

## THE BIG IDEAS

### Believe Big

If you want to think big.

### Excusitis

Get your vaccination.

### Stickability

Persistence-->Success.

### Action Cures Fear

Always.

### Memory Bank Deposits

Make good ones!

### To Think Confidently

Act confidently.

### Impossible? Huh?

What's that?

### Experiment!

It's good for you.

### Capture Ideas

Get a lot of 'em.

### Perfection

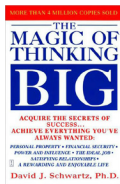
Compromise with it.

### Just Do It

Good ideas need action.

*"...the more successful the individual, the less inclined he is to make excuses."*

~ David J. Schwartz



# The Magic of Thinking Big

Acquire the Secrets of Success... Achieve Everything You've Always Wanted

BY DAVID J. SCHWARTZ · FIRESIDE © 1987 · 238 PAGES

**"Think Big and you'll live big. You'll live big in happiness. You'll live big in accomplishment. Big in income. Big in friends. Big in respect... Start now, right now, to discover how to make your thinking make magic for you. Start out with this thought of the great philosopher Disraeli: 'Life is too short to be little.'"**

~ David J. Schwartz from *The Magic of Thinking Big*

Ahhh... The MAGIC of thinking BIG. That's a fun topic.

Are you thinking big? You better if you plan to be big.

This book deserves a spot on your top list. It's written in some old school language (originally published in 1959) but still carries some big mojo that's worth checking out, regardless of the field in which you want to get "big"—be it in business or your bank account or your relationships or even your spirituality.

[Schwartz](#)' wisdom echoes all the greats and if you're committed to living your highest and biggest life, this is pretty darn close to a must read. In any case, I hope and trust you will enjoy some of my favorite Big Ideas and how they've impacted my life and might impact yours!

## BELIEVE BIG

**"Here is the first step toward success. It's a basic step. It can't be avoided. Step One: Believe in yourself, believe you can succeed."**

That's Chapter 1 in a nutshell. As Henry Ford says: *"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."*

Or, how about the first century Stoic Philosopher [Seneca](#) (see Notes on [Letters from a Stoic](#)) who says: *"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult."*

Or, how about Morpheus to Neo in *The Matrix* (you know, the scene where he's training him in karate in that sweet virtual dojo?): *"What are you waiting for? You're faster than this. Don't think you are, know you are. Come on. Stop trying to hit me and hit me."*

So, how about you? Do you really *know* you can succeed? Good. Once you *know* you can succeed, it's time to believe big. But first, let's get a little inoculation, shall we!?

## EXCUSITIS

**"Go deep into your study of people, and you'll discover unsuccessful people suffer a mind-deadening thought disease. We call this disease excusitis. Every failure has this disease in its advanced form. And most 'average' persons have at least a mild case of it."**

Hah. I love that.

What's YOUR excuse?

*"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination are omnipotent. The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."*

~ Calvin Coolidge

Too old? Too young? Not enough money? Not enough time? Not smart enough? Overqualified?

It's definitely time to vaccinate yourself from the dreaded "Excusitis"—the most pernicious disease guaranteed to drive you straight to failure. (Or, perhaps worse, mediocrity.)

Is now a good time to quit making excuses and give your highest self to the world?!? (Good. :)

## STICKABILITY

**"Just enough sense to stick with something—a chore, task, project, until it's completed pays off much better than idle intelligence, even if idle intelligence be of genius caliber."**

Now that we're learning some new vocab, let's add this one to the list: *stickability*.

Stickability is the ability to stick with something until it's done.

As Schwartz says: **"stickability is 95 percent of ability."**

Do you give up? Or do you see things through to their completion?

I've always had a pretty good handle on the bigger picture idea of sticking to something. Once I commit to achieving a big result I tend to do what it takes to get there. Having said that, I often find myself distracted by the mundane. If I hit a wall in something I'm writing or an idea I'm brainstorming, I used to immediately check my email or surf the web (do I really need to check ESPN or CNN for a new story again?!?) or otherwise waste time.

