

## THE BIG IDEAS

**What's Figureoutable?**  
EVERYTHING. "Thanks, mom!"

**How to Change Everything**  
Hint: Change your beliefs.

**Four-Letter Words**  
Can't vs. Won't (+ FAIL).

**42% (!!!)**  
How to increase odds of success.

**Growth Zone**  
Exit the Comfort Zone, please.



# Everything Is Figureoutable

BY MARIE FORLEO · PORTFOLIO © 2019 · 304 PAGES

*"Everything is figureoutable" will change your life. You can use it to solve mundane problems like a busted washing machine or a flat tire. You can use it to build a company, reshape your health, or create financial freedom. You can use it to save (or end) a relationship or create the most magnificent, passionate love story of your dreams. You can use it to find your way out of chronic stress, grief, anger, depression, addiction, anxiety, hopelessness, and debt. You can use it to invent a breakthrough technology, learn a new language, become a better parent or a stronger leader. Most important, you can use this idea with others—in your family, organization, team, industry, community, or the world—to create a positive and significant change.*

Individually and collectively, we're confronted by events and circumstances that can no longer be ignored. ... Yet there can be no significant change in the world unless we first have the courage to change ourselves. In order to change ourselves, we must first believe we can.

Together, we'll use this one simple belief, *everything is figureoutable*, to activate our inherent ability to transform our lives and, by doing so, instigate meaningful change around us. Which is exactly why this book is in your hands right now.

We need you. We need your heart, your voice, your courage, your joy, your creativity, your compassion, your love, and your gifts. Now, more than ever."

~ Marie Forleo from *Everything Is Figureoutable*

*"No matter what you're facing, you have what it takes to figure anything out and become the person you're meant to be."*

~ Marie Forleo

As I said in [my Amazon review](#) of this great (!) book: My wife Alexandra has been a huge fan of Marie's for a long time. I knew she was awesome. But... As I told Alexandra: "I had no idea Marie was THAT awesome!!!"

My excuse: I've been in hermit-mode and have done nothing but read books for 5 years (no blogs/videos/etc.) so I wasn't able to get the full sense of Marie's heroically brilliant and grounded and HILARIOUS power until this book came out.

I've read and created PhilosophersNotes on well over 500 books. This is one of my ABSOLUTE (!) favorites of all time. I HIGHLY (!!!) recommend it. (Get a copy of the book [here](#).)

As you may know, Marie Forleo created the uber-popular B School. Before that she was a Nike dancer, coach and, well a ton of other things as she hustled to create a life of meaning and joy. (She also graduated Valedictorian from Seton Hall. A nerd like me especially appreciates THOSE kinds of intellectual chops to go with phenomenal dance moves and jumbo-practical wisdom.)

So, yah. The book's awesome. In the same league as some of my other favorites like [Deep Work](#), [Atomic Habits](#) and [The 5 Second Rule](#). (In fact, on my chalkboard right now, I actually have "EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE" right above "5-4-3-2-1-GO!" <- Winning combo!)

The book is PACKED (!) with Big Ideas and I'm excited to share a few of my favorites so let's jump straight in!

*"The obvious is that which is never seen until someone expresses it simply."*

~ Kahlil Gibran

## MOM: "EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE"

"I stood there for a second, watching her work her magic. Finally, I asked, 'Hey, Mom, how do you know how to do so many different things that you've never done before, without anyone showing you how to do it?'"

She put down her screwdriver, turned to me, and said, 'Don't be silly, Ree. Nothing in life is that complicated. You can do whatever you set your mind to if you just roll up your sleeves, get in there, and do it. Everything is figureoutable.'

I was transfixed, reveling in and repeating those words in my head: Everything is figureoutable. Everything is figureoutable. Holy shit, yes...

## ***Everything Is Figureoutable!***

This phrase and philosophy took root in my soul. Since then it's become the most powerful driving force in my life."

The book begins with a great story about Marie's (awesome) Mom.

We have her to thank for this book and this phrase.

Repeat after me:

Everything is figureoutable.

*Everything Is Figureoutable.*

**EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE.**

Now say it like you mean it.

Because it's true.

Of course, the book is all about helping us operationalize that wisdom.

For now... What's the #1 biggest challenge you're facing?

Write it down.

