelmingly underestimated: a belief in himself. According to one writer, "Bannister studied the four-minute mile the way Jonas Salk studied polio—with a view of eradicating." Collapsing at the finish line after 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds that reshaped the idea of what the human body was capable of, Bannister made world history on the Iffley Road Track in Oxford. Afterwards he said, "Doctors and scientists said that breaking the four-minute mile was impossible, that one would die in the attempt. Thus, when I got up from the track after collapsing at the finish line, I figured I was dead." What's even more amazing is by believing in himself, Bannister actually helped others believe in themselves. In the next five years alone, 20 additional people went on to break the four-minute mark.

Whatever it is you hope to accomplish— a faster mile, a better job, a successful marriage, financial security, or better health--the one thing that can most impact your success is your perception.

As children, most of us believe that anything is possible, but as we make our way in the world we frequently lose this positive outlook and fearlessness. Recapturing that exuberance of youth will enable you to achieve your dreams. I believe that all my successes as a businesswoman, athlete, sister, wife and friend would not have been possible without an ability to see the glass half full.

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## **Start With You**

Rudy Garcia-Tolson and his parents faced a tough decision. After 15 operations to help correct a variety of birth defects, including Pterygium Syndrome, which prevented him from straightening his legs, doctors gave him two options. He could spend his life in a wheelchair or have his legs amputated above the knee and be fitted with prosthetics. “Cut ‘em off. I want to be like other kids,” said five-year-old Rudy. Rudy quickly adapted to his new situation, throwing himself into swimming and running. At age eight he predicted he would win a gold medal in the Paralympic Games. In 2004 he kept his word, setting a world record in the process. According to Rudy, “People need to realize that if I can do all kinds of sports with no legs, they can do it too. People just need to remember that a brave heart is a powerful weapon. Don’t just sit there; get out and do something special. Believe in yourself.”

Norman Vincent Peale, author of the classic *The Power of Positive Thinking*, says, “Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy.” It’s important to believe in yourself and to never let anyone else tell you that you can’t achieve your goals. At 16 years old I was competing at the state high school swimming championships, a race I had essentially been training for since I was 5, but specifically for months prior to this day. I was feeling really good about my chances and myself; I was nervous, but ready to perform.



Just as I was about to step onto the starting blocks I overheard a timer say, “She’s way too small. There’s no way she can compete with these other swimmers.”

My nickname on the swim team was “Bones” so you can imagine that I wasn’t the most intimidating figure in the race. At just under five feet tall and seventy pounds, I looked as if I had just come off an elementary school playground. Hearing what the timer had said, I turned toward the woman and smiled. Not once did it cross my mind that she could actually be right.

The starting gun went off and I swam the race of my life. I not only won, I set a personal best and a school record. I pulled myself out of the pool with a huge smile on my face and stopped in front of the timer and said to her, “Anything is possible.”

Sallie Krawcheck, the former CEO at Citigroup and number six on the *Forbes* list of “The World’s Most Powerful Women” relates a similar tale, “When I was a kid, I was ‘that kid’ – freckles, braces and very unfortunate glasses. If I wasn’t the last chosen for a team, I was the second to last... The teasing was really tough. I wasn’t just crying in class; I was falling apart in school. My grades went from As to Cs.

“One day when I was really down, my mom sat me on the sofa. She spoke to me as though she was speaking to another adult, telling me to stop paying attention to the girls who were teasing me. She told me that they were naysayers who would sit on the sidelines and criticize those who were out there trying. She said that the reason they were doing it was because they were jealous. Looking back, I know they weren’t really jealous, but, at the time, I believed my mom. My grades went back up, and I never let the naysayers bother me again.”

There will always be those who doubt you, so the first person who needs to believe fully in you . . . is you. You are the only one who truly knows what you are capable of. And, chances are it is far more than you think.

Following his early career on Broadway and London stages, Fred Astaire went to an RKO Pictures screen test. According to Hollywood lore, the judgment was short and sweet: “Can’t act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little.” According to the producer who ultimately signed Astaire, the test was “wretched.” But Astaire believed he was a talented dancer and was not going to let the opinions of a few Hollywood executives stand in his way. He went on to be recognized as the fifth Greatest Male Star of All Time by the American Film Institute.

One of the biggest obstacles I’ve faced was getting *Her Sports + Fitness* off the ground. I had no publishing experience, a three-person staff (one of whom was me), and a minuscule budget. How, I wondered night after night, could I take my limited resources and turn them into a successful national magazine in a market flooded with titles aimed at women readers?

To compound the matter, a very long line of industry experts urged me to give up my magazine dream. These experts cited staggering statistics of publishing failure rates, even among experienced publishers. It was pointed out that two multi-billion dollar firms had failed with similar publications. The experts felt sure that top advertisers would never dedicate budget dollars to an independent title with a small circulation.

