

**Being  
Better  
THAN YOU  
Believe**



# **Being Better THAN YOU Believe**

**8 Steps to Ultimate Success**  
**Philip Berry**



**Outskirts Press, Inc.**  
**Denver, Colorado**

The opinions expressed in this manuscript are solely the opinions of the author and do not represent the opinions or thoughts of the publisher. The author has represented and warranted full ownership and/or legal right to publish all the materials in this book.

Being Better Than You Believe  
8 Steps to Ultimate Success  
All Rights Reserved.  
Copyright © 2011 Philip Berry  
V4.0

This book may not be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in whole or in part by any means, including graphic, electronic, or mechanical without the express written consent of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Outskirts Press, Inc.  
<http://www.outskirtspress.com>

PB ISBN: 978-1-4327-5636-9  
HB ISBN: 978-1-4327-5642-0

Outskirts Press and the “OP” logo are trademarks belonging to Outskirts Press, Inc.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	vii
Introduction .....	xi
Chapter 1 .....	1
Why Change?	
Chapter 2 .....	31
Think Differently	
Chapter 3 .....	55
Anchoring Your Values	
Chapter 4 .....	81
Creating the Vision	
Chapter 5 .....	99
Identifying Your Distinctive Competencies	
Chapter 6 .....	123
Initiating the Personal Rebranding Process	
Chapter 7 .....	143
Your Personal Board of Directors	
Chapter 8 .....	165
Creating Opportunities for Success	
Chapter 9 .....	181
Basking in the Glow	
Chapter 10 .....	193
Epilogue	
Quotes or Commentary .....	195
Appendix .....	197
Living More Values List!	



# Acknowledgements

The writing of this book has been a labor of love. It would not have been possible without the advice, input, and support of numerous people. I was inspired because, as I have worked with people throughout the years, many suggested I put my thoughts on paper. I would like to acknowledge some of these individuals and thank them for their contributions... Not in any particular order, except the first one.

This writing would not have been possible without the support, input, and wisdom of my wife, Karen, who has tolerated my long days, nights, and weekends working on this. She created the atmosphere that has enabled me to focus. On the important issues she made critical comments along the way to make sure that I am saying the right things, with the right perspective... I dedicate this book to the life we share together.

Thank you to my son, Kiel, who has also provided his very helpful perspective in marketing and finance. I appreciate him more and more each day.

Thank you to my daughter, Maya, who gave me rich examples and put a touch of reality to some of my thoughts. I

am so grateful for her.

To Dolores Caldwell, who has been a mentor to me and who encouraged me to strive for change in my life. To Helen Hendricks, who knew me from way back when and so generously aided my growth. And to my good friends Richard Jones, Waldo Jeff, Jessie Combre, Steve Sims, Mario Reid, Seymour Hodge, Florence Ferguson and Debbie Williams, who have helped me grow and watched my personal changes. To my godfather Collins Reece and god brother Reuben Reece who have passed, but whose guidance still lives with me. To Donnie Johnson, whose homespun wisdom has made a difference in my life and aided my journey.

To my counselor Sarita Bhakuni, who nurtured the seed in my mind about writing this book.

To Richard Block, who sat with me over breakfast at the Waldorf a number of times and brainstormed the idea, which has become the title of this book. He is a change master, and I am grateful for his friendship.

To Jay Hershenson of City University, for his friendship, guidance and support through the years in all that I have tried to accomplish.

To my publicist team Amy Greenfield, Elizabeth Hershman, Karen Ash, and Alan Horowitz for their dedication and resources enabling me to make this dream a reality. I could not have done this without them. Alan's input was especially indispensable.

To Joe Maniscalco for his artistry in representing my thoughts in the cover design.

There are also many cheerleaders. Without their voices, this would have been difficult. Among those whose commentary I appreciate are Eugene Kelly and LH Whelchel. Simon T. Bailey, for his brilliance and advice on how to write a book: chapter by chapter so it doesn't seem too big!

To my sister, Elaine Habibah, for her support and encouragement.

To the numerous people who allowed me to use their experiences as examples. Your struggle is my struggle.

To the Creator, for all of the blessings I have received. Thank you for allowing me to be a vehicle to help others improve their lives and be better than they believe.



# Introduction

## Those who made a change

On the surface all was well with Mary. She was about 35 years old, worked for years at a federal government job in her hometown in the South. Her life was steady, predictable, and solid: a happy marriage, two wonderful children, a responsible and well-paying job, a nice house and plenty of material possessions. Everything needed to achieve the American Dream was hers, it seemed. But she was unhappy. A sense of dissatisfaction constantly nagged at her. She felt a bit like Charlie Brown of the Peanuts cartoon -- constantly walking around with a cloud over her head.

