

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 01

From Challenge to Opportunity

Chapter 1: Opportunity

Chapter 1 of **Change Maker** is about hope. It's about recognizing we're a young industry, accepting the obstacles that come along with that, and turning those obstacles into opportunities for personal growth and the advancement of the field.

To help with this, I share the six biggest challenges I see in health and fitness today. Instead of shrinking away from them in embarrassment (Uh, nothing to see here, I'll just go stand over there), or getting defensive about them (No way, that's not true!), let's find the opportunities in them. Because, in those opportunities, we find learning, growth, and maturity.

CHALLENGE #1: The gap between “us” and “them.”

OPPORTUNITY #1: Close the gap.

CHALLENGE #2: Not understanding what people want and need.

OPPORTUNITY #2: Assume less, listen more, and empathize with the people you hope to serve.

CHALLENGE #3: Not defining your purpose.

OPPORTUNITY #3: Define yours and align it with your talents.

CHALLENGE #4: Becoming too specialized.

OPPORTUNITY #4: Generalize and embrace the idea of the case manager.

CHALLENGE #5: Getting tangled up in educational options.

OPPORTUNITY #5: Create your own You-niversity.

CHALLENGE #6: Not practicing professionalism.

OPPORTUNITY #6: Intentionally cultivate your reputation.

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 02

Discovering Your Origin Story

Chapter 2: Career

In American comics, an origin story describes the circumstances under which superheroes gain their powers. In **Change Maker**, I use the term in the very same way, to describe the circumstances under which health and fitness professionals gain their superpower—their passion for this work.

In my experience, these are the five most common origin stories. Circle the one that best describes you, or add yours in the space below.

I grew up with physical activity and sport.

I've always done health and fitness-related things. I played sports. I connected with friends and family through physical activity or healthy eating. As movement and vitality have been at my core since the beginning, it made sense to continue on with them as a career.

I got mentorship at a pivotal time in my life.

One day, unexpectedly, a health and fitness mentor swooped in and changed, maybe even saved, my life. It was so transformative that I dedicated myself to paying forward that coaching and mentorship to help others who are struggling.

I excelled at a particular goal.

For years I worked hard to achieve a particular health and fitness goal, like getting off my medications, losing a lot of weight, or even competing in an athletic event. And I did it! Becoming an exemplar here, I started coaching others to help them achieve the same goal.

I watched someone suffer.

Someone close to me struggled with a preventable disease. I hated seeing this so I learned how the body works and how exercise, food, sleep, and stress management can help. Then I committed to helping people avoid the same fate I saw unfold in the life of my loved one.

Discovering Your Origin Story

Chapter 2: Career

I fixed my own problems.

I hurt myself, got out of shape, struggled with eating and body issues, or otherwise found myself in the weeds of illness, injury, and suffering. The process of healing myself inspired me to help others. Now I invest my time and energy into helping to heal them too.

If none of the origin stories above describes you, write yours below.

In the end, all paths to health and fitness are ultimately good paths because you're here! The benefit of knowing where you've come from is that it can help you decide where to go next.

Defining Your Purpose

Chapter 2: Career

I always wanted “helping people” at the core of my work. But to discover my real purpose, I had to go beyond the cliché and ask specific questions like:

- *Who* do I want to help?
- *Why* do I want to help them?
- *What kind of help* do I want to provide?
- *How will I know* if I’ve really helped them?

How can you find your purpose? Hear your call? Hone in on both by answering the following questions.

QUESTION 1

Why do you want to work in health and fitness in the first place?

Is it your passion? Has it changed your life? Is helping others primary for you? Are you the go-to health and fitness person for your friends and family? What’s your origin story?

QUESTION 2

Do you want to work with clients/patients?

Both yes and no are acceptable answers. You can work in health and fitness and never see a client or patient one-on-one. (More on this later.)

If yes, what type of clients do you want to work with?

Men? Women? Athletes? Children? Elderly? Only the motivated? Only people who’ve failed before? Everyone? No one? (Do you even like working with clients at all?)

If no, what do you gravitate toward instead?

Maybe you’d prefer to organize things or work behind the scenes in a health and fitness business? Maybe you’d like to write, or speak, or podcast, or teach? Run the front desk of a facility? Do the finances? Manage mission-critical projects?

Defining Your Purpose

Chapter 2: Career

QUESTION 3

Do you really want to help other people?

Does serving, teaching, or taking care of others inspire you? Do you truly want to help people? Or are you driven by something else? Is it external validation and status? (If so, that's okay. You might just want to consider not coaching.)

QUESTION 4

Do you want to own or run a business?

If so, do you want to have a small studio or practice? A big facility? Or would you rather work for someone else, such as a well-established health, fitness, or wellness center where you can focus on what you do best and trust your team to do the rest?

QUESTION 5

What relationship do you want with your income?

Are you comfortable with shorter-term contracts? Do you prefer the greater risk and (potential) reward of entrepreneurship? Or do you prefer a consistent, steady wage? Are you shooting for an affluent lifestyle? Or just "enough to live well"? Is money even a factor?

Defining Your Purpose

Chapter 2: Career

QUESTION 6

What relationship do you want with your work?

Are you looking for flexibility or structure? Full-time or part-time? Do you have children or other responsibilities that you juggle? Do you prefer other people to organize your work, or do you like to direct your own tasks? How much does your work define you as a person?

QUESTION 7

What other skills, talents, and aptitudes do you have?

You probably have lots of non-fitness-related things you can do, or things you enjoy. Maybe you're good with numbers. Or you have a knack for design and creating beautiful, welcoming spaces. Or you love working with animals. Take a complete inventory, even if your skills, talents, and aptitudes don't necessarily seem relevant right now.

That's a lot to chew on. And not every question here will feel relevant at first. However, spend time with each of them anyway. You never know which question will lead to a new insight.

In the end, while ideas like "find your WHY" and "follow your passion" and "discover your purpose" dominate career conversations nowadays, they can be meaningless unless you go beyond the buzzwords and consider deeper questions like those above. And this one:

Defining Your Purpose

Chapter 2: Career

When you die or retire, how will you know whether you've followed your purpose?

For my part, I believe you'll know you've followed your purpose if your work has been meaningful (to you), if it's made a difference (measured by your own metrics of meaning), if it's utilized your strengths, and if it's brought you enjoyment and satisfaction.

Uncovering Your Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

Unique abilities are the things that:

- you are, or have the potential to be, world-class at;
- you really enjoy doing;
- you can make a big difference with, if you use them.

If you're ready to discover your unique abilities, here's what to do.

STEP 1

Contact five to ten colleagues, friends, and other people you're close to.

These should be people who really get you, who know what makes you shine, who count on you. Ideally, they should come from a cross-section of your life (not all friends or all family or all coworkers, for instance; you want a diversity of opinions, which will actually help reinforce common themes).

Ask them if they'd be willing to take a few minutes and create a list with a dozen or so things that come to mind when they think about you. If they're up for it, email them the following questions:

1. What are the talents or abilities or characteristics that describe me?
2. What makes me tick?
3. What do you count on me for?
4. How would you describe my way of doing things?
5. Is there anything that impresses you about who I am?

Make clear that these characteristics don't need to reflect your hobbies, interests, or even work history. Rather, these are the things they've relied on you for or have appreciated about you.

STEP 2

Come up with your own answers.

Independently, make your own list, ideally before you get responses back. Answer the same questions you emailed your trusted list, as well as some others.

Uncovering Your Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

1. What are the talents or abilities or characteristics that describe me?

2. What makes me tick?

3. What do people count on me for?

4. What is “my way” of doing things?

5. What makes other people impressed with who I am?

Uncovering Your Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

6. What are the things I'm most passionate about?

7. What's important to me?

8. What have been my greatest accomplishments so far?

9. What are my goals—personal, family, career, life?

10. Who do I admire? Why? What can I learn from them?

Uncovering Your Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

STEP 3

Identify common themes.

Once everyone's responded, gather the replies. Identify common words, phrases, or themes. Make a list of ten or so that come up most often. Next to each item, write down why you think the person said it about you; specifically write the things you do that might make them say what they said.

STEP 4

Create your unique ability statements.

Take the ten most common themes from Step 3 and turn each into a unique ability statement.

If you'd like an example of what this could look like, check out the next form in this package. It's a one-pager of my own unique ability statements, which I keep posted in my office to remind me of what I should be spending time on.

Keep in mind that this isn't a five-minute compilation. Take your time with it—spend a few hours over several days to get the wording just right—because it's important. Think of it as an official document that clearly expresses your superpowers, just like how you'd cite your work experience in a resume. You'll review this list often to make sure you're staying in balance.

John Berardi's Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

Here are my own unique ability statements, which I have posted visibly in my office.

Delivering and communicating information. Both formally (blog posts, books, products, speaking) and in personal communication.

Getting other communicators of ideas to a better, more thoughtful, or more resonant idea. Both in formal editing and in facilitating communication between people.

Finding assumptions. Seeing and calling out all the assumptions, clichés, and shortcuts in people's plans and thoughts, and asking, "What if we didn't do it that way?"

Intentionally putting mission-critical projects past the point of no return. In a moment of clear thinking, committing to a deadline or powerful external force that compels a team to deliver on a commitment or face massive loss/embarrassment if they don't.

Operating with honesty and integrity. Being the same person across roles. Being willing to tell the truth, even when it's difficult, and being willing to commit to the subsequent conversations that happen as a result.

Gaining people's trust and emphasizing "togetherness." Carefully managing voice and body language; never pretending or elevating. Sharing only an authentic message and orienting the message to the audience. Making people feel like we're "in it together," that it's not "me vs. them," that I'm going through this too.

Engaging in reflective thinking. Thinking about things before expounding on something aloud. Keeping silent until qualified or prepared to speak. Being willing to say, "I don't know."

Asserting authority. Confidently speaking up in areas I do know about. Relying on my self-assurance and confidence in my own capability.

Expressing appreciation. Noticing when people do good things and letting them know I feel that way.

John Berardi's Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

Devising and imposing structure on chaos. Putting plans together, short term and long term, to get what we need out of the chaos. Committing to figuring it out whenever something is in our way.

Asking thoughtful questions. Asking questions that I'm genuinely curious to know the answers to and that I feel are relevant/interesting to me and to the person I'm asking.

Mirroring, mimicking, and copying success. Before beginning new projects, finding an example or template that represents excellent, high-quality work and then modifying it, shaping it, adapting it to serve our needs.

Remember, these statements come from friends, family, and colleagues. They're not necessarily what I think about myself. Rather, they're what they think of me. This is essential because most people (myself included) struggle to identify their unique abilities.

Spending Time in Your Unique Abilities

Chapter 2: Career

Keep a running log of all the different kinds of tasks you do in a week.

Once you've identified your unique abilities, give this last step a try. Figure out how much of your week is spent doing tasks within your unique abilities.

UNIQUE ABILITY ACTIVITIES:
Superior skill and passion.

You're awesome at this and love doing it. You lose track of time here.

EXCELLENT ACTIVITIES:
Superior skill and no passion.

You're awesome, but don't love it. You're the go-to person, but don't get satisfaction from it.

COMPETENT ACTIVITIES:
Minimum standard and no passion.

You're capable of it, but it gives you some anxiety and you'd rather do other things.

INCOMPETENT ACTIVITIES:
Failure and frustration.

You hate it and it stresses you out. Lots of frustration, and it makes your day horrible.

If 80 percent of your time is spent in the unique ability quadrant, everyone's happy. If you're spending much less time in your unique abilities, consider how to slowly transition out of the other quadrants and into your superpowers.

Tuning In to Your Individual Values

Chapter 2: Career

Values are the ideals you think are essential for a good life. They're guiding principles you feel proud to live out, beliefs you're willing to fight for. They're (hopefully) how you decide priorities. And, when you use them to decide priorities, you're more likely to live a fulfilled life. To help you tune into your individual values, answer the following questions.

Using examples from your career and personal life, think of the times you felt happiest.

What were you doing?

Who were you with?

What else was involved that contributed to the feelings of happiness?

Next, think of the times you were most proud, again using career and personal examples.

Why were you proud?

Who else shared in your pride?

Tuning In to Your Individual Values

Chapter 2: Career

What else was involved that contributed to the feelings of pride?

Next, think of the times you were most fulfilled.

What need or desire was fulfilled?

How and why did the experience give your life meaning?

What other factors contributed to your feelings of fulfillment?

Finally, think of the times you felt most physically energized, at peace, or full of vitality and “flow.”

What were you doing?

Who were you with?

What else was involved that contributed to the feelings of energy, peace, and flow?

Tuning In to Your Individual Values

Chapter 2: Career

Based on your experiences with happiness, pride, fulfillment, and embodied cognition, consider which sorts of values drive those feelings. For example, if you feel most energized while writing, painting, or making music, perhaps creativity is one of your core values. Or maybe if you feel most proud, fulfilled, and at peace when helping out at a senior center, one of your core values is service.

