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NOW

How to Increase  
Your Value at Home,  
Work, and the Bank

## EXCERPT: CHAPTER 4 WEAPON #2: DETERMINATION

Determination is what gets you to any goal, even after your initial promise to yourself has become a distant memory. Do you know which day of the year is our National Break Your Promise Day? It is January 2nd. Every year millions of people break their New Year's resolutions within twenty-four hours of promising themselves something to the contrary. In truth, people can do whatever they desire to do. It is not the desire that is lacking, but the willpower. You must believe that you will never fail at reaching your destiny, and feed your willpower with strong determination.

When you first set a goal, your mind is determined to assist you by any means necessary. It materializes your destiny through purposeful action and by attracting you to the right conditions. The course of your life's purpose will crystallize *with every thought* about why you are pursuing your goals. If you get a little off course or run into a fork in the road, you will know which way to go if your determination is set on a clear outcome.

Previously we discussed destiny and used the metaphor of driving on I-95 South and ending up in Miami. Let's focus back on that metaphor in regard to your goals. As we discussed it wouldn't be logical for you to determine the location of every gas station from Upstate New York to Miami, Florida, before you get on the road. You know that at intervals during your trip you will see sign for gas stations. The same applies when you are going through life moving toward your goals. It is more important that you know where you want to go than the specifics of how you're going to get there.

Don't allow yourself to be tripped up by not knowing how you will get something done. At this point, the *hows* shouldn't be your concern. Stay focused on the *whys* and be determined to take your first step. Each new step in life after that one will be founded upon your determination to reach your destiny. Through that determination, purposeful actions will evolve into automatic processes.

At first, you may be driven to master a new skill. Your first time learning how to operate a car is a good example of the process of mastering a skill and the role that determination plays. In the beginning, you were aware of every move you made to drive. You thought through every action before you did it. It was probably tough at first, but you were determined to master it. When it became frustrating, you didn't refuse ever to drive again. Instead, you mastered the skills needed to drive, and things like using your signal light and turning a corner became automatic responses.

You are ready to master a new skill when you reach the automatic response phase. At this point your determination prompts you to focus on the next new thing that you will have to think through. Eventually, this new action will also become an automatic process.

You are driving today due to your determination to learn how. Determination allows you to absorb the lessons you learn along the way in order to keep moving forward. However, you may run into rough patches along the way of mastering a new skill. These can cause you to lose determination and miss out on obvious solutions to your problems.

Sometimes, the solutions to your problems are right in front of you, but you haven't taken the

time to notice. Determination affords you the time to notice the little things.

For example, you probably own a wristwatch. **DON'T LOOK AT IT NOW.** I am going to ask you a few questions about it, and then I want you to look at your watch. A study stated the average person looks at their watch over 500 times a day. If you hate your job, then double that amount!

Here are my questions about your watch.

- What symbol is used for the “12”? Is it a digit or a roman numeral?
- What symbol is used for “3,” “6,” and “9”? Are those digits or roman numerals?
- What symbol measures the individual minutes? Are those lines, dots, or nothing at all?

Okay, look at your watch now. How close were you?

Most people have had their watches for years, and they have looked at their watches over a thousand times. Still, many cannot answer these questions accurately.

This is a metaphor for the problems you face every day. So many times, the solutions to your problems are less than an arm's length away. It's not until you pay attention to the little details that you will see the big picture.

When most people think of willpower, they think of controlling their habits. You can't break a habit. The only way to get rid of a bad habit is to replace it with a good one.

I was a closet smoker of cigarettes for nineteen years. I would try to stop smoking, but at some point in the day I would start smoking again. I would continue to smoke for months before trying to quit again, and sometimes it would be years between attempts to quit smoking. This cycle of failure continued for several years until one day I was able to quit in an instant and I have not smoked since. The same thing that gave me the willpower to quit smoking immediately also helped me to create great habits like what I eat and how often I worked out.