All the great time management guys ([Brian Tracy](#), Tim Ferriss, Steve Pavlina, etc.) teach something called "single-handling": that is, touch something ONCE and don't put it down till it's complete.

You get your mail from the mailbox? Good. Don't walk away from it until you've gone through it and paid all the bills and completed what needed to be done with the stack. DO NOT set it down on the desk and then look at it a hundred times for a week until you finally either get to it or forget about it. Checking email? Don't go into your inbox unless you intend to respond to what's in there and DEFINITELY respond IMMEDIATELY if it'll take you less than a few minutes.

Even with these Notes, I'm able to create a high volume of them because when I start one, I finish the first draft without allowing myself to get distracted. Perhaps *the* greatest way I've improved *my* "stickability" is to simply REFUSE to check my email/go online when I hit a little creative bump. I fight the urge to flee and stick to it. And my productivity has SOARED.

Try it.

Add the "stick" to stickability and watch your ABILITY take off!

## ACTION CURES FEAR

**"Fear of all kinds and sizes is a form of psychological infection. We can cure a mental infection the same way we cure a body infection—with specific, proved treatments... condition yourself with this fact: all confidence is acquired, developed. No one is born with confidence. Those people around you who radiate confidence, who have conquered worry, who are at ease everywhere and all the time, acquired their confidence, every bit of it."**

Another Amen.

If you've read some of my *Notes*, you know that dealing with fear is a near-universal theme of all of these great books. As Frank Herbert said in his genius book, *Dune*: "I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain."

And you know what kills fear?

*"Do you know your particular fears? And what do you usually do with them? You run away from them, don't you, or invent ideas and images to cover them? But to run away from fear is only to increase it."*

~ Krishnamurti from *On Fear*

*"The pain that's created by avoiding hard work is actually much worse than any pain created from the actual work itself. Because if you don't begin to work on those ideas that God has blessed you with, they will become stagnant inside of you and eventually begin to eat away at you. You might seem OK on the outside, but inside you will be ill from not getting those ideas out of your heart and into the world. Stalling leads to sickness. But taking steps, even baby steps, always leads to success."*

~ Russell Simmons from *Do You!*

*"In brief, it really is easy to forget the unpleasant if we simply refuse to recall it. Withdraw only positive thoughts from your memory bank. Let the others fade away. And your confidence, that feeling of being on top of the world, will zoom upward. You take a big step forward toward conquering your fear when you refuse to remember negative, self-deprecating thoughts."*

~ David J. Schwartz

ACTION. As Schwartz says: "action cures fear. Indecision, postponement, on the other hand, fertilize fear... Jot that down in your success rule book right now. Action cures fear." Seriously. Jot that down in your little success journal: ACTION CURES FEAR.

Are you afraid of something?

Here's what I can guarantee you: you're avoiding taking some sort of action. And you know what that's doing? It's fertilizing fear. And, ironically, it's bringing whatever it is you fear that much closer to you.

So, what are you afraid of these days?

Are you fertilizing your fears by not taking action? OK. Good. Now what can you do to move straight at your fears? What little things can you do today to move forward? Gimme three things (they don't need to be huge) that you have been putting off:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Good. Now do them.

And, remember: "Hesitation only enlarges, magnifies the fear. Take action promptly. Be decisive." And watch your life accelerate in the right direction.

## MEMORY BANK DEPOSITS

"Deposit only positive thoughts in your memory bank. Let's face it squarely: everyone encounters plenty of unpleasant, embarrassing, and discouraging situations. But unsuccessful and successful people deal with these situations in directly opposite ways. Unsuccessful people take them to heart, so to speak. They dwell on the unpleasant situations, thereby giving them a good start in their memory. At night the unpleasant situation is the last thing they think about... Confident, successful people, on the other hand, 'don't give it another thought.' Successful people specialize in putting positive thoughts into their memory bank."

How about you?

What kind of deposits are you making in your memory bank?

