



A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS
DEFINED HER WAY

CYNTHIA SHARPER

Daring and unique, Get Boss helps women alchemize failure into success. Each chapter offers raw commentary and thought-provoking exercises, holding readers accountable to gratitude, love, and action. It's the career guide you'll tell your mom, daughter, sister, cousin, and friends about. So find a pen, grab your copy, and get ready.

GET BOSS:

A Woman's Guide to Success Defined Her Way

by Cynthia Sharper

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Chapter 2: Get Your Mind Right

“Free your mind and the rest will follow.”

~ En Vogue

The women of En Vogue are not only recognized as one of the top five highest selling American female music groups in history but they have also garnered over thirty million streams and sold over twenty-million albums¹.” I trust them to school me on the benefits of a freed mind. Lyrics have power. That, and, who doesn’t love En Vogue? Yet, a freed mind had to first be willing to accept that something was holding it captive. Would you agree? I believe that ignorance, trauma, greed, and fear can imprison the mind. I’ve worked with clients and students who were psychologically imprisoned by the effects of poverty, absent and/or abusive parents, grief, rape, harmful religious indoctrinations, foster care systems, ex-lovers, crap supervisors, and a host of other traumas. These factors would often keep them in self-defeating patterns – most demonstrative in their levels of confidence during personal coaching, mock interviews or during their inability to speak fluidly about their abilities, accomplishments, and career goals. I would always have to dig a little deeper to help reprogram some of the outdated thought patterns and self-beliefs. Landing a job, promotion or college degree was simply the by-product of the healing and reframe. Like them, as you commit to finding your best, healthiest self and career, you will recognize that much of the work is mental. I challenge you to start here.

Real change occurs in the mind, and we attract people, circumstances, and things that confirm how we feel about ourselves. Our career identity can be evidence of [or a well-crafted illusion to detract from] this truth. Chapter two is an invitation to return to the light of your innocence when your mindset was full of growth and knew no limits. This is the spirit of Sankofa. Can you recall a time where you believed that anything was possible? What about your life would have to change for you to feel that way again? How much of what you’d like to change is related to how you make money or your level of education and training? What

¹ “Rhona Bennett, Terry Ellis, and Cindy Herron-Braggs,” www.envoguemusic.com, (2019)

pain have you buried? Which cycles of pain do you need to transform? What damaging self-talk are you willing to let go so you can start anew?

Unchecked pain will hurt personal relationships first and then radiate to your relational dynamics at work. Emotions are everywhere in your workplace, and dealing with them at work is unavoidable.² How unresolved pain manifests on the job depends on your type of work and the position that you have within the company. For example, a person in a position of power that has not reconciled deep wounds typically takes it out on their staff (more on this later). A person in a less-powerful position and who also has been traumatized with the same unreconciled pain may ‘willingly’ suffer the abuses of this individual to keep their job as opposed to leaving or self-advocating. Or worse, a person may quit that position without a plan or upgraded skill set, potentially keeping themselves in cycles of guilt, low-wage, and impoverished self-esteem. Self-esteem is one of many psychological phenomena that can make, stagnate, or break a career. While a positive mental attitude and high self-esteem can double the chances of career success.³

Let’s pause to reflect on ways to increase in self-confidence, beginning with your unwavering commitment and determination to unconditionally love and accept yourself – with all your strengths and weaknesses.

Self-Check

A fixed mindset accepts things as they are with the assumption that they cannot or will not change. A growth mindset embraces challenge as an inspiration for better.⁴

For the remainder of chapter two, we will do exercises that encourage spiritual development and growth mindset. You will be challenged to take ownership of your thoughts, decisions, and how they impact your life. Bosses stay accountable, take calculated risks, and are reluctant to blame others for their failures. You can and will bring your mind into alignment with growth and

² “When Work Gets Personal,” <https://www.yourerc.com> (June 25, 2013)

³ “Self-Esteem and Career Success,” <https://www.strategy-business.com> (October 30, 2008)

⁴ Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2016)

possibility. When the thoughts of limitation, lack of self-love, and self-appreciation occur you will learn how to change the channel. Change it a few times until you get that mind right. Your rewards will undoubtedly come. *Ashé*.

The critically acclaimed psychologist, Dr. Carol Dweck examines the self-conceptions people use to structure the self and guide their behavior.⁵ According to Dr. Dweck, growth mindsets are ones that see challenges as opportunities to improve and grow through risk-taking and failure. A growth mindset also boosts resilience, positive emotions, and your ability to bounce back quickly from the agony of defeat.⁶ A fixed mindset is just the opposite – and is characterized by feelings of helplessness and a lack of persistence through tough times.

Most people are somewhere in the middle and demonstrate a mixture of both mindsets. The goal is to have more growth than fixed in all situations. I say this knowing that you've suffered your share of defeats. From my own experience managing failure and poor decisions, I know that some losses create temporary limitations that are very hard to overcome. Another example could be the failure to complete a high school diploma or post-secondary program (beyond high school). The number of employment options for an individual dramatically decreases when they fail to finish school. Limited job options typically cause financial chain reactions which are internalized and thereby chip away at self-worth and efficacy, lowering self-esteem. This example could characterize a woman who is not operating in her boss mode because she's focused on loss and *feelings* of limitation. Subsequent decisions reflect then affirm her inner conflict and cycles of lack, poverty and dis-ease may repeat.