We are going to discuss how you can develop the willpower to do whatever you want . . . and it won't take years either. It will only take a moment to make a change forever.

## **Building Your Will**

As I just mentioned, making a change for the better doesn't have to take long to do. I was able to work with my wife, Lori, to help her address one of her habits. Lori had a strong passion around a particular food. She loved the macaroni and cheese served at her job. For years, she was battling a mini-revolution every time she walked into the cafeteria at the University of Maryland. She could not resist getting the biggest portion possible of macaroni and cheese. This caused her significant concern, as she began focusing more on losing weight. One day I told her I believed I had figured out how to instantly make someone stop liking a bad habit they enjoyed for years. She was quick to volunteer and gave me her confession about the macaroni and cheese. I took her through an exercise that only lasted a few moments. She hasn't had macaroni and cheese since.

I am going to tell you how Lori got the willpower in a moment that helped her stop a pattern of behavior she had for years. First, let me tell you what I found out that led me to figuring

out how to build willpower and keep it during a revolution, no matter how big or small. The proof is in the pudding . . . or in this case, in the mac and cheese.

### **Free Will + Mind Power =**

I promise to keep my explanation simple about how and why mind power and free will together have an impact on your determination. Ultimately, they are the deciding factors in winning or losing your habit revolutions.

There are good habits and bad habits, and our goal is to use our will to bend both. You want to adopt one and get rid of the other. When you are strapped to a poor habit that you cannot get rid of, your mind is being held in shackles. When you are trying to create a good habit that keeps evading you, then your mind is too free.

Lori's mind was shackled to macaroni and cheese. In order for me to help her get rid of this habit, I had to help her free her mind. I asked Lori to describe to me what she associated with mac and cheese. She described many positive feelings. She also described where these feelings were located, how they smelled, and what they would look like. Trust me. She had a lot to say about loving mac and cheese.

Then I had her tell me about another food, one that she detested. She detailed her feelings about what she hated with the same intensity. Her mind was held captive to her habit because of how she associated with mac and cheese. To free her mind, I needed to take her through a quick exercise that would replace the positive association with mac and cheese in her mind.

Before I could help her make the replacement, she needed to exercise her free will and acknowledge that she wanted to make this change. After she used free will to make the choice, I began giving her exercises to use her mind power to associate mac and cheese with the food she hated. I then asked her how she felt about mac and cheese, to which she replied, "Something is different. It doesn't feel as being that big of a deal." The entire exercise took less than three minutes to rid her of a food addiction she had for over three years.

At face value it seems like it only took Lori three minutes to change. In actuality, it took her three years and three minutes to change. It took her three years to apply free will and three minutes to make the conscious decision to change.

Many of us know we need to make a change, but we never commit to acknowledging we are going to change and so we don't. By itself, knowing something is wrong does not equate to doing something about what is wrong. Take two obese people for instance. One obese person goes to the mirror to check how his clothes match, whereas another obese person goes to the mirror to check how his clothes fit. Both people know they are obese, but one person chooses to ignore the obesity, or at least to tolerate it.

The biggest obstacle in regard to habits is when you alienate yourself from your inalienable right of free will. Free will is powerful. Take a look at what William Hutchinson Murray said: "Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, the providence moves too."<sup>1</sup> The combination of free will and mind power adds up to willpower.

My wife eliminated a big habit and I got a big hug.

*Free will + Mind power = Willpower*

No longer will you have to fail at your determination and say, “Tomorrow is another day.” Moving forward from here on out, you can say, “Today is the day.”

## **Your Flight Path**

I was conducting sales training in Tennessee, when one of my clients invited me to take a trip in his private plane. I jumped at the opportunity and he even let me fly the plane for a few miles. I was amazed at how he could manage to get from one place to another so effortlessly without any traffic signs or directions, like, “Take a right at the thirdcloud.”

