

Personal Effectiveness

by Jeremy Harbinson





“To help each person reach their own highest potential”

J. J. Harrison

Foreword

To help each person reach their own highest potential is why I get up each day. It's why I do the job I do and why I am involved with various charities and projects. This book grew out of that passion.

It is based on a talk I gave to University students. Many told me afterwards it was highly motivational. I simply shared what works for me in the belief it will work for others, perhaps even you!

Much of it is advice my own father shared with me when I had just finished University and was about to embark on my own career. It brings together the ideas and practices of many great leaders, business thinkers and academics.

This book will not cover everything that can make you become highly effective. Many are far more effective than me. But I can say from personal experience that if you can implement what I share with you in the following pages you will be well on the way to being the best you, that you can be.

Jeremy Harbinson
Cultra, April 2016

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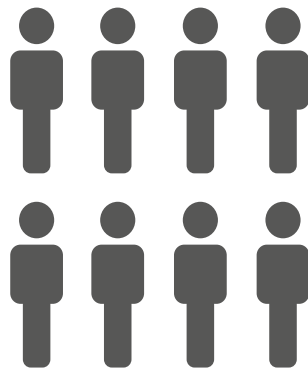
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1

Some people are 16 times more effective than most people.

Let's talk about effectiveness – but first, I've got a question for you?



Did you know that the **top 20%** are **16 times** as effective as the other **80%**?

You heard me - that's not 16% - it is 16 times! That is a staggering difference in effectiveness. And it could be in terms of your effectiveness in getting a job, progressing in your career, making money, or whatever. Yet study after study finds this staggering difference to be the case.

So how can that be true? Well, it stems from something called the 80/20 Principle. And I'll be explaining what the 80/20 Principle is and how you can use it a little later. But for now all you

need to know is that becoming effective really, really matters in terms of your career and the rest of your life.

So I think you are going to find this book interesting and hopefully fun – and maybe even a little bit life changing!

You're going to meet some interesting people – so let's get started.

2

Help each person reach their own highest potential!

Some years ago I attended a leadership conference where the keynote speakers included people like:



Gen Schwarzkopf
Victor of the Gulf War



Donald Trump
Famous property tycoon



Mikael Gorbachev
Architect of Glasnost
and the ending of the Cold War



Peter Drucker
Leading management Guru

**and
many
other
famous
names!**

But the person who completely blew our socks off and whom everyone was talking about at the coffee breaks was this lady:



Frances Hesselbein
Head of Peter Drucker's Leader
to Leader Institute

Frances Hesselbein has headed Peter Drucker's Leader to Leader Institute for 21 years. But before that, she turned around the American Girl Scouts. She was a little old lady who looked like your granny but who had taken the American Girl Scouts organisation, which was in terminal decline and turned it around into a vibrant, fast-growing and successful organisation.

She explained that before seeking to create change in any organisation you should first ask "What must never change?" Once you have established that then you are free to change everything else. And she established an inspiring vision for them that would be unchanging. She explained how she had put at the heart of her organisation this simple but powerful vision:

"Help each girl reach their own highest potential!"

That really struck a chord with me and has become a guiding principle in all that I do. And so there is a little sign in my office to remind me and those around me that my purpose in becoming effective is to:

"Help each person reach their own highest potential!"

So that is my motivation for writing this book. And I hope that at least some of the ideas that I share with you strike a chord and help you to fulfil your own highest potential.

Now, perhaps at this point you are wondering "How?" But to become more effective let me show you a more effective question to ask...

3

Don't ask "How?" ask "Who?"

In this book I am introducing you to some pretty amazing people because I learned that a key to becoming effective is to ask a better question.

I learned that when you want to find out how to succeed in something or how to solve a problem don't ask "How?" ask "Who?". "Who is already achieving the results I would like and has overcome the obstacles I face and solved the problems I have?"

So what I want to share with you are some of the key principles, habits and traits developed

by men and women who achieve a lot and are personally very effective. I hope that you will find these things simple to understand and apply in your life and that they will produce powerful results for you as they have for me.

Let's meet the man who taught this profound mind set...



Don't ask **"How?"**
ask "Who?"

4

Never try to be better than anyone else; never cease to strive to be the very best you can be.

You've probably never heard of John Wooden. He is quite simply the most successful sports coach in history.



John Wooden
Basketball coach

He really knew a lot about how to “Help each person reach their own highest potential”. You have heard of Sir Alex Ferguson and whether you like or you loath Manchester United, it's hard to deny his success in building effective teams and getting the best out of each player.

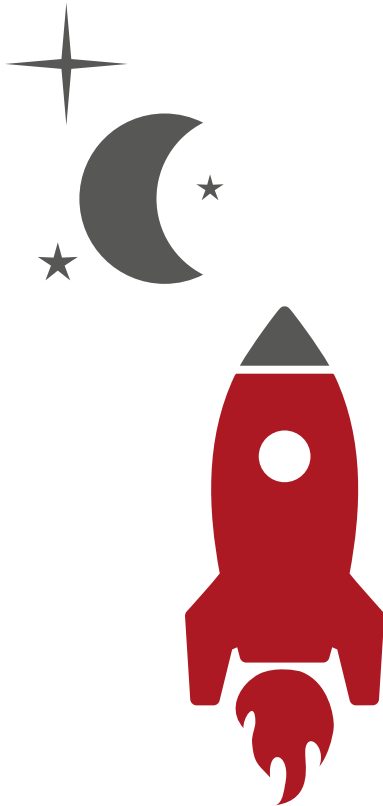
But John Wooden's credentials and track record are even more impressive than Sir Alex Ferguson's. He was an American basketball coach whose college team won the All-American title 12 times in 13 years, seven of those years being completely unbeaten. What makes this record even more amazing is that these were college basketball teams which means that no player could remain in his team for more than two or three years. So he was continually bringing players through to their own highest potential and it is well worth looking up and studying his coaching philosophy.

At the core of helping his people to become super effective was the mind-set he instilled in his players. It was this:

“You should never try to be better than anyone else, but never cease to strive to be the very best you can be.”

He explained that you cannot control whether the players you will be competing against are more naturally gifted than you. But what you can control is whether you arrive on the court in the best physical and mental shape you can be. You control how much and what type of training you do and whether or not you abuse your body with drugs, alcohol and the wrong food.

And whilst you are playing each game it is you who controls your mental alertness, concentration and focus from moment to moment.



You should never strive to be better than any one else, but never cease to strive to

**be the
very
best you
can be**

He also told them not to judge a game by the score but by how close they themselves got to playing their best. He said: “You can outscore the opposition but still be a loser if you did not give of your best; you can be outscored by the opposition but still hold your head high if you played to the best of your ability.” But he also told them: “I think that you will find that if you live life that way you will be fairly pleased with the results by the end of the season!”

What a great approach to life! Each one of us is different, with different gifts, abilities and potential. You don’t need to feel jealous of, in competition with or inferior to anyone else. You simply need to focus on being the very best “you” that you can be!

5

Success is about “How happy are you?” and “How happy are those around you?”

Accountancy is a great job for a nosy parker! You get to see how much everyone earns, see who is happy and who is not, meet with business owners and leaders, and learn from them.

From the very start of my career I became fascinated with why I could meet two people with very similar backgrounds and educational attainments, yet one was happy and successful and the other was not. I became a sort of “success detective”, always seeking out clues and testing out what worked and what didn’t.

One of the first key things I wanted to find was an empowering definition of success. After a long search the one I really liked the most simply said:

“Success is a two-part question: how happy are you, and how happy are those around you?”

I like that because I had long known that there was much more to life and success in life than merely making money.

I realised once I heard that definition of success that you might achieve some things but if it’s at the expense of the people around you and is not in some way bettering the world, then you are a failure. So I really liked that definition and I began to notice and study the people who fulfilled success by that definition.

I noticed people like Mother Theresa.

Was she happy? You bet! Were those around her happy? You bet! So was she successful? You bet! Even though she never made much money!

But I also found lots of men and women who were successful by my definition and who also made lots of money and developed successful, effective professional lives and businesses. And I paid particular attention to them!

1 How happy are you?

2 How happy are those around you?

Now we’ve chatted about mind sets and what success and being effective looks like. So now let’s start to explore some of the “How?” of becoming effective. It starts with understanding that...

6

An idea is just a dream until you write it down!

To illustrate the first “How to” point let me share a story with you.

This goes back a few decades to the late fifties in a big University in America. They decided to ask the final year students a sort of Student Satisfaction Survey. But they also added two fascinating additional questions at the end. And those questions were:

1 Have you set goals for your life about who you want to become and what you want to achieve?

and

2 If you have set goals like these have you set them in writing?

Now when the students completed the forms about a third of them had some kind of idea of who they wanted to become and what they wanted to achieve. But only 4% of the students said they had set out their goals in writing. Only 4% had bothered to take the time to write their goals down.

This survey was forgotten about for a couple of decades. But about 20 or 30 years later they found the survey and decided they would follow up. They

tracked down all the students no matter where they were all over the world, asked them various questions and got feedback. The first thing they found was in terms that maybe you might say were hard to measure. But they found that the 4% who had written down their goals seemed to be happier and better adjusted in their lives than the rest.

But in terms that could be measured they found that the 4% who had set written goals were worth more in financial terms than the other 96% put together!

That is the power of goals and goal setting.

So goal setting – getting really clear about the person you want to be and the things you want to achieve – is a foundational principle which will make you far more effective and fulfilled in just about any area that you wish to achieve.

It doesn't matter whether it is simply having a goal for a meeting that you are going to or having goals for your business or goals for some report you are writing. Having a goal, having a really clear idea of what you want to achieve, makes you far more effective. And this is at least partly because 96% of the population tend not to do that.

Learning how to become effective by setting goals is like...

7

Learning to programme the autopilot in your brain

As we chat on about effectiveness you are going to find that the real key, no matter what area of your life is simply getting clear, absolutely clear, on what you would like to be happening, your goals and then writing them down and regularly reminding yourself of them.