Potential investors argued that because typical consumer magazines had a launch budget of tens of millions of dollars (and still often failed), that we couldn’t possibly succeed with only a few hundred thousand dollar investment. Additionally, they noted

that magazines typically take three to five years before they are strong enough to show a profit, if a profit is ever reached.

One meeting I remember clearly was with George Hirsch, the founder of Rodale's *Runner's World* magazine. George is a pioneer in the health and fitness publishing industry and had grown *Runner's World* into a very successful business. I was thrilled to meet with someone with such a long and successful publishing career, and George was kind enough to listen to my plans. I liked George immediately. He seemed genuinely interested in my ideas. But although George gave me some great advice on how to launch a magazine, as well as manage distribution, circulation and advertising, in the end his advice was not to move forward. He went so far as to say I'd be crazy to think I could launch a successful national independent sports and fitness magazine.

Was I crazy to disregard his and other experts' advice? Was I pursuing a dream so lofty and out of reach that success was impossible? Why in the world, you might ask, did I continue pursuing my dream in the face of all that discouraging feedback? Well, not only because I'm not one to give up, but because I felt passionately that women needed a magazine like *Her Sports + Fitness*, one that celebrated real women with real lives being active and improving their health and fitness. Plus, I knew I had three key things working in my favor.

The first was an overwhelming belief in myself. I knew deep down that given the opportunity, I could launch this publication and make it a successful venture. Secondly, I did my homework. I read everything I could about starting a magazine, I went to conferences and I met with successful publishers. And lastly, I had a plan. And it wasn't just any plan; it was a detailed business plan that depicted every "worst case" scenario I

could think of along with solutions for overcoming those roadblocks. So I moved forward. Not only did the magazine succeed, but it became an award-winning national magazine with a long list of national advertisers including L’Oreal, Nestlé, Ford, Masterfoods, Reebok, Knudsen, Toyota, Nike, Oakley, Under Armour and Timex, and an ever-growing staff and subscriber base.

Two years after our initial meeting, I ran into George and his wife at an awards ceremony. His wife had heard about our meeting and when George introduced us, she smiled and said, “Aren’t you glad you didn’t listen to my husband.” I just smiled and told her that my meeting with George made me go the extra mile to ensure that *Her Sports + Fitness* would be a success, and I would always be grateful for that.

If someone tells you that it can’t be done. Listen to them. Find out why they believe it’s impossible, figure out what you need to do to make it happen and then believe in yourself and show them anything is possible. To increase your belief in yourself:

- Focus on the things you do well
- Actively work on the areas that need improvement
- Overcome your fears by getting out of your comfort zone
- Reward yourself for a job well done.

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## Never Give Up

Gert “Ma” Boyle was a stay-at-home mom until her husband, who ran Columbia Sportswear, her family’s company, died suddenly of a heart attack. It was 1970 and the firm’s lawyers and accountants recommended she sell the company. They couldn’t see a housewife running the firm. She was about to sign the contract to sell the company, when, according to Gert, “I figured I was going to be poor one way or the other, and I decided to fight for it.”

Gert recruited her son, Tim, to manage daily operations and she oversaw marketing. Columbia offered the first Gore-Tex jacket and introduced a two-in-one ski parka. Sales skyrocketed and with Gert’s mantra “Early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and advertise,” the company began a huge marketing push that helped sales grow from \$13 million in 1984 to \$1.1 billion in 2004. In her autobiography, *One Tough Mother*, Gert shares her advice, “Don’t give up. Be prepared to change strategy. Tap into the wisdom and experience of others who know what you are trying to do. Listen to your customers. Be a team player. Focus on what makes you unique. Don’t spend money you don’t have. Walk before you run. Always tell the truth. Do your best every day.”

We all encounter obstacles and hardships, but those who push past them have one thing in common: they don’t throw in the towel. In one moment of determination Gert Boyle completely changed the direction of her life. By having faith in herself she proved the doubters wrong.

Amateur mountain climber Beck Weathers survived the single most tragic Mount Everest climbing season in history by never giving up. On May 10, 1996 Weathers was descending Everest when an unforeseen storm hit. Nine climbers died and Weathers was

left for dead on the mountain. Unconscious for 14 hours and severely frostbitten, Weathers later said thoughts of his wife and children kept him going and allowed him to trudge back to camp. Weathers lost his nose, right hand and part of his left hand to frost bite, but his never-give-up attitude saved his life.

For many people their most vivid memory of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta was the gutsy performance by gymnast Kerri Strug. In the team competition, Strug and the other Americans, known as the Magnificent Seven, were in a heated battle with the Russian squad. The U.S., which had never won a team gold, needed a strong score in the final event, the vault, to beat the Russians and win gold. Several members of the American team faltered, and the gold medal hopes of the entire country were now pinned on Strug, the final vaulter. On her first vault she fell as she landed, hurting her ankle. Struggling with what would later be diagnosed as two torn ligaments, Strug limped back to the start, sped down the runway and landed on just one good leg. She held her position, then hobbled around the landing area and finally collapsed on the floor grasping her ankle. Strug's never-give-up attitude and score of 9.712 guaranteed the first-ever gold medal for the U.S. team.

