

BECOMING UNSTOPPABLE

PRESENTED BY

AL SMITH

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INTRODUCTION

This report is an updated extract from my book, “Need to Know.”

“Need to Know” was written for folks who have, or want, an online business. This chapter was a bit different, because it's useful as a starting point for anything you might want to achieve. It's so important, in my opinion, that I called it “Chapter Zero.”

Yeah, well, I do stuff like that.

Anyway, I got so much feedback on the value of this section that I decided to carve it out of the book for use by folks who might otherwise not have heard of it. I hope you find it useful.

Feel free to email me with your comments, criticisms or suggestions on it.

Enjoy!

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PS: If you would like the full book, and a free subscription to my newsletter, TalkBiz News, you can get both at <http://www.talkbiz.com/?page=rggpub>

BECOMING UNSTOPPABLE

I wrote something for my newsletter years ago that got me a bit of flack from a few of the traditional "positive thinking" folks. I figure it's time I reprise and compound my heresy.

By the time I'm done, I hope to also show you how to eliminate the biggest non-informational hurdle to success that most people face.

The failure to take action.

The good news and the bad news are the same: Whatever you're doing right now, whether it makes you happy or not, is exactly what you want most to be doing right now.

You are exactly where you've wanted to be all along.

Yes, you might have a really strong desire to be in some other place. I don't doubt for a minute that you could, in some respect or other. You might even be moving toward that new place.

The problem is, human beings are complex critters. We don't just have one desire or one aspiration. We have a lot of them. And where you are at the moment is the sum of all your desires, not just that big one that you know you should be working on and never seem to get around to.

Have you ever been there? You want something so badly that you can taste it, but you put off doing anything about it? Or you go after it half-heartedly, in ways that seem guaranteed to fail?

Maybe you wanted to ask that cute girl or guy out, or go for that promotion, or start a business, or start an exercise routine, or spend more time with your wife or kids, or take a vacation to the one place you've always wanted to see.

Maybe you wanted to lose weight, or quit a lousy job, or end a bad relationship, or drop a habit that made you feel small.

Has there ever been something you wanted to do that you just didn't do anything about?

Some folks will say that it's because you didn't really want it, or that you didn't want it badly enough. And they're almost right.

The trick is, there were things you wanted to avoid even more.

Good news: You can change that.

And it's easy.

The usual response to that is, "Sure. All it takes is a little willpower."

My original heresy: Willpower is the least efficient, and most difficult, tool you can use to accomplish anything. It is very rarely more than a waste of time.

Why?

If you're relying on willpower, you're fighting what you really want with what you think you should want. Even if you win that battle you lose, because you didn't get what you really wanted. A hollow victory, unless you manage, somewhere along the way, to tap into what you're about to read.

There is something within you that is far more powerful, far more dependable, than willpower.

I call it wantpower...

What you want most has the power.

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Before I explain that, I want to compound the first heresy by pointing out two more myths that you need to forget, if you ever bought into them in the first place.

The belief in "fear of success" and/or "fear of failure."

No such things exist.

What we fear are the emotional meanings of the consequences of success or failure. Knowing what those imagined consequences are takes them from the purely abstract, which we can't address, to the concrete, which we can deal with effectively.

Success and failure are meaningless concepts, except when measured against the question: **Have you achieved the sum of your wants and desires?**

You're either moving toward the sum of your wants and desires, or you've achieved it.

Now, some of you will read that and think, "Myers, you're nuts. That's not how it works. Success is measured by [fill in the blanks.]"

Okay.

Says who?

Seriously. Who defined success that way for you? If it wasn't you, it doesn't mean a thing. If it was you, and you don't have it, why don't you?

There is only one meaningful definition for success:

Living your life the way YOU want to live it.

Anything else is a hand-me-down that doesn't fit.

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Another group of you will have noticed an apparent problem with this. The idea that, if you've already got the sum of your desires, you're trapped. That you've gone as far as you can go.

For many, that would be a very scary thought.