So getting really clear on your goals really, really matters!
But why is that so?



Well, I want you to imagine an aeroplane. Just imagine this plane is in London at Heathrow and it needs to fly to New York. The pilot knows that he wants to go to New York so he checks the maps, sets the autopilot, revs up the engines and he takes off down the runway.

The plane takes off but when it gets in the air and starts to fly what happens is that a wind pocket comes along and it knocks the plane off to the left. But because the pilot and the autopilot know that they want to get to New York they correct the plane's course.

And then a cross wind knocks it off to the right; but because the pilot and the autopilot know that they want to get to New York they correct the plane.

Maybe they see a storm ahead on the radar and so they have to fly around. But they will keep correcting and adjusting the plane's course, keeping it on track for New York until they finally arrive there.

Now what is really interesting is that nowadays, with on-board computers, they can actually tell what direction the plane is flying in moment to moment. And do you know that they found that the plane is actually flying in the wrong direction 95% of the time?!

So just imagine if the pilot didn't have a goal, a destination. Imagine if he just didn't know where he wanted to go to. He would rev up the engine and he would roar off down the runway and he would take off from London. But because the plane is continually getting deflected he might end up in Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Hong Kong, Moscow or anywhere. But his chances of getting to New York are very, very limited.

And that is just like our lives! Because you set off towards a goal and you continually get deflected by life's little disturbances and by the events in your life. You get deflected by little setbacks, distractions and challenges. But if you have clear goals and keep reminding yourself of your destination and your goals you will keep making course corrections until you get there.

Your subconscious brain is like the autopilot on a plane. And you program your brain's "autopilot" by clearly setting and then repeatedly telling it your goals. And this simple process gives you the best chance of arriving at or near your chosen destination.

Now you may ask: "Is a human brain really like an autopilot on a plane?" So, let me introduce you to this man:

As well as being a famous composer Mozart was a child prodigy. His father took him all round Europe when he was very young to play for lots of Princes and Kings. But it turns out that Mozart, at this age of 5 or 6, really hated getting up out of bed. And so his father used to argue with him and cajole him. But then he discovered a much better system.

Mozart's father discovered there was nearly always a piano in the place they were staying. And he discovered that all he had to do was go to the piano and play the first seven notes of the scale – dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, but not play the eighth note. And then he would play it again – dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, dum, – and again there was no eighth note to complete the octave. He would only have to play it four or at most five times until Mozart couldn't stand the pressure of the gap and would leap out of bed, run down the stairs to wherever the piano was and hit the eighth note – dum!



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Composer and child prodigy

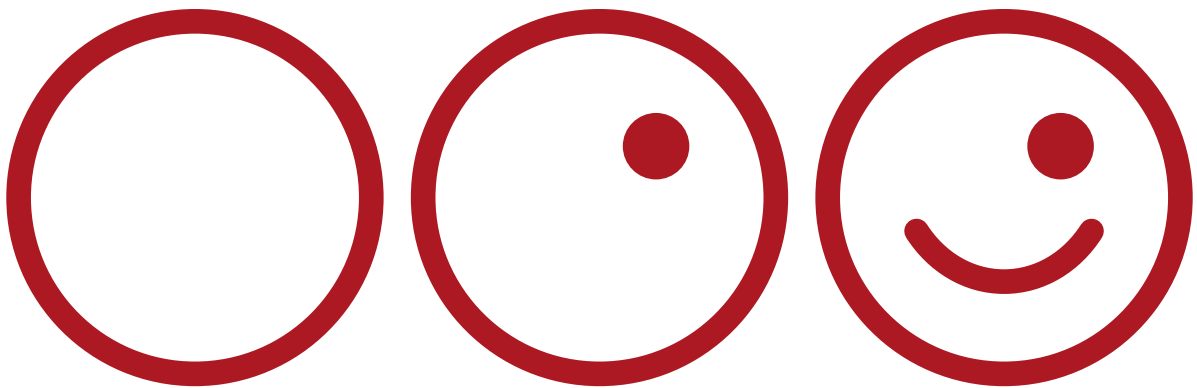
Now that's an amusing little story but it turns out that all our brains have that tendency. It turns out that the way our subconscious brain works we are all hard-wired with a fantastic desire to fill in gaps!

**To prove this to you
look at this thing I am
drawing:**

**So, I've got a question
for you.
What exactly do you
think I am drawing –
any ideas?**

**What about if I add
this?**

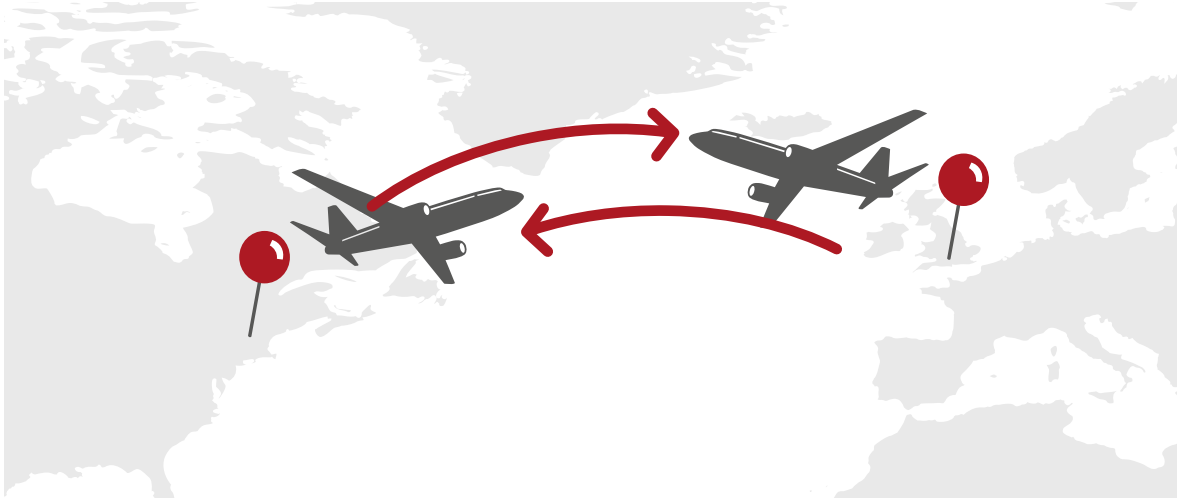
What about if I add this?



Yes that's right it's a human face! Now you can look at that and you could say okay I can see it is a human face. But a computer is never going to guess that. When a computer looks at that it says in effect – "Human face? No way! It has only got one eye, it hasn't got a nose, it hasn't got ears, it hasn't got hair, and it doesn't really look like a human face at all!"

But the human brain is fantastic at filling in the gaps as you have just seen. And this is why there is such power in goal setting - because we have this incredible ability to fill in the gaps.

So if you can get clear enough about where you want to reach and clear enough about where you are now you start to make clear what is the gap.



And your subconscious brain and all sorts of other mechanisms start to bring you closer to it. You see, every second your brain is receiving about 30,000 pieces of information different stimuli and your subconscious brain is continually deciding which of those bits of information it actually needs to bring to your conscious brain's attention. And it decides that based on what it thinks you are trying to achieve. Did you know that?

So if you can programme your subconscious with your goals it can take control of this process.

So goals really matter.

an **idea** is just a
dream until you
write it down...
then it's a **Goal!**

Now, as you start to think about goals for your life or your career I would encourage you to dream big. Now why is that? Well it has to do with left brain and right brain. I am not going to go into that at length. But quite simply, if you set a goal that is too easy your "autopilot" simply switches off – it's as if it doesn't think it's needed and it doesn't start trying to fill the gap.

But the bigger the gap between where you are now and the fulfilment of your dreams, the more your subconscious is motivated to really try and help you. So I encourage you to dream big. Don't put any limits on your imagination.

One of the questions I like to ask people is: "Where do you want to be in 5 years' time?"

Well, why 5 years' time? It doesn't actually matter whether its 5 years or 3 years or 10 years. But the point is to help people think big and get clear about their goals – to help them become more effective by dreaming bigger and clearer. Bill Gates said that most people greatly overestimate what can be achieved in one year, but greatly underestimate what can be achieved in five.

So as you start to think about the future it's time to ...



Dream big - then identify milestones

Once you have some kind of design for your life and some long-term goals you need to chunk them down.

Imagine that you wanted to reach one thousand people with an idea or a new skill and you wanted to do it in just 10 time periods. How many people do you need to reach in the first time period? (The time periods could be days or weeks or months or even years – it doesn't matter.)

1,000 people in 10 time periods?

Answer is

1,000/10=100 in each period!

Right?

Well, most people think of this in terms of 1,000 divided by 10 = 100. So they answer, "Well, if I want to reach a thousand people I need to get to 100 of them in the first time period."

But let me illustrate a more powerful form of thinking. Imagine that in the first time period you simply share the idea or skill with one other person and you share it with them thoroughly enough that they can properly and fully share the idea or skill with another person. Now two of you have it.

1,000 people in 10 time periods?

Period	People
1	2
2	4
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

In the second time period you both go out and you share it with somebody else. Now four of you have it. Can you see how it starts to multiply up on that basis? After three periods you have got to eight people, then sixteen, then thirty-two, then sixty-four after just six time periods.

1,000 people in 10 time periods?

Period	People
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	
8	
9	
10	

You may say after six time periods having reached only sixty-four people – “I am still a long way short of one-thousand”. But let’s roll it on and you will see it progressively grow to one hundred and twenty-five, two hundred and fifty, five hundred and one thousand!

1,000 people in 10 time periods?

Period	People
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	125
8	250
9	500
10	1,000

So Bingo! You have reached the thousand in just ten time periods!

That’s the power of what is called compounding. Einstein said it was the most powerful force in the universe! And it’s the power of having a strategy.

