

THE ART OF BEING **RUTHLESS**

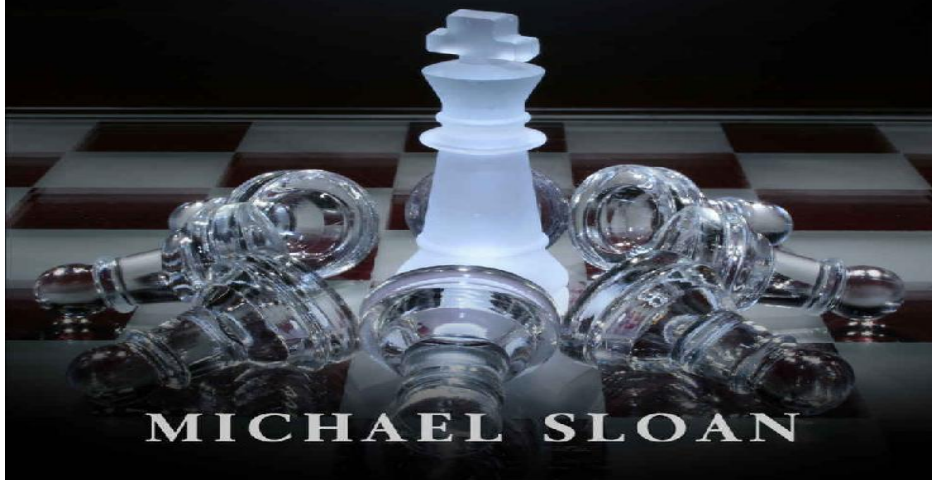
HOW TO BE BOLD, FIND
YOUR SPINE AND TAKE
CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE



MICHAEL SLOAN

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How to Be Bold, Find Your Spine and Take Control
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Introduction

Are you tired of being pushed around? Do you hate it when others are disrespectful to you, rude or even violent towards you, causing you to feel helpless? In today's society, it seems that there are two different kinds of person: the one who is willing to take whatever they want and the one who's always being taken advantage of. If you're tired of being a doormat, pushed around and always being the guy to come in last, then this is the book that you've been looking for. We're here to talk about how to become ruthless. We'll discuss what ruthlessness really is, how it can benefit your life and what kind of mindset will allow you to become as ruthless as you want to be. Don't let your boss, friends and relationships hold you down any longer. You don't need to wait for some kind of permission to become the best kind of person that you want to be. All you need is the strength, guts and willingness to step up to the plate and recognize that you're in charge.

Let's be clear about something. Ruthlessness isn't about being evil. It's not about hurting people, crushing others or causing harm. Rather being ruthless is all about learning how to get what you actually want out of life and preventing other people from controlling you. You see, everything ultimately boils down to control. Your boss controls you with your paycheck, your relatives control you with guilt and the corporate world controls you through materialism. We are here to help you break free of all of those controls and assist you in becoming your own man. Being ruthless means that you are free to do as you please and that you are not bound by other people's methods of control.

This book isn't about taking shortcuts; it's not about how you can get ahead by being corrupt. Instead, we are presenting a mindset that will allow you to move freely in your own life, free from the guilt, shame and other hooks that people put into us from a very early age. We'll look at what control really means, then we'll move into talking about how to be ruthless in your decision-making process. We'll also explain what pragmatism

means and how it can be beneficial in your life and then finally, we'll talk about ways you can become more ruthless in everyday life. If you're interested in learning how to grow a spine, take control of your life and achieve everything that you want to achieve with boldness and confidence, then let's get moving!

Chapter 1: The Ties That Bind

From the very moment that we are born, other people seek to control us. Our parents feed us when they want to feed us, they clothe us how they desire and they take us wherever they want. We have little say in the things that happen around us. Then as we start to get older, we become autonomous. We start learning to make our own decisions, despite how young we are. We start to develop a sense of self and that self is often at odds with other people. We want to play loudly, but Mom and Dad are trying to sleep, so they shush us. We want to run around, but the parents don't like us doing that. If we do things they don't like, sometimes they even punish us. We begin to learn, from a very early age, that if we don't act how the adults want us to act, we will be punished. What happens when we get in school? The teachers exert influence and control on us as well, shaping us and forcing us to do as they wish. If we don't act according to their will, if we try to do things our own way, we are scolded and punished. This cycle of punishment and coercion lasts all the way up until we're graduated and out of the house, living on our own.

This system of control isn't based on freedom and rationality, rather it is based primarily on punishment and shame. So instead of teaching a child to be independent, adults often discover that it's easier and more effective if they control the child. Emphasis on understanding and overcoming problems are diminished, instead of teaching children that mistakes are good, we live in a society where mistakes are brutally punished and shame is weaponized against most children as a means of control.

So, what happens when you grow up in a world where your parents and teachers focus on controlling you instead of aiding you in your journey? Control quickly becomes the only world we know and as a result we begin to experience a significant reduction in our own free will. We begin to act out of compulsion, instead of out of our own desire. Punishment dictates our actions. So, we grow up in a world where we aren't given a sense of confidence and autonomy. Instead, we are taught to obey and if we don't obey, we become punished.

This creates a mentality within most people, a mentality of compliance. Compliance is the key to control. It is actually very difficult to force someone to do something that they don't want to do, unless they are compliant. Compliance is a combination of a broken spirit, a weak will and a sense of fear. As we grow up in a world that demands compliance from us, we end up becoming that broken spirit over time. Our wills are weakened from a lifetime of being forced to follow orders at every step of the way.

This doesn't just leave us when we turn 18, either. For many people, we end up trapped in this compliant mindset for most of our lives. When the boss tells us that we're going to have to work late tonight, we agree. When the girlfriend calls us up and demands that we cancel plans, we agree. We are still just as compliant and weak as a little four-year-old boy who just learned that his parents punish him when he's too loud inside of the house.

Now there is a place and time for a long, drawn out conversation on what the most effective parenting methods are, how to use them and why we should teach children strength instead of compliance, but this isn't the book for that. Still, it's important for you to be able to know that the reason why most men and women are so afraid and nervous about the world around them is because of the compliance instilled in them by their parents. Even if your parents were really kind and you weren't punished that often, you still grew up in a world that punishes failure and rewards success with little thought as to how it affects the development of a young child.

You might be someone who doesn't like to step on toes. Maybe you get nervous or worried when it comes to conflict, or perhaps you're someone who always does what you're told, even if you really don't want to. Most likely, in some way, you are compliant. There are a lot of ways that we can mask compliance, there are a lot of ways to justify blind obedience in our lives. We can say that we're just being nice, or that we don't want to hurt other people's feelings. You can be nice and refuse to be compliant. You can avoid hurting other people's feelings and still get your way. We often find ways to justify our compliance and act as if fear wasn't the sole factor that was driving our motivations.

Think about it for a moment. If you didn't have fear in your life, what would you do differently? If you weren't afraid of your boss, losing your job, dealing with conflict or demanding a raise, how different would your life be? Fear of punishment is programmed into us at a very early age and guess what? When someone spends enough time stuffing feelings and emotions into our minds, it doesn't go away magically. And so, we grow up learning to be good little boys and girls, but we are taught a strange definition of good. We are not taught to do good because of morality, rather we are taught that obeying authority is the ultimate good. Are you too loud in class? Being good is being quiet. Do you want to eat cereal for dinner? Being good means you only eat cereal for breakfast. Do you want to have the weekend off? Being good means coming into work on a Saturday. We aren't taught basic principles of right and wrong as much as we are taught how to be compliant with the world around us. The rules constantly change and to us they make no sense. The adults always seem to be making up new rules that stop us from doing the things that we want.

So, we become conditioned to become afraid whenever we try to stand up for ourselves and fight back. We find ourselves dealing with serious emotional and mental health issues at times because we are so worried, anxious and afraid. The punishments have stopped being dealt to us, after all we're adults, but the fear of being punished still haunts us. Then we end up in a voluntary position, such as at college or a job, where we aren't actually required to be there and we act as if we are still being controlled. So, we begin to comply. Work late? Sure, thing, boss. Unfairly graded paper? Well what are you going to do about it? Assertiveness, courage and boldness do not exist in a world of compliance and so we aren't set up to do the things that we really want to do.

Then someone comes along, someone who doesn't really seem to care about this culture of compliance. He speaks his mind at the workplace. He demands and gets a raise when he feels like he's earned one. If the boss tries to punish him for his actions, he looks elsewhere for work and finds it. He's the kind of guy who will ask for the manager when something in the restaurant goes wrong, he's the kind of guy who women feel safe around because he's willing to step up to the plate and handle things until they are

more to his liking. He isn't bound by compliance at all. Instead, he is free to live without fear and that is what ruthlessness really is.

Being ruthless isn't about being nasty or cruel, that's a mischaracterization. Being ruthless is about putting yourself first in terms of doing the things that you actually want to do. It's about being free from the expectations and the controls that other people have on you. You can be a ruthless individual and still be a moral person, but most of the time we don't really act good out of morality, we act good out of compliance. We do the things we're supposed to do because we fear punishment! So, don't think that by talking about ruthlessness that we're here to tell you to be wretched, evil and cruel, because that's not really what we're here to talk about. We're here to tell you what it means to act ruthless by living life on your own terms. No one wants to be controlled, no one wants to be owned or to have a large list of rules put on them each and every day. But the compliant man is the one who accepts these rules that have been set on his back and lives under such a burden each day without ever questioning their legitimacy.

So, if we're going to learn how to cut those ties, to release ourselves from the bondage that has been placed on us by society, then we're going to have to be able to identify the fatal assumptions that we carried with us from childhood into adulthood. Once we question and challenge those assumptions, you'll learn that you indeed have a choice as to whether you want to live in fear or if you want to be your own man.

Fatal Assumption One: I Have to Obey Authority.

We often experience this feeling that we have to obey whatever authority figure is over us. When it comes to dealing with customer service situations, like getting a refund, we might find ourselves feeling like whatever the customer service representative has to say is the final word, even if we don't get our way. If we're in a workplace situation, we might perceive that obedience is required if we are going to keep our jobs. So, we exist in a world where we must, at all times, obey our masters and do as they say. We might try halfheartedly to get our way but at the end of the day they are the ones in charge.

Now there's one little problem with this fatal assumption. Your boss isn't actually the ultimate authority at your job. The corporation isn't the ultimate authority when it comes to getting a problem resolved, even your relationships aren't the ultimate authority on how you spend your time. You are actually the ultimate authority figure in all these situations. Why? Because you *chose* to be there in the first place. You are *giving* your boss permission to ride you every day because you are *choosing* to go to work. When a company refuses to be of help to you and you back down, you are *allowing* them to get away with their actions instead of just asking for managers until you finally get your problem solved.

You are ultimately responsible for your own actions, ideas and thoughts. If you don't think that you have any other choices in your life, if you think that you are trapped by your own boss, then of course you are going to obey everything that he tells you to do. Of course, you are going to cower in fear when he threatens to fire you over some imagined slight or problem. If you want to be bold, courageous and ruthless, you are going to have to realize that you need to stop seeing your boss as the guy in charge. Truthfully, you are the only one who is truly in charge.

Does this mean you are free to ignore your boss and do whatever you want to at work? Not at all! Remember, the point of being ruthless is getting what you actually want, not just being a jerk. There is a greater freedom to be found when you come to the realization that you are responsible for the horrible boss that you have in your life, for the toxic friends who drag you down and even for living in your own country! This freedom comes from realizing that any authority that you are under, it is because you choose to be under them.

Now there are forms of authority that should be obeyed, such as the law of the land. Breaking laws is dangerous and immoral, plus it could seriously cause you harm in the long run, so we're not advocating that you refuse to follow the authority of the government. At the same time, if you don't like the way a government is being run, ultimately you have the ability and authority to find somewhere else to go, one that might be more to your liking.

The problems happen when we *feel* like we don't have a say in who is in charge of us. When we believe that we are required to obey someone, it creates feelings of tension and resentment. When we voluntarily place ourselves under someone else's command, it's because we have respect for our leader and we trust them. We don't feel controlled by those people. On the other hand, if we feel a compulsion or requirement to follow someone's lead, it tends to drain our sense of independence and freedom.

You aren't required to do what your boss says, ultimately. There is nothing that is *forcing* you to stay under his command. He cannot harm you or use physical violence to control you. So why do we feel like we have to listen to these authority figures? It's because of our compliance culture. The reality is that you are free to do as you please.

At the end of the day, you don't have to work at a job you don't want. You don't have to do what your boss tells you and you don't even have to hang out with people that you don't like. You are responsible for your own choices and no one else has the power to tell you otherwise.

Fatal Assumption Two: If I Don't Do as They Say Bad Things Will Happen

This is most common in the workplace. "If I don't work late," the compliant man cries, "I'll lose my job!" "If I don't let my boss make those lewd comments about me," the compliant woman bemoans "I might not be able to move up in the company!" It is true that you might be in a position where you'll have to deal with serious consequences if you don't choose to obey your boss. But you've got to ask yourself if those consequences are actually the worst things that can happen to you.

The reality is that the worst thing that can happen to you is for you to lose your own sense of freedom.

When we put ourselves in situations where we are entirely dependent on other people to survive, we end up in a very unfortunate situation. If you feel like your job is a necessary thing, if you can't live without a job that you despise, then you are doomed to always be beholden to your company.

This loss of freedom that we experience is actually worse than any punishment that can be dealt to us.

If you desire to become ruthless, then you are going to need to be able to become free. A ruthless person is someone that says “I’m going to be my own man. I’m not going to be beholden to any other individual.” This kind of attitude requires some level of sacrifice on your part, however. If you want to engineer your life to where you aren’t dependent on external factors it is no easy task. But the reality is, when you feel like you are forced to work somewhere against your will, if the fear of consequences are the only things keeping you compliant, you are more akin to being a slave than a free man.

Breaking out of this slave mentality is going to require you to make some hard choices. It requires a total shift in thinking. You have to stop caring about obeying society around you and instead you need to start caring about how you can be free from these controlling factors in your life.

So how do we break free? How do we get out of a situation where our lives are constantly under other people’s control? The fear of punishment can be so overwhelming at times. We fear losing our jobs, relationships, money or material possessions. These fears can entangle us and bind us, trapping us in positions that we never really wanted to be a part of in the first place. How many times has a short-term job turned into a long-term nightmare? How many draining relationships are you in right now? There is only one solution and that solution is to cut the ties that bind us.

What are these ties? Well, a few ties are financial burdens such as debt, financial obligations to other people. There are relationship ties such as a bad romantic relationship or toxic friendships. Sometimes these ties are simply emotional, like guilt. If you want to be free, if you don’t want to be beholden to anyone, then you are going to have to focus on learning how to cut those ties.

Let’s not mince any words. The process of going from being a beholden individual to being a free man is hard. We’ll look closer at breaking those ties in the next chapter, but for right now, we’ll continue looking at the false assumptions that the compliant individual follows.

False Assumption Three: I don't want to hurt feelings

It's time to be really brutally honest with you. If you're someone who says you don't want to hurt feelings, that's not actually true. The truth is that you don't want to feel the emotional pain that comes from causing other people pain. You don't want to deal with the guilt, emotional turmoil and anxiety that comes with hurting other people's feelings. If we were able to hurt someone's feelings with a clean conscious, there is a pretty big chance that we would do it.

So, what do we do with this ugly truth? We own up to it! It's not our job to preserve other people's feelings when those other people don't care about how you feel. An abusive boss doesn't care about you. A spouse who's always cutting you down isn't concerned with how you feel. Why should you have to worry about not stepping on other people's toes when those same people have no qualms about stepping on yours?

Many times, we look to avoid conflict because we are actually quite unsure about ourselves. We are afraid of getting our own feelings hurt and seek to hide from such confrontations. Then, we are forced to endure abuse from our co-workers, friends and employers. We fear speaking up when the boss calls us in to work late, we fear telling our spouse how we feel when they insult us and we don't tell a friend about his obvious drinking problem because we are afraid of his reaction.

The reality is that we don't want to have our feelings hurt. It has nothing to do with hurting other people's feelings. The sooner you can embrace that, the sooner you can get over that hurdle. If the only thing keeping you from speaking your mind is the fear and anguish of conflict, then it has nothing to do with the other person. It has everything to do with you and how you perceive conflict.

Don't fall into the idea that you are being nice because you are letting people walk all over you. There is nothing wrong with being nice, there's nothing wrong with doing good things for other people and there's certainly nothing wrong with loving others, but choosing to avoid conflict because

you fear the consequences isn't nice at all. It is just a trained response to fear.

You have to take a hard look at your own self and ask yourself: am I a coward or am I considerate? Considerate individuals don't resent the people they help. Considerate people don't do things out of obligation, guilt or frustration. Considerate people do things out of love and compassion and guess what? If you don't have that love and compassion in your heart, then you're not considerate. So, what does that leave you as? It leaves you as someone who is refusing to step up to the plate and actually handle the problems in your life. It's harsh, but this is a book about being ruthless and part of ruthlessness is brutal honesty.

Fatal Assumption Four: I'm Just a Nice Guy!

A lot of times, we can characterize our weaknesses and our fear as being a nice guy. This is an insidious situation because it allows us to feel a smug sense of satisfaction in our own weakness. We look at the fact that we are doormats and believe that the reason we are constantly abused and stepped on is because we're just nice guys. The reality is that we are not nice guys, the reality is that we are just weak. If you really want to test whether you are a nice guy or just a weakling, ask yourself this: do you believe that nice guys finish last?

