

Free



D
KNOW

A diagram illustrating the concept of 'Doing' (D) leading to 'Knowing' (KNOW). The word 'KNOW' is written in red, with a green 'D' positioned above the 'O'. A white outline of a box surrounds the 'D' and the 'O', with a white arrow pointing downwards from the 'O'.

From Knowing To Doing

A few good ideas to help you
develop any new interactive skill

Ian Rowland

From Knowing To Doing **(How to develop a new interactive skill)**

by
Ian Rowland



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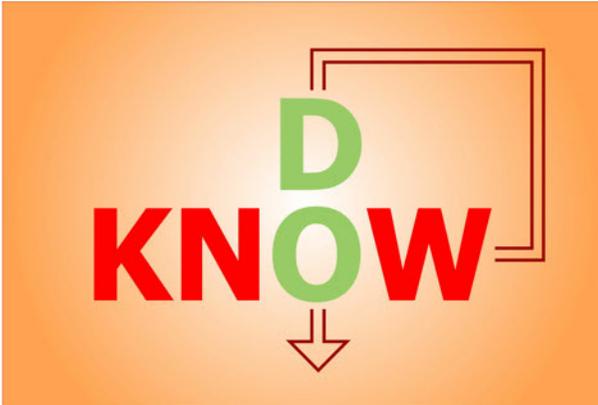
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— Ian



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by Ian Rowland

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A Quick Note About Me

I do three things so I have three websites.

www.ianrowland.com

This is about my work as a professional writer. In simple terms, I offer a complete 'start-to-finish' writing and publishing service. Technical writing, business, sales, marketing, creative... you name it, I've done it! I offer 35+ years experience across all media. In my career, I've helped more companies to sell a greater range of goods and services than anyone else you're likely to meet. I'm also a 'ghostwriter'! If you've got a book inside you, I can write it for you or guide you through the self-publishing process.

www.coldreadingsuccess.com

My website devoted to the art, science and joy of cold reading and what I call 'cold reading for business'. As well as providing free information and downloads, the site tells you about my three books on cold reading and the training I offer.

www.ianrowlandtraining.com

All about my talks and training for conferences, corporate groups and private clients. Main subjects include:

- The Practical Persuasion Method.
- Creative Problem-Solving.
- Leadership, Presence And Charisma.
- Unlock Your Mind.
- Be A Genius!
- Cold Reading For Business.

I also offer bespoke training packages to suit *your* needs. Clients to date include the FBI, Google, Coca-Cola, Unilever, the Ministry Of Defence, the British Olympics Team, the Crown Estate and many more. Full details on the site.

A Quick Note About My Books

I've written quite a few full-length books that I sell from my websites (as listed opposite) and via Amazon. Mostly, I write about:

- Business success and the joys (?) of working for yourself.
- Cold reading (how to talk to people as if you're psychic) and what I call 'cold reading for business'.
- Overcoming various forms of addiction.

In addition, just to defy easy classification, I've written one book of original romantic poetry, which I'm very proud of!

I've also produced quite a number of smaller booklets, like this one, that are available as *free, instant* downloads from my various websites.

If you want to support me, please tell your friends about my work, even if you only steer them to the free stuff. It's all good for awareness and promotion. I would also be very grateful for any friendly mentions and recommendations on social media.

Want to get in touch with me? Great! I'd *love* to hear from you. You can find me on Facebook and other social media or just send me an email: ian@ianrowland.com.

A Common Problem

“I understand it quite well in *theory*. I’m just not so sure about actually *doing* it.”

Whenever people try to learn a new interactive skill, they often end up saying something like this. The journey from ‘knowing’ to ‘doing’ can often be curiously challenging.

For the purpose of this booklet, an ‘interactive’ art or skill is one that involves dealing with other people in real time. Examples would include selling, giving business presentations, teaching and being a performer or an entertainer.

It’s one thing to acquire *theoretical* knowledge about an interactive skill from books or courses. It’s quite another to *apply* that knowledge to real-life situations. This is a problem I’ve struggled with several times in my life and you probably have as well. From time to time I teach interactive skills such as persuasive negotiation and cold reading. When students come to me, they often say things like, “I’ve studied the basic principles, but when I try to apply them in real life I don’t quite know what to do.”

Of course, developing proficiency in any area of life takes time and effort. However, it’s *especially* difficult to practice interactive skills precisely because other people are involved. As you know, people are intrinsically unpredictable and, on occasion, can also be rather difficult to deal with. (It’s worth adding that people can also be friendly, fun and entirely supportive.)

So, how can you learn a new interactive art or skill? What’s the best way to achieve the transition from theory to practice, from knowing to doing? In this short booklet I’d like to offer several suggestions based on nothing more than a few decades of experience.

This is *intentionally* a rather short booklet. Nonetheless, I hope you find it useful.

1. Get Positive: ABC

When you're learning a new interactive skill, it's good to start off with a positive attitude. However, it's important to appreciate what this really means.

There are many misunderstandings about the term 'positive thinking'. Many people seem to think it's just about *assuming* you are going to be effortlessly successful, with everything turning out just right. Alas, this isn't what 'positive thinking' means. It's not a magic wand of wishfulness that means you only have to *want* a good result to *get* one.