In my thirteen years of career advising, I've counseled individuals with fixed mindsets. They often did not strive for better jobs or career opportunities without prompting. They settled. Settling is an attribute of a fixed mindset. Allow me to share a story about one of my welfare-to-work clients. This young lady would only look for housekeeping positions. When I asked about her goals, housekeeping was all that she mentioned. This is a respectable way to earn income but I was surprised that she had no other immediate ambitions. My client was only nineteen or twenty with a GED. At that age, the world was her oyster. She could have

⁵ <https://profiles.stanford.edu/carol-dweck>

⁶ Christopher Bergland, "Self-Compassion, Growth Mindset, and the Benefits of Failure" <https://www.psychologytoday.com>, (January 2017)

strived to achieve whatever career objectives imaginable. Yet, it never occurred to her to reach higher – and it hurt my feelings to see her stunt her own opportunities due to low self-esteem. It hurt because I saw myself in her eyes. My client did not understand how her work-related skills could transfer into higher-paying positions. All she knew was what she'd seen in her environment and how much she did not have as opposed to what was possible. Hours of mentoring, coaching, and résumé restructuring helped the young lady secure a position in retail sales earning over two dollars more per hour. She was elated. Years later I learned that she had moved into management and decided to go back to school.

While this story has a great ending, I've also worked with people that did not boss up and move beyond their fixed mindsets. Many were distracted, focused on limitation or simply gave up. The predominant focus on limitations often leads to poor life choices and the continuance of poor life choices. So back to you. What choices are you making that keep you in toxic cycles and a fixed mentality? Who and what helped to keep you there?

Relationships

Your innermost thoughts, as well as subconscious programming, affect how you interact with the world. What you think is directly related to how you show up in your relationships, especially those that require you to perform. Moreover, mindset impacts your relationship with education, training and employment opportunities.

Have you ever thought about these things as relationships? How do you feel about these areas of your life? Where is the connection strongest? Weakest? The quality of every relationship that you have is an expression of how you think about yourself and your surroundings. And all relationships require honesty, trust, hard work and a willingness to fail and be wrong. The best relationships occur when there is an abundance of love, humility, and patience. In the career and educational context, you should be willing to honestly look at your circumstance with self-love and patience – especially with the obstacles and any dissatisfaction you may experience while reflecting on this area of your life.

In contrast, do you know which relationships dominate your time and attention? Romantic relationships? Relationships with food? Relationships with

your outer appearance – and the time and money you may spend mastering that illusion? Relationships with your parents? Relationships with yourself because you have no parents? Relationships with coworkers? I know that it's hard to maintain healthy balances in all relationship areas. That's a lot to ask. Sometimes we escape and hyper-focus on our education and career goals at the expense of abandoning other relationships that are tougher to manage. Whoa. Maintaining healthy relations is the challenge of our entire human existence. Over-extension in relationships, especially toxic ones is a prescription for pain – and irreversible collateral damage to ourselves and those we love.

I have been guilty of overextending myself in work, personal, and romantic relationships. Some of those dynamics were verbally, physically and psychologically abusive and as a result, I suffered from profound stress that caused neurological damage, moderately disfiguring the left-half of my face. When I tell you that facial paralysis has shaken me to my core, it's an understatement. Though the severity has decreased, the trial of disfigurement has challenged me cosmetically, psychologically and professionally. In many ways, I haven't felt like myself since – and it's been about 16 years. Needless to say, I've come a long way from the days of not wanting to leave the house (or my bed). I'm getting better at ignoring people who gawk and better at forgiving those who still make cruel remarks. Essentially, I've had to develop self-worth beyond my outer beauty. Labeled a medical 'mystery' at the time, perhaps my illness was a result of the inability to manage and ELIMINATE extreme stressors from my body and life. At the time, I chose to stay in a harmful relationship in exchange for toxic, co-dependent love. My body couldn't handle the strain and I suffered silently when I knew it was time to go. I accept my responsibility in that.

I have also had to be honest about how my relationship with sugar and alcohol affect(ed) my body, energy levels, immune system, and motivation. For example, I've eaten myself into sugar and carb comas, ignoring health concerns. I've also turned to red wine to self-medicate the pain away. While these vices are quite common, it doesn't make them okay. My work didn't necessarily suffer, but my discipline in completing this book and pursuing entrepreneurial freedom did. That, and I gained weight and settled for larger sizes and less time in the mirror naked. You should always spend time in reflection while naked. That's real talk. Lack of discipline in one relationship will usually transfer to others and I had to

look in the mirror several times, new expressions and all, to finally acknowledge that I was playing myself.

Rebalancing Activity

We have a lot of work to do in this chapter so I've organized the rebalance into seven steps: Decide, Believe, Visualize and Expect, Change Your Input, Change Your Output, Change Your Company and Be Patient. Honestly, you might dread this part. If you're not ready to put in the work, then stop right now, and do not move forward or engage in the following pages until you are ready. I love you but need for you to commit to the process of purposefully answering the questions and completing the exercises ahead. Without commitment, my words are just words – inspiration at best. I want you to be more than inspired. I want you to get to work and boss up your life on your terms. If you feel any resistance to moving forward, it may be a good idea to journal those reasons. Then challenge their validity. Rest and take the time to contemplate your motivations for reading *Get Boss* and if you're ready, come back and finish. If not, I ask that you pass this manual to someone else that you care about. No love lost.