My client shared with me that 99 percent of the time he is flying off course. He has to constantly make adjustments to his flight path based on the traffic flow of other airplanes, different wind patterns that he crosses, and jet streams. He could not fly the plane on autopilot and arrive at his destination effortlessly. Knowing where to land is the goal, but by knowing *when* and *how* to make adjustments to your course really is what takes you to your destination.

The most successful people in life exert willpower, follow and adjust their flight path, and reach their destination. Having the determination to reach your goals, like flying an airplane, requires three things. You must:

- Know where you want to go,
- Take action in that direction, and
- Be ready to make needed adjustments along the way.

Lori knew where she wanted to go (“no more mac”), and then she took action by applying her free will and adjusting her mental associations. She was ready. Every three months or so I would hear, “Honey, will you do your willpower technique with me again?” She needed a dose of willpower. Even so, I am happy to report she is still mac free.

## **The Target: Where You Want to Go**

Knowing your destiny is the first step in reaching your goals. You would think twice about getting in an airplane if you didn’t know where you were going. However, every day you may feel like you are getting out of bed and going into the world not knowing where you will end up.

You may be self-conscious about your age and feel like you should have been farther along in your goals by now. We are all “works in progress.” Don’t judge the book about your life one chapter at a time. Don’t be so hard on yourself, because you aren’t done yet!

Even if you have already gone as far as you had hoped, or even if you are not quite there yet, you are the only one who can decide if time is your foe or ally. Break loose from the bondage

of self-imposed timelines. Don't let your current position detour you from setting your final destination. Remember that identifying your destiny is the first step in the process of increasing your value at home, work, and the bank. Before you start going anywhere, make sure you aren't on a flight path to nowhere.

### **The Take Off: Action in the Right Direction**

You may experience some hesitancy in actually taking off to “fly” to your destination. A strong determination to move forward after you have identified where you want to go is a vital next step. You may be discouraged to take the first step because you are unsure of what the third or fourth steps entail. Don't let a lack of foresight cause you to override your insight to move forward toward your goal.

My first boss had a saying, “New level, new devil.” What she was referring to is that every time we reach for a higher level in our lives, we are bound to run into some challenges. Take that first step in spite of the challenges, and don't give up because of them.

You cannot achieve a purposeful life on autopilot. Similar to an airplane trip, there are bound to be rough spots throughout your journey. Despite having a solid plan to increase your value at home, at work, or at the bank, there will be adjustments. The majority of the time you will be off course, just like an airplane following a flight path. The key is to make your adjustments quickly.

I married my beautiful wife in September 1997. Many people thought it was a bad idea because of my financial situation. I talked a good game, but the majority of onlookers could see that I had no money and no prospects for the future. Two years later, they still appeared to be right on both accords.

I took a chance on starting my own business and it failed . . . big time! Our landlord refused to renew our lease and we were forced to move to a tougher section of town. Because I wasn't bringing in any money, the utilities started to get cut off. The water was the last utility we lost. You can't flush your toilet if your water is cut off. But my lovely wife, who came from a well-to-do family, didn't run home to Momma. She stayed with her husband in spite of the lack of electricity and the absence of water.

Desperate times call for desperate actions. Lori bluntly stated the uncomfortable truth: We were not going to be able to have the water turned back on for another week. We therefore needed a strategy around using the bathroom. For one week, this former debutante and college graduate was subjected to placing a trash bag over the toilet, tying it up when complete, and throwing it out for the garbage man to haul away our shame.

The last night of the week, I planned on taking out the garbage, but after getting home from working two jobs, my inner voice cautioned that the kitchen garbage could wait until the morning. Two minutes later, as I slowly dragged myself upstairs I heard several gun shots from the back of the house. Apparently, the row house adjacent to ours belonged to a drug dealer who was being robbed. If I had taken out the garbage as planned I would have run into the murderers and double homicide might have become a triple homicide. I was devastated at how far I had fallen.