Nice guy syndrome is just another way of being compliant in society and worst of all it transfers the blame onto other people. This is where the idea that only bad people get ahead comes from. The idea that nice guys finish last is usually deeply seated in jealousy, envy and frustration at one's own inability to achieve their own goals.

The "nice guy" is nothing more than an artificial construct. He is a fantasy creation made to blame other people for his own failures. The nice guy reasons that the reason that he has fallen behind in life is because he is nice. He believes that everyone else around him is a bad person and that their immoral actions are why they succeed. In reality, the nice guy is living in his own little adolescent fantasy world. He has no one else to blame for

his predicament other than himself, but he doesn't see it that way. Instead, he's always pointing the finger at someone else, lamenting his niceness as being the reason why he can never get ahead.

The truth is that the nice guy can never get ahead because he is ultimately just a weak individual trying to justify his weakness. The ruthless individual doesn't cry and whine about how other people are doing better than him, the ruthless individual sets his mind to actually doing something about his own life.

The nice guy is a victim. Everything is always someone else's fault. He's just trying to get by, can't you see? Shouldn't you feel bad for the nice guy? After all he's nice! This victim mentality leaves someone with nice guy syndrome incapable of actually become a responsible adult in his life.

The ruthless individual is a victor, not a victim. He doesn't worry about the things that he cannot change. He doesn't focus on everyone else, he focuses on himself and tries to figure out how to best improve his own life, with little regard to who is or isn't "nice."

The nice guy must learn to realize that he isn't a failure in life because he is "nice." He is a failure because he is limiting himself by transferring the blame onto other people. It's better to accept this as true now and fix that mentality than it is to continue living that way forever.

Having spent enough time talking about these fatal assumptions, let's move on to the next chapter. This is where we will be discussing how to be ruthless with yourself. There are a lot of falsehoods that we have believed all of our lives. If you want to be bold, courageous and in control of your own life, you are going to have to learn to cut the ties that bind you. And those ties are cut by learning to be ruthless with your own self.

Chapter 2: Ruthless with Yourself

So, do you want to be ruthless? Are you really willing to look at your own self objectively and make some harsh judgments? The first step to being ruthless is looking at your own life and making some tough choices about the way you live it. It's not easy being introspective, especially when you're looking for things that are wrong with you. But if you want to become ruthless, if you want to learn how to live your life with boldness and confidence, you're going to have to make the decision to look inward.

Introspection is your friend. In our modern-day world, we often aren't very introspective. We don't really think about what is going on internally and we don't think about why we act the way we do. Instead we tend to just think about the now. We don't look at the past enough to realize our own flaws and failures, we only focus on the present and sometimes dream about the future. Yet when we give up introspection, we are giving up a huge part of our lives. We are giving up something that is of utmost value and importance: we are giving up the ability to change ourselves.

Changing yourself is possible, not very easy, but it is possible. All it takes is a willingness to look inward and see your own flaws, regardless of how uncomfortable that makes you feel. A lot of times though, we can just blame other people for our problems. This is where ruthlessness needs to come in. If we look at our own lives, if we look at our own actions and choices with a ruthless lens, we can see how we are at fault. If you don't want to be at fault, you're in trouble because you're really not going to change. If a problem is always someone else's fault, you are giving up responsibility. You're not going to be someone who's able to change the circumstances in your life because you believe these problems are caused by other people.

Imagine that there is a man who is walking down the side of the road. This man trips and falls in a hole. Well, he gets up and dusts himself off and says "my shoes must've caused me to fall into that manhole!" So, the next day he's out walking down the same street and sure enough the same hole is

there. This time he trips and falls into the hole again. He gets out of the hole, dusts himself off, looks at traffic and says “I was so distracted by the cars driving by that I didn’t see the hole! Those cars are the problem.” Well, the third day he’s walking down that same street and sure enough he trips and falls in the same hole, but this time he breaks his ankle. He says “why did the weather cause me to fall into this hole? If it had been a sunny day I would’ve seen the hole, so it’s the weather’s fault.”

This is absurd correct? If the man had said “I think I’m the reason why I keep falling into this hole,” and instead chose to walk down a different street, he wouldn’t have broken his ankle. But by choosing to blame every little thing in his life except for his own choices, the choices that led him down that specific roadway, he’s denying himself the ability to be free. Free from what? Free from his own poor decisions!

If you want to be free from your own poor decisions, if you want be free from the things that are holding you back, then you’re going to have to acknowledge that you have been part of the problem! It can be a little bit painful, it can be somewhat unpleasant but it’s worth it. Let’s face some harsh facts. You might be at a point in your life where you are unhappy. Whose fault is this? You can point at anyone else, you can point at your parents, your friends, your boss, and even your animals if you’re really desperate, but until you learn to point the finger at yourself, until you can sit in front of the mirror and say “I did this to myself,” you will never be free.

There’s a brutality in this choice, of course, but it’s a good brutality. You’ve got to be brutally honest with yourself. One of the greatest losses that we’ve had in this modern society is the loss of telling the truth. People who speak the truth are usually seen as cruel, mean, or rude. If a woman says “does this dress make me look ugly?” those who say “yes,” will be punished by society. We are expected to just agree that it looks great on her and flatter her ego. Then you allow this woman to go out into public wearing a hideous dress that looks terrible on her and everyone else keeps quiet. No one tells her how hideous it is but everyone around her thinks about how terrible she looks. They feel nervous about someone saying something mean to her because of it. But no one is willing to tell her that her dress is hideous!

Now imagine that the ugly thing isn't a dress. Imagine that this is some major character flaw and no one around you is willing to tell you about it. How would you feel about those people? Chances are if you find that you have some kind of character flaw, you most likely want to improve it. But if no one tells you what you're doing wrong, you're never going to improve! Our society of being nice, our society of hiding the truth from other people has led us to live a life where we are isolated from any constructive criticism. Of course, these people are perfectly willing to talk bad about us behind our backs. They are willing to harm us emotionally, and they're willing to judge us for our decisions but who among us is willing to take someone aside and say "hey, you're doing something wrong. Here's how you can do it better." Instead, we live in a culture of backbiting and silence.

So, you're on your own for the most part, unless you can end up in a good culture of people who are willing to help you learn about your flaws. So how do we learn about our own shortcomings? Well, we learn about them by looking inward and asking ourselves some key questions. Let's go over a list of key questions that will help you learn more about your own shortcomings and allow you to ruthlessly deal with them.

Question one: Is it my fault?

We live in a world where blame is often passed around as quickly as possible. We try to blame anyone and everyone for our shortcomings and problems. When the company has failings, no one wants to be caught with the hot potato that is called fault. They throw this fault around from department to department until finally someone takes the blame. And what happens when they take the blame? They get fired. And why do they get fired for making a mistake? Because of the compliance based society that we live in! We live in a society where compliance is required, where failure is punished and success is rewarded. So, whenever a failure happens, it is ingrained into us that we must do whatever it takes to avoid dealing with the consequences of that failure.

When someone fails inside of a company, they are usually prosecuted to the fullest that a company can prosecute. The failed employee is shamed,

they are blamed, they are told that this is the last straw and they are threatened. Worst of all, they are taught to never make a mistake. But is this really possible? Can we actually live a life where we don't make mistakes? No, not at all! Anyone who tries to hide their mistakes is doing so because they fear punishment. A mistake isn't a bad thing because we learn from our mistakes. But when we live in a compliance driven society, you have to do good things in order to be revered, mistakes are the worst possible thing.

This is problematic if you want to grow. When you cast blame on someone else, you are giving up the ability to learn from your own mistakes. You are transferring responsibility from yourself to someone else. And you can't really learn from someone else's mistakes. Just like the man who blamed everything except for his own decision to walk down a sidewalk with a big old hole in it, when we choose to blame other people, we are condemning ourselves to walking down the path that has ruined us before. This is why we often see people who can never seem to get ahead in life. This is why we usually see people who are often confused, frustrated, sad or angry about their position in life. These people rant and rave, claiming that the whole system is rigged, but they always make the same mistakes day in and day out. When you give up your opportunities to learn from your own mistakes by doling out blame, you are condemning yourself to never being able to grow.

So, this puts you in a position where you're going to have to ask yourself some hard questions when you are in the wrong. Ignore the sting and stigma of being wrong. It's okay to make mistakes, it's okay to do things poorly. The point of a mistake is they are meant to help you learn to grow, they are meant to allow you to push yourself forward. If we are willing, we can learn valuable lessons from mistakes that will follow us for the rest of our lives. We do not learn from our successes. You must be willing to reject everything that you have been taught up to this point. You must be willing to reject the notion that in order to be good you need to be compliant. You're better off failing 100 times and learning 100 different lessons than you are having one big success in your life. That one big success in your life will get you somewhere good but it will not help you stay there. Failure leads to character development, if it's treated right. Failure swept under a rug, failure pushed away and hidden from sight will

ultimately just lead you to continue the same habits that have led you to your continual struggles.

So, you're going to need to be honest with yourself and ask if you are the reason why you aren't successful. You might've made some very poor decisions growing up. You may have taken on debt that you shouldn't have, you may have partied your golden years away, you may have even invested in something that was a terrible decision. You might have spent way too much time in college or you might not have gone to college. It does you no good to refuse to accept these facts. The first step to being ruthless is being ruthlessly honest with yourself and if you cannot be honest, then you're never going to get better. You're never going to become strong and courageous.

On the flipside if you do decide to accept responsibility for where you are with your life, you will find that you are in a far better position than most other people. This gives you the ability to learn from your mistakes. You can honestly ask yourself "am I at this job because the economy is so bad or because I have failed to secure a better job?" Admitting that you have failed to secure a better job might sting more, but it gives you the ability to correct the problem. That lesson is worth far more than blaming the economy. The economy is always going to be a problem for someone somewhere. It's the winners in life who choose to work in spite of the circumstances around them.

So, ask yourself this question very seriously: am I at fault? Then answer that question with honesty, if you feel like you haven't been really honest with yourself, now's the time to start! Once you identify your faults, you are able to change them! But until you identify your faults, you can't really change them. You must be willing to change

Question two: how did I get here?

Now comes the next question: how did I get here? You asked if you were at fault and you found out that yes, you are at fault for the unpleasant things in your life. Now you have to learn how you became this way. So, if you are a spendthrift, you are going to have to ask yourself why do you

spend so much money? You have to ask yourself: how did you become this person? You have to learn why you are the way you are. Are you undisciplined? Do you struggle with an understanding of certain things? Do you not know how to be good with your money? All of these questions are meant to help you become educated about your own flaws, they aren't meant to condemn you. It's easy to point and condemn. It's easy to be judgmental about your shortcomings and it's easy to self loathe and hate yourself, but the whole point of asking these questions isn't to be judgmental, rather it is about learning how to correct your problems. Once you can correct these issues in your life, once you can learn to cut them out with ruthlessness and brutality, you will become a much stronger person.

Question three: what do I want to be?

It's easy enough to ask yourself how you got there and to ask if you're responsible, but it doesn't end there. You now have to ask yourself what you want to be. If you have been compliant and beholden for your entire life, ask yourself if you want to still be that way. If you've been manipulated, controlled or trapped, ask yourself if that's what you want to be. If you want to be strong, confident and courageous, it must be a conscious decision on your part. No one becomes stronger and more confident due to an accident.

It's going to take a lot of energy and effort to become a new kind of person. Change does not happen overnight, it's a steady, progressive increase. If you want to become someone new, someone who's stronger and more effective, you're going to have to make the commitment inside of your own heart and stick to that commitment.

There is a discipline that is required to become ruthless. That discipline is learning how to reject the emotional turmoil and discomfort that you feel within yourself as you look to change. Instead you must embrace the discomfort of becoming a new person. We live in a society where comfort is held above all other things. In our microwave culture, we look to things that make our lives quicker and easier. We want things fast. If

you want to buy something online, you can have it shipped to your house in two days. If you want pizza, it will be at your house in 30 minutes or less. We live in a world where we just want things as quickly as possible and without much work.

We desire happiness above all else. We crave comfort. At the same time, this cultural desire for improving our lives in order to enjoy comfort has created a weakness and a softness within us. This softness has led us to see anything that is uncomfortable as bad. Discomfort has become the enemy in our quest to be as comfortable as possible. Believe it or not, it is very possible for you to be happy and compliant. You can work really, really hard for a long time, you can spend your whole life working the 9-to-5 in order to build up a big retirement account. You can work for the man until you hit retirement age and then finally, after all those years, you are free to live out the rest of your life doing whatever you like. Hopefully you were able to manage your finances right and can afford retirement. This course of action can make you very happy, at the cost of 30 or 40 years of your life.

Does that sound attractive to you? Do you feel something deep inside of you say “No! That wasn’t what we were meant for!” We were meant for far more than just obeying our masters and doing what we are told. But comfort is another weapon used to control us. Giving up material things is uncomfortable, but those material things are how your boss can control you at work. Think about it. If you didn’t have all the expensive stuff, if you didn’t have to pay for the house, the car and your credit cards, what kind of power will the boss have over you when he threatens your job? Better yet, how much power would the rest of the corporate machine have when you don’t feel a deep-seated compulsion and need to buy their stuff?

There’s nothing wrong with being comfortable but comfort isn’t the point of our lives. We weren’t meant to just sit around, lazy and happy. We were meant to be strong, rugged and powerful people. Now people tend look at the strong and ruthless individual with envy and jealousy. When the world sees a person, who refuses to follow the rules of the system, they become hostile to that person. That envy runs deep and can make the compliant individual feel uncomfortable around the ruthless individual.

Strong people can be intimidating because they don't need comfort, they aren't held hostage by the desires of the flesh and they aren't held hostage by the need for pleasure. Rather they are commanded by something greater, they are commanded by their own free will. And they are free from having to worry about what other people think or say about them.

If we want to become a free minded, ruthless person, then we are going to reject the things that are controlling factors in our lives. So, what are the things that are controlling us? What are the things that have their hooks in us so deeply that they are preventing us from living our lives as we please? Let's take a look at this list:

Controlling Factor One: Comfort

We've talked about it already in length, but comfort is something that is really used to control us. If you want to be free of the control of comfort, then you're going to have to learn to accept that discomfort isn't painful. We often erroneously feel that discomfort is painful. Consider the cold shower for a moment, if you were to take a cold shower, you would most likely gasp, shudder and feel a sensation akin to physical pain. Your body would be immensely uncomfortable and would try to escape the unpleasant situation as quickly possible. So, it tries to signal to you and tell you that you are experiencing severe pain. In that moment, you *feel* the immense desire to find comfort wherever you can. So, if the body reacts that way, what gives you the ability to take a cold shower? Your willpower! You have the ability to force your body, in spite of what it wants, to go against its own natural desires and to push past the pain and unpleasant sensation of cold water. Cold water is not going to kill you. But your body and its desire for comfort is going to try and convince you that you are in some kind of trouble. So, if we want to become stronger, we're going to have to learn to stop worrying about our own comfort.

Comfort is how the corporate machine makes us do the things that we don't really want to do. Comfort is how they lure you into buying a brand-new luxury model car that you can't afford. When you have to make a choice between an old beater or the brand-new car, you are going to most likely feel the pressure to do the comfortable thing and buy the expensive,

unnecessary car. The most comfortable choice is also the thing that puts you in debt. And what does that debt do? Debt controls you!

Think about food! It is always more comfortable to go out and eat at a restaurant than it is to go home and eat. It can feel way more comfortable to run and grab fast food in the moment, than to have to eat ramen at home. So, we reject the discomfort of eating frugally and instead indulge ourselves in the comfort of eating good food at restaurants. If we can afford it, that's fine, but think about it. If you're in a position where you can't afford to eat out and you still are, you are putting your own comfort first.

If you want to be your own boss, if you want to be ruthless with your life, then you're going to have to be the boss of your own body first. You've got to reject comfort and instead make decisions that go out of your own comfort zone. It isn't comfortable to exercise, but if you want to work out to improve your body, then you're just going to have to accept that you're going to be uncomfortable. It is a test of will to push yourself physically, it is a test of will to refuse to eat bad food and it is a test of will to not spend an afternoon wasting your life on video games. All of those tests of will can lead to a stronger personality within you, which can allow you to become more ruthless. You could exhibit a greater degree of control on the world around you when you are not mastered by your own flesh. Reject comfort today and make the decision to take the stairs instead of the elevator. Start seeking out challenges instead of hiding from them. Don't give into the desire to be comfortable, because comfort is how these people will control you for the rest of your life. Break the tie of comfort and no longer will you be bound by all the fancy toys that the corporations and your bosses use to enslave you.

Controlling factor two: guilt.

Guilt is a powerful factor that can control us in most social situations. People often use guilt to motivate others into doing what they want. It is often a form of manipulation and control. For example, if a woman wants to hang out with her husband for a day and he is busy, rather than communicate clearly that she would prefer to spend time with him, she might use controlling phrases to guilt him into feeling bad about going out.

She might say to herself out loud, “Boy it’s been really long time since we’ve hung out and I’m just so lonely,” as opposed to saying “can we spend time together? I would like to spend time with you.”

You might not see the difference between these two phrases but one of them is a controlling phrase and it’s using guilt to control. The husband in the situation feels pity and sorrow for his wife, as she is saying how sad and how lonely she is, and instead of making a rational decision, he makes an emotional decision to stay home and hang out with her because he feels guilty. Consider the other side, one where she clearly communicates what she wanted. He would have the ability to make the decision free of her manipulation. Why is giving into guilt bad? Because it will build up resentment between both parties.