Step 1 - Decide

Decide that you have room for growth and improvement. Decide your goals can and will be achieved in divine time. Decide that just “getting by” in your career is no longer an option. We already live with the clear and present wage disparity between the sexes in the U.S. Some things take generations to overcome ... and organizations like Women Employed, AAUW, UN Women, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau works toward eliminating the wage gap. In the meantime, you don't have to settle for a life of low-wage jobs. And recall, low-wage is in the eyes of the beholder. A millionaire may think earning six-figures is low-wage, and a six-figure executive may see earnings of \$65k a year as low-wage. Wealth is relative. Comparing yourself to others by minimizing your own accomplishments is self-sabotage.

How will you decide to get boss? Which relationship with WHAT have you playing yourself small? Where have you given up on yourself? Ignoring the truth or praying and waiting on a miracle, while physically doing next-to-nothing, is not

okay. Faith without work is wasted energy. Actually, if faith is not accompanied by action, it is dead⁷, according to the book of James. Inaction can also cause us to feel tremendous guilt as well as cycles of self-condemnation.

Decide to put in the work and evaluate your relationships in an effort to align your mentality with success and a growth mindset. Decide to have the audacity to do more for your SELF, to dream bigger, to ask for more, to demand more for yourself and your loved ones. Don't let life decide for you. Don't allow setbacks to continue to decide for you! Remember, we are training our minds. Your thoughts create your reality; your reality mirrors your subconscious thoughts. You can deprogram ... use your mind to visualize the best version of your life. From there, you can decide to make moves in the direction of what you desire most!

Toxic Release Activity for Step 1

Your intentions are so very powerful – as are your decisions. Free will is a double-edged sword. You have the power to make choices that can make life sweet or very difficult. In the following activity, you are to revisit your toxic relationship list and decide once and for all what to do about them.

For example, you could say, 'My relationship with finances is toxic; I have decided to seek a free credit counseling agency or budgeting app to help me develop a healthier relationship with my finances,' or 'my relationship with public speaking is so toxic, I have decided to continue to speak publicly and consult with a therapist and people I trust to help me develop healthier habits, including self-talk, before, during and after speaking engagements.'

⁷ Jm. 2:17, NIV

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH _____ IS TOXIC

Ex: My spending habits

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

SO I HAVE DECIDED ...

Ex: To seek out a free credit counseling agency or app to help me manage my budget and debts

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9



Step 2 – Believe

Do you believe you can? Honestly, there were times when the state of my life had become so pathetic, I just *decided (step 1) to believe (step 2)* that one day I would earn a lot more – and therefore, have the ability to provide my child with more. It was she who helped me cultivate career goals beyond basic survival. And it was this that helped me get my life in order. In many ways, I owe my daughter my career and my life.

Back in the day, somewhere around 2002, all I wanted was to earn \$50k a year. I was a bank teller at the time, earning somewhere around \$23k a year. For reference, I had my baby girl at eighteen and dropped out of college after completing freshman year at Capital University. At the time, and for years after, I had no dreams or real goals besides going back to school to finish my baccalaureate program. My dreams of being a writer faded into the complexity of my new reality as a teenage mom. I had no clue that I'd become an expert at living in a numb, depreciated state of existence brought about by childhood traumas and religious programming that is, to this day, healing in layers.

I honestly could not imagine life beyond twenty-five to thirty years old. I set the \$50k goal when I was a twenty-six-year-old bank teller and customer service representative for Charter One Bank. I was earning between \$10-\$12/hour and was paid to process transactions, sell banking products and recruit new and upgraded business, personal checking, and investment accounts. It took nearly four years working there part-time to increase my wage by 37.5 percent from my starting wage of \$8/hour. Before banking, I barely earned \$7/hour as an overnight stocker and daytime sales assistant supervisor (with no benefits, except a 401k plan) at a major department store. My annual salary was less than \$10,000 there while raising my daughter and attending classes at the University of Toledo.

I provide my story as a backdrop to help you understand why setting a salary goal of \$50,000 was so powerful. I still remember the day that I wrote “\$50k” on a pink sticky-note inside my teller-window and had the nerve to actually expect to achieve it. It was an audacious stretch: boss intentions for boss moves. A double or triple salary increase is always a boss move.

For reference, the median earnings for women working full time in 2002 were about \$26,712/year (\$530/week) according to the Bureau of Labor and

Statistics.⁸ As a single mother who had not quite completed a social sciences degree, I intended to earn nearly double the gross median salary of women in the nation. Talk about #goals. No self-help book, blog, or IG guru helped me dream this ‘big.’

It took me another fourteen years, including two years as a stay-at-home mother, one marriage, one master’s degree program, and one divorce, the birth of my grandbaby, two raises and one promotion to finally reach that \$50k/year goal. Have mercy ... but that was my journey. So, yes, in the fall of 2016, I accepted a new role as Assistant Director of the Bowling Green State University Career Center and I started with a salary of \$50, 000/year. Keep in mind that in 2016, the median wage for full-time working women was \$37, 749 (about \$782/week).⁹ African-American women earned even less (\$672/week or \$33, 868/yr.).

Throughout the ups and downs of the fourteen-year hike to my salary goal, the true irony is that in the fourteenth year, shortly after the finality of a divorce which nearly left me emotionally incapacitated, I was offered two positions that each paid \$50k annually, within two different organizations. Go figure. One of those offers came out of the blue when a former employer asked me to come back for about nine-thousand dollars more a year. While I was grateful for simultaneous offers and of course the \$50k salary, I wasn’t as excited as I thought I would be when I created the goal. There were reasons for the dissatisfaction: I now had a child in college and a teenager with private school tuition and fees. You know, inflation, etc., lol. So, I worked my ass off, bossed-up my growth mindset – as is my tradition – and was promoted again to the position of Associate Director with nearly a thirty percent increase in roughly one year. And I will never stop stretching above and beyond any salary cap I encounter. Not out of greed, but out of my true understanding of my value and contributions. Brilliance costs.