We all have opportunities to overcome varying degrees of challenge in life, and frequently the greatest moments we have involve pushing ourselves further than we knew was possible. Although Beck and Karri's stories may be extreme, Gert's story shows that you never know how a small decision can literally transform your life.

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## **Overcome Your Doubts**

Her father's death and husband's suicide propelled Katharine Graham from a housewife into the highly visible role of publisher of the *Washington Post*. She wrote a friend that, "I am quaking in my boots a little," at the thought of all she was expected to pull off. But she threw herself into her work, learning as she went. She asked questions and created strong relationships both within her company and outside. She evolved into one of Washington, D.C.'s most respected power brokers and made a name for herself outside the beltway. Under her leadership, the *Washington Post* exposed one of the biggest stories in presidential history, giving way to the resignation of Richard M. Nixon.

No matter how much you believe in yourself, there will be times when you experience doubt. How you handle that doubt and how you overcome it is what's important.

By any measure Oprah Winfrey is a success. She is a self-made billionaire and one of the most recognized women in the world. She was quoted saying, "I believe in my possibilities, and I feel I can do it all." Yet Oprah herself admits that she wasn't always so confident. It took her time to really start believing in herself. In an interview with NBC News correspondent Ann Curry, Oprah talked about the event that she believes really launched her onto her path to success.

In the early 1980s, Oprah, then a Baltimore talk show host, read Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Having been sexually abused as a child, Oprah felt a strong bond with Celie, the main character, who was also abused. Oprah took to passing out copies of the book to friends and even complete strangers. According to Oprah this was a turning point in her life for she was finally able to face her past abuse. Later, when the book was being

made into a movie, Oprah was determined to get on the set. Quincy Jones, one of the movie's producers, saw Oprah on TV, and decided she was perfect for a role in the movie. He contacted her and arranged an audition. But after several months she had heard nothing back. Oprah's self-doubt began to creep in. She convinced herself the reason she was not being cast was because she was overweight and that they had hated her.

Desperate, she enrolled at a "fat farm" to lose 50 pounds. One day trudging around a track in the rain, she prayed, "God... Please help me to let it go so that I can move on with my life." Shortly after she received a call from Steven Spielberg, the director.

According to Oprah, Spielberg said, "I hear you are at a fat farm. If you lose a pound, you will possibly lose this part. I'd like to see you in my office tomorrow." Oprah packed her bags, stopped by a Dairy Queen in an attempt to gain back some weight, and was soon busy working on the set of *The Color Purple*.

Oprah's story shows that even the people we view as successful and full of confidence have moments of doubt. Self-doubt is a basic component of human nature. The trick is to keep your doubts from limiting all you're capable of doing. Former Secretary of State and presidential advisor Henry Kissinger in commenting on what he learned working with a variety of U.S. Presidents said: "Presidents don't do great things by dwelling on their limitations, but by focusing on their possibilities." Make an effort to focus on your strengths. Next time you feel self-doubt limiting your behavior or success, employ the following steps to get back on track.

- Recognize your fears
- Eliminate negative self-talk



- Get out of your comfort zone
- Take small steps
- Focus on the positive - Write a list of the reason why you're able to succeed
- Surround yourself with others who believe in you.

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### **Eliminate the Negative Whenever Possible**

It sounds simple, but one of the best ways to stay positive is to eliminate the negativity around you. I have a good friend who constantly is put down by one of her close friends. She's constantly being told she's not good enough, talented enough, etc. I keep urging my friend to take herself out of the situation. My friend has many supportive people in her life, a great career, a beautiful family and is a nationally ranked amateur athlete. Yet this one negative friend always seems to bring her down and make her forget how wonderful she really is.

If you're in a situation like this I urge you to try and change it or get out. You deserve to be surrounded by friends, family members and co-workers who support you. Deepak Chopra in his book *Creating Affluence* says, "Saying no to negativity also means not being around negative people. Negative people deplete your energy. Surround yourself with love and nourishment and do not allow the creation of negativity in your environment."

After winning *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* I was given an amazing opportunity to work with an incredible life coach, Cheryl Richardson. Cheryl believes, "When you

focus on removing those things that drain your energy, or the things that are not aligned with your priorities, you create emotional, physical, and spiritual space in your life. And when you start to experience this space, your body, mind, and soul naturally move toward balance. This means we actually begin to draw toward us more positive experiences, better opportunities, and greater peace.”

