

The No Excuse Guide to Success

**No Matter What Your Boss—or Life— Throws at
You**

Exercise Documents

Stops and Starts Exercise (Pages 62-70)



Stop being defensive when someone holds you accountable for your poor choices.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when your poor choices resulted in someone holding you accountable. How did you react? Did you react in a defensive way? Here's your chance to rewrite history. First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would have been a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this, I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Stop being irritable and angry when you don't get your way.

Think of a situation or circumstance when you immediately went red-zone after you didn't get your way. Why did you blow up? Was it a situation you experienced before? Did you do all that you could to avoid the outcome? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would have been a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Stop looking for what's wrong with the other person.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you totally focused on what the other person did rather than on your role in the circumstance or situation. How did you react? Did you react in a defensive way? Did you consider what you did to create the situation? Do you typically focus on the other person? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Stop being a victim.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you went into victim mode. What contributed to your feeling of helplessness? Is it a feeling you routinely experience? Did you do all that you could to avoid the outcome? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Stop thinking negatively (and masking it by saying you're just keeping it real).

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you attempted to mask your negativity by saying that you were just keeping it real. Why did you react this way? Did the other person or group pick up on your negative energy? Is thinking negatively something that you typically do before finding something positive? How is this working for you? First, describe your current way of dealing with these negativity situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Start saying “I got this!” when the going gets tough.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you shied away from assuming responsibility. Why didn't you step up? Was it a situation you experienced before? Were you afraid? Were you worrying about how the other person would react? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Start asking for specific, clear feedback for improvement.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you avoided asking for feedback that might have created a different outcome. Why? How do you typically respond to “polish” feedback? What are your thoughts about being a lifelong learner? When are you more receptive to feedback? First, describe your current way of dealing with these feedback situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I’m in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I’m in this situation or circumstance I will



Start listening without judging.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you judged during a conversation rather than listening to what the other person was saying. Why were you judgmental? Are you usually this way? What was it about the other person that contributed to your judgmental behavior? Do you ever consider that you maybe wrong? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Start focusing on the possibility and not the problem.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you focused totally on the obstacle rather than the opportunity. Is this a trend for you? Do you find it easier to focus on what can go wrong rather than what can go right? Do you consider yourself a problem-solver? Do you find that what you focus on grows? First, describe your current way of dealing with life's challenges (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with these situations or circumstances (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will



Start following through with what you said you were going to do.

Think of a recent situation or circumstance when you disappointed someone because you didn't follow through with what you said you were going to do. What went wrong? Did you overcommit? Is this a trend? How did you rectify the situation? If there was another person involved did he or she accept your apology? Can people trust you? Do people believe in you? First, describe your current way of dealing with these accountability situations (**Up to Now**). Then, jot down what you think would be a better way to deal with the situation or circumstance (**From Now On**).

Up to Now: When I'm in a situation or a circumstance like this I

From Now On: When I'm in this situation or circumstance I will

Why Detector Tool Exercise (Pages 79-80)

What's your goal? Write your goal down as clearly and succinctly as possible.

Why is attaining this goal important to you? List three really good reasons.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Once you obtain or reach your goal, how will it make you feel?

Quick Uncertainty Quiz (Page 92)

I am uncertain and fearful because _____.	Despite the fear and uncertainty, I can take positive action by _____.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

5.	
6.	

Eliminating Fear Exercise (Page 99)

My Tenets for Eliminating Fear and Uncertainty	<i>Brief description of the practice and how you'll implement the practice into your life.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Egregious 8 Barriers (Pages 139-140)

1. I don't want to be judged by others.
2. I tried it before and it didn't work.
3. The odds are against me.
4. I let other people's opinion of me become my reality.
5. I know someone who tried it before, and he or she failed.
6. I've talked myself into believing that it's not for me.
7. I've talked myself into believing that I can do without it.
8. I've determined that the timing is bad right now or me to do it.

Advice For Handling The Egregious 8

1. Believe in oneself.
2. Form a phenomenal Success Team (e.g., mentors, coaches, confidants).
3. Focus on positive outcomes.
4. Expect success.
5. Participate in trainings and classes that stretch your comfort zone.
6. Ask yourself what the worse thing that could happen and ask yourself the likelihood of that actually happening.
7. Change the conversation you have with yourself by deleting the 't from the end of the word "can".
8. Imagine yourself living the change you seek.

BONUS TIP: Examine the root cause of your self-created barrier AND commit to not letting your past continue to control your future.