Here's what positive thinking is really all about. It really comes down to ABC: Attitude, Behaviour and Consequence. Your attitude shapes your behaviour, which in turn shapes the consequences.

Attitude > Behaviour > Consequences

Let's suppose you are studying for an important exam, and you start off with a negative attitude. You tell yourself that it's a really tough exam, not many people pass, you don't feel very confident, it's not really your sort of subject and it's probably going to involve a lot of time and effort.

This negative attitude leads to negative behaviour. You probably won't think much about the best way to prepare for the exam, or how to plan your study schedule. You won't spend much time dreaming up ways to improve your chances or study effectively. Even when you do get doing to some studying, you probably won't be very focused and will find yourself easily distracted. After all, you've more or less convinced yourself that it's a waste of time.

The negative behaviour tends to lead to negative consequences — you will most probably not do well and end up failing the exam. Your attitude ('I'm probably going to fail') shapes your behaviour (not making much of an effort) which shapes the consequences (failing the exam).

Now, let's see what happens if you start off with a positive attitude. You say to yourself that it's nothing scary or difficult: it's just an exam, and one that lots of people just like you somehow manage to pass every year. There's a curriculum, meaning a well-defined set of information that you have to study, and then you have to answer some questions to demonstrate what you know and that's it... you've passed!

Having decided that you're going to pass this exam, and enjoy the process, your attitude shapes your behaviour. You start planning your campaign. You try to think of every bright idea that could possibly help

you, or make the process easier. Do you know someone who has already passed this particular exam, or could you find someone, and talk to them? Do you know someone who seems to be pretty good at this particular subject — maybe with more of a natural aptitude for it than you seem to have? Could you make friends, hang out with them, discuss the subject and learn from them?

If you struggle with some parts of the course, could you get some extra time with your teacher or tutor to go over them? Can you search online and learn a bit about good ways to study, and how to learn as efficiently as possible? Can you learn a bit about mnemonics and memory techniques that will make it easier to remember the material?

You start thinking about how you will actually study for the exam. When can you make time, on a regular basis? When do you study best? What sort of environment can you create for yourself that will put you in the right mood to study? What can you do to minimise distractions? What sort of factors do you know tend to make it easier for you to learn, and which ones tend to make it harder?

By thinking about all these ideas, and developing the best strategies you possibly can, you will tackle the learning process as successfully and efficiently as possible. You will devise a good study schedule (which includes remembering to have some time off and some fun!), not waste time, adopt a good, disciplined approach to study, get the help you need when you need it, and give yourself the best possible chance of passing the exam. Your attitude ('I can very probably pass this exam') shapes your behaviour (coming up with lots of good ideas about studying successfully) which shapes the consequences (very probably passing the exam).

You can't *guarantee* success but the positive attitude — when translated into positive behaviour — does make it very likely.

That's how positive thinking really works. It's about translating a positive attitude into positive action and behaviour that makes your success more likely. It's about Attitude, Behaviour and Consequences, and it applies to just about anything you want to achieve.

So that's my first suggestion. If you want to learn any new interactive skill, start with ABC. Adopt a positive **a**ttitude that will lead to positive **b**ehaviour and (probably) good **c**onsequences.

2. Love The Learning Adventure

Everyone who goes to make their first parachute jump experiences the same problem: they want to be good at making parachute jumps *before* they actually jump out of a plane. In short, they want to be good before they've started.

This 'parachute problem' affects many people who are learning any new type of interactive art or skill, particularly if there's a risk of perceived public failure. Most people who want to become performers, entertainers or speakers get a little 'paralysed' and never take the first step because they worry about their attempts going badly. What if the performance doesn't go well? What if the audience isn't very nice? What if the speech or presentation turns out fairly awful?

It might be nice if there was a way to be good at something at your first attempt. However, this just isn't how life works. There is no realistic option other than to start somewhere, while you're not particularly good, make mistakes and learn from experience. Rather than finding this reality annoying or inconvenient, I suggest that you *embrace* it. Get enthusiastic about the notion of slowly but surely acquiring a skill or talent through experience over time. Go on your personal learning adventure and love every glorious and occasionally maddening second of it.

Learning gives you a sense of achievement, satisfaction and fulfilment. If everything was easy, all the time, you'd never feel that sense of having progressed from 'not very good' to 'really rather impressive'. What's more, learning always brings its own rewards. These range from the simple convenience and pleasure of being able to do something quite well to the possibility of making money from your skill, either directly (e.g. learning to sell things really well) or indirectly (having students who will pay to learn from you).

I've known many successful people with different skills and talents. One thing they all have in common is that they embrace the practical reality of learning: you can't be good on day one. There's no alternative: you just have to start somewhere and go through the learning curve.

Think of anyone you admire who is really good at something — acting, singing, managing an office, painting, selling or anything else. They were all beginners once and even very talented people had their early days of stumbles, fumbles and failures. You don't need to take my word for it — just read a few biographies of people who have achieved great things in their chosen field. Without exception, you'll find that they made a lot of mistakes before they eventually found success. They only got to be good at what they do by going through a learning process.