This can help us with our thinking and working towards effectiveness. That’s because you can see that half the people in this were reached in the very last time period! 50% of the people in the entire one thousand were reached in the last time period!

1,000 people in 10 time periods?

Period	People
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	125
8	250
9	500
10	1,000

} **50% of the total happens in the last period!**

You can also use this to start thinking strategically. Working backwards from your big goal you can see how many people you need to have reached by period five, period three, and period one. You now know that if you want to reach 1,000 and you are using this model, then if you have reached 32

after five time periods you are on target for your goal. And you will know that if after three time periods you have reached 8 people then again you are on target for your goal. And you'll know that in the first time period you just need to reach that one other person.

1,000 people in 10 time periods?

Period	People
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32
6	64
7	125
8	250
9	500
10	1,000

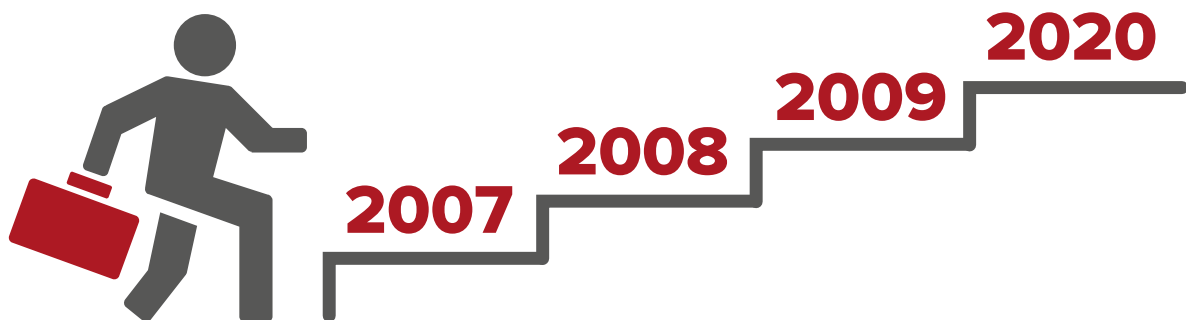
← Year one

← Year two

← Year three

} *50% of the total happens in the last period!*

So this is about taking a massive goal and starting to break it down into little intermediate steps by establishing some milestones along the way.



You can do this with any goal. Let's say that tonight I want to drive from my office in Belfast to my home in Holywood. Well I set off from our car park near the centre of Belfast and I start driving. I know in the centre of Belfast I should go past the Albert Clock – that is a milestone. Then I keep driving and I know I should go over the Queen's Bridge.

If I find myself on the M2 I know I'm off course and need to make a course correction. I know I should pass the George Best Belfast City Airport – that's another milestone. Then I know I should see the Rugby pitches – that's another milestone. And then I should get to Holywood and I know I am nearly home.



And you can do that with any major goal. You can break it down into smaller steps towards achieving it.

Talking of taking steps, let's now...



Take a walk in your future using all your senses

When you start to think about your goals it is not enough just to set them like a New Year's resolution, saying, "Well, this year I want to do this and that". You know you'll have forgotten about it or abandoned it by about the 5th of January!

Set Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Use "Past Tense!"

So – the key is to set goals, to set big goals, then chunk them down into smaller steps or milestones, set them in writing and then keep reminding yourself of them until you achieve them.

But you can multiply the power of all this many times. So let's talk about some of the science of how to make your goal setting really, really effective.

The first key is that when you set goals you should write them in the present tense as if you have already achieved it. And as you think about each goal use all of your senses. Imagine what it will feel like to have achieved it - what you will be seeing, what you will be hearing, what you will be feeling. Experience what it feels like in the moment – to have your goal happening and achieved. Visualise as vividly as you can using all your senses what you would be experiencing if you had already achieved your goal.

So let's say you want to run a marathon. Well, you would put that down as: "I have completed a marathon in great style and I am finishing it in... whatever time you want to run it in. The crowd is cheering and I am feeling tired but elated!"

And why do you do that? Well again it is to do with the way your subconscious works. This process of present tense vivid visualisation sets up a gap in your mind between imagining as clearly as you can exactly what it is like to have achieved the goal and the outer reality of where you are now. Your subconscious brain is there comparing the one to the other and experiencing a gap between the two realities

and therefore a pressure to somehow bridge that gap. And to your mind they are both realities – it turns out that your subconscious brain can't tell the difference between a vividly imagined experience and the real thing!".

Doing that really starts to programme your subconscious brain to motivate and guide you towards your goal.

Each time you do this you are turbocharging your subconscious brain to bring to your attention everything that moves you closer to your goal.



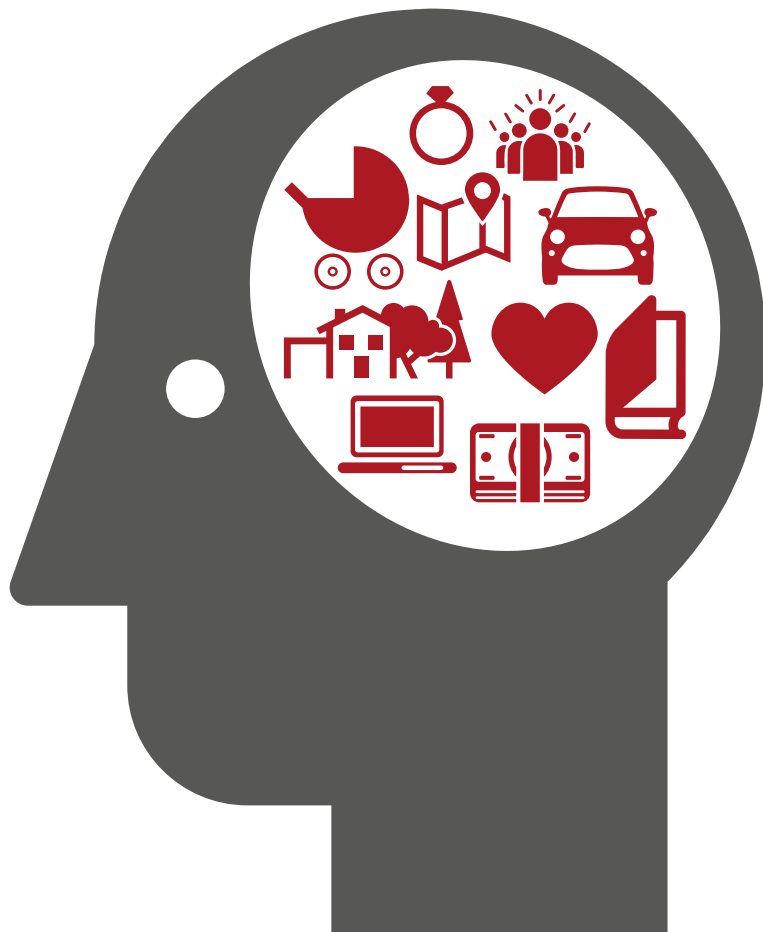
**Another key that I have found works really well is this simple idea:
“What’s your story?”**

10

Experience your “Story” and your “Vision board” daily.

Using all your senses on your goal is really important. It’s not always easy to do that so now I want to help you to...

Imagine that you are walking down the street and you bump into an old friend who you haven’t seen for a year or two. This friend starts chatting to you and they tell you about everything that is happening in their life and how everything is going. Now imagine that when you meet your old friend you discover that this old friend is actually you in two or three years’ time. And in that scene you allow this old friend (yourself) to tell you everything about your life and what you have achieved – to them it’s the past – but it’s really your future! You can take all of your goals and your ambitions and put them into a little story which you can remind yourself of as if it is your in the future telling yourself just what has happened!



Another little technique which is used by many people and is very effective is this one: A “Vision board”!

This idea simply uses the fact that a picture is worth a thousand words. Take whatever goal you are setting and think of some image which captures it. It might be something that you want in your life. Think of a picture or a little image and put it onto a board. Then remind yourself regularly of these goals by looking at it. Just glancing at it quickly can remind you of the things that you want to bring into your life.

I compiled my vision board onto a little PowerPoint which I keep on my iPhone – I flick through the pictures and experience having what they represent.

A while back my firm was thinking of moving to new offices. I wasn't that interested but then one day I saw a picture online of a guy standing in an office front in of a desk looking out of the window. But this wasn't just any window – it was a spectacular floor to ceiling wall of glass looking out over a spectacular view. I thought "Wow!"



and started to imagine what it would be like to work in that environment.

Anyway, I added it to my Vision Board on my iPhone but didn't mention it to anyone. I wasn't actually involved much in looking for our new offices – my partners did that. But one day they said, "Hey, we found this place which is really great" When I got the chance to go see it guess what I found – our office is 7 floors up, with floor to ceiling, wall to wall glass, and spectacular views out over Belfast. Come to CenterPoint and you will see what I mean!



When we had our first partners meeting at the new office I got out my phone and said to my partners, "I think you might be amused to see this" and told them the story. They were highly amused! This stuff works you know!

Now that I have reminded you of the power of all of this to help you to become more effective may I just caution you to...

11

Design your life – or someone else will

In goal setting there is a caveat I need to share. You will recognise this lady. Her name is Madonna.



Madonna
Recording Artist

I once saw Madonna interviewed on television and the interviewer asked her, “Would you like to be President of the United States?” Madonna considered the question for only a second and then answered, “Be very, very careful what you dream about and what goals you set!” You see, Madonna had learned that any dream she

allowed herself to meditate on and any goal she properly set, she would probably achieve. But she had also learned another very important secret. “Be very, very careful what goals you set for yourself!”

Too many people set themselves narrow goals which end up destroying them. For example if you simply set yourself the goal: “I want to become the top lawyer in my nation!” you might find that you became utterly driven to achieve it. But along the way you might find you have destroyed all your personal relationships, your health, and everything else that contributes to a fulfilled life.

Madonna knew that if she allowed herself to spend much time visualising herself as the President of the United States she risked becoming driven to fulfil that goal which she knew would destroy her.