Do you replay the "Check-me-out, I-rocked-that!" high points or the "Did-I-really-just-say-that?!" low moments?

The cumulative effect of that makes a HUGE difference. Schwartz tells a great little story to magnify his point. He says, imagine what would happen if, every morning before driving to work you took a scoop of gravel and threw into the car's "crankcase." (For those who aren't mechanics, that's part of your engine! :). What would happen? "That fine engine would soon be a mess, unable to do what you want it to do."

Same with our brains.

When we throw negative thoughts in it every morning (and mid-day and night and...) guess what? We fall apart. The alternative? Take every opportunity to make good deposits. We need to think of all the things we've done that we're proud of—from the award we won in college or early in our career or whatever. Think about all those things for which we're grateful—from our health to our past successes to the fact that we're alive. We need to overload our brains with good thoughts.

For awhile my mantra was "thank you." I'd say it thousands of times a day and the funniest thing started happening. After a very short time, my mind would be looking for all the reasons

*"You see things and you say  
'Why?' But I dream things  
that never were and I say  
'Why not?'"*

~ George Bernard Shaw

why I was saying "thank you" and after awhile, when I was just sitting quietly, I'd hear a random "THANK YOU!" pop into my head from out of nowhere. Loved that. :)

So, back to you.

What kinds of deposits are you making? Become more conscious of what thoughts you're poppin' into your head and deliberately take advantage of the quiet moments by yourself (in your car, in the shower, at the gym, on walks, etc), to overdose on the good stuff.

## TO THINK CONFIDENTLY, ACT CONFIDENTLY

**"To think confidently, act confidently... Act the way you want to feel."**

Here's another one you'll find everywhere you look in the self-development literature.

**"Motions are the precursors of emotions."**

What do you want? Who do you want to be?

Start acting AS IF you already embody that quality.

My favorite example of this is from [Wayne Dyer's Power of Intention](#) (see Notes). He puts it beautifully.

Next time you're stressed, ask yourself, what would my IDEAL self do right now? And then ACT AS IF you were that ideal self. You don't need to do that for too long until YOU ARE that ideal.

Would a conscious millionaire worry about losing some money in her 401k? Of course not. She would know she'll make more and go back to the business of creating. ACT AS IF you already are that conscious millionaire. (And, remember that a conscious millionaire is NOT waiting for her retirement to really start living! In fact, the words "conscious millionaire" and "retirement" will very rarely, if ever, go in the same sentence unless the sentence is, "Conscious millionaires rarely retire because they love what they do so much they'd do it for free.")

Would an enlightened parent uncontrollably yell at her kids? Of course not. Take a deep breath and ACT AS IF you already were that enlightened parent.

Apply that to your health, to your intimate relationships, etc.

In all cases, if you want to think confidently, you need to ACT confidently.

Build your confidence, destroy your fear. Act confidently.

## IMPOSSIBLE? HUH?

**"Eliminate the word impossible from your thinking and speaking vocabularies. Impossible is a failure word. The thought 'It's impossible' sets off a chain reaction of other thoughts to prove you're right."**

You want to tap into the "magic of thinking big"?

We MUST remove that little word "Impossible" from our vocab.

One way to get there: Ask yourself: What would you do if you weren't afraid?

... Well, what would you do?!?! :)

## BE AN EXPERIMENTAL PERSON

**"Be an experimental person. Break up fixed routines. Expose yourself to new restaurants, new books, new theatres, new friends; take a different route to work someday, take a different vacation this year, do something new and different this weekend."**

*"It's kind of fun to do  
the impossible."*

~ Walt Disney

*"All life is an experiment.  
The more experiments you  
make the better."*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

*"The best way to get a good idea is to get lots of ideas."*

~ Linus Pauling

*"Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today."*

~ Benjamin Franklin

*"When you believe something is impossible, your mind goes to work for you to prove why. But when you believe, really believe, something can be done, your mind goes to work for you and helps you find the ways to do it."*

~ David J. Schwartz

*"If you bring forth what is inside you, what you bring forth will save you. If you don't bring forth what is inside you, what you don't bring forth will destroy you."*

~ Jesus

I love that.