I suggest you do the same: embrace the learning process, enjoy it and go on your learning adventure. It is an adventure, because you never quite know where it's going to take you or what will happen. There will be good days and not quite so good days, high points and low points. There will be times when you don't do as well as you had hoped and other times when you exceed your own expectations. It's a great adventure to go on. Here's the alternative: never learn anything new, spend the next year watching TV and this time next year be exactly where you are now. I prefer the learning adventure.

Whichever interactive skill you want to learn, the reality of the process is always the same. When you make your first attempt, you probably won't be very good at it. I'm not saying you'll be awful, or that anything bad will happen. However, you probably won't be as smooth, relaxed and confident as you'd like to be. It's also likely to be the case that you won't get the results you want or, if you do, that you feel it's more by luck than judgment. In other words, you won't feel as if you have much control over what happens.

The second time you try, you'll be a little better. The chances are you still won't be all that great, but I can guarantee you'll be better than you were the first time. The third time you try, you'll be even better... and so on. After a few dozen attempts, you'll probably start to get the hang of whatever it is you're trying to do. You will feel more relaxed and at ease plus you'll start to get better and more consistent results and to feel as if you're mostly in control. These are all good things to feel and good experiences to have.

Let me put it like this. The way to do a really great sales pitch is to do it for the 500th time. But the only way to have a 500th time is to have a 499th time. And the only way to do *that* is to have a 498th time. You get the idea. It all leads back to attempt #1: your wonderful first step on your journey to the 500th time. Of course this applies to any type of interactive art, skill or performance.

So my second suggestion is that you decide to go on your very own learning adventure and to love every moment of it. You may as well do this since there's no realistic alternative.

3. Form Good Expectations

When you go on a learning adventure, it's very helpful to form the right kind of expectations. In fact, this can be crucial to your success.

Suppose you embark on a new project and tell yourself it's going to be pretty easy and you'll get almost everything right at your first attempt. You may feel that you're adopting a very positive attitude. In fact, you're forming very *unrealistic* and *harmful* expectations. How will you feel when you make some mistakes or a few things go wrong? At the very least, you will feel puzzled, disappointed and frustrated. You may even take to blaming others or blaming yourself, neither of which are very productive options.

Now consider an alternative. Suppose you embark on a new project and tell yourself that, though you will be successful *eventually*, you will probably make about six mistakes before you get there. How will you feel when things go wrong and your project suffers a slight setback? You won't feel puzzled or disappointed because it's *precisely* what you were expecting. You won't feel too frustrated either because you know you are making progress towards your goal. You can say to yourself, "Great! That's one of the six out of the way... I'm getting closer to my eventual success!"

I think this is a much better approach!

For many years of my life, before I started to work for myself, I was involved in the world of business-to-business selling. Like most people in this rather complex arena, I rarely expected to get a sale the first time I visited a prospect (although it was nice when that happened). In most cases, I took the view that I might have to visit a company five or six times before finally making a sale. Each visit was one more successful step towards the day when I clinched the deal.

Over the years I've heard various 'inspirational' stories about Thomas Edison and the invention of the light bulb. Some say that when he was trying to devise a practical light bulb filament, he tried ninety-nine substances that didn't work before he finally found one that did. Some say that each time he tried something that didn't work, he made notes like this: "I have not failed — I've found one more substance that doesn't work and eliminated it from my research."

I don't know whether these stories and quotes are accurate, but they nonetheless convey an important point: you can choose to see every so-called 'failure' as just one more piece of progress, one more stepping stone towards your goal. I think this is tremendously important.

For most of my working life, I've earned a living as a freelance writer. When I started out on this delightfully precarious career, I often found the work rather difficult. There were times when my relative lack of experience was cruelly exposed and my assignments dissolved into an embarrassing catalogue of errors. I never felt the least bit discouraged by these experiences. I couldn't *wait* for the opportunity to try again and improve my ability to handle every aspect of my job — from handling what some would call 'difficult' clients to wrestling with uncooperative technology and managing rather challenging deadlines. I was absolutely fascinated by the process of learning my trade and, slowly but surely, becoming a successful writer who could handle most jobs with confidence.

If you want to learn how to perform stand-up comedy, give a business presentation, act in a show, perform a magic trick, present motivational talks or become adept at cold reading (how to talk to people so you sound as if you're psychic), you will have to go through the same process of stumbling, learning and (eventually) achieving. So long as you form realistic expectations, there's no reason to regard any of this as a problem.

My third suggestion, therefore, is that you form positive but practical expectations, and learn to interpret any problem or setback as just one more bit of progress towards your eventual success.

4. Value Experience

One characteristic of successful people, in addition to enjoying their learning adventure, is that they also realise the tremendous value of experience.

In my opinion, experience is everything. Experience is the greatest teacher in the world, the only teacher that you can always rely on and the only teacher you really need. When you go on your learning adventure, you are choosing to have the experiences that will shape your talent, improve your abilities and make you into the relaxed, confident and capable person you want to be — whether you're aiming to be a performer, manager, sales rep, leader or anything else.

