

Author of the #1 *WSJ* bestseller *Your Next Five Moves*

CHOOSE YOUR ENEMIES WISELY

Business Planning
for the Audacious Few



Patrick Bet-David

with Greg Dinkin

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**PATRICK BET-DAVID
WITH GREG DINKIN**

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To all my past, current, and future enemies. I'm thankful for you all!

YOU have no enemies, you say?
Alas! my friend, the boast is poor;
He who has mingled in the fray
Of duty, that the brave endure,
Must have made foes! If you have none,
Small is the work that you have done.
You've hit no traitor on the hip,
You've dashed no cup from perjured lip,
You've never turned the wrong to right,
You've been a coward in the fight.

Charles Mackay, Scottish author

Contents

[Introduction: The Enemies Spoke](#)

[PART ONE](#)

[Integrating Logic and Emotion to Build Your Plan](#)

[1. The 12 Building Blocks](#)

[2. Look Back to Create Duration, Depth, and Magic](#)

[3. The Path of the Audacious Few](#)

[PART TWO](#)

[Creating the 12 Blocks of Your Business Plan](#)

[4. Enemy and Competition](#)

[5. Will and Skill](#)

[6. Mission and Plan](#)

[7. Dreams and Systems](#)

[8. Culture and Team](#)

[9. Vision and Capital](#)

[PART THREE](#)

[Bringing Your Plan to Life](#)

[10. Assembling the Building Blocks to Make Your Own Plan](#)

[11. Rolling Out the Plan](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Resources and Ways to Stay Connected](#)

[Appendix A: Previous Year Review](#)

[Appendix B: One Page Business Plan](#)

[Notes](#)

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INTRODUCTION

The Enemies Spoke

A wise man gets more use from his enemies than a fool from his friends.

Baltasar Gracián, seventeenth-century Spanish philosopher

In December of 2002, I was twenty-four and broke, living with my dad in his small apartment. The only routine I had in my life was a rotating schedule of L.A. nightclubs that I went to six nights a week . . . Saddle Ranch, Garden of Eden, Century Club, Key Club, Palace, and Dublin's. Half the time, I only knew what night of the week it was because of the club I was in. Every week was the same, until I got kicked out of Dublin's for getting into too many fights.

Nothing was going well in my life. Things had gotten so bad that I had a discussion with an army recruiter about reenlisting. In return for wiping out \$49,000 of debt, I would have to commit to six more years of service. I was days away from saying yes.

That year on Christmas Eve, with nothing else to do, I drove my dad to a relative's house for what should have been a fun break from my miserable life. When we arrived, the celebration was in full swing. Everyone was joking and laughing, and my dad started talking to some relatives in Assyrian. As I chatted with the other guests, I heard a guy who my dad had helped out years before make a sarcastic comment. He seemed amused at seeing how far my dad had fallen since he left Iran.

I remember hearing something like “Gabreal Bet-David, the brilliant chemist in Iran, now the ninety-nine-cent store cashier in America, twice divorced and still alone.” The group of men around my dad had a good laugh. It was all true: my dad had been a brilliant chemist and now worked at a ninety-nine-cent store, where he was frequently robbed at gunpoint. Plus, he really had gotten divorced twice from the same woman, my mom. Even though this guy didn’t have any ill intentions, I could see on my dad’s face that it hurt. He looked smaller to me.

Something about that man laughing at my dad—and maybe more important, the look of shame on my dad’s face—produced a fury in me that I had never felt before. I was intense back then, but this brought out another level of rage. Instead of taking a swing at the guy, I walked right up to the circle of men and said, “Nobody talks to my dad like that. For all the things he’s done for you, you’re not going to talk to him that way. This is not going to happen. We’re out of here.”

I turned to my dad, and repeated, “We’re out of here.” He didn’t move. Maybe it was the pride of not wanting to show his hurt, but he dug in. The room got silent. I’m nine inches taller than my dad, but he was still my dad, and I would never disrespect him. Somehow, I managed to control myself, and as calmly as I could, I said, “Dad, I’m your ride. We’re leaving.”