Here's a list of values that people commonly associate with:

ACCOUNTABILITY	EXCITEMENT	PERFECTION
ACCURACY	EXPERTISE	PIETY
ACHIEVEMENT	EXPLORATION	POSITIVITY
ADVENTUROUSNESS	EXPRESSIVENESS	PRACTICALITY
ALTRUISM	FAIRNESS	PREPAREDNESS
AMBITION	FAITH	PROFESSIONALISM
ASSERTIVENESS	FAMILY	PRUDENCE
BALANCE	FIDELITY	QUALITY
BEING THE BEST	FITNESS	RELIABILITY
BELONGING	FLUENCY	RESOURCEFULNESS
BOLDNESS	FOCUS	RESTRAINT
CALMNESS	FREEDOM	RESULTS
CAREFULNESS	FUN	RIGOR
CHALLENGE	GENEROSITY	SECURITY
CHEERFULNESS	GOODNESS	SELF-ACTUALIZATION
CLEAR-MINDEDNESS	GRACE	SELF-CONTROL
COMMITMENT	GROWTH	SELFLESSNESS
COMMUNITY	HAPPINESS	SELF-RELIANCE
COMPASSION	HARD WORK	SENSITIVITY
COMPETITIVENESS	HEALTH	SERENITY
CONSISTENCY	HELPING SOCIETY	SERVICE
CONTENTMENT	HOLINESS	SHREWDNESS
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	HONESTY	SIMPLICITY
CONTRIBUTION	HONOR	SOUNDNESS
CONTROL	HUMILITY	SPEED
COOPERATION	INCLUSION/INCLUSIVITY	SPONTANEITY
CORRECTNESS	INDEPENDENCE	STABILITY
COURAGE	INGENUITY	STRATEGY
COURTESY	INNER HARMONY	STRENGTH
CREATIVITY	INNOVATION	STRUCTURE
CURIOSITY	INQUISITIVENESS	SUCCESS
DECISIVENESS	INSIGHTFULNESS	SUPPORT
DEMOCRACY	INTELLIGENCE	TEAMWORK
DEPENDABILITY	INTELLECTUAL STATUS	TEMPERANCE
DETERMINATION	INTUITION	THANKFULNESS
DEVOUTNESS	JOY	THOROUGHNESS
DILIGENCE	JUSTICE	THOUGHTFULNESS
DISCIPLINE	LEADERSHIP	TIMELINESS
DISCRETION	LEGACY	TOLERANCE
DIVERSITY	LIFE FLEXIBILITY	TRADITIONALISM
DYNAMISM	LOVE	TRUSTWORTHINESS
ECONOMY	LOYALTY	TRUTH-SEEKING
EFFECTIVENESS	MAKING A DIFFERENCE	UNDERSTANDING
EFFICIENCY	MASTERY	UNIQUENESS
ELEGANCE	MERIT	UNITY
EMPATHY	OBEDIENCE	USEFULNESS
ENJOYMENT	OPENNESS	VISION
ENTHUSIASM	ORDER	VITALITY
EQUALITY	ORIGINALITY	
EXCELLENCE	PATRIOTISM	

Tuning In to Your Individual Values

Chapter 2: Career

As you consider how your experiences dovetail with the values listed here, circle or write down the ones that best describe you. If your list is long, narrow it down to the three to five that feel most resonant.

From there, reality test them by asking questions like:

Would my closest friends, unprompted, say these were the ideals that mean the most to me?

Would I support these ideals even if my choice wasn't popular and it put me in the minority?

Am I prioritizing my work, and my life, according to these values today?

Another great way of knowing if you're on the right track is to test them against each other. For example, if you list adventurousness as your top value, consider whether you'd be willing to go on a once-in-a-lifetime three-month trip even if it meant losing out on a fantastic career opportunity? If not, is adventurousness really your top value?

Choosing Your Career

Chapter 2: Career

When most people think of working in health and fitness, they consider mainstream options like:

- personal trainer
- strength coach
- nutrition coach
- naturopath
- functional medicine doctor
- yoga or Pilates teacher
- rehab specialist
- group exercise instructor

However, there are many additional opportunities including:

- **Writing** in books, magazines, or online publications
- **Speaking** at trade shows or conferences
- **Lecturing** at high schools, colleges, or universities
- **Podcasting** as a regular guest or host
- **Hosting** programming on TV or on the radio

Alternatively, with the right training and unique abilities, they could work in **human resources, finance, business development, marketing, tech, design, or leadership** in a company that shares their purpose and values. They could also pursue **entrepreneurship** and start their own company.

To help *you* better align your career choice to your purpose, values, and unique abilities, let's list them again here.

Choosing Your Career

Chapter 2: Career

Your purpose:

Your unique abilities:

Your values:

With these in mind, brainstorm some career options that best fit all three:

If your current job is among the career options you brainstormed above, great! You're on the right path. If you're thinking you need to make a switch, **Change Maker** includes ways to get started.

Making Wise Daily Decisions

Chapter 2: Career

While you need to consider your purpose, unique abilities, and values to “zoom out” and make wise, big-picture-perspective career decisions, the same thinking is valuable for zooming in and making daily, seemingly pedestrian, work decisions.

To this end, write down a few of the different opportunities you’ve been asked to choose from lately.

Now evaluate whether those opportunities are in alignment with your purpose, unique abilities, and values. If they all are, rock on! If not, how can you go out and create new opportunities that are in better alignment?

Revisiting Your Purpose, Unique Abilities, and Values over Time

Chapter 2: Career

Circumstances, time, experience, and insight will have you rethinking your purpose, your unique abilities, and your values. That's normal. Optimal even.

To make sure you're regularly reevaluating, I'd highly recommend opening your calendar, and choosing a date three months from now to schedule an hour or two for your next review. Record it below.

Day and time for my three-month review:

Six Steps to Choosing a Fulfilling Career

Chapter 2: Career

The fuel for powering a long, successful, rewarding vocation includes gaining a much deeper understanding of your:

- **explicit purpose** (going beyond clichés like “I want to help people”),
- **unique abilities** (putting your one-of-a-kind skills in service of your purpose), and
- **individual values** (creating professional guardrails to ensure a meaningful life).

I use a six-step process to help team members (and coaching clients) clarify each. By following this process, you’ll have a much stronger chance of finding value, meaning, happiness, satisfaction, and—ultimately—success in your career and in your life.

CAREER STEP 1

Create your unique ability statements.

CAREER STEP 2

Uncover your unique abilities (and unique inabilities).

CAREER STEP 3

Tune in to your individual values.

CAREER STEP 4

Use your purpose, unique abilities, and individual values to choose your path.

CAREER STEP 5

Use your purpose, unique abilities, and individual values to guide your daily practice.

CAREER STEP 6

Revise your purpose, unique abilities, and individual values over time.

The Five Stages of Opportunity

Chapter 2: Career

It's often said that the difference between successful people and really successful people is that really successful people say no to almost everything. Yet I believe this is bad advice for those early in their careers. When you're starting out, you need to do the opposite and actually say yes to almost everything. To this end, here's an outline of the five career stages I've experienced, each of which required a different approach to accepting or declining opportunities.

JOHN BERARDI'S Five stages of saying 'no'



How to Say No Gratefully and Gracefully

Chapter 2: Career

Early on, I thought saying no was nuts. I wanted to help people, so yes, I would accept all offers. Plus I knew I needed the money, the reps, and the experience. But, as my career flourished, and new opportunities flooded in, I realized I'd have to start saying no. A lot. That's when I made the commitment to learn how to say no the right way, with grace and gratitude. Here's how I do it.

STEP ONE Express gratitude

Even if it's not the most exciting opportunity I've gotten, I still make a point to remember when no one cared about working with me. So the first thing I say is this:

Thank you so much for thinking about me. It means a lot that you shared this opportunity.

STEP TWO Show respect for their project

Just because I can't say yes to the project right now doesn't mean it's not a worthwhile endeavor. That's why I usually follow with something like:

Your project sounds really cool, and I'd love to help. However, I'm working on [this other thing] right now, and I have to stay 100 percent focused on it. The truth is, I'm intrigued by [your thing], and I'd love to get involved. But I don't think I have the capacity to give it the attention it deserves.

How to Say No Gratefully and Gracefully

Chapter 2: Career

STEP THREE

Come through for them

Step back for a moment and ask yourself why the person came to you in the first place. Do they need you specifically? Or do they need someone like you?

As much as I like to think I'm special, and no one else can fill my shoes, it's not true. If someone asks me to speak at an event, and there are twenty other speakers, they don't need me. They just need a speaker. Or if they ask for a quote in the New York Times, they don't need me. They need an expert to quote in an article. Whatever it is, I try to give them what they need:

However, I'd love to recommend my friend Brett. I'm not sure if he's available, but he'd be awesome for this project. If he doesn't work out, you might also try Krista or Geoff, they'd be great too.

Notice how, instead of burning a bridge by just saying no, I've built three or four. I've built a bridge to them by helping to solve their problem. And I've built bridges to Brett, Krista, and Geoff because they're going to find out I recommended them for an event or an interview or a project they wouldn't otherwise have had a chance to do.

STEP FOUR

Keep the door open

In closing, I say something like this:

I'm really grateful you thought about me for this opportunity. I want you to know I never take things like this lightly. If something similar comes up again, don't hesitate to reach out. I can't promise I'll be able to do it, but I'm a pretty connected guy, and I can probably help you find the help you need.

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 03

The Jobs to Be Done Framework

Chapter 3: Clients

Jobs to Be Done is an interview-and-analysis technique that seeks to uncover the “jobs” that people “hire” products and services to do in their lives. Developed at Harvard Business School and taught to Phil and me by one of the co-developers, it’s been the most effective client-research tool we’ve ever used, leading to growth year after year.

Here’s how you can use it in your own business.

STEP 1

Begin with clear questions that you need answered, such as:

- Why do people hire my product or service?
- Why do people fire my product or service?
- How are people **struggling** with my product or service?
- Where are my **opportunities** to improve my product or service?

STEP 2

Identify people in each of the relevant buying stages, such as:

- those who expressed interest but didn’t buy your product/service
- those who did buy your product/service
- those who bought and are actively using the product/service
- those who bought but aren’t actively using the product/service
- those who bought but then later returned your product/service

You could also look for people at various stages such as:

- **within one month of buying** your product or service
(This can help you understand why they “hired” it in the first place.)
- **within one month of returning** your product or leaving your service
(This can help you understand why they “fired” it.)
- **midway through** the use of your product or service (This can help you understand what they’re struggling with. It can also highlight what they’re hoping you can improve.)

The Jobs to Be Done Framework

Chapter 3: Clients

STEP 3

Once you've identified your groups, conduct structured interviews.

To understand the point of sale, ask:

- When did you buy the product?
- Where were you?
- What time of day was it? (daytime/ nighttime?)
- Was anyone else with you at the time?
- How did you buy the product?

To find their first thought about purchasing, ask:

- When did you first start looking for something to solve your problem?
- Where were you?
- Were you with someone? What did they say?
- What triggered you to think about this?

To discover what else they considered when weighing their options, ask:

- Tell me about how you looked for a product to solve your problem.
- What kind of solutions did you try? Or not try? Why or why not?

To uncover the emotions associated with the purchase, ask:

- What was the conversation like when you talked about buying the product with your <spouse/friend/parents>?
- Before you bought, did you imagine what life would be like with the product? Where were you when you were thinking this?
- Did you have any anxiety about buying? Did you hear something about the product that made you nervous? What was it? Why did it make you nervous?

The Jobs to Be Done Framework

Chapter 3: Clients

Of course, these are sample questions that should be modified based on whether you're interviewing someone hiring your program, firing your program, or in the midst of experiencing your program.

In the case of hiring or firing, what's most important initially is that the interview accesses their memory of events surrounding the action. That's why we start by asking about "when," even though we already know exactly when they purchased or dropped out.

From there you might ask, "And where were you when you did this? Were you with anyone? Do you remember what the weather was like?" Again, you're not necessarily interested in the specific details but in activating their memory and exploring events adjacent to the action.

This helps uncover the emotional forces in their decision-making. These are forces that people usually don't mention because they seem unrelated or uninteresting. However, they provide the best insights for product refinement and/or improved marketing and advertising.

Once the interviews—which you've recorded so you can go back to them again—are completed, it's time to organize what you heard into two popular Jobs to Be Done organizational frameworks: the Timeline and the Forces. These two frameworks help you contextualize the answers you heard. You can then turn the answers into useful stories that help you understand what your clients and prospects are thinking and feeling when they interact with you and your products/services.

The Jobs to Be Done Framework

Chapter 3: Clients

STEP 4

The Timeline helps you understand clients' decision-making, giving you a sense for the thoughts and events that brought them to hiring, using, or firing what you've created.

TIMELINE

Adapted from jobstobedone.org



Once you've collected your interviews, organize their answers into individual timelines as follows.

<p>FIRST THOUGHT</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>EVENT ONE</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>EVENT TWO</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>BUY NOW</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>PASSIVE LOOKING</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>ACTIVE LOOKING</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>DECIDING</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>CONSUMING (YAY OR NAY)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

The Jobs to Be Done Framework

Chapter 3: Clients

STEP 5

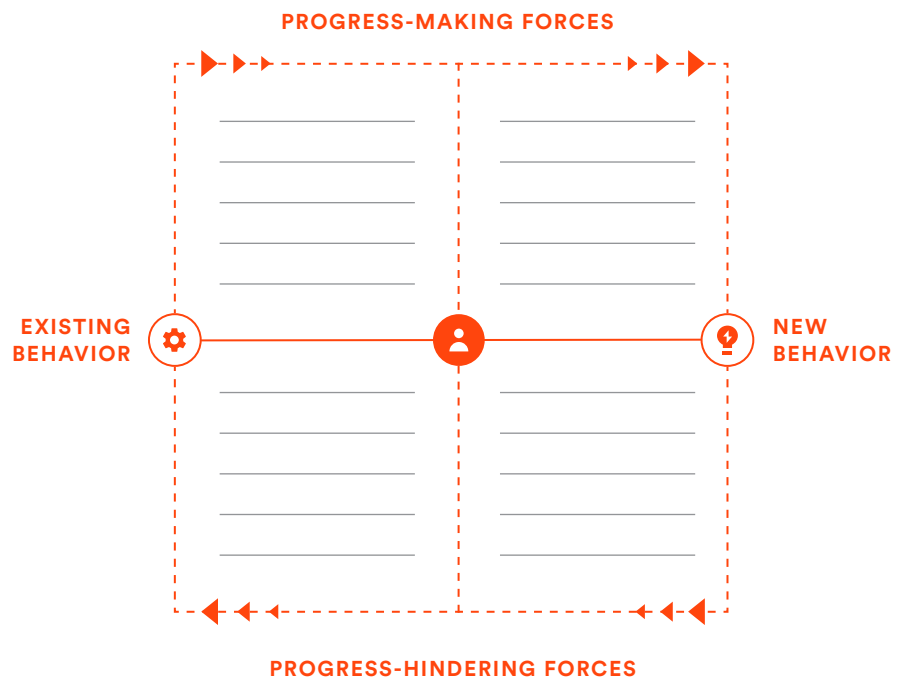
The Forces helps you map out the feelings that lead a customer toward hiring or firing your thing vs. the forces that lead them away from hiring or firing your thing.