Let this be your inspiration, to always write and rewrite your monetary and professional goals. Write them clearly, state them aloud, affirm your intent and never forget them. Isaiah 55:11 says, “so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

⁸ “Highlights of women’s earnings in 2002,” <https://www.bls.gov> (September 2003)

⁹ “Women’s median earnings 82 percent of men’s in 2016,” <https://www.bls.gov> (March 8, 2017)

As you can tell I rely on broad spectrums of wisdom to inform my path. One of my first affirmations came while reading a quote on self-renewal from the late educator, leader, and public servant John Gardner. I was standing in my teller window: “There’s something I know about you that you may or may not know about yourself. You have within you more resources of energy than have ever been tapped, more talent than has ever been exploited, more strength than has ever been tested, more to give than you have ever given.”

Mr. Gardner’s words helped me understand that I wasn’t finished yet! I could overcome my situation and poverty. I rewrote and taped this quote in several places at work and at home. This quote was the first of many to slowly de-active the running malware of guilt and disappointment that ran through my mind like a bad app. A dirty computer¹⁰ still perfect and clean in all of my imperfections. To this day, I still work in earnest to believe that I am enough.

Dare to Believe Activity for Step 2

Where is your mind in the midst of transformation? Do you believe that you have the ability to achieve your deepest desires? Do you believe that you have the courage to find and live out your passions? Do you believe or doubt your ability to change your life? Believing in what seems impossible can feel like a Jedi mind trick. Your ultimate challenge is to tell your mind what to believe ... not the other way around! Mind control. Right. I know ... when you are courageous enough to DECIDE to make clear intentions and believe in their manifestation, miracles happen.

Please use this next exercise to create and embed empowering beliefs into both your subconscious and conscious awareness. You will clarify your decisions as well as each intention behind them. An example statement could be, “I dare to believe that I have the ability to, and therefore, will learn Microsoft Excel in order to increase my efficiency at work,” or, “I dare to believe that my daycare issues will resolve themselves so that I can attend school at night in order to advance my career and improve my family’s quality of living.” Whatever fear paralyzes your boss ambition, dare to believe the opposite. Let the daring free you. Let your belief BE you! Get ready for powerful career shifts as you upgrade core beliefs.

¹⁰ Janelle Monet. Dirty Computer. Wondaland Arts Society, Bad Boy Records and Atlantic Records, 2018

I DARE TO BELIEVE

Ex: I will grow my business to an international market

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9



Hopefully, you ran out of room! Your new list should supply your daily affirmation arsenal. Copy/paste or snap a photo of your new and updated beliefs and place them where you can read them out loud. I surround myself in affirmations like this:

- Vision boards – I have four and am always astonished when I, with divine assistance, begin to manifest the phrases and photos. Try using a digitized vision board as your desktop or phone wallpaper (check out online tutorials on this). I use a variety of magazines (Forbes, In Style, Essence, etc.) to collage my visions. I also like to bring ladies together to create our boards as a community. We also pray and set goals together. It’s a beautiful experience. When I come to your town, please join me!
- Encouraging words in dry-erase marker on almost anything. I will write on any mirror that I look in several times a day ... even my rear-view used to say, “the past is the past ...”
- Sticky notes at home and work – you know this by now!
 - “Love is all that is,” been on my computer monitor for two years. It helps to keep me in a love frequency despite external toxicity.
 - Snap a pic of your sticky note and save it to the background of your phone or desktop. I once used a note that said, “I slay,” because I do.

Have fun with your visualization activities and pay attention to how they make you feel **DESPITE** your current circumstances. Hack the malware of self-doubt and affirm your greatness. You deserve happiness and goodness always, in all ways.

Step 3 – Visualize and Expect

You are grounded in thankfulness and open to receiving the benefits and rewards of thinking positively while expecting greatness from and for yourself. See yourself accomplishing your dreams in your mind’s eye. Imagine them, step by step. If it’s re-enrolling in classes this fall, spring, or even this summer, see yourself walking onto campus or going online to live-chat with someone while getting the answers you need. Who knew enrolling was this achievable? Maybe you envision yourself standing on a scale and seeing your weight at three pounds lighter than your ideal weight. You squeal in delight, hop-off, and James-Brown-shuffle to the mirror so you can do the snake. Yea! How do these experiences feel, look, smell and taste?! Stay in that frequency and smile, girl! That’s what I’m

talking about. Quietly, I'm still visualizing my first book-signing, surrounded by love, looking sleek, and overjoyed. I hope to see you there! *Ashé*.

Visualization is a technique used by elite athletes and the super-rich to accomplish goals.¹¹ World-renowned speaker and author Dr. Deepak Chopra says that visualization changes your behavior.¹² No matter how you earn a living, couldn't you use an upgrade? How do you visualize your next position? Are you on your feet, sitting, or a little of both? How are you dressed? How does it make you feel to be in this new situation? What do you see, smell and hear in this new situation? If you visualize your desired outcome every day, for twenty-one days, how will that impact your daily decisions?

Visualizing can be scary! It might feel silly or unrealistic to create and experience highly desirable situations in your mind. But what's wrong with holding a vision? When disbelief or negativity creep in, stop. Redirect your thoughts and try again. Feel the joy of visualizing an improved version of your life. You deserve it.

