AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF
THE MAGIC OF THINKING BIG
by David Schwartz

Who is David Schwartz?
David Joseph Schwartz (1927 – 1987) was born in America and worked as a coach and motivational writer. As a professor at the prestigious Georgia State University, David also began working as a life strategist. Additionally, he also served as a self help coach to help numerous people and later founded a consultancy firm that focused primarily on leadership. His book, “The Magic of Thinking Big” was published in 1959.

Note: This book was recommended by billionaire Chris Sacca, and he claims it’s his favorite read.

Preston and Stig’s General Thoughts on the Book
I’ve always found that your reality is what you think about most of the time. If anything, this book takes that idea a step or two further. The book stresses that thinking big is not the same as wishful thinking. We all want to win the lottery – that is wishful thinking. The premise of this book is rather that few take decisive action to become successful. The reason for this is simple: We don’t think big. Everything comes from how we think about the world and ourselves. The right way to look at something difficult is to move step by step backwards to realize what needs to be done right now. The moment you think something is impossible you will – unfortunately – be right. This was my three key takeaways:

• Successful people don’t make excuses. If something is important enough they know it’s up to themselves to change it in their favor
• Success is all about having the right habits. If you’re easy on yourself life will be hard, but if you’re hard on yourself life will be easy
• Surround yourself with the right people. You can’t control what other people think, but you can control which people you want to be around.

Preface
The book primarily focuses on positive thinking and its power to enhance lives. The crux of the book concentrates upon the importance of thinking big and self belief. David states that it’s important to think positive, dream big and work hard, and when these elements converge, it becomes easier to attain success.

Chapter 1: Believe You Can Succeed and You Will
In this first section, David stresses on the importance of belief. Believing is way different than just wishful thinking. There are three guides to harness the power of belief. First, you need to think about success and not failure. Think about how you are going to succeed, rather than thinking about how you can fail. Second, never underestimate yourself. Believe that you are better than what you think you really are. When you look at successful people, remind yourself that it isn’t due to luck, but it’s because they believed that they could do it. Third, always think big. When you
think small, you attain small goals, but when you think big – and it definitely isn’t harder than thinking small – you automatically move towards bigger accomplishments. It is imperative to remember that the size of your own success depends significantly on the size of your beliefs.

**Chapter 2: Cure yourself of excusitis, the failure disease**

When we don’t succeed, we often come up with a variety of excuses and most of them are regarding our health, intelligence, age and luck. David states that this is akin to a disease and has termed it “Excusitis”. If you’re suffering from health excusitis, you need to stop doing it since complaining about health usually makes you look self centered. Therefore, stop worrying about your health and start being grateful for what you have.

Next, we worry about our intelligence and complain that we can’t succeed because we lack in the brains department. David asserts that one must never underestimate his own intelligence. Additionally, successful people aren’t gifted with extra brains but it’s their hard work that takes them where they are.

Thirdly, people often give excuses about their age and complain that they are too old to start anything. However, this is not true. If you’re 30 years old, you have at least 80% of your best years ahead of you, so stop thinking about your age and take advantage of your intelligence. If you’re 50 or 60 you have plenty of time too, to realize your goals. The limit is you – not your age.

Lastly, people complain about their bad luck when they fail in their endeavors. The difference between a successful and a mediocre person is that a successful person learns from his mistakes whereas a mediocre person fails to learn and repeats his mistakes. There’s no luck involved here. Instead of wasting your time on wishful thinking, concentrate on developing qualities that are likely to make you win.

**Chapter 3: Build Confidence and Destroy Fear**

In this chapter, David talks about fear. Fear is a factor that prevents an individual from attaining riches and success. Action, especially constructive action, is the best cure for fear. On the other hand, inaction breeds insecurities and strengthens fear, thereby destroying your confidence. It also gives way to indecisions and speculations, thereby delaying your path to success. In order to get rid of fear, one must only entertain positive thoughts and consequently shun negative thoughts. For instance, if you want to feel confident, you must act confident. Walk with your head held high, and make eye contact and smile when talking to people.

**Chapter 4: How to Think Big**

David stresses the importance of never selling yourself short. Self-deprecation is terrible and will only aid you towards failure. Once you think that that you are way better than what you have imagined and conquer self-deprecation, success will be easy. When you think and talk, use vocabulary that instills confidence such as victory, happiness, winning and pleasure, instead of using words such as failure, grief and sorrow.

Additionally, you have to stretch your thinking and vision and be able to imagine what can be, rather than merely seeing what is. Remember to value simple things and learn to respect others around you. David also says that it’s imperative to focus only on big objectives. Many of us waste our time while getting involved in petty issues but the moment we convince ourselves that it isn’t worth it, things become easier.
Chapter 5: How to Think and Dream Creatively
In this section, David reiterates the importance of believing in oneself. Essentially, when you believe that you can achieve something, your mind automatically sources a variety of ways to do it. By eliminating negative words such as “impossible”, “can’t” and “futile” from your vocabulary, you keep your mind positive. Needless to say, try to improve yourself everyday and be very progressive with everything you do. Keep your mind fresh and open to new ideas by experimenting with several things.