The key to changing it is in the word "sum."

As you know, that's a math word, meaning, "What you get when you add a bunch of things to each other." Like most things in life, if you manage to reduce something to math, just for purposes of clarity, you can change it.

With a sum, you simply adjust the value of the things you're adding up.

This is where it gets fun.

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If you ask a person what they want, most will rattle off a list of surface-level things. "I want to spend more time with my kids, I want a raise, and I want a pony."

And yet, they're not spending more time with their kids, they're not doing what they need to do to get the raise, and they still ain't got no pony.

Why?

Because they don't want those things. What they want are the benefits they associate with them, and they haven't piled up enough benefits to out-pull the benefits of not getting them.

Had you ever considered the idea that there are benefits to not getting what you want?

You should. That's the key to turning things around.

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In his book, "The Motivated Mind," Jason Gracia uses the analogy of a set of scales, with one side holding the weight of all the factors that count toward doing a thing, and the other holding the factors that count toward not doing it.

While that's a useful picture, I think it leaves out a couple of important concepts: Direction and speed. I believe that likening these forces to driving a car will help make the ideas more

concrete.

(By the way: Thanks to "Wild Bill" for the pointer. You can find Mr. Gracia's book at <http://www.motivation123.com>)

Like driving a car, getting motivated - taking action - is a skill that can be learned, and you can get the basics down very quickly.

Unlike driving, it doesn't take very long at all to become highly skilled.

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So, how does this work?

If you're unsure about a goal, or if the things you want and don't want about it are in balance, you'll just sit there, with the car in neutral.

If you say you want a thing, but the total of your desires pulls away from that thing, you'll put the car in reverse. You will move away from it, despite your (possibly very strong) desire to achieve it.

If the total of your desires relating to that thing have more emotional force than the things that make you want to avoid it, you'll put the car in drive.

Once you're moving, your speed will be determined by two things: The degree of difference between the two sides, and the intensity of the desires involved.

Before you can make the car go where you want it to go, you need to know what the controls are and how to work them. Otherwise, you could end up going in circles in reverse at 100 miles an hour.

Lots of people live their whole lives like that.

On each side of the equation are two universal human considerations: Pleasure gained and pain avoided. Each one has some level of emotional power attached to it. The emotional intensity of all of the factors on each side are added up to get the force for that direction. The side having the most force determines whether you put the car in drive or reverse.

Let's look at an easy example: Spending time with your sports buddies.

If you don't really enjoy hanging out with them, but think you're supposed to, you may only have one bit of force pushing you toward it: Avoiding the pain of disapproval by others. If disapproval bothers you a lot, that can be a strong force. If you don't care what others think, it could be a very weak force.

Let's look at the other side. Maybe you think that spending time with them will take away from more fun areas of your social life, cost you money you'd rather spend on something else, and regularly put you in environments that conflict with another goal.

If your fear of disapproval is really strong, it can be the deciding factor, even though there are more "points" on the other side. So, how can you change that?

The first thing you could do is to re-assess the importance of disapproval. You can do this by diminishing it or by putting it into perspective in relation to other things.

Diminishing it could be done by looking at the real impact it has on you. For example, you might realize, on thinking about it, that your buddies will only be a little disappointed, but will quickly adjust. Or that their disapproval comes from expectations that you never agreed to, and is their problem, not a commitment you're reneging on.

Basically, "They'll get over it, and so will I."

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Putting it in perspective involves comparing it to something that's more important to you. For example, you might think to yourself, "Yeah, I hate to disappoint them, but I'm not going to let other people decide how I live my life."

Or you could say, "Their approval isn't more important than my own."

Any number of things can be included here, and they'll all add up.

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The other way to change the equation is to add strength to the forces on the other side.

Most people will tend to consciously compare only the similar forces: Your sports buddies vs other areas of your social life. The rest of the factors will usually be weighed unconsciously.

