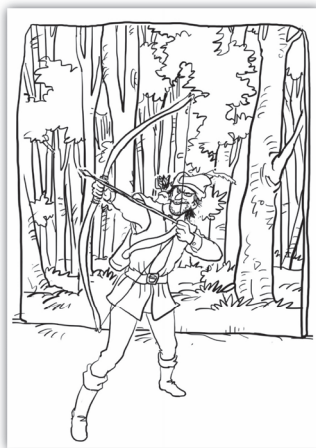


CHAPTER 1: WHERE WILL MY ARROW FALL?



SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE.

My heart was pounding, and I was sweating as if I had just run a marathon. For the third night that week, I was trading sleep for worry over paying my bills—which included the salaries of my two key employees, John and Sue. I mean, John had two kids who depended on him, and Sue was taking care of her elderly mom. I couldn't let them down.

From the moment I opened the doors of my company, cash flow had been a problem. Sure, I had recently closed some new

projects. But one of my biggest clients hadn't paid his bills, and I was frantic. All my liquid assets were tied up in an ongoing project that I knew would have a big payout eventually. But "eventually" wasn't going to pay the bills NOW. Time was a luxury I didn't have. I was working seven days a week, and more often than not, sixteen hours a day. Every single pay period I went through the same panic: "Can I really ask my employees to be paid late? How long will they stay with me if I do? What will they think of me as a leader if I have to ask them to wait just one more week for their checks?" I was ashamed, frustrated, and stressed out. I hadn't paid myself in months. I was burning out fast, and deeply unhappy. The stress was affecting every aspect of my life.

What happened to the dream of flexible working hours and more freedom? Why did I feel more tied down than ever? I wished someone had told me this was the cost of owning your own business.

Something had to give.



Entrepreneur Mindset

The truth is, I never intended to start my own business. I admit that I always valued money, probably more than my peers. Even as a child I was always involved in one "business venture" or another—lemonade stands, paper routes, mowing lawns—however I could serve a need and earn a dollar or two. But the difference between my friends and me was that I was usually doing all of those things every day, day after day—which meant I always had my own money to buy treats and toys or the spare cash to save for a rainy

day. I didn't realize it back then, but I was enjoying creating my own opportunities and being my own boss.

As a young adult, I was open to any and all jobs. I worked the standard run-of-the-mill gigs: fast food counter girl (“fries with that?”), waitress, and six-foot sub builder. But I quickly learned that the more unusual options often proved to be the most lucrative—for example, delivering phone books for Donnelly directory. This was a workout and driving lesson all in one! I had to unload the truck, pack the car, and learn how to throw the directories while driving. I figured out a system to maximize the loading and delivery process to make more money in less time. Not only was I making more money being my own boss than I could working for someone else, I was having a blast doing it. During our senior year of college my best friend and I went into business selling welcome baskets to the parents of incoming freshman. After two semesters, we had raised enough money for an awesome trip to Europe!

It wasn't that I woke up one day and said to myself, “Today's the day I become an entrepreneur.” Rather, it was a way of thinking. For me it was about finding places that I could add value. Even when I worked for other people, I approached my assignments as if it was my business on the line. I saw a lot of success that way and was quickly promoted through every company I worked for. By the time I was twenty-five, I owned my own IT company. Before I turned thirty-five, I had sold that business to a public company and was offered an executive leadership position at one of the top market research companies in the world. Of course, it wasn't all sunshine, rainbows, and smooth sailing. Anyone who has ever owned a business knows that there are good times and bad times.

- *It's what you do during the bad/hard times that defines and refines who you are.*

So Much to Do

Owning a business showed me that there was always more to do than could be done. On any given day, there were so many things to manage to keep clients happy and all the while deliver the value and standards that I prided myself on. Between supervising my growing staff, moving research and development further, and acquiring new customers to feed the pipeline, I felt that I could work 24 hours a day and still not gain traction. I always felt that if I could do one more thing, work one more hour, answer one more email, or call one more prospect, that's when I would finally get on top of things.