First, we should distinguish visualization from daydreaming. There are distinct differences in approach and outcome. Daydreaming is:

- Unfocused, unconscious thinking that can be pleasant or negative
- A form of procrastination in disguise (a pleasant escape)
- Not the same as visualization and doesn't require feelings to fuel them like visualization¹³

Visualize Success Activity for Step 3

This next activity forces you to clearly and intentionally use the power of your emotions and the mind's eye. Use the following grid to organize the details of your vision. See yourself engaged in the ideal work environment, healthy body weight, dream vacation, spiritual experience, classroom setting, or whatever you sincerely

¹¹ Jack Canfield, "Visualization Techniques to Affirm Your Desired Outcomes: A Step by Step Guide," <https://jackcanfield.com/blog> (2013)

¹² "How the Practices of Deepak Chopra Changed the Life of a Cancer Patient," <https://www.foxnews.com> (March 26, 2013)

¹³ Danii Turnbull, "8 Differences Between Visualization and Daydreaming," <http://www.olivelantern.com/8-differences-between-visualization-and-day-dreaming/> (Nov. 2015)

hope to achieve. For example, imagine seven details in every scene of your vision. Under “where?” you might write, 1) a conference room 2) on the fifth floor at the _____ headquarters in _____ 3) at the head of the table 4) facing six board members 5) in front of a laptop 6) next to a screen 7) with my back facing windows that overlook the New York city skyline. Next, in the “wearing” section, you could list seven items that make up your outfit within the environment already outlined within the “where” section.

Use the Visualize Success grid in whatever way feels natural. Remember you don’t have to necessarily envision something career-related. Maybe you need to envision an important conversation with your daughter, parent, or partner. In the deepest part of your heart, what do you want that interaction to look like?

Ok, it’s almost time to write. After the exercise, I highly suggest that you create new and improved visualization grids in the cloud or a physical notebook (remember those?). You may even choose to record audio files and meditate to them later. Whatever method you decide upon, it is important that you experience the emotions of securing your dream situation. Spend time and attention developing the ‘how do you feel?’ column. Allowing emotions to enter your visions energizes them in a powerful and alchemical way. It will transmute your creativity into a full body experience throughout multiple dimensions.

VISUALIZE SUCCESS

WHERE?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

WEARING?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

DOING?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

SEE AND HEAR?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

FEEL?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

BEST SCENARIO?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.



Once you've completed the entire grid, pick a time of day and spend as long as you can visualizing one scenario at a time. Make time to experience the satisfaction, happiness, love, joy, accomplishment, and peace of mind that visualization can bring. You should do this daily – perhaps before bed, when you awake, during lunch, or as part of your daily prayer and meditation. Remember ... if doubts creep-in, stop, pray, and try again. If you find yourself daydreaming, stop and try again. It will take practice and time but you should absolutely expect for a version of your visualization to come true. As above so below.

Step 4 – Change Your Input, Mind, and Body

If you obsessively monitor what other people do instead of carefully minding your own self-improvement, you are self-sabotaging. Trolling lowers self-esteem. Comparing yourself to others and then staying in a frequency of envy is indicative of a fixed mindset. We're not doing that, remember? Walking around with a compromised mentality is dangerous and can keep you trapped in illusions of hopelessness. We have to resuscitate ourselves. Get and stay woke. Because sleeping in the shadow of another's shine is not living. It's vampirism. How can you upgrade yourself if most of your waking consciousness is dedicated to somebody else? How do you have time to consume alerts and feeds about other people living their best lives? I mean ... we all know it's mostly an illusion, but still.

Is there a quicker route to envy **and** even depression? Sheesh. I've probably wasted hundreds of hours online, not on social media per se but in surfing and watching other people live their best lives while I procrastinated in managing mine. It's addictively satisfying to numb the pain of your own existence through the ingestion of entertainment and social media. Are your online friends really your friends? Are your followers following the real you? How is their input, or lack thereof, affecting your daily energy? What do your follows and likes say about you? Let that saturate while I move on ...

Internet activity is a form of psychological consumption but food consumption affects the mind too. Dr. Chopra encourages visualization as well as natural foods to obtain optimal living and success. He advocates that we rid the body of processed foods (anything not grown and served fresh, i.e., sausage, chips, nuggets, most breads, etc.). Anything that you allow into your body has a chemical and physical impact on your brain. Almost every disease can be linked to diet. The

same can be said about your emotional and spiritual health. You have to be protective of what comes into your energetic and psychological fields. Therefore, it is imperative that you scrutinize what enters and **leaves** your mouth. Garbage in = garbage out.

If you eat a lot of fast-food, convenient store garbage (and I loooooove, love-love hot Cheetos) you will kill yourself from the inside out – teeth included. I have more cavity fillings than I care to admit. Carbs cause cavities, too. A poor diet will leave you depressed and zapped of energy. According to Harvard Medical School, a dietary pattern characterized by high consumption of red and/or processed meat, refined grains, sweets, high-fat dairy products, butter, potatoes, and high-fat gravy, and low intakes of fruits and vegetables is associated with an increased risk of depression.¹⁴

Everyone has problems, but how your body and mind are prepared to handle those problems can often be related to diet – and we don't always consider that. We'll run to the doctor for a prescription for Zoloft or Prozac before we run to the produce and whole foods aisle. Just saying.