The men were staring at us—father and son locked in a silent battle. It was a tense moment. If the wrong thing had been said, it could have turned ugly. With all eyes in the room glued to us, my dad made a comment about wanting to beat traffic. It allowed him to save face so we could leave the party, but I could tell that he was livid.

We walked out, and my dad managed to hold his tongue until we got to the car. He turned to me, eyes blazing, and said, “What is wrong with you, son? You just embarrassed me in front of my family. This is not how you handle yourself. The guy was just kidding. He didn’t mean anything by it.”

“I don’t care whether it’s a joke or if he’s being serious,” I said. “No one talks to you that way.” For thirty minutes, I couldn’t stop repeating to my dad, “*They may have to kill me, but the world is going to know your last name.*” I couldn’t even tell you who “they” referred to, but I was going

ballistic. For thirty minutes, I couldn't stop repeating, "They may have to kill me, but the world is going to know your last name."

In response, my dad just kept shaking his head, saying, "What is wrong with you, son?" I can't tell you what my dad was thinking at the time, but I could sense that he didn't really believe me. I had yet to prove that I could stick with my goals, so I'm sure he thought that I lacked the discipline to back up my words. To him, it must have sounded more like a tantrum than a declaration.

That didn't stop me from carrying on. "No one talks to my dad like this. Nobody does. And you shouldn't let anybody talk to you like this. No matter how hard a life we've had."

We arrived at our run-down complex in Granada Hills and went up to the apartment we shared. I had one final thing to say to my dad: "I'm going to show the world how special a father you have been." Then I called my sister and brother-in-law and told them to come over the next day for a meeting. When they arrived, we all sat down, and I said, "I'm not going to sleep until the world knows our last name, Bet-David. It's game over."



The holiday party happened more than six years before I started my financial services firm and more than a decade before I started making content for Valuetainment, my media company. So what does my dad being insulted have to do with business planning?

Everything.

As you will soon understand, **the most critical element for success in business planning is choosing your enemies wisely**. Yes, you heard that right—enemies. In business, you will face challenges, haters, betrayals, bankruptcies, and ideologies that stand in the way of your success. But what if I told you that these so-called enemies could become your greatest source of fuel? What if you could turn shame, guilt, anger, disappointment, and heartbreak into the fire that propels you toward your wildest dreams?

You're going to see how to leverage your enemies to light a fuse that ignites your power to transform. We'll dive deep into the mindset of successful entrepreneurs who have turned their greatest challenges into

their biggest strengths. You'll learn how to harness the energy of emotions and use them as a catalyst for success. But this is not just a book about mindset. I'll also provide you with practical tools and strategies to help you navigate the challenges of business. You will see how to use the fuel from your enemies to **create a business plan that is emotional, logical, and actionable.**

The night of the party, I had no clue what a gift this condescending relative had given to me. I didn't realize that, to find the key to my success, exactly what I needed was someone to insult my last name and my father. I learned that I do better fighting for others than for myself. All I needed was for someone to piss me off by offending my dad.

The man who insulted my dad created a fire that would move me in ways that I didn't know I could be moved. It's no coincidence that this party was right after my dad had another heart attack and stayed at UCLA Medical Center for a month. It intensified my fear of him dying without meeting his future grandkids. I wanted my kids to know him because I had never met his dad, my grandfather. When many bad things happen at once and we can no longer handle the stress, we have either a breakdown or a breakthrough. By the grace of God, I found a way to channel all this adversity into changing my life.

With the goal of showing the world what the Bet-David name is all about, I immediately dropped all bad habits. I was done with clubs. With my free time, all I did was read books on investments, sales, and anything that had to do with business. My sister and my friend Robby recommended *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and *How to Master the Art of Selling*. I took notes and read them over and over.