Then write: "Everything is figureoutable."

Then act like that was true.

Because it is.

## HOW TO CHANGE EVERYTHING (HINT: CHANGE YOUR BELIEFS)

**"When you change a belief, you change everything."**

Our beliefs either propel us to or prevent us from living to our fullest potential. Our beliefs determine whether we fail or succeed, and how we define success in the first place. Just imagine the decades of relentless belief, action, and determination required to give women in the US the right to vote.

Or the unshakable belief that President John F. Kennedy and the team at NASA had in our ability to send humans into space and *walk on the moon*—something a mere one hundred years prior would have seemed preposterous.

Belief is where it all begins. It's the genesis of every remarkable discovery and leap forward humans have ever made from science to sports to business to technology and the arts.

*"As motivational speaker Michael Altshuler says, 'The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot.' There is no time fairy that's going to swoop down and magically clear your calendar. Embrace the fact that if you were powerful enough to create an overcommitted and overstretched life, you're powerful enough to uncreate it."*

~ Marie Forleo

The power that beliefs have over our lives simply cannot be overstated.”

*“Fear is not the enemy.  
Waiting to stop feeling afraid  
is.”*

~ Marie Forleo

Want to change EVERYTHING in your life? Change your beliefs.

That wisdom is from Chapter #3: “The Magic of Belief” in which Marie walks us through some of the astonishing research that points to the power of beliefs.

Remember that sham surgery study we talked about in our Notes on [Herbert Benson’s \*The Relaxation Revolution\*](#)? You know... The one in which people who THOUGHT they got a real \*surgery\* actually showed the same improvements as those who got the *actual* surgery?

Marie tells that story brilliantly. Then she tells us about similar studies done with kids who suffered from terrible responses to poison ivy. Blindfold them, tell them they’re being touched by poison ivy (even though they aren’t) and they get crazy reactions. Yet... If you tell them they’re being touched by something harmless but actually touch them with poison ivy, nothing happens.

Insert: Additional crazy stories.

Insert: The MAGIC of Belief.

Insert: Question: How’re YOUR BELIEFS?

Particularly this one: Do you believe that EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE?

(Well... Do ya?)

P.S. Marie says that “*All you need is one core meta belief, a master key that unlocks every imaginable door in the castle of your consciousness. It’s like throwing a switch that instantly illuminates a field of infinite potential. If you haven’t yet guessed, the whole purpose of this book is to inspire you to adopt the supremely powerful belief that everything is figureoutable.*”

P.P.S. Marie also says: “*As clichéd as this Henry Ford quote has become, it’s a fact: ‘Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.’ Now does this mean that anyone can do or achieve anything they imagine as long as they believe hard enough? No, it does not. Consistent action, creativity, and commitment all play a role.*

*But one thing is certain. If you don’t believe something is possible for you, it’s not. Period. End of story. The moment you tell your brain, ‘That’s not possible’ or ‘I can’t’ or ‘That will never work for me,’ you’re 100 percent right. You command your brain to shut down. The mind and body will follow.*

*While our potential as individuals is unknowable, what we know for sure is that limiting beliefs guarantee limited outcomes.”*

[Seneca](#) comes to mind when I reflect on all this. He told us: “*It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult.*”

*“We do not see things as  
they are, we see them as we  
are.”*

~ Anais Nin

And... I’ve had a couple conversations with [Tal Ben Shahar](#) over the last week. Marie’s NASA reference reminds me of his fantastic “throw the knapsack over the wall” wisdom from [Happier](#): “*In 1962, when John F. Kennedy declared to the world that the United States was going to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade, some of the metals necessary for the journey had not yet been invented, and the technology required for completing the journey was not available. But he threw his—and NASA’s—knapsack over the brick wall. Though making a verbal commitment, no matter how bold and how inspiring, does not ensure that we reach our destination, it does enhance the likelihood of success.*”

Here’s to throwing our knapsacks (filled with belief AND action!!) over the wall of our dreams.