Ambition takes energy. How can we have the energy to get up, get out and get boss with a sluggish, tired and constipated body and mind? You absolutely must connect your diet to the quality of your existence. Try to eat right. I fail regularly, but I also succeed in making positive choices toward a fresh, low-to-no meat diet. Eating well can be expensive, but it's no costlier than nail-service, tanning, or beauty supply binge-shopping on wigs and cosmetics. And no, I have nothing against fake hair or makeup. I love options like the next woman and have had my fun with pony-tails, braided extensions, and concealer. I wouldn't dare judge a woman's decision to enhance, especially women who battle health conditions. What I'm talking about is the priority financing of façade over self-care and family. You don't have to hide what's underneath and there is no need to compete for what already belongs to you. Tell him to get hair-plugs and conceal **his** stretch marks. And frankly, your money could be better invested. Alright ... I'm done with that topic.

¹⁴ Monique Tello, MD, MPH, "Diet and Depression," <https://www.health.harvard.edu> (February 22, 2018)

Back to input ... junk food is junk food. If you feed your mind with music and graphic images that are full of misogynistic and oversexualized lyrics, drugs and violence, what do you think your focus will be? Not a career, it couldn't be.

Check your playlist. It's probably a variety of music genres, but there are some songs you listen to more than others. What are your top five songs in rotation – what is the lyrical content? How do you feel in your chest and stomach when you listen to them? Are you inspired to get up before 4:00 a.m. or 5:00 a.m. to work out then prep your children for the day to be out of the house at or before 7:00 a.m. in order to get your résumés updated, emailed, or printed by 8:00 am? This was my life at one time.

Does your playlist keep you motivated, every day, all day? Are you inspired to be great? Does it make you want to dance? If so, do you dutty whine to the bank or the clinic? Do the lyrics make you angry? Aroused? Frustrated? Depressed? Lonely? Are you missing that jerk you should have left a lonng time ago? Do the lyrics make you feel under-accomplished ... or, what?

What's really going on with the soundtrack of your life?! Is it motivating you to work toward a promotion? Start your business? Update your website (self-check!)? Seriously, you should write the lyrics sometime and just read them aloud. Read the lyrics real loud, read them to someone you look up to and then ask yourself if the words are helping you align to the work you've invested during the exercises of *Get Boss*.

Your playlist is the soundtrack of your life. I stream binaural meditations but trust me; I've also favorited some songs in my Tidal playlist lately, and um, I need to go ahead and delete some. There are valid times and places for all genres of music; I firmly believe that. I've listened and danced to everything from Beethoven to Belle & Sebastian; from Sister Nancy and Stevie Wonder to the Sons of Kemet; Princess Nokia to Pharrell; Women of the Calabash to Christine and the Queens (and about 400 other artists, including Solange and the Carters – of course!). My son and I frequently bond over new music. He plays two instruments and has an eclectic taste for the arts like his mom – and I love when he hits me with something brilliant. Ratchet, trap music with the sick bass lines sound great at the gym and during the interstate drive to work. They too can inspire and put you in beast-mode to blow through challenges like a boss – it's important to give

the ego room to flex. Then we reel it in. Keeping toxic music in rotation, and coaching my subconscious mind is not good. I have to check myself and remember that I am the feminine archetype for my son as we bob our heads with the roof back. I told him the same thing – we gotta’ watch what we stream into our minds. Period, because we have no time for frequent, foolish consumption ... and neither should you.

External images affect your mind’s ability to maintain balance as well. The subconscious does not know the difference between real and make-believe so why would you allow images of deceit, gossip, casual sex, and violence your home? Enter the minds of innocent children? Junk input is like junk food and it is an addiction. I hope the next exercise will help you identify which consumptions need to leave your life. Include food, music, downloads, and the like. If it helps, go through your cabinets, your handbags, your social media accounts, and phone contacts. Also scrutinize your lists of downloaded games, movies, and playlists.

Winning Input Activity for Step 4

In the next activity, you will write about the inputs that are dirtying your physical and energetic bodies. Our energetic bodies cannot be seen with the naked eye, but are highly complex and intelligent systems that comprise our emotions, chakras and auric fields. Inputs such as diet, sexual behaviors, entertainment, and conversations with others affect your energy. Always consider your spiritual/energetic body when making decisions. This holistic awareness will assist your communion with the Holy Spirit and intuition. It will also increase your ability to recognize and stay clear of bad influences. In doing so, you will come up with healthier alternatives and affirmations. The Buddhist path to right-mindedness involves a mind that is devoid of lust, ill-will, and cruelty.¹⁵

Example statements could be, “I know my obsession with gaming has got to go. Instead, I will enjoy using the same amount of time taking action steps towards my dreams of starting a business.” You could also say, “I know watching hours of ___ every day has got to go. Instead, I will enjoy the sense of accomplishment and hope that comes with researching degree and training programs.” Use this exercise to isolate and replace problematic behaviors with winning solutions. You

¹⁵ Jayaram V, “Right Mindedness or Right Resolve,” <https://www.hinduwebsite.com>

have nine opportunities to help clean up your act, below. Keep it real and have fun!

**I KNOW _____
HAS GOT TO GO**

Ex: My addiction to
social media

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

**INSTEAD, I WILL ENJOY
THIS WINNER**

Ex: Using the same time to
teach/talk to my children

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9



Your winning action list should motivate new levels of redemption and hope. Your mind is holy and powerfully created, so you must protect it. In doing so, your changes in attitude and behavior will radiate from the inside out.