One night, after being awake for about thirty-six hours, having worked the last twenty or so days straight, I hit my breaking point. I was tired and couldn't do this any longer in this way. I mean, WHAT was I doing? I needed to take a step back, stop being busy, and stop working like a horse! I needed to start being productive and find more leverage. I needed to evaluate how I was working and redirect my focus on only those factors and activities that would magnify my results.

The signs were everywhere. My life was a mess. I wasn't eating right, I wasn't exercising enough, and my husband was getting sucked into the madness with me. The obvious question finally dawned on me: How effective could I possibly be if I was always running on empty? Was this what success was supposed to look like? I decided that I needed to stop blaming and start solving. Einstein said, "We can not solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them."

It was time to change the way I was thinking and approaching the situation.

Take a Step Back and Look for Leverage

It took a few days for me to honestly assess how to get my company and my life in order. Staying away from the office those days was hard! In the back of my mind, I still heard the one-more-thing-gremlin whispering, “Get back to work.” I was committed, however, to finding new ways of approaching my business and creating a new plan, so I changed my environment entirely and went away on a retreat. Three days later I was inspired, rejuvenated, and finally ready to pursue the success I knew the business was capable of. I completely overhauled what we focused on and how we operated.

Though I didn’t realize it at the time, I was implementing my 10 Core Drivers of productivity. Long before I gave them a name, they were bringing me success. This was what helped me create the leverage to accelerate my company’s growth. Two years later, I sold what had become a multi-million dollar company.

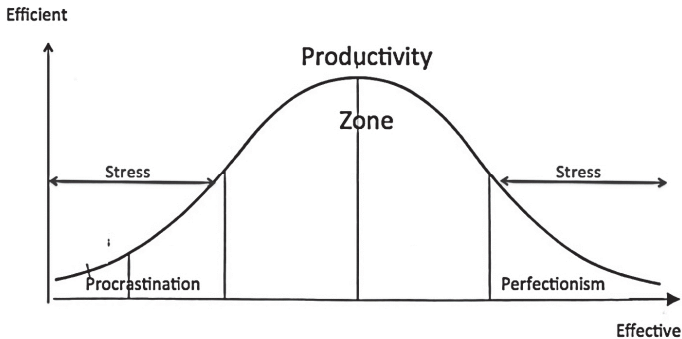
In Howard Pyle’s famous adaptation of the Robin Hood folktale, “Robin Hood and His Merry Men,” the hero shoots an arrow into the horizon, and with his dying breath declares, “Where the arrow falls, there bury me.” Robin shot that arrow, but where it landed depended more on the wind than on him. Don’t let yourself get caught in the trap of “letting the arrow fall where it may.”

- *You can dictate your results, but only if you fully manage the factors that affect them.*

The Productivity Curve

Perhaps you're familiar with the Probability or Bell Curve. This describes the normal/average distribution of a large population of scores. Let's look at this famous curve in a new way.

This Productivity Curve is a visual depiction of the results you get based on what you do and how you approach what you do. This curve determines your level of personal productivity and satisfaction. The ends of the curve are outliers, or extremes. These are areas you want to avoid because the closer you get to them, the more your life is out of balance. It's at those corners where you'll allow yourself to make excuses. The goal is to reach the Productivity Zone where effective and efficient meet.



Procrastination

Look at the far left side of the curve. What you see are the people who aren't getting things done; they aren't accomplishing what they want. They're neither efficient nor effective. Maybe they're lacking clarity, or maybe they're stuck in complacency. Maybe they're unconsciously terrified of the very success they say they want. This is the environment that breeds procrastination.

There is a fine line between prioritization and avoidance. Priorities are usually the most important items, not the most urgent ones. A procrastinator's list is upside down, and they focus only on the urgent tasks, leaving the important ones to collect dust. However, it is these important tasks that really need doing, and by ignoring them, procrastinators remain stuck in place.