One caveat to all this “you can do it” advice: Those who decide to shed their self-created barriers do not always find immediate success or hit the jackpot. But that’s hardly the point. Simply taking action is an end in itself, and leads to new paths and different ways to succeed and move forward. You can’t really lose. So go ahead—put in a few coins and pull the lever. You might win the jackpot. Rather than 7-7-7 appearing on your screen, you get: Joy! Joy! Joy!

Passion and Purpose Discovery Exercise¹⁰

(Pages 157-159)

Read the following statements and jot down your reactions to each one. For some, your initial answer might be a simple “yes,” whereas other statements may prompt a longer response.

- It takes you longer to accomplish the work than it takes some of your colleagues who seem to be a better “fit.” Yes___ No___
- The performance of the work takes on a “hollow” quality; you start performing without thinking too much about what you are doing. Yes___ No___
- You find yourself making errors that seem minor and unimportant to you, but others seem to have a different reaction. Yes___ No___
- You have trouble getting up in the morning and hate to think about another day (week, month, year) of work ahead. Yes___ No___
- You are absent from work more frequently and you are ill more often. Yes___ No___
- You rarely read about, discuss, or explore the content of your work on your personal time. Yes___ No___
- You are less likely to speak up in meetings, to engage in discussion and debate with colleagues, to take on additional involvement in related tasks, or to offer leadership. Yes___ No___
- You are becoming more involved with interpersonal difficulties at work and in your other relationships. You find yourself blaming others for things they are doing or not doing. Yes___ No___

- Your self-esteem diminishes because you are not being recognized and rewarded for who you are. Indeed, your image may become tarnished as you are viewed performing work/ roles that do not engage your passion and thus your best energy and effort.
Yes___ No___
- Your overall health is suffering. Your headaches are more frequent and more severe. Your blood pressure has increased.
Yes___ No___
- You are becoming more impatient, argumentative, and moody.
Yes___ No___
- You appear energy-less and lethargic; people are always asking you what's wrong. Yes___ No___
- You begin spending more time on your computer, at work, on non-work-related sites. Yes___ No___
- You're one of the last to arrive in the morning and one of the first to leave in the afternoon. Yes___ No___
- Nothing about the job excites you anymore. Yes___ No___
- You begin to leave the office each day not having accomplished anything of significance. Yes___ No___
- You offer excuses for your situation, typically blaming your manager and your company. Yes___ No___

Finding the Source of Your Passion (Pages 160 – 163)

This exercise should help you clarify what motivates you. (For these questions, “motivated” means that this is an activity that you both enjoy doing and feel you do well). As you’re responding to each item, think about situations that provide “evidence” for your response.

- Do you know what it takes to get you started and actively interested in pursuing a task or activity? Yes___ No___
- Are you “motivated” to sell? Yes___ No___
- Are you “motivated” to plan? Yes___ No___
- Can you identify three subjects that interest you? Yes___ No___
- Do you know whether or not you’re at home in a politically charged environment? Yes___ No___
- Are you aware of how you would react to do a job that was not well defined in terms of what you were expected to accomplish? Yes___ No___
- Do you require ample time to prepare when asked to respond to an unexpected request? Yes___ No___
- Do you know whether you must have a standard or other way of measuring performance? Yes___ No___
- Is exercising initiative a high priority for you? Yes___ No___
- Would you say you know how much and what kind of stress and pressure you can handle comfortably? Yes___ No___

- Do you have entrepreneurial tendencies? Yes___ No___
- Do you have specific goals? Yes___ No___
If not, do you know why? Yes___ No___
- Are you a person who recognizes an opportunity before it is apparent to others? Yes___ No___
- Is money important to you? Yes___ No___
- Are you a conceptual person? Yes___ No___
- Are you a creative person? Yes___ No___
- Are you a strategic person? Yes___ No___
- Are you “motivated” to make risky decisions when your reputation is on the line? Yes___ No___
- Are you comfortable confronting others? Yes___ No___
- Are you aware of the reasons why you lose your cool (when you do)? Yes___ No___
- Do you know why you get depressed occasionally? Yes___ No___
- Are you a leader? Yes___ No___
- Are you “motivated” to build relationships with others? Yes___ No___
- Do you sweat the details? Yes___ No___
- Are you good at probing others for information? Yes___ No___