Step 5 – Change Your Output

I can feel the shift in energy ... can you? Yassss! We're making great progress. Output, in this section, refers to the words we speak. One of the quickest ways to sabotage your life is through the whispers and conjures of a deplorable tongue. What's the tone of your self-talk? What spells are you casting in your own life? Broke people say they're broke, so they stay or become broken. If we loved ourselves and our children, we would choose our words with wisdom. It's like labeling a child as bad their whole life and then wondering why they manifest badness ... their whole life. Duh.

How many religious texts have to say the SAME THING about the power of words? If we really understood our creative authority, we would never speak [or write, or post] a negative comment again. Whether you are talking about yourself or someone else, it comes back to you. I truly believe that obsessive, sharp-tongued gossip-mongers are devoid of self-acceptance and love.

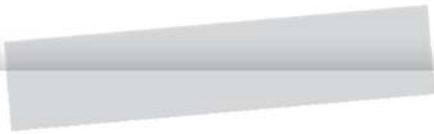
Seek to verbally affirm positive energy in your career and personal life. I've said this many times. You should have predominantly positive, uplifting things to say or nothing at all. Remember that in right-mindedness, we are seeking the light in all dark situations. Even saying 'peace' to a lover and especially to a hater – as well as 'thank you' and 'I love you' helps to attract good things. It's a universal law.

Negative language endorses situations we are trying to escape. So stop verbally amplifying situations that you really do not want to experience.

Purifying My Outputs Activity for Step 5

The next exercise is used to track and replace negative outputs. Focus on how you express yourself. Now think of ways to reframe your language, hence your mentality. An example could be, "I will no longer complain about my landlord's refusal to maintain a clean and safe living environment. Instead, I will focus on the fact that I have shelter while I improve my ability to relocate to a space that better reflects my personal level of self-love, self-provision, and self-respect." Or, "I will no longer sing along to love-songs that make me feel awful/envious/

lonely/angry/_____ (*note that singing a sad love song is slightly worse than merely listening to the same lyrical content). Instead, I will focus and speak on the love that already surrounds me, even if that means the love I am growing for myself.” There is no wrong way to complete this exercise. Whatever comes to mind, is right for you.



I WILL NO LONGER ...

Ex. 1: Compare my career to someone else's

Ex. 2: Be angry at my mother/father

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

INSTEAD, I WILL FOCUS AND SPEAK ON ...

Ex. 1: My dreams and work towards them

Ex. 2: Self-healing and forgiveness first

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	



Take a picture of the completed activity and save the image as a constant reminder. You may need to share the image with an accountability partner so that you stay on track. For at least twenty-one days, commit to changing your output. Ask your angels for assistance and be persistent.

Step 6 – Change Your Company

Complacency is cancer. When you are surrounded by drama, pain, and people of a fixed mindset, it's hard not to match that same frequency. The spirit of indolence is sneaky. You may find yourself depressed and unmotivated in the company of the depressed and unmotivated! Like crabs in a bucket, they'll pull you down so everyone can scavenge off the same energetic waste.

Unfortunately, bad company can also come packaged significant others, family, colleagues, and supervisors. Even more unfortunate is that we hold onto toxic relationships long after their expiration date. Sometimes we have to let them go and let distance be our teacher. You will learn self-reliance through the process. Distance also helps you see that the healthiest relationships can survive estrangement while the ones that were meant to end, do so. Only time will tell if those connections are meant to regenerate. Your mental and emotional wellbeing is not a luxury; it's something you must fight to protect – even if that means sacrificing relationships you once treasured. Allow me to explain ...

I chose to abandon an abusive marriage. Over the course of eleven years, I had lost my ability to negotiate irrational, threatening behavior. The intimidation and degradation got worse and more frequent; my children were often afraid, isolated or crying; and I knew we deserved better. Almost overnight, I decided to walk away from the middle-class luxuries of 'married life' and headed for a one-bedroom apartment with my two kids.

In the simplicity of sleeping on that cold-ass floor with all of my clothes and shoes fitting into one coat-closet, I found indescribable relief. Juxtapose my freedom against the shock of my babies, ages eighteen and ten. Though my daughter was already away at college, it was especially agonizing to witness my son as he processed the pain of separation and divorce. We have both had counseling and to this day, I carefully listen to his perspective while gently providing my own: I loved my ex-husband but had to leave for the sake of

everyone's long-term psychological and physical safety. By grace, I was able to slay some demons and rescue my children's mother. By doing so, I truly believe that I freed my ex-husband to slay a few demons of his own.

Cord Cutting Activity for Step 6

Generational cords of abuse and victimization are real. Toxic cords of any kind are unacceptable. As you read my testimony, I can only assume that you were made aware of the cords that you also need to cut. Reflect on the company you keep. We typically have three kinds of people in our immediate circle – the good for you, the not good for you and the neutral-for-now. Identify five people in your personal and professional circle who need to go! Focus on how these people truly make you feel. Allow God/dess to sever any cords that connect you to harmful energies and trust that it is for your highest good. Pray to dissolve any unknown addictions to toxic personalities so that you can learn your spiritual lessons and move on to healthier environments and activities. Brainstorm what these could be and grow something beautiful.



**I AM CUTTING THE
CORDS TO ...**

Ex. 1: My ex-partner
Ex. 2: My toxic work
environment

1

2

3

4

5

**SO THAT THIS CAN
GROW INSTEAD ...**

Ex. 1: Self-love and
independence
Ex. 2: Courage and faith
during change

1

2

3

4

5



Step 7 – Be Patient

Patience is centeredness during the ebb and flow of joy and adversity. It takes great patience to navigate adversity including the emotional drain of job dissatisfaction. I've held several positions where I emphatically said, "This ain't gon' work – I'm out!" Then another voice would say, "Okay, so now what? If you quit, what's the plan? Where will you go and how will you care for yourself and your children?"