That is why I recommend that instead of simply setting goals for your life you “Design the life you wish to lead.” Who do you want to become emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually, financially, etc?

Design the life you want to lead; because if you don't, others will design it for you.

Imagine a day 40 or 50 years from now – a perfect day. Imagine how you want to be emotionally, socially – who is there with you – spiritually, physically, and financially. The more vividly you can imagine yourself fully in that perfect picture the better.

Let me put a little bit more flesh on the bones of that. One of my life goals is always to be happy with my wife. I had a great experience years ago when my own parents (who had a very loving relationship) had their 50th wedding celebration. They had a big celebration party at a hotel and it was a tremendously happy day. All their family and friends were there and there was lots of celebration, laughter and storytelling of all the amazing things they have achieved and all the contributions they have made to the world.

So I took that wonderful scene and I just imagine myself with my wife in the middle of it instead of my parents. I imagine all our friends and relatives and our children and grandchildren and everybody celebrating with us and it is really powerful. I experience just how good it feels and tastes and what I am hearing and seeing and knowing.

And it has worked so far because my wife and I have been happily married for over 30 years! We have four wonderful children and have recently become grandparents! (I know I only look 27 but I married young!!) Try it! Develop a little “imagination movie” of your goal and then replay that “movie” frequently in your mind.



And in order to do what it takes to make that movie a reality you need to know that...

12

Desire matters more than ability

One key thing about setting goals is the psychological impact it has on you. But I've got a question for you.



I'm holding a coffee cup. It's a fairly ordinary coffee cup. I expect you can buy a cup like this in Tesco's for about £1. Do you think that you could sell a coffee cup like this for £100?

Now you are probably beginning to doubt your ability. But let me make it harder still. Do you think you could sell 100 of these cups at £100 a go within the next 5 days?

Now most people are doubting their ability a lot!

But what if I told you that the company that makes these cups has a special competition going. If you can manage to sell 100 of these cups at £100 a go within the next five days they are going to put £1 million, tax paid into your bank account in seven days' time!

Now you are probably starting to think things like, "Well, my Mum might buy one, my sister might buy one. Maybe I could do some work for somebody for free if they bought a coffee cup from me for £100." You start to think creatively about ways you can sell them.

But how about if I then told you, "If you don't manage to sell 100 of these coffee cups at £100 a go within 5 days we are going to take all of your relatives and shoot them in front of your eyes and then take you and torture you to death!" Now most people are saying "This will not be a problem. I will have sold 100 of these coffee cups at £100 a go within 5 days!"

Now I have a question for you. Have I just increased your ability to sell by 100% in two minutes? Are you're going to go and tell everybody, "Jeremy Harbinson is the most amazing teacher I ever met!"? Or did I simply increase your desire for a solution?

Therein lies one of the great keys to becoming effective. Desire matters more than ability.

What I increased was your desire, not your ability. So if there is something you want to achieve, whether you think you have the ability or not, if you can build up enough reasons why you want it, that desire will get you to find a way.

It's not enough to figure out "What?" you are aiming for, you need to figure out "Why?"

Once your desire is great then if you need new skill sets you will find a way to acquire them. If you need to work hard at something you will find yourself motivated to do it. If you need to go through some pain to get the gain, you'll do it.

That is one of the reasons I have spent so long in this book on the topic of goals and designing your life. Getting really clear on what you want to be and have in future and experiencing what it is like to achieve that really stirs up your desire and motivation to find and then do all the things that will make you become more and more effective and achieve your goals.

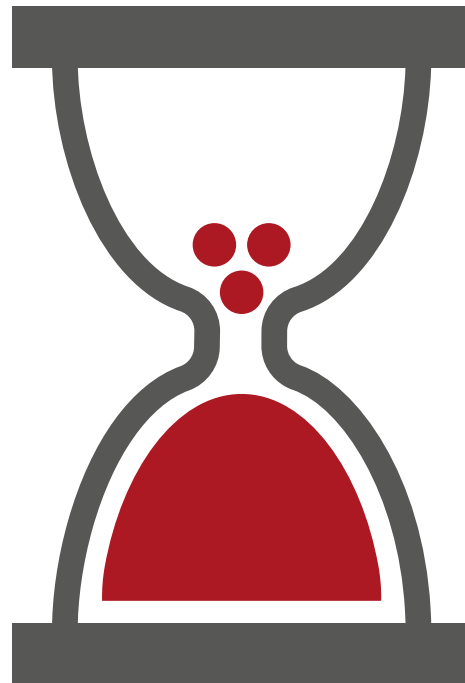


And I think one of the most important skills you can learn to master is how to effectively use your time. So let's chat about...

13 Effectiveness and time

Let's talk about one of the most important resources we have and that is simply time.

Time is a non-renewable resource. Each of us has about 4,000 weeks to live!



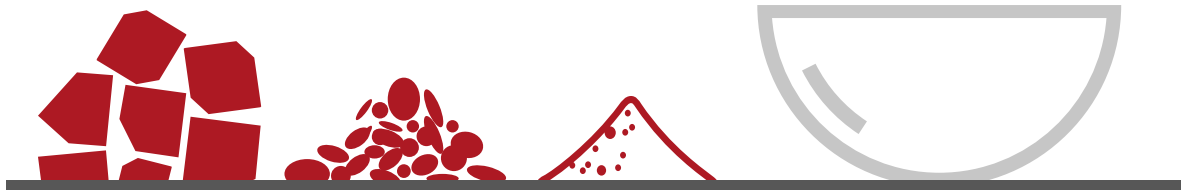
Time is a non-renewable resource. In fact each of us only have about 4,000 weeks to live (if you want to do the calculations that is about 78 years of life!) We can't make any more time; the best you can do is make the best use you can of it.

I have seen and heard lots and lots of tips about how to do that but I found that most of it could be distilled down to simply learning to...

14 Think of your life as a bowl

I want you to imagine that on a table in front of you is a large glass bowl. Also on the table there is a pile of rocks about the size of your fist, a pile of small pebbles about an inch wide and a pile of sand.

Your life is like a bowl which you fill with rocks, pebbles and sand



You start by taking the rocks and putting them into a bowl until you have filled the bowl. Is it full? Well, yes it seems to be full. Now there are still rocks sitting on the table but you can't get any more rocks in because the bowl is full.

But now you start to drop some of the pebbles into the bowl. You shake the bowl about a bit until the pebbles go down into the gaps between the rocks so you can add as many

pebbles as you can. You use as many of the pebbles as you can but eventually the bowl is absolutely full of pebbles and rocks. You notice that there are still rocks and there are still pebbles left on your table but the bowl seems full.

Now you take some sand and you pour it over the top to fill all the little gaps. You can get a bit more sand in especially when you shake the

bowl about a bit. But eventually you reach the point where the bowl is absolutely full. There are still rocks and pebbles and sand left on the table but the bowl is absolutely full.

Now you take the bowl, turn it upside down and you separate out the rocks and the pebbles and the sand on the table and you start again. But this time you put the sand in first. Now the bowl is absolutely full of sand. There is still some sand and a pile of pebbles and a pile of rocks on your table but your bowl is absolutely full and there is no room for any pebbles let alone any rocks.

This bowl represents your life. It represents the amount of time you have. The rocks represent the big important things that make a really big difference in your life, your business, and your career. The pebbles represent the less important things and the sand represents the myriad of little things which tend to get in the mechanism and clog things up.

The first thing I encourage you to notice from this metaphor is that the best you can do is make sure your bowl is full mainly of rocks and not sand. And part of the secret is to plan ahead in order to be able to put the rocks in first.

Now let's take a look at this idea of your bowl, rocks, pebble and sand again but in a slightly different scenario. This time instead of having

the rocks, pebbles and sand on the table they are on conveyor belt passing in front of you. It's like at the airport where the bags come out from behind the screens.

What is happening now is that you are just frantically picking up all the stuff you can from what goes by, just taking whatever comes along first. It's a handful of sand here, a few of pebbles there, maybe the odd rock. But when you are filling up your bowl like that what happens? After a few minutes your bowl is absolutely full and there are still rocks, pebbles and sand passing you by on the conveyor belt of life! And whenever you look at your bowl you will probably find there is more sand and pebbles than rocks in there.

Again, this is just a metaphor for life. Unless you can look ahead and up the conveyor belt to identify and plan in the rocks, you will simply put things in just as they come along to you. And you may end up left with mainly pebbles and sand.

You can apply this simple idea of the bowl and rocks to many things. You might think of the bowl as your life as a whole, or your business life, of your working day, or some project.

But what are the rocks you most need and want to be in there? And for that matter – how do you figure out ...

15

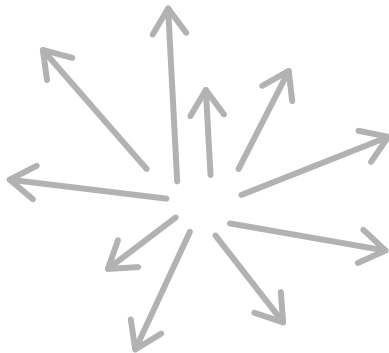
How to tell the rocks from the pebbles and sand

So how can we use these metaphors to help us in real life? Well the first question you need to ask is: “How do we separate the rocks from the sand?” because in life you need to know which things are the rocks and which are sand.

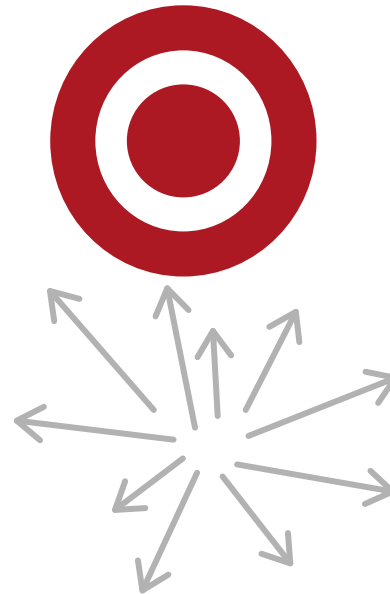
Here is a diagram which I find found helps with this.