Following Cheryl’s advice I immediately noticed a positive change in how I handled certain situations and people in my life. Simply identifying the negative influences in my life was the first step in minimizing their detrimental impact. If you need to eliminate some negative influences in your life:

- Minimize the time you spend with negative people
- Replace the negative influences with positive influences
- Confront the negative people in your life and see if that leads to an improvement in behavior
- If you can’t entirely eliminate the person from your life, try to decrease the amount of time you spend with him or her
- Don’t accept or dwell on unwarranted criticism.

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### **Find the Silver Lining**

A lot of staying positive is a result of how you look at things. And looking at challenges with optimism and hopefulness (remember the adage “when life hands you lemons, make lemonade”) leaves you in a more confident state.

Several years ago my husband, Matt, and I relocated from California to Florida. It was of course a big decision to uproot our lives from one coast to the other. Three months after we both had settled into new jobs and a new life, Matt's boss explained the company was in financial trouble and "offered" Matt a 50 percent salary reduction.

At first Matt was upset. How could his new boss have misled him when he accepted the job just three months earlier? He wondered how our expenses would be met with a salary cut in half and what the change would do to our savings, our lifestyle, and our plans to some day start our own business. But then it occurred to Matt to rethink the situation from a different perspective.

"I can work for 50 percent with no chance of a bonus or a raise in the foreseeable future," he reasoned. "Or, I can work for myself for a few months for free, but with a huge opportunity to earn more than I am making now."

Matt did some research and decided he wanted to form a media company specializing in corporate identities, web development and streaming media. He found a business partner, took a deep breath and jumped in. In just a few short years, Matt's company, Blue Reef Creative, was named Outstanding Business of the Year and won a host of local, regional and national creative awards.

Remember that change is opportunity. While it's often uncomfortable when it occurs, a simple shift in attitude and perspective can quickly open the doors of success.

The next time you're faced with what at first seems like an unwelcome change take a moment to look for new opportunities the change presents. The change doesn't have to be as monumental as starting your own company, but it never hurts to dream big.

From the time I was twelve, I wanted to compete in the Hawaii Ironman triathlon. My childhood swim coach was an Ironman athlete, and I viewed the 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and 26.2-mile run as the ultimate challenge. I finally got my chance in 1999. I prepared for months, going to extremes to pack in my training around a hectic schedule as a management consultant, with long hours and frequent travel. I broke away at lunch for runs and endured questioning looks as I lugged my bike through hotel lobbies in my business suit, just to fit in a 45-minute ride on an indoor wind trainer every morning. Finally, the event was just a week away. On a stopover to the Big Island of Hawaii, I ate an under-cooked chicken sandwich. I'll spare the details, but that evening will go down as one of the most unpleasant of my life. Matt took me to the emergency room the following morning where I was diagnosed with salmonella poisoning and partially rehydrated with five bags of IV solution. The doctors strongly encouraged me to not compete in the race just five days away. Unable to eat anything and barely able to keep down water, I finally had some rice and Gatorade the evening before the race.

Despite this I was committed to racing. Achieving my original goal of a 12-hour Ironman was not a possibility, but I knew I could finish.

Having been sick made the race itself probably one of the most miserable and painful experiences I've ever had. It wasn't until days later (yes, I finished) that I was able to reflect on the experience and truly appreciate how much I grew as a person that day. In the end, I learned more about myself suffering through the race than I would have if I had met my original time goal. Every situation—no matter how rough or painful—can be an opportunity to learn and grow.

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## **Embrace The Small Things**

One of my dogs, Valkyrie (Val), is the most happy-go-lucky dog you could ever meet. Every time I look at her, whether she's walking around, rolling on her back or trying to catch a lizard, there's something about her energy that puts a big smile on my face. One of my daily highlights is coming home at night and seeing the silhouette of her head in the front window of my house. No matter how tough a day I had, my mood instantly changes, a smile breaks over my face and I can't wait to get inside the house and play with her.

While the world has its share of doom and gloom, positive energy is all around you if you look (and if you have small children or pets you probably don't have to look far). Try and find those little things in your everyday life that put a smile on your face and help you stay positive. I have a friend that on hot summer days sometimes stocks the employee freezer with popsicles and sticks a note on the door that they're there for everyone to enjoy. Be that positive person that spreads energy to those around you. Have you ever walked into an office and just felt the positive energy? We all pick up on energy and it is much easier to succeed in a positive environment. Do your part to improve your environment for you and those you work with by making some small but noticeable changes.

Think of the small details that help keep you smiling, and then surround yourself with them, at work and at home. Sometimes a few simple things can improve your positive outlook on life:

- Smile
- Think of something funny
- Imagine yourself succeeding
- Sit up straight
- Listen to uplifting music
- Keep a plant or bouquet of flowers on your desk or in a communal place in the office
- Place pictures of your loved ones where you can see and enjoy them.