So, start with the similar things. Maybe you would rather spend that time with your girlfriend, or with a different group of friends. Just saying that isn't going to give it as much force as it could have. You want to strengthen the positive emotional associations of the other options.

And consider the negatives (pain) that go with continuing the same behavior. You might find that the feeling of letting your girlfriend down is more powerful than the disapproval of your buddies.

Bring every factor of those things into sharp focus. Look at all of them, being careful to be honest about what you really enjoy and what you don't.

Then contrast those things with the experience of time with the old crowd.

Now, look at the things that aren't directly related to the social aspect. If better health is a goal, and your friends hang out in bars, you might think about coming home smelling like cigarettes, gaining weight from the bad food and not sleeping as well because of the smoke and the drinking.

You might prefer to spend the money on classes to improve your work skills and your income.

There are more possible factors involved than I could list here. The important thing is to make the pleasures that you get and the pain you avoid when you achieve your goal as strong as you can. Then make the pleasure you get and the pain you avoid by NOT getting it as weak as possible.

When the emotional attachment you make to things that move you toward it are stronger than those of the things that keep you from it, you will have effectively put the car in drive.

You will *automatically* move in the direction of those desires.

That's wantpower, not willpower.

As you increase the difference between their collective strength and the strengths of your desires that point away from it, you increase the speed and consistency of movement toward achieving them.

That's the gas pedal.

There is no maximum speed on this car.

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Let's take a look at the way this affects your action (or lack of it) using the example of starting or expanding a business.

First, some of the things that might tend to keep you from taking effective action on a consistent basis.

- Don't know how to create and sell products.
- Fear that people will ridicule your goal, or resent your success when you achieve it.
- Fear of losing the friends and comfort of your job.
- Fear of financial trouble if the effort doesn't succeed at a certain level or in a certain time.
- Dislike of having to make decisions.
- Fear of making wrong decisions.
- Losing a privileged position or seniority.
- Enjoyment of letting someone else be responsible.
- Less time for your family and friends.
- Looking like what you've done in the past was wasted.

For every person, there are a lot of other perceived "costs" that could seem significant. Let's look at a few of the ones on that list, though, as they're very common.

If you've got a boatload of money and years of your life invested in an education that supports your career, or a lot of seniority and a pension at stake, that's going to make chasing a business of your own look very risky. This type of concern is especially strong in older folks, or people with dependent family members.

If you have dependents, or a very low tolerance for risk, you should probably start with something you can do alongside of your current work. That eliminates most of these concerns, and lets you get started.

Most people are going to have to start out part time anyway, so this is no huge burden. Having a clear and realistic plan, using the information in the rest of this book, can cut the time it takes significantly.

It also makes it easy to figure out what information you need, and how to get it.

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You'll notice that the majority of the things keeping you from doing something in business are either fears or lack of information. Sometimes they're both tied up in one concern, such as the fear of making wrong decisions. The easiest way to get over that is to realize that you're going to make them. Period. You cannot avoid it. You're going to make wrong decisions about other things in life, too.

Nature of the beast. Perfect we ain't.

Having a clear plan and going after it, with the best information you can get at any given time, will reduce the number of wrong decisions you make. Limiting your risks to things you can afford to lose will ensure that you don't create the dire financial situations you fear.

Assets risked with a calculated probability of profit are called "investments." Even the best investors, with the best information, lose some of those bets. It's part of the game.

Knowing how to apply leverage effectively will help make the potential payoffs larger, while keeping the downside risks affordable. That means that one idea that works can quickly cover a lot of ideas that don't. That's a big part of why some people experience rapid success, while others struggle to get anywhere at a pace that's more than glacial.

Putting the concern in a logical perspective like this can often reduce it to the level of background noise.

But not always.

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For some people, making wrong decisions isn't the real fear. What scares them is the belief that they'll look stupid to someone else in the process.

Depending on how important the people are whose negative opinion scares you, you can deal

with that a lot of ways. If they're casual acquaintances, you might just say, "So what?" Or you might simply not tell them what you're doing.