He will feel regret or frustration with her manipulating him into staying home with her and then resent her for the rest of the night. On the other hand, if he has a free choice, without emotional manipulation, his decision to stay with his wife was his own choice, freeing him from resentment. Guilt creates a feeling of pressure, but choice doesn’t involve any kind of coercion.

Guilt is a weapon commonly used by family and friends to get you to do things that you don’t actually want to do. The worst part about this weapon is that it eats you up from the inside, making you feel bad for choosing to do things that they don’t want you to do. There are appropriate times to be guilty. The time to be guilty is when you do something morally wrong or harm another person with malicious intent. The wrong time to be guilty is when other people put that guilt on top of you. A toxic friend might be a sad sack; they might always be dragging you down and the only reason you hang out with them is because you feel guilty for where they are in their life. When you take on other people’s guilt, you’re transferring their responsibility in the situation to yourself. This can then lead you to make decisions that you generally don’t want to make, but you feel a compulsion to. This is just another method of control. Guilt, when used wrong, will make you feel miserable. It will take the joy out of your life and will only increase resentment, bitterness and frustration within you.

How many people stay at their current job because they feel guilty about leaving? There is no shortage of people in this world who feel like they owe their employers something. The truth is you only owe your employer your work. He pays you and you work for him, if the arrangement were ever threatened on the company side, they would fire you in a heartbeat and replace you with someone else. But when we think about getting a new job, when we begin to consider the idea of finding employment elsewhere, we start to think instead about our own emotional obligation to the company. And the feeling of obligation controls us. It stops us from taking advantage of opportunities and looking for better jobs. And so, in a misplaced sense of guilt we are held back from advancing our career, trapped in the prison of our own mind.

And what do people say when they see someone who exists without guilt? They become envious! They become judgmental and harsh. They point and say “look at that person! They have no sense of shame; they have no guilt.” This is common when you see a CEO make a fortune at his company. A lot of bleeding hearts will point at the CEO and say “look how many millions of dollars he’s making; he should be ashamed when his company is only paying \$10 an hour to their janitors.” The CEO doesn’t have any guilt and is free to reward himself with millions upon millions of dollars for his hard work, regardless of what people say. We might look at that and say that it’s horrible, we might say he doesn’t deserve that much money, but we are merely transferring our own sense of responsibility onto him. He has his own beliefs and in his own belief structure he believes it is perfectly fine for him to reward himself. Who are we to say that he can’t? Yet if he were to allow other people to put their own beliefs and pressure on top of him, he would feel guilty for his choices, despite the fact that he personally has no problem with it.

Guilt is one of the strongest ways to control a human being because it’s emotional. Not only is it emotional, it is entirely based on how other people want you to feel. Other people in your life are determining what makes you feel guilty and they work as hard as they can to inflict that guilt on you. We are following the rules to someone else’s game and the worst part is we didn’t even agree to play this game. What did we agree to exactly? That’s a problem when it comes to guilt. We never actually agree

to the premise and the rules that they put on us. We somehow managed to agree that we should feel bad when we don't do what other people expect us to do.

Don't fall into the trap of being guilty just because other people want you to feel guilty. You've got to cut the tie of guilt in order to have real control over your life. You should never do things out of a sense of obligation because it doesn't create a healthy environment. All that guilt creates is frustration, resentment, bitterness, anger and eventually erodes away at your core self.

If you let the ties of guilt control you, you won't ever be happy because you are allowing other people to dictate your own emotions. You are not responsible for how other people feel. Even if you refuse to do something that they want and they are sad, if they cry or if they're upset, you still are not responsible for their reaction. Everyone is responsible for their own emotions; everyone is responsible for their own actions and opinions. Create a firm boundary in your heart and in your mind to never let guilt be the thing that drives you forward.

Controlling factor three: money.

It has been said that money is the root of all evil. That might be true but what's more true is that money is the root of all compliance. Our bosses can control us with money. Our lives are controlled by corporations and their desire to own us through the use of debt. The Bible says it best: the debtor is slave to the lender. When you owe an exorbitant amount of money, you are not a free man, you are a slave. Slavery has changed. It's no longer about one individual controlling you, rather it's about a group of different people controlling. We are owned by the corporations and our employers. When we are buried in debt and have no savings, any threat to losing our income can control us.

Money is a necessary evil. We need it to survive in this world, but the question is why do we need debt to survive in this world? Corporate America would have you believe that debt is a necessary and even a good thing. There's so much pressure to have the newest and latest things. "Get

into debt for stuff,” they tell us as they push their high rate credit cards at us. “Buy now, pay later!” They tell us that we need to get into debt in order to be happy, so we spend money that we don’t have on things that we don’t really need. Then we’re stuck struggling to pay it all back for a long time.

The phrase “keeping up with the Joneses” has become a way of life in the modern world. Money, when you don’t have enough of it, can cause you an enormous amount of stress in your life. In fact, one of the most common reasons for divorce is money issues. As we try to keep up with the materialist world around us, we find ourselves growing too weary and exhausted. Chasing after money has a steep price and the social pressures around us would like us to believe that more money is a necessary thing to always be pursuing.

So, what are we supposed to do when it comes down to the money conundrum? Are we supposed to renounce money and go live in a commune? No, it’s not that easy.

Money is influence. If we want to participate in modern life and make a difference in the world around us, then we are going to need as much money as possible. The ruthless individual doesn’t work for his money; the ruthless man makes his money work for him. What’s the difference? When money works for you, you don’t feel the worry and fear of losing it. You aren’t forced to work for a crummy job that you don’t want. When you work for your money, you might end up giving hours of your precious life away in order to obtain it. If you’re working 14 hours a day, seven days a week in order to get money, guess what? You’re not controlling anything. You are the one being controlled by money.

If we want to get away from being controlled by our money, we are going to have to master our own cash flow. We are going to have to say no more to our frivolous spending and have a tight rein of control on our money. We must be ruthless with ourselves when it comes to our spending, savings, and debt management. Remember, the goal of being ruthless is to cease being controlled by the world around you so that you may be free to do as you please. This means that we have to change our relationship with our money in order to become free. It is no longer simply about getting out of debt, rather it is about taking *control* of your finances so that no one else

can control you. It's not easy to make such a decision, but it is necessary if you are going to become a ruthless individual.

Money is just another tie that needs to be cut. You need to stop working for your money and make your money start working for you. It's no good for you to be in a position of subservience to your boss because you need a paycheck. If the idea of losing your job causes your heart rate to spike because you can't afford it, guess what? You can't afford to be ruthless because you are incapable of being free. Suck it up, get your finances in order and cut the money and debt ties that control you.

Controlling factor four: time.

The ruthless man is the man who controls his time and controls it well. He doesn't allow obligations to take control of him and he doesn't allow his work to extend itself into his own personal life. Rather he respects his own self enough to have boundaries. Time is a very precious and rare resource; we don't have a lot of it in our lives. We have 24 hours a day and that's it. What we do with our time is of the utmost importance. At times, we can end up in situations where we are wasting our time because other people don't have the same respect that we do for our own time. This puts us in a precarious position especially when it comes to things like surprise requests for volunteering, mandatory overtime or a spouse signing you up for something without your permission.

We don't have a lot of time in our day provided that you are getting adequate and sufficient rest. You really only have about 16 hours after sleep. We give most of our time to our employers, family members and chores. Then we're left with a few hours for ourselves which we then tend to squander on things such as television, video games or movies. So, our day goes by and comes to an end, then we start right back where we were the next morning. We continue the cycle of work, sleep, work, sleep, ad infinitum. And we continue to allow other people to waste our time until we finally learn how to say no.

No is such a scary word to people because it's a boundary that refuses to obey what other people have to say. There is value in saying no, in fact it

is way harder to live a life built around always saying yes than it is to simply say no. But saying no can feel uncomfortable and can create feelings of guilt. The word yes-man is used to describe someone who refuses to say no, even when it would be better to do so. These individuals like to delude themselves into thinking that they are being nice guys, that they're friendly and helpful, but the reality is that they're just doormats.

We've got to say no if we want to have control of our lives. Time is the stuff of life, and each hour that you spend doing something that you don't want to do is an hour you will never get back. There is nothing wrong with sacrificing time for other people, but there is something wrong when your entire life is built upon the constant sacrifice of your own time for others.

This continual sacrifice comes from a misguided sense of wanting to help, or worse it can come from a feeling of guilt or inadequacy which then leads to compliance. No one is responsible for your own time management except for you. If you aren't able to do the things that you want to do, then you're going to have to learn to be aggressive with your ability to control the schedule. You are in the captain's chair; you are in charge of your own schedule. No one else can control your time except for you. There are worthy things to donate your time to, but be warned that people will continue to take and take and take until there is nothing left for you to give.

Don't let a misplaced sense of ego control you. Don't think that just because you say no to a request that it'll never get done. The fact is, there are plenty of other people in the world who can help with the many problems that plague people. It's not all riding on your back. Cut the tie of obligations and cut the tie of giving into people's demands for your time.

Controlling Factor Five: Pride

Let's talk about one of the deadliest things that can be used to control you: your pride. Pride is a deadly thing, it leads men to believe they are greater than they really are and it can then lead them to ruin. Many a time there is a form of pride that is secret and hidden though, when we think of pride we often think of someone who is loud and noisy and braggadocios.

They make a lot of bold claims and talk about how great they are. These loud figures puff out their chests and everyone seems to agree that this is a very proud person. While this is a very obvious type of pride, the truth is that there is another kind of pride that is quite hidden from the public eye. This is the pride of seeking approval from others, also known as vanity.

It can be pleasurable when you obey the forces around you. When your boss tells you good job, when you get a raise or people praise you for how you look with the latest fashion product, it all contributes to your vanity. Vanity is nothing more than a servant's pride. It is a pride that comes from the mistaken idea that it's great to be the slave with the Golden Collar, when the reality is that freedom is far better than golden chains.

So, our vanity and our pride begins to create a false narrative in our minds. This narrative insists that the reason we are so easily manipulated is because we are important. We begin to let our ego tell us that the reason why the boss needs us to work so late is because we're very important. If you find that you are someone who is prone to obeying other people because they talk to you with flattering words, you might just be controlled by your own sense of pride. If you want to achieve great things in your life, then you are going to need to give up your sense of ego and self.

The sense of self is what prevents you from being secure in your own skin. Vanity causes you to always worry about what other people think about you. The fear of what other people think can keep you from doing the things that you want to do. Instead, you are chasing their approval in the hopes of pleasing the crowd.

This is just another type of control. If we're always chasing after the approval of our peers, if we're always working to make ourselves look good, it's usually at the expense of our own goals and desires. Instead, we're following after other people's goal. A ruthless man is his own man; he doesn't care about what other people think. The ruthless person doesn't worry about other people's perceptions of him, he just does what he wants to do. He rejects the traditional notion that he has to be appealing to other people in order to be happy. Instead, he finds a greater sense of happiness from achieving the things that he wants to achieve.

People can be like a bunch of crabs in a bucket. If you have a bucket full of crabs, they will all try to climb out of the bucket. The problem is that they will all grab each other as they are trying to climb out and pull each other back down, despite the fact that each crab has the ability to leave the bucket on his own. All of them will work very hard to pull each other down. This means these crabs can never actually leave the bucket and worse, they are keeping other crabs inside of the bucket. When it comes to learning to break out of the matrix of compliance, there will be people in your life who will try to pull you back down. This is what approval is used for, and this is where your pride can get yourself killed. If you allow for your pride to be wounded by other's words, if you let other people's thoughts and opinions about you matter more than what you think about yourself, you are guaranteed to be pulled back down, regardless of what you do.

The problem is that approval can be like a drug. When someone approves of you, when someone appeals to your pride or makes you feel good about yourself, it can be somewhat addicting. I would wager to say that most of the world is full of approval addicts. These approval addicts are the people who are searching desperately to be loved, to be liked and to be treated well. The problem is that these approval addicts will always be controlled by those who are giving out the approval. You can see this happen in controlling relationships where an otherwise rational individual is controlled by his wife because she withholds approval on a regular basis. You can see this in a child who seeks approval from his father and will do whatever it takes to get that approval but can never really seem to get it. When you rely on an external source to receive approval you will always be enslaved by those around you. Instead of looking to the external world in order to receive approval, it is far better for you to look to the internal to receive approval and find something that can bring satisfaction within.

So, we've spent quite a lot of time talking about all the various factors that can control you. If you're serious about becoming ruthless, you are going to have to see how these factors control you in your life and make the hard decision to step away from them. This isn't an easy process and it will take quite some time but don't worry about it. If your goal is to live the life that you've always wanted to live, if you want to be able to speak your mind, to be honest, then it's worth it. You can free yourself from this control

and it's extremely worth it. There is nothing quite like freedom from the controlling factors all around you. Making the choice to cut those ties will always be worth it.

If you find that you're in too deep, if you think "wow I have so much debt" or "I have so many problems" don't be afraid. Don't fall into the mentality of the loser. The loser looks at what has been and says that these things will never change. The winner is the one who looks at the past and says this how can I make it better? Don't let yourself fall into this false sense of hopelessness, don't think that just because you've been one way that you always have to be that way. You can start being ruthless today and it starts with a ruthless honesty with yourself. Let's go to the next chapter and see how we can become more pragmatic in our approach.

Chapter 3: Pragmatism and You

If you want to be successful and ruthless in life you have to learn the political philosophy known as pragmatism. Pragmatism is essentially what is known as thinking realistically as opposed to thinking idealistically. What's the difference between idealism and realism? Well, for one, realism is based on the idea that things don't really work out for the best. Pragmatism looks at the world around you and says "well there are certain things that are guaranteed to not work." Idealism, however, doesn't think about what is, rather idealism thinks about what *should be*. The idealist is someone who is continually disappointed because they can never get reality to match the expectations in their head, mainly because those expectations can never actually be achieved. On the other side, the pragmatist is capable of creating a better reality for himself because he is focused more on what is possible as opposed to what should be.

In politics, pragmatism is looked at as a rather ruthless kind of mindset. When you are pragmatic, you are someone who doesn't really mess around. The pragmatic individual doesn't focus on making everyone happy, instead he just focuses on achieving his own goals. The political school of pragmatism has been around for quite some time and you can see its influence in modern politicians who will do anything that it takes to win an election. The idealist politician often fails and they fail rather miserably. They fail because they don't grasp the full reality of how the world works. Instead, they try to conduct their campaigns based on how things should be instead of how things are. They are inevitably disappointed by these choices.

So how do we become pragmatists in our own lives? How do we become people who deal with only the real and put the unrealistic expectations of idealism away? Well, it's about learning to lower your own expectations about the world around you and instead of assuming the best at all times, try instead to assume the worst. This isn't about becoming a rain cloud or someone who's always critical, rather it is about being free from the naivete of someone who is always hoping and expecting the best.

So, if we were to define pragmatism as thinking realistically, then we must make note that everything should go through a realistic filter. For example, suppose that you were applying for a job. You apply for the job and after your interview you are offered the job but at lower paying rate than you wanted. An idealist would reject the offer because it doesn't match what his idea of reality should be. The pragmatist, on the other hand would accept the job offer because it is the only offer that actually exists. Essentially, pragmatism is a form of decision-making that's based upon reality as opposed to basing your decision making on how you feel. So, what are some ways we can incorporate pragmatic thinking into our lives? Well let's take a look at a list!

Pragmatic Thinking Tip One: Think about what's possible.

If you want to be pragmatic with your life, start thinking in terms of possibility. That means whenever you have to make decisions, don't go with what you think *should* happen instead make more of a conscious effort to look at all of what *is* actually possible. Many times, we can allow idealism to interrupt our ability to actually get work done. For example, if you are trying to make a decision in your life, don't think about what the most ideal thing is, instead think about what the most possible thing at that moment is. This is a very ruthless way of thinking because it's not focused on absolutes, it's not focused on ideals. This way of thinking allows for you to become more flexible with your choices. Someone who is focused primarily on ideals can often be trapped by those same ideals. Idealism tends to be rigid and incapable of adapting as the world changes around them. Flexibility is necessary if you want to be able to change the world around you to your liking.

This also means that when you start to experience failure that you are able to ruthlessly eliminate the things that are causing the failure. Many times, we can live in a place where failure is just rewarded with more failure. Everyone has ideas at times, but what happens when an idea fails? The pragmatist cleans off his desk, figures out a new idea and then moves on. The idealist becomes obsessed with why his idea didn't work and then

focuses on making that idea work. We can see this happen oftentimes in government situations. The federal government fails at something and they don't ask themselves "hey, how did we fail?" they instead say "how can we add more things to make it work." The pragmatist's job is to focus on what works and ignore everything else. The idealist might not ever give up, even when there is no clear solution to his problem.

It's a paradoxical situation for the idealist because he's never actually able to get anything done. Whereas the pragmatist, while not a big fan of the choices that he might have to make, is able to consistently get his work done. This has been shown to be true time and time again in business, politics, and even in relationships.

Think about the couple who has no satisfaction in their relationship. If they conduct themselves idealistically they will be miserable for their entire lives because no spouse will ever live up to the expectations and fantasies of the other partner. But if they deal pragmatically and instead focus on what is achievable in their relationship and not about what *should* be done in their relationship, they discover something new. They discover that it's far easier for the relationship to come together and grow because they are both willing to focus on what works.

The idealist couple refuses to go to counseling, even if they are having marriage problems, while the pragmatic couple is only looking for what works and thusly go to counseling. In other words, the idealist condemns themselves only to continuous frustration, while the pragmatist is capable of getting much more satisfaction out of life.