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### **Spread Positive Energy**

There's nothing more contagious than positive energy. If a sports team in your town has ever played in the Super Bowl, NBA Finals, or even the Little League World Series, you've probably seen the whole community come alive with enthusiasm. Strangers talk to each other, people fly banners and put up signs, and the whole city or even state seems to get a huge emotional lift. The energy is palpable.

Whenever I'm able, I tune into one of my favorite talk shows, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. What I really love about the show is the opening sequence, when Ellen segues from her monologue to dancing through the studio. While Ellen's dance style may not rank next to the likes of Janet Jackson, Justin Timberlake or Usher, it's full of energy and enthusiasm. Every time I watch her I can't help but leap out of my chair and start

dancing –along with the hundreds of audience members who are grooving right alongside her. In fact, her energy is so contagious it helped the show earn 15 daytime Emmy’s during its first three seasons.

Ellen’s opening sequence not only puts her in a good mood, but it puts the entire audience, including the viewers at home, in a good mood. If you try to spread positive energy to other people you have no choice but to be positive yourself.

A strong belief in yourself is the launching point for any real success in business or in life. I believe everyone has the ability to be more, do more and give more.

Anything is possible when you believe in yourself!

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### **The Bottom Line**

1. Stay positive
2. Never give up
3. Eliminate negativity
4. Look on the bright side
5. Know your energy will have a positive impact on others.

### **Do You Believe In Yourself?**

1. If you set your mind to it, what are you capable of?
2. How can you begin to see problems as opportunities?

3. What are the three things you're best at?
4. What areas can you improve on and what can you do to improve these skills?
5. What can you do to overcome your doubts?

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### **Real World Wisdom**

Sylvester Stallone's early acting career was filled with rejection. To cope with his frequent rejections from casting directors he turned to writing. After some minor success as a writer and actor, he moved to Hollywood. He shopped his longhand version of the Rocky script and received offers from several producers to purchase the screenplay. But Stallone insisted he wanted to also play the starring role. Despite having just \$100 in his bank account, Stallone held out for his starring role, and eventually got it. Produced for just \$1 million, Rocky went on to win a Best Picture Oscar and gross over \$200 million worldwide. The original Rocky and five sequels have a combined worldwide gross of over \$1 billion, in large part because Sylvester Stallone believed in himself.

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## Chapter 2: Learn to Communicate

“If I went back to college again, I’d concentrate on two areas: Learning to write and learning to speak before an audience. Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively.”

Gerald R. Ford

Words have power! Your ability to communicate is one of the greatest markers others rely on when forming perceptions of you. The ability to communicate well is equated with intelligence, self-confidence, leadership, trust, and kindness – all traits that will help you in business and in life.

According to Danny Meyer, a well-known New York City restaurateur, “Communication is at the root of all business strengths and weaknesses. When things go wrong and employees become upset, whether at a restaurant, law firm, a hardware store, a university, or a major corporation, nine times out of ten the justifiable complaint is, ‘We need to communicate more effectively.’”

Virtually every interaction we have with another person involves some form of communication. It can be verbal, written, physical or a combination. Improving how you express yourself and communicate with others will help you in the short and long term. The further you advance up the career ladder, the more time you spend with people. A typical entry-level job frequently confines a person to her workstation or cubicle. As you advance through management and then executive ranks more of your day-to-day activities include presentations, meetings, conference calls, and visits out of the office.

Strong communication skills and a focus on how you say things are necessary for success at higher levels of business.

Jim Rohn is considered by many to be the greatest motivational speaker of all-time. In the past fifty years he has addressed more than 6,000 audiences and more than 4 million people with a personal style that is laced with anecdotes and witticisms. Jim's advice is, "Take advantage of every opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when important occasions arise, you will have the gift, the style, the sharpness, the clarity, and the emotions to affect other people."

Al Ries, an advertising consultant, says, "Today communication itself is the problem. We have become the world's first over-communicated society. Each year we send more and receive less. The goal then is to make each communication as effective as possible."

Being a strong communicator will increase your ability to connect with people. To succeed in business and life it's imperative that you learn to communicate effectively and powerfully. To do so, you need to:

- Let others talk
- Listen actively
- Develop positive communication
- Project energy
- Smile often
- Know your audience
- Make your point clear
- Make sure you are on the same page.

## **Let Others Talk**

Ever heard the adage “talk less, listen more?” If not, you may need to improve your listening! One of the best and most effective ways to improve your communication skills is to become a better listener. We’re all guilty of inactive listening (“listening” without truly hearing) at times, and I probably don’t have to tell you how easily this type of listening can lead to trouble. If you’ve ever tried answering a quick email while on the phone with your spouse and gotten caught not listening you understand what I mean.