You want to come up with new ideas and experience the magic of thinking big?!??

You gotta get yourself out of the ruts of your life. Shake yourself up.

Let's create a list:

- What new restaurant have you been wanting to check out? Add it to the list.
- What new book have you been meaning to read? (You read fiction as well as non-fiction? I hope so. This is one of the best ways to get the juices flowing. Oh! And, if you haven't read the novel *Shantaram* yet, go for it. It's amazing. :)
- What new friends have you wanted to make?
- You take the same route or two to work everyday? Try a new one!!
- Same vacation every year? (You DO take vacations, right?)

What are some things you can do to shake it up?!?

## CAPTURE IDEAS

**"Don't let ideas escape. Write them down. Every day lots of good ideas are born only to die quickly because they aren't nailed to paper... Carry a notebook or some small cards with you. When you get an idea, write it down... People with fertile, creative minds know a good idea may sprout any time, any place. Don't let ideas escape; else you destroy the fruits of your thinking."**

I LOVE this idea.

It's been one of my biggest keys to thinking big. Seriously.

I can't remember the last time I was in a meeting without my journal. I'd feel naked without it. How else am I going to capture the great ideas I get from interesting people I'm chatting with?!? And I usually have a folded piece of paper and a pen with me whenever I'm out on a hike or otherwise (gasp!) separated from my journal.

It's almost like the simple fact of having something to write on invites your subconscious to throw more ideas your way. In any case, we gotta capture our ideas. I know this one simple habit has been totally transformative in my own creations and I STRONGLY suggest you follow the tip!

Oh! One more thing.

You want to really catalyze your creativity?

ACT on your creative ideas.

If you're feeling totally inspired by an idea, don't put it on a to-do list! DO IT!!! That moment is the time when you can most powerfully convey the mojo of your idea—whether that's by making the phone call or writing the email or writing the blog post.

There's NO WAY you will feel the same inspiration when you look at your notes the next day or the next week. Impossible.

If you want your life to really take off, capture the ideas and act on them. NOW.

## COMPROMISE WITH PERFECTION

**"We must be willing to make an intelligent compromise with perfection lest we wait forever before taking action."**

Ahhh... Perfection.

You all up in your stuff about needing to be perfect before you can do anything? I've mastered that as well. And, if you haven't figured it out yet, we need to GET OVER that!!! :)

As Maslow says: *"It seems that the necessary thing to do is not to fear mistakes, to plunge in, to do the best that one can, hoping to learn enough from blunders to correct them eventually."*

If we want to think and live big, we've gotta learn that nothing is ever going to be perfect—things are rarely going to go as planned, and the best we can do is to plunge in, do our best, and hope to learn enough from our blunders to correct them on the way!!!

## GOOD IDEAS NEED ACTION

"A good idea if not acted upon produces terrible psychological pain. But a good idea acted upon brings enormous mental satisfaction. Got a good idea? Then do something about it. Use action to cure fear and gain confidence. Here's something to remember: Actions feed and strengthen confidence; inaction in all forms feeds fear. To fight fear, act. To increase fear—wait, put off, postpone."

There's that word "action" again! Yep. Always.

OK. This book is so chock-full of Big Ideas I'd have to re-write it to capture them all. But, alas, that's not the point of these Notes.

So, I leave you with one of the most powerful questions we can ask ourselves in our pursuit of the magic of thinking (and acting!!) big:

*What would you do if you weren't afraid?*

I PROMISE you that if you get in the habit of asking and answering that question with positive action, we'll all hear about you and your big dreams and big life.

I'm looking forward to it.

**Brian Johnson,**  
*Chief Philosopher*

If you liked this Note,  
you'll probably like...

[The Power of Intention](#)

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)

[Tony Robbins](#)

[Ask and It Is Given](#)

[Do You!](#)

[Overachievement](#)

## About the Author of "The Magic of Thinking Big"

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at [brianjohnson.me](http://brianjohnson.me).