If you want to be a ruthless individual you're going to need to adopt a ruthless attitude towards failure. You must make a conscious decision to adopt only what works and ignore any high-minded ideals that you might have. These ideals will be a poison in the long run, it is far better to focus on what you can do instead of focusing on how to fix a sinking ship. Some boats are just destined to go down and you shouldn't be like the captain who always goes down with the ship.

Pragmatic Thinking Tip Two: Skepticism

The pragmatist is also a skeptical individual by nature. Because he is not operating in ideals but is instead operating in realities, he has the ability to look at the world with a critical lens. Instead of thinking of all the glorious things that should be, he has a habit of looking at the way things are. So, when he encounters things that tell him concepts that are contrary to his worldview, he should have the ability to sufficiently investigate. Skepticism is an extremely valuable tool to be able to navigate through the lies and falsehoods that the world around us often uses to control us.

One of the values of skepticism is the ability to discern the truth when someone is trying to promise you something falsely. You can see these kinds of false promises a lot, especially in the corporate world. A boss tries to persuade an employee to work extra hard, has a lot of hints that there will be something awesome in store if they do well and then when the product is finished, the boss simply takes the credit for the work and then moves on.

The skeptic is able to naturally look at these individuals who make such promises and see through them in order to find out what the truth is. Usually the skeptic has a belief structure of saying “I believe you’re wrong prove me otherwise.” Many times, the idealist puts the burden of proof on himself. The idealist hears something that he likes and then tries to match his mindset to fit with it. So, when the idealist hears something that he really agrees with, he will automatically believe it, even if it’s simply too good to be true.

On the other side, the pragmatist doesn’t naturally believe anything because he has to think about reality. The pragmatist and the skeptic says “show me the proof” whereas the idealist says “let’s do this!” without even having to see proof. This makes it far easier to take advantage of the idealist than a pragmatist. So, if you want to become more pragmatic you’re going to need to increase your natural level of skepticism.

Pragmatism Tip Three: Ask What Is Best?

The pragmatist ultimately asks what is the best outcome of any given situation. For example, consider the ethical dilemma of the train tracks. There is a train moving towards five people tied to a track but there is a lever right next to you, if you pull the lever it will divert the train to a different track, however there is only one person tied to the other track. The ethical question would be: what is the most moral choice you can make at that moment? By refusing to pull the lever you're condemning five people to die, however by pulling the lever you're condemning one person to die. This is a hard-ethical quandary but the pragmatist believes in doing the most amount of good or the best action at the time. The best action is the one that results in the greatest amount of good. Therefore, the pragmatist would pull the lever.

Now, you're most likely never going to be in that situation, but it doesn't mean you can't ask yourself consistently what is the best thing for you? The pragmatist makes a habit of always looking at all the things in his life and asking what is best. He doesn't consider all of the external factors, he only considers one question: what is best for me here? There are a lot of things that are good but there are not a lot of things that are the best, especially for the pragmatist. If you're looking at a job offer, asking yourself what is best is a lot different from asking what do I like? Looking for the best will lead you to make decisions that are in your best interest. Doing whatever you think is good, enjoyable or fun isn't necessarily thinking about the best. A ruthless individual is one who only considers the benefits of what's in front of him.

The businessman is the man who thinks "how can I get the best deal possible?" He doesn't think in ideals because he's not thinking about what is perfect. If you want to be more ruthless in your life, you are going to have to adopt a mindset of always looking for the best possible deal. We live in an economic world in which there is a scarcity, a limit of what can be owned and what can be gained. This means that ultimately there isn't enough to go around. The idealist wants everyone to get something, but the pragmatist knows that it would be impossible to try and save everyone. Instead the pragmatist simply focuses on doing the most amount of good that he can with the resources that he has, considering who he wants to help

and that's usually himself. There's nothing wrong with the decision to help yourself, despite what the people in this world try to tell us.

Chapter 4: Becoming the Bold

What is the difference between the confident man and a poser? The poser looks very similar to a confident man, however at the same time the poser is a very different person from the man who has boldness and confidence in his heart. You see, the poser is someone who feels like they need to pretend they are something. These are usually the kind of guys who are big, mean and tough; they wear loud clothing on their bodies, they make lots of noise and are loud, aggressive and mean. You would look at those guys and think that they are really strong, bold and confident, but the truth is they are simply just posing. A confident man doesn't need to pretend that he is confident, a bold man doesn't need to show everyone in the room that he's a tough guy. Rather he is seen as bold by his actions and by the words that he uses. Let's not fall under the false trap of believing that just because someone looks confident that they actually are confident. Confidence goes deeper than appearance, it's even deeper than actions. To be a bold and confident individual is to be someone who is free. Free from what? Well, if you've been paying attention so far, you should be able to answer my question on your own, free from control!

You see, when you are afraid of being punished and you feel a deep sense of anxiety and dread due to the control other people have had on you, you aren't really free. Fear has a way of detracting all of our feelings of confidence. Our fear of punishment prevents us from having the strength to stand up for ourselves and be assertive. It is necessary for you to be free from controls in order to develop an authentic sense of confidence. Many times, we see inauthentic confidence from posers.

We talked a bit about how to be stronger and how to break the ties of control that bind you. Let's assume that you've worked really hard to cut those negative ties in your life. Does that mean you are automatically confident? No, not yet. To develop a mindset of confidence, you're first going to need to be able to understand what confidence is actually made of. Confidence is a combination of freedom, relaxation and self-esteem. If you want to be more aggressive in your life, you're gonna have to develop a

good mixture of all three of those in order to become as confident as you possibly can. Confidence put into action is boldness, when a person is bold they are often taking action that other people would be too afraid to do. So, if you want to become bolder in your life, then you're going to have to learn how to master these three areas in order to be that confident, ruthless individual that you've always wanted to be. Let's go over each one in detail.

Freedom:

As heavily discussed in the earlier chapters, in order to be confident you also need to be free. You need to experience the ability to walk around without worrying about someone punishing you. Punishment can kill confidence because it creates fear; fear and confidence are natural enemies, they cannot coexist. You cannot be confident if you are constantly afraid. So, let's talk about how to better build a sense of freedom.

Just because you might have cut off all the controlling ties in your life, you might not necessarily be free from the slave and compliance mentality the world has forced on us. So, what creates the mentality of a free person? We create boundaries for ourselves. Henry Cloud, from the book *Boundaries*, defines the word boundary as something you create or something you allow. We'll use that definition for this book as well. Having a strong sense of boundaries will preserve your own freedom. Imagine a fence around you. This fence prevents everyone from being able to get into your castle and destroy your property. But if you don't have a very strong fence or very strong wall, people will get inside and they will steal, take and destroy things. Now, if you have a firm sense of boundaries, if you have the ability to say no, you are free to build your walls up as high as you like. Not only are you free to do whatever you please inside your castle, you are also free to allow people inside of your castle. What this means is that you can do other things for people, help them out, love them and care for them without having to feel a sense of obligation, or sense of requirement. This reduces bitterness, eliminates any chance of resentment and will generally improve your relationship with the people around you.

If you find you are someone who has a poor sense of boundaries then you are going to have to learn how to build them up so that you can be truly

free. Learn to say no, make it your favorite word. Be strong enough to say no. If you're in a situation where you can't say no because of the control, then you really aren't free. How can you be confident if you aren't truly free? People do not respect someone who is beholden. People respect someone who is able to do things on his own terms, someone who is free.

You also won't feel very strong or confident if you are doing things out of compulsion. It is far better to be inspired to do something than it is to be forced to do something. So, don't fall into the trap of letting your mind become controlled by the forces around you. That will kill your confidence. Also, don't think that you can become confident while you're under this false system, because confidence stems from control. For example, imagine that you had \$100,000 in your bank. That is enough to cover your expenses for eight months. Your boss comes into your office one day and says "you need to shape up or else I'm going to fire you." How would you feel in that moment? Would you feel afraid, worried or confused? Most likely not. Why? Because you have the ability to be free of him at any time, so you don't have to do what he tells you to do. The reason you're at that company is because you like the work. So, you can respond to him and tell him what you really think. You don't have to worry because you are free to find another job. You are not being held hostage.

Let's imagine that same example except this time you have five dollars in your bank account. You have no savings; you have no other way of getting income than your job. Your boss comes and says "Guess what? You're working late tonight, deal with it." How would you feel? You might try to argue with him, you might try to fight with him but at the end of the day, you have to do what he tells you to. Even if you wanted to speak your mind and be honest with him, you might feel intense fear. That fear will undermine your confidence. Fear of environmental factors such as losing a job, losing a relationship, getting in trouble or losing validation will ultimately detract from your confidence.

There was once a man who decided he was going to ask a girl out as a joke. His friend was feeling depressed, so this man figured that he'd go up to a very attractive young lady, ask her out and be rejected in a hilarious manner. He wasn't worried at all about the consequences because he was

hoping for rejection. As he went up to this woman, he asked her out and they hit it off. Eventually they became married several years later. He wasn't afraid because he was hoping for rejection. The worst possible thing wasn't rejection so there was no fear in him and he had total control. This is the perfect picture of what it means to become confident and unafraid of the consequences. If there are things to be afraid of, we cannot be confident. If you are relying on other people for validation, then you cannot be confident when you speak your mind. If you are relying on your job to pay you money so you can survive, then you cannot be confident when you demand a raise. Confidence and freedom walk hand in hand together so you must make a concentrated effort to become free so that you may become confident. Anything else is simply posing.

Relaxation

If you want to be confident, you're also going to need to be relaxed. A relaxed individual is someone who isn't nervous and anxious about the world around him. He isn't hyped up, afraid or constantly worrying. He's not in a state of consistent agitation, rather he is in a state of calmness and stillness. He allows his calm mind to help him achieve the things that he wants to achieve. He feels relaxed when he talks to people that he doesn't know. He is perfectly capable of having a conversation naturally. Why is he like this? Because he's not concerned with what other people are thinking. The key to relaxation is not worrying so much. If you worry about what everyone else is thinking or what's going on you will be tense. If you want to be relaxed, you just have to make a couple of modifications to the way you think. A relaxed mind is someone who's not focusing on what's happening later, but is instead looking at the now. A relaxed mind is also a very grateful mind. He's happy with what he has and is living in the moment.

By being relaxed and present, you are capable of being more confident because you're in the moment. One of the greatest things that can cause lack of confidence is trying to predict the future. A relaxed individual isn't trying to predict the future because he's thinking about the now. He isn't a nervous or worried individual trying to think about what happens in

the next 10 minutes, the next day or the next month. These worrywart's minds begin to spiral and soon they find themselves following an endless trail of concerns and nerves that always seems to just cause more worry.

You cannot predict the future, no one can, so why bother worrying about it? There is nothing wrong with planning for the future but if you keep fretting away each moment of every day, too caught up in your own fear and anxiety to be relaxed, you will just wreck your health. Remember, fear is the opposite of confidence. It is the enemy of our ability to speak calmly. He who looks relaxed and at ease will be much more confident than someone who is constantly shifting around and acting jittery.

Self-esteem

The last ingredient in learning to be confident is learning how to be okay with yourself. One of the problems with our current society today is that you don't really get to be yourself, you instead have to be what other people want you to be. Your boss wants you to be an opinion-less, hard-working individual who will agree to whatever he says. Toxic friends want you to be just like them, worthless and needy. Even a moderately healthy relationship poses the danger of trying to shape you into something that you are not.

We live in a world in which everyone is constantly striving to become something else because they feel that they are inadequate on the inside. They feel like there's something inside them that just isn't up to snuff and it impacts them greatly. The constant need and craving for validation is a major source of our lack of self-confidence. We feel empty and as a result we will do anything that we can to fulfill that emptiness.

So, what happens? Well, we try to fit in. We join a group, a club or a group of like-minded individuals who will tell us how great we really are. This doesn't create self-esteem; however, this just creates ego. This is extremely important for you to know; you should never ever put yourself in the position to where you depend on others for validation.

You are a unique being who is intrinsically valuable regardless of who you are. Self-esteem is not about acting a certain way to be accepted;

self-esteem is about realizing your own value. Do you find your value in the eyes of other people? You can only realize your own value by looking inward and seeing the things that are worth loving. If you want to change because other people are putting pressure on you, then you are trying to become less of yourself. What you are also saying to yourself at that exact time is that you aren't very valuable. This damages your self-esteem and as such damages your confidence. If you want to be more confident in your life, then you need to learn how to be okay with yourself just the way you are.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to change. There's nothing wrong with growing and there's certainly nothing wrong with wanting to improve on your own. There is something very wrong, however, with changing ourselves just because other people demand us to. The problem is that people will always demand that you change. The cycle of appeasement will never end because when you change to be like one group, another group will demand that you look like them instead.

The ruthless man is the man who rejects the crowd telling him what he needs to do. He finds his value to be evident in his own self. He looks at his own self-worth and says "I am beautiful. I am useful. I am wonderful just the way I am." He isn't dependent on the world around him to validate him, he isn't dependent on other people telling him what to do. He is confident because no one can take away his source of value. On the other hand, if all of your value comes from other people, as soon as they start to take that value away, your confidence will be shaken. So, when it comes to learning how to speak your mind, if you don't have a sense of self-worth, you will have trouble talking to them honestly because you are too worried about your own value being threatened.

So, you've got to be willing to stand up for your own sake and start to develop a sense of self-worth. You've got to eschew all of the things around you that you are consistently using to fulfill yourself. What are some of things that we use fulfill ourselves? Alcohol, drugs, sex, validation, overwork, and even complements. All of these things might have a place, but our society has put too much emphasis on those things as the only way to be happy. The truth is that the pursuit of those things will only lead to

continuous slavery. If you want to be free, then you're going to have to make the choice to walk away from all of those things as a source of validation. The ruthless man doesn't need any of those things to get by. Instead all he needs to do is look within himself and see that he is strong, capable and powerful on his own.

It might feel weird at first, making the choice to step away from all those things that continuously make you feel good, but over time you start to realize that it was just an addictive cycle. You put way too much energy and effort into one thing, then you receive a large amount of validation but over time eventually those feelings of validation would vanish. So, what do you do? You move onto something that feels more effective. Think of the man who's constantly running from girl to girl, looking for that emotional high. Think of a guy who can never stop working no matter what, who's always refusing himself rest and time with his family because he just needs to please his boss. These things do not make for a confident man, but they provide a cheap source of validation. On the other hand, a man who is confident doesn't need any of those things to keep him feeling confident.

So how does one develop a better sense of self-esteem? Well, one great way is to take up meditation, and before you roll your eyes you might want to consider that meditation has been linked to a greater sense of wellness, self-esteem, emotional regulation and ability to think. If you're someone who is a pragmatist, you should also look at meditation. There are significant studies that show meditation increases your intelligence, your ability to think, your emotional processing and cognitive strength. So, as a pragmatist it would be in your best interest to take up meditation. Those who meditate are found to be 10% happier than those who don't, and you don't need junk food, affirmation, money or alcohol to enjoy the benefits of meditation.

If you're wanting to increase your self-esteem, then you might want to learn how to increase your gratitude. Believe it or not, but a lot of people are just unthankful about who they are. This unthankfulness causes them to feel dissatisfied with their life and corporate America preys upon that dissatisfaction. Advertising companies love to throw things at the dissatisfied individual and tell him that they have the product that is going

to make them whole. For example, are you feeling sad and lonely? Corporate America might tell you to get a brand-new car that will make you feel better about your masculinity. The constant pressure to buy products in order to feel better about yourself is one of the most common forms of marketing.

Gratitude actually combats the materialist attitude as a whole. Because gratitude is a sense of being thankful for the things that you have, you don't necessarily feel the pressure of needing to buy worthless junk. In addition to simply being thankful for the things that you have; you can also be thankful for who you are.

By changing your mind and learning to be happy with who you are, you're going to discover a greater sense of well-being. You won't need other people to express gratitude to you, because you are becoming grateful for yourself. It's that internal sense of strength and fortitude that will protect you from everyone else around you. Don't fall for the trap of thinking that you need to become someone else in order to be happy. Your self-esteem takes a beating every time you wish you were someone else. On the other hand, each time you're grateful for who you are and grateful for your own self, your self-esteem becomes greater.

So, we've talked a lot about the three elements that make up confidence and hopefully you're starting to see how confidence can be cultivated. It does not happen overnight. And you cannot fake being confident, instead you learn to be confident over time, focusing on growing in each of those three areas.

Now then, let's talk about boldness. Boldness is confidence applied. So now that we've learned confidence, let's consider what it means to become bolder. Boldness is confidence with action, so if you intend to become bold then you are going to need to learn how to act. Here are some tips to increase your boldness in life.

Boldness tip one: Urgency

The bold individual is the one who realizes that time is of the absolute essence. Someone who is bold doesn't wait around, instead they focus on

getting things done quickly and without hesitation. Think about the people in your life that you see as being bold. Most likely one of the overarching factors is that they are willing to kick down the door and get the thing done. They don't seem to wait much and seem to have little patience when it comes to waiting. This is a great quality to have because time is money. Time is a precious commodity and you don't have a lot of it, so if you want to achieve important things with your life then you're going to have to act with urgency.

If you make the decision in your life to be bolder then you have to actually work on getting stuff done quickly and effectively. This means having a timeline, this means actually doing what you talk about doing. There's not a lot of respect for people out there who just talk about things and then don't actually do it. A bold person is someone who lets the pressure of time propel them forward. They get things done at a rapid pace and they don't slow down for even a second.