One minute of real experience will teach you more than any amount of theory, practice and armchair contemplation. Whatever interactive skill you're trying to learn, every single grain of practical experience will teach you far more, and be far more useful, than a hundred hours of theory, study and thinking about it. I'm not saying study, home learning and rehearsal aren't important. I'm saying that practical experience will teach you far more, and more quickly, than anything else.

I think it's useful to cultivate this attitude of relishing real experience, cherishing it and embracing what a wonderful teacher it is. When you start to practise any interactive skill, every grain of practical experience will teach you far more than any teacher could.

You can't always have access to a teacher but you can always help yourself to as much experience as you want. Want to be good at public speaking? Speak at every possible opportunity. Speak at charity and fund-raising events. Volunteer to host events or give speeches when opportunities arise at work or through any clubs you belong to. Find your nearest 'meet up' group and offer a talk on something the organisers think the group would like to hear about. Cherish every single bit of real-life, real-world experience that you can win for yourself. It doesn't matter whether or not you always do well. The point is to build up your real-life experience. This is all you have to do. Experience will teach you everything you need to know in order to be successful.

Over the years, I've known several friends who wanted to get into stand-up comedy. If you know anything about this particular world, you'll know that it's a tough business. You have to start at the bottom, slogging around the circuit doing short, unpaid 'open mic' spots until someone thinks you're worth a paid gig. It's a tough life, calling for a great deal of dedication, and comedy club audiences aren't known for being particularly kind to beginners.

On one occasion, I went with a friend of mine to a small comedy club where he was going to perform for just a few minutes. It was one of his very first attempts at stand-up comedy and, unfortunately for him, it didn't go very well. His material just wasn't very good and the audience made it clear they didn't much care for his attempts to make them laugh.

When I saw my friend after the gig, I thought he would be rather unhappy with how things had turned out. Instead, he seemed to be in a very good mood. I asked him why he was in such high spirits, given that the evening hadn't really gone all that well. He said, "Oh, but I *learned* so much tonight! I'm thinking about how much better I'll be next time. I can't wait!"

So that's my fourth bit of advice: place great value on real-life experience, and get as much of it as you can. It is the supreme teacher.

5. Choose Your Responses

So far, I've made four suggestions:

- Get positive (in the right way).
- Love the learning adventure.
- Have great expectations.
- Value experience.

Suppose you take all these suggestions on board. What's going to happen when you start trying to master your new interactive skill? You will have positive experiences (when things go well) and learning experiences (when they go less well than you might have hoped).

The next point is: how you should respond when things don't go quite as well as you wanted them to? Here's what you need to know: you can't choose what happens in life but you can choose how you *respond* to what happens.

Jack Canfield wrote a very popular book called 'The Success Principles'. He offers this formula: 'E + R = O', meaning that Events + Responses = Outcome. As he puts it, 'The deciding factor in success is not the external conditions and circumstances. It's how you choose to respond.'

So, let's just suppose for a moment that you are learning your new skill, which could be anything from public speaking to a bit of corporate training, and it doesn't go all that well. Maybe you got a little nervous, you fluffed your words, you found your client or audience rather difficult to deal with and so on.

You wouldn't choose to have this experience. However, you can choose how you *respond* to it.

One option is to feel embarrassed and disheartened, saying to yourself, "I'm just no good at this. It's hopeless — I should just give up." Alternatively, you can choose to accept that this is just part of your learning adventure. You can choose to be proud of yourself for deciding to go on the adventure in the first place and for sticking with it — even when it doesn't go well. By going on the adventure, you are developing a new skill, fulfilling yourself and making progress. At the same time, you are gaining fresh insight about yourself, about people and about life. It's better than deciding to just stay as you are and watch TV for a year, never learning anything new or seeking new horizons.

There's one point I'd like to add to all this: the tremendous importance of humour, laughter and fun. I think this point is overlooked by a lot of business gurus and motivational speakers, possibly because more than a few of them seem quite spectacularly devoid of anything even close to a sense of humour.

As I've said, even when a reading maybe doesn't go terribly well, you can choose to respond in a positive way, feeling good about yourself and your learning adventure. You can also choose to smile and to have a good laugh about it with people who are either on the same adventure or have already been on it.

I spend a lot of time hanging out with all my wonderful, valued friends who work as performers and entertainers. Every single one of them has a hundred tales to tell of awful gigs, embarrassing moments and times when everything went wrong that possibly could. In fact, I've never really seen entertainers sit around and talk about their best and most successful shows — it's the 'disaster' stories that they love to laugh about.

I'm sure the same goes for any other group that share a particular trade or specialised interest. Everyone who is good at anything has stories of mistakes, fumbles, wrong turns, bad moves and embarrassing moments. They are just part and parcel of the learning adventure and they're good to share.

The best definition of humour I've ever seen comes from the wonderful James Thurber: 'Humour is emotional turbulence recalled in tranquility.' Isn't that wonderful?

Whenever you're developing your new interactive skill and things don't go so well, I suggest you recognise that you didn't choose the event but you can choose your response. Accept whatever has happened as an important part of your learning adventure and feel proud of yourself for being on the adventure and sticking with it. Then smile and look forward to sharing the story with friends and having a good laugh about it in retrospect.