Let us say that each of these arrows represents things that you could or should do – each one is a task if you like. How do you decide which ones are important?

You can see the arrows are pointing in different directions and some are longer than others. But how do you decide which ones are important?



Well you can't! Because I haven't given you enough information! But what happens if I add this to the picture?



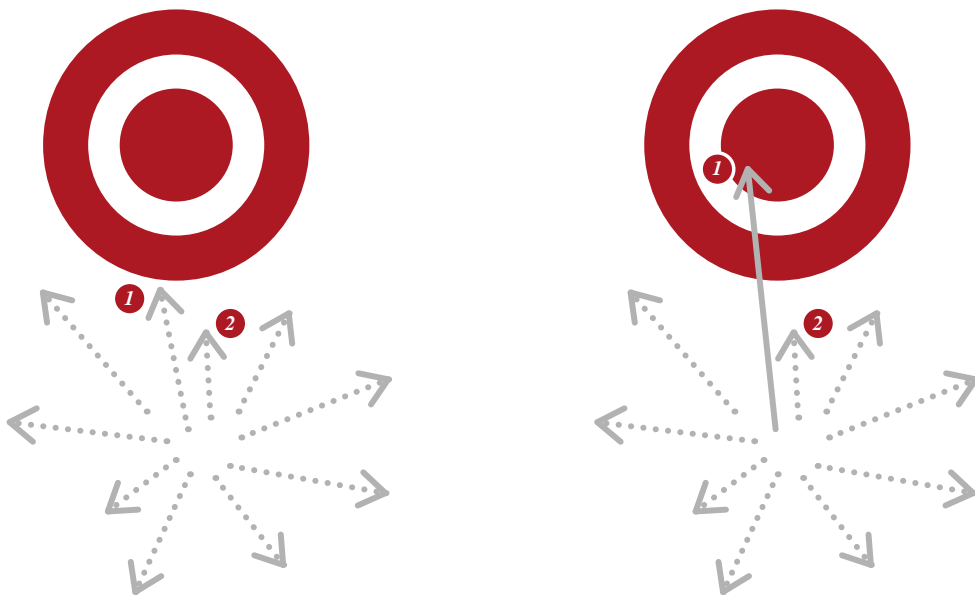
Now there is a target, a goal. And what you now see is that some of the arrows are pointing in entirely in the wrong direction. But you can also see that some of the arrows are pointing in the direction of the target.

This is how it works in your life. You can only judge what is important and what is not by reference to the amount they contribute towards attaining whatever goals you are trying to achieve. Once you have clarified what it is you are trying to achieve then you have a way of looking at things you might do in order to see which are important and which are not. You can also identify how important they are.

In this diagram you can see that, of the two arrows pointing towards the target, one is longer than the other.

So the longer arrow is the most important because it moves you the furthest towards your goal or target. The greatest effect comes from arrow number 1 so that is what you really should do first. Then move to arrow number 2. And, as you can see below, in this way you will reach your goal or target.

But having clarified that, there is another area that most people struggle with each day – It's called "The tyranny of the urgent"! ¹

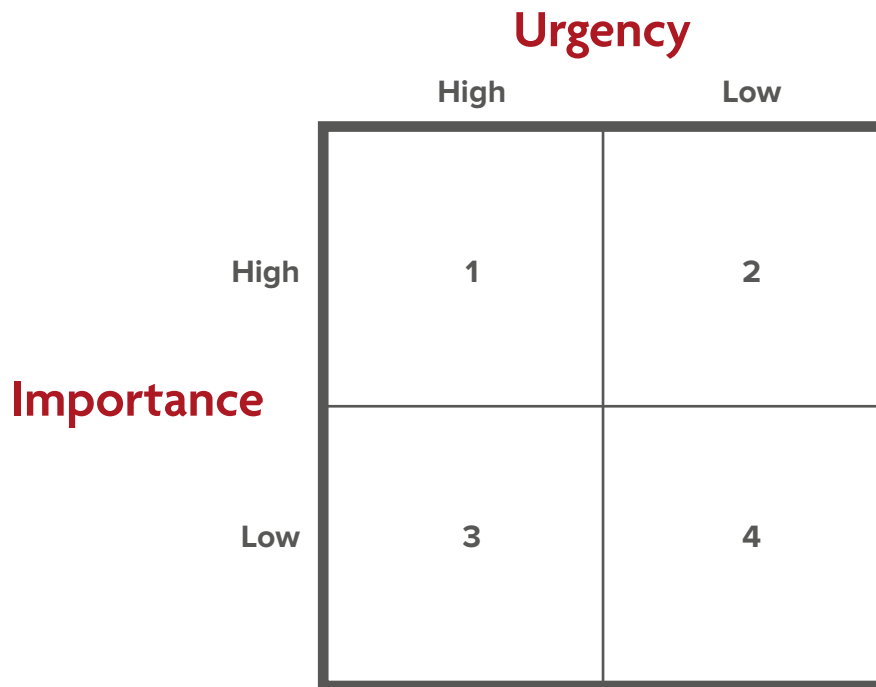


And part of how you combat that tyranny is to ...

1. "Tyranny of the urgent" From the book "Tyranny of the Urgent" by Charles E. Hummel.

16 Make time to be “in the zone”

Another very important area in which people often have difficulty is in understanding the difference between things which are important and things which are urgent.



Eisenhower's decision matrix

How do these interact and how do you decide how to deal with both of them? I found an answer to this question in this matrix. It is very helpful.

You will see that the chart has two axis - one dealing with importance and the other dealing with urgency.

Box number 1 represents the things which are both highly important and highly urgent. Think of say an important report you have to get out by tomorrow night. Well, is it important? Yes. Is it urgent? Yes. It is no good getting it out in three days' time as that would be too late.

Now let us take the next box – box number 2. These are the things which are important but are not urgent. Well, it could be things like, for example, taking time out to set your goals, to develop some new skills, to develop the marketing in your business, or to develop new products and services. The thing about these sorts of things is that they are really important but they are not urgent. It does not seem to really matter if you complete them today, or this week or this month or this year because they will still be there and they will still be useful to do after that.

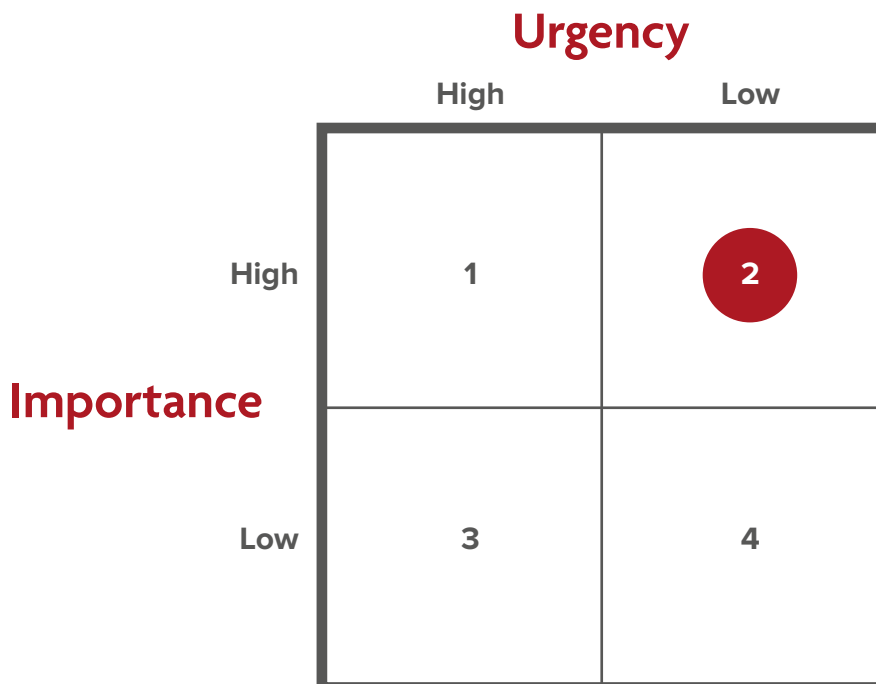
Let's next look at the things which are urgent but not important – box 3. For example, let us imagine that one of my staff comes to me and says "Mr Harbinson I am going to the paint shop in five minutes and need to know what colour of paint to get for the inside of the toilets." Now, is it urgent? Yes it is because the guy needs a decision right away. But is it important? No - it

doesn't really matter what colour the toilets are as it's not going to make a big difference.

Many things in life are like that. They are urgent and therefore cry out for attention but they are not important.

Then the final category - box 4 - is the ones which are of no importance and of no urgency. The interesting thing here is that in a lot of cases these are things that we really enjoy doing! That's because there is no pressure and they are not particularly difficult or important. They are just nice to do. But just like the sand they can clog up the mechanism and slow your progress towards your goals down. They make you ineffective.

So, I've got a question for you! Which box makes the biggest long-time difference to you, your career and your business?



Eisenhower's decision matrix

The answer turns out to be box number 2!

I find it really interesting that study after study has found that, it is the things which fall into box number 2 that have the biggest influence on your long-term effectiveness and success. Yet these are the very things that we so often never quite get round to! That is often because we are too busy doing all the things that are urgent! If that describes you then you are suffering the “tyranny of the urgent!”

I found it helpful when I saw the matrix translated into this diagram in which box number 2 is represented by the centre ring.

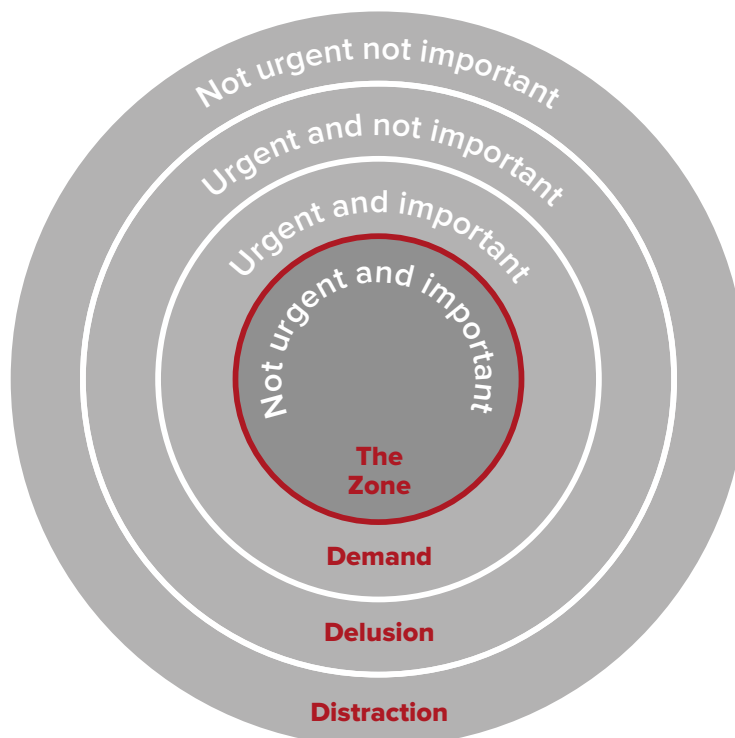
You will see that the outer rings are not urgent and not important and the inner rings are the things which have no urgency but high importance. On this diagram you can see that when you are dealing with things which are

neither urgent nor important you are in the zone of distraction. And if you are dealing with the urgent but unimportant you are in the zone of delusion.

But when you are dealing with those things in the very centre – the important but not urgent – you are “in the zone”.

So in your life you want to try to organise yourself and your day so that you spend more of your time “in the zone” – i.e. on category 2 tasks. These are the things which are not urgent but are really important to your longer term effectiveness, happiness and success.

So another real key to becoming effective is maybe even just giving yourself time to attend to those important but non urgent things. But in the busy world you live in, with all those demands on your time and energy, how do you do this? Well, how about your try this...



17 Make an appointment with yourself!

So how do we do that? Well the most effective way I have found is simply to use a diary and block out time and space to spend on Category 2 tasks. Maybe, like me, you should even have a default calendar where there are certain times of your day or week which you block out to do these important but not urgent tasks.



I found that it was very helpful to use the concept of blocking out time for meetings with myself. I simply put a meeting in my diary for a certain length of time and use that "appointment" to work on my category / box 2 tasks

By doing this it means that if somebody phones up and they want to have a meeting at that time, I just look at my diary and say "Oh, sorry - I am not available then". And I will set the meeting for another time. If for some extenuating circumstance I have to shift the meeting with myself I immediately reschedule it for another time so as I do not lose the appointment completely.

By using this little technique it means that I am able to construct my bowl so I have it mainly filled with rocks. It also means that I can leave space for some of the other rocks, pebbles and occasional sand that come along and want to be accommodated.

Ever with these key ways of thinking and acting in place many people still struggle to become really effective and often feel simply overwhelmed. So it's time for me to introduce you to possibly the most powerful technique to help you become more effective in this whole book.

You are now ready for...

18 The Rule of Six

‘The Rule of Six’ works like this...

You look at all the things that you could or should do tomorrow and you ask yourself this question: “If there was only one thing which I could get done tomorrow what should that be?”.

What one thing that you could do tomorrow would make the biggest difference to your life, your business, your career, or whatever?

That is not always an easy question to answer. But it is a really powerful and effective one to ask yourself.

Having figured out the answer – write it down with the number 1 beside it.

Now, you ask yourself the question: “If there were only two things that I could get done tomorrow, what should the second thing be?”

Write that down with the number 2 beside it.

Now, continue to ask yourself these questions to establish the third, fourth, fifth and sixth most important things. But stop when you have a maximum of six things on your list.

Why a maximum of six things?

Well it has to do again with the subconscious and the pre-conscious brain. If you have too many things ‘to do’ on your list, your subconscious can’t keep them all in your pre-conscious mind at once. It therefore, starts to distract you from the thing you are trying to focus on, and reminds you of all the other things you have to do. This often

leads people to start feeling overwhelmed. But in experiments this just doesn’t seem to happen when the things on the list are limited to just six or less in number.

In fact, if you are feeling overwhelmed, just try taking a clean sheet of paper and doing the Rule of Six to select just the most important six things from all the things you could do. Leave all the other things on some other list and just focus on your Rule of Six list – it’s amazing but it usually cures the feeling of overwhelm almost immediately. Try it!

6

- **If there was just 1 thing you could get done tomorrow?**
- **If there was a 2nd thing?**
- **Maximum of 6 things**
- **Start with #1 – stick with it!**

The very best time to do this is in the evening before you stop work. This way lets your subconscious brain think about those things for the next day even while you sleep. It gives you clarity and a sense of hope and control.

When you come to work the next day you start on item number 1 and you stick with it until either you complete it or you can’t take it any further. That might be because you are waiting for someone else to come back with information.



I do this at the end of most days for the following day. I take a piece of paper, write down what meetings I have and then draw a line and use the process to pick from my “To do” list the six most important things I could do the next day.

This means that any time that I am not in meetings is time that I am spending on my Rule of Six best things – in the order of their priority. And what happens is that some days I don’t get all six done. But on those days I can look back and even if I only got say two things done I can go home knowing that those two things were the two most important things I could have done today.

If I get all six completed then I simply look at my list of things to do and I pick the next six in the same way and I get going on those.

And when an interruption or a new task comes along I simply compare it to the tasks on my Rule of Six list. That way I can assess whether it is more important than the task I am working on and if not, where it should rank. It simply provides a very effective way to operate your day.

This idea is a very simple one but it is sometimes called the ‘Million Dollar’ idea. It got that name way back in the 1930s when it was used by a leading management consultant. He was called into a big Steel Mill that was losing money. He went in and he talked to all the management and he looked at how they operated their accounts, marketing, and all their problems. And then he

simply called all of the top management together and taught them this Rule of Six idea to make more effective use of their time.

At the end of the training they said “Okay, we will give that a go. Now, how much money do we owe you for your fee?” He said: “Instead of me sending you an invoice for my services why don’t you just send me a cheque for whatever you feel is the fair value of the difference The Rule of Six idea has made to your company.”

And at the end of six months of using it do you know how much the steel men sent him a cheque for? One million dollars! Now back in the 1930s \$1m was an even more amazing amount of money than it is today.

That is the value of the “Rule of six”. And it can make an amazing difference in your life if you use it.

Do it the night before - it’s your plan for the next day. Don’t give in to the temptation to put down seven or eight items. Just keep it to six. When you rise in the morning maybe glance at the list to remind you what you hope to achieve during that day. Then when you get to work, any time you are not in a meeting, work on your list and don’t move to the next task until the previous task is either completed or you reach a point where you have to wait for someone else to get back to you.

As Josh Billings put it (I saw this on the peel of a calendar once):

“The value of a postage stamp consists mainly in its ability to stick to one thing until it gets there!”

The Rule of Six is so powerful you don’t have to use it only for planning tomorrow. You can become even more effective by...

19

Using the Rule of Six for effective forward planning

You can also use this very powerful little idea for longer term planning.

The rule of six forward plan...

- If there was just 1 thing you could get done this year? If there was a 2nd thing... up to 6
- Bearing in mind my 6 for this year if there was just one thing I could get done:
 - 3 months
 - 1 month
 - 1 week
 - Tomorrow

I use it periodically to look at the year ahead. I ask myself: "If there was just one thing I could achieve this year what should that be?". I write that down.

Then I ask "If there were just two things I could achieve this year what would the second thing be?" I keep going with that up to a maximum of six things.

Now you remember the idea of milestones I shared earlier? Well, bearing in mind the list of things that I want to achieve over the next year I look at the next three months and I ask myself "If there was just one thing that I could do over the next three months what one thing would take me furthest towards those goals?". In this way I come up with my list for the next three months.

Then I do the same for one month, and then one week.

Then when I come to make my "Rule of Six" list for the next day I look at these lists. In this way I can bear in mind those goals for the week, the month, the quarter and the year, it really gives you a sense of direction.

We have chatted about how you should think and what you should do. But it also matters what you say and the vocabulary you use.

And there are two words you probably need to get better at using. To become effective you need to...

20 Learn to say “No” and “Later”

One key to becoming more effective is that you learn to leave space. To do that you must learn to say “No” and “Later”. Because, for many people, particularly professionals and busy business people, they don’t like saying “No” to anybody. They want to please everybody.

**You can’t
delight
them all!**

**Leave space!
Learn to
say: No! and
Later!**



The truth is that if you never say “No” or “Later” you are back sitting in front of that conveyor belt frantically picking up everything that comes down the track at you! You are not looking being effective; you are just picking up each thing without discrimination as it comes along. And some of those things will be sand and some will be pebbles; and probably not many will be rocks.

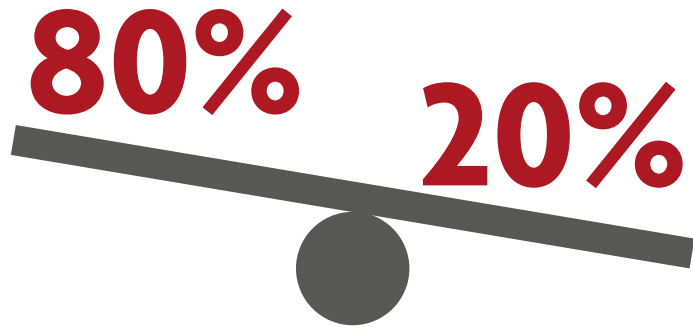
So bear in mind that you can’t please them all and that you need to create space by learning to say “No” and “Later” to some people and some things.