If it's your spouse, that may not be the best way to approach the situation. In that case, you can start a project, and tell them that you're doing it so you can get XYZ, without taking the money out of your regular budget. Or you're making a hobby out of learning this stuff, to put some extra money in the retirement fund.

It's a different kind of investment, and one that can pay off big in the long run, with a risk of very little money and some time in the short term.

If you already spend a lot of time on the computer, you might just change what you spend that time doing and not even have it noticed.

Understand that most people will be skeptical of your efforts. That's normal. They have the same kinds of fears that you have, without necessarily having your ability or information to balance and control those thoughts.

Concern about what other people will think, especially negative comments from family and friends, is probably the hardest thing to deal with when you're getting started.

When it starts working, those fears naturally go away.

So does *(most of)* the skepticism.

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At this point, I should probably address something a lot of people encounter that creates major problems for them: A perceived lack of support from family and friends. This is most commonly a challenge when you're trying something new. It can be crippling, especially if the doubting person is your spouse.

If the reason for the concern is a perception of higher than acceptable risk, and the people involved depend on you, you can use some of the ideas we've already discussed to offset that.

There's a whole other thing that's often at the root of this problem, though, and it's one that most people never want to consider. While it's most commonly an issue for business or professional choices, it can affect any area of your life that involves growth or improvement. Put bluntly, it's that, when it comes to some areas of life...

Your family and friends like you, but they don't respect you.

Think about it. If you've never done it before, they have no basis for judgment. If they're prone to believing in your capability, this probably won't come up. But if not, or if their own experience says the thing is difficult, they're not going to be likely to accept that you can easily accomplish it.

Add to that the fact that your closest family members and friends know about all your failures. They've seen you fall off the bike and scrape your knees. They remember the failed relationship(s) in your past. And they've seen you at the party with the lampshade on your head.

Given that, their thinking is understandable. If you haven't demonstrated a talent for learning new things and accomplishing what you set out to do, they'd be silly not to be at least a little skeptical, wouldn't they? They don't want to encourage you to fall on your face yet again.

Here's the problem with that thinking. If you let it influence you, you're making yourself a prisoner of your past. Everyone tells you to learn from your mistakes, and then they use those mistakes as the basis for believing you can't learn? And you buy it?

That's insane, but it's a common kind of crazy.

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So, how do you deal with this? The answer is, for most people, simple. Not always easy, but simple:.

Get over it.

Get over the need for the approval of others. Get over your past mistakes and accept them for what they are: The past. Get over the fear that you'll disappoint someone. Just get over it.

Like I said, not always easy.

Just knowing where the problem comes from helps a lot of people. Remembering that you had to make those mistakes to get to where you can learn to move forward is also a useful thing. The most important part, though, is realizing just how many successes you've had in your life already.

You were born knowing nothing, and with no skills at all. Everything you've learned to this point in your life is the result of trial and error, either on your part or the part of the person who taught you. Somebody, somewhere, paid for that knowledge by bumping their elbows and bruising their egos.

The fact that you can function at all in the chaos we call the modern world is a testament to your potential. And you've barely tapped it at this point.

There is a price for change, yes. That's what most of us fear. But there is often a much steeper price for staying the same. Becoming aware of that, using the exercises mentioned earlier, is the way through.

Don't worry. You'll make mistakes and you'll make progress. If you accept the inevitability of mistakes before you start, the only thing that will matter is the progress. And you'll make more of it, faster, because you won't let the fear stop you.

So, those are the downsides.

On the plus side, what benefits do you gain from having a successful business (or other positive change) of your own?

The most common things people list are more money, financial security, more free time and being their own boss.

Those are not powerful motivators.

What would you do with the money? What would it mean to you?

Maybe you'd be able to travel, and see places you've always wanted to see? Maybe you'd drive a safer (or fancier) car, or move your family to a better neighborhood, where they can enjoy more of life's comforts. Maybe you would feel like a better provider for your children, and help them to grow up believing that a higher level of accomplishment and success is possible. Maybe you'd give your spouse more of the things they want, or you'd have a more active social life for yourself.