You can apply the same thinking to every area of your life. Whatever happens, you can always choose your response. You have this power, this control, and it can't be taken from you. If you look after yourself by choosing good responses, you'll never feel annoyed by anything ever again.

6. Fix The Fear

Even if you have taken on board all the suggestions I've offered so far, you might still feel some fear or nervousness when you start trying out your new interactive skill. You can fix this.

This fear arises largely because *your own imagination is working against you*. It is filling your head with scenes where you try something new, things go wrong and you end up looking foolish.

Fortunately, you can deal with this fear very easily by using four fear fix strategies (FFS).

FFS #1: You Don't Need To Imagine Anything

As I've said, a lot of fear stems from imagining things going badly. Whether you're learning how to make a sales call, speak in public or become an entertainer, you may well find yourself looking ahead and imagining things going wrong.

The first Fear Fix Strategy is to realise that you don't *need* to imagine anything at all. When you try something for the first time, you haven't a clue how it will go. Maybe you won't be all that successful or, then again, maybe things will go a little better than expected. You just don't know. The only way to find out what happens is to actually have the experience and learn from it. Having a real experience is much more fun than just letting your imagination run wild. It's also more fulfilling and will teach you a lot more.

I therefore suggest that you don't waste much time imagining how your early attempts (to do whatever you're trying to do) will turn out. You don't need to do this. Have the experience and let it be what it will be. Embrace the reality, discover what happens and have a tale to tell.

FFS #2: Imagination Isn't Reality

Another good way to deal with fear is to remind yourself that what you imagine is not reality. I know you already know this. However, it often helps to remind yourself of this fact — especially if your imagination is fuelling fear of failure.

It's very easy to do this, anytime and anywhere you want. Close your eyes and imagine you have a hundred gold coins in front of you. Imagine this as clearly and as vividly as you possibly can. Imagine it with as much

fierce and focused intensity as you can manage. I guarantee that when you open your eyes the gold coins won't be there. Just because you can imagine something doesn't mean it has anything to do with reality.

Alternatively, try this example. Close your eyes again and imagine that you can speak a foreign language fluently, such as Chinese, Tagalog or Kirundi. Imagine this with great force and intensity. Then open your eyes and try to speak that particular language. Doesn't work, does it?

These examples may seem silly but they help you to remember an important point: just because you can *imagine* something doesn't mean it has anything to do with *reality*. There's simply no point in imagining a scenario where you try a new interactive skill and things go wrong. Imagining doesn't tell you anything.

FFS #3: Four Magic Words

Here's another effective way to slaughter any anxiety or fear about trying anything new. It couldn't be simpler. All you have to do is to smile to yourself and say four magic words: nothing bad will happen.

Just say the magic words and then go ahead with whatever it is you want to do. Any worries, doubts, fears or anxieties you may have been feeling will just vanish into the mist. Try it!

FFS #4: Black Box Thinking

If you are learning any new interactive art or skill, I highly recommend Matthew Syed's brilliant book, 'Black Box Thinking'. This superb book will completely change your attitude towards so-called 'failure'. It will open your eyes and help you to see that, although the word 'failure' carries many negative connotations, it's actually a necessary, healthy and very positive aspect of success and achievement!

Even if you only read the first chapter of this remarkable book, which looks at how failure is treated in two different industries (aviation and medicine), you will never worry about failure again.

7. Ignore What People Say

There is a specific fear that I know tends to plague anyone learning a new interactive skill, particularly anything in the realm of performance and entertainment. It's simply the fear of what other people might say.

Suppose you try your hand at acting, comedy or public speaking and your initial attempts aren't very good. You may feel worried about other people making unkind remarks, sneering or telling you that you're not very good.

This tends to be more of a problem for younger people than it is for older, wiser souls. The older you get, the less you tend to care what other people might say or think. Nonetheless, let me address this point.

If you just bear two simple points in mind, you'll never worry again about what people might say.

Got A Better Idea?

Let's suppose you try something new and someone makes an unkind remark or says you're not very good. If you want to, you can just politely say, "I agree with you. I'm not very good at this yet. I'm learning. I intend to carry on learning so that one day I will be good. We all have to start somewhere and that's what I'm doing: starting, trying and learning from my mistakes. I can't think of a better way to succeed. Can you? Have you got a better idea?"

You don't need to actually say this out loud (and in most cases it's probably a good idea not to). You can just say it to yourself inside your head — and when you do, the harshest, nastiest comments in the world will just slide right off you, like water off a duck's back.

The 'BITDIG' Principle

There's another very effective way to deal with any concerns about what other people might say or think. I call it the 'BITDIG' principle. Let me explain.

One of my favourite books is 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest' by Ken Kesey, which was made into a very successful film in 1975. The story takes place in a psychiatric hospital. Randle McMurphy (played by Jack Nicholson in the film) is a convict who has been sent to the hospital for evaluation. McMurphy is a highly confident character who loves to

make bets with the other inmates. At one point in the story, McMurphy bets everyone that he can lift the large, central control panel in the communal shower area and hurl it through one of the windows to make his escape. This seems impossible because the control panel, as described in the novel, “is steel and cement, half the size of one of the tables, probably weighs four hundred pounds.”