My business did not take off the next day, much less the next year. The last thing I want you to think is that my path was easy. Obstacles will appear for you, as they did for me. Right when you start to make progress, you'll lose a big customer, or your top sales rep will get poached. For me, those challenges seemed to show up on days the bill collectors gave me an ultimatum. It made it harder to resist the military recruiter, who was there to solve all my problems by promising to wipe out my debt and provide an easy way out.

You're going to face the same type of resistance. It's going to take something extra to fight through the adversity. Just when I thought I had turned a corner, I lost a big sale, and my only asset in life—a black Ford Expedition that my friends called “Big Mama”—got repo'd. It felt like one step forward and three steps back, and it almost drained my energy when all my effort wasn't showing up in my bank account.

Whenever things got really tough for me, I could always go back to the image of those men making my dad feel small. The desire to prove them wrong was stronger than the urge to quit. That's why I'm going to keep emphasizing the importance of having enemies.

Twenty-one years after that holiday party, this book was published. What I want you to know is that sometimes we spend so much time trying to find *how* to win at life that we miss the entire point. Maybe you need to look for *why* to win in life. Did somebody humiliate you? Did somebody manipulate you? Is there a teacher or family member who made you feel ashamed? We're all driven in different ways, but **the right enemy can drive you in ways an ally never can.**

When “experts” say that you shouldn't get emotional in business, I ask what kind of success they've had. They rattle off their degrees and publications and brag about their prestigious universities and privileged upbringing. Most of the time, they don't have any business success to speak of. Maybe nobody offended them in life or maybe they were taught to keep that emotion bottled up and not bring it into business. No matter the reason, when I see that they don't have enemies to fuel them, I realize that I am the privileged one.

ENEMIES: THE MISSING ELEMENT OF STANDARD BUSINESS PLANNING

Most people love to *hear* a rags-to-riches story. There's another group of people—like you, the audacious few—who want the formula to *create their own*. Words like “perseverance” and “heart” are great, but they fail to tell you exactly what to do to fulfill your own dream.

You may know my background and how I went from nothing (fled Iran at age ten during the Iran-Iraq War, divorced parents, on welfare, 1.8

GPA, no college options) to starting my own financial services firm at age thirty. In July of 2022, I sold the business to focus on my next twenty-year run. Valuetainment, a YouTube channel I started to offer business advice I wish I'd had when I was starting out, became the most popular channel for entrepreneurs. It all happened while I was running another company. This allowed me to later leverage the brand to build a full-scale media, consulting, and production company. In just a few years, Valuetainment has produced the number one business podcast on Spotify, hosted live conferences, grown to just shy of a hundred employees, and mentored entrepreneurs to massively scale their businesses.

The question I think you want answered is, *How?*

Did I have a secret? Did I reach into my vault and pull out a revolutionary idea that had never been seen before in a boardroom?

No . . . and yes.

No, because I started with the same old business plan that everyone uses.

Yes, because year after year, after reviewing what succeeded and what failed, I kept adapting. I created a radically different approach to a common business practice that made all the difference in the world.

I created a one-of-a-kind business plan.

In all my research, it was unlike any business plan I had ever seen. It took years of testing and countless revisions to figure out the exact formula. It then took a couple more years to simplify it so anyone could benefit from it. What I'm most proud of is that it's duplicatable. Anyone, and most importantly, YOU can create this plan.

I used logic and thought strategically. That's where most people start. It's also where most people stop. I wasn't interested in going through the motions to create an unexciting business in which money was the only measuring stick. I wanted something magical that would inspire me and my team.

I chose my enemies wisely, because they gave me the energy to keep pursuing the plan long after I had more money than I would ever need. Now that I've "made it"—at least in some people's eyes—slowing down isn't even a thought. Instead, I've graduated to new enemies who create the fuel that keeps me more excited and committed than ever.

