THE
HIGH ACHIEVERS’ GUIDE TO HAPPINESS,
CONFIDENCE, AND SUCCESS

Audiobook Supplemental Material

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Dan Sullivan’s Dedication

The “GAP and GAIN” achievements, since 1995, of more than 20,000 ambitious, talented, and successful entrepreneurs enabled us to write this book. The reports and accounts you’ll read represent 60,000+ years of collective entrepreneurial transformation.

These admirable men and women provided us with overwhelming proof that measuring progress backward quickly and easily becomes a fundamentally positive and permanent human skill.

The GAP and The GAIN is proving uniquely useful for visionary high achievers in every entrepreneurial field.

This is especially true for innovative high achievers who, until learning the GAP and the GAIN distinction, seldom felt happy with their remarkable results, and never for very long.

Entrepreneurs’ growing mastery of this single concept dramatically changes their lives in much happier directions. By simply measuring each day backward, and not against their endless ideals, they increase their individual confidence and organizational capability on a daily basis.

Their individual lives, and the lives of those they serve, work with, and live with, improve in every area of commitment and purpose.

My collaborator, Dr. Ben Hardy, explained to me that from the perspective of psychological research, our findings in this book are probably the most extensive and comprehensive to be continually and exclusively derived from outlier individuals.

In other words, these thousands of entrepreneurs are not normal people and they don’t live normal lives. They were born as lifetime goal setters and overachievers. No one had to teach them how to be successful. To a person, they are self-motivated, self-managing, and self-measuring.

Their single fundamental problem is simple to state: throughout their successful journey since childhood of always achieving bigger and better, they missed the classes on being happy.

That goes for me too. My single greatest stroke of good fortune in my life was meeting and marrying my lifetime business partner, Babs Smith. Since 1982, her wisdom and teamwork have kept me on a marvelously productive success path, which has also provided great enjoyment for both of us, and thousands of others.
Benjamin Hardy’s Dedication

To Lauren, for being the most important GAIN in my life. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you for helping me become better. Thank you for appreciating my GAINS while helping me see how much further we can go.

To Kaleb, Jordan, and Logan, for each of your incredible GAINS over the past several years. It’s inspiring to see how much you each learn and grow each day. You also help me to become better every day as well. We’re all growing together. Thanks for staying in the GAIN with me when I make mistakes.

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“The way to measure your progress is backward against where you started, not against your ideal.”  
—Dan Sullivan
MAKING HAPPINESS A BURDEN

“It’s an enormous burden to be in the mindset that happiness is something you need to go out and get.”
IDEAL
ACHIEVED
START

GAP

VISUALIZE
MEASURE

FAILURE
FRUSTRATION
DISAPPOINTMENT
LOW SELF-ESTEEM
GUILT
DEPRESSION

GAIN

VISUALIZE
MEASURE

SUCCESS
SATISFACTION
CONFIDENCE
HIGH SELF-ESTEEM
ENJOYMENT
OPTIMISM

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GOALS EXPAND HAPPINESS

“I don’t think we set and achieve goals in an effort to become happy. We do it because we are happy and want to expand our happiness.”
HAPPINESS IS YOUR STARTING POINT

“Happiness is your starting point, and you’ve expanded the center by achieving the goal. So, it’s a constant outward expansion of happiness.”
IDEALS ILLUMINATE THE PATH

“The ideal is like the sun that illuminates the path ahead of you to give you the encouragement to take the necessary steps to reach your destination.”
REALITY MEASURED BACKWARD

“The future isn’t a reality—it’s a projection. And because it’s not reality, it can’t be part of any real measurement of your progress. The only way to measure goals is backward, against the past. Use the reality of where you currently are and measure backward from there to the reality of where you started.”
NO SCARCITY WITH WANTING

“In the world of wanting, there’s no scarcity, because it’s a world of innovation—not of taking. Wanters are creating things that didn’t exist before.”
WANTING IS A CAPABILITY

“This transformation, moving from needing to wanting, is a capability. The more you do it, the better you get at it. Yes, it’s a risk at first because your previous tendencies of justification are well developed and habitual.”
WANTING EMPOWERS YOU

“When you take the wanting approach to your future, it also means that you’re leaving behind the world of needing. It means that no one else is responsible for your future progress and success.”
WANTING CREATES ABUNDANCE

“In the wanting world, there is an abundance of resources as a result of the creativity and innovation that comes from wanting.”
IDEALS AREN’T FOR MEASUREMENT

“An ideal can’t be measured. It’s there for emotional, psychological, and intellectual motivation, but it’s not there for measurement.”
PROGRESS MUST BE CONCRETE

“A sense that we’re making progress toward our goals makes us happy. But to truly get the feeling of progress, we need to base it on concrete facts. When we set goals, we must be specific so we know when they’re accomplished—usually, a number was reached or an event took place.”
HOW TO MEASURE GAINS

“You can’t make a real measurement of your gains unless it’s based on numbers achieved or events that have made a difference. It has to be quantifiable and verifiable.”
APPRECIATE PROGRESS FIRST

“Before you start the process with a new goal, make sure to recognize and appreciate the progress and achievements you’ve made so far.”
ELIMINATE JUSTIFICATION