THE FORCES

Adapted from jobstobedone.org



Once you've collected your interviews, map out the individual forces that helped to make their decisions as follows:



The Jobs to Be Done Framework

Chapter 3: Clients

STEP 6

Look for common themes among your Timeline and Forces diagrams.

- What nudged people to make their decision?
- Who did they see as “the competition”?
- Which anxieties did they have to overcome to purchase?
- How did what they thought they were buying match up to what they actually got?

STEP 7

Ask yourself new questions.

- How can I talk about my business in a way that resonates more with how my customers talk about their needs, challenges, and concerns?
- How can I reach out to people in places I’ve never considered before?
- How can I see my customers’ trajectory and anticipate where they’re heading?

How to Use “Thinking Aloud”

Chapter 3: Clients

Thinking aloud is a method used, primarily, in web design and usability engineering to get real-time, unfiltered feedback on things like web pages, online tools, apps, etc. However, it’s not only for digital experiences. It could also be used to get feedback on advertisements, articles, videos, infographics, intake forms, questionnaires, or any other piece of content designed for interaction.

Here’s how to run your own thinking-aloud test.

STEP 1

Recruit a representative sample of your clients, customers, or users.

STEP 2

Give them a representative task to perform (i.e., browse a website, read an advertisement, fill out a form, buy a product).

STEP 3

Record the session so you can watch it later.

STEP 4

Ask them to narrate their thoughts, moment by moment, completely unfiltered as they perform the task. Such as:

Okay, I’m on the home page now, there’s a red button, should I click it? Oh no, wait, this is the one I click, the link that says “Learn more...”

(This requires prompting, as people aren’t used to verbalizing a monologue of their thoughts as they do things. You might even share a one-minute video of a previous thinking-aloud session so they get a sense for how it should work.)

STEP 5

Watch the videos and look for common themes.

As with the Jobs to Be Done method, it only takes a few interviews/ tests for common themes to appear. Tease them out for a deeper understanding of not only how your clients and prospects think, but for actionable revisions that can make your website (or whatever it is you’re testing) more useful for your goals and your clients’.

Strategies to Use Instead of “Jobs to Be Done”

Chapter 3: Clients

If the Jobs to Be Done process feels too much of a stretch, you can learn more about your clients in the following (less-structured) ways:

Watch: Pay attention to what makes clients and patients light up and get excited. Notice their body language and self-expression. Look for small details that could tell you more about them and what they might be seeking. See where they hang out on social media and observe what they’re saying.

Listen and use client-centered talk: Hear what they have to say and ask follow-up questions to make sure you understand. Wait a moment or two before jumping in to give advice. Use a client-centered coaching style to understand them better, and learn what methods work best for them (more on this in Chapter 4 of [Change Maker](#)).

Stop assuming: Start knowing for sure. Ask them directly what they like, what they want, what they need. They might not know right away, but working around “not sure” is way better than not asking at all and getting it completely wrong.

Find out their story: Why did those clients or patients come to see you today? Why not six months ago, or six months from now? What series of events brought them through your door at this time? Find that out, and you’ll get some very interesting insights.

Ask for feedback: Ask probing questions and create a safe environment for them to answer honestly. Yeah, it can be uncomfortable, but it’s incredibly valuable if you’re brave enough to step up and really absorb that input.

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 04

Coach-Centered vs. Client-Centered

Chapter 4: Coaching

Are you sometimes too focused on your knowledge, expertise, and authority (what I call “coach-centered”) instead of focusing on the lives and embodied experiences of your clients (what I call “client-centered”)? If so, that’s normal, especially at the beginning of our careers.

Here’s one way to change that.

Coach-centered approach

If a client comes to you with a question that you think you have a slam-dunk answer for, it’s easy to feel like a kid in a classroom. “I know this! I know this!” For example, someone’s not losing weight, you look at their food journal, and boom! “Replace that potato with veggies and you’re all set!”

The problem is that, without a discussion, you don’t know enough about why the potato is in their diet in the first place. Nor, without the client’s input, do you know whether they’ll even want to remove it (or if they’d prefer to remove something else from a different meal).

Client-centered approach

Instead of blurting out your knee-jerk solution, this is a perfect time to ask questions about your client’s exercise, overall eating patterns, which foods they can (and can’t) live without, what’s convenient and easy to eat, and so on.

Once you learn more about the client, you can discuss how, for their goals, they might be eating more carbs, or calories, than optimal. Then, finally, you can ask how they might adjust their diet to make the necessary improvements. One of my favorite ways to open the discussion is: “I have a few ideas on what to do next here, but I’d love to hear yours first.”

Remember that while you’re expert on the body, your client is the world’s number-one expert on his or her own life. Therefore, great coaching can only happen when a coach integrates his or her own expertise with the necessary expertise of the client.

Compassionate Listening Questions

Chapter 4: Coaching

Questions are a way to help you focus less on yourself and your agenda while focusing more on your clients and their needs. In fact, one way to level up your coaching immediately is to spend about 80 percent of your time asking questions and listening, and 20 percent guiding or giving instructions.

Here are a few examples of the kinds of questions we use every day, questions designed to improve our listening skills, to better hone into client needs, and pave the way for giving advice without triggering client resistance.

EXAMPLES

Exploring questions

- What things are important to you, and how does exercise and eating fit into this?
- What sort of things would you like to accomplish in your life?
- What would you like to see change?
- If things were better with your eating/exercise, what specifically would be different?
- What have you tried? What worked and what didn't?

EXAMPLES

Imagining questions

- Imagine you can X (your goal). Describe your experience.
- Imagine you are already doing more of X. What would that feel like?
- Imagine that you have the body and health you desire. What exactly did it take for you to achieve it?
- If you weren't constrained by reality—let's imagine for a minute that absolutely anything is possible—what might you . . . ?

Compassionate Listening Questions

Chapter 4: Coaching

EXAMPLES

Solution-focused questions

- In the past, when were you successful with this, even just a little bit? How could we do more of that?
- Where in your life have you been successful with something like this?
- Did you learn any lessons that we can apply here?
- Where is the problem not happening? When are things even a little bit better?

EXAMPLES

Change-evoking questions

- In what ways does this concern you?
- If you decided to make a change, what makes you think you could do it?
- How would you like things to be different?
- How would things be better if you changed?
- What concerns you about your current exercise and eating patterns?

EXAMPLES

Statements that act like questions to validate feelings

- I get the sense that you may be struggling with . . .
- It seems to me like you're feeling . . .

Awesomeness-Based Coaching Prompts

Chapter 4: Coaching

Shifting from coach-centered to client-centered means thinking less about awfulness (what the client's bad at) and more about awesomeness (what the client's good at).

With awesomeness-based coaching, you specifically ask yourself: “Where is this client winning outside of health and fitness?” And, “What skills are they using to win at that?” (Don't know where they're winning or how? Ask them.) Then you look for:

Skills: What do they already know how to do?

Knowledge: What information do they already know?

Expertise/Experience: What have they already done? (In particular, what have they already done well?)

Interests: What do they like to do? What do they enjoy?

Talents: What are they naturally good at?

No-problem times: When does the problem they often face not happen?*

Once you understand where clients are awesome, give them the kinds of tasks that interest them or that use their talents. Or help them work toward a goal that inspires or excites them.

Use their awesomeness to shape their goals, to solve health and fitness challenges they keep coming up against, or to come up with next actions.

*

For example, if a client occasionally binge eats, perhaps you could look for clues on how to not binge eat by examining their no-binge times vs. binge times and noting the differences.

Setting the Right Kinds of Goals

Chapter 4: Coaching

We've spent decades looking at goal setting and at how health and fitness coaches set goals with their clients. We concluded that coaches and their clients repeatedly commit the same three errors when it comes to establishing goals. The good news? It's relatively easy to turn these "bad" goals into "good" ones. You can do it with this three-step process.

STEP 1

Turn "outcome goals" into "behavior goals"

What are "outcome goals" and "behavior goals"?

An "outcome goal" is something you want to happen, such as losing a certain amount of weight, or running a certain time in a 5K.

A "behavior goal" is an action that you'd do or practice to move toward that outcome, such as putting down your fork between bites, or practicing your running technique three to four times a week.

Why not outcome goals?

While there's nothing wrong with wanting an outcome like a lower body weight, we often can't control outcomes because they're affected by so many outside factors.

Why behavior goals?

Behavior goals, on the other hand, allow us to focus on (and practice) the things we can control—actions, not end results.

What it looks like in practice

A client wants the outcome of "losing twenty pounds." However, to lose twenty pounds, they'll have to do certain behaviors like exercise regularly, better control calories, manage stress, and sleep well. So you turn those into goals.

For example, you might spend two weeks with the behavior goal of exercising four times each week for the next two weeks.

Setting the Right Kinds of Goals

Chapter 4: Coaching

Then, another two weeks with the behavior goal of eating slowly and until satisfied, not stuffed.

Then, another two weeks with the behavior goal of taking a five-minute break twice a day to do a mind-body scan.

And another two weeks with the behavior goal of practicing sleep-promoting calm down starting thirty minutes before bed. Notice how the goal is now an action, not an outcome.

Remember

There's nothing wrong with having a desired outcome. But the outcome is for you, the coach, to think about (and track). Your clients, on the other hand, should be thinking about (and tracking) the behaviors/practices that will lead to that outcome.

STEP 2

Turn “avoid goals” into “approach goals”

What are “avoid goals” and “approach goals”?

An “avoid goal” is something you don't want—something that pushes you away from your current pain, like “I don't want to be out of shape” or “I don't want to be on diabetes medication.”

An “approach goal” is something you do want—something that pulls you toward a better, more inspiring future, like “I want to feel confident and strong” or “I want to live pain free.”

Why not “avoid goals”?

“Avoid goals”—don't smoke, stop eating junk food—are psychologically counterproductive because telling someone to stop something almost guarantees they'll keep doing it. In addition, a flat-out “don't” reinforces the feeling of failure when someone messes up.

Setting the Right Kinds of Goals

Chapter 4: Coaching

Why “approach goals”?

“Approach goals,” on the other hand, give clients something else to do when old habits might have otherwise kicked in. Plus they’re about helping people feel good, successful, and inspired to keep on their journey.

What it looks like in practice

Instead of “no junk food,” try focusing attention on eating more cut-up fruits and vegetables. Instead of “no soda,” try focusing attention on drinking a glass of water with at least three meals each day. Instead of “no stress-eating,” try focusing attention on stress-relieving activities to do instead of eating.

Remember

Writing down a habit you want to stop isn’t enough. The key is to find a replacement your client can lean on when the old habit could kick in. For bonus points, write down why the new action is good for you. For example, “no soda” can be turned into “tea break,” with the following: “Tea is calming, it has antioxidants, and there are lots of flavors I can try. I can even drink it in the mug my daughter made in pottery class.”

STEP 3

Turn “performance goals” into “mastery goals”

What are “performance goals” and “mastery goals”?

“Performance goals” are a lot like outcome goals, but they’re usually associated with external validation—wanting to win a competition for the prize money or wanting to beat a record time. You’re shooting for a specific performance, particularly one that will give you kudos, applause, and/or something good to post on social media.

“Mastery goals” are about learning, skill development, and the intrinsic value of becoming excellent at something, or understanding something deeply.

Setting the Right Kinds of Goals

Chapter 4: Coaching

Why not performance goals?

These have limitations because so many things can influence performance like tough conditions or just feeling bad on race day. They can push you to achieve your best, of course. But they're demotivating if you don't achieve them.

Why mastery goals?

Mastery is about the process of continued skill development, which almost always leads to better performance in the long run. Mastery also allows you to focus on the joy of learning, which is gratifying no matter what others think or what time the clock says.

What it looks like in practice

Say your client wants to set a half-marathon personal record. Well, that's both an outcome and a performance goal. To help them transform it into a mastery goal, you might consider working on running with a smooth, efficient stride and better controlling breathing. This could involve watching video of the client running, identifying technique elements to improve, and turning those into behavior goals.

Remember

Again, you can begin by writing down the performance objective. But don't stop there. Continue by listing the skills required to help achieve that objective. Then turn those skills into a series of behaviors. This process makes the goal about progression, not performance.

From Goal to Action Worksheet

Chapter 4: Coaching

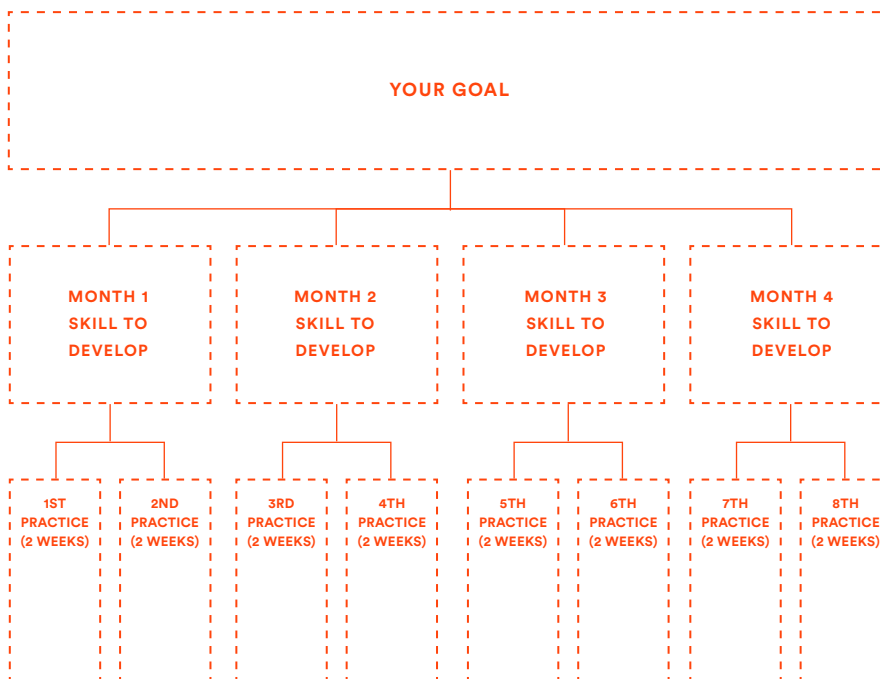
This idea of progression isn't unique to sports.