Becoming a better listener leads to successful relationships. It will help you garner trust and secure the confidence of those you do business with. After graduating from UC Berkeley I was fortunate to secure an analyst position with Wall Street powerhouse Morgan Stanley. The typical department hierarchy was Partner, Vice President, Manager, Sr. Analyst, Analyst. My team was unique in that there was no senior analyst or manager. Our department consisted of a partner, a vice-president and me. As such, I found myself regularly calling high-level executives at *Fortune* 500 companies like Dupont, Kodak and Weyerhaeuser. I still remember the first day the partner asked me to call Dupont’s Chief Financial Officer. My response was, “You want *me* to call?” For months, I worked closely with these senior executives over the phone and when I attended deal-closing dinners, they were all surprised to find that I was fresh out of college. Over the phone, each had perceived me as being much older.

One of the reasons these execs made the assumption that I had more experience was that I simply listened. Rather than impose my ideas on what I thought these high-powered CFOs needed, I listened to their ideas, thoughts and needs, and only then, after

listening, did I act. This sequence is critical to effective communication: listen first, then act.

It's natural to want to talk about ourselves and express our ideas, but you'll be amazed how much more productive conversations can be when you let others talk. Everyone wants to feel respected and valued, and by letting others know you are listening you're effectively telling them you regard them as important, and that their opinions matter. Sometimes just listening is not enough. You need to encourage the other party to expand on their thoughts. The former president of Mitsubishi Corporation, Minoru Makihara, says, "I think we have to lead our people by being good listeners. That is to say, we lead in a company such as ours by drawing out ideas from people." Draw out ideas from people by asking:

- "What are your thoughts on the subject?"
- "How would you handle this situation?"
- "Can you suggest any other options?"
- "Where else has this approach worked?"

### **Listen Actively**

It's no mistake that people have two ears, but just one mouth. For many of us, listening takes twice the effort of speaking. One of the first tenets of good communication is to never assume you know what others want and need. Instead, ask them what their wants and desires are, and then stop talking, and open your ears and mind. Leadership expert Walter Bennis believes "Successful executives are great askers."

Matt always laughs about the time his agency delivered a marketing program to a new client and the client's president commented, "Wow, you actually listened to us." Previous agencies had not incorporated the client's ideas into their proposal. Needless to say Matt's company had the opportunity to do a lot more work for this particular client.

Many companies make the mistake of doing independent research on a prospective client and then creating an elaborate pitch about how they can improve that client's business – all without ever asking what the client is trying to achieve.

I've encountered this numerous times when receiving sales calls. Sales people are often so busy touting a product (and I know because I've been on both sides of the sales table) that they forget to ask me what I need. The irony is that I could be sold in a tenth of the time if the salesperson would simply ask about my business, about the goals of the company and the needs of our organization, and then sit back and listen to my reply. Instead, sales are often lost purely because the seller wasn't willing to ask and allow the other person to be heard.

At *Women's Running* we put listening into action by also listening to our employees. Each quarter we hold strategy meetings in which our employees are each asked what we can do to can improve the company – everything from operations to the bottom line. We ask them "what's working well and what can we improve?" Our thinking has always been that every employee, regardless of position or level, has valuable insights, opinions and ideas. We once we hired a new managing editor who started just a week before our quarterly strategy meeting. At our team dinner after the first day, I was happy to hear her comment on how motivating it was to work at a company that actually listened to her ideas.

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How to listen effectively:

1. Give the person who's speaking your undivided attention
2. Maintain eye contact with the speaker; nothing indicates boredom and disinterest more than a wandering eye
3. Ask relevant open-ended questions (after the speaker completes a thought)
4. Paraphrase what the person has said to ensure you both have the same understanding of the conversation
5. Listen without judgment and respond with interest ("yes," "I see," "I understand")
6. If appropriate, take notes.

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### **Develop Positive Communication**

The number of ways you can describe a situation are endless, and often how something is said is as important as what is said, so take care to position things in a positive light and use positive words. You'll feel better and uplift the people around you. The following example illustrates the difference between negative and positive communication:

Negative

If we don't pull together as a team we are going to be left behind. It's time for everyone to stop slacking and start pulling their weight. It's time to start showing some results or get off the team.

Positive

If we pull together as a team we'll be unstoppable – the best of the best. It's time for us to show what an incredibly talented, hardworking and dedicated group of people we are. Let's show everyone what we can achieve!

The underlying message of both statements is the same, but the effect it will have on the audience is completely different. No matter what the situation – trying to sell a product, meeting a person for the first time, cheering up someone who's down, writing a business letter, or telling a story to a group of friends – being positive will have a more productive impact. As author Carl W. Buechner says, “They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

### **Project Energy**

Have you ever experienced a public speaker that just left you in awe with their enthusiasm? You may remember the image more than any specific words, but you also probably left feeling inspired and alive. Combining energy with a strong positive message is the pinnacle of communication.

Comedian Robin Williams was a stalwart of the USO, entertaining troops around the world. Williams made his reputation with his manic onstage behavior, improvised comedy, and rapid-fire delivery. According to Williams, “Comedy is acting out optimism.” And he made it a point to share that optimism and energy with his audience.