## TWO FOUR-LETTER WORDS

“Let’s start by looking at your language and two common words that blur your ability to be

*"The best years of your life are the ones in which you decide your problems are your own. You do not blame them on your mother, the economy, or the president. You realize that you can control your own destiny."*

~ Albert Ellis

honest with yourself. Those two four-letter words are 'can't' and 'won't.' Think about how often people say some version of the following:

*I can't get up and work out every day.*

*I can't find the time to get writing done.*

*I can't forgive her for what she's done.*

*I can't take that job, it's across the country.*

*I can't ask for help.*

*I can't ask for a promotion because I'm not good enough yet.*

*I can't launch this project because my boss didn't approve it.*

*I can't \_\_\_\_\_ [take the class/learn the language/start the venture/etc.] because I can't afford it.*

Here's the problem: 99 percent of the time when we say we 'can't' do something, 'can't' is a euphemism for 'won't.' What does 'won't' mean? 'Won't' means we're not willing. In other words...

### **You don't really want to."**

Welcome to Chapter #4: "Eliminate Excuses."

Step 1. Write down your list of "I can't"s.

Seriously. What "can't" you do? Write a bunch of those down.

Now...

Cross those all out.

And re-write them with "I won't..."

How's that feel? A bit more honest? A bit more empowering?

As Marie says: *"In my life, whenever I say 'I can't,' most of the time what I really mean is 'I won't.' I don't want to. I have no desire to make the sacrifice or put in the effort to get that particular result. It's not something I want badly enough or something I want to put ahead of my other priorities. Saying that you don't want something (or don't want to put in the work or sacrifice to get it) doesn't make you bad or lazy. It makes you honest."*

P.S. This whole "Can't" vs. "Won't" chat reminds me of [Louise Hay's](#) wisdom on "Should" vs. "Could." In [You Can Heal Your Life](#) she tells us: *"I believe that should is one of the most damaging words in our language. Every time we use should, we are, in effect, saying 'wrong.' Either we are wrong or we were wrong or we are going to be wrong. I don't think we need more wrongs in our life. We need to have more freedom of choice. I would like to take the word should and remove it from the vocabulary forever. I'd replace it with the word could. Could gives us a choice, and we are never wrong."*

P.P.S. Revisiting our exploration of four-letter words, let's hear what Marie has to say about the word "fail": *"Think about the word 'FAIL' like this: it's a faithful attempt in **learning**. That's it. A faithful attempt in learning. It's nothing to fear and nothing to avoid. From this perspective, failure is not a glitch in your figureoutable journey, it's a must-have feature. As cliché as it sounds, you can only truly fail if you stop learning and growing."* <- L O V E it!

## **HOW TO INCREASE YOUR ODDS OF SUCCESS BY 42%**

*"An oft-cited study done by Dr. Gail Matthews, a psychology professor at Dominican University of California, shows that you're 42 percent more likely to achieve your goals if you write them down. Gail's sample group included men and women, ages twenty-three to seventy-two, from around the world and all walks of life—entrepreneurs, educators, health care professionals,*

*"There are two types of pain you will go through in your life: the pain of discipline and the pain of regret. Discipline weighs ounces, while regret weighs tons."*

~ Jim Rohn

*"Normal is not something to aspire to, it's something to get away from."*

~ Jodie Foster

artists, lawyers, and bankers. She divided the participants into two groups, those who wrote down their goals and those who didn't. The results were clear. Those who wrote down their goals achieved those desires at a significantly higher level than those who didn't.

**As basic as it seems, most people still don't write down what's most important to them.** If I was considering making a bet and you told me that if I wrote that bet on paper, I had a 42 percent HIGHER chance of winning—I'd do it! If I was undergoing some kind of medical protocol and my doctor said, 'Hey, if you write this down, you'll increase your chances of healing by 42 percent'—am I NOT going to listen? Who doesn't want those kinds of odds?

Even without this study, writing down what you want is sheer common sense. In our endlessly distracted, overcommitted, overstretched world, writing down what's most important is a deceptively easy way to stay focused. Writing down your dream forces you to be clear and specific about what you want. Ambiguity is the enemy of accomplishment. ...

Now, obviously, you shouldn't just write your goal in a journal and call it a day. You should look at it often. Daily is ideal. This keeps your top priority top of mind."

Let me repeat that key stat: You are 42 percent more likely to achieve your goals if you write them down. 42 (!!!) percent?!? That's nuts.

All of which, of course, begs the question: Have you written YOUR goals down?!

Marie has some great exercises to help us get clarity on our 1-year and longer-term goals. (Get the book for more!)