Using this business plan, my financial services business grew from sixty-six agents to forty thousand agents in thirteen years and a multi-nine-figure exit. Most of the agents don't have college degrees, and dozens are million-dollar-plus earners. There are also the thousands of people in other industries who I've coached on business plans that have scaled companies and achieved unprecedented success.

There's a reason I called out the "audacious few" in the subtitle. This book is for visionaries, dreamers, and psycho-competitors. I can see how some might think my approach is extreme. But in my view, you have to be "extreme" to be part of the audacious few.

If you want to gain every edge possible, if you are honest and receptive to feedback, I'll guide you down a path that leads to extraordinary results. If you are a competitive person who thrives on doubters and haters, you want to know your blind spots so you can get better. You may be one of the few people who, **when it comes to your life, legacy, and family, refuse to take shortcuts or play small.**

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN FROM THIS BOOK

Where you are now in your career doesn't matter. Whether you are in the C-suite, own a business, work as a solopreneur or sales rep, or are an employee or a student thinking about starting a business, the process is the same. I'll show you how to choose an enemy and leverage that emotion to build the right business plan.

I've seen people who were down and out, who had stopped dreaming, find their way back and go on to achieve incredible things. It started with choosing the right enemy. It's the first and most critical element to writing an effective business plan.

I wrote this book because it can change the game for entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs (people who work for a company and operate with an entrepreneurial mindset)—whether you are hoping to become one or already running a big or small business. Since other plans fail, we're going down a much different path. This is not the boring approach that most people teach. If you're looking to cure insomnia, you can go buy any

course on how to write a business plan. What you'll learn here is how to become a leader who lifts up your family, friends, and team.

This process of writing a business plan is unlike anything you've ever done before.

For the longest time, I hated writing business plans. It felt like homework assigned by my least favorite teacher. I didn't have the attention span or the education to get through a technical book on business planning. I needed to figure out how to organize my ideas and create a tactical plan for my business. At the same time, I wanted to connect to my heart and write something that inspired me. I've learned that writing an effective business plan only requires three things:

1. It must be simple enough for you to want to write it.
2. It must have emotion that is fueled by enemies.
3. It must have logical steps that are clear and well organized.

Writing a business planning happens at different times, so it doesn't matter when you are reading this book. You may be starting a business, reorganizing your existing business, or setting new goals. Others of you may be about to begin a new sports season or a new academic year. The time horizon doesn't matter. In fact, this approach is also perfect for a fundraising or political campaign. What all these situations have in common is that you are looking forward and feeling hopeful. There's nothing like a clean slate, a fresh start, an undefeated record. There are no wrongs to right and no fires to put out. This allows you to put all the pieces in place to make your goals a reality.

The plan works for people at every level of business:

- Complete beginners, without college degrees, just starting out in business
- CEOs doing half a billion in revenue, who want to scale or plan an exit
- Seasoned executives who want to become intrapreneurs and increase their net worth

- Veterans, straight out of the military, starting careers in sales or as entrepreneurs
- Sales leaders who want to grow revenue and motivate their team
- Couples who work in a business together and want financial and family success

Choosing your enemies is the catalyst. If done correctly, it's the rocket fuel that gets you going.. Acting on revenge and envy leads some people to choose the wrong enemy. That type of emotion can end up destroying you. **The key is to choose your enemies wisely.** As you will see, there's a process to it. You must identify the right target and get emotional when you think about why you must defeat this enemy. You'll see many examples to understand why this is so effective, so you can do it yourself.

You also need a methodical plan. You may have heard that people must know why before you can tell them how. A more accurate statement is that you and those around you must know *both* your why and your how.

I've taught my team how to direct their energy into choosing the right enemy, and I've "trained the trainer" to teach business planning to everyone in the company. That's why I know it can be duplicated, and why you can both learn it for yourself and teach it to your team.

