

CLEAN EDITION

NEVER FINISHED



UNSHACKLE
YOUR MIND AND
WIN THE WAR
WITHIN

FROM *NY TIMES* BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF *CAN'T HURT ME*

DAVID GOGGINS



LIONCREST

P U B L I S H I N G

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To my North Star that has always shined, even on the darkest of nights.

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Contents

Warning Order

Introduction

1. Maximize Minimal Potential

Evolution No. 1

2. Merry Christmas

Evolution No. 2

3. The Mental Lab

Evolution No. 3

4. A Savage Reborn

Evolution No. 4

5. Disciple of Discipline

Evolution No. 5

6. The Art of Getting Hit in the Mouth

Evolution No. 6

7. The Reckoning

Evolution No. 7

8. Play until the Whistle

Evolution No. 8

9. Wringing Out the Soul

Acknowledgments

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WARNING ORDER

TIME ZONE: 24/7

TASK ORGANIZATION: SOLO MISSION

SITUATION: Your horizons have been limited by societal and self-imposed barriers.

MISSION: Fight through resistance. Seek unknown territory. Redefine what's possible.

EXECUTION:

Read this book cover to cover. Absorb the philosophy within. Test all theories to the best of your ability. Repeat. Repetition will sharpen new skills and stimulate growth.

This will not be easy. To succeed, you will be required to face hard truths and challenge yourself like never before. This mission is about embracing and learning the lessons from each and every Evolution so you can discover who you really are and can become.

Self-mastery is an unending process. Your job is NEVER FINISHED!

CLASSIFIED: The real work is unseen. Your performance matters most when nobody is watching.

BY COMMAND OF: DAVID GOGGINS

SIGNED:

W. C. C. W.

RANK AND SERVICE: CHIEF, U.S. NAVY SEALS, RETIRED

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Introduction

This is not a self-help book. Nobody needs another sermon about the ten steps or seven stages or sixteen hours a week that will deliver them from their stalled or jacked-up life. Hit the local bookstore or surf Amazon and you will slip into a bottomless pit of self-help hype. Must feel good to consume because it sure does sell.

Too bad most of it won't work. Not for real. Not forever. You might see progress here and there, but if you are broken like I used to be or stuck wandering an endless plateau while your true potential wastes away, books alone can't and won't fix you.

Self-help is a fancy term for self-improvement, and while we should always strive to be better, improvement is often not enough. There are times in life when we become so disconnected from ourselves that we must drill down and rewire those cut connections in our hearts, minds, and souls. Because that is the only way to rediscover and reignite belief—that flicker in the darkness with the power to spark your evolution.

Belief is a gritty, potent, primordial force. In the 1950s, a scientist named Dr. Curt Richter proved this when he gathered dozens of rats and dropped them into thirty-inch-deep glass cylinders filled with water. The first rat paddled on the surface for a short time, then swam to the bottom, where it looked for an escape hatch. It died within two minutes. Several others followed that same pattern. Some lasted as long as fifteen minutes, but they all gave up. Richter was surprised because rats are good swimmers, yet in his lab, they drowned without much of a fight. So, he tweaked the

test.

After he placed the next batch in their jars, Richter watched them, and right before it looked like they were about to give up, he and his techs scooped up the rats, towed them off, and held them long enough for their heart and respiratory rates to normalize. Long enough for them to register, on a physiological scale, that they had been saved. They did this a few times before Richter placed a group of them back into those evil cylinders again to see how long they would last on their own. This time, the rats didn't give up. They swam their hearts out...for an average of sixty hours without any food or rest. One swam for eighty-one hours.

In his report, Richter suggested that the first round of subjects gave up because they were hopeless and that the second batch persisted for so long because they knew it was possible someone would come along and save them. The popular analysis these days is that Richter's interventions flipped a switch in the rat brain, which illuminated the power of hope for us all to see.

I love this experiment, but hope isn't what got into those rats. How long does hope really last? It may have triggered something initially, but no creature is going to swim for their life for sixty hours straight, without food, powered by hope alone. They needed something a lot stronger to keep them breathing, kicking, and fighting.

When mountaineers tackle the tallest peaks and steepest faces, they are usually tethered to a rope fixed to anchors in the ice or rock so when they slip, they don't slide off the mountain and tumble to their deaths. They may fall ten or twelve feet, then get up, dust themselves off, and try again. Life is the mountain we are all climbing, but hope is not an anchor point.

It's too soft, fluffy, and fleeting. There's no substance behind hope. It's not a muscle you can develop, and it's not rooted down deep. It's an emotion that comes and goes.

Richter touched something in his rats that was nearly unbreakable. He may not have noticed them adapting to their life-or-death trial, but they had to have figured out a more efficient technique to preserve energy. With each passing minute, they became more and more resilient until they started to believe that they would survive. Their confidence didn't fade as the hours piled up; it actually grew. They weren't hoping to be saved. They refused to die! The way I see it, belief is what turned ordinary lab rats into marine mammals.

There are two levels to belief. There's the surface level, which our coaches, teachers, therapists, and parents love to preach. "Believe in yourself," they all say, as if the thought alone can keep us afloat when the odds are against us in the battle of our lives. But once exhaustion sets in, doubt and insecurity tend to penetrate and dissipate that flimsy brand of belief.

Then there's the belief born in resilience. It comes from working your way through layers of pain, fatigue, and reason, and ignoring the ever-present temptation to quit until you strike a source of fuel you didn't even know existed. One that eliminates all doubt, makes you certain of your strength and the fact that eventually, you will prevail, so long as you keep moving forward. That is the level of belief that can defy the expectations of scientists and change everything. It's not an emotion to be shared or an intellectual concept, and nobody else can give it to you. It must bubble up from within.

When you are lost at sea and no one is coming to save you, there are only two options. You will either swim hard and figure out how to last as long as it takes, or you are bound to drown. I was born with holes in my heart and sickle cell trait, and into a childhood torched by toxic stress and learning disabilities. I had minimal potential, and by the time I turned twenty-four, I knew I was in danger of wasting my life.

Many people get it twisted and think my accomplishments directly correlate to my potential. My accomplishments do not equate to my potential. The little bit I had was buried so deep, most people would never have found it. Not only did I find it, I learned to maximize it.

I knew that there could be so much more to my story than the wreckage I saw around me, and that it was time to decide if I had it in me to go as hard as I could for as long as it took to become a more self-empowered human being. I fought through doubt and insecurity. I wanted to quit every single day, but eventually, belief kicked in. I believed I could evolve, and that same belief has given me the strength and focus to persevere whenever I've been challenged for over two decades. More often than not, I've challenged myself to see how far I can push it and how many more chapters I can add to my story. I'm still seeking new territory, still curious just how high I might rise from the bottom of the barrel.

A lot of folks feel like they are missing something in their lives—something money can't buy—and that makes them miserable. They attempt to fill the void with material things they can see, feel, and touch. But that empty feeling won't go away. It fades some until all gets quiet again. Then that familiar gnawing in their gut returns, reminding them that the life they are living is not the fullest expression of who they are or might become.

Unfortunately, most people are not desperate enough to do anything about it. When you're hogtied in conflicting emotions and other people's opinions, it's impossible to tap into belief and easy to drift away from that urge to evolve. You could be itchy to experience something different, to be somewhere different, or to become someone different, but when the slightest resistance arises to challenge your resolve, you moonwalk right back into the unsatisfied person you were before. Still itchy, still jonesing to be someone new, yet still trapped in your unfulfilling status quo. And you are nowhere near alone.

Social media has compounded and spread this virus of dissatisfaction, which is why the world is now populated by damaged people consuming airy gratification, hunting an immediate dopamine fix with no substance at all behind it. Instead of staying focused on growth, millions of minds have been infected with lack, leaving them feeling even lesser than. Their internal dialogue becomes that much more toxic, as this population of weak, entitled victims of life itself multiplies.

It's funny, we question so many things about the way our lives are going. We wonder what it would be like if we looked different, had more of a head start, or were given a boost at one time or another. Very few people question their own warped minds. Instead, they collect slights, dramas, and problems, hoarding them until they are bloated with stale regret and envy, which form the roadblocks stopping them from becoming their truest, most capable selves.

All over the world, hundreds of millions of people choose to live that way. But there is another way of thinking and another way of being. It helped me regain control of my life. It allowed me to eviscerate all obstacles in my path until my growth factor became near limitless. I'm still haunted, but I've traded in my demons for evil angels, and now, it's a good haunting. I'm haunted by my future goals, not my past failures. I'm haunted by what I may still become. I'm haunted by my own continued

thirst for evolution.

The work is often as miserable and thankless as it ever was, and although there are techniques and skills I've developed that can help along the way, there is no certain number of principles, hours, or steps in this process. It's about constant effort, learning, and adaptation, which demands unwavering discipline and belief. The kind that looks a lot like desperation. See, I am the lab rat who refused to die! And I'm here to show you how to get to the other side of hell.

Most theories on performance and possibility are hatched in the controlled environment of a sterile laboratory and spread in university lecture halls. But I am not a theorist. I am a practitioner. Similar to how the late, great Stephen Hawking explored the dark matter of the universe, I am intensely passionate about exploring the dark matter of the mind—all of our untapped energy, capacity, and power. My philosophy has been tested and proven in my own Mental Lab through all the many trials and tribulations that shaped my life in the real world.

After each chapter, you will find an Evolution. In the military, evolutions are drills, exercises, or practices meant to sharpen your skills. In this book, they are hard truths we should all face, and philosophies and strategies you can use to overcome whatever is in your way—and excel in life.

Like I said, this is definitely not a self-help book. This is boot camp for your brain. It's a what-are-you-doing-with-your-life book. It's the wake-up call you don't want and probably didn't even know you needed.

Rise up!

Time to get to work!