Patience and iron-will are the primary skills needed to survive and transcend job dissatisfaction, low-wage, and unemployment. There will be times when you want to give up because life may seem to stagnate. Success, wealth, and independence may seem to elude you. Chapter one, *Get Thankful*, will help you recognize the abundance that already exists but is often overlooked. When we are prone to frequent failures we can become blind to the blessings in plain sight. Just because you fail doesn't mean you lose! Six-time best-selling author and renowned speaker, Lisa Nichols, says that abundant leaders permit themselves to fail. And I've developed a love-frustrate relationship with failure because I know success is imminent and comes faster when I learn what NOT to do the first or second times around. I have had to be patient through pitfalls and so must you. Just because we get ahead and then fall back again does not mean that it is over. I view failure as an opportunity to practice patience through the ebb and flow. Thriving through adversity makes you a warrior and authentic as you reach back to other women who need your mentorship in the future.

Consider this quote from President Obama: "Making your mark on the world is hard. If it were easy, everybody would do it. But it's not. It takes patience, it takes commitment, and it comes with plenty of failures along the way. The real test is not whether you avoid this failure because you won't. It's whether you let it harden or shame you into inaction or whether you learn from it; whether you choose to persevere."

Patience destabilizes shame and fear. On the contrary, it demonstrates perseverance, wisdom, and self-control. Since millennia, master teachers have demonstrated the art of patience. The Chinese oracle system of *I Ching* says that training our mind is similar to gently redirecting a dog on a leash. Control. We

should work to master our thoughts and disallow them to enslave our existence and relationships.

The processes of growth and healing can be overwhelming. People may reject and criticize your actions as you more consistently make decisions that no longer reflect your old ways of thinking. Patiently replace the noise of judgment with loving thoughts of forgiveness and focus. Most importantly, be patient with yourself and be patient with your grind to new levels of redemption. Shifting your mindset and the behaviors associated therein will not happen overnight.

What Motivates You to Get Your Mind Right?

When you actively pursue mind and mental health, everything else in your life will fall into alignment, and managing stress (because stressors will ALWAYS be present) becomes so much easier. Pursuing right-mindedness has to be a priority. Be encouraged to seek a professional counselor or healer to help you process old wounds and trauma. I believe in working with mineral deposits (crystals) and tuning chakra systems as well. Consistent practice of whatever blend of modalities work for you should be a priority far above education and career mobility. Mental and spiritual health absolutely impact every aspect of your life. A poor leader (parent, partner, etc.) is always injured at the root.

Trauma may take years to come to the surface but when it does you could go into an emotional crisis. Women internalize so much pain ... we can put on a brave, contoured face but no glamorous career or title will release you from inner turmoil. Seek help without the shame attached. But don't do it because I said so. Something must sustain your efforts today, tomorrow and hopefully, for the remainder of your days, no matter where you are in your career. What will motivate you to take care of your mind? My children motivate me.

I've mentioned that my daughter motivated me to finish my bachelor's degree and excel in my career. After my son was born, he motivated me to pursue freelance journalism through Adams Street Publishing. One day, I decided to do something about my obsession with child abductions and crib death, I monetized my fear and decided to write an investigative article on missing children in Lucas County. I turned post-partum depression into revenue. My article evolved from missing children to the teen runaway crisis we had in the area. As it turns out, more children ran away than were abducted at the time of my reporting. In

October 2004, the Toledo Area Parent published the article and after it's writing, I was delivered from those post-partum anxieties.

Sometimes the fear of an outcome can be a motivator but it must be alchemized. We should always find a way to replace fear with a love-based action. For example, I developed a deeper love for foster youth, the primary teen runaway population in Toledo, through my work on that article. My Aunt B had to go into foster care as a young teen and ironically, my household was blessed by several foster children in the early '90s. Several years later in 2015, I helped create a support network for former foster youth on the campus of Bowling Green State University (BGSU). My love for them motivated a wave of compassion, donations and grant-funded programming for orphans and independent students on BGSU's campus. The program is now called the Independent Falcon Network and we've had several students graduate from the University since then. I see challenges as motivation to build, serve and make a difference.

Clear, love-based motivations are essential to a healthy mind. Be unwavering and unapologetic as you strive for right-mindedness in pursuit of your long-term aspirations. The time is now.

Take Action

Update your responses within chapter two frequently. As time passes, do self-checks to ensure progress toward right-mindedness. Re-read this chapter often. When you feel old habits and relationships creeping in, ground yourself in the work you just completed. I hope that you have learned a lot about yourself in the meantime. Make a note of any activities that made you uncomfortable. Sit with the discomfort and feel the spiritual stretch. Stretching releases tension and emotion. Releasing toxic emotions stimulates growth! Holistic growth occurs mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. As above, so below. Synchronous opportunities will find you as your positive vibrations increase. I have witnessed this truth for job seekers of all background, race, age, and gender. Power-moves require that we raise our vibration through consistent, holistic growth and devout self-commitment. I'd like for you to make this declaration through the personal oath exercise. Rewrite or post your oath where you can see it regularly. See you in chapter three!

PERSONAL OATH

I am grateful and commit to my personal and professional development. For the rest of my life, I will never give up on myself and my ability to do better. My definition of boss is mine alone. I define my own success, and I rightfully claim the love, life, and abundance that my Creator intended. My mind is right. *Ashé.*

Signature

Date





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