- Are you good at problem-solving? Yes___ No___
- Are you a results-oriented person? Yes___ No___
- Are you someone who could be trusted to get the job done, in spite of the difficulties? Yes___ No___
- Do you like working with people? Yes___ No___
- Do you like working in teams? Yes___ No___
- Do you like to travel for work? Yes___ No___
- Do you prefer to work alone? Yes___ No___
- Can you see how something will look in advance of it being made a reality? Yes___ No___
- Do you like to go beyond where other people are? Yes___ No___
- Do you worry about the bottom line? Yes___ No___
- If you have management ability, could you describe how you get things done through others? Yes___ No___
- Are you “motivated” to teach? Yes___ No___
- Are you good at making presentations/facilitating workshops?
Yes___ No___
- If yes, do you know what kinds of people and learning situations you find agreeable? Yes___ No___

- Can you define what it is that you want to accomplish in your work—more than anything else? Yes___ No___

If you were not able to provide a clear “yes” or “no” answer to all of the questions, that’s all right. You have still succeeded in creating a blueprint to begin the process of more fully appreciating the possible potential in understanding and utilizing your innate motivations (both personally and professionally). You will find more about utilizing your Motivational Patterns at www.motivationalpattern.com, along with additional ways to move past tired excuses and toward finding your true passion and purpose in life.

Right-Fighting Checklist (Pages 173 – 175)

As a right-fighter, do you:

1. Reject, dismiss, and ignore others' ideas or offers to help?
2. Take things way too personally, way too often?
3. Become defensive quickly?
4. Have people accuse you of being selfish?
5. Have people say to you: "You always have to be right?"
6. Believe that everyone has something against you?
7. Play the victim role?
8. Criticize, criticize, and criticize?
9. Become angry and annoyed very fast?
10. Frequently use sarcasm regarding the quality of others' ideas?
11. Blame, judge, and make fun of people?
12. Seldom believe, during the disagreement, that you may be wrong?
13. Seldom take the high road?
14. Fight even stronger depending on how important you perceive the stakes are?
15. Tend not to have many friends or close relationships?
16. Justify, defend, and rationalize your behaviors?

17. See the right-fight in others but not in yourself?
18. Think you're misunderstood?
19. Have a difficult time listening?
20. Seldom accept personal responsibility and accountability for what happens after the right-fight?
21. Go behind people to correct or reposition what they've done?

Of the items listed here, select two that are true for you and develop an action plan to effectively deal with them. Write down your plan here. When you've dealt effectively with the two you've identified, select two more and take action on these habits. Keep choosing two more until you're cleared your list.

My Plan to Correct My Right-Fighting Habit

Right Fighting Habit	Action I Will Take to Correct My Habit
Habit 1	
Habit 2	

7-Step “Stop Right-Fighting” Program

(Pages 180 – 182)

1. **Recognize your own needs:** You probably have a strong desire to engage others in doing things professionally and/or correctly (or what you perceive to be the best way). In a fast-paced world, these standards can be overlooked and short-circuited—which you can experience as frustrating. Respect and do not lose your values and priorities for high standards and quality. Respect and not just tolerate, though, the values, approaches, and ideas shared by others, too. Refrain from showing annoyance and frustration when others don’t share your opinions, approach, and/or attention to detail (as long as it’s not life-threatening or hazardous to one’s health).
2. **Help others to recognize your strengths and desires:** When necessary, help others realize that your input and/or professionalism is not meant to control them, but comes from a deep desire to build something or bring value for all (when this is indeed the case). Help others understand your broader concern, when applicable. Also articulate your interest in having others’ input in developing shared standards—not just assuming that your way is the best way. Show them that you are genuinely open and interested in what they have to say.
3. **Know your goal in any situation:** Given the situation, examine the goal you hope to achieve. Is it to be right? Is it to help? Is it to provide supportive information? Is it to seek clarification? Identify where it will be important to make sure your desire to be right does not get in the way of harming the relationship or the outcome. Ask yourself in that moment: “What’s my goal? What’s my purpose?” If your goal continues to be “to be right,” reread the chapter.
4. **Program flexibility:** If you are a leader, manager, or decision-maker and want to be seen as someone who empowers other members of your team, find ways to include others in setting values

and standards for the way the team will operate. Individual contributors can use this approach as well. Be careful not to impose your “have to be right” sense of standards on others. You can use the same flexibility at home. Remember: You can win, and still lose.

5. **Express positive as well as constructive feedback by stretching your strengths:** When you operate in your “have to be right” mode, you may be seen by others as being inflexible, harsh, impatient, and overly critical. In addition, your strong style of communication may intimidate others, particularly those who are sensitive. They may see you as being hard when you are simply attempting to make a strong point. Where appropriate, engage others in conversation, rather than telling them what you want them to do or what you think. During feedback moments, listen with your third ear, and use your intuition and your sincere desire to help them to pave the way for enhancing their capabilities and level of self-esteem.