Procrastinators, being notorious excuse makers, keep important items on the bottom of the list and hone that craft over a lifetime. As a child, the budding procrastinator used the age-old, "The dog ate my homework" and from there the excuses got more sophisticated.

In an interview I conducted with John Perry, author of *THE ART OF PROCRASTINATION*, he spoke of the high levels of productivity that procrastinators think they have because of their urgency system. They get a lot done because the avoidance of high-risk important tasks frees them up to focus exclusively on the smaller low-risk tasks. Over time, those important tasks may become urgent and get done, but tasks typically don't get done until something else becomes more important. As Dr. Perry put it, "I can do anything, as long as there is something else more important that I ought to be doing."

Procrastinators are usually very busy, but no matter how much they actually accomplish, their stress levels are high, and their moods swing from apathy, to overwhelmed, to relief—while others sit in frustration. As a leader, this creates stress and later apathy at a lack of ownership in your organization.

Perfectionism

Now, consider the far right side of the curve. Those are the people who can't stop doing and doing and doing. They're the

perfectionists, or what politically correct people would call “overachievers.” Give them some credit: they are effective, they may even make a lot of money, but they are rarely efficient. Many entrepreneurs fall in this category; chances are YOU do too. Full disclosure: That’s my Achilles heel. I still struggle with perfectionism from time to time. People on the overachieving side often fall into the trap of needing to do “just one more thing.”

There is a fine line, however, between dedication and fixation. When you push and push, there’s a breaking point where the price of “one more thing” becomes too great to ignore. Overachievers can get a huge number of things done. They may even make a lot of money. But typically, they aren’t happy or fulfilled. And if you’re not happy, are you really successful? Overachievers rarely give themselves the time to step back and enjoy what they’ve achieved. Sometimes, people become so addicted to the adrenaline rush and excitement of doing, and get so caught in the overdrive, they forget how to stop. They often forget or ignore their own needs. For these overachievers, the sense of purpose can be extremely strong. That purpose is the driving force behind their need to keep going. But this almost always ends in burnout, or missing out on the value and lessons along the way. Perfectionism is often a mask worn to hide the fear of not being good enough. Just like with procrastination, when you are caught up in perfectionism there will likely be collateral damage to those around you along the way. After all, if you live in a mental space of feeling like you are never good enough, how likely is it that someone else will measure up to your standards?

No matter where you typically fall on the curve, you’re likely to slip into one of the other zones at one time or another.

Champions are the people who recognize they have moved away from the Productivity Zone and can redirect themselves back quickly.

- *We are all human, so we will inevitably find ourselves in those other zones; the trick is to not live there.*

At my productivity bootcamp, we use football as a metaphor to explain the Productivity Zone. Your objective is the ball, and the optimal Productivity Zone is between the goal posts. To get the extra point, you don't need that ball to sail through the dead center of those posts, it just has to go through. Your score is the same no matter if the ball flies cleanly between the posts or bounces off one of them. So give yourself that flexibility and don't focus on, or become overwhelmed by, the idea of being in one fixed place within the Productivity Zone.

What Is Productivity?

Success and profits in your business are a result of productivity. It has nothing to do with time, and it has little to do with the state of the economy, although some business owners like to blame their failures on the prevailing business climate or lack of time. Blame lives on the outer edges of the productivity curve and is a sure fire way to keep you out of the Zone. You have to take personal responsibility to get in the zone by being positive, solution oriented, and ready for action.

Feel Productive

Productivity and success are mindsets. If you feel productive, or successful, then you are. If you feel busy and overwhelmed, you won't find success. Are you productive if you're always busy but aren't able to make time for your primary relationships? Are you

productive if you're making money but are so tired and burned out that you don't enjoy it? What makes you feel productive and why? I have been criticized for this statement, but I think productivity is something that you feel, not something that you do.