Williams kept politics out of his USO act, saying, “I'm there for the troops.” And the troops recognize his contribution. Ned Powell, president of the USO, relates a story of a soldier being asked the difference between seeing Williams and George Bush, who visited three weeks earlier. The soldier responded, “The president's visit was really cool,

but you know, he *had* to come. And Robin Williams didn't." Keep your communication energized, show in your tone and body language that you "want" to be there and people will remember you. When it's your turn to speak, here are some quick tips that can help hold the attention of your audience:

- Maintain eye contact
- Use a strong confident voice
- Stand up whenever appropriate
- Vary the tone of your voice
- Try and get your audience involved by asking them questions
- Smile and show your enthusiasm for the conversation
- Be aware how you're holding yourself physically.

### **Smile Often**

You may remember the television show *Fantasy Island*. Every week a new group of people would land on Fantasy Island, where Mr. Rourke and his assistant Tatum would help fulfill their fantasies. Just before the plane landed, Mr. Rourke would wave his arm and encourage his team, "Smiles everyone!..Smiles!" Mr. Rourke knew how powerful a simple smile can be.

A smile may seem like a small gesture, but it can quickly brighten not only your day, but the day of those around you. It's one thing you can give that doesn't cost you a dime. In his landmark book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie calls a smile, "A simple way to make a good first impression." He continues, "Actions



speaking louder than words, and a smile says, ‘I like you. You make me happy. I am glad to see you.’”

You don’t need to be in-person to take advantage of the power of a smile. Every time you’re on the phone you should try and smile. The energy from your smile comes out in your voice. This is a common technique for many successful business development specialists who do most of their selling over the phone.

Smiles also go a long way toward smoothing over misunderstandings. Comedienne Phyllis Diller says, “A smile is a curve that sets everything straight.” The next time you meet someone remember to bring your smile.

### **Know Your Audience**

Josh Gordon writes in his book, *Presentations That Change Minds*, that he once gave a strong and persuasive presentation that convinced his audience that his product was the best and “highest-quality” product on the market. The problem was that this audience wasn’t looking for the best product; they were looking for the most affordable product that would do the job. Needless to say he didn’t get the sale. It’s imperative that you know what your audience is looking for before you try to sell to them. It’s also important to gauge your audience’s interest in your presentation, and make adjustments accordingly that involve them in the presentation whenever possible. Had Josh asked what the client’s key criteria were prior to, or during, his presentation he might have made the sale.

Also keep in mind that different styles of communication are necessary for different audiences, situations, and objectives. Who your audience is and what’s

important to them will change the way you communicate to them. The pre-school my niece and nephew attended invited me to do a reading of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, a children's book my team on *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* wrote and published during our first task. Walking into a room with thirty preschoolers scattered about the floor, I assessed the situation and took a seat on the floor and began reading— at their level and using a repertoire of silly voices. It was a great experience. Contrast that to how I behave making a presentation in a boardroom—standing up, confident, and with a much more professional image than when reading to a preschool class. Imagine if I went into the preschool with the same professional demeanor as I do when in the boardroom. My audience would have been thoroughly disappointed. By knowing your audience and changing your communication style accordingly, you'll not only capture their attention but leave a lasting impression. Next time you're getting ready to give a presentation ask yourself these 5 simple questions to ensure you know your audience:

- What's my audience looking for?
- What's the demographic makeup of the audience?
- What's the purpose of my talk – what am I trying to convey?
- What has this audience responded to favorably in the past?
- Who will be in the audience? (New employees, the management team, or prospective customers?)

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## **Make Your Point Clear**

Business communication isn't like a novel or movie where being subtle may be part of the appeal. For business relationships to be effective you need to get your main idea across quickly and clearly. Elmer Wheeler, a marketing consultant who coined the phrase "Don't sell the steak - sell the sizzle," was fond of saying, "Your first 10 words are more important than your next 10,000." In 1937 Texaco paid Wheeler \$5,000 for a nine-word phrase that it rolled out to all its service stations. The phrase was "Is your oil at the proper level today, sir?" Wheeler claimed it helped service station attendants get under 250,000 additional hoods a week. The communication worked because it was clear, simple, and courteous.

Before I enter a business meeting or get on a conference call, I always ask my team "What is the goal of today's meeting?" We'll discuss what we hope to accomplish during the call or meeting and the best approach for achieving our objectives. This saves time for all involved.

Generally speaking, people have short attention spans and as communicators we often have a narrow opportunity to be heard. Burying your idea, suggestion, or request in the last line of an email or the last slide of a presentation is a sure way to lead to communication failure. Conveying your main point upfront will ensure your audience hears it, and summarizing it at the end will help assure they remember it. This approach is a simple three-step strategy: 1) Tell your audience what you're going to tell them; 2) then, actually tell them; 3) and finally, tell them what you've told them.