All the other characters feel sure McMurphy won't be able to lift this immensely heavy object so they are happy to bet against him. It's an intriguing moment since the feat seems impossible yet McMurphy has never lost a bet and seems full of confidence.

If you have read the book or seen the film, you will know what happens. McMurphy tries his best to lift the control panel, straining and sweating so hard that it seems the effort might kill him. However, he eventually has to give up and concede defeat.

At this point, the others feel rather smug and superior. Some of them start to make fun of McMurphy for having failed. Now utterly exhausted, McMurphy slowly leaves the room. As he reaches the door, he turns to face all those who are sneering at him. He says, “But I *tried*, didn't I, goddamit. At least I did *that!*”

I think this is a wonderful scene to remember if ever you try something and people make unkind comments. While it's true that you may have tried and failed, you are way ahead of everyone who didn't even try. It's easy to sit in a chair and make negative comments. This requires literally no effort, skill or talent of any kind. It's a far greater achievement to at least try your hand at something, even if the results — to begin with — are not that impressive. You can always say to yourself, ‘But I tried’, and be proud of the fact that you got that far. This is the ‘BITDIG’ principle: it stands for ‘But I tried, didn't I goddamit’.

Incidentally, ‘One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest’ is one of only three films in history to have won all five of the main Academy Awards or ‘Oscars’ as they are known: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Screenplay. In case you're interested, the other two are ‘It Happened One Night’ from 1932 and ‘The Silence of the Lambs’ from 1991.

8. Love Criticism

Having said that you never need to worry about what other people may say or think, I'd like to add a general point about criticism.

Whenever you try something new, and especially if you're attempting a new interactive skill, you will attract critics. I think it's very important to understand a couple of things about criticism.

Criticism is actually very *useful* so long as it has two qualities.

First of all, it has to be *informed* criticism. The critic or whoever is offering an opinion has to know what they are talking about.

Secondly, it has to be *constructive* (rather than destructive). This means that it's offered in the spirit of assisting improvement and making things better.

If criticism passes both of these tests then it's very useful stuff indeed. You should welcome it with open arms because it will help you to improve and to achieve your goals. Everyone successful person has stories of times when someone offered some criticism that helped them to learn and improve.

If criticism isn't informed, or isn't constructive, then it is inherently useless. You can't use it or benefit from it in any way. All you can do is ignore it. There's no need to become argumentative, defensive or confrontational. You can just see the so-called criticism for what it is: something that serves no purpose and therefore can be, and ought to be, disregarded.

9. Learn, Don't Blame

From time to time, as your learning adventure unfolds, things will occasionally go wrong. When they do, you may feel that you have two choices: to blame yourself or blame other people. Unfortunately, neither of these options has any merit.

If you sit around blaming yourself, you will just undermine your self-belief and self-confidence. This isn't a good move.

If you sit around blaming others, you will just start to develop a negative attitude towards other people in general. This can lead to prejudice, hate, anger, confrontation, withdrawal and all sorts of other bad things. Again, not a good move.

This is why I recommend the third option: *don't bother blaming anyone at all.*

The fact is, you don't *have* to blame anyone. Blame is lame. I suggest you become deeply uninterested in the very concept of blaming anyone for anything. I suggest you learn to regard it as a tedious, boring waste of time that you want nothing to do with.

You can learn from mistakes, certainly, but try doing so *without* blaming yourself or blaming anyone else.

The fact is, you are doing the best you can with the cards you're dealt. So is everyone else (even though it's sometimes hard to believe this!) There's no need to blame yourself or anyone else, and it doesn't serve any purpose or help you to achieve anything.

10. Find A Mentor (But Avoid Torment)

Here's some good advice: if you want to learn any new interactive skill, find someone who is already good at it, and who seems to be successful, and ask if they will mentor you.

A mentor is in a position to pass on the benefit of experience, thus saving you a lot of time on the learning curve. Some people will refuse to mentor you (because they don't want to or already mentor a few people and don't have any more capacity). Some will do it for free and some might want to be paid. Search, find and come to whatever arrangement works for you both.

Although finding a mentor is theoretically good advice in theory, it's unfortunately fraught with problems that flow both ways.

Some mentors aren't that great. It's possible for someone to be an expert but not be very good at teaching, coaching or passing on the benefit of their expertise. Not everyone is a great communicator or all that pleasant to deal with. Sometimes, mentors don't just pass on their expertise but also their bad ideas, old-fashioned or out-of-date thinking and poor choices. Don't get on the bus with a bad navigator.

However, that's not the commonest problem that tends to arise with a mentoring relationship. The commonest problem is that some people expect their mentor to do their work for them. At the risk of stating the obvious, this can never end well.

Every physical fitness trainer will tell you the same thing: they can't do the exercise for you. The same applies to any mentoring relationship. A mentor is neither your slave nor servant. Don't use him or her as an excuse for not putting in the hours, doing the work and learning your new skill.

Mentor? Good idea. Torment? Bad.

Good Thoughts

I don't spend a lot of time sharing 'motivational' quotes and so on. However, as we're at the end of this short booklet, I thought you wouldn't mind if I just included a few favourite thoughts, just in case they help you on your next journey of learning and achievement.