Boldness tip two: Courage

If you want to be bold then you also have to be courageous. Courage is the ability to move in spite of fear. Sometimes there is fear in the presence of scary things and it's natural to be afraid. Fear is a part of the human experience, after all, but we do need to learn how to move past that fear. The ruthless man must learn to act in spite of his own fear, refusing to allow it to have power over him. So how do we build up our courage? Let's take a look at a few sure shot ways to do so.

Courage tip one: Do the Hard Things

If you want to develop a strong sense of courage then you're going to have to develop a mindset of being willing to involve yourself in the hard things. A lot of times especially in our comfort driven society, difficulty can be looked at as the enemy. This creates a paradox, because if you look at difficulty as the enemy then how can you do difficult things? Why would you ever willingly involve yourself with something that involves your enemy? Yet, if you'd learn to change your mind and stop perceiving

difficulty as the enemy, instead, if you started focusing on learning how to embrace difficulty you will naturally raise your ability to move in spite of fear.

By learning to do the hard things you are going to improve your natural ability to work in spite of your own fear. What do I mean by doing the hard things? Well, the hard things in life can be things such as pushing yourself physically, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, having hard conversations with people, doing anything that doesn't come easily or naturally. This can be tough when it comes to comfort because our natural desire as humans, especially in this society, is to be comfortable. Sometimes in order to be courageous you're going to need to choose to be uncomfortable. But if all you're focused on is your own comfort then you're going to never have the strength to get things done because you are afraid. By adopting a mindset of refusing to accept comfort and instead choosing to fight onward and do the uncomfortable things, you are creating a mindset of a vigorous nature.

The best way to grow in courage is to embrace the hard things. Take cold showers, take the stairs, be willing to look at the uncomfortable things in your life as challenges to overcome instead of as obstacles to avoid. There are so many people in this world who do not want to deal with any form of hardship, there are entire industries built around the avoidance of hardship. We're told that you deserve a break, we're told you deserve a vacation, we're told to kick back and relax and never do anything hard and what does that breed within us? It breeds weakness, it breeds cowardice, fear and loathing. If you want to be as strong as you possibly can, if you want to be courageous, then you're going to have to develop a mindset of doing the hard things. Don't let yourself get stuck in thinking that comfort is the best thing for you. Being strong is the best thing for you

Courage Tip Two: Ignore the Feelings

Courage often appears when there is fear. In fact, the best definition of courage is that it isn't an absence of fear, but rather the ability to press on in spite of fear. Many times, there are parts of a person's life when they are forced to encounter something that causes them to react in fear. This fear

can be powerful and compelling, it can inspire someone to react out of sheer terror and in that moment, their emotions will overwhelm them.

Emotions can be a tricky subject, especially when you are trying to cultivate an air of ruthlessness in your life. Many people, especially those who like to pose, might consider themselves to not have feelings and to work very hard to hide the fact that they feel things like sorrow, despair and even disappointment. These people end up suppressing natural human feelings and in the process of doing so, cut off a very important part of themselves.

If you want to learn how to be courageous, the solution isn't to cut off yourself from your own humanity. Rather, it is to learn how to act in spite of your feelings. If you are experiencing a deep emotional influx of energy, energy that causes you feel nervous or uncomfortable, you might not be able to act the way that you want. You must be able to learn how to overcome those feelings.

The first step to learning how to overcome your fear is acknowledging the reality of the fear. Fear is a real thing and you are not doing anyone any favors by trying to pretend that you don't feel it. Instead of refusing to feel your fear, you have the option and ability to step up and acknowledge the fear. By acknowledging that you are indeed afraid, it will lessen the intensity of your feelings. Those feelings will only work against you if you try to fight them. There's nothing wrong with them, despite how we feel. Remember, we have a natural hatred for discomfort, so when we begin to feel fear, we also begin to feel uncomfortable. In the process of feeling uncomfortable, we rebel against the way that we feel and try to avoid or suppress those feelings. This causes them to become only more and more intense.

By learning to acknowledge the feelings and give yourself permission to experience them, you can develop a greater sense of control over those feelings. You reduce their strength and power, you remove their intensity and as a result, you become stronger and more in control. This sense of control then gives you the ability to move in spite of your feelings.

After you've acknowledge the fear and it lessens in intensity, you will then discover that you have a greater sense of self control. The stronger the emotions, the harder it is to have the courage to do the things that you want to do. Consequently, once you reduce the severity of your emotions by acknowledging them and feeling them fully, you will discover that you have a far greater chance of overcoming your fear, which is really the next step in building courage.

You build courage by working to overcome your fears. You build courage, quite honestly, by *doing*. It might seem paradoxical at first, but consider it. The greatest thing that fear does, in the moment, is prevent you from acting the way you want. If you need to talk to someone important in order to get a raise, fear will stop you from picking up the phone and acting. If you're trying to handle a serious conflict in the workplace, fear will be the thing that will stop you from being able to talk to those individuals. There is no magical manual to overcoming fear other than one thing: you must act! We can overcome our fears by acting, by doing. Don't fall into the trap of believing that in order to overcome your fears you must spend time doing sufficient research, instead you need to just get up and act.

Acting is hard, but that is part of being bold. A ruthless, bold and courageous man acts, despite how he feels at the moment. If you feel worried or afraid, go ahead and act anyway. Don't let yourself fall prey to inaction due to your fear. It is far better for you to say "no more!" to your fear and act than it is to wait for the perfect plan. The longer you wait, the harder it can be. Become bold by making the tough choice to act in spite of adversity. It'll make you stronger in the long run.

Boldness Tip 3: Opportunism

If you want to achieve greatness in your life, then you're going to need to be able to spot opportunity when it opens up in front of you. Not only do you need to be able to see opportunity, you'll need to be able to act quickly to act upon the opportunities as well.

Many times, we have tremendous opportunities laid out before us. They might not be very obvious to us, such as an investment plan or a new

job, or they could be extremely obvious such as a job offer or someone asking you to join a partnership with them. Regardless of the types of opportunity that we could potentially face in our lives, one fact remains: if we don't take an opportunity, it will vanish forever.

What separates the ruthless from the weak is the ability to identify opportunities and then take them as they come up. Hesitation or delay could potentially ruin our chances at success or victory. A ruthless individual figures out the details after he has seized the opportunity, not before. Fortune favors the bold, as the saying goes, and if you delay too much, you could miss out on something very valuable. The ruthless man would rather fail spectacularly than risk a great opportunity to pass him by.

So, there we have it. With those three factors combined together, you will become a much bolder and stronger person. This will allow you to be as ruthless as you like because with boldness you can actually get what you want in your life. You won't have to worry about other people interfering with the things that you desire to do. You can instead be as free as you want and that freedom will open the door to achieving great things in your life.

Chapter 5: How to Get What You Really Want

Now that we've built a sufficient base, we've learned how pragmatism can be of extreme value in our lives and we've learned how to be bold. We must now turn our attention to how to put all of this into practice. We must put time and energy into learning how to get what you actually want out of life.

Many people are looking and waiting for permission to get what they want. They mill about, waiting and constantly asking themselves when it will be their time. They create a world, an imagined future where they are granted the thing that they really want through some sort of wish fulfillment. It's why millions of people play the lottery. Those people all want something, but they would rather live in a fantasy world where it just happens magically. In their imaginations they receive the rewards of hard work and years of labor in a single instance. This can be fun to fantasize about, but it's a terrible way to actually get anything important accomplished.

We must abandon a few things if you want to get the things that you really want out of your life. We must reject and surrender the concept of our "rights" and entitlements, we must get rid of all of the idealist ways in our minds and instead think only in the terms of the real. Then we must decide upon what we want and then we must give ourselves permission to go after what it is that we want.

This is no easy, task. We have lived in a slave society where we have been told what to want, time and time again. The corporate goon tells us that we want something new and expensive. The boss tells us we want to keep our job. The significant other tells us we want them. These desires and wants aren't actually created by us, however. They are invented by other people and then fostered upon us.

There is nothing wrong with wanting money, a nice house, a good job, or a relationship. But there is something wrong when we are working

so hard for the things that we don't actually want. We must make the choice to find freedom in our own goals and desires.

Chances are there is something that you actually want, deep down inside. It's not something that somebody put on you, it's not something that other people have demanded you become. You most likely have something that is deep inside of you that leads you to dream big about the future. But there's a problem. This dream doesn't align with what those around us want us to become. Maybe you want to become a dancer, but the "real money is in programming," maybe you want to run your own business but you are too afraid of the outside world. Maybe you just want to have a happy life, but other people are consistently preventing you from achieving that.

If you're waiting for someone to give you permission to go for the things that you want, if you're in the process of waiting for the perfect opportunity to actually follow your own goals and dreams, guess what? That time will never come. Other people will never treat you as well as you will treat yourself. Even those who have the best intentions for you can't plan and advise you in your life. You don't need to wait for permission to do the things that you want to do. Rather, the only permission you actually need is your own.

But that's a problem! It's hard to give yourself permission to actually go after your dreams because we live in a society where we are often answering to other people. This compliance based society creates an environment that discourages independent thinking. The education system is based around creating dull minded, compliant workers who are capable of putting long hours in a factory, not inspiring someone to be the best that they can be. If you have been accustomed to following other people's direction your whole life, the idea of striking out on your own can be downright terrifying.

Of course, this isn't acceptable for the ruthless individual. The ruthless individual, by nature, is striking out alone in their own world. They are doing the thing that they really want to do and they don't give a damn about anyone else's opinion about it. We see it all the time, the brilliant businessman, the genius inventor, the trailblazing explorer, all of these people were able to do these great feats because they weren't hanging

around waiting for permission. Instead, they gave themselves permission to do what they wanted to do. They weren't waiting for their boss to clear their ideas, they didn't wait for someone to write them a blank check, they instead were more focused on making the leap of faith in their pursuit of their dreams.

You can be the same type of person, if you want. You can make the hard choice to step away from the system, you can pry yourself out of the corporate machine that has taken so many bright and brilliant people and forced them to become just a mindless drone. It's not easy, but then again, the ruthless individual isn't concerned with easy, he's concerned with achieving great things in his life.

What drives you? What drives you in your day to day operations? Are you just hoping to get to that weekend? Are you barely present in your current life? Do you hate the life that you are in, but you can't figure out how to escape? As mentioned before, if you are in a tough spot in your life, then at the end of the day, you are ultimately responsible for whether or not you stay there. You have the right to leave at any time, but most people don't take that right. Most of our lives are just prisons with the doors locked on the inside. And then when we see that fabled individual escape from time to time, when we see someone navigate through life with shrewdness and cunning, we become vengeful and envious. We call them names; we point at them as being without any sense of morals and we make the argument that "they are what's wrong with the system." At the end of the day though, if there are exploits in the system, then a pragmatist wouldn't despise them. The pragmatist would take advantage of them.

Stop envying and fussing about other people's success. How many times do you hear the public decry the millionaires and billionaires on Wall Street? How many times do we hear the fuss about crooked politicians who are only interested in their own gain? The reality is that there will always be people who are able to navigate through the system and take advantage of it for their own gain. Now, we're not advocating illegal activity, we're not saying that in order to get ahead that you must do unethical or immoral actions, but we are advocating for taking advantage of the systems that are in place.

Getting what you actually want out of life takes courage, strength and risk. It requires a specific kind of focus, a focus that many people would consider to be single-minded devotion and ruthless. Once again I will repeat, there is no one in this world who's going to care about you as much as you care about yourself. This is just the nature of things. This isn't an excuse to be selfish, it's not an excuse for you to do wrong things to people. But what I am saying is that if you do not have an appropriate level of self-concern, then you are not going to be able to make a change in the world regardless of your intentions.

What is self-concern? And how is it different from selfishness? When you think about it, self-concern is primarily focused on taking care of yourself first. Imagine how airlines work during emergencies. One of the instructions they give you on an airline is that you are required to put on your oxygen mask in case of an emergency. If a parent has two children and the oxygen masks drop, the instructions from the airline is for the parent to put their oxygen mask on first before they assist their children with putting their oxygen masks on. Why is that? Well because if the oxygen levels were to drop, then the parent would be knocked out and both of the children would die. But once the child's parent has the ability to operate without fear of suffocation, they are then able to help both children out. This is the perfect picture of what self-concern is.

Self-concern isn't about taking from others it's just about taking care of yourself first. Many times, we live in a society where sacrifice is regarded as the best possible thing but we see over sacrifice happen in a lot of lives. Those who sacrifice constantly find themselves angry and frustrated with their sacrifice. They aren't acting out of self-concern when they do sacrifice, they are acting out of obligation. Obligation, as noted before, is one of the most dangerous and deadly parts of life that forces people to do things they don't want to do. It creates tension, a tension that shouldn't be needed. It strains relationships and harms people's ability to actually be happy. Don't fall for the trap of thinking that just because you are doing kind things for people that you are being unselfish.

There are a great deal of people in the world who are doing good things for others out of a selfish heart. Helping out other people can provide

a sense of self-worth, belonging and pleasure. In fact, there are a great many people in this world who would much rather do the kind thing and the nice thing, instead of the mean thing, because they would rather feel better about themselves than actually handle the truth. Don't be mistaken there is nothing wrong with doing good for other people, provided that your intentions are right. But if your intentions are not correct, well then you're in trouble. Don't make the mistake, of thinking that unselfishness and selfishness are the result of actions. The truth is this selfishness is an intention. Someone who volunteers and works in the soup kitchen 24/7 can be just as selfish as someone who robs a bank. But since the actions look better than the intentions, we make assumptions that the person who spends all the time in the soup kitchen is a very kind and nice soul.

This is where the difference between self-concern and selfishness start to come out. Selfishness wants an inordinate number of things; it wants to take and take and take, never giving. Self-concern is simply concerned with taking care of yourself first and then others later. There is nothing wrong with wanting to take care of yourself. In fact, there is nothing wrong with wanting to do good things *after* you've taken care of yourself. However, we live in a society that demands much more of you. Society wants to take everything from you, and when you can't give any more or when you refuse to give anymore, they call you selfish. This is just another method of compliance that is used to control us, the word selfish seldom actually means selfish.

Now, the word selfish means that you aren't doing what other people are demanding of you. And we become afraid of that label, we become so that we refuse to do the things that we actually want to do. Not only do we refuse those things, we actually begin to believe that we are in the wrong for wanting those things.

Imagine a young man who's doing exactly what his mother demanded him to do. She tells him that he needs to take out the trash, work on his homework, do the dishes, and make sure the dog is fed. He does all those tasks and upon finishing those tasks, he then begins to relax and play the guitar for fun. His mother then scolds him and tells him there are so many more chores to be done and that he is selfish for wanting to have this time

to relax. What message does this man take away? He takes away the message that anything done for his own pleasure is selfish. And if he's an especially compliant young man, he will begin to believe that his own natural desire to play the guitar is wrong. He will then think that he has to spend his life doing what other people wants him to do and never the things that he wants to do.

The unfortunate situation is that we live in a world of compromise. We live in a world where we are required to give and take. Yet we often are surrounded by people who only demand that we give. And when we begin to push back, when we say we don't want to give anymore, or when we simply try to have our own boundaries, we are considered to be selfish. This is such a misnomer, if we were selfish then we wouldn't care about what all these people think. But deep down on the inside all we do is feel guilt, a guilt that seems to consume us. We try to help other people but when our afternoons are ruined by others, when a sudden phone call changes our entire trajectory for the weekend, we begin to feel frustrated with the situation. This resentment and frustration leads us to act out, it leads us to do things that we don't necessarily really want to do. We might look like we're the heroes because we're saving the day, but on the inside, deep down, we become very angry people.

So now that we've established that we live in a world where people are willing to deem those who don't obey their demands as selfish, let's ask what it actually means to be ruthless. The ruthless man is the man who simply chooses to do his own thing. He refuses to feel guilty for his choices, he refuses to allow other people to influence him into doing things that he doesn't necessarily want to do. It's a matter of principle for the ruthless man that he will do the things only he wants to do. A ruthless man can do whatever he wants, including doing charitable, kind, and nice things. The problem is that since he isn't playing by everyone else's rules, he is considered to be a bad person. The morality used in this world is based more around wanting to manipulate people instead of simply asking them and respecting them for their choices. All of this is to say that if you want to be ruthless then you have to make the decision to ignore what other people are telling you.

We're not talking about doing crime, we're not talking about stealing or acting immorally towards others, we're talking about growing the spine that is necessary to go for the thing that you actually want. How many men and women in this world are simply doing things out of obligation? How many men and women in this world live lives of boring mediocrity, instead of going for the hopes and dreams that are deep within them? The nature of people is to be selfish. And many times, someone who is selfish wants other people to do their own bidding, regardless of that individual's preference and desire. And when these manipulators can't get their way, they call the person they are trying to bend and manipulate selfish. This accusation often creates feelings of guilt and sorrow, and it leads a person to genuinely believe that they are in the wrong.