Brevity also causes you to really focus in on and hone your message. President Woodrow Wilson said, "If I am to speak ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if

fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now.” Some tips to keep it short and sweet:

- Get straight to the point
- Have a one sentence main idea – if you can’t summarize your message into one sentence you need to rethink your idea
- Use simple to understand terms
- Slow down especially if you’re nervous
- Lean toward the people you’re addressing
- Speak with conviction.

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### **Make Sure You’re on the Same Page**

During my days as a management consultant, a co-worker would joke that if he asked four execs what their take-away was from a meeting he would get five different answers. When I’m conducting a meeting I make it a point to restate the main points of the discussion as we go along. I then ask the others in the room if they have the same understanding. By using the recap technique—asking everyone involved in a conversation or meeting if their understanding is the same as yours—you will ensure everyone leaves with a common understanding and is primed to move forward.

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## Writing Effectively

While for many people writing is becoming a lost art, it is still an important part of the business world. Well-written, grammatically correct and proofed correspondence can set you apart. Poorly written communications will create a negative halo effect about your other skills, especially when I'm hiring, poor writing skills lead me to immediately consign a letter or resume to the circular file. Below is a sample letter asking for an introduction.

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Dear Kim,

It was such a pleasure seeing you today. I learned a great deal from our conversation and I feel fortunate to have met you. I found your advice on how to broaden my magazine's marketing reach particularly valuable. Also, I'd like to take you up on your offer to introduce me to Joanne Smith, the VP of Sales at 'xyz' company. It sounds like Joanne and I might both benefit from the introduction. Please let me know how best to contact her.

Thank you for your time. I hope we can get together again soon.

Sincerely,

Jane Rogers

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If you're contacting someone new over e-mail make sure to use a subject line that catches their attention. If I received their contact from someone's close associate, then I will write: "Tim Jones suggested I contact you" in the subject line of the email. The odds of the person opening your email are much better when they recognize their friend's name or business.

#### E-mail tips

- Use a subject line that gets noticed
- Eliminate background graphics
- Use simple formatting and a common font
- Always wait to fill in the "To" and "CC" lines until after you've proofed your correspondence
- Remember to attach the necessary document. If you feel the need to include boxes, charts or graphics in your cover letter or resume attach the document as a pdf to ensure formatting elements stay intact.

#### **The Bottom Line**

1. Words are powerful, chose them wisely
2. Talk less and listen more
3. Develop positive communication skills
4. Sometimes a smile can be your best communication.

### **Are you winning with communication?**

1. Do you make a point to listen actively?
2. How can you expand a conversation using open-ended questions?
3. How do you show your energy when you speak?
4. When was the last time you smiled at someone just because?

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### **Say It Right**

Be specific whenever possible. For example, if you're writing a congratulatory note, instead of writing:

Sue,

Congratulations on your promotion. I knew you would get it.

Dawna

Write:

Sue,

Congratulations on your promotion to Director of Sales. 'xyz' company is lucky to have someone with your creativity and determination.

You deserve it!

Dawna

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Just a few minor additions like above can make the letter more personal and also show that you've taken the effort to include the pertinent details.

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### **Real World Wisdom**

It's often difficult to say no to people. *In Reagan: A Life in Letters*, there is a wonderful example of a "rejection" letter written to Andy Smith, a seventh grader, that actually inspires Andy to take action and make a difference in his life. See how skillfully Ronald Reagan handles the situation and you'll see why he was known as "the great communicator."

Andy wrote: "Today my mother declared my bedroom a disaster area. I would like to request federal funds to hire a crew to clean up my room."

Reagan replied:

Dear Andy,

I'm sorry to be so late in answering our letter but as you know I've been in China and found your letter here upon my return.

Your application for disaster relief has been duly noted but I must point out one technical problem; the authority declaring the disaster is supposed to make the request. In this case your mother.



However, setting that aside I'll have to point out the larger problem of available funds. This has been a year of disasters, 539 hurricanes as of May 4<sup>th</sup> and several more since, numerous floods, forest fires, drought in Texas and a number of earthquakes. What I'm getting at is funds are dangerously low.

May I make a suggestion? This administration, believing that government has done many things that could better be done by volunteers at the local level, has sponsored the Private Sector Initiative program, calling upon people to practice voluntarism in the solving of a number of local problems.

Your situation appears to be natural. I'm sure your mother was fully justified in proclaiming your room a disaster. Therefore you are in an excellent position to launch another volunteer program to go along with the more than 3,000 already underway in our nation – congratulations.

Give my best regards to your mother.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

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I sincerely hope you enjoyed these two free chapters of Succeed With Purpose. I would love your feedback. Please email me at [info@DawnaStone.com](mailto:info@DawnaStone.com) and put SWP Feedback in the subject line. I appreciate your comments as they will help me as I finish writing the book.