What would you be more secure from? Uncertain job markets? Rising prices affecting your standard of living? Being locked into a situation that could change in ways you don't like and can't control?

What would you do with that free time? Spend it with your kids or your spouse or friends? What about those things is important to you?

Would you take up a hobby you've always wanted, or spend more time with one you enjoy now?

What pain would go away when you're successful? Struggling with bills? Sending your kids to schools that aren't preparing them for the kind of life they deserve? Having to say no to things your family wants? The stress and aggravation of a job you hate, or that just bores you silly?

It's impossible to visualize freedom. It's easy to visualize spending a Saturday afternoon on the golf course with your buddies, or a week in a favorite vacation spot with your family.

Abstracts don't have emotional power. Specifics do. Get as specific as you can, with as many things as you can.

There's one thing about this that can be tricky for some folks. That is the process of adjusting the power of pain. A lot of us spend our whole lives avoiding even looking at pain, much less dealing with the ones that don't exist yet. But it's precisely those imagined pains that have the most power. That's why turning them into specifics is so helpful. You can get a more realistic look at what they mean and what it would take to deal with them.

Or to see that they're not real at all.

Again, you want to maximize the emotional significance of the pleasant things you'll gain and the unpleasant things you'll lose by achieving your goal. At the same time, you want to minimize the emotional impact of the things, pleasant and unpleasant, that you get by not going after it.

First you get shifted into drive, and then you pile on the stuff that moves you forward, to really ramp up the power behind your desires. Keep moving the balance further, every way you can.

That's how you develop unstoppable motivation.

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One thing that comes up frequently when I talk with people about this is that some of them don't believe they can succeed.

Don't even worry about that. It's not possible to really want something that you don't believe is possible. You might think it would be incredibly cool to be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, or stop a speeding freight train bare-handed, but you know it's not possible.

You won't really want it.

You might miss something you can't get back, or feel bad about something you can't fix, but those aren't desires. They're regrets.

If you really want something, you already believe it's possible.

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So, make a list of all the pleasant things you'll get by achieving the goal of a successful online business, and the unpleasant things that will go away when you do. Be specific and picture them with the most powerful impact you can.

Make a list of the pleasant things you keep and the pains you avoid by NOT creating a successful online business. For as many as possible, figure out how to eliminate them or make them as unimportant as possible.

If you've tipped the balance toward taking action, you'll know it.

Any time you feel discouraged or start to slow down, run through all of those things in your mind. In fairly short order, you should find that minor discouragements don't even register, and bigger ones have much less impact.

As you start to see more and more success, the positive things will become stronger on their own, and the negative things will fade without you needing to think about them.

At that point, you've got the momentum you need to virtually guarantee that you'll get where you want to be, and get there in grand style.

Yeah. It's a simple process. Do it, and you'll find that it's very effective.

Along the way, you'll learn a lot about yourself. You have much more going for you than you probably know right now.

This will help you uncover it.

THE LAST WORD

I don't know your goals or experience level, but I hope that this book has been useful to you. That it will help you in getting where you want to be more quickly, and with less of the hassles and obstacles that so often get in the way.

And have some fun with it.

Seeing real success, and having fun in the process, will help to protect you from one of the harder challenges you'll face in any attempt to improve your life: Negative people.

Throughout your life, you're going to deal with a lot of people. Probably many more than you would believe at the moment. Many of those people will work harder at keeping you from believing you can succeed than they do at accomplishing anything positive for themselves.

You get to choose who you listen to and who you associate with.

Choose wisely, and remember the words of Laurie Anderson, who was once asked, "How do you deal with all the negativity in the world?"

Her response: "You're hanging with the wrong people."

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I would love to hear your thoughts on the book. What helped, what didn't, and what you think would make it more useful to you and others.

Good luck, enjoy the ride, and remember...

To live your life your own way is the best last word.

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