

I don't just read books, I devour them, with a pen in my hand, highlighting and making notes. After reading, I copy down all the notes and type them up, considering each idea all over again. Yet, I have often found that key learnings are too quickly gone from memory. That's why I started compiling these two-page book reviews for personal use. With the encouragement of friends and colleagues, I offer my notes now through the Creative Option C website so that others may gain the insight of these authors and perhaps be inspired to read the entire work.

TITLE:	<u>The Magic of Thinking Big: Acquire the Secrets of Success...Achieve Everything You've Always Wanted</u>
AUTHOR:	David A. Schwartz, PhD, Georgia State University, President, Creative Educational Services
PUBLICATION:	Simon & Schuster, 1959. Fireside Edition 2007

PRIMARY THEME: Where there is a will, there is a way. People who have big dreams, who believe in them strongly, and are committed to their achievement, will have big success in life. Even when we don't know exactly how we will achieve some goal, it is important to hold firmly to the belief. A way will be found. That is the magic. An important sub-theme here is that success is generally predicated on the assistance and support of others, so it is necessary to keep others on side, not just by being likeable, but by genuinely liking other people and valuing their contributions.

SUMMARY DISCUSSION: This is one of the classics in a series of similarly-themed books by authors ranging from Napoleon Hill to Norman Cousins to Wayne Dyer to Rhonda Byrne, who wrote 2007's best seller The Secret. The book explores the connection between our thoughts and the reality we create. The condition of one's life is a direct consequence of how one chooses to be. This book is readable and practical, less spiritual than others like it.

CHAPTERS:

- *Chapter 1: Believe You Can Succeed and You Will.* This is an overview of the main thesis of the book. Human experience is created by human thought. Those of us who think positively, who believe in ourselves, and who expect success will create the conditions for achieving it. Thinking about failure produces failure. Thinking about success has the opposite effect. The trick is to monitor and guide your thoughts.
- *Chapter 2: Cure Yourself of Excusitis, the Failure Disease.* Successful people are generally not in the habit of making excuses when things don't go well. They take responsibility, grasp the learning, and move on. The people who cannot make a success of their lives are the ones who think they are too unhealthy, too unintelligent, not the right age, or have bad luck. Losers make excuses; winners make plans.
- *Chapter 3: Build Confidence and Destroy Fear.* Confidence is not something we are born with. Rather, it is something we develop, over time, as we take action in accordance with our goals and our consciences. Easy action steps for creating confidence include 1) sitting in the front row, 2) practicing making eye contact, 3) walking faster, 4) speaking up, and 5) smiling big.
- *Chapter 4: How to Think Big.* How big one thinks determines one's level of success in life, so practice thinking big. Focus on your assets, how to use them, and on being positive about both yourself and about others. Envision the future the way you want it, without the limiting hindrance of current reality. Time spent wallowing in trivial details is time not spent thinking up a new reality.
- *Chapter 5: How to Think and Dream Creatively.* Our creative minds follow our beliefs. If we believe strongly enough in our big idea, our mind will sooner or later invent the how-to part. It helps to stay open to new ideas,

to solicit ideas from others, to break old habits and patterns, and to devote time daily or weekly to reviewing your ideas and thinking through how to implement the good ones.

- *Chapter 6: You Are What You Think You Are.* How we are treated by others is largely governed by how we treat ourselves. If we treat ourselves with respect, others will as well. If we think we are important and worthy of respect, we will act that way. If we take care of our appearance, we reflect to others a sense that we matter.
- *Chapter 7: Manage Your Environment: Go First Class.* Whenever we make changes and begin to grow, or express our ideas about the future we want, we will often find that well-meaning people around us begin to throw cold water. Listen to these “negators” but don’t let them bring you down. Seek out successful people whose achievements you admire and ask their advice. Go out of your way to make friends with people who stimulate and encourage you. And avoid poisoning your mind with negative talk and gossip. Elevate yourself through the company you keep.
- *Chapter 8: Make Your Attitudes Your Allies.* Since attitude is such an important progenitor of success, it is important to cultivate positive attitudes. Three especially useful ones are an attitude of enthusiasm, an attitude of appreciation for others, and an attitude of service.
- *Chapter 9: Think Right Toward People.* It is no secret that likeability can be an important element in success, which of course always requires the support of others. Just as interesting is the habit of sincerely **liking** others. Strategies are provided for those who struggle to find something positive in difficult people. Accepting human differences and taking the initiative to build friendships are two such strategies. Practice thinking well of others until it is automatic.
- *Chapter 10: Get the Action Habit.* An idea might be great but if it is never implemented, it will be less in the end than a mediocre idea that someone did put into action. Some people procrastinate because of fear or boredom but the cure for that is taking the dreaded action. Conditions may never be perfect, so there is no time like the present to begin. Just do it.
- *Chapter 11: How to Turn Defeat into Victory.* There is forward movement in every setback for the person who takes the time to salvage the learnings, remains undaunted, stays focused on the goal, and chooses to live victoriously. Persistence and determination overcomes luck.
- *Chapter 12: Use Goals to Help You Grow.* “A goal is a dream being acted upon.” Taking steps to achieve a goal creates energy, which can then be applied to further actions necessary to achieve the goal. Schwartz advises making sure the tasks we perform each day advance a goal, and also that monthly benchmarks be established on the way to a ten-year vision.
- *Chapter 13: How to Think Like a Leader.* The Four Leadership Principles are 1) Trade minds with people you want to influence, 2) Think: what is the human way to handle this? 3) Think progress, believe in progress, push for progress, and 4) Take time to confer with yourself and develop your supreme thinking power.

TOOLS: This is an author who makes ample use of checklists, tables, bulleted hints and tips, and side-by-side lists that contrast such things as “The Petty Thinker’s Approach” and “The Big Thinker’s Approach.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS: *“Doing what’s right keeps your conscience satisfied. And this builds self-confidence. When we do what is known to be wrong, two negative things happen. First, we feel guilt and this guilt eats away confidence. Second, other people sooner or later find out and lose confidence in us.”* p. 67-68.

“The price tag the world puts on us is just about identical to the one we put on ourselves.” p. 88.

“Successful businesses invest large sums in consumer research... The procedure for developing successful products is to get as much opinion as you can, listen to the people who will buy the product, and then design the product and its promotion to please these people.” p. 117.

“Put service first and money takes care of itself - always.” p. 188.

“...how you think when you lose determines how long it will be until you win!” p. 209.