Are you someone who has always wanted to do something, but you felt like you can't? The reason why is because, on some subconscious level, you are waiting for permission. You are waiting for someone to tell you to follow your dreams, you are waiting for someone to take charge and tell you to finally do the right thing, but that will never happen. Your boss will continue to exploit you; your friends will continue to advise you to do what they think is right and people will continuously try to take your joy away from you. You are going to have to stand up and say no. You're going to say no to all the things they are demanding. But this is where it becomes a struggle for you to resist other people's demands. For you to resist their control, it is to step on their toes. This is where the idea that ruthlessness is bad comes into play. A ruthless man isn't afraid of hurting feelings. But a ruthless man also isn't looking to hurt feelings. His intentions aren't to cause harm, rather his intentions are wrought out of self-control and self-concern. But the world cannot accept this, the world can never accept someone who makes their own way. And so, they deem the person who goes his own way as a bad person, they call him ruthless and mean-spirited, they call him selfish. Yet he isn't concerned with what they have to say about him. He's stronger than that. He's smarter than that. He's his own man.

You need to ask yourself this point, are you really someone who wants to strike out on their own? Are you ready to be strong for yourself? Everyone around you will try to tell you that you do not have permission to

take charge of your own life, but they are not the people who are in charge. You are in charge, you are the one who calls the shots and you are the executive authority in your own life, will you accept that? If you want to really get all the things out of life that you so desperately desire, then you're going to have to come to one seriously significant conclusion. This conclusion is the most important thing that you will ever learn about yourself. This conclusion is what separates a leader from a follower, a ruthless man from a spineless man, and a winner from a loser. Do you know what this conclusion is? The conclusion is that you are the only person in charge. You are an authority and you're going to have to embrace that fact.

Chapter 6: The True Authority

A lot of people in this world dream about becoming self-employed because they want to be their own boss. They fantasize about coming into work whenever they want, they think about how great it would be to tell themselves when they go to work, when they can go to sleep, and even when their vacation time is allowed. The idea of being your own boss is deeply ingrained in the idea of the American psyche. So many people in this world dream of becoming the ones in charge of their own lives. They look out the window of their cubicle or office, and wish that things were better. The mere fact that there are entrepreneurs in the world seems to indicate that it's possible to be your own boss, but such an idea escapes you. How do they do it? How do you become your own boss? Do you want to know a little secret? Do you want to know the truth? You are already your own boss! You are already the one who's in charge. You just haven't accepted that role yet. You haven't looked into your own heart, and realized that you are a natural leader. Why is that? Well because it's because of the society that we live in today.

We live in a compliant slave society where authority is always burdened onto us by other things. For example, when you're a child you listen to what your parents tell you, when you're in school, you had to listen to what your teachers tell you, when you're in college you listen with your professors tell you, and then finally when you're at the workplace you have to do what your boss tells you. Nobody tells you that you are in charge. What you need to know is that you are your own boss in real life.

The reality is that we are voluntarily placing ourselves under other people's authority at the end of the day. What this means is that we have the ultimate authority to place ourselves under all other authorities. Why do you, a full-grown adult, obey your boss? Or listen to your parents? Or even listen to what your spouse has to say? The reality is that you are placing yourself underneath those people's authority. Is there anything wrong with that? No! The problem starts when we feel like we are required to follow the authorities above us.

The Founding Fathers talked about something known as unalienable rights. Their perspective was that there were specific rights given to every human being by God and God alone. Those rights are things that cannot be taken away. They summed these rights up in the Constitution as the Bill of Rights, which were the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. Some of those rights include the right to bear arms, the right to have free speech, the right for freedom of religion and the right to a fair trial.

The Founding Fathers believed essentially that all authority came only from God and that God granted each man authority over his own self. And believe it or not, authority cannot be taken away from you. However, there is a viewpoint that authority is given to man by other men. These people believe that we need permission from something or someone in order to do the things that we want. So, what does this mean for us? Well, if authority has to be given, we have to ask ourselves who is the one to give authority? And secondly where does this authority come from? We have two options. We can believe that we are endowed with unalienable rights that make us authorities unto ourselves, or we can believe that other people are responsible for giving us our own authority. Which one do you think the ruthless man believes? The ruthless man, the leader, follows the idea that he has been endowed with rights by his creator and no one else. He doesn't seek permission to be in charge of his own life, because he knows that he is the ultimate authority in his life.

Let's do a little experiment, raise your right arm. Who made the choice to raise your arm right now? You did! You were the one to make the choice to raise your arm, because you are in charge. You are in charge of everything that your body does. You walk, talk and speak of your own free will and authority.

So, this places us in a precarious position. If we never accept our natural role as authority figures in our life, then we will never be able to get what we actually want. We will never really take care of our own mind, you'll never be able to do the things that you desire to do, and worst of all we will never be free from the machine that enslaves us. If you want to be free, then you are going to have to accept the reality that you are the leader in your own life. You have to accept that you are in charge. Does this mean

that you have to reject all authority around you? No, not at all! What it means is that you have to be accepting of your own role in your life. You have to realize that you made your own decisions, actions and choices and that you, at the end of the day, are ultimately responsible for everything that has happened. Because you are the authority figure, you are expected to act like one. But we live in a world where there are a lot of people who act as if they are not the ones who are in charge. They stand around hoping and waiting someone will tell them what to do because they have not accepted their natural designation as leaders.

The average person does not realize that he is in the one in charge, instead he serves someone else in the hopes for a better life. They give up their God-given rights in exchange for what? They give it up in the exchange for the illusion of safety. They like to believe that other people in their lives will ultimately make decisions to benefit them. But let me ask you a simple question: how much money does your boss share with you at work? There's an old phrase that says "the boss makes a dollar; you make a dime." Now, there is nothing wrong with making money off of people who are willing to work, after all the boss absorbs risk, the owner of the company is the one who puts his neck on the line. At the end of the day corporate owners are the ones who have to make the hard decisions, their jobs aren't the safe jobs. The hourly job is the safe one. The nature of life is that we trade safety in exchange for freedom.

This is a classic debate that goes back a long, long time. Safety versus freedom. It is hard to be free and safe at the same time. There is a risk, and inherent struggle that comes with making the decision to act of your own volition. Yet, if you are listening to someone else's direction and orders, there is an illusion that this individual knows what he is doing. The reality is while you are trusting a leader to make good decisions, there's always the chance that he doesn't have your best interest in mind.

The corporate leader may have no interest in his own employees past what they can provide him. They use the tools of greed, money, manipulation and emotional control in order to secure their positions. Think about it for a second. Would you really follow these people if they weren't paying you? Would you do the thing that you're doing right now if money

wasn't involved? Many times, the answer is no. Many times, the answer is that we're trapped in the machine that seems to continuously run forever and ever. And they make money right off of our backs and who can blame them? They are the ones who are risking it all. By being the leaders they are the ones risking everything by making these decisions. You risk nothing when you choose to be compliant.

So, it's time for you to start to make some choices. You need to be the one to realize the truth. If you want to be an authority that means you're going to have to risk things.

You have to trade your safety in exchange for your freedom. Is that something that you find attractive? Do you long for the idea of doing your own thing, not taking crap from anyone and living the dreams that you have in your heart? Or do you just want to eke out an existence? Do you just want to get by without any problems or fears? You can have one but not the other and it is a hard decision. But the fact is, the ruthless man craves freedom, the one who is ruthless makes a decision that benefits him ultimately in the long run and that decision is that he is an authority figure. How do you even begin to start looking at your own life as an authority figure? Well let's look at some steps.

Authority Tip One: Be Tough

An authority figure is someone who decides to be tough with those around him. He is firm, brash and unapologetic when it comes to getting his way. Rather than tiptoe around the subject, the authority speaks his mind with boldness and vigor.

It's hard in this modern society to be tough with people because we often fear negative reactions. Instead of worrying about how people will respond, the tough authority figure will instead focus on how he can get his own way. Many people will try to impose their will on a person who is seeking to do his own thing, so you are going to need to learn how to resist other people with firmness.

The key to being steadfast is to be unwaveringly committed to your principles. Figure out what you believe and develop a keen awareness of

those beliefs. Some people prefer to write manifestos for themselves, creating documents that state all of their beliefs and non-negotiable terms.

A non-negotiable term is something that you refuse to bend on. For example, if you have the belief, “family first,” that term is non-negotiable. The tough authoritarian follows his principles, even if it puts him in conflict with others.

Authority Tip Two: Be Active

Passivity is the poison that the modern culture has given to us. We become passive as we look at the things in our lives that need to get done and refuse to do them. We look at people who are go-getters, doers, and achievers as somehow special. The fact that they are able to get stuff done makes us look at them with envy and wish we could be like that. But when it comes to calling up the phone company to renegotiate our phone bill, or to take an item back because it was broken, we feel fear and refuse to do so. Someone who is an authority figure in their life is someone who is active. They reject the notion of passivity, they push back the idea that they need to sit and wait, instead they are go-getters getting stuff done to the fullest. Where does this come from? Where does the desire to be active come from? It comes from the realization that no one is going to do it for you. It comes from the realization that you are your own boss, that until you stand up and get the thing done no one can take care of it for you.

Your mother isn't around to clean this up, your father isn't going to make the calls for you. Instead, you've got to be the one to stand up and get it done on your own. The passive life, once again, has a reward. It rewards you with comfort and safety. Yet the active life is a life of freedom, freedom from frustration, worry and control.

The trade-off is a difficult one for most people because being active, being someone who doesn't wait for things to go away is uncomfortable. Not only is it uncomfortable it's also very hard. But is it worth it? Absolutely!

It requires a certain kind of thinking though. It requires you to make the choice to be active with your decision-making. Instead of just letting life

go by and hoping things will go away, you've got to be willing to commit to working things out in your own power. The active life is a life of strength, a life that requires energy and focus. Many people feel they don't have that strength within them, but they do. Everyone has the ability to live strong active lives if they so choose.

Authority Tip 3: Be Comfortable with Confrontation

A lot of people aren't comfortable with the idea of their own authority. Even the very word authority itself makes them squirm and feel uncomfortable. Many people feel like it's a scary word or worse they might feel like it makes them mean. A lot of people have the idea of authority as being something negative. But the reality is authority is a very positive thing. Authority is the ability to take control of the situation and assist people with achieving their goals and dreams. We look to the authority of the President of the United States to guide our country. We look to the authority of our teachers to teach us information that's accurate and true, we look at the authority of our parents to guide us and make us stronger. No one would argue that authority, when used correctly, is a bad thing. So, where does the fear of authority come from? It comes from the fear of confrontation. If you aren't able to confront someone, if you are unable to tell people how you actually feel, then you will not be comfortable with being an authority figure. So, the truth is we're actually afraid of confronting other people. And that fear of confrontation drives us backwards into our holes.

Think of what your boss goes through when he disciplines or coaches his employees. When he has to correct someone on something wrong, it is an intense act of courage that isn't very easy to do. This takes strength and a firm understanding on one's role as an authority to do properly.

A lot of people come to believe that confrontation is wrong or that confrontation is mean, therefore undesirable. However, the best way to be authoritative is to be willing to confront people. But confronting others requires you to step outside of your comfort zone. It requires you to step up and deal with a potentially unpleasant situation. Yet the reality is that without confrontation, there cannot be any kind of growth.

Sometimes people need pushing, sometimes they need confrontation, and sometimes they just need someone to tell them the truth as it is. Don't make the mistake of thinking that just because confrontation feels scary or uncomfortable that it's a bad thing. Confrontation is what separates a leader from a follower.

This means that you're going to have to learn to become comfortable with confronting people. This doesn't mean you have to harm people, this is doesn't mean that your intentions are to cause people ill. Remember, confrontation is not a bad thing. The problem is that we live in a world where confrontation is looked at as the ultimate wrong, and we are willing to do whatever it takes to avoid that. As a result, we become weaker and softer. Don't make that mistake, do not think for even a split second that confrontation is bad. Confrontation is really good; confrontation is what will allow you to achieve great things in your own life.

Are you unhappy with your marriage? Believe it or not, but confrontation is necessary to improve your relationship. Confrontation is not the same as fighting. Fighting is the decision to cause harm, confrontation is the decision to show truth, to make a point. If you think that you can be a leader without any form of confrontation, you are unfortunately very, very wrong. You must stand up for yourself, you must tell other people your opinions, and you must be willing to bruise some noses or step on some toes if you want to be where you want to be in your life. Be comfortable with confrontation, don't be afraid of it.

Authority Tip 4: Develop Thick Skin

We live in a culture where being offended is rewarded with attention, sympathy, and pity. There is no shortage of people in this world who are going to be offended by the things you say, but believe it or not, an easily offended person has little chance of being seen as an authority figure. Being offended evokes strong emotions, and those emotions prevent you from being able to think clearly. The solution to that is to learn how to be thick-skinned.

Now I'm not advocating for you to suppress your emotions, but I am advocating for you to learn how to sift through them in such a way that you no longer have to worry about how other people talk to you. If someone is able to elicit strong emotional reaction by what they say to you, who is really in control? Not you! You are not in control if someone else has the power to change how you feel and think based on your emotions. Developing thick-skin, getting rid of the right to be offended makes you stronger. It makes you healthier. Don't fall into the false trap of becoming offended by what other people have to say, even if it is really harsh criticism. An authority figure will experience blowback. They will experience people pushing back against them in so many different ways, ranging from agitation, to sedition, to backbiting or even to petty name calling. If you are concerned with avoiding all of those kinds of offensive actions by other people, it will impede your ability to get involved as a leader in your life, because you will be voluntarily subjecting yourself to such treatment at times.

You're going to have to be a boxer if you want to be an authority figure. The boxer's first job is to learn how to hit, the boxer's second job is to learn how to be hit. In fact, if you can't take a punch, guess what? You're gonna be a terrible boxer because boxers are gonna get punched. When you choose to climb into the boxing ring of life and be an authority figure, you're going to get walloped occasionally. That's fine though, it's perfectly normal to endure pain on occasion. How you react to the pain, how you react to rejection, sorrow, frustration and confrontation will determine how strong of a person you actually are.

Think about it like this: how in control is someone if they are offended and emotionally manipulated by offensive behavior? They aren't really in control at all!

How do we develop thick-skin? Well it's simply making a conscious decision to stop allowing other people to control us with their words. We don't have to become angry because someone wants us to be angry, we don't have to be taunted when someone wants to get us upset. Offense is a state of mind; you can only be offended if you allow someone to offend you. The question is: are you willing to give up the right to be offended or

do you prefer to be offended by what other people have to say? A strong, ruthless man doesn't worry about what other people have to say because he has a strong control of his own internal emotions. He has a thick wall up around his heart and that wall prevents other people from shooting arrows into it. It doesn't mean that he's unable to take criticism or listen to what other people have to say to him, what it means is he doesn't let it deeply affect the innermost part of his soul. He takes criticism with a critical eye, he doesn't take it personally.

We live in a world where most people take it personally. They get upset, they are offended and they feel like everything everyone is out to get them. This just isn't true but that doesn't change the way they feel. Most of the time people say things because they are trying to express themselves, they just don't really know how to express themselves well. Take everything that people tell you with a grain of salt. Just because someone says something is true doesn't make it so. By remaining objective and refusing to allow your emotions to get involved with a confrontation, you will be able to diffuse the situation without fear.

Being an authority figure isn't easy, being in control of your own life is really hard. That is why most people aren't in control of their lives, it's why most people choose to give all their hard-earned freedom to other people. But the truth is no one will care as much about your life as you do. They won't make the good decisions for you, no one is going to help you along in your life. You have got to be the one to do it all. You got to be the one to step up to the plate and get it done. You are in charge and no one else. This is a tremendous responsibility but guess what? You are up to the task! By accepting your natural role as a leader, you will be able to achieve incredible things in your life!

Chapter 7: Go to War and Win

We've talked about confrontation a little bit here and there. We've discussed the necessity of confrontation, and we talked about how important conflict is if you want to become a ruthless individual. This entire chapter will be discussing how to become the best confrontational person that you can be. We'll talk about all the things that make up for a good confrontation, and then finally we'll talk about how you can become more confrontational.

Let's start with the simple definition of confrontation. Confrontation is at its core making the decision to tell someone something that they won't like. It's as simple as that. It's not swearing at someone angrily, it's not yelling at someone, it's not trying to fight them with your fists, rather it's simply telling someone something that will cause them to resist. Does this change your idea of what confrontation is? It most likely has! Think about it like this: if you are at a grocery store and you wanted to purchase something with the coupon, you go to scan the coupon and the cash register operator tells you that the coupon is no longer valid, that is actually a confrontation. How you respond will determine the nature of this confrontation. You wanted something, but you were blocked by an interaction. That interaction told you that you couldn't have what you want. You don't like that. So therefore, it becomes a confrontation. Most people in their lives would one of several things, they would blow up and get angry at the teller, they would meekly accept it, they would ask to see a manager or they might just pretend it didn't even happen. Regardless of how they react, this is still confrontation at its core.

Any time you have a disagreement, friendly or hostile, it is a confrontation. Whenever you say something to someone and they don't like it, it starts a confrontation. Confrontations are plentiful in this world, but most people try to shy away from them. They don't like the feelings they experience while they are in a confrontation.

The problem with avoiding confrontation is that it prevents growth. Confrontation, if done properly, can improve your relationships, solve

disputes and resolve longstanding problems. Many people look at confrontation as simply fighting, but that is incorrect. The difference between a fight and confrontation is intention. When someone wants to fight, their intention is to cause harm. The intention is to cause chaos and to inflict punishment on someone. Consequently, the intention of a confrontation is simply to get one's way. This is much different from someone who seeking to cause harm. We all want to get our own way in life. That is the nature of being human.

So, if the reason that you don't get involved in confrontation is because you are afraid of causing harm, then you need to be able to adequately gauge your own intentions. This is what makes a cruel person different from a ruthless individual. A cruel person only desires to inflict harm. A confrontational or ruthless person only desires to get his own way. Don't think that you can exist in this world without effective confrontation. The problem is that we are rarely taught how to confront one another. We are taught to play nice, to obey, to let everyone get their own way and to never ever step out of turn. At the end of the day, this creates a victim-based society. We look at confrontation as the bad thing.