And... As I read that passage, I thought of our work together and, more specifically, the work we're currently doing with our first class of [Optimize Coaches](#) during the Mastery phase of our program. As we've discussed, our #1 goal (the "summum bonum" or highest good of life according to Aristotle) is to live with eudaimonia—to flourish by having a "good soul."

We achieve that by living with virtue. (Go areté!)

How do you operationalize Virtue to achieve that uber-#1 goal?

Well... We break THAT down into what we call "The Big 3 (x 2)": Energy + Work + Love (x Identity + Virtues + Behaviors). We want to clearly see our optimus-best Identity for each of those facets of ourselves. Who are you at your Energy best? Your Work best? Your Love best? What Virtues do you embody?

And... What will you do TODAY to be in integrity with that Identity such that you can high five your inner soul and feel the joy of being in flow with the best version of yourself?

Longer chat but that's the basic outline. Guess what?

We need to WRITE that stuff down. When? EVERY DAY! #carpediem style!

But only if we want to increase our odds of success by 42%.

## COMFORT ZONE VS. GROWTH ZONE (AKA DISCOMFORT ZONE)

"In the comfort zone, which is where most of us spend way too much time, life feels safe. Even if things are stressful, at least you feel secure in the fact that it's familiar. You're accustomed to the patterns, no matter how dysfunctional. It's the beast you know.

But everything you dream of becoming, achieving, or figuring out exists in the growth zone (aka the *discomfort* zone). When you're in the growth zone, here's what's guaranteed: you will feel vulnerable and insecure, but in order to grow, you must let go (at least temporarily) of your need for comfort and security. You must train yourself to value growth and learning above all else.

The growth zone is where you'll gain new skills and capabilities. It's where you acquire strength

*"If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."*

~ Gospel of Thomas

"The most difficult thing is the decision to act. The rest is merely tenacity."

~ Amelia Earhart

and expertise, and produce new results. Hang in the growth zone long enough and something marvelous happens. That growth zone becomes your *new* comfort zone.

All the things that once felt so terrifying no longer faze you. Your confidence increases, which strengthens your conviction to tackle the next set of challenges. You begin to expect and embrace uncertainty, vulnerability, and humility embedded in every learning experience. This cycle is fundamental to mastering the figureoutable philosophy.

Almost everything you need to make your dream a reality requires new skills, experiences, and understanding. You must do things you've never done before. Starting before you're ready isn't easy, but if you want to change—it's required."

That's from one of the last chapters called "Start Before You're Ready."

One of the reasons why I love this book so much is that Marie does an *astoundingly* great job of wisely, yet playfully and yet, at the same time, incredibly powerfully (!), weaving together a lot of the ideas we've talked about in our prior 550+ Notes.

This is a great example. Want to grow? Exit your Comfort Zone and enter your Growth Zone. How's that feel? By definition, uncomfortable. (Recall Dalio's 5-Steps + Mistake-Learner's High.)

How do you maintain your courage and equanimity and joy while hanging out in that potentially freaky stretchy zone? Remember: *Everything is figureoutable*.

And, by that, we mean: **EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE**.

As in: **EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE**.

So... What are you here to do with this one precious life of yours? Give us all you got. TODAY!

B

**Brian Johnson,**  
*Optimize, Founder + Leader*

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

[The 5 Second Rule](#)

[Atomic Habits](#)

[The School of Greatness](#)

[Deep Work](#)

[So Good They Can't Ignore You](#)

[The Obstacle Is the Way](#)

## About the Author of "Everything Is Figureoutable"

MARIE FORLEO



A born-and-raised Jersey girl with nothing more than passion, a laptop and a dream, Marie Forleo has created a socially conscious digital empire that inspires millions across the globe. Named by Oprah as a thought leader for the next generation, she's the star of the award-winning show MarieTV, with over 47 million views, and host of The Marie Forleo Podcast, with more than eight million downloads. Marie has taught entrepreneurs, artists, and multipassionate go-getters from all walks of life how to dream big and back it up with daily action to create results. She runs the acclaimed business training program, B-School. Learn more at [www.MarieForleo.com](http://www.MarieForleo.com).

## About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives so they can actualize their potential as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + practical tools. Learn more and optimize your life at [optimize.me](http://optimize.me).