**And you may feel more “desire”
to do this once you understand
the “Pareto Principle” and know...**

21 How do you get 80% from 20%?

Having talked about the rocks and the goal setting, that brings us neatly to the 80/20 Principle – also known as the “Pareto Principle” after the Italian economist who first observed and documented it.

80% of what you accomplish comes from 20% of your actions



The Principle simply states that around 80% of what you accomplish probably comes from just 20% of your actions. 80% of the value you create comes from 20% of your actions.

Now that is not how most people think of the world. Most people tend to think of groups of things in terms of averages. But averages often give a very inaccurate impression of what a group is actually like. For example, if you stop to think about it, all human beings in the world have an average of one testicle! In very many cases an average actually describes very few of the population.

The 80/20 Principle may at first seem like a very startling idea but it is extremely powerful and is simply based on lots and lots of studies and observation. It is present in nearly every grouping in economics, business and effectiveness.

For example, if you examine the distribution of wealth throughout the world you will find that around 80% of the world's wealth is owned by just 20% of the world's population. Around 80% of the total value of the companies in the USA stock market is comprised in just 20% of those companies. And study after study has found that this broad principle applies to many, many things.

As an accountant when I go into a client's business and start analysing the books and records I generally find that this 80/20 principle pops up all over the place. You will find that 80% of sales tend to come from about 20% of the customers. 80% of the staff problems come from just 20% of the staff. 80% of computer crashes come from just 20% of the bugs.

So what you may ask? Well let me demonstrate with this illustration.

10 sales people sell £1m

80/20, predicts:

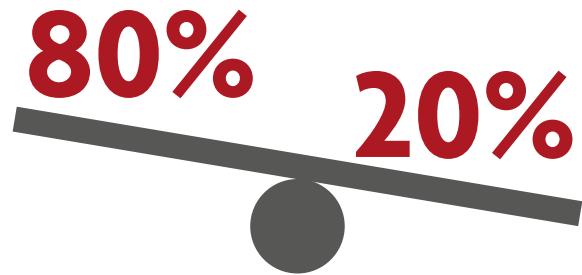
2 will sell £800k; average £400k each
8 will sell £200k; average £25k each

The difference
is not 16% but
16 times!

Let's imagine that we have a company which has sales of £1m per year made by 10 sales people. The 80/20 Principle predicts that just two of those sales people (20%) will account for the 80% of those sales - which is £800,000 - trust me – I'm an accountant!!

The other 8 will between them sell only 20% which is 200,000. Okay! So what?

Well, if you care to do the maths you will see that the top two have average sales of £400,000 each whereas the bottom 8 have average sales of just £25,000 each. In terms of "effectiveness" in the area of selling that is a difference of sixteen times



($400/25 = 16$) between the best sales people and the majority of the sales people. That is not 16% but 16 times!

And in my experience it tends to be the way a lot of things work in life and in business. So figuring out what your strengths are and increasing your effectiveness really matters.

I want to emphasise that this ratio is not always 80/20. It is just the principle of the vital few and the trivial many. So the ratio could be 65/35, it could be 75/25, it might be 80/20 or it might be even 90/10 or 95/5. But generally speaking a minority of your time and effort relates to the majority of your results.

One of the other really important things about this principle is that it is “fractal”. This means that you tend to find that the top 20% of the top 20% tends to account for 80% of the top 80%. So, in other words, you are likely to get 64% in the results from about 4% of the inputs and possibly even 51% of the results from something like maybe 1% of the inputs. (If you are struggling with the math here just trust me – I’m an accountant!!)

So for example, you’ll find that around 64% of the worlds’ wealth is owned by around 6% of the world’s population.

Applying this principle to your effectiveness can have dramatic results. Start thinking about what you do each day and each week. You are trying to identify, for example, what is the 20%

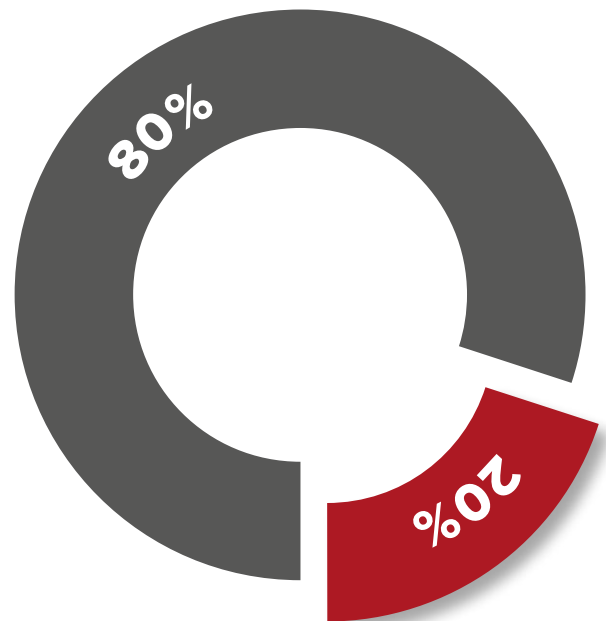
that you do in your job which makes 80% of the difference you make? Who are those key customers that may be your 4% best customers? Maybe, if you just lavished a bit more time and attention on them it really would make a big difference.

I hope I am getting across the notion that not everything in life is of equal value. So, don’t invest your time equally over all the things you could do. You become more effective as you start looking at your customers, your actions, at what bugs need fixed in your software and start looking at any letters, emails or reports you decide to write and understand that 80% of the value is probably in just 20% of what you do. Some things are rocks – the 20% things – and some are just pebbles and sand!

It’s Fractal

**80% of the 80% =
20% of the 20%**

- **64% from 4%**
- **51% from 1%**



So let’s pull together the things we have been discussing so far by remembering the ...

22

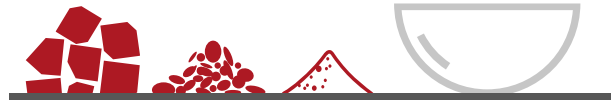
Practical lessons of the bowl, rocks and sand

Here is a summary of the key principles I have shared about becoming more effective in your use of time. The practical lessons we can draw include:

- When you fill your bowl the best you can do is fill it mainly with rocks.
- You need to learn how to distinguish which things are rocks and which things are sand, which are the essential 20% and which are the other 80%.
- To be very effective you need to plan in advance and plan the rocks in first. You need to be able to see the table and not just the conveyor belt coming down the line at you.
- You need to decide in advance the size of your bowl. Some people start off working 40 hours a week. But when they can't get everything done and they try to increase the size of their "bowl" to 50, 60, 70, or 80 hours a week and more. So it is very important to prevent that happening. Decide what the size of your bowl is.
- Understand that no matter how well you plan things there will always be some rocks, pebbles and sand which you can't get into your bowl and which get left undone. The best you can do is to try to handle mainly rocks.
- In terms of planning your life a good thing is don't finish today what you plan tomorrow. I try before I leave work each day to look at what I am going to be doing tomorrow, Use the Rule of Six. It just gives great clarity to what you are going to do. It energises you.

Practical lessons from the bowl of rocks and sand:-

- Fill your bowl mainly with rocks
- Learn to distinguish rocks from sand
- Plan the rocks in first
- See the table – not just the passing conveyor belt
- Decide in advance the size of the bowl
- Understand there will always be rocks / sand left out
- Don't finish today until you plan tomorrow



Keys to getting the most out of your time,

- Deciding
 - What to do
 - When to do it
- Handle expectations
 - Yours
 - Other peoples



Plan ahead and use a pen and paper

Growing your effectiveness is not a one off event but a continual process. So I encourage you to...

23 Pursue the 1,000% formula

With all of these skills shared in this book, if you keep using them and increasing them, you will grow more and more effective.



Brian Tracy
Teacher of Effectiveness

The key to long term success is to dedicate yourself to continuous improvement. It's what the Japanese call Kaizen (a Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement of working practices, personal efficiency, etc.) And that is a great goal to set yourself – to aim to become progressively more and more effective. And it leads us into what is called: “The 1,000% formula.”

This gentleman is Brian Tracey. He is a really great teacher of effectiveness so check him out on You Tube. He taught me this powerful formula. It basically asks you the very simple question:

“Could you become one tenth of 1% more productive or effective each day?”

Now to simply make an improvement of one tenth of 1% should not be very hard for anyone. So most people when asked that question would agree and say, “Yes, I could do that! Tomorrow I could become more effective by one tenth of one percent.”

But consider what would happen if you managed to make such a tiny little incremental improvement each day? If you simply could become one tenth of one percent more effective each day, that would mean that at the end of one week, you would be half a percent more effective.

Now that may not seem like a huge difference to you. But keep it up and at the end of a 4-week month you would be 2% more effective. And if you kept doing that then at the end of the 52 week year you would be 26% more effective.

1/10th of 1% more productive each day?

= 0.5% per week

= 2% per month

= 26% per year

**= 1,000% in less
than a decade!**

And if you keep following this discipline then in less than a decade you will have become 1,000% more effective! That’s the 1,000% formula.

That is an increase of ten times over ten years! The cumulative effect of becoming a tiny bit more effective in your field each day compounds into a tremendous increase in your value and your output over time.

This is called the Law of Accumulation, or the Principle of Incremental Improvement. It is the primary reason for all great success stories. “By the yard, it’s hard. But inch by inch, anything’s a cinch!”

Make a decision, right now, to be a 1,000% person. Commit yourself to continuous personal and professional development. This process will completely transform your life.

We live in a society that is based on productivity and effectiveness. If you increase your ability to contribute value, the amount you earn will increase as well. Your income will eventually rise to match the value of your contribution.

As you make these small incremental improvements in your effectiveness you are following in the footsteps of the many great people we have chatted about in this book.