The reality is that confrontation allows us to get what we want. The question is: are you willing to become confrontational? Better question: Are you willing to become confrontational and win at those confrontations? If the answer is yes, then read on!

Confrontation truth one: confrontation is healthy

If we are going to develop a mindset that is based around the idea of being willing and able to engage in confrontation, we must recognize that confrontation is a healthy thing. Confrontation by its lonesome will allow you to express yourself, and the expression of the self is one the most valuable things that you can possibly bring to the table. One of the things that creates unhealthy confrontation is when violence is used. A lot of times we think of violence in a very physical term. We think of violence as pushing, shoving, kicking, or punching, but the truth of the matter is that violence is not always about physical damage. Rather, violence is about our tone, our method of expression and the words that we use. This is what

creates the idea that confrontation is bad. When violence is used in a confrontation, we come to believe that all confrontations must be violent. For example, if a husband and wife are having a disagreement about something and the husband says “you are an idiot for saying that,” he is using violence. Violent communication fills our world. Especially in the political realm, we see our leaders using only the most violent possible communication. As a result, we begin to believe that in order to be able to win a confrontation, we must be violent. And this causes a problem for us. Because we believe that violence is required to win a confrontation, we can shy away from confrontation because we are scared of being violent. The truth of the matter is that violence is a form of unhealthy confrontation.

There is no benefit to unhealthy confrontation. Unhealthy confrontation causes problems, it hurts people, and worst of all it can damage relationships, preventing you from getting what you want out of the situation. The best thing you can do is learn to tell the difference between unhealthy and healthy confrontation.

Healthy Confrontation:

- Is for a purpose.
- Is respectful of the individual.
- Isn't emotional in the moment.
- Is based around clear communication and expression of desires and intention.
- Isn't personal.

Unhealthy Confrontation:

- Is destructive.
- Causes problems.
- Isn't respectful of the individual.
- Creates or is charged by emotions.
- Doesn't communicate desires as much as feelings.
- Becomes personal.

By adopting a clear understanding of the differences between healthy and unhealthy confrontation, it can take away some of the fear of

confrontation. The realization that you are doing good when you confront people, can improve your ability to healthily engage in conflict.

Confrontational thinking isn't bad because confrontational is based around the idea of getting what you want or at least expressing your desires to the other party. There is no bonus in life for moving through discussions without telling people how you actually feel. Another word for hiding your actual feelings and emotion is dishonesty. Confrontation and honesty are best friends, avoiding confrontation requires a certain level of dishonesty.

Confrontation Truth two: confrontation makes you stronger.

Confrontation requires you to have strength, fortitude and the ability to stomach the harder emotions. In short a hearty love for confrontation will eventually lead you to becoming stronger as a person. Confrontations make you better, because each time you engage in a confrontation you gain more experience in handling such conflicts. You'll grow in your mastery and you'll get better with each confrontation.

It's somewhat like lifting weights, the more weight you lift, the stronger you'll get. Therefore, the more confrontation that you will be involved in, the less nervous it'll make you. Over time, you will find that you are becoming much better at confronting people. Remember, confrontation isn't a dirty word, it's not about hurting people or making people angry, it's about expressing yourself and making sure that you get your own way.

Each time you confront someone, you will find yourself being forced to deal with adrenaline, nerves, fear and other things that will hold you back. And each time you overcome those feelings and continue with your confrontation, you will be able to strengthen yourself for the next time around. Eventually you will cease from being a pushover and start becoming a strong, assertive individual. This is where we change from being normal to being ruthless. Each time we make the conscious decision to assert ourselves, and push other people back, we are growing our confrontation skills. Eventually you reach a point where you don't need to

worry so much about other people pushing you around and instead you'll always jump at the chance to engage in a confrontation.

Before we get into the quick and dirty tips to win any confrontation, let's go ahead and take a look at all of the elements that make up someone who is effective at confrontation.

Element one: assertiveness.

Assertiveness is the act and the art of putting yourself forward. Being assertive means making your opinions, points, ideas and thoughts known to other people. It's not very easy to be assertive because our default nature is one of compliance. Compliance punishes assertiveness and calls it selfishness. To be assertive means to have your own interests first and put yourself forward more aggressively. Assertiveness has a forcefulness to it, and there's nothing wrong being forceful.

A lot of times people aren't assertive because they don't want to be seen as brash or mean. But that's just something that you're going to have to give up if you want to become more assertive. One way to become assertive is to speak louder, be more forceful with what you say, and refuse to back down from your position. One common situation that denotes lack of assertiveness is where someone makes a claim, determines the value of that claim and then immediately retracts the claim. For example, suppose a man were to tell his wife "I think you're too mean to me." She responds poorly and he replies with "you know I'm just kidding." That is the polar opposite of being assertive. Retracting a claim after someone disagrees with what you say isn't assertive, you have to be willing to be resolute and strong. It requires you to be honest and courageous. Assertiveness is necessary. Think of being assertive like having a hand that pushes out. Your voice is that hand when it comes to assertiveness. Don't speak with a nervous softness, speak with a strong, firm authoritativeness that dictates that you are in perfect control of the situation. This display of force is known as assertiveness and it will garner you respect in the negotiation. Don't confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness. There is no value in being nasty, mean or insulting to people. You have no reason to be aggressive with anyone when you're making negotiations during a confrontation.

Assertiveness and aggression are two entirely different things and they need to be treated as such. You can build up your assertiveness by focusing on being heard whenever you have a confrontation.

Element number two: readiness

Not only do you have to be assertive when it comes to conflict and confrontation, you also need to be ready at all times to engage in confrontation. This means you have to look for opportunities in which you can refine your skills. A lot of people are looking to avoid confrontation, so they see it coming and they try to get out of the way. On the other hand, if you are someone who wants to become more confrontational, then you need to develop a willingness to run into confrontation. This requires a change in your own perspective, because no longer are you focusing on avoiding something, instead you're focused on engaging in a battle. The readiness will reduce your nerves and fear because it's something that you are wanting to do. The act of running towards confrontation improves your stomach for it. This means that you look at things as an opportunity to grow and improve as opposed to avoid. This is a major change in thinking because it creates the readiness to get involved on a serious level.

This means that when you see a chance to negotiate a new salary, or ask for a raise, you are willing to run in headfirst. This means that instead of hiding the truth from people, you are willing to speak honestly and earnestly in other people's lives. This means that everything that you desire to engage in is no longer about your own comfort and safety but is instead about taking risks. This mindset changes the entire nature of your relationship with confrontation.

Element number three: playfulness

This might come as a surprise but the individual who is experienced and skilled with negotiation, confrontation and disagreement doesn't necessarily have a solemn viewpoint of all of the above. Rather they have a feeling of sportsmanship or playfulness that they associate with their work. To them it's fun to have these kinds of discussions. Rather than feeling

afraid or worried, they move into these discussions and arguments with the feeling of excitement. They enjoy the thrill of the fight; they enjoy the experience of going back and forth. They don't take anything too seriously and they aren't worried about losing. This makes it far easier to stomach confrontation than just to worry about it all the time. Instead of going into some huge fight with the feeling of worry and fear, going towards it with a feeling of excitement and pleasure will reframe the entire experience. This will make you significantly more capable of dealing with the stressors that are involved with confrontation. Fights, anger, shouting; none of those things can really affect an individual when they're looking at all of those things as part of the sport. It's all about your perspective, if you are worried and afraid, then you will be far more stressed out than if you were to have a casual, relaxed attitude towards confrontation.

Element number four: honesty.

Part of confrontation requires you to be honest about your position. Many times, we like to hide how we feel, we like to pretend that we agree with something when actually we're upset with it. This is no good for us. If we're not going to be able to be honest with people, then we're never going to get our own way. So, if you want to become a confrontational individual, then you have to develop a mindset of being honest. The honesty element cannot be overstated. For example, if you want a raise and your boss offers you something that isn't satisfactory, our natural inclination is to accept that. We say thank you that's great, instead of saying that it isn't enough for us. The latter requires honesty whereas the former only prevents you from doing what you actually want. There are no prizes for lying, there is no reward for second best, and worst of all when you refuse to tell people the truth, you are making yourself out to be a liar. We don't want to be liars; we don't want to project falsehoods. You might realize at this point that being ruthless is actually more about being honest than it is about being deceptive. The difference between an assertive, confrontational individual and a cowardly individual is honesty. If you do not desire to be honest with other people, then you will never be able to be confrontational. Part of confrontation is stating the truth about what you want.

Element number five: goal oriented.

Confrontation also requires you to have a goal. Before you get involved in any kind of discussion, disagreement, or argument, you're going to need to be able to realize what your goal is and then work to achieve a goal. The difference between a fight and a confrontation is that in a fight, the goal is usually to cause pain. Your goal in a confrontation is to get what you actually want. A lot of times we can start confrontations without realizing what we want. You can see this mostly in our relational circles.

When you have a discussion with someone and you begin fighting with them, it's usually because you don't actually know what you want out of the situation. Think about it like this, before you go into any serious confrontation, ask yourself what would make you happy in the situation. Is there some kind of resolution that you would like to see? Do you desire change in some area? Are you trying to get them to see things your way, gain respect, or just gain some additional money for your work? Don't fall for the trap of thinking that just because you started confrontation, that you'll be able to figure out what you want in the middle of it. That will cause more frustration and confusion on your end because if you do not have a clear position, you are going to feel your emotions rise due to a feeling of vulnerability.

Think of your goal like an anchor. It is the thing that keeps you from losing track of what you are saying. A good confrontation, good negotiation always has an end goal or objective before you start.

So, there you have it! A solid collection of all the elements and truths about confrontation. These together will make up for a strong, confident individual who is capable of confronting others without fear. Now that we've talked about both the elements and reasons to engage in confrontation, it's time to start learning how to win at these confrontations.

Just because you're in a confrontation doesn't mean that you have to play fair. Many times, the entire point of a confrontation is for you to get your own way. If you want to achieve great things in the confrontation, then

you're going to need to have some kind of tactics. A good playbook is invaluable when it comes to negotiating a raise, arguing a point with a friend or trying to get out of a serious conflict gracefully. With that in mind, let's go ahead and start looking at a series of tips and tactics that you can use to win any confrontation they you get engaged in.

Confrontation tactic one: stay cool.

When you're in a conflict, there can be an immense temptation to lose your cool. Sometimes someone might say something that you don't like, or worse they try to taunt you. Their taunting and badgering might give you the urge to fly off the handle and go into a rage, but it is important for you to be able to weather their attack. When you lose your cool in an argument, you essentially lose the argument. The moment you start to become emotional is the moment that that you start to lose control. Once you start to lose control, you're not going to be able to get it back.

Instead of giving into the urge to get angry, try to remember that the entire point of winning a confrontation is to get your way. When emotion gets in the way, you will find it much harder to speak clearly, to make yourself known and to gain respect from your opponent. This is why you need to purpose in your heart to never allow for them to frustrate, agitate, irritate or anger you.

How do we learn to avoid such feelings? It's simple, you just need to remember the goal of what you're trying to achieve. Deep breathing exercises can help as well. Instead of just rushing to speak the moment you hear something, take a moment to pause and soak it in. Anger is a secondary reaction to fear. Usually, when we become angry it's because we feel threatened on some level. The solution to keeping your cool is to realize that your opponent has no ability to harm you. This will reduce your anger and hopefully will help you have more self-control in the moment.

Keep your priorities straight. Are you there to inflict pain or are you there to win? If you want to win, you're going to have to keep your cool, so never give into your rage.

Confrontation tactic two: never defend.

One of the trickiest maneuvers your opponent can use on you during a confrontation is to levy an accusation that will derail the conversation. When you go into a confrontation, you should have a specific plan and goal. When you begin the confrontation, the person that you're engaged with will counter with something that isn't entirely related, but it's enough to warrant your interest. A lesser experienced individual will take the bait and begin to try and defend themselves. The entire argument then changes and is no longer about the subject that you brought to the table, rather it is about protecting yourself from the attack that your opponent laid at your feet. You should be able to see that this is simply a distraction tactic meant to change the point of the conversation.

So, what do we do when we encounter this kind of problem? It's simple, we make a commitment to never defend against things that are not part of the initial discussion. For example, if you were going into ask for a raise from your boss and your boss tells you that you didn't do something right at your job the other day, you might want to give into the temptation to start arguing against that. But by doing so you are eliminating any chance for you to stay on topic. This is called losing ground. You don't want to lose ground, so the right decision to make is to simply shelve that discussion. So, when someone brings up something that you aren't interested in arguing about, you merely have to say that is not the point of discussion right now. By refusing to engage in their defensive tactics, you are empowering yourself to stay on target. This increases your chance of actually reaching your goals in the discussion.

What you do if they refused to let up from that topic? Well, that's a tricky one, but one of the best actions that you can do is to simply tell them that you will have a discussion on that topic at a later date but you're here to talk about the subject that you brought up.

One of the biggest dangers in an argument is the urge defend yourself. Whenever you try to defend yourself, you are just giving legitimacy to the charges they bring against you. This is very common in relationship arguments. Don't give into the temptation to protect yourself, instead keep focusing on your goal and do not let go of your plan.

Confrontation tactic three: repeat yourself.

Believe it or not, but goals can become quickly muddled in the middle of a confrontation. The solution to this muddling is to consistently bring it back to your main point. This means you are required to repeat yourself.

Many times, we become so focused on our own emotions and opinions during an argument that we lose sight of what the whole point of the argument is. This will happen in your opponent as well. Your opponent will most likely be just as unfocused and frustrated as you are. This is why it is essential for you to continuously repeat your point, don't bash it over their heads and certainly don't repeat it angrily, just make sure that they are very well aware of what your intentions are. By stating your intentions at the very beginning of a discussion, you are improving your chances of getting your way. Why is that? Because people tend to respond to the last piece of information that they receive. If they know that you are purely arguing to reach a specific goal and point, they will be significantly less defensive. Keep repeating what your main goal is and do not let them lose focus of it during the fight.

Confrontation tactic four: never get personal.

The easiest way to lose any confrontation is to make it personal. Rather than try to argue on the point, or argue on the merits of the conversation, you might just be willing to name call. Name calling, personal attacks and focusing directly on the character of the person that you are disagreeing with is a sure shot way to get yourself booted out of the conversation.

Nothing shuts a person down faster than the feelings of being personally attacked. That is when they become extremely defensive and will try to argue with you. Their emotions will rise significantly and they become impossible to reason with. It might be tempting, especially when you're frustrated with the situation, to levy a personal attack against your opponent, but in doing so you are dooming the conversation. Instead, focus only on the points at hand.

If you want to be extremely clever, you're going to have to learn how to be able to levy personal charges against someone without them feeling attacked. For example, suppose you were trying to confront a person about the way they treat you. They have been very hostile and mean to you over the years and you are sick and tired of it. So, you decide to put a stop to it by calling them out on their bad behavior. The most tempting solution to the problem would be to just simply tell them that they are a bad person, they are mean and that they are hurting your feelings. This will do nothing except make them even more defensive and pretty soon you are engaged in a back-and-forth that will never end.

So how do we present a personal issue to someone without them feeling that they are being attacked? It's simple we learn how to communicate our grievances without directly assaulting them. For example, speaking in non-judgmental phrases helps. Instead of saying "you are a bad person," try telling them how their behavior is affecting you. This changes the conversation entirely. It's no longer about you saying something mean about them, rather you are talking about how you are experiencing their behavior. This gets past a defensive individual's desire to protect themselves and it might end up helping resolve the problem more effectively. Speaking in nonjudgmental, non-accusatory language has a better chance of changing someone's mind than pushing at them directly. Someone convinced against their will, never actually changes their mind.

Another effective tactic when laying criticism on someone is what's known as the sandwich technique. Now the sandwich technique has different types of reception, but it generally works as long as you are authentic. How the sandwich technique works is that before you criticize someone, you say something nice about them. You say something nice, you criticize them gently, and then you say something nice about them again. This technique is designed to allow a person to feel heard and valued instead of just attacked. It's very easy to point someone's flaws out and there is very little work required to hurt someone's feelings. But by using the sandwich technique, you are disarming your opponent by showing them that you have good intentions. Mileage may vary on this one, but it can be effective with the right people.

Confrontation tactic five: make them feel like you are on their side.

The easiest fight to win is the one that isn't a fight all. Confused? It's simple. If you have the need to bring something up to someone, it's far easier to convince them that you have their best interest in mind than to convince them that you are right. For example, if you are calling someone out on a character flaw, bringing it up in such a way as to help the person improve from their flaw will work far better than just accusing them angrily. When a person feels like you are trying to help them by calling their behavior into play, it can benefit you greatly.

But what if your intentions have nothing to do with helping them, is it still worth using this tactic? Absolutely! Just because your intentions are different, doesn't mean you can't use this tactic. The goal of any confrontation tactic is to assist you in winning, so if you feel that it can help your case, then by all means use it. Convincing your opponent that you are on his side will allow for far more constructive conversation than if he were to feel that he is engaged in some kind of power struggle. You very well could have only your own interests at heart, but it doesn't matter. What matters is that he perceives you as caring.