I believe that all dreams are sacred. For entrepreneurs, there's even more risk and uncertainty. Many of you have walked away from high-paying jobs to risk your reputation and livelihood on a dream. In these moments, full of hope, you begin to author your own destiny. I know that what happens next will determine your next year and shape your legacy. I also know that poor planning is why most dreams die.

That can all change now as long as you put in the effort to follow the step-by-step guide for how to build a business plan. As you go through the steps, you will

- learn how to tap into your emotion and channel it to become relentless;
- identify your vision, define who you want to be, and uncover your craziest dreams;

- know the specific action steps to take to accomplish your Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs);
- learn best practices to secure investors and raise capital;
- improve your relationships, both inside and outside your business;
- master how to lead your team so they are as inspired as you are.

You'll finish this book and never look at a business plan the same. What you are about to learn I have taught my teams for fifteen years. If it only worked for me, you could argue that it's not duplicatable. The fact that it has worked for thousands of other leaders is why I know it will work for you—if you put in the effort.

Once and for all, you will have a complete guide to walk you through how to make your business and your life succeed.

And it all starts with the one step you absolutely cannot miss.

You must choose your enemies wisely.

PART ONE



Integrating Logic and Emotion to Build Your Plan

CHAPTER 1

The 12 Building Blocks

The general who wins the battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes but few calculations beforehand.

Sun Tzu

I was working on a massive deal. Millions of dollars were on the line, and I needed to focus. I told my assistant to hold all calls and tackle anyone who tried to walk through my door. In retrospect, I should have hired a bigger assistant. Actually, I don't think even Lawrence Taylor, in his prime, could have stopped this guy.

He stormed into my office and screamed, "I'm so sick of my life!" He was shaking. "I can't live like this anymore. I've got nowhere to go and nowhere else to turn. I want to win so bad. I'm telling you, right now, that I'm going to be the best agent in this office! Nothing can stop me!"

His rage turned to sadness, and for thirty minutes the tears didn't stop. Ernie was nineteen at the time. He had four hundred dollars to his name, a high school degree, and no business skills. Ernie had all the desire in the world, but I wondered if it would be enough for him to compete.

Earlier that day, Larry had presented his business plan. He displayed all the polish and professionalism that you would expect from a UCLA graduate who had worked at Northrop Grumman. His words were as crisp

as his starched shirt. His parents had taught him well, and if he ever needed help, they were there to provide a safety net.

As you might expect, Larry's business plan was impeccable. It was full of Excel spreadsheets and charts and clearly mapped-out goals for the year. When I asked him to share with me why his business was so important to him, he looked confused. When I asked Larry about his enemies, he pointed to the plan, which was bound, and said, "All the relevant details are included herein, sir." I seriously thought about checking Larry for a pulse.

Ernie's plan was a mess, and that's being generous. There was no structure to it and no numbers or projections. There weren't even any bullet points. When I asked him about his strategy for prospecting, Ernie broke down again. He said he was tired of the poverty and drama that came with being in a family affected by alcoholism. "Ernie," I said, "I understand what you're going through, but you still need a plan. What is it that you actually want to do?"

He couldn't find any words. I could see the toll that his family life had taken on him even before I knew much of his story. It took Ernie several minutes to pull himself together enough so that he could speak. Finally, he managed to mutter, "I'll do whatever it takes not to be poor."

If Ernie had been in the room for Larry's presentation, I wonder if he would have been so bold in his claim to be number one. But I saw something in him that I recognized in myself. Unlike some other business leaders, I viewed emotion in a positive light.

If you were in my shoes at the time, who would you have chosen to work with: Ernie or Larry? You don't know these two people, but you know their type. In fact, they represent thousands of people I've worked with over the years. Just about everyone I've met—before they evolved into the audacious few—fell into one of two types: logic or emotion. To make them easy to remember, Larry represents logic and Ernie represents emotion.

In 2005, when we sat down in my Granada Hills office, they were both dreaming of entrepreneurial success.

Based on what you know about these two guys, who would you bet on to succeed in achieving their goals, whether they are losing weight,