David offers a very important piece of advice to business owners by saying that you need to find the winning combination by combining quality and quantity. Apart from that, an individual needs to improve his listening skills as it can help him become receptive to great ideas and arrive at good conclusions.

Chapter 6: You Are What You Think You Are
As mentioned earlier, the way you think can be the difference between a successful man and a failure. Your thoughts and actions produce success. In order to make the best of your thoughts and think like successful people, a few rules need to be followed. Firstly, your appearance plays a pivotal role. When you look important, you automatically think important. Dress a way that helps you build your confidence and uplifts your spirit. Secondly, think that your work is mighty important. Once you do so, your brain will automatically send signals to help you improve your work. Thirdly, build your mental strength and confidence every day by reminding yourself that you have what it takes to be successful. Pep talks really help if you’re feeling down. Lastly, teach yourself to think like an important, successful person so that you think that way too.

Chapter 7: Manage Your Environment: Go First Class
The biggest obstacle on our road to success is our negative thoughts where we think that major accomplishments are impossible. There are three groups of people we can find in our daily lives. While the first group constitutes of people who surrender to their problems and convince themselves that they are really happy, the second group surrender only partially. This group also includes intelligent people but the difference is that they choose to crawl through life since they are afraid to face their problems. The third group is of those people who never surrender in life, no matter how bad their problems are.

Therefore, it is important to surround yourself with people who support and work with you, which makes a great environment that paves your way to success. Avoid people who spread negativity as they will only try to pull you down. Your environment should work for your success and not against it. If you need advice, take it from people who are successful instead of relying on people who are failures themselves. Whether it’s your thoughts, actions or the services and products you buy, always go first class.

Chapter 8: Make Your Attitudes Your Allies
Your attitude is imperative to attain success. Needless to say, the results of anything you do are directly proportional to your attitude and effort. David talks about the “activated” attitude where you develop enthusiasm to do anything. If you’re not interested in anything, try to make an effort to learn more and develop enthusiasm towards it. Remember that your attitude including your smile, the way you walk and talk and the way you carry yourself will have an influence in your life. Most importantly, act alive! David suggests that you should show passion in everything you do. If a business owner puts service first, then money will follow quickly. In addition, you must remember to offer more than people expect.
Chapter 9: Think Right Toward People
This section is associated with the other chapters that talk about a positive attitude and the right environment. In order to have a good environment around you, you need to be a person people like. This way, you will make friends who can support you and help you succeed. Be the first to build long lasting friendships and ensure that you know your friends on a personal basis. In addition, be courteous and encourage others when they talk. Don’t let negative influences change your thoughts about a third person. If you don’t agree with someone over something, remember that they have a right to their opinion too. Don’t try to change or reform people as nobody can be perfect.

Chapter 10: Get the Action Habit
Leaders are those people who don’t waste time with speculations. They never hesitate to get things done, especially when they believe that they can do it. Likewise, you need to get into the habit of taking action and doing things. Don’t waste your time waiting for the conditions to be perfect. Even if you encounter adversities in your venture, look for ways to solve them. We all get numerous ideas, but they are great only if you act and do something about them. If you’re fearful about something, try it until your fear disappears! Just concentrate on the present and stop worrying about the future. Get down to doing what you need to do, and you’ll gradually find the inspiration to do it.

Chapter 11: How to Turn Defeat into Victory
We all face situations that can be disappointing but a winner will find ways to convert them to victory. There are five ways to do this:

- Study the issues that stand between you and your success so that you can learn to win when you try again.
- Be critical towards your own mistakes and have the courage to identify and accept them. Once you do that, you can correct them and be successful.
- Stop giving excuses and blaming others and your situations for your failure. There’s no point in blaming your destiny or luck. You are the only person that can do anything about it anyway.
- Experiment with anything you want and be persistent until you find out what you’re actually passionate about.
- Try to find the positive side in everything. Even if the future looks bleak, try to find the silver line.

Chapter 12: Use Goals to Help You Grow
Be clear about where you want to proceed in your future. For instance, think about where you see yourself ten years from the present day. Write out a plan and don’t ignore it since it will aid you to accomplish your dreams. Recognize your desires and put your best step forward to achieve everything you crave for. We only get one life, so don’t squander it by wasting time. Ensure that you’re focused about your important goals. Take it slow and one step at a time because there’s nothing wrong in going slow. Remember that your effort will pay every day as you inch towards your goals.

Chapter 13: How to think like a Leader
Surround yourself with people who are passionate about everything they do. If you start seeing things through their eyes, it’s pretty easy to get them to do things. Think about how you can exchange roles with them. Most importantly, don’t forget to be kind and human with the things you do. We often forget about the important things in life when it comes to money but it’s not necessary to stop being human in order to become wealthy.
Try to improve anything you’re doing and believe in your progress. As mentioned earlier, think first class and act like it. Also, take some time for yourself alone and unleash the power of your creativity. Great leaders often confer with themselves to arrive at the best conclusions or strategies for their businesses, so you must learn to do the same.