“What about the main thing in life, all its riddles? If you want, I'll spell it out for you right now. Do not pursue what is illusory, property and position: all that is gained at the expense of your nerves decade after decade, and is confiscated in one fell night. Live with a steady superiority over life — don't be afraid of misfortune and do not yearn after happiness; it is, after all, all the same: the bitter doesn't last forever, and the sweet never fills the cup to overflowing. It is enough if you don't freeze in the cold and if thirst and hunger don't claw at your insides. If your back isn't broken, if your feet can walk, if both arms can bend, if both eyes see, and if both ears hear, then whom should you envy? And why? Our envy of others devours us most of all. Rub your eyes and purify your heart, and prize above all else in the world those who love you and who wish you well. Do not hurt them or scold them, and never part from any of them in anger; after all, you simply do not know: it might be your last act before your arrest, and that will be how you will be imprinted in their memory.”

- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn from 'The Gulag Archipelago'

“I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

— Michael Jordan

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”

— Albert Schweitzer

“A good laugh overcomes more difficulties and dissipates more dark clouds than any other one thing.”

— Laura Ingalls Wilder

Final Words

That's all there is to it! This is intentionally a rather short booklet but I hope you nonetheless found one or two useful ideas in it. Most of all, I hope it gave you that little extra bit of courage you need to start trying a new interactive skill — whether it's in a business environment or something closer to the world of showbusiness and entertainment.

I wrote the first version of this booklet to help people who were studying cold reading with me. My aim was to help them take what they knew about cold reading in *theory* and apply it in real life. If you didn't get this booklet from www.coldreadingsuccess.com, you may like to visit the site. It's all about cold reading (as the name suggests) and what I call 'cold reading for business'. It's also where I sell my three cold reading books (see below) in paperback and Kindle form.

This is a living document. I hope it will grow, develop and evolve over time. Your comments, criticisms and contributions are welcome.

I wish you health, wealth, love, smiles and magic,

— Ian Rowland



End Note 1: An Invitation

Let's work together!

Would you like me to work with you and help you to learn the art of cold reading or some other interactive skill?

You can hire me! I help people all the time via Skype or Zoom. For details see www.coldreadingsuccess.com .

I'd love to work with you.

— Ian Rowland

www.ianrowland.com
www.coldreadingsuccess.com
www.ianrowlandtraining.com

End Note 2: Three Requests

Please Help Me If You Can

If you'd like to support me and my work, please tell all your friends about this free booklet and my various websites. I'm self-employed and promote my work as best I can, but a little help is always welcome. If you can help me to 'spread the word', I would be very grateful.

For example, you can mention me to your friends in real life or on social media. Wherever people are discussing cold reading, communication psychology or related subjects, please give my websites and books a mention.

Got contacts in broadcast or online media? Tell them about me or about my books. They might get a good story, article or feature out of it — if you've got an audience, I've got content! Maybe you can help me to get media appearances or to get booked to give a talk or presentation. I'd appreciate whatever help you want to offer. Thank you for any assistance you can give me.

Improvements, Fixes And Flubs

If you have notes or ideas about how I can improve this book, or if you've noticed errors I should fix, I'd love to hear from you. If there are factual errors, things I should explain more clearly or typos, I'd love to correct them.

Please Send Me Your Review

Reviews are really helpful. If you can, please send me a review of any of my books you've read that I can add to the product pages on my websites. My email address is ian@ianrowland.com. Your review can be published under your own name or can be anonymous.

Your review doesn't have to be very long or a literary masterpiece. Short reviews can be great although if you *want* to write a detailed review then you're welcome to do so! Also, don't worry if your writing needs a little help or tidying up. I can take care of that for you.

You can also submit reviews to Amazon if you obtained any of my books from there.

What Can I Do For You?

Personal Coaching And Training

I work with private clients all over the world, either in person or via the internet. Some people contact me for help with weight loss and fitness. Others want a little help with areas such as self-fulfilment and personal success, building their business, creating a passive income or related subjects. Let's work together and see what value I can provide for you!

See any of my websites for details.

Talks, Keynotes And Corporate Training

I love taking part in live events! I offer excellent talks, training and keynotes on subjects such as persuasion and communication skills, working for yourself, creating digital products and building a passive income. I often add touches of magic and mindreading, just to make my sessions a little bit different!

To date, I've worked for the FBI, Google, Coca-Cola, Marks & Spencer, The British Olympics Team, The Ministry of Defence, Hewlett-Packard, The Philadelphia 76ers, CapGemini, BBC, Kier Construction, NBC, The Crown Estate, Iceland, Medtronic, Unilever, The Sunday Times Oxford Literary Festival, The Prince's Charities, McKinsey & Company, Eurostar Software Testing Conference, Ogilvy & Mather, Rabobank, London Business School, ABC Television, Channel 4, Cambridge Technology Partners, Synon, Valtech and many other companies.

I've also lectured at Oxford University, Cambridge University, the California Institute of Technology and Monash University.