➤ *Productivity is a feeling and personal assessment.*

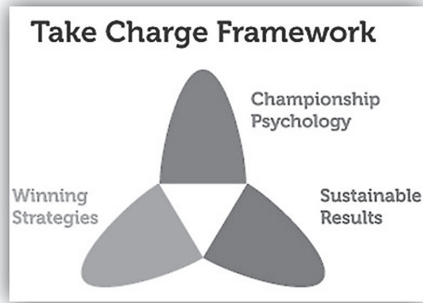
Productivity=Profits

How do you know when you are in the Productivity Zone? When you experience the profits! Your level of productivity determines your profits. Keep in mind “profit” does not just mean “making money.” If you spend one hundred thousand dollars to make fifty thousand dollars, did you profit? Obviously not! If you're at the overachiever end of the curve, chances are that you'll make money, but you probably won't maximize your profits. The difference is being in the Productivity Zone.

It's as simple as that! What I call “profit” actually appears in many forms: health, effective relationships (both at work and at home), joy, gratitude, peace of mind, passion, drive, ambition, and, of course, financial wealth. To me, profits are the natural byproduct of productivity.

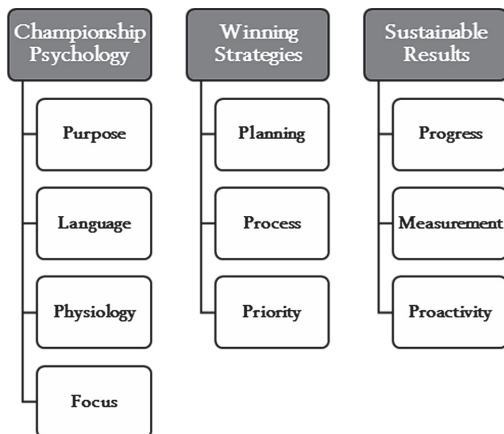
The Inner Workings

Imagine that your total potential is like a windmill, abundant with limitless potential and natural resources, creating amazing momentum when everything is in sync. The windmill has a gear mechanism that works from within: The more smoothly, consistently, and quickly the blades turn, the more productive you tend to be.



In taking charge of your productivity, there are three segments—or in windmill terminology, “blades”—that are critical. They are Championship Psychology, Winning Strategy and Sustainable Results. Without all three, your “productivity windmill” is underpowered. Yes, it might still turn, but not optimally.

Overall, there are 10 Core Drivers that make up these three blades:



There's a sequence to success. These three sections, containing the subsets, need to be worked through in that order so that you can effectively and efficiently power your windmill.

The Time to Change Is NOW.

Maybe you've been where I was. Maybe you've seen your personal relationships suffer because of problems at work, or feared that you would lose your house, or wondered if your business could afford to stay open. Perhaps you've had sleepless nights worrying that you wouldn't be able to cover the bills this month, or felt guilty that you couldn't buy a holiday gift for your child.

Do you feel guilty because you missed important family events, like a birthday party or recital, because you couldn't afford to leave work? Are you angry and frustrated, or feel that you're not in control of your life, and desperately wish you just had **MORE TIME**?

You Are Not Alone

Most of my clients have been there. Nearly all business leaders wish they had more time. Once you commit to the 10 Core Drivers, you never have to feel that way, at least not for any extended period of time. The goal is to recognize uncomfortable emotions as a warning that your needs are not being met. You need to know how to read them, and then how to shift them as quickly as possible. That is what this book and my program are about because when you master these 10 Core Drivers, that doesn't just become possible, it becomes natural.

So congratulations on taking the first step. You are among the few who know you have a choice. By educating yourself on the 10 Core Drivers, you can take charge of your productivity,

stop the procrastination and perfectionism, and start to use your time and energy in a more effective way. You'll get better results than you've ever had, and you'll accelerate your success.

TAKE AWAYS:

1. Take charge of your results to possess a full understanding of the factors that affect those desired outcomes.
2. There are 10 Core Drivers of productivity that help bring you to the Productivity Zone, and stay once you've arrived there: Purpose, Language, Physiology, Focus, Planning, Process, Priority, Progress, Measurement and Proactivity.
3. These 10 Core Drivers will provide you with achievement, flexibility, balance, and greater fulfillment—all found in the Productivity Zone.