The best piano teachers use it to help people eventually play Rachmaninoff. The best yoga teachers use it to help people eventually do inversions. And the best language teachers use it to eventually help people become fluent.

On some level these teachers realize that accomplishing advanced outcome goals is never done through heroic single efforts. Rather, outcome goals are accomplished through the mastery of a series of basic skills. And those basic skills are accomplished through regular practice.

I teach coaches and clients to visualize the process with this worksheet.

WORKSHEET From Goal to Action



Translating Goals into Skills and Practices

Here's what the goals, skills, practices model looks like for a common health and fitness example: weight loss.

Chapter 4: Coaching



Precision Nutrition's 5S Formula for Goals

Chapter 4: Coaching

The practices-skills-goals model can be applied to every area of coaching. And it's fairly simple to comprehend. Break goals down into the skills required to accomplish those goals. And break skills down into daily practices that help develop those skills.

To create the best daily practices, you can use our 5S Formula:

Simple: The best practices are small daily actions that can be done in the context of real life. If you ask your client, "On a scale of 0–10, how confident do you feel you could do this practice every day for the next two weeks?" the answer should be a 9 or 10. Anything lower and the practice is too challenging or intimidating.

Segmental: Most goals are too big, or complicated, to try for in one go. Most skills are the same way. So break them down into defined and organized segments.

Sequential: Breaking things down into segments is great. But you also have to practice those segments in the right order. If you do "thing four" before "thing one" you're less likely to succeed. So have clients start with thing one, then do thing two, then thing three, and so on. Do the right things in the right order and success is a reliable outcome.

Strategic: Think this process sounds slow? Fact is, if your practices are strategic, the whole process goes quicker. That's because strategic practice addresses the thing that's in your way right now. Focus on that one thing—and only that thing—and a difficult process becomes easier and faster.

Supported: Practices work best when they're supported by some form of teaching, coaching, mentorship, and accountability.

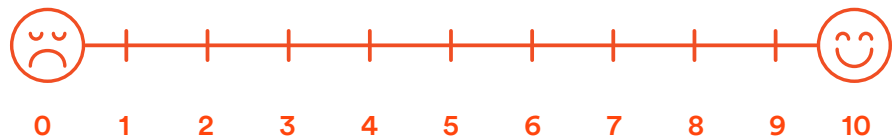
Confidence Testing

Chapter 4: Coaching

One surefire way to increase the probability that clients follow your advice is to confidence test it.

Before deciding on a course of action or recommendation, simply ask them: On a scale of 0 to 10—where zero is “no chance at all” and 10 is “of course, even a trained monkey can do that”—how confident are you that you can do Practice X every day for the next two weeks.

You could even have them use a scale like this to visualize it.



Four Coaching Scenarios

Chapter 4: Coaching

When we want so badly to help clients, we often find ourselves preaching, lecturing, pushing, cajoling, and prodding. When on the receiving end of all that pressure, clients do what humans do, they push back. That's why the more we argue for change, the more clients will argue against it. Paradoxically, it's only when we relax, when we allow non-change, that our clients become more ready, willing, and able to do it.

But how do you relax and allow non-change? Check out the following coaching scenarios. They'll show you how to use questions and curiosity to facilitate the change process, not sabotage it.

SCENARIO 1

The Change Talk Wedge

When someone is expressing ambivalence about change, you start by reflecting on why they might not decide to change. It sounds weird but often leads to proposing their own solutions.

Your client is ambivalent or resisting change. Don't condescend or patronize. Be sincere here and compassionate.

YOU: "Wow, it sounds like you have a lot on your plate. I can see how tough it is to schedule exercise time." **OR** "I know it can be hard to resist those homemade brownies. They're so good."

Tap into your own busy-ness or love of brownies to offer genuine empathy. Then wait. Be quiet and patient. Let your client speak first. When they do begin talking, they'll likely start telling you why they should change. This is "change talk" and it's a great step. It means they're not arguing against change, but for it.

CLIENT: "Yeah, I do have a lot going on. But I really should get to the gym. I know I'll feel better." **OR** "Honestly, I don't think I need three brownies. I'd probably be happy with just one."

Once you hear them suggesting change on their own, you're getting somewhere. Using their language, simply reflect and gently imply a next action in the form of a question. Look inquisitive.

Four Coaching Scenarios

Chapter 4: Coaching

YOU: “It sounds like you’d feel better if you went to the gym?” **OR** “It sounds like maybe one brownie would be enough for you?”

Now wait again. They may be silent for a bit. Eventually they’ll likely keep talking about what they want and how they can achieve it. Let them lead the discussion. Once you feel like they’re ready for a next action, go there.

Your client shares a few ideas for what she wants.

YOU: “Given all this, what do you think you’ll do next?”

Notice how you’re not playing expert or guru. You’re simply using questions to lead them through an articulation of the challenge, then to arguing for change, and then to their own solutions.

SCENARIO 2 **The Continuum**

You can use this after listening for change talk. This can help your client move up the continuum of behaviors from worse to better without taking an “all or nothing” approach.

The client has decided, through Scenario 1, that they want to eat less fast food. But they’re not confident that they can give it up totally.

YOU: “Okay, so it sounds like you want to eat less fast food, but eliminating fast food entirely feels like too much, which makes sense. What could you do to just move a tiny bit towards your goal instead of all the way? What would that look like?”

Notice how you’re suggesting the possibility of a third option between “all” or “nothing.” And empowering them to come up with the option themselves.

At this point clients often propose something smaller than “no fast food ever” but something still too difficult to do consistently.

Four Coaching Scenarios

Chapter 4: Coaching

CLIENT: “Well, what if I went cold turkey and ate no fast food for the next two weeks?”

YOU: “Okay, no fast food for the next two weeks. You know, I think that’s awesome. But that feels like a pretty big challenge. What about no fast food for just a few days this week? Say, three of the days? Or maybe some days you pick another thing from the menu that’s slightly better? What do you think?”

Although you haven’t confidence tested yet, you have a gut feeling that the change is too big. So you might shrink it a little and see how they feel about it.

CLIENT: “I can totally do that, coach—9 out of 10 on the confidence scale! I’ll make Monday through Thursday my ‘no fast food’ days. Or if I go to [insert fast-food restaurant], I’ll get the chicken wrap and a salad.”

This sounds promising!

YOU: “That’s a great idea. I’m wondering how I can help? Would you text me at the end of each day to let me know you were successful? Even better, send me a picture of the meal you chose to eat instead!”

At this point you layer in some accountability. And you make a fun “what did you eat instead” game out of it.

SCENARIO 3 The Crazy Questions

If someone is struggling with ambivalence, resistance, and change, it can be really effective to ask some unconventional questions they may not expect.

YOU: “For starters, it sounds like [reiterate what they just said about their understanding of the problem they’re struggling with]. So I’m going to ask you two crazy questions. I know it’ll sound really weird, but humor me.”

Four Coaching Scenarios

Chapter 4: Coaching

CLIENT: *Raises eyebrows*

YOU: “Question #1: What is *good* about the nightly gallon of ice cream? In other words, how does it help you or make you feel better in some way? And question #2: What is *bad* about giving up the nightly gallon of ice cream? In other words, what will be the biggest bummer in that? What might you have to lose?”

Notice how you’re probing for more information about what purpose the “bad habit” serves in their life. And why they might be so attached to it.

At this point, you should be listening closely. They may talk about stresses in life, pressures, and the reasons why they find comfort in the things that are ultimately unhealthy for them. Let them get it all out without judgment.

YOU: “Wow, yea, it sounds like there’s lots going on there for you. I think I’d want to eat ice cream in that situation too!”

Now you normalize and empathize, first arguing ever so slightly in favor of not changing. This helps prevent you from judging the behavior and causing them to push back against you even though they want to change in the first place.

CLIENT: “Thanks for saying that. But I really should find a better way to deal with this.”

See how they proposed change, not you?

YOU: “Well, tell you what. There’s no rush to do this. When you’re ready, do you feel confident that you could try going for a walk instead of eating the ice cream—at least a few nights for the next two weeks? Or maybe you have the ice cream—but after a walk?”

This is where you can negotiate the next action, confidence test, and plan for the client to check in with a photo that shows them walking instead of eating ice cream.

Four Coaching Scenarios

Chapter 4: Coaching

SCENARIO 4 The Self-Solution

As discussed above, when we help clients develop their own solutions, they're much more likely to feel confident in them and follow through. That's what this option helps with.

After exploring change and learning about a client's struggles, it's time to affirm, validate, hear, and normalize.

YOU: "I totally hear you and understand what you're experiencing. It's quite normal. Lots of people feel that, too."

Here you leave some space for the client to respond. Whether they do or they don't is fine. Now it's time to see how the client might solve their own problem.

YOU: "It sounds like you already have a good sense of the key issues. Knowing this, if you were the coach, what would you recommend?"

If you feel like they'd be resistant to self-coaching, you can add to it:

YOU: "Of course, I have some ideas here. But I'd like to hear yours first."

Let them work through some concepts. Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions or help shape the recommendations.

YOU: "Great ideas. I'm wondering, on a scale of 0 to 10, how confident you are that you can do each of them for the next two weeks?"

They'll rank the ideas. Listen for the ones that score a 9 or 10. If none do, help shape up solutions that they feel really confident they can do.

YOU: "Awesome, it sounds like we have a winner here. At this point do you mind checking back with me in a few days to share how it's going? What day and time is best for you?"

Four Coaching Scenarios

Chapter 4: Coaching

Set a time for follow-up and hold them accountable to it.

In the end, notice how each scenario demonstrates the power of good questions, compassionate listening, and change-oriented dialogue. Always remember this: When a coach argues for change, clients argue against it. So don't argue for change! Instead, get clients arguing for it themselves. Bonus points if you help them propose their own solutions too.

The Super Seven Coaching Principles

Chapter 4: Coaching

Coaching is a two-way relationship. If clients are resisting something, that something is probably you. However, with a new kind of commitment, your coaching life will change.

That commitment: Take 100 percent responsibility for your advice and your client's ability to follow it. Lead the horse to water and make it very thirsty. You can do that with these seven principles.

1. Become more client-centered, less coach-centered.
2. Ask good questions to practice active, compassionate listening.
3. Focus on what's awesome, not what's awful.
4. Set the right kinds of goals.
5. Establish the right practices to reach those goals.
6. Always confidence test.
7. Speak in a way that makes people more likely to change.

Your Five Whys

Chapter 4: Coaching

Typically, when we ask clients and patients what they want, they give us socially acceptable, surface-level answers. This simple, yet powerful, exercise pushes them to go deeper and share with us the real reasons they're motivated to change. It works for coaches too.

Here's how you can use the Five Whys to get the most out of this book.

Consider why you're reading this book right now. What do you hope to get out of it?

Why is that important to you?

And why that?

What are you hoping that'll help you with?

Your Five Whys

Chapter 4: Coaching

And why's that important to you?

See where you end up. Your answers might surprise you.

Then consider how you could use this exercise with your clients and patients.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Chapter 4: Coaching

There's a concept I love called "the moving horizon." The idea is that if you run your fastest to "catch" the horizon, you never will because, obviously, it's always moving away from you.

People know this, of course. But they still try to "catch the horizon" when working toward goals. As soon as they get close to reaching them, they set new, more ambitious ones. And, since the goal keeps moving away, they end up feeling frustrated even though they've made tremendous progress.

This is why we need to build in a process of looking back, a way to remind ourselves how far we've come (and celebrate that) instead of constantly feeling equally far away from an ever-moving goal. As a coach, you can help clients with this by taking time (every month or every other month) to systematically show clients your how far they've come, that progress has been made.

Here are some questions to help them feel proud of how far they've come.

QUESTION 1

What have you put the most effort into during the last few weeks?

If you've been showing up, even just a little, it means you've been working on something. So jot that down and remind yourself of where your focus and energy have been.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Chapter 4: Coaching

QUESTION 2

What are you most proud of from the last few weeks?

Here we're looking for daily wins. Like having a good breakfast on your busiest morning. Or making a smart eating decision in a tricky situation. You've done something to be proud of. Now's the time to call it out.

QUESTION 3

How will you high-five yourself for the great work (in a healthy way)?

Think about how you'll celebrate your progress, even if it's just a small reward that supports your goals.

QUESTION 4

What more would you have liked to accomplish?

Everyone thinks this kind of stuff: coulda, woulda, shoulda. Let's get it down on paper, and then let it go. Write down what you wanted to get done . . . but didn't.

And here are some questions to help them feel excited about the next steps.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Chapter 4: Coaching

QUESTION 1

Looking ahead to the next few weeks, what are you most looking forward to?

In other words, what are you excited about? Ready to tackle?

QUESTION 2

Knowing what you're about to work on, what advantages do you think you have that'll make progress more likely?

Tune in to your own unique abilities. What "superpowers" do you have that can help you in your efforts?

QUESTION 3

Knowing what's coming up in the next few weeks, what things are likely to stand in your way?

Consider the things that might prevent your progress.

QUESTION 4

How can you prepare, right now, to make sure those things don't get in your way?

Having listed obstacles that might stand in your way, think about how you'll prevent them from sabotaging you. How can you avoid them before they happen?

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 05

Effective vs. Efficient

Chapter 5: Business

A question I've long asked is: What if I can achieve big, important goals without my brain feeling like it's been through a blender? What if I did much less than everyone else but made sure everything I did was of critical importance and moved the needle in measurable, meaningful ways? By prioritizing effectiveness over efficiency, could I stand out from my peers and accomplish more?

It turns out the answer is yes. In fact, most of the extremely high performers I know take a similar approach. This has led to a totally different way of working.

PRODUCTIVITY IS NOT

- sleeping less, working more, and hustling harder
- multitasking social media on your phone while doing invoices and responding to emails on your desktop
- “productivity hacks” that are supposed to make you more efficient but scramble your thinking instead
- trying to do everything that could make a difference because you're afraid of missing out

PRODUCTIVITY IS

- organizing and prioritizing your time ruthlessly
- ditching many low-leverage tasks and replacing them with a few high-leverage tasks
- automating the things that can be automated
- focusing the rest of your time on your unique abilities

Your Time Diary

Chapter 5: Business

In health and fitness we often ask clients to fill out food diaries and training logs. The professional equivalent? A time and activity log.

The idea here is to keep a record of everything you do during your week, to catalog your tasks and the time it takes to do them. You don't need fancy apps or time trackers for this, although you can use them if you want. Yours could be as simple as this.

Your Task Log

7 AM	:00-10	:10-20	:20-30	:30-40	:40-50	:50-60
8 AM						
9 AM						
10 AM						
11 AM						
12 PM						
1 PM						
2 PM						
3 PM						
4 PM						
5 PM						
6 PM						
7 PM						

Your Time Diary

Chapter 5: Business

After a week or so of recording, divide your work into one of these categories:

1. Low-leverage activities I worked on

2. High-leverage activities I worked on

3. High-leverage activities I didn't work on*

Next, look at how much time you're spending on low-leverage activities, the ones that feel urgent or important but don't make a difference in getting clients, keeping them, growing a business, or achieving any goal you've set out to achieve.

Back when I was a full-time personal trainer and lifestyle coach, it was scheduling, invoicing, and answering basic questions about protein and peanut butter that felt annoying, low leverage, and in the way of my bigger goals. If I was busy doing these things, I wasn't working on getting new clients, building systems, or learning more about my craft.

*

These are the activities you know are important and will produce a high return but you simply didn't make time for them, so they never made it onto your calendar.

Your Time Diary

Chapter 5: Business

Next ask yourself if there's a way to cut down on the time you're spending on low-leverage things by creating templates for the same emails you send out every week, or using scheduling software, or using an automated billing system. Are there some you can flat-out eliminate? Is there a way to structure your month so certain tasks can be done in a single chunk on a specific day, rather than having them hang over your head every day or every week?

The goal here isn't necessarily to eliminate low-leverage activities. Some of them are necessary—for now anyway. Rather, the goal is to reduce time spent on them, freeing you up to do more high-leverage tasks, including some of the things you've been procrastinating for much too long now.

Schedule Time for Thinking

Chapter 5: Business

Once you've bought back some time, I encourage you to begin booking appointments with yourself for thinking about, re-searching, sanity checking, and getting others' thoughts on the high-leverage work worth tackling now. This is so important that I'd like you to schedule that time immediately.

On which day of the week can you budget a few hours for thinking?

How long can you budget for this?

Now pop open your calendar and make your first appointment with yourself to do it.

Which day did you choose?

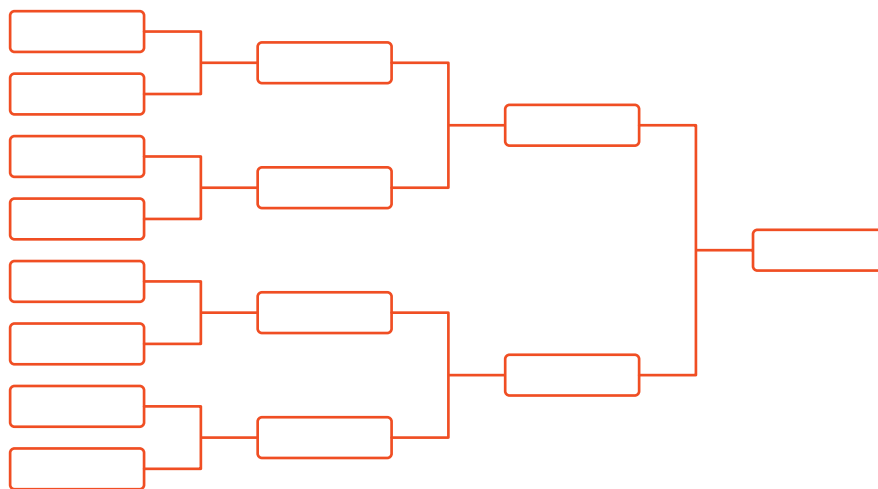
The To-Do Tournament

Chapter 5: Business

As time goes by, more and more opportunities will come flying at you. You'll never have enough resources to capitalize on even a small fraction of them. Which means your only competitive advantage is a counterintuitive one: put rigid constraints on your time, figure out the very few opportunities worth doing, focus on those few unwaveringly, and pass on everything else.

The tournament bracket method can help with this.

Whenever trying to decide on what to prioritize, print this out and put your ideas and opportunities up against each other, using the theory of constraints (identifying the most important limiting factor standing in the way of your goal) to help inform which to do next.



Four Strategies for Getting Better at Prioritization

Chapter 5: Business

Prioritization is a skill. Develop it, using the following strategies, and you'll feel less anxiety and experience an improved ability to do the right work in the most efficient ways.

1. Reframe your definition of productivity
2. Free up time for more high leverage work
3. Schedule time to think
4. Play the to-do tournament to decide what's next

The Tripod Marketing Formula

Chapter 5: Business

Marketing is identifying your ideal customer early, crafting a compelling offer just for them, and attracting them to your physical location (or website) already at an 8 or 9 out of 10 on the readiness-to-buy scale. In essence, great marketing makes selling significantly easier. Which is why we've always put so much emphasis on it. We've even come up with a fancy name for how we do it.

The Tripod Marketing Formula

1. Know what people want.
2. Do something awesome to deliver it.
3. Tell everyone about it.

What Can You Give?

Chapter 5: Business

It's important to give awesome, free, educational content to your audience at a higher ratio than you ask them to buy something. At Precision Nutrition, our Giving vs. Asking ratio across our entire website, and all our programs, is about ten to one. Most of our "gifts" are free articles, courses, and videos. Yours don't have to be. For example:

- If you're a good writer, write a free article, booklet, or useful handout.
- If you have a knack for design, create infographics or workout journals.
- If you love to cook or bake, whip up some free protein bars or green drinks.
- If you're a performer, make free educational or instructional videos.

What kinds of things could you give to readers, clients, and prospects to increase your exposure, build trust with them, and increase the chance they'll buy from you in the future?

The Hopeful Future

Chapter 5: Business

Marketing and sales aren't about you, your product, or your service. They're not even about the features or benefits of your product or service. Rather, marketing and sales are about painting a compelling and hopeful future for your prospects. To do that, fill out the following.

Write down who you are and what you do.

Example: My name is John and I run a company called Precision Nutrition that offers coaching for clients, certification for professionals, and coaching software for certified professionals.

Now write down the features of your product or service.

Example: The Precision Nutrition certification includes a) a 600-page definitive textbook covering the art and science of nutrition coaching, b) an online learning portal with videos, lessons, and quizzes, and c) a group forum for interacting with instructors, coaches, and other students.

Now write down the benefits of your product or service.

Example: The Precision Nutrition Certification helps you master the science of nutrition and the art of coaching using a university-level curriculum without having to quit your job and go back to school. Study at your own pace, anywhere, take the quizzes online, and earn a certificate in exercise nutrition.

The Hopeful Future

Chapter 5: Business

Now write down the hopeful future people can expect when working with you.

Example: With the Precision Nutrition Certification, you'll master the industry's most effective nutrition coaching system, helping you get life-changing results for yourself and the people who come to you for advice. You'll feel competent and credible in any coaching scenario, with any client. And you'll be able to deliver advice that you know is right, in a way that helps your clients put it into action immediately, without resistance, and without eventually falling off the wagon.

Your Elevator Pitch

Chapter 5: Business

To help paint a crystal-clear picture of what you do, who you serve, and the hopeful future you can provide people with, it's important to create a brief "elevator pitch" like this.

I help {kind of person}
to {action/benefit}
so that they can {brighter future/more inspiring benefit}.

Here are some examples of what you might come up with:

*I help {new moms},
to {get active and eat better},
so that they can {drop their baby weight and feel more energy}.*

*I help {busy executives},
to {find time in their schedule for healthy habits},
so they can {finally get their health under control}.*

*I help {people with back pain},
to {move freely again},
so that they can {live their lives without pain and disability}.*

*I help {young athletes},
to {improve their movement quality},
so that they can {dominate on the playing field and injury-proof themselves}.*

*I help {women with health challenges},
to {figure out what's going on with their bodies},
so that they can {manage their symptoms and feel in control of their bodies again}.*

*I help {people in their sixties and seventies},
to {begin a new movement practice},
so they can {walk, jump, run, and play with their grandkids}.*

Give it a try:

I help _____
to _____
so that they can _____

Survey Selling

Chapter 5: Business

Once you've identified your ideal client, the benefit you can deliver for them, and the hopeful future they can expect in working with you, it's time to go out and look for them.

One strategy I've found particularly effective for getting your first few clients is "survey selling."

Begin by creating your survey.

(I recommend Google Forms for this as it's free and easy to use, with quick how-to tutorials for beginners.) When creating your survey, start with a title, a compelling description, and a few demographic questions. Here's an example of what you might come up with if you were a fitness and nutrition coach:

Tamara's Awesome Coaching Business

I'm looking for ten new moms ages 25–40 who live in Toronto, Canada, and are looking to get active and eat better so they can drop their baby weight and feel more energetic.

If this is you, please fill out the form below. All eligible applications will be contacted by phone.

GENDER

Male Female Other: _____

AGE

How committed are you to dropping 10–20 pounds of baby weight, safely and effectively (1 = Meh, I could care less; 10 = I'll eat fire to reach my goal)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Survey Selling

Chapter 5: Business

Here's the formula:

I'm looking for {number of people} {gender} ages {age range} who live in {your location} and are looking to {goal}.

If this is you, please fill out the form below. All eligible applications will be contacted by phone.

Next, share a link to your survey (on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or wherever you prefer to share it) by posting your survey description as follows:

****I'm looking for {number of people} {gender} ages {age range} looking to {goal} that live in {location}.****

I am looking for {gender} who want to:

-{benefit 1}

-{benefit 2}

-{benefit 3}

Spots are extremely limited and I'm only looking for {number of people} who are ready to make a change today. To apply, fill out the quick survey below and I'll be in touch if you meet the requirements:

===> {link to your Google form}

The benefits you include will vary but they should speak to the hopeful future I described earlier.

Once you get the message out and people start responding, make sure someone calls them right away to learn more about their goals and expectations and to tell them more about how you work.

As discussed in Chapter 4 of **Change Maker**, take a client-centered approach here, asking questions and focusing on who they are and what they need before talking about what you can do, your fees, etc. Ideally you'll get in touch within twenty minutes of them filling out your survey, at the peak of their interest.

Survey Selling

Chapter 5: Business

If you're able to get in touch with them and you schedule an initial appointment together, fantastic. If not, keep following up, with a friendly check-in, once a week for the first month. If you're still unsuccessful, follow up once a month after that until they become a client or tell you they're not interested in working with you.

This is where most people drop the ball, assuming that if someone hasn't gotten back to them or made an appointment, they're not interested. This is a bad assumption. Sometimes people are busy, need to think more, or have to talk it over with a significant other. By continuing to reach out in a friendly way, you make sure that when they are ready to get started, it's with you.

If you decide to try this method, you'll be up and running with your first post inside of thirty minutes. Most people who try it report getting one to three clients within a day or two. Even if you think it's too simple or couldn't possibly work, try it anyway. People constantly tell me that they would have never expected something like this to work. But it did, exactly how I said it would.

The “Tell People What You Do” Challenge

Chapter 5: Business

Every year, through our Precision Nutrition Facebook groups, we do a two-week challenge. Our certification students and graduates are encouraged to do something simple (yet, apparently, radical these days). They are asked to talk to people. You know, like, real people. In real life.

Specifically, we ask them to tell one person a day what they do.

That person could be anyone: the barista that frothed the milk on their latte, the cashier at the grocery store, or the lady sitting next to them on their commuter train. The goal is to develop a “script” about what they do, get comfortable talking about it, and maybe even get a new client or a referral.

If you’re interested in trying it, here’s how it works.

Begin by making sure you can describe what you do without rambling and without boring listeners with irrelevant details. A simple way to do this is to use the statement you created in the Your Elevator Pitch activity:

*I help {kind of person}
to {action/benefit}
so that they can {brighter future/more inspiring benefit}.*

Next, pick a person (any person) every day to talk to. You can approach folks however you like to get the conversation started. If you’re not sure how to do that without coming off creepy, break the ice with something like this:

Hey!

I’m doing this two-week challenge where I have to tell someone about what I do, and you’re who I chose today!

Is that cool?

If they’re game, lay the elevator pitch—or something like it—on them. If they seem interested, expand on it. The conversation could end pleasantly but without any real interest on their part and that’s okay. You’ll still benefit from the practice.

The “Tell People What You Do” Challenge

Chapter 5: Business

However, should they express real interest, keep the conversation going with something like:

Hey, thanks for listening. Mission accomplished on the contest!

Before I roll, you seemed kinda interested in {some aspect of what you talked about} and a really cool resource just popped into my head that I’d love to share.

Could you write down your {email address/phone number/FB page} so I can send it over?

Just so you know, ‘no’ is a fine answer here. After all, we just met.

However, I do think you’ll dig it. And I promise not to bug you beyond that.

If they share their contact info, wait a day and follow up with something awesome—a cool article, some recipes, an infographic, an inspiring YouTube video—whatever you think will be helpful and is in line with what you talked about. It doesn’t have to be your own content. Just something that’s high quality and will be genuinely helpful.

Here’s how you might follow up.

Hi!

It’s {your name}, we met yesterday at {place} and we talked about {topic}. Wanted to follow up with {the thing I promised}, which I think you’ll like.

*Here’s the link:
{link to the thing here}*

No obligation to {watch it, read it, etc.}. I just thought it might help.

The “Tell People What You Do” Challenge

Chapter 5: Business

If they follow up and thank you for the link, reply with a casual reference to your services.

Thanks for the note!

I’m so glad you liked {the thing you sent}!

I don’t know if you, or anyone you know, would be interested in this . . . but I’m running a program that starts in two weeks.

I’ll be working with {number of people} {gender} ages {age range} looking to {goal}.

Spots are extremely limited and I’m only looking for {number of people}.

Again, if you or someone you know is interested, let me know by filling out this super-quick survey below.

==> {link to your Google form}

Again, no pressure. Just sharing this in case you, or a friend, might be interested.

How to Leverage your Existing Communities

Chapter 5: Business

Many of us belong to one group, or a host of them, either online or in person. These are often unrelated to health and fitness, which—in this case—is a good thing as it gives you the opportunity to share what you do with a new audience. If you do it right, these groups can be an amazing source of new clients.

To try this method:

Join a group. Consider the groups you're currently a member of (online or in person). If you're not a member of any, consider whether there are any groups you'd like to be a part of that would be good candidates for your coaching. (Remember, it's better if they're not health and fitness groups.)

Engage with the group in an authentic, helpful, supportive way. Don't just join groups to make your elevator pitch as this is universally frowned upon. Instead, become a real part of the community and only talk about what you do if it's relevant to the conversations already going on.

Offer genuine help. If a health and fitness topic comes up, bingo! Help answer questions. Offer support. Send people helpful links, articles, videos, and other resources. You can be subtle about self-promotion by simply linking back to your website or social media profile. Still, hold back on mentioning your services.

Occasionally mention your services. After you've built trust and made genuine connections, mention your services. Have your information easily available if people want it, but don't be pushy about it. If you need a ratio to work with, for every ten helpful comments you make, you can slide in one about your coaching.

Building Your Systems

Chapter 5: Business

Systems allow you to find redundancies and time wasters in your work and streamline them to free up time for other activities. In Chapter 5 of **Change Maker** we talk about how you can build a few simple systems, without being a systems engineer. After reviewing those suggestions, consider the following.

STEP 1

Create a “General” file

You’ll need a list of the communications you use repeatedly. For a standard coaching business, this may include:

- information about services and pricing
- welcome messages
- reminders about upcoming sessions
- post-session check-ins
- monthly “How’s it going?” messages
- regular “You’re doing great” messages
- requests for data like weight, measurements, blood work, etc. ads and marketing materials

What categories of communications (info about services and pricing, welcome messages, reminders about upcoming sessions, post-session check-ins, etc.) do you use regularly?

Once you have your categories in mind, write the content itself. You’ll probably want to do this on your computer so you can save your own templates and paste in content from emails, brochures, or other material you’ve already written. Depending on the nature of your offerings, and how often you like to check in with clients, there might be a lot of things to document. That’s okay; take a few weeks to get this done. Don’t rush; do it right.

Building Your Systems

Chapter 5: Business

STEP 2 Create a “Programs” file

Whatever services you offer, you undoubtedly have to deliver them (and communicate about them) over and over. These communications might include:

- intake questionnaires
- workout plans (weight loss)
- workout plans (weight gain)
- workout plan FAQs
- meal plans (weight loss)
- meal plans (weight gain)
- meal plan FAQs
- meal-planning strategies
- supplement guidelines (weight loss)
- supplement guidelines (weight gain)
- supplement FAQs
- body-measurement guidelines

What categories of programs/deliverables (intake questionnaires, workout plans, eating plans, supplement guidelines, etc.) will you be using?

Again, capture these on your computer for easier copy/paste later.

Building Your Systems

Chapter 5: Business

STEP 3 Create an “Emails” file

Go through a couple months’ worth of “sent mail” messages and look for patterns. In the seeming hodgepodge of your communications with clients, there are probably repetitions. Typically, coaches send lots of messages about:

- nutrition, workouts, and supplements
- sleep, and stress management
- travel and schedule-change challenges
- meal-planning challenges
- questions about nutrition basics
- general anxieties about life/goals/programs/progress

Which emails are virtually the same? What categories of emails (nutrition/exercise/supplement discussions, sleep/stress-management discussions, travel/schedule discussions, general anxieties about life/goals/progress discussions) could you capture for easy copy/paste later?

In a new document, make a list of your email categories. Under each category heading, paste in your best email on the topic, and tweak/perfect it as necessary.

Building Your Systems

Chapter 5: Business

STEP 4 Create a Master Folder

Save your “General,” “Programs,” and “Emails” files in one easily accessible folder. Now you have a master database of the most common things you’ll need to type out. You can pull from it when it’s time to reply to questions, to send programs, or proactively reach out.

STEP 5 Remember to personalize

By the time you pull information from your Master Folder and paste it into a new document, email, or text message, you’re 90 percent done. The other 10 percent? Customizing for the specific person.

To do this, start with a friendly greeting and a sentence or two about how they’re doing, what they’ve been up to, etc. Then personalize your standard reply based on their situation. After that, sign and send.

Six Important Hiring Lessons

Chapter 5: Business

When you get to the point where the influx of new clients and customers outpaces your ability to keep up, no matter how you prioritize, you may need to consider building a hiring capability.

Here are some of the lessons I learned going from two team members to 120.

LESSON 1

Don't hire until it hurts.

LESSON 2

Get clear on exactly what you need and hire for that.

LESSON 3

Get some help with recruiting.

LESSON 4

Put less stock in interviews, more in assessments.

LESSON 5

The hurting doesn't stop once you hire.

LESSON 6

You don't have to become a manager, executive, or leader.

Balancing “Inside the Wall” and “Outside the Wall”

Chapter 5: Business

I like to think of companies as castles with walls separating the inner workings of the castle from the outside world.

Outside the wall is the content you put out into the world, including your products and services. It’s also where your customers live, how they experience your products and services, and how they perceive your company. Things like editorial content, advertising, sales, marketing, and user experience are all outside the wall activities.

Inside the wall are your team, your processes, and your policies. It’s how you are together and how you work together. Things like leadership, management, human resources, internal communications, values statements, and mission statements are all inside the wall activities.

To make sure you find the right balance, ask yourself:

How much of my own personal time is being spent on inside the wall vs. outside the wall work?

How many of our team members are doing inside the wall vs. outside the wall work?

How much total time is spent thinking about ourselves and how we work together (inside the wall) vs. our customers and what they’re thinking, feeling, and experiencing (outside the wall)?

The Five Most Important Business Skills

Chapter 5: Business

Here are the five most important skills I've had to build over the last fifteen years as I transitioned from employee to solopreneur to entrepreneur to board member to investor. I didn't even know I'd need many of them until I did (like the need to attract and hire talented people plus organize them in a way that allows everyone to do their best work).

Some skills will feel more relevant than others, depending on where you're at in your career. (That's why I provided a relevancy rating for each one in Chapter 5 of *Change Maker*.) Yet I highly recommend reviewing them anyway—consider this chapter a crystal ball that will allow you to look into your own future and be prepared for what's to come.

The Five Most Important Business Skills

SKILL 1

Ruthless Prioritization

SKILL 2

Marketing and Sales

SKILL 3

Building Systems

SKILL 4

Hiring Team Members

SKILL 5

Organizing Teams

Project and Prioritization Questions

Chapter 5: Business

As you can probably tell, I'm a big fan of questions to help me make better decisions. Here are some of the questions I consider when evaluating a potential idea or project.

BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

Begin here...

Will this make a difference to my most important goals?

Am I really sure?

Why do I think that?

If I think it'll make a difference, then how?

What will I do if it works?

What will I do if it doesn't work?

Does this add value?

To me?

To my organization or business?

To my clients?

To the universe?

Would I be excited to share this with people I respect?

Would I want to get on stage and loudly proclaim that I do/did this?

When I think of doing this thing, would I think "HELL YES!"?

Or would it be "HELL NO!"?

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

If the big picture answers are promising...

Am I absolutely 10/10 confident that I can do this thing?

Do I really have the time, energy, mindset, and funds to allot to it?

How would my best friend answer the above question?

Logistically, what resources do I need to do this thing?

Time? Money? Skills? Other people?

Do I have those resources right now, or can I somehow get them?

Project and Prioritization Questions

Chapter 5: Business

TRADE-OFF QUESTIONS

If the big picture and practical questions are promising...

If I do this thing, what will it break?

If I say yes to this thing, what do I have to say no to?

What am I prepared to give up or lose in order to get or do this thing?

Sometimes I just boil these down to two simple questions:

1. Does anyone in the room think this thing will actually work?
2. If we do it, what's it going to break?

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 06

Reaching Out When Others Have Done Good Work

Chapter 6: Reputation

Whenever I see a great piece of work, I take a few minutes and send the person (or team) responsible a short message saying: *Wow, I loved the thing you did. You're awesome! That is all.*

Here's an example of a note I sent to recognize good work. My friend Molly is the founder of a company doing fantastic work to empower women to be their strongest, most confident selves (Girls Gone Strong). Although I didn't know her before she released her first product, once she did, I found her email address and sent her this note:

Subject: Hell yeah!

Wow, I love this:

<linked to product page>

The product looks awesome.

Really great sales page too.

It's all beautifully done, thorough, accessible.

I can tell a lot of care and attention went into this.

High fives!

JB

Since then, I've become an advisor to Girls Gone Strong and have enjoyed countless referrals from her business. Even more, Molly and her partner have become great friends, making time to visit us annually and join us for family vacations.

Reaching Out When Others Have Done Good Work

Chapter 6: Reputation

Precision Nutrition co-founder Phil Caravaggio and I often talk about “catching people doing something right” instead of just “catching people doing something wrong” (not only in our own business but outside our business too). To this end, we’re constantly on the lookout for great work.

When we find it, we’re quick to send a message saying: *Hey! Caught you! You just did something amazing! You’re SO busted!* People remember this because it’s so rare and feels so good, especially if it comes from someone whose work they respect.

Nine Important Qualities to Build Your Reputation

Chapter 6: Reputation

Whether showing up as a mentor, mentee, colleague, student, or friend, here are nine important qualities I've tried to embody as I've built my reputation.

- 1. Respectful** of the other person's time, always checking in to make sure I'm not being too pushy, aggressive, asking for too much, or overstaying my welcome
- 2. Grateful** for the fact that they've spent time with me, and showing my gratitude through words (genuine thanks) and actions (gifts, tokens of appreciation, etc.)
- 3. Trustworthy** in that I keep private information private, that I make good on what I say I will, and that I follow through on the things I commit to.
- 4. Open** to learning about the other person by asking them questions about what's going on in their lives, what they're interested in, and why they're sharing certain things with me
- 5. Compassionate** about their lives, thinking about how I'd feel if I were in their shoes, and asking them how they're feeling instead of guessing, assuming, or ignoring because I'm not sure
- 6. Honest** about what I'm thinking, feeling, and experiencing so they don't have to guess or assume things about me
- 7. Curious** about the world, about how people behave, and about what I still have to learn, asking lots of questions but never to trip people up or back them into a corner
- 8. Consistent** in that I show up as the same person every time, with every group of people, in all situations
- 9. Intentional** in that I tell myself, in advance, how I plan to be in upcoming interactions, what I hope to get out of them, what I hope others get out of the interactions, how I'll know if that's happening, and what I'll do to correct what doesn't meet expectations

Nine Important Qualities to Build Your Reputation

Chapter 6: Reputation

While all this might seem like common sense, it's anything but common practice. Often unintentionally, people see their careers as transactional, treating others as commodities and ignoring the power of relationships. That's why those who show up as I've described stand out.

JB's Three-Part Reputation Formula

Chapter 6: Reputation

When I think back to my early days in this industry—when I had to beg for any opportunity, no matter how small; when I was giving free talks to six people in aerobics studios and small breakout rooms—I feel both gratitude for the amazing things that are now simply dropped into my lap and a genuine awe for how powerful something as nonquantifiable as “reputation” can really be.

While I do think it’s hard to pin down all the factors that help create this kind of professional reputation, I believe my own formula has been made up of these three parts.

PART 1

Earn a set of unimpeachable credentials.

PART 2

Do great work, celebrate others’ great work too.

PART 3

Show up as a respectful, trustworthy, and consistent human being.

Responding to Feedback

Chapter 6: Reputation

Even if someone is so bold as to suggest: “You suck at X,” the trick is to remember this acronym: WAIT, which stands for Why Am I Talking? In other words, when someone’s giving feedback—of any kind—don’t argue, defend, justify, or react. Just quietly receive it. Even better, thank them for it regardless of how it makes you feel in the moment.

Here’s a template you can use:

Thanks for being open enough to sharing this. Can you tell me a little more about why you think that way? I’d like to do better at this in the future and it’d be really helpful to understand what you’re seeing and how I might improve.

This is easier if you remember *you’re in control*. You don’t have to do anything with the feedback. It’s not necessarily even valid or true. But deciding its worth, or whether to take action on it, isn’t something to do in real time.

Your goal is to simply receive all data without blocking transmission. Gather now, process later. You can evaluate what’s worth taking action on once you’ve had the processing time. From there, you can use your growth mindset to learn, adapt, and evolve based on what you think was valuable.

Asking for Feedback

Chapter 6: Reputation

This idea of actively soliciting feedback is what I call “hunting feedback.” The fastest learners I know do it aggressively. They’re on a mission. They collect more feedback per day, per week, per month, per year than everyone else. And this exposes them to every possible growth opportunity available.

To accomplish this myself, I send standing requests to clients and colleagues, friends and family members, to share their feedback—the good, the bad, and the ugly. I let them know that, although I might not always enjoy criticism in the moment, I want and need it. That I’ll be receptive to it. That I’ll view it as a gift.

Here’s a script for how you might do the same:

Can I ask you to help me with something important?

Growth is really important to me at this point in my life. So I’m asking some of the people I respect and admire to share feedback on how I’m doing—good, bad, or ugly—whenever it pops into their minds.

This is so important to me because, like everyone else, I have blind spots. I have to rely on the folks around me to help me see what I’m missing so I can be a better coach and colleague, friend and family member.

Please know that I want you to be as honest as possible. In exchange, I’ll do my best to not respond emotionally or defensively. I consider this feedback a gift, no matter how difficult some of it might be to hear.

Hopefully there will be a nice balance of positive and negative. But it’s okay, too, if there isn’t.

Is this something you’re comfortable doing?

Of course, not all feedback should be weighted equally. Some people are more articulate, thoughtful, or believable than others. Theirs should be weighted as the most important. At the same time, the more feedback the better. And all feedback should be considered.

Seven Strategies for Giving Better Feedback

Chapter 6: Reputation

Learning to hunt feedback brings a host of career-changing benefits. However, if you're not careful, it could come at a cost. Because, when some individuals get really good at taking feedback, they get really bad at giving it. All about substance over style, they forget that most others aren't yet hunting feedback, they're hiding from it. They haven't come to see feedback as a gift.

If you're looking for ways to give better feedback, here are seven strategies I've found helpful.

FEEDBACK STRATEGY	WHY IT'S SO USEFUL
Give feedback when things have calmed down.	Some people hold a false belief that things have to be “worked out” in the heat of the moment, not realizing that this is most often going to worsen the conflict, not solve it. But all feedback—positive, neutral, or negative—should be delivered at a time when emotions are low. This helps both parties feel calm and safe. Even positive feedback can feel disingenuous if it's delivered in the middle of conflict.
Speak slowly and quietly.	Whenever emotions run high, heart rates accelerate, and people speak more quickly and intensely. This leads to emotionally charged, unnaturally fast (and loud) monologues that are never well received. That's why, when giving feedback, wait until things are calm. Then calm them down even more. Slow your tempo. Speak softly. Even if you feel like you're going too slow, that's better than rushing and being too loud.

Seven Strategies for Giving Better Feedback

Chapter 6: Reputation

FEEDBACK STRATEGY	WHY IT'S SO USEFUL
Be neutral, curious, and focus on the relationship.	<p>When giving feedback of any kind, deliver it with neutral language and natural curiosity. “I noticed that . . .” or “Can you tell me more about . . .” are better than “You always . . .” Also, make it clear that you care about them and their growth, that your goal is to build the relationship, that they don’t have to respond to your feedback right away, and, in most cases, they don’t have to do anything with the feedback at all. They’re in control.</p>
Be specific and as objective as possible.	<p>Rather than global, general feedback like “You’re awesome!” or “That sucked!” give precise, specific, concrete feedback that’s situated in a particular time and place, and that describes something that really happened (or didn’t).</p> <p>For instance: “When you presented to our team on Tuesday afternoon, I noticed that you discussed Topic X but not Topic Y. From my perspective, including Y would have been useful because Z.” “When interacting with Client X just now by the front desk, I noticed that you couldn’t find the sign-up sheet. Would it be worth looking at the front desk organization system to see if we can make the process easier?”</p>

Seven Strategies for Giving Better Feedback

Chapter 6: Reputation

FEEDBACK STRATEGY	WHY IT'S SO USEFUL
<p>Always put your feedback in context.</p>	<p>When sharing constructive feedback, always make it clear that your comments don't represent the sum total of how you feel about the recipient as a team member or as a person. After all, they're in your life because of good things. So make sure you communicate that you like them, respect them, think they're awesome, and are sharing your feedback in that context.</p>
<p>Share lots of positive feedback too.</p>	<p>In most successful romantic partnerships, there's a 20:1 ratio of positive comments to negative when not arguing. But, even when arguing, those couples have a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative. So make sure you're sharing the right balance of positive to negative feedback. Instead of always "catching people doing something wrong," be sure to "catch them doing something right." This makes it easier for them to understand the context above and to take constructive criticism in stride.</p>

Seven Strategies for Giving Better Feedback

Chapter 6: Reputation

FEEDBACK STRATEGY	WHY IT'S SO USEFUL
Share lots of positive feedback too. (cont)	Positive feedback also gives people a useful “action plan” for what to correct, improve, and/or develop. For instance, “I overheard you chatting with Client X, and I noticed your sales communication is really coming along well! In particular it sounds like you’ve been working on active listening and trying to understand their story in order to tailor our membership offer to what they’re seeking. That’s really effective! Keep working on that!” Now the recipient knows exactly what they did well, and what they can continue to strengthen too.
Ask for permission.	This might sound obvious but it’s often lost: People usually take feedback better when they’ve asked for it. So start by asking for permission: “Would it be okay if I shared some feedback about X with you?” With that said, sometimes you’ll have to share unsolicited feedback. In those cases, consider calling it out: “I wanted to share some unsolicited feedback with you. I totally get that you haven’t asked for it and that I’m just showing up with it unannounced. Is now a good time to talk about this? If not, when’s better?”

The STATE Method for Crucial Conversations

Chapter 6: Reputation

In Chapter 6 of *Change Maker*, I share some ideas on how to get better at having crucial conversations. One key to this is using the STATE method.

Share your facts.
Tell your story.
Ask for their path.
Talk tentatively.
Encourage testing.

First, **Share your facts** instead of your story. For example, say someone is often late. Instead of sharing your interpretation of the fact (that they “don’t respect your time”), simply begin by saying that you noticed they’re often late.

Then, once the fact is out, you can **Tell your story** about the fact. This is when you can share your interpretation, making it clear this is just your interpretation, not necessarily fact.

Finally, you can **Ask for their path**. Remembering that the goal isn’t to prove you’re right but to understand their perspective and resolve the situation.

To incorporate all three strategies you could say something like:

“I’ve noticed you’re often late. Now, I’m not sure why that’s happening. But it gives me, and others, the impression that you’re unreliable or don’t care about how your lateness affects them. Am I missing something about what’s going on? I’d love to hear things from your perspective.”

When sharing your story, again, remember it’s an assumption, not a fact.

The STATE Method for Crucial Conversations

Chapter 6: Reputation

So *Talk tentatively* and show that you're open to being wrong. Saying things like "it makes me wonder" and "I get the impression" works better than "it's obvious to me" or "it's clear that."

Finally, *Encourage testing* by asking them to share their viewpoint, even if it's completely opposite to yours. This helps add to the shared pool of meaning while also demonstrating you want to hear what they have to say. If they're uncommunicative, you can prompt with "Let's say I'm wrong here. Can you help me see things from your point of view?" or "You seem frustrated and I'd like to understand why. Can you help me see your perspective?"

Four Strategies for Having Crucial Conversations

Chapter 6: Reputation

Being able to skillfully navigate crucial conversations will take your coaching game, your professional collaboration, and your personal relationships to the next level.

Instead of avoiding key issues or bringing them up in a way that creates defensiveness (and, therefore, no real resolution), you'll be able to masterfully navigate situations that others can't see their way out of. You'll become the most valuable communicator in the room, in any room.

To evolve your own crucial conversation game, here are four strategies, adapted from the book.

01. Change your own motives.
02. Create a safe space.
03. Add your perspective.
04. Find the path to action.

Knowing Your Goal

Chapter 6: Reputation

Asking “What’s my real goal here? What am I trying to accomplish?” will help you avoid distraction and stay focused on what matters. To get started, consider your goal in each of the following scenarios.

When giving a seminar

When interacting on social media

When writing an article

When speaking with a client or patient

When in a staff meeting

Knowing Your Goal

Chapter 6: Reputation

When responding to criticism

This idea of keeping the goal in mind also extends to every situation in your career and life. From crucial conversations to stage presentations. From social media posts to parenting children. From creating your refund policy to handling unprofessional behavior.

Practice this and you'll be recognized as the consummate professional, as someone who's unflappable, as someone who keeps the main goal the main goal; your reputation will grow.

Ten Ways to Cultivate Wisdom

Chapter 6: Reputation

Having the self-knowledge to understand your own goals, and the discipline to stick with them in the face of distraction, relies on developing wisdom. While it often feels like an intangible quality, psychologists suggest wisdom is a thinking process that integrates knowledge, experience, deep understanding, common sense, and insight.

To cultivate wisdom, consider these ten opportunities.

Try unfamiliar things. Each time you try something unfamiliar—from visiting a new place, to experiencing a new hobby, to checking out a different form of entertainment, to trying a new skill at work—you open yourself up to learning. Approach it with a growth mindset and current you slowly becomes wiser future you. Even more, you'll better home in on your purpose, unique abilities, and values. Because experiences teach you which things to do more of and which to do less of.

Strategically face your fears and do the uncomfortable. It's often the things we're afraid of, the things we come up with seemingly good justifications for not doing, that help us grow. Or, at the very least, hold the key to helping us handle discomfort in the future. Don't purposelessly expose yourself to real or psychic danger, of course. Instead, look for the fearful things—like starting that book you've been wanting to write, or applying for the new business loan, or asking a colleague for help—that will give you meaningful growth rather than just pointless pain or anxiety.

Talk to people with different perspectives. Listening closely to people who think differently than you (about social, political, economic, religious, and scientific issues) and have different life experiences (from where they grew up, to the jobs they've held, to the hardships they've faced, to the triumphs they've experienced) can teach you about perspective, kindness, and compassion. You have to really listen, though. And ask: "What's it like to live in their shoes? What would my worldview be if I were them?" You don't have to agree with their conclusions. Yet the more you're able to see the world through multiple lenses and understand why those exist, the wiser you'll be.

Ten Ways to Cultivate Wisdom

Chapter 6: Reputation

Pursue education. No, you don't have to go back to school. But you do have to learn with intention. Because the more exposed you are to organized and well-researched viewpoints, the more likely you'll be to discern fact from fiction, signal from noise. We'll talk more about this in the next chapter.

Read. Reading can be done as part of your educational curriculum or purely for pleasure. Whatever the goal, read. Not only does it expose you to the narratives and inner lives of thousands of real and imagined characters, it also gives you the quiet time to absorb, process, and reflect on what you're learning in your life and help integrate it into your thinking.

Spend time with wise people. Humans are expert mimics. From infancy, we learn everything by copying others. People around us walked, talked, and fed themselves. So we figured out how to walk, talk, and feed ourselves. If wisdom, then, is our new goal, the next step is obvious: Spend time with wise people. Yes, ask them how they think, what frameworks they use to see the world, and why they do what they do. But, most importantly, observe what's behind the words: how they live.

Know your (changing) self. While learning from others is clearly important, wisdom also comes from balancing what they offer with what you offer. As mentioned earlier, "self" isn't a fixed thing but an ever-changing one. Yet, at any point in time, each of our selves does have a purpose, unique abilities, and values. Get to know each iteration of your today self—expecting, of course, that it'll one day change—to grow ever more comfortable with the wisdom of change.

Lead with a beginner's mind. As you gather experiences, education, and insight, it's easy to rely on pattern recognition, make quick assumptions, and get everything wrong. That's why it's important to enter new situations like a beginner: wide-eyed, open, and curious. Ask questions, listen closely, and confirm that your understanding is correct before assuming you know exactly what's going on and what to do about it.

Ten Ways to Cultivate Wisdom

Chapter 6: Reputation

Review cause and effect often. Nothing feels more frustrating and foolish than making the same mistakes, over and over and over, without learning anything or even seeing what's happening. Wisdom is able to see patterns and links between inputs and outputs, rather than insisting that something should work, even though it demonstrably hasn't. However, it's hard to see this without making space to reflect, and without purposely looking for how things might be connected.

Slow down. When you act (or react) too quickly, you don't have time to engage all the parts of your brain. Especially the parts that store your accumulating knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. To develop this skill, practice meditation, mindfulness, or even counting to ten. Respond too quickly and emotionally in high-stakes situations and it's like you've never cultivated wisdom at all.

Eight Reputation Principles

Chapter 6: Reputation

Your path to growing your reputation may look different than mine. So here are eight foundational principles you can use to build your own reputation and professionalism in a way that feels right for you.

- 1.** All skills, including reputation skills, require patient practice.
- 2.** Feedback, even if it's delivered unskillfully, is a precious gift.
- 3.** Aggressively hunt feedback, expose yourself to all growth opportunities.
- 4.** Learn to give great feedback too.
- 5.** Getting good at crucial conversations makes you the most valuable person in the room.
- 6.** Know and articulate your goal in every situation.
- 7.** Cultivate and invest in wisdom.
- 8.** Operate with unflinching integrity and authenticity.

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHEETS

CHAPTER 07

Evaluating Continuing Education

Chapter 7: Education

Whenever a new (and exciting) continuing education opportunity comes up, it's tempting to enroll right away. However, it's important to evaluate each one thoroughly to make sure it maps to what you most need to build your skills and grow your career.

Next time you're wondering whether you should sign up for a specific course (or not), ask yourself the following questions:

Will it provide me with specific information I wouldn't otherwise have?

Will it provide info I can immediately apply in my interaction with clients and staff?

Is it delivered by one of the best? Can they speak from an experienced, in-the-trenches perspective? Or are they academics who haven't worked with clients in years?

I'd add one additional question that I think is important:

Is it part of a comprehensive long-term personal development plan designed to help me achieve a deep mastery of my craft and lead to my ultimate career goals?

Areas to Develop Beyond Your Specialty

Chapter 7: Education

You probably already know your main area of focus. It could be exercise programming, nutrition coaching, diagnostics and prescription, etc. You've probably also invested a lot of time and money into deepening this area of knowledge. Yet maybe it's time to focus on some different areas like:

Exercise and Fitness: To develop a deeper understanding of how different exercise modalities can contribute to massive improvements in health, fitness, disease resistance, and performance.

Nutrition and Supplementation: To more deeply understand how your clients' eating decisions and supplement choices influence their energy levels, physical health, quality of life, and performance.

Healthy Movement and Mobility: To discover how movement and mechanics play key roles in the daily health and functional capacities of office workers, manual laborers, athletes, children, and more.

Stress Management and Mental Health: To learn how mental health and stress influence who we are, how we see the world, how our bodies function at rest (vs. during performance), and what we're able to do (vs. not do).

Sleep: To understand how sleep amount and quality are closely interconnected with exercise (ability and capacity), eating (choices and digestion/absorption), mental health, and more.

Coaching and Change Psychology: To realize that knowing all about cellular function, movement, nutrition, sleep, and stress won't get you far without knowing how to help people change their actions and practices.

Marketing, Sales, and Business: To learn how to attract people to your business, convince them you're the right fit for them, and deliver exactly what you've promised in a way that exceeds their expectations.

Curious which courses are the best in each domain? At the end of the **Change Maker** book, you'll find examples in each category. But, before rushing to that, consider filling out an empty T with the categories you think are most essential to achieving your career goals.

Your T-Shaped Curriculum Worksheet

Chapter 7: Education

The T-shaped model helps you visualize your depth and breadth of knowledge as well as map out the skills you'll require to move from *today you* to *future you*. To this end, fill out the following empty T with the categories you think are most essential to achieving your career goals.

The horizontal bar should be filled with the categories you'll need to be fluent in to become *future you*—the ultimate change maker you want to become.

The vertical bar should be filled with the category you'd like to (or already do) specialize in—where you'll achieve mastery.

Either can include the categories listed above, as well as other professional skills (like having crucial conversations, giving and receiving feedback) or clinical skills (like reading and interpreting blood labs, diagnosing and treating special conditions).

A large empty T-shaped box with a thin orange border, intended for students to write their responses to the worksheet questions. The horizontal bar is at the top, and the vertical bar extends downwards from its center.

Seven Learning Formats, Rated

Chapter 7: Education

In Chapter 7 of *Change Maker*, I outline the seven most common learning formats available, their pros and cons, and their value. In addition, I created a ranking system based on the following criteria:

- **Ease:** 10 represents education that's simple to consume
- **Affordability:** 10 represents education that's free or very low cost
- **Contextually relevant:** 10 represents education that's put in its proper context
- **Skill building:** 10 represents education that will help you build practical skills
- **Credentials:** 10 represents education that will give you credentials
- **Career value:** 10 represents education that will make a difference in your career

Here are the formats and how I've ranked them.

Articles in magazines, journals, trade publications, or online:

EASE																			
AFFORDABILITY																			
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT																			
SKILL BUILDING																			
CREDENTIALS																			
CAREER VALUE																			

Books and e-books:

EASE																			
AFFORDABILITY																			
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT																			
SKILL BUILDING																			
CREDENTIALS																			
CAREER VALUE																			

Seven Learning Formats, Rated

Chapter 7: Education

Free online videos, lectures, podcasts:

EASE										
AFFORDABILITY										
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT										
SKILL BUILDING										
CREDENTIALS										
CAREER VALUE										

Live Seminars (paid):

EASE										
AFFORDABILITY										
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT										
SKILL BUILDING										
CREDENTIALS										
CAREER VALUE										

Certification Programs:

EASE										
AFFORDABILITY										
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT										
SKILL BUILDING										
CREDENTIALS										
CAREER VALUE										

Seven Learning Formats, Rated

Chapter 7: Education

Internships and Field Experiences:

EASE										
AFFORDABILITY										
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT										
SKILL BUILDING										
CREDENTIALS										
CAREER VALUE										

Academic Programs:

EASE										
AFFORDABILITY										
CONTEXTUALLY RELEVANT										
SKILL BUILDING										
CREDENTIALS										
CAREER VALUE										

Finding Mentorship

Chapter 7: Education

If you're reading this and you don't have a mentor today, I urge you to begin looking for one who can help you reach the next stage of your professional journey. Someone who's thoughtful, experienced, wise. Someone's who's just a little further along the path than you are (but not so far along the path that they can no longer relate to the challenges and opportunities before you today).

The next step? How to approach them.

To help you figure out how to do this, I asked my friend Nate Green, a master connector who's been mentored by a who's-who list of interesting and successful people. Here's how he thinks about approaching possible mentors, plus some of the strategies he'd recommend for you.

Send the email.

Nate emailed Lou Schuler, the fitness industry's most well-known journalist, when Nate was just nineteen years old. He proceeded to tell Lou that he wanted his job, asking how he got it.

"It wasn't my best email," Nate told me. But Lou surprised him by writing back and offering career advice. "That meant a lot to me. I would have never met him (or many other people who've helped shape my career) if I didn't first reach out."

Here's an updated script he recommends if you plan to reach out to a potential mentor via email.

Finding Mentorship

Chapter 7: Education

Hey NAME,

My name is Nate, and I'm a big fan of your work.

Specifically, your (article/book/podcast) about (A, B, C) really helped me to (X, Y, Z).

I know you're busy, but I'm hoping you have a minute to answer a very short and specific question for me.

INSERT VERY SHORT AND SPECIFIC QUESTION HERE.

If you don't have time, I completely understand.

Thanks again for your work.

Approach an equal and not as a “fanboy”.

Whether you start with an email, or you get the chance to meet a potential mentor in person, make roughly 5 percent of the next interaction about how much you love their work. The remaining 95 percent or so is all about talking to them like a friend would. (This works better in person, of course, but applies equally to email.)

Nate recommends never fawning over people, hanging around them for too long, or coming across as needy. “It’s like dating that way,” says Nate. “No one wants to hang out with someone who’s constantly like, ‘OH MY GOD I LOVE YOU’ and clings on in a needy way.”

Also, when meeting people in person, never ask to take photos with them. (“It’s too fanboy-ish,” according to Nate.) Yet feel free to bring people small gifts, such as a book you really enjoy and think they’d like too.

Finding Mentorship

Chapter 7: Education

Ask if you can follow up.

If you end up meeting someone at a professional event or social function and have a good initial conversation, Nate recommends asking if you can follow up. Here's how you can approach the subject.

It was really nice chatting with you, NAME.

I know you're busy, and so I want to respect your time.

That said, if I have a VERY specific question about (X, Y, Z), are you open to me sending you a short email?

If you don't have time to answer, that's fine.

But I really respect your opinion and think it could really help my career.

You have my word that whatever you tell me to try, I'll give it a shot.

If they say yes,

Thanks so much. What's the best way to get a hold of you?

If they say no,

Thanks so much. Keep doing good work. You're helping a lot of people.

Finding Mentorship

Chapter 7: Education

If they share some advice, take it.

More than gifts or financial rewards, a mentor's greatest payoff is knowing that a mentee respects their time, takes their help seriously, and isn't afraid of hard work.

“Let's say I'm at a conference and meet someone I respect and want to learn from. Maybe we have a five-minute conversation and they give me a small piece of advice. I write that advice down (later, when I'm back in my hotel room). Then I follow their advice. If they tell me to read a certain book, I read it. If they tell me to should consider starting a blog, I start one.”

Whatever it is, Nate does what they recommended. Later, he tells them about it. “I'll email to follow up. Then I'll ask for a next step, something else they'd recommend I put into action.”

Always consider: “What can I offer them?”

You may have no idea what that is. But it helps to think this way—to constantly be on the lookout for how you can do something, anything, to express your gratitude for their help, guidance, and support.

If you're wondering why mentors would even spend their time helping you like this, the answer is easy. The right mentors want mentees, badly. They want to share what they've learned. And they want to share it with young, smart, curious people who are likely to do something valuable with their advice (and honestly report back on what they did and how it worked out).

And, keep this in mind, they're not looking to be “impressed.” Frankly, if you're mentoring with someone worth learning from, you can't impress them at your level of development. So you're not there to be the expert, or to show them how smart you are, or to impose your own limited insights. You're there to show up with a great attitude and a growth mindset. To listen carefully, ask great questions, and put what you're learning into action.

Finding Mentorship

Chapter 7: Education

Yet, while you're there to learn, you do get points for being curious, thoughtful, and adding value to the relationship in other ways, for expressing gratitude for the advice and the opportunity. To this end, I often send my mentors handwritten notes, short reports of how I used their advice to my advantage (as Nate does), and small tokens of my gratitude. I love it when my mentees do the same.

The Triangulation Method for Decision-Making

Chapter 7: Education

When it comes to your business, your love life, your finances, your children, there are so many options out there. To help you choose which are right for you I highly recommend a method I learned from Precision Nutrition’s co-founder, Phil Caravaggio. It’s called “triangulation.”

Here’s how you do it:

STEP 1

Find at least three *believable** people with *demonstrated* competence** who are passionate about the subject matter.

STEP 2

Prepare thoughtful, insightful, deeply curious questions to ask them. Creating these questions might take some research and “homework” beforehand—for instance, he might review a particular person’s career path, read materials they wrote, and so forth.

STEP 3

Use these questions to interview them in person (preferably) or on a video conference; listen closely and absorb everything they teach, taking extensive notes.

STEP 4

Pay particular attention to areas where the experts don’t agree. (This is important.) Then follow up with each to figure out why they disagree.

STEP 5

Only then, taking everything into account, make your decision.

*

People who have repeatedly and successfully accomplished the thing in question, who have a strong track record with at least three successes, and have great explanations of their approach when probed.

**

Showing that you deserve the title of “authority” or “expert” with consistently high-level performance.

Your Educational Tournament

Chapter 7: Education

How should you choose your very next learning opportunity?

Here's what I recommend:

STEP 1

Begin where you are today.

STEP 2

Check your gaps.

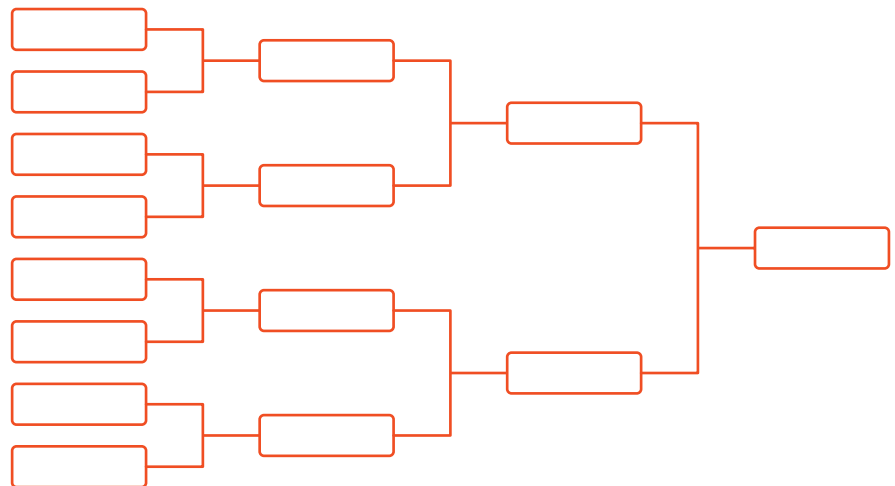
STEP 3

Do a limiting factor analysis.

STEP 4

Run a tournament.

Fill out the following blank tournament bracket to decide on your next course or learning opportunity. Pair up items from your list, make them compete for the next precious spot in your learning calendar, and see what wins. (Then, of course, take action and do the learning.)



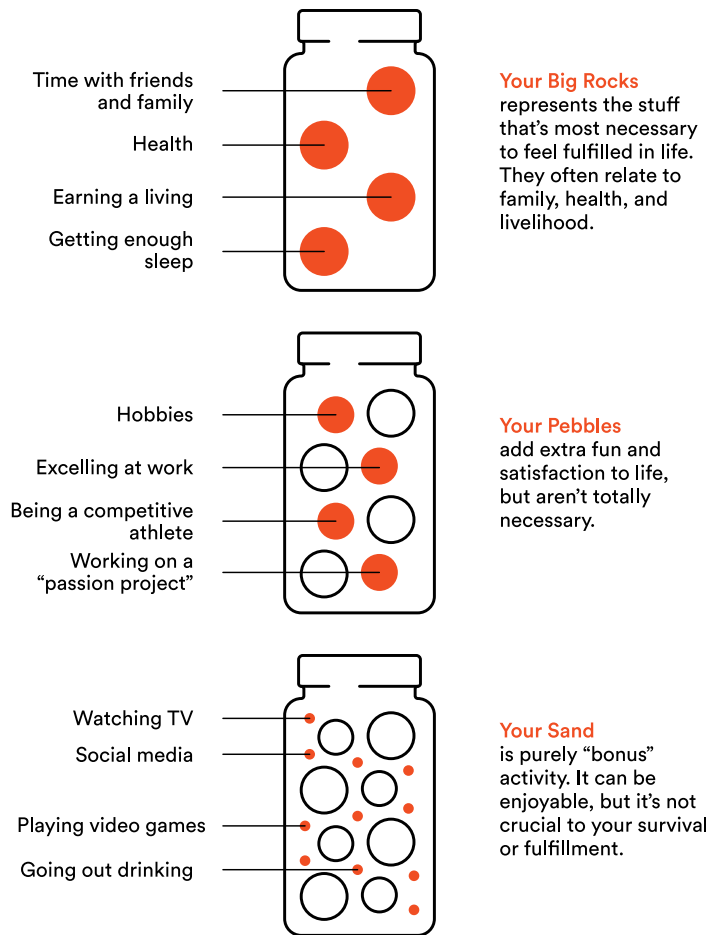
Important: Once you complete your latest learning adventure, be sure to rerun the tournament. You'll want to be sure your original list, your brackets, and your winners are as up-to-date as possible and are based on what you've learned since your last time running it.

Prioritizing the “Big Rocks”

Chapter 7: Education

When overwhelmed with options and opportunity, errands and busy work, the only reliable way to make time for the most important things is to reevaluate how you’re spending your time and prioritize the tasks that have the potential to make the biggest difference.

One helpful method of doing so is to think of your time as a jar, which you can fill with a finite number of rocks, pebbles, and sand. Here’s an example:



Everyone’s rocks, pebbles, and sand will look different. But, regardless, if you fill your jar with too much sand first, the rocks and pebbles won’t fit.

Spend some time thinking about your “big rocks,” “pebbles,” and “sand,” and fill out the following.

These activities and worksheets are taken from the book **Change Maker**: Turn your passion for health and fitness into a powerful purpose and a wildly successful career by John Berardi, PhD.

Check it out at: www.changemakeracademy.com/book