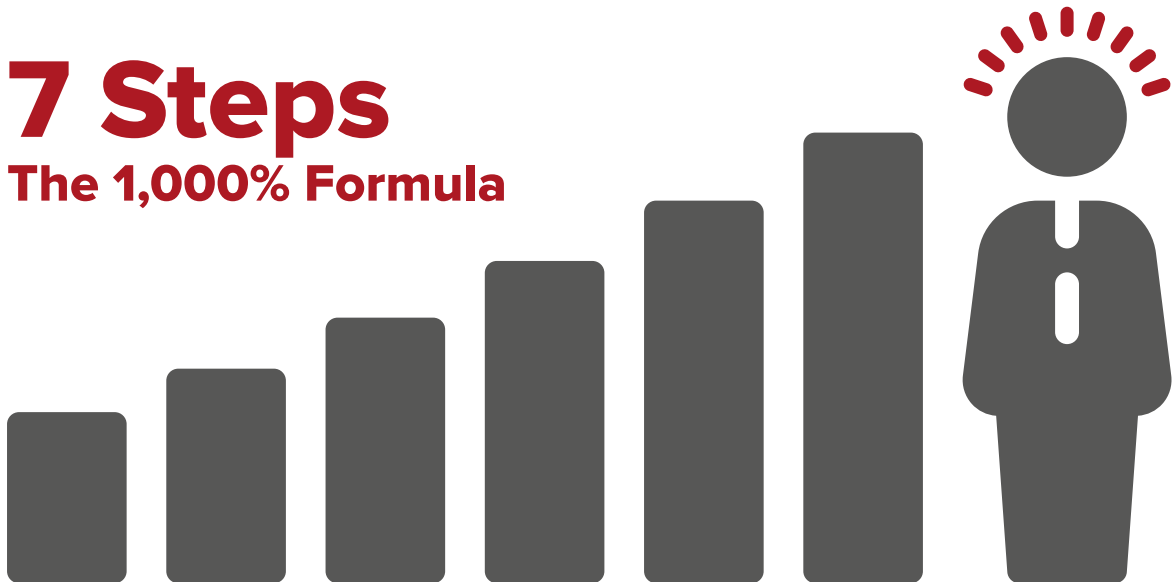
**And as you walk in their tracks
here are ...**

24

Seven steps to becoming effective

When Brian Tracey taught me the 1,000% formula he also shared seven steps to take and we have looked at most of them in this book. So to tie many of the things you have learnt in this book together let me briefly go over the seven steps.

7 Steps The 1,000% Formula





- 1** Get up two hours before your first appointment/task/activity and read for one hour - not just a fiction book but something which is improving either your technical skills or better still in terms of your soft skills.

Invest this first sixty minutes in yourself and in your mind. Do not let anything else distract you during this period. If you do that think of how many books you will read in the course of year. It is like getting a continuous University education.

When I finished my accountancy training I decided that I would do that. So I started studying books on strategy and books on finance and then I read books on management, leadership and then marketing and selling and then I studied psychology, behavioural economics and even quantum physics! I studied so many different things - just continually investing in myself.



- 3** The next step is to organise your time by using things like the Rule of Six.

Plan every day the night before using the Rule of Six either at the end of your workday or before you go to bed. This process will program your subconscious mind while you are asleep to work on your tasks. When you wake up you will be given ideas that will lead you to the achievement of your goals faster and more effectively.



- 2** Rewrite and review your major goals each day before you start off. This process will only take a few minutes and programs your mind to be alert to opportunities to achieve your goals all day long. Grab yourself a spiral notebook and write your goals in the present tense as though you have already achieved them. Take 5 to 10 minutes to simply imagine those goals maybe using something like a “vision chart” or “your story”. This will program your subconscious mind to be observant to opportunities to move you closer to achieving your goals.



Focus on your “Rocks”

- 4** The next step is to focus mainly on your rocks.

Use the 80/20 principle to concentrate on the most valuable task that will give you the most value. Work on the one activity that can have the greatest positive impact on your business and start on this task first thing and focus on that until it is done.



5 The next step is to listen to educational audio programs in your car or during exercise. Load your MP3 player or iPod with your audio books and personal development improvement material.

All of us have down time at some point. I used to get frustrated when I drove to work and the traffic might be bad and it might take me half an hour to get there. But now I think of my car as a kind of university on wheels and I just enjoy continuing learn and grow. It's a great way to get information. Some people like to do it when they are exercising. You do not have to do it all the time but it just is a great way to use your time.



7 The last point is simply to treat each person you meet as you would like to be treated.

This is known as the golden rule! Treat the people you work with in exactly the same manner as you would treat a valuable customer of your firm. Treat every prospect or customer as if they had already purchased a million pounds worth of what your company sells, and was thinking of doing it again.

Especially, treat the people at home as though they were the most valuable people in the world to you, because they are.



- 1** What did I do right?
- 2** What would I do differently?

6 The next tip is to ask two questions after every experience.

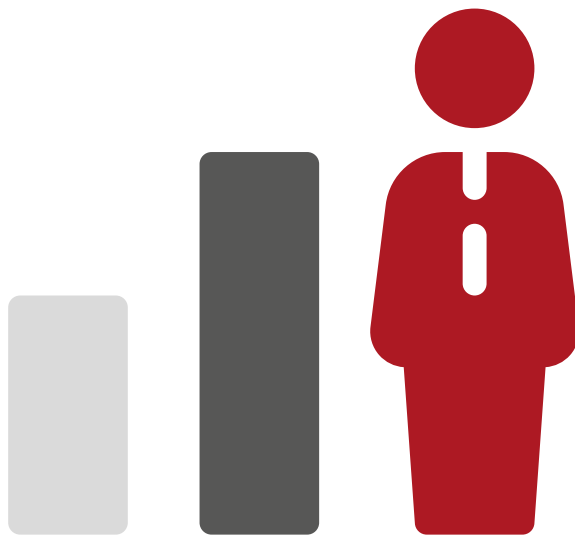
Whether it's at the end of a meeting or a report or whatever, ask yourself those two questions. Now, most people after an experience will say: "Oh, what should I have done better" But you will notice that the key is to ask first of all "What did I do right" Take time to notice and be grateful for the things that you did right.

And then take time to learn from the things that were not right by asking the question "What would I do differently?" That means you are continually drawing all the nutrients out of each experience. You are learning as much as you can to get on with. This will help you to grow more and more rapidly by efficiently speeding up the process of doing your tasks.

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I challenge you to become a little bit better every single day!

I have studied and applied the 1,000% formula in my life. I can't claim that I have followed all the steps every day. But I do frequently remind myself of it and renew my efforts and notice a huge difference.



Become the top 20% that are 16 times as effective as the other 80%

I therefore challenge you to make a commitment to become a little bit better each day. Learn and apply one new idea each day to help you to become more productive and effective. The incremental effect will amaze you.

And be patient. Don't expect overnight changes or instant results. Remember the story of the tortoise and the hare. Become a little bit better each day and your future will take care of itself.

I hope that this little book has given you some ideas and insights into how to become more effective. My hope is that as you set your goals and manage your time and as you keep working at improvement you will become part of the top 20% who are indeed - 16 times as effective as the other 80%.



The Story of Harbinson Mulholland

In April 1998, Jeremy Harbinson asked Paul Mulholland his now famous question: “Where do you want to be in five years?”

Their answers were both the same. They sat down with a sheet of paper and wrote out their vision for the future which was to create a firm:

- which is a “buzz”,
- where people feel good about themselves and therefore create great results,
- where we deliver a service which is “Very Special” being excellent, specific, and personal,
- where things like accounts and tax are merely the foundations for advice on how to improve and grow your effectiveness,
- where we continually strive to help each person reach their own highest potential; and
- where we do all this while having some fun in the process.

And so Harbinson Mulholland was born. Starting with just 15 people, the firm has now grown to a team of 50, led by 9 partners. They seek to grow your wealth, solving your problems, save you time and money, whilst hopefully making you smile along the way!”

All of which, as they like to say, makes:

“Uncommonly good business sense!”



Jeremy Harbinson

As a young man Jeremy played lead guitar in a band and dreamed of being a rock star. When it became clear that wasn't going to happen he decided that obviously the next best thing was to become a Chartered Accountant!

Having graduated with an honours degree in Economics from Queens University, Belfast he joined international accounting and consulting firm Price Waterhouse. There he fulfilled his dream and qualified as a Chartered Accountant. He found it involved somewhat less travel than being a rock star. He specialised in providing business and strategic advice to small and medium sized enterprises. He remained with the firm for 19 years and was admitted to partnership.

In 1998 he and fellow Price Waterhouse partner Paul Mulholland left to found Harbinson Mulholland. They thereby joined the ranks of the entrepreneurs they so often advise and built their new firm into a very successful business. In doing so they brought a distinctive and pro-active style to their specialist niches of business advice, accounting, tax, forensic accounting, corporate reconstruction because Jeremy believes that accountancy should be fun!

Those who have worked with Jeremy will recognise many of the tips, quips, techniques and anecdotes shared in this book. They frequently roll off his lips to help solve problems, create opportunities and shed fresh light on whatever issues are faced by his clients or team mates.

Over many years he has been a frequent speaker at events and conferences both locally and across Europe where his style is entertaining, inspirational and insightful.

He is married to Cheryl and together they have four children, one daughter in law, one grandchild, and a dog. He still enjoys playing guitar (now in his church orchestra) and playing 5-a-side football twice a week.

Personal Effectiveness

by Jeremy Harbinson

To help each person reach their own highest potential is why I get up each day. It's why I do the job I do and why I am involved with various charities and projects. This book grew out of that passion.

It is based on a talk I gave to University students. Many told me afterwards it was highly motivational. I simply shared what works for me in the belief it will work for others, perhaps even you!

Much of it is advice my own father shared with me when I had just finished University and was about to embark on my own career. It brings together the ideas and practices of many great leaders, business thinkers and academics.

This book will not cover everything that can make you become highly effective. Many are far more effective than me. But I can say from personal experience that if you can implement what I share with you in the following pages you will be well on the way to being the best you, that you can be.

£9.99