The next day my friend saw the story on the news and came over to visit us. I cried my eyes

out as I reflected on how my actions had led us to being evicted, living in a high crime area, having our lights cut off, and having the prettiest woman in town using a trash bag for a toilet. Lori put her arms around me and said, “I believe in us. We will make it together.” The look in her eyes was one of pure faith. Lori believed in me so much that she made me believe in myself again. The look of confidence on her face became the anchor for my willpower. I would fail several other times over the years, but the same look of confidence from Lori remained. It inspired me to learn from my errors and strive to improve. We never threw a pity party.

In 2006, we received our social security benefits statement in the mail. It showed our taxable income for that year and previous years. That year was unlike the other years. I noticed that within a six-year period I had gone from making \$15,000 dollars a year to \$122,000 dollars a year. I was shocked! Lori was not shocked. Over the years she had successfully used her willpower technique on me, too. I looked at the benefit statement, remembered the garbage bags, remembered each look of confidence from Lori, then turned around and gave her a big hug.

Whether you want to break a habit or begin doing something great, willpower means knowing how to identify your target, take action towards it, then utilizing any failures as catalysts for change and getting back on course.

### **Failure and Determination**

Willpower grows like a muscle. Your muscles grow when they come into opposition with a force that pushes them beyond their current capabilities. Life is the only class where the test comes first and the lesson comes afterwards. Our failures are merely bridges to success, crafted with the stones of determination.

The most determined man I know is my friend Brett. Brett has been my friend for over a decade. Together we have watched each other come from nowhere and achieve our dreams. However, Brett started from a place much more challenging than my own. It was his determination that helped him stay on path and eventually reach his goals.

Brett’s birth was controversial. His biological mother had an affair with her sister’s husband while living in her sister’s home. His aunt adopted him, despite her feelings against her sister and her husband’s infidelity, and raised Brett as her own son. He grew up knowing the situation surrounding his birth, but never looked at his life as a mistake (and neither did his aunt/mother).

Brett was always the type of person who marched to the beat of his own drum. As such, he dropped out of college and moved to Denver in pursuit of his dreams. Brett wanted to become rich, and someday work for Tony Robbins. He felt that if he became wealthy, Tony Robbins would notice him. He tried every business scheme there was without ever making it big. He finally had to confront failure when his rent was two months past due, his car had been broken into, and he lost his ten-dollar-an-hour telemarketing job. He moved back in with his mother and father in Arizona.

His parents were glad that he had “come to his senses” and moved back home. But Brett told them that he planned to save up his money and move to San Diego, because he still wanted to work for Tony Robbins. Brett believed that his failures had come from pursuing

get-rich-quick schemes, not from his dream of working for Robbins. His course adjustment was to work for Robbins first and later become rich. His parents and siblings tried to talk him out of his plan. Eventually, he stopped telling them his plans, but he remained determined to save up his money for another attempt at greatness.

After several months and much reflection on his past mistakes, Brett reached his financial goal. He packed up and moved to San Diego, leaving the “doubters” behind. They all thought he would be back soon, but they would have to wait a long while. Brett arrived in San Diego and stayed in a hotel until he secured a job as a customer service representative for a local company. He repeatedly went to the Anthony Robbins Foundation seeking employment. Although he didn’t get the answer he wanted at that time he continued to go week after week.

One day his persistence finally paid off. After receiving his applications multiple times, they decided to give his skills a try. He was finally offered a job!

Brett worked so hard at his new job that after a short while he was given an opportunity to move up in the company. In less than one year, he switched roles several times and got a promotion. In addition, he met Tony Robbins, personally, several times in that first year.

He eventually did return to Arizona, but by choice rather than desperation. At the time of this publication he is still a valued member of the operations team for the Anthony Robbins Foundation.

We all fall from time to time. However, your determination will enable you to get up faster, better, and stronger the next time around. As the poet Maya Angelou says, “You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so that you know who you are, what you can rise from, and how you can still come out of it.”<sup>2</sup>