“By eliminating justification, you recognize that all the energy you were spending comes back in the form of creativity, innovation, and cooperation.”
IDEALS AS INSPIRATION

“The best way to look at your ideals is as an infinite source of inspiration for creating goals. We are all like moviemakers, using our entire memory and imagination as raw material for casting a never-ending series of pictures out in front of us.”
CREATE SUCCESS CRITERIA

“The simplest and most efficient way to ensure you get the results you want is to create a list of success criteria for your goals.”
BE SPECIFIC, NOT VAGUE

“Vagueness generates vagueness, so you must be specific when describing your desired results.”
COMPARISON MAKES YOU UNHAPPY

“Comparison makes you unhappy, and there’s no end to comparison in the world, if that’s the path you choose.”
BE UNIQUE, DON’T COMPARE

“Instead of focusing on self-comparison, you focus on valuable thinking and action, created through your unique thoughts and experiences.”
MEASURE YOUR OWN PROGRESS

“Measuring your own personal progress keeps you out of comparison with others.”
YOU’RE 100 PERCENT DISCIPLINED

“You are 100 percent disciplined to your existing set of habits.”
YOU’RE ALWAYS GROWING

“You are always growing, and you continually measure yourself in terms of growth.”
MOVE TOWARD WHAT’S GROWING

“Your increasing sense of individual uniqueness makes you aware of everything and everyone that’s rigidly opposed to any kind of growth. This enables you to identify and move toward everything that’s growing.”
THE PROBLEM IS HOW YOU MEASURE

“Do you find that no matter how much success you have, you’re perpetually dissatisfied with your progress? Does it feel like you’re still far from achieving your biggest goals? The problem is not in the quantity or quality of your success and achievements. The problem is how you measure.”
THE ONLY WAY TO MEASURE

“The only way to measure the distance you’ve traveled is by measuring from where you are back to the point where you started.”
HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

“Your level of capability in the future depends upon your measurement of achievements in the past. You can’t move forward and grow until you’ve acknowledged how far you’ve come and have properly measured your GAINS.”
THERE’S NO BLAME

“There’s no blame to be had for your being in the GAP up to this point. Even if you were raised in a GAIN-minded household, you could easily have picked up GAP-like thinking from the culture that was otherwise around you. After all, measuring backward is counterintuitive to most people.”
HOW TO MAKE JUMPS

“As you move forward, new goals will require you to jump to higher levels of confidence and capability, but you’ve done that before, time and time again. To remind yourself of this, all you have to do is look back to your various starting points and then to your corresponding achievements.”
DON’T COMPARE TODAY

“Don’t compare today’s value to that of any other day.”
EACH WIN IS IMPORTANT

“Each win, big or small, is important, and the more you do the activity of identifying your daily wins, the more you’ll see greater and greater opportunity for wins.”
WINNING EVERY DAY

“You’ll notice with each winning day—which is every day—that your sense of pride, confidence, and excitement expands and accelerates.”
WINNING EXPANDS WINNING

“Once you get in the habit of looking for wins, you expand your understanding of what can be a win.”
THE WINNING MUSCLE

“When you take the time daily to recognize your achievements, you’re building a muscle.”
WE CREATE MEANING AND VALUE

“Meaning and value aren’t given to us. We create our own meaning and value for every experience.”
FREE YOURSELF FROM JUSTIFICATION

“When people stop spending their energies on justifying what they want, they free themselves up to focus on creativity and innovation.”
EXPAND OWNERSHIP OVER LIFE

“You use your winning brain to identify, achieve, and measure daily progress, which continually expands your ownership over every area of your life.”
CONTROL YOUR RESPONSE

“Successful people don’t control events; they control their response to events.”
VALUE CREATES MEANING

“With increased value comes greater meaning. The things that we value or appreciate the most also have the greatest meaning. Value and meaning in the world, then, are totally created by appreciation.”
“Proactive gratitude is about appreciating everything in the world around you. It’s not initiated by something special the world first does for you, but rather by something special that you first do for the world.”
PROACTIVE GRATITUDE CREATES GROWTH

“Proactive gratitude allows you to enter into a special relationship with the world—one that continually grows in value, meaning, and happiness.”
ENDNOTES

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**Chapter 2**


Chapter 3


Chapter 4


Chapter 5


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**Conclusion**


REFERENCES


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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dan Sullivan is the world’s foremost expert on entrepreneurship and has coached more successful entrepreneurs than anyone on the planet. He is the cofounder of Strategic Coach®, the leading entrepreneurial coaching program in the world, and author of more than 50 publications on entrepreneurial success. Over the past 30-plus years, Strategic Coach has provided teaching and training to more than 20,000 entrepreneurs.

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Dr. Benjamin Hardy is an organizational psychologist and author of Willpower Doesn’t Work and Personality Isn’t Permanent. Together, he and Dan co-authored the national bestseller Who Not How and The Gap and The Gain. His blogs have been read by more than 100 million people and are featured in the Harvard Business Review, The New York Times, Forbes, Fortune, CNBC, and others. For several years, he was the #1 most-read writer on Medium.com. He and his wife, Lauren, are the parents of six kids. They live in Orlando, Florida.

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