She came to me for assistance, and I helped her look at her life in ways that would reveal what was working well and what needed change. (I will go into considerably more detail later in this book as to how I help folks understand what makes them happy and what does not.) She thought about things she liked and didn't like. She paid attention to what bothered her and what made her happy. She assessed her skills to understand her strengths and their potential market value. She thought about where she lived -- the people, the community, and the

opportunities -- and how well her living situation served her. She thought also about her family, to understand their role in her happiness and, perhaps, unhappiness. She considered what she wanted, what she had, and what she lacked. This took weeks and more than a little good-ol' soul searching.

But it all paid off. She learned a great deal about herself and her situation, and came to understand what was working well and what needed change. Her husband and children made her happy -- no problem there. But her job and hometown -- well, those were not addressing her needs. Where she lived was too limited and familiar.

She worked for the federal government, which was not the problem, but she had been at the same job for years and it no longer provided challenges, surprises, or creative opportunities. She was flying a straight, predictable course on automatic pilot, when she needed to be making some sharp turns and steep dives to test her limits.

From this analysis began a search that ended in Washington, D.C. She convinced her husband and children she needed a change. They realized they all could benefit from leaving their comfort zones and exploring new worlds. Her husband jumped at the opportunity; it turned out that he, too, felt stuck and wanted a change. Her children took more effort to convince, but when they learned about the opportunities they would have, they went from hesitant to excited.

For reasons of cultural, job, and other opportunities, she decided the northeast -- New York, Boston, Washington, or

near these cities -- was where she wanted to live. Her need for a new job was easy to detect, but she did not know the type. So she started looking at many different job types and industries.

As it happened, she found a winner in Washington working for another department of the federal government: the same industry but a very different job. The new job and new city proved liberating. Her family is very happy. And so is she.

In the spring of one year, she could not imagine living anywhere but her hometown and working at the job she'd had for years. By the spring of the next year, she could not imagine why she stayed in her hometown and at her job for so long. Mary had a breakthrough when she decided to stop what she was doing, analyze her situation, and commit herself to take a chance and make a change -- a big change

Rob, who was in his 20's also made a major change. He lived what many would consider a charmed life. After graduating from a prestigious college, he immediately landed in the industry considered among the most glamorous at the time -- investment banking. Challenges, money, and even adventure were his, including a three-year company-paid stint in London, where he lived like a proverbial king. What more could someone in their 20's want?

As it turned out, Rob learned he wanted something very different. Like Mary, dissatisfaction dogged him. Assessing his situation, he discovered the job lacked independence and entrepreneurship, both of which he valued. Listing his strengths and weaknesses revealed that, for him, a much smaller organization

where he could make a major contribution was more suitable to what he wanted in life than his current position of being a small spoke in a big wheel. The bottom line: goodbye to one of the world's most prestigious investment banking operations, and hello to a small but high energy boutique marketing firm, where he could use his financial skills to help this firm land contracts and grow its business.

Mary and Rob are now much happier. (I have changed their names and the names of most others in this book to protect their privacy.) Their choices surprised those who knew them -- and themselves. They took paths they never expected to be on. Their lives were controlled by what was expected of them; the benefits reaped were unfulfilling. Breakthroughs were needed to break out of their cycles of actions and reactions and to move in new, exciting, and challenging directions.

I call this book *Being Better than You Believe*, because in my decades of working with people, I have seen many like Mary and Rob change their lives in unexpected ways. They rid themselves of self-imposed shackles and find the freedom to pursue what is really important. They move to a new city, leave a prestigious job -- make major changes in their lives, the kind of changes most people are too afraid to attempt.

Rare is the person who lives to his or her full potential. Rare is the person who does not place self-imposed limits on what he or she can achieve. Rare is the person who does not undersell him- or herself. I will show you in this book a personal strategy that will enable you to manage your life and your

career to their fullest, and make you better than you ever believed possible.

An irony I notice is that people often have strategies for the companies where they work -- detailed, well-designed, comprehensive strategies -- but lack a comprehensive strategy for themselves and their personal and professional lives. They work hard thinking through problems and challenges of their employers, but spend little time thinking through their own problems and challenges. They can quickly identify opportunities available to their employers -- new markets, new products, new services, and new marketing ideas -- but have no opportunities identified for themselves. This book provides the tools you need to assess your situation, understand your opportunities, and construct a strategy to maximize those opportunities -- to be better than you believe. What you may be doing for your employer, I will help you do for yourself.

### **Working to help you make a change**

The consulting practice I run has a tagline that explains the goal of my work -- and the goal of this book -- “**being better than you believe.**” I used it for the title of this book because it captures what I am trying to achieve here. As I consult with and counsel others, many have asked for the formula to move forward with their lives. One size never fits all. No magic wand exists that can be waved and cure all your ills. Sorry to say, there is no magic formula.