How do we convince someone that we care? We talk about our struggle in language designed to assist them. We talk about the good of the company, we talk about how important this thing would be for them, we highlight the benefits of the action but we don't focus on the benefits for us, we focus on the benefits for them. For example, if a wife is trying to get her husband to go to counseling, rather than focus on how counseling would fix him, she might make more noise about how counseling would benefit her and improve her behavior. The reality is a good counselor will cause both of them to change, but all she needs to do is get him to support idea of both of them going in the hopes that she will change. This greatly can stack the deck in your favor when it comes to convincing someone to do things your way.

Confrontation tactic six: do your homework.

The best way to go into a conversation with someone is to be fully aware of what you're going to say. If you are trying to negotiate with someone, having additional information on the situation will drastically improve your chances for success. At the same time, if you fail to do your research and sufficient homework on the situation, you could end up walking into a situation where you're potentially blind.

For example, if you are in a negotiation with the company and you are trying to acquire their firm, you should have spent sufficient time trying to find any vulnerability or weakness that this firm might have. If you're fortunate, you might discover some weakness that will allow you to exploit them in the middle of your negotiations. At the same time, if you neglected to do any research, you are entirely at their mercy. There is no reason to assume that any individual that you are in negotiations with is telling the truth. Instead, what you're going to want to do is research all of the facts for yourself, that way you know what is true and what is a lie.

What we do when we have caught them in a lie? We hold onto it until it is advantageous for us. Loudly calling out someone in a lie does you no good, you'll want to use it when you have the opportunity to use it for good of the discussion. Remember, the point of winning a confrontation is to get your own way, not to feel superior or better than them. This means you need to hold onto pertinent information until it is absolutely vital to use.

One great example of doing sufficient research and holding onto the evidence is usually during politics. A good politician always makes sure to learn dirt on his opponent, but he doesn't immediately release the dirt, he waits until it will maximize his political benefit. This might be seen as a scumbag move by other people, but it's a legitimate strategy. For example, some politicians have a habit of unsealing their opponents divorce records. Divorce records can tend to be very nasty and if a politician plays his cards right, he's able to get access to things that the opponent certainly doesn't want anyone to know. Doing so can give him a tremendous benefit in the confrontation, and it could very well win him an election.

Confrontation strategy seven: have perspective.

If you're going to be able to defeat your opponent in a confrontation, then you need to be able to understand their own perspective. You need to be putting yourself in their shoes and thinking about your words through their ears. In doing so, you are giving yourself a valuable tool in the discussion. This tool is known as empathy. Empathy gives you the ability to experience what your opponent is experiencing. This allows you to more effectively argue your points without going past the breaking point in the discussion.

The ruthless individual thinks clearly about what his opponent perceives in his words. All that matters in a confrontation is perception. Perception is reality. It doesn't matter if you have the nicest sounding words, if your opponent perceives you as being hostile, then you will not win the argument. This is why you must make a continual practice thinking about how your words will be heard by those you oppose. Consider their way of life, consider their actions, their values, their belief structures and their emotional temperament. When you consider all of this as you are speaking to someone, it can improve your effectiveness tenfold. Just because you are trying to get your own way doesn't mean you shouldn't be empathetic. The empathetic individual is the one who's able to more expertly navigate through a confrontation as opposed to someone who just tries to do things his own way.

Confrontation tactic eight: always go high.

When you are in a negotiation, you should always make a point ask for more than you actually want. The reason for this is because when you give them a higher ceiling, and they counter with a lower offer, you can lead them to believe they have gotten a good deal. For example, let's say that you wanted a 20% raise. When you go into a discussion with your boss, you ask for a 30% raise. You get immediately shut down, and they offer you 20% raise instead. Guess what? You just got what you wanted. By over inflating your demands, you are actually improving your chances of getting what you actually want. Just be careful with this tactic. If you go too high it might be seen as an insult. The subtle art of negotiation is to pick a price

point that they will not like, but will cause them to lower to the range that you are actually looking for. The best-case scenario is that they accept your unrealistic demand. The worst-case scenario is that they go lower, but not lower from where your original demand was. This is better than just asking for what you want immediately. For example, if you had demanded a 20% raise, they might offer you a 10% raise. There is no room for negotiation in that. Instead, you are creating the illusion that the other party is getting a good deal, while in reality it was your plan to lower to that rate to begin with. This is a shrewd business tactic, but it can be quickly recognized if your demands are wildly unrealistic. Don't go too high or else they might suspect you're trying to pull something over on them.

Confrontation tactic nine: control your words.

Don't hang yourself with your own rope. What I mean by that is that the more you speak in a negotiation, the better chances of you failing during it. Chatty people tend to be quick to expose themselves. But the slow, calm speaker who does not rush to counter, who does not rush to argue back, is the one who will win in the long run. There might be a temptation to act as quickly as possible in the conversation, but the fastest person at the table doesn't win. Instead the person who has the greatest degree of control is the one who wins. A quick word can quickly spiral out of control. By speaking before you have a chance to think, you are setting yourself up for disaster. Instead, you should focus entirely on speaking as slowly and as thoroughly as possible, that way you are able to get your message out with a cool and collected manner.

Confrontation tactic 10: ignore the sob story.

If you are in a confrontation and you are currently winning, you run the risk of running into the sob story. Depending on what you were trying to achieve, the sob story can sound like all sorts of different things. For example, the boss might tell you that the company just isn't generating enough money to pay you more, or your spouse might tell you that nobody loves her and that your confrontation of her spending habits is just proof

that no one really cares. Your alcoholic brother-in-law might try to tell you that he is just trying to get back up on his feet and will quit drinking as soon as he gets a good job. All of the sob stories are meant to convince you to back down from your original position. Once you start to reach the sob story, you are in the victory zone. Don't back off! Instead, acknowledge that you feel bad for their position, but don't give in to their demands. They will act wounded as a means to defend themselves from the loss. Refuse to accept that and instead continue pressing forward until you get your way. Ignore the sob story and win the war.

Remember the greatest enemy that you can have in your life is fear, because fear controls our actions. If you want to overcome your fear of confrontation then you are going to have to get involved in as many confrontations as you can. They could be small ones; they could be disagreements with a coworker about a movie or they could be big ones like asking your boss for a raise after all these years. The point is when you learn to confront other people, you are strengthening yourself each and every day. With that in mind were going to go ahead and move on to the last chapter before we close out the book. We're going to discuss how to be ruthless with your own goals.

Chapter 8: Always About Goals

Single-mindedness is one of the most valuable weapons that you can have on the ruthlessness front. What does it mean to be single-minded? It means that you need to be in a position of always thinking constantly about your goals and desires. Single-minded individual makes decisions to cut out things that don't fit with their goals. So, that is what we're going to talk about in this chapter, how to be ruthless when it comes to achieving your own goals. Believe it or not, you don't need to be as ruthless with other people as you need to be ruthless with your own self when it comes to goal setting and goal achieving. Are you confused? Well let's look at it like this: if you have a goal, there are many enemies to your goal. But those enemies aren't always very obvious, sometimes there are just good things that look very attractive in the moment.

It has often been said that good is the enemy of great. This is especially true when it comes to achieving your own goals. What can happen is that as you are working to get your own stuff done, you might begin to find that there are certain things that seem like good ideas but they don't fit in with your goals. The ruthless individual is only interested in what works. The ruthless individual isn't thinking about all of the ideas that are good, they only think about the ideas that make sense for what they are trying to do.

Consider how the businessman works. He has a lot of different things that could take his time and energy, for example if he was in the business of creating light bulbs, he might be enticed to also start manufacturing lamps. It might seem like a good idea on paper and it might seem like it would be very financially attractive. But the problem is how does selling lamps advance the agenda of selling light bulbs? It doesn't! So, all of sudden this businessman has to make a choice, he can take something good, making lamps, or he can focus on achieving greatness which is only selling light bulbs. Many times, in our lives we do not have to choose between good and evil, we actually have to choose between good or best. But in our lives, we don't really know how to tell the difference between good and best.

That is why the ruthless individual gets ahead so quickly because they have the ability to not just simply see what is good and what is best, they have the discipline and strength of character to go for what is best only. Good will usually try to seduce you on some level, good often shows up in many different ways. For example, if you're an entrepreneur and you're trying to start your own business, you might have a bevy of good ideas, worse you might have friends around you who all have good ideas too. If you start to take all of these good ideas and lose the focus of what your business is about, you'll end up too bloated to get anything done. The ruthless man focuses only on one thing at a time in order to achieve his goals, because he knows that the bulkier a project gets, the more he will be slowed down. I will repeat myself when I say that good is the enemy of great. The temptation to do just good enough and not be exceptional is very powerful.

Imagine the difference between a man who climbs Mount Everest all way of the top and the man who climbs Mount Everest halfway. The man who climbs halfway will still have an amazing view. He will still see the world around him and he will still have some level of accomplishment. He might even feel like it's good enough and in his infinite wisdom will choose to go back home having achieved something that most people will never be able to achieve. But it is not enough, it is not in line with his actual goals, it does not advance his agenda. All that work and energy in preparation wasn't to reach half of Mount Everest it was to reach the top of Mount Everest. Consequently, the man who reaches the top of Mount Everest gets to plant a flag, see the world and receives all the accolades of climbing Mount Everest. It's harder to reach the top than it is the climb it halfway through. The decision to climb Mount Everest requires all of his single-minded energy and effort to achieve his goal.

There are a lot of people in this world who have some level of drive, they have some level of single-mindedness but what they don't have is a deep, intense desire to push themselves all the way through to the very end. And as a result, they accept the good. The ruthless man is only satisfied with great because greatness is not easy to achieve. Complacency can be common place in the world of success.

The ruthless man is not complacent when it comes to his goals, instead he makes a constant decision to force himself forward, even if he doesn't feel like it. He knows what he wants and then he goes for it with all of his energy. He fights to achieve his goals relentlessly and without giving up. The question is: do you know what you want yet? Finding and achieving your goal isn't easy, it requires a certain level of introspection and realization. But once you have those goals figured out, you have to ask yourself: are you wanting to achieve exceptional goals or are you happy with second place? First place will require a serious, ruthless mind to achieve.

The question is what do you really want? Do you want to be exceptional? Or do you just simply want to be run-of-the-mill? There are no shortages of regular people in this world and there are no shortages of regular goals in this world. We live in a world where good and mediocrity are the standard. If you want to be exceptional, if you want to be great, it's going to require a greater sense of push, a greater drive, and above all a greater sense of ruthlessness. So, let's break down how to essentially cultivate a ruthless mentality when it comes to goal setting.

Ruthless goal one: sorting.

One of most effective ways to set goals is to learn to tell the difference between good ideas, bad ideas, and great ideas. A great idea is something that will require a lot of discipline and energy to take off. A great idea requires an effective strategy to get done, and most of all it's something that can feel somewhat scary. Good ideas usually don't have the same emotional punch. Believe it or not, but fear is an excellent indicator of how important your goal is. The scarier an idea is, the more worthwhile it can be to achieve. It's really easy to get off track when it comes to setting goals that is why you need an effective sorting process. You must be willing to make sure that each idea that you have works with your original plan. You need to be certain that every action and step that you take supports your original goals entirely. Any idea that doesn't work for the benefit of your original goals should be thrown out. Don't allow for these lesser ideas to stealthily pile up on your goals, bogging you down over time.

You need to be ruthless with yourself, however, because the temptation to grab any idea that seems like it fits is quite high. In fact, most entrepreneurs struggle desperately with the desire to include a bunch of good ideas. Remember, one exceptional idea is worth 10 good ideas.

Ruthless goals two: Being Specific

If you want to implement and achieve your goals, then you're going to need to be specific as to what those goals are. Vagueness is the enemy when it comes to goal setting. Vagueness allows room for laziness, lack of discipline and fantasy. The ruthless individual cannot be vague about their goals because they know that vagueness will weaken them. Vague goals produce unreasonable and uncertain results. Concrete specific goals on the other hand enable you to get a sense of accomplishment. The more specific your goals are, the easier it is to come up with plans to get them done.

So, if you are someone who is prone to coming up with vague ideas and hoping it'll work, you're in trouble. It is far better for you to have a specific plan and goal setting than to fall prey to the idea of making it up as you go along. It takes discipline to have specific goals and the ruthless individual must have that discipline.

Ruthless goal three: action must come after goals setting.

The ruthless man knows that action is necessary in order to achieve his goals. He does not wait and dally and hope for things to happen, he does not give his time to some imagined tomorrow where things are better. He doesn't delay and he realizes that if he doesn't do it it'll never get done. Tomorrow is a lie. Tomorrow never comes, the more we will give our time, days, hours and energy to tomorrow, the less chance of us actually getting anything done today. Don't fall into this trap of focusing only on tomorrow. Don't fall for this lie that tomorrow is somehow magically better than today. The ruthless man must have the discipline to know that today is the only day for him. This is the day that he refuses to give into the temptation to be lazy and wait for tomorrow and instead works to get his goals done today.

Think about it like this: every single day that passes by is a day you get further away from your goals. Yet if you look at it, every day you spend working even if it's a small amount towards reaching your goal, it is an advancement of your greatest purpose and goal. These productive days are important because they allow you to move the ball forward, no matter how minuscule it might feel in the moment. Large walls are made up of thousands of small bricks. The ruthless man is strong; the ruthless man is a taskmaster of his own self; he chooses to push himself. He chooses to overcome his own laziness and desire for self-gratification and instead focuses on achieving all of his goals in the now. What he does not do is wait. Each day that passes by never comes back. Each hour that slips past you will vanish forever. You will never see that hour again. So, what you do with your time is of infinite value because unlike money, you can do nothing to get more time in your life. The ruthless man knows this to be true and lives accordingly.

Ruthless goal four: stick to the plan, no matter what.

There are a lot of things that can threaten you in your desire to implement your goals. Other people might try to discourage you with hurtful messages. You might find yourself frustrated or agitated. You might be afraid, or worse you might encounter setbacks that feel like your goals will not be achieved. This is where the rubber hits the road, this is what separates the regular individual from ruthless individual. Regular individuals reach trouble, encounters struggles or obstacles and then give up. They might lament the situation and surrender. Worse they might end their goals and say that their goals were wrong and change them.

The temptation to change your goals, to change what your dreams are in response to some kind of failure is powerful. These temptations are ever present, and will continuously plague you until the end of time. You can never give into the temptation to give up. You cannot allow setbacks to hold you back. The desire to quit will always be present, regardless of what you're trying to do. You certainly cannot abandon your plans just because you are afraid. Nothing worthwhile will ever be easy. Yet we live in a world where we might be tempted to believe that success should be handed to us

on a silver platter. Such fantasies serve only to harm us in the long run. Do you want to indulge in these fantasies or do you want to live in reality and fight for what you want?

Remember how the pragmatist thinks. The pragmatist's job is to consider reality and to resist thinking about fantasy. And this means that when you hit the rocks, when you begin to experience frustration and pain, you stand up and hold yourself resolute. You refuse to back down from your convictions and you don't allow circumstances, people, or emotions to stop you from doing what you need to do. This is what makes the difference between a ruthless individual and a weak individual. The strong one, the one who is not afraid, will hold themselves firm. The weak individual on the other hand will buckle and break. If you really want to achieve your goals, if you want to achieve great things, then you're going to have to make the decision to hold fast and firm.

It can be extremely hard to set goals in this world especially when the urge to be compliant is deep-seated within us. We often need permission from other people to do the things we actually truly want to do. We can sometimes suppress our desires and bury them in caution and wariness. We can even try to convince ourselves that we don't really want to strike out on our own. Achieving our hopes and dreams isn't easy. In our compliance-based society we are told to not follow our dreams and instead be productive. We are told to work as hard as we can to earn, to turn a profit, to help the business or assist the boss in getting somewhere in life, but we ourselves are told time and time again that we do not deserve success. What happens as a result of this is that very few people actually end up where they want to be in life. The good news is that you don't have to be one of those people. You can be the maverick; you can be the one to walk away from the system and get your own way! You can be the one to get in front of everyone else and get ahead in life. It's going to take intense focus on setting goals and sorting through them appropriately in order to get there.

Conclusion

Ruthlessness is far more than simply being mean. It is far more than just being rude, cruel, or selfish. It is an entirely different way of living in a world where you're constantly put into the box of compliance. We've spent a great deal of time talking about all the different things in this world that are meant to control you. We've talked about the different ways people try to get their hooks into you and all the ways that they steal your free will. You might feel like it's too hard to buck against the trend of society. You might feel intimidated or nervous about the idea of standing up for yourself and refusing to follow the rules that the world has put into place. How many of us in this world are carrying a burden that we never agreed to take on? How many of us are put into positions of compliance even though deep down on the inside we seek to be free?

The reality is that if you want to change your life and become more confident, you're going to need to learn how to be ruthless. It won't be easy but that's okay because looking for the easy way is the enemy in our lives. Comfort breeds weakness and complacency. You must embrace discomfort; you must embrace the rugged and independent life. There is no instruction manual to truly becoming the ruthless individual past but we have shown. It's easy to have this knowledge in your head, it's easy to know what the right answers are, but it's hard to actually implement them. If you really truly want to achieve all these great things in your life, then you're going to need to start working hard to develop this mindset. It's possible to achieve all of your goals, to break free of the system that has tried so hard to keep you down, but doing so will take everything that you have to achieve victory.

Stand up for yourself, don't be afraid and never ever give in to the desire to be like the world around you. You can be a ruthless, strong and smart individual who is able to achieve whatever you put your mind to. You just need to have an attitude of pragmatism, a willingness to question everything and the desire to break free from the corporate machine that has taken over all of our lives.

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