Writing

A friend once described me as 'a book midwife'. If you have a book in you, I'll help you to write it, publish it yourself, market it and make some money from it. I've been a professional writer for over 35 years and I offer a complete, end-to-end service.

I particularly like helping people to create a passive income for themselves: create a product, set up a website, make money while you sleep. This is what I've been doing for about twenty years. I can guide you through the entire process! It's a challenging road to travel, to be sure, but at the same time highly satisfying and rewarding.

Social Media

I'd love to stay in touch via social media!

For each of my main websites, there is a corresponding Facebook page:

- www.ianrowland.com
- www.theaddictionfixer.com
- www.coldreadingsuccess.com

You can also find me on:
Twitter (@IanRowland1)
Linked In
Instagram



Some Kind Words...

“My FBI Behavioural Analysis Program hired Ian to work with and train our team for a full day. He demonstrated and taught us a lot about cold reading and how we could apply it to our work as behavioural analysts. Additionally, he also covered advanced communication skills, persuasive language and relevant insights into the art of ‘misdirection’. At the conclusion of his comprehensive seminar, he entertained our entire team and families with a mindreading show at an evening social. Not only was it great fun, but even today my team is still talking about it. I’d highly recommend Ian to anyone who’s interested in these subjects and wants a first-class speaker and trainer.”

— *Robin Dreeke, former Special Agent and Head of **FBI Behavioural Analysis Program***

“I regard Ian as a first-rate trainer and consultant. He has amazing material, he always delivers and he’s great to work with.”

— *A. Sanghi, Lead Economist, **World Bank Group***

“Ian has a very engaging and energising style and he was thought-provoking and entertaining throughout. Most importantly, everyone said it was a great use of their time. Ian gave us plenty of ways to work smarter and be more effective both professionally and personally.”

— *A. Mellor, **Marks & Spencer***

“Ian is the best speaker and trainer I’ve ever seen, and he hosted our day perfectly. We learned a lot, he was entertaining and I know we’ll be more successful this year thanks to what he shared with us.”

— *D. Holmes, Financial Director, **Healthcare Learning***

“We had some of the top experts around the globe in their field, but when we looked at how people were registering for the conference and what the attendees wanted, overwhelmingly we saw very large numbers signing up for Ian’s course, so much so that his class was the largest in the whole session that we had for those three days.”

— *Chris Hadnagy, **Organiser, Human Hacking Conference***

“Of the hundred plus lectures and shows we have hosted at Caltech none have brought more enthusiastic praise than your performance. I have now heard from dozens of people in the audience, all of whom said this was one of the most entertaining, informative, and above all funny shows they had ever seen. You are to be congratulated for breathing so much life and class into the science and skeptics community.”

— *Michael Shermer, **Executive Director, Skeptics Society***

“Ian's special talent lies in his ability to communicate useful information about self-improvement, business, psychology and, yes, magic to diverse audiences around the world. His books are essential reading and if you get the opportunity to hear him speak, don't miss him! For those outside the world of magic and mindreading, let me tell you that Ian is very highly regarded in the trade. He even gets hired to go to major conventions and teach other magicians! When I was Editor of the Magic Circle's magazine, I asked Ian to write a column on mindreading, which he did for 12 years to great acclaim.”

— *Matthew Field, **Member of the Inner Magic Circle***

“I've been an Independent Financial Advisor for 20 years and have learned from people like Dale Carnegie, Anthony Robbins, Jim Rohn and Brian Tracy. I now include Ian Rowland on that list. Having attended his courses and invested in some personal coaching with him, I cannot recommend him highly enough. His unique insights regarding positive persuasion and what makes people tick will prove invaluable in your personal and business life. He's funny, engaging and a leader in his field.”

— *Mike LeGassick, **Leading Independent Financial Advisor, UK***

“I make it my business to learn from experts. I spent four days with Ian and we covered a range of skills that I know will help me both personally and professionally — particularly inter-personal skills and ways to establish instant rapport with people. I think he's terrific.”

— *Sam Q., **Entrepreneur, Saudi Arabia***

“I'm a sales guy. I've studied all the big names and been trained by some of the best in the business. I trained with Ian via Skype and he just blew my mind with techniques and perspectives I never knew before. It's all practical. I use what Ian taught me almost every day. He opened my eyes to aspects of communication that truly deserve the term 'magic'.”

— *Michael Martin, **Sales professional, USA***

“I studied CRFB with Ian via Skype and without doubt it's my best investment this year! Ian is an excellent teacher and working with him is very enjoyable. In addition, Ian is incredibly generous with his knowledge in many adjacent fields.

— *Patrick Ehrich, **Teacher and Educational Trainer, Germany***



Training day for Coca-Cola Europe in Lisbon; lecturing at Masters of Magic in Italy; management training event at The Atomium, Brussels



Training FBI field agents; teaching persuasion skills at The STTAR Summit at the Philly 76ers HQ; training a private client in London



Cold reading training for the Human Hacking Conference in Orlando; the Human Hacking audience; management training for Cap Gemini



A demonstration in New York for ABC 'Prime Time'; lecturing in Gothenburg; training for the Alternative Investors Institute, Paris



A couple of stage shots; teaching a public 'Cold Reading For Business' class in London