However, if you follow certain thought processes that direct you to address certain questions; you can move a step closer to getting what you want. Our capacity to grow is greater than we imagine, but we don't always stretch ourselves to reach our fullest potential. Organizations often are constrained from accomplishing all they are able to because they don't tap into the creative reservoir of talent they have on their payroll and unleash those capabilities to the fullest extent possible. If we can get beyond the barriers and forces that constrain our thoughts and abilities, we can be better than we would have believed possible. In other words, we can do the impossible, though the "impossible" is actually quite possible, if we believe in ourselves.

Living up to one's potential has never been easy, but I would argue it has never in recent history been more important than it is now. We all face business and personal worlds changing faster and more dramatically than ever.

Consider what is happening in various industries. The American automobile industry is a shadow of its former self. The investment banking industry has reinvented itself in the past few years to remain relevant to the needs of the consumer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For years, the airline industry's profits have had the up-and-down frequency of planes taking off and landing. Media of all kinds (newspapers, television, and radio) are on the ropes, with futures that look troubling if not devastating. The department store industry holds a fraction of the retail market it had 25 years ago.

While these are “old economy”-type industries, the future of some of the “new economy” companies is constantly evolving. Twitter, Face book, LinkedIn and MySpace are moving the world of social media to a whole new level. I am sure there will be more to come.

In addition, employees in many industries face competition they never imagined they could possibly face -- from workers overseas. Much has been written about computer programmers and telemarketers who work for U.S. companies but live in India, Ireland, Indonesia, and elsewhere. But competitors in other industries are limiting the earning power of Americans. For instance, I’ve seen freelance writers in India and the Philippines bid on American writing projects posted on Internet job sites. And they expect pay of a few dollars an hour, less than any writer in the U.S. could afford to accept -- in fact, considerably less than the American minimum wage.

Americans are going to Singapore, Costa Rica, and other locales for medical and dental procedures, because good healthcare is available in many countries, often for a fraction of the price one pays in the U.S. How many writers or doctors who are, say, of Baby Boomer age, ever imagined they would directly compete with talented, trained writers and doctors in developing countries?

While the job scene is changing literally before our eyes, personal lives are also undergoing upheavals, though perhaps not as dramatically as in business. Being stuck in an unhappy marriage -- a common situation a generation or two ago -- now

seems as though it was from another era. People today marry and divorce with greater frequency than ever.

Women have more earning power and more autonomy than at any time in modern history. Online dating sites now make it possible to “meet” potential mates anywhere in the country, even anywhere in the world. There are even online dating services for senior citizens. Moving from one city to another is easier than ever. Air travel is relatively inexpensive, and long distance telephone service is dirt-cheap, so children who move because of a parent’s job change can now stay in touch with their old buddies to a degree never before possible. This makes it easier for parents to pick up and move the whole family.

Bottom line: Choices are greater today than ever before, opportunities are greater today than ever before, and the risks today of staying put --, as a result, greater than ever. Those who do the same thing over and over are the people who will never be better than they believe. In fact, they will never be nearly as good as they can be.

While the primary focus of this book is on personal change, organizations also need to consider how they will change in order to be more effective and productive. The principles I will talk about will give you insights into how to begin rethinking your organization’s purpose. Whether you work for a corporation or not-for-profit, it is critical to think about how you can improve your business proposition. I will show you how these concepts apply to organizations looking to improve their ability

to be relevant to their clients, customers, and employees.

This book will provide tools that will help you reach your potential, enabling you to have a breakthrough in your thought process. To put it in today's vernacular, you will be able to re-think your value proposition to your employer, life partner, or whomever, and reposition yourself. Perhaps you have been working in technical positions; a breakthrough might direct you to rethink your contribution to an employer and reposition yourself as a marketing person with technical expertise.

The purpose of this book is to stimulate your thought processes, to have you consider your present situation in a very different way. I want you to evaluate whether you are consciously doing the best that you can do -- for yourself or your organization. I want you to consider that embracing change can be more fulfilling than the status quo.

What I will help you avoid in this book is going around in circles, never quite breaking out of your established patterns. You can never be better than you believe if you keep doing the same thing over and over. In computer logic, there is a "do loop," which keeps repeating itself until it is true. In human experience, repeating oneself endlessly typically results in ending up just where one started. If you are happy with where you are, then you have no compelling reason to read this book. But if you feel you can do more and have more, then likely you are not being better than you can be, let alone better than you believe.

Keep in mind that because of advances to medicine and

nutrition, you will likely live longer than most did in previous generations. Baby Boomers, for example, will live more years in retirement than their parents or grandparents (though not as long as their children). They need to think about how they will be satisfied and fulfilled during the remainder of their lives.

But even younger people have to be dexterous and responsive. As I write this, it is tough for young people to find a job, any job. Opportunities, at least for the time being, are constricted, and young people need to adapt to this reality.

Both young and older folks have to assess their skill sets, review their capabilities, and consider their desires and goals, and place these within the context of industries likely to do well in the coming years. Previous career assumptions probably will not hold for any length of time.

My goal with this book is to have you reach beyond anything you ever imagined. I want you to make the changes that will position you to be everything you ever imagined and hoped for -- and more -- and not be stuck doing the tried-and-true, which has been so unsatisfying. When you have completed the process, you will be a different person than you are today, in ways like Mary and Rob. They changed significantly, and so can you.

## **The book's organization**

I have arranged this book according to eight guiding principles, and devote a chapter to each. Note that each chapter

starts with a quote. I have a fondness for quotes, which I have collected for years. Many are entertaining, while others are truly insightful. But the most important reason I collect them is because they can help focus my thinking, help position my thoughts around a core idea.

A favorite example is from a man who, though dead for over half a century, seems ever more popular, Albert Einstein: “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.” To connect this quote more directly with this book, let me paraphrase it: You cannot get out of your rut and become better than you believe, by doing and thinking in the same ways you did that got you in the rut to begin with. At the end of each chapter are some questions, which I call thought stimulators. I encourage you to consider these as you think through how to make the principles applicable to you in your life and organization.

To be better than you believe requires a strategy, which is what I present here. The strategy’s eight steps will take you from where you are now to where you want to be. This is a journey, and these principles are the trail markers that will guide your trip so you can achieve major breakthroughs in your life.

The eight principles are:

1. Why change?
2. Thinking differently
3. Anchoring your values
4. Creating the vision

5. Discovering your distinctive competencies
6. Change your paradigm and rebrand yourself
7. Networking and maintaining your personal board of directors
8. Creating opportunities for success

When beginning a journey, it helps to know where one is going and how one will get there. You are just starting this book, so let me now briefly describe each of these principles. Then, in subsequent chapters, you will read in depth about each and learn how to use them in your own life. Each principle builds on the previous one. Thus you can use this as a model for personal and organizational change. At the end I have a chapter called “Basking in the Glow”. This chapter outlines some of the characteristics of those who have been successful in accomplishing their goals and achieving success.

### 1. *Why change?*

On the journey to breakthroughs and change, the first step is to understand why you need to change, or even if you need to change. Given the fact that you are reading this book strongly suggests you think change is needed. This first chapter will help you decide if you need to change, and why such change can bring more benefits and joy than you ever imagined.

## 2. *Thinking differently*

Once you decide change is needed, your next step is to start thinking differently. I will go into this in more detail later, but keep in mind a comment made by Norman Vincent Peale, the well-known proponent of positive thinking: “Change your thoughts and you change your world.”

## 3. *Anchoring your values*

When people start to change their thinking, they begin to explore their values with an eye towards, perhaps, altering some of their values. Values guide our behavior and, in a sense, dictate the choices we make. Knowing and understanding our personal values is an absolutely critical component when we are hoping to change and make a major breakthrough.

## 4. *Creating the vision*

A powerful tool to help you change is visioning. With it, you can begin not just to think in new ways, but *see yourself* in new ways. With visioning, you can begin to dream how your life will be, and then be able to live that life.

## 5. *Discovering your distinctive competencies*

When you visualize yourself after you have completed this journey, you will have focused not just on what you want to

achieve, but what you are able to achieve. Picturing yourself a concert pianist, though you have little in the way of musical talent, is not productive. Understanding your strengths -- the things you are good at and that most people are not -- is productive. I call these distinctive competencies, and identifying and capitalizing on them is essential if you are to be better than you believe.

#### 6. *Change your paradigm and rebrand yourself*

Changing yourself internally is not enough. You need to change your image to the outside world so it sees you as you want to be seen. If you want to start a clothing store for fashion conscious businesswomen, do not dress in jeans and chew gum, even if this has been your usual course of behavior. This chapter discusses techniques you can use to change your paradigm and rebrand yourself.

#### 7. *Your personal board of directors*

To change your paradigm and rebrand yourself requires the support of others. You cannot get where you want to go alone. You need to develop relationships that help you define your brand and sustain it, the subject of this chapter.

#### 8. *Creating opportunities for success*

I do not believe in relying on luck. In fact, luck is a word I

do not like to use. Life presents opportunities to virtually all of us. Those who have “luck” are really those who have prepared themselves with education, skills, experience, and attitude to have the willingness and ability to take advantage of life’s opportunities. Here I discuss how you, too, can create your own opportunities for success and take full advantage of them.