6. **Recognize early signs of shifting to right-fighting:** When you find yourself feeling anxious, unappreciated, angry, isolated, and misunderstood regarding your desire to help, support, or clarify, realize that to other people it may seem as if you’re trying to be right again. It’s going to take people some time to adjust to your adjustment. Ask yourself in these moments: “Am I really attempting to help and/or am I whetted to the outcome?” When you give up right-fighting you can no longer be attached to the outcome. If people sense that you are attached to the outcome or that you’re right-fighting, just without your usual intensity, this will still drive them away. People can tell a right-fight dressed as support any day. Also, are you looking for them to change, or are you willing to maintain your change? You could be holding inflexible or unrealistic standards for others to be agreeable to; this attitude can also create more distance than closeness.

- 7. Learn to value the strengths and interests of those different from you:** Build partnerships and spend time with those who have different strengths, interests, and ideas than you to stretch your bandwidth. If you only know one way of doing, seeing, and approaching something, then you only know one way. Bring some diversity in perspective to your life. Remember: Giving up right-fighting is not merely being quiet to keep the peace. It's letting go of that desire to win and to control. People can right- fight quietly if they still have a right-fight spirit.

Urgency and Purpose TAN Exercise (Pages 211 – 214)

Print the Excuse Feedback sheet below and distribute it to seven people (for example, your colleagues, friends, direct reports, boss, or family members), and have them complete the form and return it to you. Tell them to be as candid as possible and that they don't have to sign their names, unless you want to dig real deep. (If that is indeed the case, schedule follow-up meetings with each person to discuss their thoughts. During the meetings you'll listen with your third ear.)

Excuse Feedback Sheet

Name (optional): _____

Relationship: _____

What excuses does _____ make?	What has been the impact?

For the next part of the exercise, identify, using some of the feedback if you'd like, your most common excuses that keep you stuck where you are on your living life full out journey. The deeper the better. Take a few minutes to list these excuses now.

Excuse 1	
Excuse 2	
Excuse 3	
Excuse 4	
Excuse 5	

Now that you've identified your most obvious excuses, it's time to dig even deeper. Here's a step-by-step approach that will help you accomplish this goal.

Step 1: Go back through this book and review all of your personal action plans. If you wrote your answers or made notes in this book, compile all of the exercises and notes into one place. If you downloaded and used the on-line forms from www.noexcuseguide.com, gather those electronic files and notes before moving to the next step.

Step 2: Make a list of the social networking communications you sent to others as you moved through the book. Gather the best of these thoughts and reactions to what you've learned, and post them someplace where you can- not avoid seeing your thoughts and promises (on your vision board, as your screen saver, on your exercise bike, or framed on your desk).

Step 3: Engage a "traction team." Ask coworkers or some- one you trust (a friend, spouse, or partner) to help you build momentum and stay on track and meet your goals to live an urgent, purposeful, and excuse-free way of living. You can also participate with others on-line by signing up at www.noexcuseguide.com and by following the other social media outlets offered on that Website.

My "No Excuse Club" Traction Team members are:

Name	E-mail address

Step 4: Take a personal inventory of your negative attitudes and excuses. Focus on what brings you real inner joy; that’s different from what makes you happy (such as a new car or a good meal). Joy comes from within. Examine the excuse habit in your life and how you use the habit to keep you from living with purpose. Is it chronic or just an occasional habit? Confront your fears by listing them on a piece of paper, and say out loud to shift your mind-set: “I’m taking your power away.”

Next, rip up the paper and throw it away. Remember: Challenges don’t make or break you; they reveal who you are. Seek support for this self-examination using your traction team network (either in person or on-line).

Step 5: Join the “No Excuse Club” on the associated LinkedIn and Facebook pages. You’ll find others there who have decided to take full responsibility and total accountability for their professional and personal lives. You will find support from others who don’t give away their power or let someone’s opinion of them become their reality. You’ll

find many others who want to face any circumstance with confidence and without fear.

Step 6: Put yourself out there. Look for opportunities to get out of your comfort zone and use what you have found out about yourself using this book to succeed.

Accountability Exercise (Pages 215-216)

I am most proud of:

My life goals are:

I have not been successful meeting my goals because:

Here are the positive changes I plan to make so that I will meet my goals:

I will ask the following individuals or take advantages of the following resources to ensure my success:

